

Who are Lauren Southern and Stefan Molyneux?

What are the two sides of the issue surrounding these people speaking in New Zealand?

What were some of the social actions taken by groups involved in the issue?

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Lauren Southern and Stefan Molyneux are best known for their far-right alternative views on everything from feminism, gender and immigration to Islam. Lauren and Stefan are on the front line of what's called the "culture war" — a series of disagreements over the West's acceptance of political correctness, immigration, feminism, gender theory and multiculturalism. Lauren and Stefan believe the left has won this culture war. So they are fighting back with a growing online movement of people who, like them, are skeptical of the entrenched conventional wisdom surrounding these cultural issues. (www.news.com.au)

Aside from speaking engagements, they further articulate their views through selling merchandise with slogans like "Feminism is cancer", "There are only two genders", "Turn back the boats", "It's OK to be white" and "The West is the best". (Paragraph continues)

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Southern and Molyneux came to New Zealand to spread their opinions. Right from the beginning there was controversy with the decision by the Immigration Minister Iain Lees-Galloway to grant a 10-day visas for them to New Zealand. The minister said they were still entitled to work here. "The grounds on which someone can be excluded from New Zealand involve things like being involved in a terrorist organisation, being convicted of a crime or have clearly been involved in inciting violence. None of those applied to those two people." However, Lees-Galloway said his decision did not mean he condoned the views of the pair. He was adamant that the New Zealand government does not like the views expressed by Southern and Molyneux and thinks they go against all the values that New Zealand uphold. He said "INZ's decision in no way condones the views expressed by the pair, which are repugnant to this Government and run counter to the kind and tolerant values of the vast majority of New Zealanders." He values New Zealand's largely tolerant society. He comes from a democratic perspective where everyone is entitled to a degree of freedom of speech but also from a human rights perspective.

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A range of groups stepped forward to express their opinions about the pair. Some groups like the New Zealand Muslim community were angered. The two Canadians are known for their Islamophobic views and the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand president, Hazim Arafah, expressed his displeasure after the visa announcement. He thinks that the type of speech presented by the pair makes Muslims throughout the world angry and profiles all Muslims for the sins of a few. He does not think it is conducive to the public good. By sharing his viewpoint through media outlets, he is making a stand for the Muslim community and creating awareness about their viewpoints on the Southern and Molyneux issue.

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Others thought that the group should be allowed to speak as it was an issue of freedom of speech. When the Auckland council denied the pair's use of council buildings for their talks the Free Speech Coalition was formed. The group says they formed it to stand up to Auckland Mayor Phil Goff who banned the two based on their political views. Mr. Corish, a member of the group believes that it is important to "...uphold the rights of Aucklanders," to hear diverse views. He values the democratic ideal of freedom of speech and feels that even if the message isn't to everyone's taste is imperative that all views are able to be heard.

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Initially, they tried to broker a deal with Auckland Council to reinstate the speaking event. The coalition has written to Mayor Phil Goff, councillors and the organisation, hoping to renegotiate the decision by a council agency to cancel the pair's booking at the Bruce Mason Centre. Following on from this the group has filed papers at court seeking a judicial review of the legality of the cancellation under the Bill of Rights and Human Rights Act.

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Reliability: All of my information was off the internet, with many from online blogs, news articles and websites. This means that my information may not be 100% reliable. Some of the information would be reliable like the guardian newspaper site. This is a well-respected newspaper and has won many awards for their stories and information.

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Sufficiency: There certainly needed to be some more information on Southern and Molyneux themselves. The information on the internet was devoid of their opinions in lots of ways except for their right-wing beliefs about things in society. I would have liked to get their opinion about the controversy in New Zealand. I also needed some interviews with the organisers of the Freedom of Speech campaign or the ones in New Zealand. I didn't really seek much primary information which was a really weakness in presenting a reasonable case.

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What could be done better: I needed to do more background research.