

Posie Parker: Anti-trans rally attracted a range of far-right groups, researchers say

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An anti-trans rally in Auckland attracted a diverse group of far-right individuals and groups, researchers say.

While British activist Kellie-Jay Keen-Minshull, aka Posie Parker, has attempted to distance herself from extremist groups, several were in attendance at Albert Park in Auckland on Saturday.

Around 150-200 people showed up in support of Parker's Let Women Speak event on Saturday but they were [drowned out by a much larger group of around 2000 counter-protestors](#). Parker then [abandoned her tour](#), citing safety concerns.

Researchers who specialise in extremist groups in New Zealand said the audience included a range of individuals on the far right spectrum, from right-wing populists and Christian fundamentalists to neo-Nazis.

Four young men wearing all black and covering their faces with skull masks were pictured flashing Nazi salutes before the rally.

They wore symbols of the Azov Battalion - a far-right ultra-nationalist regiment of the Ukrainian military - and the Boogaloo Boys, a US-based, anti-government movement whose members were involved in the storming of the Capitol building in 2021.

Paparoa, a group of researchers which cover the far right in Aotearoa, said the men were part of an emerging group of neo-Nazi, traditional Catholics who they believe promoted extreme antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia and Islamophobia.

They said that Sam Brittenden, a member of the white nationalist group [Action Zealandia](#), was among the group at the rally.

Brittenden [pleaded guilty](#) to a charge of failing to assist police with a search in 2020. That search followed a threat against the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, though it was never confirmed that he made the threat and he was never charged over this incident. He was previously found guilty of disorderly behaviour for [making anti-Muslim](#) slurs while a student at the University of Otago.

When challenged about their Nazi salutes by the *Herald*, one said they were making "Roman salutes" - a gesture linked to fascism and Nazism. They later said they were "Christians... who were against transgenderism".

Other controversial figures at the rally included Voices For Freedom, one of the anti-vaccination groups which co-ordinated the Parliament protest in 2022, and Counterspin Media, an alternative media organisation led by Kelvin and Hannah Alp, which has previously focused on Covid misinformation. The Alps are [facing charges of distributing objectionable material](#). Their court case is ongoing.

A number of members of the New Conservative political party attended the rally. The party, which changed its name from the Conservative Party, has veered right since the departure of its founder Colin Craig, focusing on American-style culture war issues.

Co-leader Helen Houghton has previously petitioned Parliament to [ban any teaching about gender diversity](#) in schools. In a statement, she said she was at the protest to "represent and speak up for women".

Another New Conservative candidate, Dieuwe de Boer, also attended the rally. De Boer helped to organise the visit of far right speakers [Stefan Molyneux and Lauren Southern](#) in 2018.

A statement from the party said: "New Conservative has actually veered greatly towards the centre, away from the right since the new leadership of Ted Johnston and Helen Houghton two years ago.

"The issues of women's safety and freedom of speech, parents' rights and undue ideological sex teaching in schools are not American style culture wars. They are valid NZ issues and are not reliant at all on association with American or any other

country. Those are our issues here.

“We forge our own NZ identity and path. We do not follow any other countries interpretations of ideology.”

Activist and researcher [Byron Clark](#) said the far-right individuals were mostly on the fringes of the rally.

“Most of the people who are going along to these things to support Posie Parker wouldn’t be far right. But the far right sees them as a group they can find an audience with,” Clark said.

“If they can push this idea that transgenderism is an example of the degeneration of the West, for example.”

Transphobia had become a large part of the far right’s ideology, he said.

“They see it as a kind of deviation from the ideal of a straight, cisgender white person, in the same way they see homosexuality and disability as being deviated from this ideal.

“It’s become prominent because it’s still something of a more socially-acceptable prejudice, more so than racism, so they can use this as the thin edge of the wedge to gain an audience among the more mainstream conservative crowd.”

Parker, who describes herself as a women’s rights campaigner, has previously denounced neo-Nazis as “abhorrent”.

Speaking to the *Herald* ahead of her visit to New Zealand, she said she did not know why neo-Nazis would attend her rallies and distanced herself from their worldview and activism.

- **An earlier version of this story said the New Conservatives Party was an “offshoot” of the Conservative Party. Co-leader Ted Johnston says the party is not an offshoot but merely changed its name**

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