Counterfutures is a multidisciplinary journal of Left research, thought, and strategy. It brings together work from across Aotearoa New Zealand’s Left, aiming to intervene in, and inaugurate, debates about how to understand and influence our society, politics, culture, and environment.
Renters United!
Te Peeke o Aotearoa
The Habilitation Centre
Narrative Absurdity
Black Study and Communist Affect
Combating Online Racism
The Revenge Economy
Wealth and Power in New Zealand
Politics of Futility
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Organising in the New Zealand Rental Sector
ROBERT WHITAKER & GEORDIE ROGERS with NIC GUERRERO
Launching in 2015, Renters United has sought to build a movement to push back against landlordism in New Zealand and secure healthy and affordable homes for all renters. Organisers Robert Whitaker and Geordie Rogers discuss the organisational and campaign strategy of Renters United, the search for crux issues around which meaningful reform can be built, and the importance of telling renters’ stories.

The Native Lands Acts and Te Peeke o Aotearoa
CATHERINE COMYN
An excerpt from Catherine Comyn’s forthcoming book, *The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa* (ESRA, 2022). The Native Lands Acts of the 1860s and 1870s are read as the colonial weaponisation of credit, enabling the division and seizure of Māori land. Against this, the founding of Te Peeke o Aotearoa in 1885 presented an exclusively Māori alternative to colonial financial institutions, reasserting Māori economic autonomy and threatening to weaken the fabric of the colonial project.

The Habilitation Centre Ideal
LIAM MARTIN
An analysis of the 1989 Roper report traces out the genealogy of the ‘habilitation centre’, from its development in the United States to experiments in Aotearoa New Zealand. With the Labour government attempting to reduce the prison population, does the habilitation centre offer a model for decarceration or for the expansion of penal confinement?

On Tristan Tzara and Steve Bannon
BRYCE GALLOWAY
Absurd art has tended to find greater currency during periods of intense socio-political unrest. Does this thesis still hold in the face of today’s accelerating online narratives and divergent internet realities?
Black Study and Communist Affect
ANISHA SANKAR
Engaging with the work of Stefano Harney and Fred Moten and examining the influence of their ideas in Aotearoa’s undercommons, Anisha Sankar highlights the political potentiality of ‘black study’ as a mode of already-existing communism. Here, the distant liberatory horizon gives way to the embrace of relationality and being-for-others in the present.

Online Graphics and Racism in Aotearoa New Zealand
JENNY RANKINE
While it is widely known that racism is endemic in online spaces, enabled by the structures of social networking sites, little research exists on how to effectively counter everyday racism online. The results of a wide-ranging and detailed experiment with developing and disseminating anti-racist graphics highlight the importance of systematic political-meme creation by social-justice groups.

The Revenge Economy
FAISAL AL-ASAAD
Through a reading of Max Haiven’s Revenge Capitalism, Faisal Al-Asaad highlights the centrality of debt as a principle of social and economic life. An engagement with the institution and philosophy of utu is called for as a means of transforming destructive capitalist debt relations and abolishing today’s revenge economy.

Wealth and Power in Aotearoa New Zealand
GEOFF BERTRAM

Utility, Futility, Counter-Utility
TIM CORBALLIS
Review of Neil Valletly, Futilitarianism: Neoliberalism and the Production of Uselessness. Futility as both dominant structure of feeling and fulcrum for political action in the twilight of neoliberalism.
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