

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.

counterfutures

LEFT THOUGHT AND PRACTICE AOTEAROA

ISSUE 14 2023

The Fictitious University

Legacies of Financial Colonisation

Constitutional Struggle in Chile

Contesting Closed Adoption

Socialists Confront Interwar Fascism

Political Theology and COVID-19

A Communist Life

Mapping the Far-Right

counterfutures 14

EDITOR Neil Vallelly

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Simon Barber

CONSULTING EDITOR Graeme Whimp

EDITORIAL BOARD Simon Barber, Sue Bradford, Emalani Case, Tim Corballis, Chamsy el-Ojeili, Jack Foster, Kate Stone, Amanda Thomas, Warwick Tie, Neil Vallelly

BOOK REVIEWS Chamsy el-Ojeili

WEB SUPPORT Tim Corballis

DESIGN Xanthe Griffiths

ADMIN SUPPORT Luke Biggs

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD Ozan Alakavuklar, Maria Bargh, Cassandra Barnett, Anita Brady, Sophie Bond, Toby Boraman, Shannon Brincat, Ciara Cremin, Karen Davis, Eli Elinoff, Peter Howland, Campbell Jones, Cybèle Locke, Georgia Lockie, Dougal McNeill, Brett Nicholls, David Parker, Sean Phelan, Helen Potter, Nate Rigler, Brian Roper, Murdoch Stephens, Giovanni Tiso, Cindy Zeiher

Post: Sociology, Gender Studies and Criminology Programme
University of Otago
PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054,
New Zealand

Email: counterfutures@counterfutures.nz

ISSN 2463 - 5340



Contents

EDITORIAL

- 10 **The Fictitious University**
NEIL VALLELLY

BOOK FORUM

- 20 **The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa**
ARAMA RATA, JANE KELSEY, SIMON BARBER & CATHERINE COMYN

INTERVIEW

- 56 **Constitutional Transformation in Chile: Mapping the Horizon of Struggle**
CAMILA VERGARA

ARTICLES

- 82 **Adoptee Activism: I Am Not Your 'Child for All Purposes'**
DENISE BLAKE, ANNABELL AHURIRI-DRISCOLL & BARBARA SUMNER
- 112 **Confronting Fascism: Socialist Knowledge and the Far-Right in Interwar Europe**
CHAMSY EL-OJEILI
- 144 **The Political Theology of Covid Governance**
PHILIP FOUNTAIN

REVIEWS

- 170 **A Striking History**
SUE BRADFORD
- 178 **What is the Far-Right in Aotearoa New Zealand?**
MAX SOAR

Contents Overview

The Fictitious University

NEIL VALLELLY

How might the concept of “fictitious capital” help us understand the origins and depths of the current crisis enveloping universities in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Book Forum: The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa

ARAMA RATA, JANE KELSEY, SIMON BARBER & CATHERINE COMYN

Three leading thinkers discuss Catherine Comyn’s new book, *The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa* (ESRA, 2022). Each discussant uses the book as a prompt to think through how financialisation was used as a tool of colonisation and how this legacy manifests itself today in forms of intergenerational trauma, legal structures, and inflation. The forum concludes with Comyn’s response to the discussants.

Constitutional Transformation in Chile: Mapping the Horizon of Struggle

CAMILA VERGARA

An interview with one of the world’s foremost critical legal theorists, who discusses her role in the constitutional transformation struggle in Chile. In a wide-ranging discussion, Vergara charts the political history of Chile from the fall of Salvador Allende, through the Pinochet dictatorship, to the troubled decades of democracy, leading up to the popular uprising in October 2019. She outlines her work with local councils pushing for the inclusion of a variety of social and economic rights in the new constitution, how wealthy and powerful right-wing elites used the prospect of Indigenous rights to undermine constitutional reform, and the consequences of the defeat of the proposed constitution in the 2022 referendum.

Adoptee Activism: I Am Not Your ‘Child for All Purposes’

DENISE BLAKE, ANNABELL AHURIRI-DRISCOLL & BARBARA SUMNER

Three scholars of adoption reflect on adoptee activism in Aotearoa New Zealand, tracing a history of closed adoption, the social and psychological legacies of state practices, and the difficulties involved in contesting adoption law and the status quo. Applying an autoethnographic and dialogic method, Blake, Ahuriri-Driscoll, and Sumner reflect on their personal experiences as both adoptees and activists, and point the way to new forms of collective organising around adoptee activism in the political moment.

Confronting Fascism: Socialist Knowledge and the Far-Right in Interwar Europe

CHAMSY EL-OJEILI

A detailed and comprehensive study of socialist interpretations of interwar fascism in Europe. El-Ojeili maps the multiplicity of socialist responses to fascist formations and the ways in which these responses were refracted through various organisational and situational forces, which also evolved as a consequence of socialist defeats in the period. Understanding this history, El-Ojeili contends, has relevance and lessons for how we confront the complexity of the far-right today.

The Political Theology of Covid Governance

PHILIP FOUNTAIN

An analysis of themes of transcendence and the sacred in the government's management of the Covid-19 pandemic through the lens of political theology. Drawing on themes of solidarity, sacrifice, sovereignty, and the iconic, Fountain reconsiders aspect of modern techno-politics and charts some of the reasons why governance of the pandemic was so challenging.

A Striking History

SUE BRADFORD

A review of Cybèle Locke, *Comrade: Bill Andersen—A Communist, Working-Class Life*. A captivating and rigorous portrait of a complicated but pivotal figure in the trade union movement in Aotearoa New Zealand.

What is the Far-Right in Aotearoa New Zealand?

MAX SOAR

A review of Matthew Cunningham, Marinus La Rooij, and Paul Soonley (eds.), *Histories of Hate: The Radical Right in Aotearoa New Zealand*. An overview of key individuals and organisations in the history and present of the far-right.

Author Biographies

ANNABELL AHURIRI-DRISCOLL

(Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Kahungunu) A Senior Lecturer at the University of Canterbury, teaching and researching in Māori public health. Current projects include climate change and child health, pēpi-caregiver emotional connection, and donor conception and identity.

SIMON BARBER

(Kāi Tahu, Pākehā) A lecturer in Sociology at the University of Otago, and scholar of Indigenous thought and politics, Marxist and critical theory, Black studies, and communism. He is co-editor with Miri Davidson of *Through That Which Separates Us* (2021), centred on themes of deportation, incarceration, and colonialism.

DENISE BLAKE

Associate Professor and Director of Whakahāngi Mātai Hinengaro Hauora— Postgraduate Diploma in Health Psychology Practice in the School of Health at Victoria University of Wellington. She has over 25 years of experience within the alcohol and another drug sector as a lived experience advocate, health professional and researcher.

SUE BRADFORD

Community-based activist, educator and researcher. Currently working as Coordinator for Kōtare Research and Education for Social Change in Aotearoa. Former Green MP (1999 - 2009); Public policy PhD (AUT 2014).

CATHERINE COMYN

Researcher at Economic and Social Research Aotearoa and PhD student in International Political Economy at King's College London. Her work is centrally interested in intersections of finance capital and colonisation, and possibilities for their overcoming. She is the author of *The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa* (ESRA, 2022).

CHAMSY EL-OJEILI

Associate Professor of Sociology at Victoria University of Wellington. He is author of *The Utopian Constellation* (Palgrave, 2020).

PHILIP FOUNTAIN

A Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington. He is author of *The Service of Faith: An Ethnography of Mennonites and Development* (forthcoming with McGill-Queen's University Press) and co-editor of *Political Theologies and Development in Asia: Transcendence, Sacrifice, and Aspiration* (2020).

JANE KELSEY

A retired law professor from Auckland University and a prominent commentator on neoliberalism, globalisation and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Her book *The FIRE Economy: New Zealand's Reckoning* (Bridget Williams Books, 2016) examined the contemporary financialisation of capital and strategies for post-neoliberal transformation.

ARAMA RATA

(Ngāruahine, Taranaki iwi, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Apakura) An independent researcher with current projects focused on race and rangatiratanga, Māori-migrant solidarities, Pacific regionalism, and liberatory pedagogies.

MAX SOAR

A PhD candidate at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington studying the relationship between the far-right and scientific knowledge.

BARBARA SUMNER

PhD Candidate, “The Illegitimate Other: Adoptology and the Manufacture of Identity,” at Te Herenga Waka, researching the structures, functions and purpose of human adoption in Aotearoa. She is author of *Tree of Strangers* (MUP, 2020).

NEIL VALLELLY

Lecturer and Rutherford Research Fellow in the Sociology, Gender Studies and Criminology Programme at the University of Otago. He is author of *Futilitarianism: Neoliberalism and the Production of Uselessness* (2021).

CAMILA VERGARA

A critical legal theorist, historian, and journalist from Chile. She is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at University of Cambridge and the author of *Systemic Corruption: Constitutional Ideas for an Anti-Oligarchic Republic* (Princeton University Press, 2020).