

A QUICK LOOK AT THE UNITED PATRIOTS FRONT



Let's check out exactly who it is that's walking our streets, waving flags and smiling. They're not the 'Aussie battler' types that you might think and they are certainly no fools.

These people have among their leadership the typical One Nation voters mixed in with self-identifying neo-Nazis; convicted anti-semites and arsonists; and convicted violent criminals. They support the banning of Islam (which is protected under the Aussie constitution as all religions are), the repeal of Australia's gun control laws to allow for easier access to firearms for these unstable far-right thugs, promotion of far-right Christian politics, white supremacy, neo-Nazi ideology, anti-LGBTIQ action and the use of extreme force as a way of silencing opposition.

Here are some quotes from these 'pillars of our community':

- Blair Cottrell in defence of Adolf Hitler – *'There should be a picture of this man in every classroom and every school, and his book should be issued to every student annually.'*
- Blair Cottrell on women – *'Women have manipulated me using sex and emotion; demoralization, and I have manipulated them using violence and terror. We use what we have to get what we want.'*
- Neil Erikson on local Councillor Stephen Jolly, after stating that he knows the Councillor's whereabouts at all times – *'Don't worry, Jolly won't always be a jolly c***... have faith we have plans and we've got it covered.'*
- Shermion Burgess on 'left-wingers' – *'If there was no such thing as police I'd just bump the f*ckers off.'*

So no, they aren't just a bunch of good ol' Aussie blokes defending our way of life. They are dangerous, violent thugs and have the backing of street-level neo-Nazis.

WHY THE FLAG SOMETIMES GETS BURNED



First off, the media bloody love a good flag burning. They love it more than those doing the act. But there is a long, strong history of flag burning in Australia and in the international community. These days, it's almost always the choice of an individual in the moment and not of those organising.

Let's look at some of the reasons that it happens:

- To many people, the flag is a symbol of the colonisation of an inhabited land and the oppression and annihilation of Aboriginal culture and peoples. This is self-explanatory and I hope that we can accept that people who identify as Aboriginal (and others who stand against colonialism) may undertake this action as a protest.
- The flag is being used as a metaphorical weapon. The flag that burned in Bendigo was not brought to the rally for that purpose; it was confiscated from a raving lunatic who was screaming obscenities and untruths while waving a scrunched up flag at the left. The act of burning a flag in this situation is contextual as it was (and is) being used as a symbol of hatred and hard-line right-wing action against a minority. It wasn't nicked off a sweet little old lady on ANZAC day.
- The flag was used against the left as a physical weapon in Bendigo. There is widely available footage of a UPF boofhead literally trying to impale the left with a 10-foot flagpole with the Aussie flag attached. This surely contravenes their high-held views on how the flag may be treated, but you don't see that on the evening news, do ya?

If we let the possibility that someone may choose to put a flame to a flag keep us away from a rally, we throw the baby out with the bath water and give the fascists even more space on our streets and in our communities.

WHY SOME MEMBERS OF THE LEFT SOMETIMES WEAR MASKS

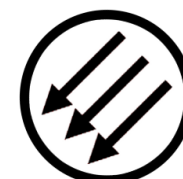


First off, you guessed it: they're hiding their identity. But they aren't hiding it from you and they usually aren't hiding it from the police. They're hiding it from the fascists. These right-wing buggers are known to actively collect personal information about their opponents in order to run campaigns of harassment and physical violence against them.

Secondly, masked people are usually not looking for trouble. Many activists and protesters conceal their identities because this allows them to act quickly and unselfishly when getting allies and bystanders *out* of trouble. Being masked allows them to move in and out of situations without being caught up in the action with either the police or the fascists.

If you watch closely at a rally (and ignore the media), you will see that for every scuffle that occurs there are at least 10 incidents that are avoided by masked people quietly chasing right-wingers away from the protest group. These people keep you safe at a rally, whether they agree with your particular politics or not. In fact, even when you are railing against the 'masked hoodlums', they're saving your skin.

For a more in-depth read on this topic, check out 'Why Masks?' at tinyurl.com/melbafi



DON'T LET THE GOLDEN CITY BE THEIR PLAYGROUND

The UPF have recently announced that they are running for the Australian Senate. This should raise a massive red flag to any thinking person. These people need votes and are attempting to build their political base in our town. They think that if they carry the flag and talk about 'saving Australia', that we'll let them set up shop here. It doesn't take a great leap of the imagination to guess that their plan will involve an office, and which town do you reckon they're checking the real estate listings of right now? Do you really want these people walking the streets, threatening your friends, family, neighbours and colleagues?

FASCIST GROUPS ARE MORE LIKE A CANCER THAN A SEAGULL WANTING A CHIP

There has been suggestion that we should 'ignore them and they'll go away'. This is a great way to work if you're trying to get a seagull to leave you alone while you're eating your fish and chips, but it just doesn't work in situations where you're dealing with people who are trying to build a political base. These people and their violent organisation are a cancer in our society. If ignored, they will build to a horrible apex of violence and political power, making the job of resistance even harder. If we act now, it'll be done and dusted before we know it, but it won't happen without your support and action. A large portion of the community ignored them the first time they came to town and look what happened. They now see Bendigo as their base for hate. Is that what we want?

SO, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

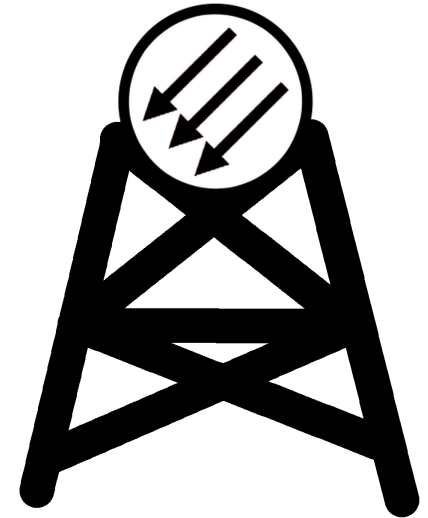
With a threat like this our response must be strong, constant and diverse. It requires the focus and determination of community organisers as well as the unwavering agreement of the community to challenge the views of the individuals in our lives and on our streets.

Here are some ideas for countering fascist mobilisation, and hate-speech in general:

- Attend rallies. The ultimate way to get the message across to these nasty fellas is to physically show up at counter-rallies and let them know that they aren't welcome here or anywhere. Check social media for info on these actions.
- Make your opinion known wherever you can. Put up posters in your neighbourhood, write letters to the editor, talk about these issues at work, teach kids about diversity and freedom, and support each other. Even if your allies occasionally act in ways that you disagree with, they are still on the front line fighting those who wish to tear apart our community and pit us against each other.
- Ask people to clarify their views when they speak in favour of fascist ideologies. Many of the foot soldiers of organisations like this have no backing for their views, so showing them that you know this can help to water down their beliefs and shame them out of their blind following.
- Report threatening behaviour online to social media providers. This gives them less of a platform.
- Meet with your community leaders and ask them to speak out in opposition of fascism and bigotry.
- Stay the course. Commit to fighting this rubbish in your own way and stay on it until the fight is over. Your actions belong to you. You choose. What will your response be?

ACT. YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU.

NOT ON OUR STREETS!



INFORMATION FOR BENDIGO RESIDENTS AND SUPPORTERS REGARDING THE REPEATED MOBILISATION OF FASCIST GROUPS AND BIGOTTED INDIVIDUALS IN OUR TOWN AND THE NECESSITY OF ANTI-FASCIST RESPONSE

Written by Bendigonians, for Bendigonians