

Letter to the Editor: The Stuff Hit-Job on Billy TK

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letter-to-the-editor

13 October 2020



Dear Editor

Stuff has sunk even deeper into their political advocacy by publishing a 50-minute “documentary” and associated text article defamation piece against **Billy Te Kahika** (co-leader of the Advance party). They have been obviously a politically biased outlet for years, but this is the lowest I have ever seen them sink.

Regardless of whether the content of the documentary is true or false, **this is an election advertisement**. It has been released five days before the election, deliberately to try and stop people from voting for Advance. This is electioneering.

And it has been funded by NZ On Air.

So this is a government-funded hit-job on the one political party that is most critical of the present government. That completely undermines all our basic principles of democracy, and makes a mockery of the Electoral Act (which supposedly controls funding of political advertising).

But why? Supposedly, Advance is polling at only 1% (same as New Conservative). The mainstream media usually just ignore minor parties like this, and choose to only talk about the parties already in parliament. It's near-impossible for New Conservative to get any attention from the media. And despite them also saying many of the same things as

Advance (such as anti-UN positions), no major media outlet has felt a need to do a political hit-piece on Leighton Baker.

There seems no reason to do this at all – unless Advance is actually polling much higher than the media is letting on, and are actually a serious threat to the establishment that warrants pulling out all the stops to try and prevent them getting into parliament.

So what is the basic thrust of the documentary?

Stuff asks “Is Advance NZ co-leader Billy Te Kahika Jnr who he says he is, a man of Christian values and integrity?”. They then say he is not, because they can find examples of him doing or saying things that other people don’t like. For instance, they talked to people who claim he was mean to them and who say he didn’t pay the bills he owed. No doubt at least some of this is true. I’m sure that there are people who think each one of us has mistreated them also. Everybody has flaws, and if a media organisation spends megabucks hunting for them they’ll find them.

But they then sink to the lowest insults possible. They call him a “false prophet”, as if secular *Stuff* even cares about prophets – but he isn’t even claiming to be a prophet at all! They call Advance a “cult”. They repeatedly accuse Billy of antisemitism, because of his opinions about specific individual Jews and Israel – even though he specifically says in their own documentary that he does not hate Jews (and therefore, by definition, is not antisemitic). And even, no joke, try and associate Billy TK with **Brenton Tarrant**, by saying they’ve found similar rhetoric on 8chan and Tarrant likes 8chan. It quickly moves from fair criticism into defamation.

But they completely misunderstand Christianity. As a sticker on my grandfather’s truck said throughout my entire childhood:

“Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven”.

Of course Billy TK is flawed. We all know that, because he’s a human, and humans are flawed. We don’t need a 50 minute documentary to know that – it’s already a given. Big deal, let’s move on to stuff that matters.

What is his political party actually saying, *Stuff*? What are the facts behind those statements? Can you oppose those scientifically? Can we discuss that stuff that actually matters?

Because Advance is the only party consistently saying we need to completely stop the lockdowns – which is the latest advice from the World Health Organisation. **Are you going to argue against the WHO now Stuff?**

Personal attacks, shooting the messenger, are the last resort of the desperate person who cannot fault the actual message but is desperate to stop it anyway.

Good on Billy TK for having the guts to stand up so firmly for what he believes (even if he has flaws, even if he is partially wrong), enough to be noticed by the establishment and to receive this level of attack.

Remember – they’re not attacking New Conservative, the ONE Party, Heartland NZ, or anybody else. They’re attacking Advance, and they’re pulling out all the stops to do so. They see Advance as a real threat. Why? What polls are they seeing that we are not seeing?

If *Stuff* is this scared of Advance, they’ve got my vote.

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