

# The Black Flag Catalyst Revolt Guide

Black Flag Catalyst



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# Introduction

The following resource is intended to be a guide for those who wish to carry out concerted political action and includes tactics for both militant and pacifistic direct action, organizing, creating assemblies, and even some introductory aspects of being a street medic. The goal of this guide is to compile the knowledge from the various insurrections across the planet and turn them into a single resource which can be given to anyone and to inform that person on their place in the broader schema.

For this reason, we will include both peaceful and non-peaceful tactics within this guide. If we are to learn from the successful movements of the past, we can see that all successful pressure has been the collusion of the peaceful and non-peaceful aspects of the movement, such that the peaceful party can lobby the state to concede, saying to them “now see? Wouldn’t you rather deal with me than them? Sit down and make some concessions to those suffering people.” Meanwhile, the non-peaceful protesters escalate the aggression of their actions such as to put a clock on the state. Direct action should therefore not be seen as a chaotic by-product to be avoided. It should instead be seen as a necessity to extract outcomes for the movement. Ultimately, if the demands of the protests are not met, revolution should be the threat. In this way, we are to transform the state to our whims, not vice versa. And if it does not concede, we will have built the bodies of prefiguration that will be prepared to replace it.

# Preparation and Coordination

Firstly, before we get started, what should you bring to a protest? This will vary depending on what your role is, obviously, but there are a few things that will serve you well no matter what role you are filling. The items listed below are recommended for everyone, if they are able to get access.

## What to wear

- Non-descript, solid color, layered clothing that will cover identifying tattoos
- Goggles and a mask
- Emergency contacts written on skin
- Tie your hair up, but not on top. Bundle tightly.
- Ballistic protection as listed in Skills for Revolutionary Survival: 3 by IAF
- Heat resistant gloves
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Elbow and knee guards
- Comfortable shoes
- A fanny pack or lightweight backpack
- A gas mask
- Personal protective equipment as listed in Skills for Revolutionary Survival: 2

## What to bring

- A squirt top water bottle for drinking and to put out tear gas
- Snacks
- Cash/change
- ID
- Washcloth
- First aid supplies

## **Do NOT bring**

- Jewelry
- Illegal paraphernalia
- Contact lenses

It is recommended that you not bring your phone to the protest or turn off your phone unless you have taken proper precautions. Police can use all data transfers as a way to permanently track your movements. For this reason, it can be a good idea to use a burner phone. Do not activate it at your home, or its history will begin there and defeat the purpose. Activate it somewhere public or close to the protest.

It is highly recommended that you develop trust networks before and during the protests. This includes not only protest buddies who will be with you at all times and with whom you should try not to split up, but also groups of trusted individuals. In order to form trust networks with new allies, communicate feelings of trust or doubt about other protesters only within groups you can control, reach an agreement on their trustworthiness, and *only then* communicate that agreement outside the group. Do not diminish trust with others just because they are using different tactics than you.

Protest buddies should be used to make sure you are safe. A good model for coordination, especially if you have quite a few people in your larger party, is to separate them into groups based on their willingness to escalate. Those who want only pacifist protest go in one group, those who would clash with the police in another, those who would engage in property destruction or graffiti in another. This is so that the tactics of the groups do not conflict with one another and so that those who would be willing to escalate do not get the others in trouble with their actions.

Broader coordination is also highly recommended. A person who is offsite of the protest who is monitoring the protests, coordinating legal resources, communicating messages between groups, and so on... can be invaluable. In order to minimize the need for protesters in each group to constantly be monitoring and coordinating, it can also be a good idea to choose one representative for each of the groups, sometimes called a spoke, to communicate with the offsite asset and with the other groups.

The next level of the organization beyond the individual is the *affinity group*. Affinity groups are small, with 2 or more people, but not so large that it is difficult for individuals to form relationships of trust with other members of the group. For instance, your group of friends that attends protests together is an affinity group, and the protest is made up of many affinity groups coordinating together autonomously. Affinity groups often operate in a non-hierarchical manner and use informal consensus methods. The success of these groups coordinating well relies on the fact that the group has strong trust in one another. There is not necessarily a need to agree on ideological details to operate as an effective affinity group, but there must be a level of respect and shared accountability.

Try to communicate safe areas and regrouping zones with protesters in your trust networks. This will allow, if your protest is split or diffused, for everyone you know to return to a particular area where you can all regroup and decide how to move forward. Be smart in choosing these areas. You want them to be close enough to the planned protest that they can be accessed by your allies, but not so close that they are likely to be consumed by the protest, and in a place

that is just private enough that it serves as a means of escape and cover when fleeing from state enforcement.

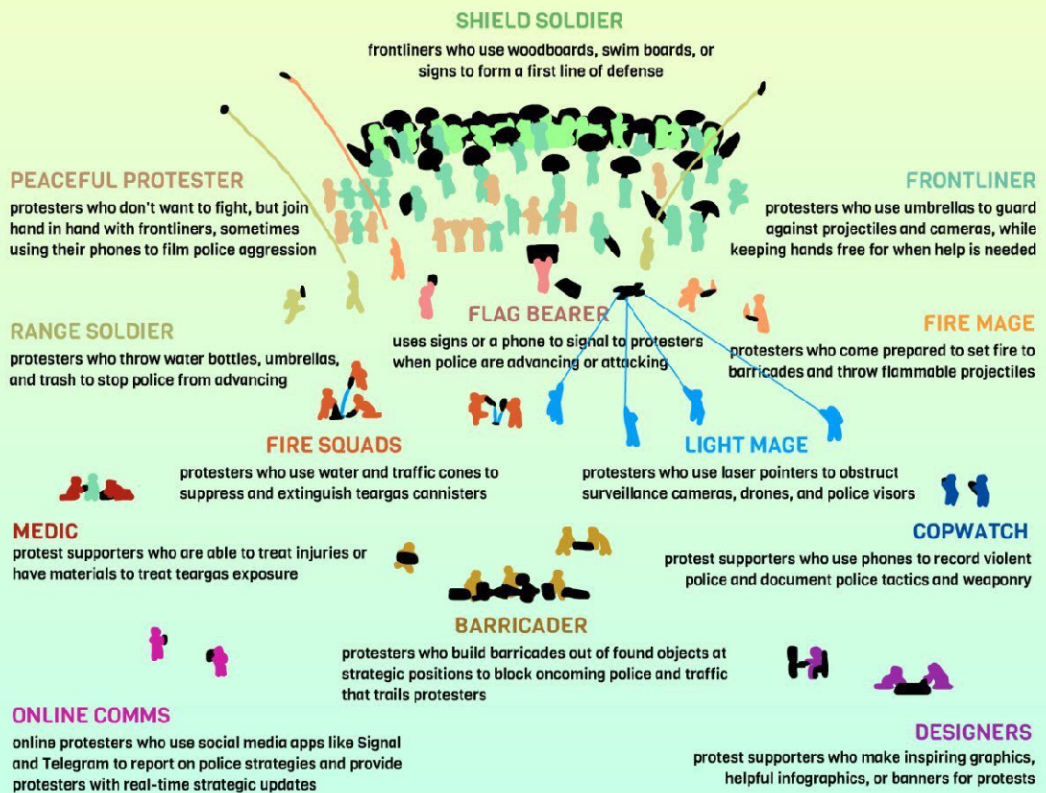
# Protest Tactics

In the following section, we will lay out a variety of roles that are needed in successful protests and explain several of them in considerable depth. Different people will be better and worse at different tasks and more or less inclined to carry them out. And this is good! This diversity of tactics is what gives our movement strength. Below you can see some of the names that the Hong Kong protesters gave to the typical roles that developed on the streets. We will cover several of these, although perhaps not with these names, in the future versions of this guide.

# PROTEST ROLES

There are many ways to participate in a protest and support each other.

EACH FIGHTING OUR OWN WAY  
WE CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN TOGETHER



As we begin, do not think that the presence of militant tactics is meant to suggest to you that you are not useful to the movement if you only choose pacifism. Mass pacifist tactics will always be useful and even necessary to a successful insurrection and have always served as an integral means of popular pressure. Let us discuss some of the most important ways that civil disobedience plays a role in mass protest.

One of the most important jobs of the civil disobedient, is documenting the protests and the treatment of protesters by the state. However, in order for you to help more than harm, you must be careful not to document the faces or other identifiable traits of protesters. Not only does this allow police to document and identify who was at a protest and thus press charges at a later date, it also may serve as a means of doxing protesters' identities to white supremacists or other violent fascists. Thus, if you want to document the protests, *please* be aware of the importance of your safeguarding the identity of everyone present. If you are going to film video which will have protesters' faces in them, download apps that obscure them before posting pictures or video to social media.

Quite the opposite of this tip, in terms of filming, is to film the agents of the state; whether police, military, or otherwise, as much as conceivably possible. For the same reasons that we should not want our protesters' identities recorded, we should want the faces and actions of the state documented as much as conceivably possible. This way we will be able to pressure them and call them to task at a later date as well as create outrage in the public.

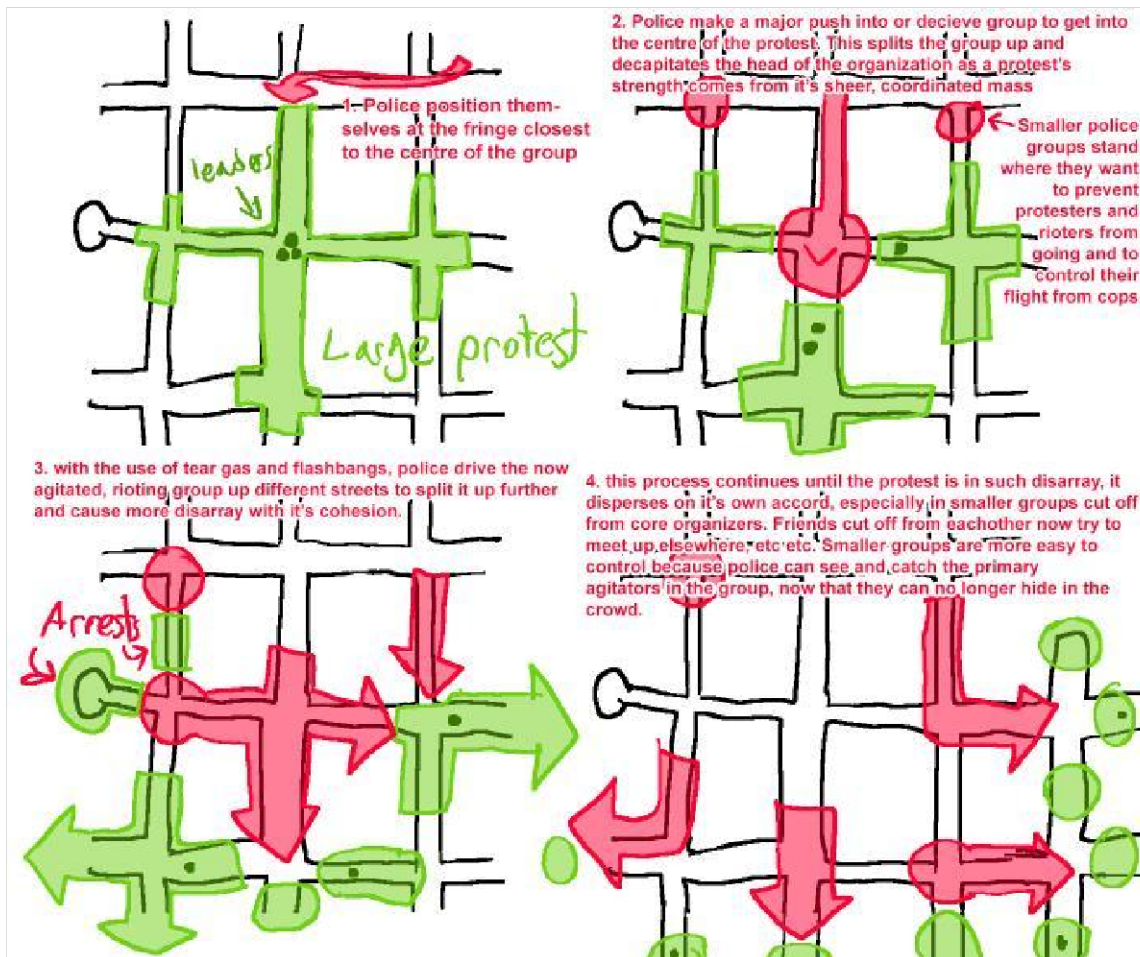
If you are not filming, once again, consider leaving your mobile phone at home or at least turn it off. There is now technology which can use your phone as a means to track you and the protest broadly. In this way, your decision to record can backfire if you are not properly prepared.

Pacifistic protesters can also be *very useful* in amplifying the voices of others. This technique is often called the human megaphone and it utilizes callbacks. The first person will shout "MIC CHECK!" and the people will decide to amplify the message or not based on whether they shout back "MIC CHECK" in unison. There may be a few rounds of "MIC CHECK" going back and forth to make certain that everyone is in unison together. After this has been achieved, the person who originally mic check'd will speak in short, easy to repeat statements "THESE ARE!" ("THESE ARE!!!") "OUR STREETS!" ("OUR STREETS!!!") "MOVE BACK!" ("MOVE BACK!!!") The more protesters are present, the louder these mic checks can become.

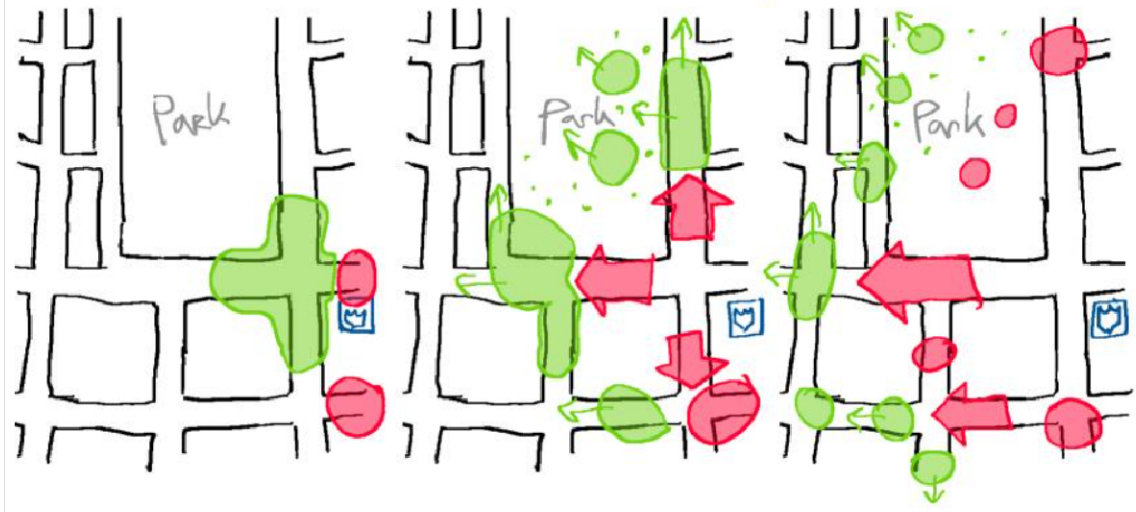
Another reason why pacifist protesters are helpful is because they provide numbers. Even those who might flee when the clashes begin, only to rejoin shortly after, are helpful. Having large numbers of people turns crowds into intimidating things and requires a proportionate ability to suppress by the state. In this way, because it is more and more difficult for the state to dominate the protests, the larger they become, the *very presence* of human beings decreases the tendency that clashes should take place to begin with, turning the tables in favor of the masses as they choose to act.

The usage of human bodies to blockade or otherwise control areas, is a major part of what any protest is comprised of. For this reason, it is important that, when numbers are present, they have a good idea of how to act, how to place themselves where they are needed, and how their movement and presence affects the reactions by officers of the state. Ideally, for optimum ability to exert pressure, crowds should stay a little more than shoulder width apart. This can allow the crowd to act in a more even and concerted fashion on the front and also allows some usage of diversive tactics.

However, this can be a very stressful environment for protesters and will therefore often not take place. By default, protesters will have a tendency to spread out somewhat, when space permits. This has the effect of controlling more space and therefore extending the size and presence of protests. But it can leave them very vulnerable to being split or suppressed easily by small numbers of police.



Another example.



**Be careful that the direction you are moving does not start the crowd down the wrong path.** As best as possible stay as one cohesive group and resist being split. Be aware of how your movements will send a message to other protesters. When the time comes that there are clashes with the police, if you are just behind the frontlines, do not push your allies into police lines, but cushion them from being pushed back as they resist. Further, if they are hurt or they need to move back, be ready to recover them and fill the line. This is why only those who are ready to confront the state oppressors should be close to the front line. If you wish to stay peaceful, stay considerably back from the layers of people who stand face to face with the police.

The state is NOT YOUR ALLY. Never trust orders from police or military. Any agreement made with them should be treated as false until it is demonstrated otherwise. Never plan around any agreement made with police, except to give them room to demonstrate adherence. If police choose to defy agreements, ignore previous agreements immediately and return to previous tactics.

There is a very good chance, if you clash with the police, that they will then use “non-lethal” techniques such as rubber bullets, pepper spray, tear gas, and pepper spray balls to suppress or defray the crowd. All of these techniques can be lethal in certain scenarios and none should be taken lightly. You can withstand *serious wounds* from rubber bullets even if they do not hit you in the head, where they can do *life-threatening* damage including disfiguration and permanent blinding.

There are ways, however, of staying safe. First, if there are those who have made shields, be aware of their placement. Keeping those with shields between you and the police is one of the best ways to avoid being hit with rubber bullets or pepper spray.

If tear gas comes into your area, there are a few things you can do. First, if you have a gas mask or other face covering, stay calm. You are best oriented to act quickly and stop it from harming others. If you have a bottle with a squirt top you can sometimes stop the tear gas by spraying water on it. Better, if you see a traffic cone of almost any size, it can serve as a means to suffocate the tear gas grenade and allow you more time to spray it with water. If done successfully, it can completely snuff out the canister. If you are not wearing a mask or respirator do NOT inhale or stay in the midst of the tear gas for extended time. While it is rare it will do serious, lasting damage, it can put you out of commission quite quickly and extended exposure can indeed lead to lung distress and even miscarriage.

Let us also discuss the tactics that can be used in the occasion that police are using flashbangs. Firstly, although flashbangs are not meant to cause physical damage, they *can* do serious physical harm and even kill people as they launch shrapnel into the surrounding area. However, their main purpose is to disorient and subdue protesters through sound and light. In order to prevent this, close your eyes when you see flashbangs being deployed and put your hands over your ears. If you only have one hand, cover whichever is closer. It is recommended you do not put your fingers *in* your ears, because this may be unsanitary. If you have earplugs, put them in as soon as you see flashbangs are being deployed. Lastly, open your mouth. There is a concussive wave that comes along with flashbangs and this simple action can reduce the pressure inside your head, keeping you oriented. Lastly, crouch low and watch your balance. The combination of loud noise and bright light can easily knock you from your feet and if you happen to fall, staying low will keep you safe.

Sound devices such as the LRAD have been used by police forces to disorient protesters. LRADs can cause permanent hearing damage and possible neurological damage. If one is being used on you, it is time to move.

You can also be a great help as a legal observer and in staying safe to coordinate bail and legal resources for protesters. Documenting abuse while not putting it on social media can be very helpful for those trying to fight conviction. Further, giving people numbers for ACLU and NLG attorneys, as well as other organizations who will coordinate bail, could mean the difference between protesters spending large amounts of time in jail or having their freedom.

Another aspect of being a civil disobedient is controlling the narrative. This can be one of the most challenging things to do when there are masses of people. **Disapproval with tactics of fellow protesters should never be communicated with journalists or outside sources. All discussion of tactics (approval or disapproval) should be kept inside protest groups.** If asked about your approval or disapproval of certain tactics with those outside the protests, only ever communicate that their actions are valid responses to the events taking place. When you spend your time criticizing fellow protesters, you only validate the worries of people on the outside. Demonstrating solidarity with the actions of your fellow disobedients is a way to control what is reported and shows the seriousness of the issues at hand. Take a tip from the radical Mexican feminist movement. They chant “WE ALL DID IT” in response to any and all acts of vandalism.

If you are not prepared to talk on camera or you feel you may say something you do not intend, please allow others to speak with reporters. Journalists have long had a tendency to choose the clips which cast protests in the worst light, especially focusing upon interviews which use ableist biases to present protesters as irrational or mentally ill.

Also attempt to avoid meaningless gestures. Ask yourself what impact your actions will have. Only ever use symbolic gestures if they are being filmed. Deny the state any opportunity to use symbolic gestures. We have seen, for example, police taking a knee during the 2020 revolts in order to show solidarity with the movement and being filmed as some sort of inspirational story, just to turn around and launch tear gas into the protesters moments later when cameras have been turned off. Accept only meaningful concession, diffuse any attempt they make to control the narrative.

# Active Shooters

Unfortunately, the state's direct tools are not our only enemy. Because of the increase in fascist violence at protests, it has become necessary that we outline the way to respond to active shooter situations. The following is intended to prepare protesters for incidents of gun violence. First: the best shooting is one which never occurs and it's always best to prevent a shooting from happening in the first place.

During a shooting, as explained below, it's important to know your surroundings. When you head out to a protest, take note of what kind of area you're heading to. Know where the roads lead, areas which seem safe, or secluded, the nearest and most direct route to a hospital, areas which result in large swaths of people, etc. If you know about active risks, you are less likely to be caught off guard by an active shooter. Below are a list of tips which may help you identify potential threats:

- Displaying fascist symbology, on clothes, hand symbols, flags, posters, or any other medium. Comprehensive lists of hate symbols are available online after a quick search.
- Association with people displaying fascist symbology.
- Speaking to, or interacting with, the police on friendly terms
- Being associated with the so-called "Boogaloo Boys" or similar right-wing groups.
- Aggression when speaking to people, especially when speaking with marginalized people(s)

Once you've identified a potential shooter, let as many people as you can know about their presence, without alerting that threat. Be sure to report the threat to the person(s) you believe is best handled to engage with that threat, be it a local militia, local organizers, etc. After this, try your best to keep an eye on them with others. Hopefully, this or these person(s) will be able to disarm and remove the potential shooter from the area, as well as any associates of the shooter. If not, hopefully an organizer or a speaker will be able to alert the crowd of the presence of potential shooters, or of what to do during a potential shooting.

## During an Attack

If you lack the proper training to deal with a shooter, **don't be a hero**. Attempt to remain as calm as possible and be aware of your surroundings to the best of your ability. In addition, make plans for how you will respond to a shooter in areas you or the movement frequents (courthouses, justice centers, police departments, etc.) and try and know where to go ahead of time. Above all, if you are a bystander, it is recommended you follow the "Run, Hide, Fight" mantra we explain below:

**Run** — If you can see a clear path to safety, take it. If you can see the shooter, or have reliable information on where the shooter is, use that information to determine if you have a safe route to get far away from the scene of the shooting and then take that route.

**Hide** — If you cannot find any escape, or do not know where the shooter is, find shelter. Stay away from windows, lock and barricade any doors you can get behind by piling up furniture. Try to keep solid walls between you and the shooter. Stay still and quiet. Most shootings last no longer than fifteen minutes, don't move until then, or if it lasts longer than that, until the shooting is definitively over.

**Fight** — In the worst case scenerio that you are unable to run or hide, be prepared to fight with the intention of killing the shooter. If you aren't carrying lethal weapons, search around you for an improvised weapon. Look for heavy weapons you can swing around quickly, for example, a fire extinguisher. If you cannot improvise a weapon, aim for the face and eyes of the shooter with your fist, and the shooter's stomach or genitalia with your knees. If you can disarm the shooter, grab the gun, and fire upon the attacker. The shooter may have more than one gun, or there may be more shooters present.

When the shooting stops, if you have the ability, you should administer medical aid to those who have been injured. In the interests of this and in combination with prolific police brutality, we have compiled a compressed guide to street medicine below.

# Street Medicine

As we begin, **please** remember this is only a short, condensed supplement guide for the most introductory purposes. If you would like to become a dedicated medic in your protests, it is highly recommended that you read Riot Medicine (<https://riotmedicine.net/>) and consult the Street Medic Wiki ([https://medic.wikia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://medic.wikia.org/wiki/Main_Page)) to get a fuller understanding of the role of a trained street medic. If you would like to know what gear street medics should carry, read the Black Cross Health Collective's gear list (<https://www.blackcrosscollective.org/page12.html>) or the first section of the Indigenous Anarchist Federation's Skills for Revolutionary Survival

With these notes in place, we will now lay out several simple tips that will allow you to begin carrying out basic medical practices. First, when someone is injured, it is easy to become overwhelmed. But if you follow the steps below, you will do well in assessing medical emergencies even in high stress environments.

## Initial assessment

1. **Calm yourself:** First of all, **do not panic**. Take a deep breath and relax. Remain as calm as possible throughout.
2. **Assess the scene:** Ensure that a scene is safe enough to treat the victim. If a scene either is unsafe, or becomes unsafe, you will need to leave or evacuate the victim into an area which is safe. You cannot assist a victim if you become one yourself. You will only add to the toll of the event and add further weight onto other medics shoulders.
3. **Assess how the person was injured, AKA: the MOI (mechanism of injury):** Assessing the MOI can give you clues on the particular injury the victim has, and how to treat them. Have the police been firing tear gas? Do they appear to have been hit with munitions? Ask the victim. If the victim is unresponsive, ask the people around them.
4. **Form a Stack:** You should always treat victims in order of who's injury is most life-threatening, and whose injury is least life threatening. The severity of a victim's injury can often be determined by simply looking at them, however, in instances where two or more victims' level of injury cannot be simply determined, use **triage** to determine a victim's level of injury, and to treat people most efficiently. First, ensure that people who can walk on their own head to a designated treatment area. Have yourself or assistants guide anyone visually or sonically impaired to the treatment area. Typically people who are capable of walking are lower in priority.
5. Next, assign the most medically capable person to assess each victim, using all of steps below this, as well as any other medical knowledge they have. After each victim's injury has been assessed, begin treatment.

6. **Take precautionary measures:** BSI, or body substance isolation is a set of measures taken to reduce or stop the transmission of disease. During an uprising this mostly means wearing a pair of medical gloves whenever touching a patient. You may want to preemptively equip a pair of medical gloves if you suspect someone may be injured. In stand-offs with police or with white militias, for example.
7. **Determine if the person is conscious, alert, and aware of their surroundings:** If you discover that the patient is alert then section A of step 8 applies. If the victim is unconscious then section B of step 8 applies. Know them both.
8. **Gain the person's consent to treat them:** Everybody has the right to bodily autonomy and freedom. Before you begin touching or treating a patient, you must gain their consent to do so.
  - A. If the patient is conscious, approach them and introduce yourself, clearly asking for their consent to treat them. Clearly state your qualifications, the person has a right to know the amount of training their medic has received. For example:

“Hello, I’m John. I have some first aid training I learned from an online resource and I could treat you. Would you like me to help you?”

If the person says yes, continue treating them. If they say no, respect their wishes.
  - B. If the patient appears to be unconscious, say hello. If they remain unresponsive, shout and repeat yourself. Tap them, but **do not** shake them, as it could make a neck or spinal injury worse. If still they do not respond, attempt to wake them through painful stimulus, be gentle and precise with where you hurt them to ensure you’re not worsening any injuries already inflicted. If still they do not wake, you have permission to treat them through what’s called implied consent. Implied consent is the assumption that any unconscious person or person in an altered mental state would want to receive aid in an emergency situation.

## The ABCs

The ABCs are a way to review the potential life-threats to a person before moving on to focus on one particular problem. Always assess and treat systems in alphabetical order.

### A. Airway

If the person has the ability to speak to you normally, their airway is open. If they can't or did not speak, put your face next to theirs and look, listen, and feel for breathing for 15 seconds.

- Watch their chest for pulses or pumps indicating breaths
- Listen for sounds of breathing
- Check if you can feel their breath on your cheek

### How to Manually Open the Airway:

- Manually open it with the head tilt/chin lift (or with the jaw thrust if you suspect spinal injury, which can be understood with a quick Google, or reading resources listed in this guide)
- If you suspect that the airway is blocked by a foreign body, manually expel material with the Heimlich maneuver (which can be learned with a quick Google search)
- If the victim is having an asthma attack, help them use their own inhaler.
- If the victim appears to be having an allergic reaction, they may need an epinephrine (*Adrenaline*) injection immediately. HELP THE VICTIM administer their own Epi-Pen, if available.
- Keep victim's airway open by rolling them into recovery position (Take precaution regarding the victim's spine!)

### **B. Breathing**

If they can speak to you normally, they are breathing. If they can't speak and there seems to be no obstruction of breath, the problem might lie with their breathing system.

#### **How to Restart Their Breathing:**

- If the victim is in respiratory distress (oddly timed breaths, or unusually deep and shallow breaths) try to keep them awake and breathing on their own by pinching their shoulder or earlobe
- If the victim is not breathing on their own, start rescue breathing if you know how. Remember to observe BSI precautions.
- Keep their airway open by rolling them into recovery position. Take extra precautions regarding spinal care.

### **C. Circulation**

The circulatory system is contained within the heart and blood vessels. If the person is breathing, their heart is beating. Don't waste time taking their pulse unless you know how.

- Look for bleeding. Baggy or heavy clothing, sand, or rocks might disguise blood loss. Blood loss may also be internal. Even if you find one bleeding injury, keep looking—there may be other hidden injuries that are more severe.
- If the victim is pale, cool, and clammy, and if s/he is becoming less alert, assume victim may be going into shock.

#### **Interventions to Help the Heart and Stop Bleeding:**

- Familiarize yourself with CPR, if their heart isn't beating, be sure to employ CPR. Be certain someone has called 911.
- If the person says or indicates that they're having a heart attack, help them take their own pills.

- Apply firm, direct pressure to the injury. Use a sterile gauze pad, a clean cloth, clothing, or even your gloved hand if necessary. If the person is able, they should be able to put pressure on their own injury. Elevate the injured area above the level of the heart unless you suspect spinal injury.
- Don't lift the gauze or cloth to check if bleeding has stopped, as it could dislodge the blood clot and re-start the bleeding
- Call 911 for a bleeding emergency if bleeding does not stop in about 15 minutes or if they are spurting blood (usually meaning an artery's been cut).
- If they become light-headed, help them lie down and slightly elevate their feet. Keep them warm

#### **D. Disability**

Someone with the inability to think, move, or take care of oneself as they normally do—or any person with a potential spinal injury—is disabled. Stay with these people until help arrives.

#### **Interventions to Help:**

- If you suspect spinal injury, they should be kept still with calm words and holding the head still until help arrives. Be certain someone has called 911.
- If you suspect diabetic emergency, think about offering the victim sugar or orange juice, only if the victim is fully able to drink, eat, or swallow.
- If victim is scared or traumatized, sit with them, listen to them, and help them breathe; but be realistic about the limits of your care. Instead, you should be able to direct them towards someone better equipped and more specialized in handling this issue.
- If the victim appears to be intoxicated, keep an eye on them. Be careful not to antagonize a potentially intoxicated person.
- Keep an unresponsive person's airway open by rolling them into recovery position (Remember to take spinal precautions)

#### **Call 911 if:**

- The person has MOI indicating spinal injury,
- The person is unresponsive,
- If you suspect that the person is diabetic, even if the sugar you gave to the victim seemed to improve their condition. You cannot fix a diabetic problem with sugar. Sugar simply may keep the situation from getting worse until help arrives.
- The person presents a danger to self or others

### **E. Expose and Examine injuries**

Check for bleeding. If the patient has a suspected head or spinal injury, do not move, shift, or roll the patient during this process. Check underneath clothing for traces of blood. Move your hands under the patient's arms, legs, and torso and look for traces of blood on your gloves as an indication of bleeding. If you find hemorrhaging, this needs to be managed immediately, including before beginning CPR or artificial ventilation.

Typically, an initial assessment is followed by more in depth analysis of the situation, if you wish to learn about this, and be able to treat people in other situations, we recommend you read through Riot Medicine, linked at the beginning of this section.

## **Open Wounds**

We will now move on to tips on how to treat open wounds. It is always recommended that you only treat people as an unexperienced medic, if you're the only option. Assuming there are more trained medics in the area able to treat the victim, please allow them to treat the wound(s) instead. This is only for circumstances where you're the only option to treat someone. Furthermore, please keep in mind these are notes only on open wounds, which is only one type of potential injury.

### **Preparations for Treating Open Wounds:**

1. **Ensure the victim is lying down:** Due to intense pumps of adrenaline, victims of particular wounds often won't even realize they're wounded until later. You should utilize this initial shock to get the victim to lie down, as it reduces the chance of potential injury from falls and stabilizes the patient. Of course, there are exceptions to this, such as if a victim has a wound on their back, or if lying down obstructs their breathing.
2. **Expose the wound:** Locate and expose the wound. It can be hard to find wounds with blood gushing, so it's important to ensure that you know where a victim's wounds are. Wounds will also often be obscured by clothing, so you may need to remove clothing in order to find the wound. In order to easily and quickly remove a victim's clothing, it's recommended you carry a pair of scissors, though a knife or any other sharp object can also work.
3. **Identify the type of bleeding:**
  - **Arterial Bleeding:** Blood spurts out in a bright red color. This is life threatening, always call an ambulance.
  - **Venous Bleeding:** Blood oozes out in a darker color. Still dangerous though not always life threatening.
  - **Capillary Bleeding:** Blood slowly seeps out and will eventually stop on its own. Scrapes and shallow cuts. Typically not severe.
4. **Identify the type of wound:**
  - **Abrasion:** A scrape, for example, a road rash. May be contaminated by debris.
  - **Laceration:** A cut made by a sharp object, such as a knife. It might be jagged, or straight. It also may be deep or superficial

- **Puncture:** May have bleeding on the outside, but internal bleeding is always a possibility. Caused by poking weapons such as sharpened sticks, or bullets.
- **Avulsion:** Torn off skin, or body part. Ranges from a small flap of skin to a near amputation.
- **Amputation:** When a body part is completely severed.

#### 5. Standard open wound treatment:

- If bleeding is not severe, simply rinse the wound and apply dressing
- Don't remove individual bits of junk. That requires particular sterile instruments and it's assumed if you own them, you know how to operate them.
- Apply direct pressure for ten uninterrupted minutes, as explained below in the "life-saving techniques" section
- If severe bleeding does not stop with direct pressure and elevation, or the wound is impaled with any objects, pad around the wound and apply indirect pressure, also as explained below.

## Special Considerations

Not all wounds are the same and the above guide is only intended to be a standardized, simplified list of steps to take when treating open wounds. Below are special considerations to take when dealing with gunshot wounds, or shrapnel wounds.

### Shrapnel Wounds

Do not remove the shrapnel. If the shrapnel is still hot, **do not touch it**. Irrigate the site.

Shrapnel almost certainly results in infection. Irrigate and cool the wound immediately to the best of your ability and get the patient to advanced care even if the wound is not immediately life-threatening. Don't use direct pressure on shrapnel wounds. Most shrapnel wounds won't bleed all that much. So loose, sterile dressing, and indirect pressure is the recommended method.

In the event that Emergency Care cannot be given and removal is needed, follow these steps:

- Locate entry wound and apply a solvent liquid.
- Attempt to locate the exit wound which will generally be larger than the entry although not always on the other side.
- If none is found, sterilize a probe and locate ALL debris internally.
- Using forceps and antiseptic remove all debris. Give stitches to both sides if needed.
- If wound is to the torso, neck or legs, have an Evac Team remove them on a stretcher to a safe zone.

## **Gunshot Wounds**

A gunshot wound (hereafter referred to as GSW) can be intimidating, but with the correct equipment a GSW is survivable and treatable. In the event of a GSW, follow the HABC flow of treatment;

### **H: Hemorage**

Your first course of action is to control hemoraging. This means stopping all bleeding as much as possible. Direct and indirect pressure is the most important thing, as explained above. Tourniquets are also useful, though a tourniquet should be used only after every alternate method has been attempted. If unable to get to medical aid within 2 hours, after 20 minutes, gradually loosen the tourniquet; if bleeding continues, reapply and leave in place. Also, keep in mind tourniquets can only be applied to the extremity, aka limbs. After some form of pressure has been applied, apply a dressing (gauze, towels, shirts, etc.) to the wound. Certain rounds, especially rifle rounds will cause entry and exit wounds. In the event that a handgun round has caused a GSW, such as 9mm, or 22lr ammo commonly found in many pistols, there may not be an exit wound and the round will remain inside the wound. Never remove a round that is in a GSW. If the ammunition is frangible, only one wound will be caused, with large amounts of splintering inside the wound.

### **A: Airway**

Your second goal in a GSW situation is to establish an airway on the victim. This can be done with either the head tilt/chin lift method, or with the jaw thrust method, the second being more stable for head or spinal GSW victims. Any basic CPR certification will prepare you to render either of the airway methods, and a basic guide is given in the “life-saving techniques” section. If trained you may also use an airway on a GSW victim, an NPA or OPA will both do wonders but you will need to receive specific training to use either physical airway.

### **B: Breathing**

Your third goal in a GSW scenario is to monitor breathing, you will do this by looking, listening and feeling for respirations from your victim as explained in the initial assessment section, once again any CPR class will prepare you for this, as well as also teach you rescue breathing methods.

### **C: Circulation**

The fourth thing to address in a GSW situation is circulation, monitor your patient’s pulse and if necessary render CPR to your victim.

The last thing you need to do in a GSW encounter is render immediate evacuation to your victim. Even with the risk of arrest or police crackdown, it is essential that a GSW victim is delivered to a high level of care within one hour of the trauma being inflicted. After this “golden hour,” survival rates dramatically drop.

### **Treating a chest wound:**

If you are unfortunate enough to run into a situation where there is a GSW to the chest, you will need to have the correct gear to administer lifesaving aid. You will need to follow the HABC treatment flow described in the last section but you will also need to apply an occlusive (air tight) dressing to the wound. The best and easiest way to do this is to use a commercially produced chest seal, available on the internet. Wipe up blood and then apply a chest seal to the victim on both the entry and exit wounds.

There are two main types of chest seal available:

1. **A solid occlusive dressing:** Street medics should avoid these due to the need to use a chest decompression needle after applying the dressing. These completely airtight dressings will actually cause the lung to collapse inside the cavity in a condition known as tension pneumothorax.
2. **A vented chest seal:** These are recommended instead as you do not need a chest decompression needle. Examples of vented chest seals include Asherman seals or Bolin seals. Both are commercially available to anyone on the internet.

Keep in mind that you will need two seals to treat a chest GSW with exit points, so plan accordingly. After applying a chest seal you should finish the HABC flow of treatment and immediately move the victim to a higher level of care.

## Lifesaving Techniques

### **Applying direct pressure:**

Elevate the wound above the heart and apply pressure with a sanitized compress (e.g. a clean, heavy gauze pad, washcloth, t-shirt, or a sock) directly on the wound. Do not remove a pad that is soaked through with blood; you will disturb any blood clots that have started to form to help stop the bleeding. If blood soaks through, place another pad on top of the soaked one and continue applying direct pressure. When the bleeding stops, tie the pad firmly in place with gauze, a shoelace, or any other cloth available

### **Important notes:**

Do not elevate legs if the victim has GSWs in the chest or abdomen as they will bleed more quickly if legs are elevated, and make it difficult for the victim to breathe.

### **Applying Indirect Pressure:**

Apply direct pressure to an artery. There are specific major arteries shown below which should have direct pressure applied to them. Press firmly until the artery is sufficiently pushed against the bone.

To check if bleeding's stopped, slowly release pressure from the pressure point, but do not remove direct pressure from the wounded area. Also apply dressing around the wounded area

### **Head Tilt/Chin Lift:**

Airways begin at the nose and mouth, and end deep in the chest. In an unresponsive person, the most common obstructions of airways are the tongue and epiglottis. Gently tilting the head back, and pulling their jaw forwards, most airways can be opened. An unresponsive person will not remain in the head tilt/chin lift position without being constantly held in it.

### **Jaw Thrust:**

If spinal injury is suspected use the jaw thrust instead. Place your fingers behind the victim's jaw bone on either side, just below the ear, then push forwards so the jaw thrust out away from the face. Once again, an unresponsive person will not remain in the jaw thrust position without constantly being held in it.

# Militant Tactics

We now reach the section on how to place active pressure on the state. This section provides tips on how protesters may clash with the police and use property destruction. It must be said, all escalation should be done carefully and should consider what message will be sent. **Rule #1 is do not escalate further than state forces unless you are prepared for them to respond in kind.** Said otherwise: only ever escalate to a level of violence you are prepared to receive. Further, note that many of the following tactics should be practiced with those in your trust network ahead of time. If you are aware you will be attending a protest where confrontation might arise, coordinate at least some rudimentary training with those who will be on the frontlines with you.

One of the simplest forms of non-peaceful resistance is to prevent police from moving through an area by force. If the police are armed with batons and riot shields, it can often be practical to stop them from taking an area, especially if you have protesters armed with shields and body protection. As has been said above, densely packed formations are ideal for these scenarios, but do not pack in too densely or there will be no room to maneuver or recover allies from the frontlines. The ideal of this tactic is not to actively harm the police, but instead to prevent them from moving. It can be a very good way to use your superior numbers to distract the inferior numbers of the police with a stalemate while the protest proceeds elsewhere or takes up room that the police cannot control.

Another way, short of clash with the police, of preventing from doing their job is the use of high powered lasers.

These are used to blind officers by obscuring their vision. Lasers will make it very challenging for officers to look in the direction you are shining them, disorienting them, and possibly even causing permanent damage if they do not look away. Many lasers can overload the sensors of simple drones and force them to land. They can also be used from a very long distance, meaning that the police will have a very challenging time stopping you from using them. The more people with these lasers the better, because then the police will be unable to root out all of the users. Other light devices such as a high powered flashlight can be used to disorient but are more difficult to conceal the source.

Paint can be useful in a similar way in order to obscure the visors of the riot police.



It is recommended that one only rely on spray paint if they plan on being on the frontlines. Otherwise, if protesters are engaging with the police at a distance, they should use small buckets or filled balloons, as seen above. This paint is also more likely to adhere and form a consistent layer over the visor or riot shield which will prevent the riot police from seeing, forcing them to raise their visors or lower their shield and thus place themselves at risk.

If you plan on confronting police in a militant manner, it is recommended you only ever do so if you have training, if their numbers are far inferior, and if they are not well armed. It is also recommended that anyone on front lines armor themselves as much as possible. Even bicycle or paintball gear can be enough to keep you safe and those from LARPing communities often know how to build cheap and very resilient gear, including makeshift riot shields. Do not be afraid to reach out to people who know how to make this gear ahead of time, even if you plan on being safe, as you may not get to choose where you are in the crowd.

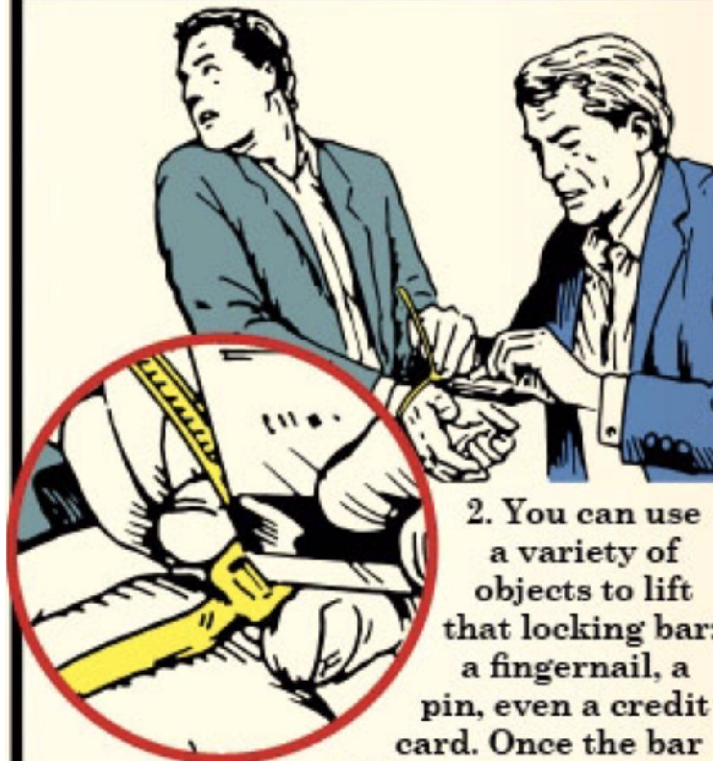
Another aspect of engaging in a non-peaceful manner, is being fearless in de-arresting allies when officers have gotten ahold of them. If officers are trying to pull a protester from the crowd, grab hold of the protester and then have others grab ahold of you and *pull them back*. The only means an officer has of punishing protesters aside from violence, is to physically remove them. Disallowing fellow protesters from being removed from the crowd is the same as freeing someone from jail, paying their bail, and expunging all charges.

You may also be surprised to see how lax officers are with arrested protesters, often being unable to manage the numbers they have gathered and leaving them unattended for periods of time. If you find protesters who have been zip-tied, you can place a thin object between the track and the band and this will often allow you to loosen the ties and free arrestees.

## SHIMMING OUT



1. Defeat the mechanism of the zip tie with some kind of shim. If you look closely at a zip tie, you'll see it has a small locking bar that does all the work. If that bar is lifted from the tracks of the zip tie, it can be easily removed.



2. You can use a variety of objects to lift that locking bar: a fingernail, a pin, even a credit card. Once the bar is lifted, simply pull the tie out of the locking mechanism. This method is easier with multiple people held captive to help each other, but can be done on one's own as well.

## SLIPPING OUT



1. Present your hands to your captor with fists clenched and palms facing down. Doing this makes your wrists bigger and creates room to slip out.



2. After the tie is tightened, unclench, turn your wrists so they're facing inward, and work your way out. It may be tight, but the key is to just get your thumb out first. This method can be used from a variety of hand positions, and should be tried first.

If you are arrested with zip-ties or cuffs, when they are wrapping them around your wrists, *flex your wrists*. Officers will clamp down *very* tightly when they affix them, making it uncomfortable and disallowing you from wriggling out. However, if you flex your wrists, you expand the size of your wrists, allowing you to un-flex afterwards and thus possibly get your wrists free.

Another approach to clashing with the police is to keep distance and use projectiles such as bricks, bottles, and so on... This has very small chance of doing permanent physical damage to officers, especially if they are in riot gear, but it *does* have the effect of defraying, confusing, and often forcing retreat. During the recent unrest fireworks have been used as well. The greater the number of projectiles used, the greater the chance that the police will cease the clash until they can escalate to the usage of “non-lethal” munitions. One common police tactic is the *kettle* or the process of surrounding protesters on all sides to engage in mass arrests. Make sure you always have a way out.

If the police have engaged in unnecessary brutality, the community may begin to riot. Keep in mind that **riots are never planned**. Riots have always been a reaction to police brutality against largely non-violent actions and are generally instigated by the material conditions of an oppressive state and failing economic systems. If someone is planning a riot in your area, it is at worst police entrapment and at best an inexperienced and angry activist.

If you find yourself in a riot, you need to be prepared beforehand to ensure your safety. A riot action lasts one night but the metadata from your activities will last forever. Follow these rules to protect your identity.

- Cover your face and hair, wear non-descriptive single color clothing
- Think before you text
- Use encrypted systems as discussed above
- Wear gloves
- No pictures or videos of comrades undertaking non state-sanctioned activities
- Leave your phone at home; It’s a tracking device
- No bragging or speculation about the event
- RFID tags can be scanned and should be considered dangerous
- Do not talk to media in the same outfit you wore at the action
- NO SOCIAL MEDIA
- Do not discuss what happened at the action with the police

Burning a building, a car, or other piece of property, is a multi-faceted tactic and has ups and downs. First, it is recommended that you choose targets which represent the enemies of the movement such as symbols of state oppression. These include federal courthouses, local police stations, office buildings affiliated with the Department of Corrections, and other buildings where state repression happens actively. The 2020 insurrections have garnered majority support in the burning of the Minneapolis Police Department and there is next to no outcry of the destruction

and looting of large chain corporations, but there has been less public support for small business destruction. This is not to invalidate the choosing of these targets. One of the primary purposes of property destruction is to place pressure on power structures and a flagging economy is always a means of pressure on the forces of capital. But if you are part of choosing a target, try to choose it based on concrete material benefits.

When choosing targets for property damage, be certain that you loot as many of the useful materials within the building as possible. Try to focus on looting items which can be redistributed to comrades and provide real material aid. This is not to pass judgment on any act of looting. But try to connect the act of looting with principles of mutual aid, not simple personal benefit. This allows the movement to continue for longer, as these expropriated goods can then be used to sustain other protesters and thus counteract the real material damage that may be done to their personal solvency by taking place in these protests.

If you have moved to the point where your protests have become so radical as to seize areas of the city in a permanent fashion, it may be very useful to create barricades of various kinds. This is not only to include the traditional barricade, as we have seen throughout history, in the form of piled up rubble. It is also to include more modern methods of preventing vehicle entrance. Below can be seen how effective clingwrap is, when wrapped between two poles, in stopping even very large vehicles from passing. So long as the vehicles do not have tread, there is little chance they will be able to move through these cheap and effective clingwrap barriers.





## Protesting Armed

If you are protesting armed, keep in mind that neither the state nor the judicial system is your friend. Police will execute you in the street as readily as the state will apply trumped up charges and put you in prison for life if you happen to survive your violent encounter. Some protesters are engaging in open carry, and if you are going to do so you need to be aware of the tactical drawbacks.

The primary reason for an individual to open-carry is to engage in a show of force. For marginalized communities openly armed actions by organized groups can be an important declaration of their rights against a racist police state. However there is no scenario in a standard protest, a march, a demonstration, or otherwise where engaging in open-carry with an assault rifle, plates/body armor, and other tactical gear will provide you with a tactical advantage. The biggest draw-back of the open-carry is you are exposing your tactical capabilities to those you are hypothetically defending the community against without any real gain. If you believe a scenario demands high-powered assault rifles and those ready to use them, a trained and accountable group with that level of gear should be located nearby off-site but ready to move in and engage as needed. The ideal security forces are those that use concealed weapons, melee weapons, and integrate into the crowd. Similarly when you are engaging in direct action where the police and paramilitaries are still operational, open carry does little but expose who is armed. In scenarios where state power has receded, and autonomous zones have been formed it may be necessary to engage in open-carry to defend your community, and these concerns do not necessarily apply, but that is after we have built the prefigurative systems to ensure that the groups of armed individuals are trained and held accountable.

Security forces are better suited to engaging in concealed carry to ensure that they have the element of surprise if the protest or action comes under attack by a mass shooter. However a more common tactic to attack protests is with vehicles, and shooting a driver who is attempting to run over protesters does not guarantee the vehicle will stop moving or save lives. In this case taking cover, and helping others take cover, will likely save more lives.

Security forces must be trained, have a shared and understood Rules of Engagement (ROE), have an open line of communications among all members of the security team, and foremost de-escalate situations where possible. All security should have radios and be trained in their usage. To operate as security for your community and help defend against threats, it is crucial that you coordinate and work with others operating security in that area. Your security force needs to be condoned by the organizers of the event you are securing. If there are existing security forces, and you show up alone and carrying openly, there is no way for them to know if you are there to help or hurt people. That is why for those that wish to engage in community defense, it is best to follow these principles of action.

This definition is wrong. DA is to directly solve or delay the problem

## Organizing Direct Action

As you are present in these protests for longer and longer, you will begin to learn what the process of planning a protest might look like. We hope to provide here a framework for understanding the challenges and pitfalls of organizing direct action, so that you will have a better understanding of what is at hand. This process is one crafted to avoid vanguard ideology, yet allows us to establish a coordinated and autonomous organization.

**First, what is direct action? Direct action is any coordinated or individual action that is directly in the service of a political cause.** Some examples of direct actions include marches, banner drops, strikes, demonstrations, and other creative actions that could facilitate a goal for your cause. They can also include mutual aid efforts such as food distribution, disaster relief, medic operations, and other relief or community support efforts. David Graeber has described direct action as “acting as if you were already free.”

It is important to understand that, in this model, there is no centralized leadership, but there can be organizers and facilitators. As the individual or group developing the direct action it is up to you to determine the tasks and those best suited to fulfill them. A rally with speakers will necessitate some level of organization and temporary roles that will be assigned, such as chant leader or speaker. These roles do not imply leadership, and oftentimes it is best if these roles originate from the group organically through need rather than operationally through an organizer. Sometimes these roles require that individuals make demands of the group, for instance as a medic attending to someone may ask the crowd to move aside. Those working within their roles must be respected by the group, but that respect must also go both ways.

These temporary roles are necessary to ensure a safe and effective action, but it is best to ensure that your facilitation of the direct action is as ephemeral and temporary as it needs to be. The key to being a good organizer is to step up when you see a need and step back when that need no longer exists. Don't create another organization that revolves around you, help build the movement for everyone.

The key to a good direct action is ultimately in its effectiveness to directly or indirectly achieve the goal that you want to achieve. Not every action must be service in the revolution for you to be a good revolutionary. Sometimes you just need to improve your municipal trash services. The effectiveness of a direct action may not always be evident and not every direct action will be entirely effective. There will be defeats and there will be victories. To ensure that you do not get burnt out, you must temper your expectations. It is rare to achieve victory after a single action for your cause but you can achieve victory after repeated work and many actions will have transformative power in the world that is not completely evident.

Before you begin actively planning actions you should understand what the various forms of actions entail. There are 4 different types of environments revolutionaries will find themselves organizing and it is good to recognize the type of environment you are in and act accordingly.

## **The Long Campaign**

Whether successful or failed, your campaign is a long term series of direct actions designed to achieve a singular goal. There may not be a significant knowledge or presence about your issue outside the community it effects, but you can change that with effective and disruptive actions. For instance the NoDAPL protest was a series of actions lasting nearly a year with the goal of preventing industrial development at odds with ecological systems and Native treaty rights. Municipal and state petitions have been used for criminal justice reform, legalization of cannabis, and could equally be applied to abolishing the police or other future objectives. Cooperatives, salting strikes, and other labor actions require long campaigns. Long campaigns require a diversity of tactics, constant re-evaluation of strategies, and acceptance that many actions may fail before the action that ultimately succeeds, if any ultimately does. Long campaigns also include the possibility of organizing with a vast and diverse group of people which may be best served through the councils described in future sections of this document. The long campaign is often a struggle that does not end.

The liberatory struggle of humankind and your own movement within it should be viewed as a process rather than a destination. Issues of justice will exist beyond your lifetime. Your campaign may fail, but the unforeseen and indirect consequences can alter the future of your community in positive ways you will never realize. Occupy Wall Street never achieved its stated goals, but there are still affinity groups formed from that time that operate and positively affect their community in 2020. Every campaign we organize or aid adds up and multiplies the power of others now and in the future. The opportunities you create to volunteer, build, and work outside the system are vital to expanding the minds of future generations.

## **The Mutual Aid Project**

Mutual aid is based in community control, aiding one another to break free from capitalism and colonial authority. Mutual aid is simple, it's the breaking of the binary of the "haves and have nots" with the intention to re-allocate for equitable access to resources, education, and needs. Seems simple enough. However, Mutual Aid is also a legacy, and a practice.

These types of projects are perfect for pacifists and those who do not seek conflict with the state. Mutual aid projects might already exist in your area, such as Food Not Bombs or other local efforts, and these are necessary components of building dual power. The mutual aid projects you engage in and help build should not be confused with charity. Mutual aid is a long-term commitment to the community and a tool to break free from the state and capital.

## **The Catalyst and the Movement**

When material conditions have reached a revolutionary potential there is often a violent catalyst which may set off an organic movement. When Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in 2011 to protest the revocation of his street vendor license in Tunisia he had no idea he would become a catalyst for the Tunisian Revolution. This in turn sparked the wider Arab Spring against autocratic regimes, which inspired the 15-M Movement. More recently a simple local march for Justice for George Floyd escalated into global protests against police brutality, systemic racism,

and ultimately the burning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Precinct of Minneapolis. It started with a simple peaceful march that the state escalated through violence and the unnecessary usage of tear gas. The immediate catalyst can come at any time, but it is often unforeseen and triggered by the overreach of the state. Your goal during this catalyst as an organizer should be to use the momentum of the organic movement to make demands and recuperate as much state power as possible. These movements are often reactive to state violence or oppression and are quite capable of evolving into an open conflict that can recuperate power out of the hands of the state.

## The Open Conflict

The catalyst and the protests it spawned can evolve into an open conflict or one can be planned. Open conflicts generally evolve organically when the police crack down violently on peaceful protests, fueling anger and action. Blockades, autonomous zones, direct conflict with police forces, general strikes, economic shutdowns, and unplanned riots can all be elements of the open conflict. Blockades are being used by indigenous allies in South America to fight against both destruction of the ecosystem and their homes. Autonomous zones such as those within Chiapas under the EZLN have ceded from state power and corruption with minimal violence. Direct conflict with police and sustained riots can force the state to cede power, but the state is also adept at skillfully managing and redirecting the narrative. The state uses a combination of surveillance-state crackdown on the spread of insurrectionist content, streams, and info as well as inserting activists into the movement to neuter social movements that have evolved into open conflicts.

Large scale blockades in combination with strikes that are strategic and well organized can be very effective, bring the economy of a state to a standstill, and force state concessions. During the Bolivian Gas War in 2003 protesters used the blockade to force resignations of political leadership, however many protesters were killed by the state in that conflict. Open conflict brings risks that, while forcing political concessions much faster, can also spiral out of control and lead to violent fascist crackdowns. Ultimately, a strategically planned insurrectionist direct action that evolves into an open conflict has a higher rate of success than open conflicts spawned organically from a catalyst.

Before the action **identify a goal** or have a demand(s) written down. Seek consensus and input from your community and try to find a diverse set of voices to go into the demands that you have. If the goal has already been established by the situation at hand, i.e. justice for someone who has been murdered by the police, it may not be obvious what the problem is, but the demand may also not be so obvious. This is where organizing committees, democratic councils, and other sort of mechanisms to make cooperative decisions can come into play and help determine the ideal goal or demand for your action. However, it is not necessary if the community has already achieved consensus and your action is designed to support or signal boost an existing goal. If you are organizing in an existing movement or with other groups it is best to follow the *St Paul Principles* to facilitate work alongside different groups who are also engaging in positive work for the community.

1. Our solidarity will be based on respect for a diversity of tactics and the plans of other groups.

2. The actions and tactics used will be organized to maintain a separation of time or space.
3. Any debates or criticisms will stay internal to the movement.
4. Don't work with or talk to the police.

**Have an understanding of how your action can bring victory every step of the way.**

There is nothing worse for a movement than direct actions that have no goal and serve no purpose. These types of actions will eventually grind down interest for people and lead to movements being suffocated. Your actions should be in service of the goal or supporting those who are acting to achieve that goal.

## Dead Rituals

In most industrialized nations, the governments have learned to diffuse and ignore a variety of tactics which have a long and storied history on the left. For this reason, there are many dead rituals that are no longer considered effective, yet are still used regularly. This list is not all inclusive. There may be times where one of these tactics is uniquely effective within the conditions. But be careful of getting sucked into these *dead rituals* as it will often amount to a repeated engagement with ineffective and exhausting actions.

- **Public meetings and rallies** – The only times when there are large turnouts, extending beyond the usual participants, at public meetings and rallies is in times of crisis.
- **Paper Selling** – Newspapers were at one time a novel way to smuggle information to workers in autocratic states but are now ineffective. Your time is better spent making memes.
- **Petitions** – Petitions that are not legally binding are basically just tools to harvest people's identity that serve no purpose, even when actually presented to the state. At best the petitions will be tossed out and at worst your names go on a list.
- **Street stalls and leafleting public areas/crowds** – Running stalls can be a good way of engaging with the public at large. It enables a few people in a limited amount of time to reach out to large numbers of other people. However such activity can easily become unreflective and ritualized.
- **Pickets** – There are occasions when pickets can be effective both in terms of influencing the people in a location and those passing by. This is generally in combination with a strike. Pickets that are not disruptive or designed to bring about "awareness" will not be effective.
- **Lobbying legislatures or parliaments** – Lobby days or meeting with representatives is not likely to achieve significant positive outcomes. One exception to this general pattern is when a major matter of concern arises which affects a lot of people in a particular locality. Frame these as negotiations with the state rather than lobbying.

- **Cycles of pacifist marching** — Repeatedly marching down sidewalks will do very little for your cause. The anti-war protests brought millions into the streets and achieved nothing. If your demonstration draws smaller numbers, it only makes the movement appear weak.
- **Using the media** — The media is not your friend and must be seen and approached with caution. Mass media can actually be more detrimental for your cause as the ruling class and state will develop counter-narratives or use wedge issues to divide the public on your issue. Personal communication is more effective.
- **Standing in elections** — From time to time we all get that election fever, but ultimately there is nothing democratic about liberal democracy. There are occasions where it may be feasible to stand in a local or municipal election but this should be a rare exception to the rule. The party system, archaic voting methods, and capital requirements have all but ensured that electoralism is a dead-end.
- **Solidarity campaigns** — Solidarity campaigns aim to give support to revolutionary struggles and progressive regimes in other countries. Campaigns designed around the concepts of effecting policy or boycott actions have not been highly effective. If an international movement requests help provide mutual aid if you can, but otherwise making revolution at home in the heart of the empire will do more for our international allies.
- **Fundraisers** — Auctions, bake sales, and other fundraising efforts may seem like a good idea to fund a campaign, but in reality the time and energy to organize these is better spent on actually carrying forward the particular political cause.
- **Meetings about Meetings** — In order to organize the above activities, left political organizations and campaigns necessarily have to bring people together to make the appropriate arrangements. However, what is ostensibly meant to be a means to an end very often becomes an end in itself. Make sure you aren't spending more time in meetings planning the actions you are supposed to be organizing than you are acting.

Some of these may come as a surprise to you. If you find yourself engaging in the same action over and over, it is time to step back and reflect. Engaging in dead rituals will suffocate your movement. By contrast, the following are still proving useful. These methods have the capability to actually oppose the state and capitalism.

## **Invisible Molotovs**

These are actions that we have seen some success in putting pressure on the state and capital and can force concessions by the state or cause state power and support to erode. To help accelerate the process of eroding state power, you may be interested in organizing one of these actions.

- **Organize affinity groups** — Get your radical friends together and form a shared protocol for action as described in this document. Support each other in times of crisis and share in

times of plenty. Organize direct action together and encourage the development of other affinity groups in your community.

- **Graffiti and wheatpasting** — Posting political fliers is a challenge to the state and ruling class and can be a good start to give people the confidence to break the rules. Use stencils and better-designed posters which have more visual impact.
- **Sit-ins and sit-downs** — The sit-down tactic has been used on many occasions, usually on a small scale. Such action is often spontaneous, rather than planned in advance, and is a response to some immediate opposition, especially by the police. It has become something of a ritual and quite often a protest march includes a period in which the participants sit down or stand around on the road for a short period. Often there is no particular point in taking such action and by unnecessarily holding up traffic it can alienate some potential supporters of the cause being put forward. However they can have uses if the action has a specific target and purpose.
- **Self-defense and survival training** — Most people of progressive and revolutionary inclinations do not like violence and try to avoid it. This is a positive sentiment but many leftists other than those of pacifist views recognize that there are occasions when violent conflicts with opponents are unavoidable. It is wise to prepare ourselves and your revolutionary allies with self-defense techniques.
- **Withholding tax, labor, or fares** — If possible withholding tax from the state and labor from capital can have a serious effect, especially at scale with many people taking part in the action. Unfortunately for many wage workers withholding taxes or labor is not possible. Mass fare evasion in places with viable public transportation can also be effective, for instance the student left evade y lucha revolt which evolved into general unrest in Chile in 2019.
- **Economic blockades, port strikes** — Economic blockades, strikes by port workers shutting down the flow of goods, and other methods of shutting down economic avenues using sit-ins or other tactics can be highly effective, especially if these actions can be sustained. A physical road blockade can be.  
Any road or highway blockade is best served by having ally vehicles or some other large equipment as shields to protect the participants.
- **Labor strikes and horizontal unions** — Whether a wildcat strike or a general strike, more people are making demands through labor power. If you have leverage in the labor pool or you work in a field with limited labor supply, you have more labor power than ever and it is time to use it. Salting your workplace and organizing a strike is beyond the scope of this document, but the best place to get started today is to join your local IWW and get trained in organizing a union and begin salting your workplace.
- **Tactical occupations** — Tactical occupations with a specific goal and that generally are not expected to last indefinitely can be highly effective. The longer the occupation need to be to fulfill the goal, the more likely it is to be violently attacked by the police. Occupations can also give agitators an easy target, so the more people involved, the more unweildy they

can become. In practice smaller, more tactical and focused occupations have had greater success.

- **Distributed denial of service (DDOS)** — Using phones, emails, letters, in-person and through more in-office visits, enough people can shut down any government or corporate public service by simply clogging up the lines of communication. On a website this is known as the DDOS but the same method works for all communications mediums. For voice this is known as a *phone zap* and has been used to great effect to put pressure on the state. This action can only become more effective as more people join in and the longer you can sustain it. This method is designed to shutdown public system, but there is another similar action with a personal touch.
- **Harassment** — Life should be made uncomfortable for politicians and business leaders. They could be bombarded with phone calls and emails. Their offices and homes should be picketed as appropriate. They could be targeted at company annual meetings and on public occasions. Every opportunity should be seized to turn them into pariahs. These people get away with a lot because they rely upon the norms of politeness and decent treatment of each other which generally prevail in civil society to avoid being reproached. But they are not decent and thus should not be treated decently.
- **Sabotage** — This has happened in the course of industrial disputes when workers have disabled production equipment by removing some vital and not easily replaceable part. The targets for sabotage should be carefully chosen. There have been some instances of damage to public buildings and monuments which have had a negative impact on people. Sabotage can be effective both in terms of actually obstructing and damaging the enemy and in its public impact.

This is not exhaustive nor is it a absolute dictate of any sort. To succeed you must innovate and do what you feel works best in your community based on what you have read and experienced. Marches and protests can bring awareness to the public about your demands but can also be highly ineffective, occupations and blockades can pressure governments but can also come with huge costs. The key is to always consider your actions and the environment you are working in and rely on experience of others as well as your best judgement. To successfully organize under the ever-present surveillance state we must understand how to operate effectively and safely in the digital world.

## Digital Operational Security

Do not talk about the action on open comms. Open comms include both public and insecure private messaging platforms. Facebook and Instagram are not your friends. Signal is great, but it has two big downsides:

1. its whole infrastructure could be taken down by the US government,
2. it ties you to a phone number which gets exposed to people you're communicating with, and it can be a pain to get another phone number.

Share Signal contact info privately with everyone you trust right now, and compare your safety numbers in pieces across multiple channels with people you're trying to trust. (Conversations in Signal have certain distinct identifying numbers you can get, both of you should see the same numbers unless someone is intercepting your conversation, verify these numbers through FB messenger, email, in-person, etc, where such a person couldn't also intercept.) The biggest limitation of Signal is that your phone is relatively easy to hack. In the early days of the Syrian civil war the Assad regime used Skype to track activists, beyond intercepting Skype signals it would hack or directly access one person's computer, then use it to send attachments/files to all their contacts, infecting every computer and allowing them to read locally encrypted files, etc. Beyond being very suspicious of files, if your phone is ever touched by a cop you need to immediately destroy it and get a new phone. Since most folks can't and won't practice a high degree of security with their phones, Signal is only somewhat safe.

For a more distributed but still new and insufficiently tested communications framework over the web that allows arbitrary identities and is decentralized, Element/Riot/Matrix is a messaging option. (Element is the new name for Riot which exists in the ecosystem of applications using the Matrix protocol.) This has its uses, but has lower usage than Signal, isn't as tested, and could be significantly blocked with sufficient repression.

Email will probably outlast the cockroaches, it's always worth having backup email addresses your friends already know about. Bonus: having backup email addresses that aren't publicly (or anywhere in your existing accounts) tied to your identity or existing accounts. Super-bonus: setting up those email accounts with services like Tutanota or Protonmail that try to use PGP encryption with other Tutanota or Protonmail accounts. What to do: each person in your group sets up a new email account with a brand new name (ideally using a VPN or Tor), then you share the names of these names and email accounts with each other through something like sheets of paper passed into your friends' actual physical mailboxes, once you've started messaging each other via these new email accounts (never using real names or information that would leak personal identity), memorize and destroy the sheets of paper identifying which friend is which email. Email networks are most useful when folks have to go on the run, without carrying a lot with them.

For more distributed communications in minor absences of internet put the app Briar on your phone, create an account and share that account with your friends. Now your friends and you can chat either over Tor (when the internet is up) or over bluetooth and wifi (when the internet is down). This is helpful in situations where you're all on the streets or live nearby and they take away cell signal, this was useful in Hong Kong. Briar flourishes in situations when they shut off cell towers around a protest, but it's less feasible as a communications system across neighborhoods when the internet is turned off for a whole city.

Larger scale electronic/network catastrophes are hard to predict. The NSA could have backdoored every single revolutionary device, the state could just storm ISPs and turn off all internet to facilitate a massive crackdown, infrastructure could get knocked out by an earthquake/etc, civilization could collapse.

One way you can take precautions is by establishing communication protocols with your friends for how to move physical messages around. Dead drops and geocaches are not just for supplies, they can be used to move messages and USBs of data. Particularly in situations where repression is widespread and you're under surveillance. Old school spycraft is worth thinking about. If your friends already know to, for example, send messages via a crumpled up sheet

of paper in an abandoned big gulp in a pedestrian tunnel under a bridge, you're prepared to diversify plans and communication channels in a crisis. Obviously you can and should think of other inconspicuous approaches. Even just working out to stick USBs in a ziplock bag under a rock near a bus stop can help immensely. When the internet goes down we often have to resort to Sneakernet, just directly carrying the files to one another. Know your friends addresses, but also don't write them down.

Finally there are more active and resilient networking possibilities, albeit with no substantive encryption. Everyone should own a ham radio. We're building a mesh network using disaster.radio. If you're interested in joining our network, order the parts from China now, we'll help get them set up and you connected. The basic premise is that little radio sets sit on the roof of houses across town and peer with each other, letting people local to one radio connect to it via wifi and send messages, etc. With some solar boards you can power them and phones to connect to them through a rough collapse.

## **Logistics**

After you have chosen your action and what kind of campaign you will engage in, you will then begin moving into the logistics stage. This is an important stage where you will need to coordinate both public and private resources. Public logistical information that you should share widely includes the time, space, and loose description of the action. Private logistics will include reaching out to medics, security, and other crucial roles which must be organized for a successful action. However, the information conveyed in private circles should be kept secure among organizers. If there are parts of the action that you do not wish to make public for security or legal reasons, ensure that the fewest number of people are made aware of these plans and that those plans are communicated through secure communications.

Food, water, dealing with cold or hot temperatures, and other environmental issues associated with direct actions are often an important part of logistics and planning. Plan according to the temperature and weather. If it is hot ensure there are sufficient cooling stations available, ice coolers, and other gear to deal with heat. Survival skills come in handy in these situations and as an organizer either you or another trusted member of your affinity group.

A bail fund may be needed and if large funds are required it is often best to do this through an existing non-profit or other legal incorporated entity. The non-profit industrial complex is filled with problems, but these organizations are important mechanisms to raise funds for important activities such as jail support. Without a legal entity and a board to oversee those funds it is possible that an individual can be corrupted and steal those funds. While we never wish it to happen, it has happened before and this is an important mechanism to prevent fraud while we are still trapped under the auspices of capitalism.

A good direct action will have individuals in dedicated medical and security roles. Security should be responsible for de-escalating conflict during the action. Your direct actions should have a defined beginning, middle, and end. You should establish a few alternate plans in case something goes wrong. For instance if you were planning a loud and disruptive counter-demonstration, but you find yourself outnumbered, you may alter your tactics towards something less confrontational such as a silent protest.

Another aspect of a successful protest is scouting the location you will use. The further in advance you scout ahead, the better. Sometimes it is best to scout a position multiple times, once long before for logistical purposes and even in the hours before the direct action. If you have a small group operating a counter-protest or demonstration, you would want to scout the event to determine the number and sentiment of the opposition before you determine the next course of action.

A good scout depends on some urban exploration and social engineering skills that are beyond the scope of this guide, however there is plenty of information online along these lines. It's good to have a scout team or use the buddy system rather than scouting alone. In addition, a good cover story for your presence at the location is wise to have aligned beforehand with members of the scout group.

To scout you will need a cell phone with proper opsec protocols in place, maybe a sketchbook or notebook for basic notes, comfortable appropriate clothes and some money, and whatever other tools may be appropriate. Practice makes perfect. When scouting a location, the following questions are the ones that should be on your mind:

- What is the ideal time and day of the week for this action?
- What is the minimum number of people you will need to pull the action off successfully and safely?
- How can the activists access the target location? What are the different needs (cover stories, costumes, equipment, etc.) for the different options? What are the potential drawbacks/obstacles?
- What kind of security does the target location have? Cameras? Patrol cars passing by on rotation? Security guards? Given these concerns, is your action plan realistic?
- What are the options re: attachment points (if you're doing a lockdown) or anchor points (if you're doing a climb action)? Keep safety standards in mind, and remember, in all likelihood, it will be someone else who's going to put their safety at risk according to your scout assessment.
- What is the relevant measurement data for each potential action tactic, at each potential target site (remember that some locations will provide multiple target options for the same tactic—e.g., many buildings have multiple entrances that can be blockaded). Make sure to keep your measurements in order, to avoid later confusion (don't just rely on your memory either; take notes).
- What kind of equipment will be required to accomplish this action? What other resources would be needed to pull this off?
- What are concerns re: accidental property destruction, trespassing, or other potential legal charges?
- If you're planning a legally permitted action, what different jurisdictions (city, state, federal) will need to be contacted for permits?

- If one of your action objectives is to produce a quality publicity image, is your action scenario sufficient? From a potential photographer's perspective, is there good light? Are there obstructions that would get in a photographer's way? For some actions, getting a good photograph is a major concern, and the success of such an action will depend on the ability not only for the activists to deploy, but to deploy at a time and way that presents an enduring photographic image.
- What other tactical options does this site present?
- What is the probability of success for each possibility?

If you are relying on a third party or other trusted ally to scout the location for the organizers, it is often best for them to produce a report. An ideal report includes the following:

- Photos of the location and surrounding area
- Detailed notes about location, building size, public/private access, exit/entrance points, pieces of equipment to be aware of, coordinates or street address
- Security protocols, security patrols if applicable, uniforms or plain clothes, central security locations, digital security systems
- Measurements and other more detailed information if applicable

After this, the next task at hand will be getting people to your action. When you are inviting allies to your direct action, **contact individuals in your affinity group directly** if possible. Encourage them to contact other affinity groups they trust. Use secure and encrypted communications channels as much as possible. When you send a generic invite to a direct action, it is less likely they will show up than if you send someone a personalized direct message. If you need a small highly trained group, this is the best way to gather your team. If it is a larger action that requires more bodies, such as a march, you will also want to create more public invitations. If you are organizing a large scale action that requires some level of coordination it is helpful to create a **volunteer in a box** package for action participants, with printed materials and other information to hand out. These packets, in addition to a short training session either on video or in person, serve to ensure that your group remains both decentralized yet coordinated.

Creating a persuasive, eye-catching flyer can be very helpful when organizing a large, public event. This flyer should include the time, date, and some loose description of the action and its motivation. Post the flyer in neighborhoods, on public utilities, on trees, on social media networks, and everywhere that you can. Ask your affinity group members to do the same. If you or your organization are sending a press release to the media outlets in your area, this can increase the presence of counter-demonstrators just as easily as it can bring more support. It is a tactic that must be used with great care, as the media can often lie and craft narratives that are counter to your cause.

As has been said numerous times, it's also good to establish legal support and have lawyers on hand ready to advocate on behalf of those arrested, preferably pro-bono if possible or funded

through a legal support fund. Be cautious about using your personal banking information. Crowdsourcing bail and legal fund over the internet is highly advised, as this is a way that allies from everywhere can help you. If possible, utilize an existing trustworthy democratic council with access to an accountable and transparent bank account to avoid the financial and tax related headaches associated with keeping individuals accountable with large sums of money.

## How Organizing Goes Wrong

Before you get started in organizing your own events, it is important to know and understand the pitfalls in organizing and how things can go terribly wrong. The threat of corruption, assassination, and state-security infiltration represent some examples of external threats to your movement.

Leaders can be corrupted and bought. The pressure of power, money, and prestige can be great within a capitalist system. Even those that are not swayed by money or power can be simply consumed by the spectacle and fame. The flavors of corruption are many, but the outcome is always a broken and shattered movement, or worse a zombified movement that no longer serves its original aims but only seeks to empower the status quo as its leaders have found comfortable and paid positions.

Leaders that are not corruptible usually find themselves dead. Whether a car accident, a “suicide,” or simply retribution by local police, good organizers whose identity becomes too public are killed by the state all the time. You could also face jail and solitary confinement on falsified charges. From Martin Luther King Jr. to Fred Hampton to Thomas Sankara, all across the world the leaders of great movements have been killed long before their time. These days assassination, imprisonment, and exile have been readily employed by agents of the state either judicially or extra-judicially. Even today some organizers of the Ferguson actions have been murdered by agents of the state and had those deaths classified as suicides.

Undercover officers are also a real threat. Moe, Gloves, and Boots are all names that have been used by undercover police officers whose role and job has been to infiltrate and engage in recon on our movements, as well as entrap individuals in crimes that can be used as justification for crackdowns. These infiltrators will organize a crime or illegal activity but want you to carry it out. They may provide free housing, drugs, food, money, and other items designed to influence and groom their targets. If their targets become anxious/skeptical and seek to pull out of the action they may use derogatory words and emotional abuse, calling their target names, in an attempt to push them to act. Be aware and skeptical.

However not all threats come from outside the movement. Movements that draw attention from the public and media can also draw attention from those that have ulterior motives or disruptive individuals. Even when the state is not actively destroying your movement, there are those who can destroy it from within. These are people usually driven by fame and fortune but are sometimes just well-intentioned but inexperienced.

Agitators will say one good thing about the movement, then proceed to criticize everything publicly and openly in speeches or through text. This is so they can always claim they support your cause and organization, while privately trash talking and doing everything they can to bring it down. They may form a similar movement or organization with the same goals, but poach people from your affinity group or organization, steal content and designs without attribution

or solidarity, and generally work against your operations disrupting your movement's time and space for actions with their own. However, they may also simply be members of your movement attempting to accrue power or embezzle funds.

Counter-revolutionaries are also a real threat. Internally a counter-revolutionary might find themselves in a position of power through charisma or by bringing in outsiders to alter the dynamics of the group. To maintain this position of power they will use emotional manipulation and lies within their leadership role. If anyone opposes them they will use these tactics to undermine them and gaslight them and others in order to maintain their power. Oftentimes they have a support base that is willing to engage in attacks, either physical or verbal, allowing them to keep their hands clean and always act. They may even offer some hollow denunciation of their supporter's activities, while privately egging them on to do more.

Some counter-revolutionaries are not explicitly disruptive or even aware that they are disruptive to movements. These people are drawn to the spectacle of being in the media, they call themselves "leaders" or are drawn to these positions in existing organizations, they fail to seek input or the involvement of the community they are trying to organize, and they treat the revolution as an aesthetic. They may also engage in racist, misogynistic, transphobic, or other discriminatory behaviors or micro-aggressions. Generally if they receive criticism from other members of the movement they simply acknowledge it and continue to engage in the same behaviors. Some other red flags include asking for donations or monetary support with zero transparency or accountability.

Another real risk are the peace police. Internal and external, the peace police will come to shut down the diversity of tactics we rely upon and ensure that the movement becomes another lifeless series of the dead rituals discussed earlier or simply the threat of violence by armed individuals who are there to "keep the peace." Some peace police are armed with only megaphones, however if you encounter peace police engaging in open-carry it is advised that you avoid them, give them distance, and simply move on. This applies to liberal, libertarian, and fascist-identifying peace police, paramilitaries, or any right-wing militia or group that is claiming to "protect the peace." These people are most likely just looking for any quasi-legal reason to shoot you and your allies.

So what do we do when we encounter people inside the movement who are harming it? Our first instinct cannot be to marginalize those who may not be aware their actions are harming the movement. If possible, mediate these issues through established mediation channels if they exist. There are some steps you can take to help deal with these issues.

1. Get a temperature check of members of your affinity group who have encountered the behaviors you feel are disruptive. Are they feeling the same? If so, gather consensus around what behaviors are disruptive.
2. Have individuals of your affinity group reach out to them for personal dialogue. Gently explain to them how their behavior is harmful to the movement or discriminatory towards individuals within the movement. Give them a set of concrete steps they can take to work cooperatively and respectfully with other individuals and groups.
3. If after private dialogue they fail to alter their behaviors and those behaviors are actively and directly harming the movement or individuals within the movement, then it is time to

bring the concerns publicly, but as gently as possible, without appearing to gang-up on or attack the individual themselves.

4. If they have rebuffed or ignored public criticism, then it is time to reach out to other activists within your movement and explain to them that the organizer or individual's behavior is toxic, how mediation has been attempted and failed, and explain it is time to invest our time and energy elsewhere.

Generally, when there is no attention or media behind one of these toxic organizers they will move on. In the case that the problem does not resolve itself in one way or another, accrue evidence of the actions and behaviors that are harmful and prepare an explanation or response when presented with the existence of the counter-revolutionary group to educate newcomers to the movement. It is key to be as objective and factual as possible, as unfounded rumors can be just as damaging to movements. Additionally, not everyone is perfect. It is important to continuously offer the ability for the individual to recognize their faults and continue working with the group as a respectful ally.

All these types of toxic organizers are poisonous to movements. It is nearly impossible with our current social norms to completely prevent these types of individuals from corrupting a mass political movement. The key is to inoculate ourselves to these behaviors first and educate those within our affinity groups. In order to overcome the challenges associated with overcoming global capital we have to adapt to the new world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The old style systems of mass mobilization of social movements through large-scale hierarchy are flawed as we have seen in the previous section. There are many vectors for both malicious parties inside and out of the state to influence and degrade these movements. A confederation of smaller groups, either democratic or revolutionary in nature, is more resilient to the disruptive activities of the state but may still face counter-revolution.

These are some of the challenges the network of revolutionaries seeking liberation and justice must face. It is why we must train ourselves and develop internal tools to act in concert with millions of other revolutionaries, globally and at scale, without the need for a centralized leadership or agenda.

With this in mind, the next step will be actually carrying out the action. For this reason, we will now discuss the tactics that the organizer must use on the day of the action.

# Organizer Tactics

First, let us be clear: as the organizer of the action you cannot control the actions of the individuals. However, you can set the mood for a peaceable action or a militant one through the information you provide to participants about the action and the feedback you give in important situations.

For this reason, it is important to have a basic idea of the tactics required at each level of the action. Providing those participating with what they can do as **individuals**, as an **affinity group**, and what the **entire action** hopes to accomplish is wise, as this broader tactical overview will give them a better idea of how they fit into the action and what to do during the action. But do not delude yourself that you are the commander of the protest.

Before the action if you are going to engage in militant non-violence, like an occupation, ensure that all individuals participating in the action are aware of the nature of the militant non-violence and any possible repercussions. Ensure that you follow the most effective security protocols as you can for your group and have a strong culture of **operational security**. Only communicate the details of the action to those that need to know those details. Once the action is underway, more detailed descriptions of the action, route, or other sensitive information can be provided to participants.

## Day-of Operational Security

Ensuring you and those who attend actions you organize are secure, safe, and are not arrested when it is not planned is vital not only to your well-being but your capability to continue organizing and acting. Follow and share the rules for protecting your identity documented earlier in this guide. For these types of actions there may not necessarily be a dedicated security force since the entire action requires some level of preparation.

If your action is as non-violent as a small group having a picnic then there is no real need for organized security. However if you expect a large number of people or a serious threat from counter-protesters then you may consider having an organized **volunteer security detachment** who have been trained in de-escalation and have appropriate gear necessary to engage in security. If you do have formal security, ensure that they are not to act as peace police but rather to physically defend the participants of the action from physical or vehicular assault. Oftentimes security will operate a car in the lead or behind a march, for instance.

It is important to **know your rights** as a citizen of the state you are currently in and use these to your advantage as much as possible whether during the action when engaging with the police or after the action when dealing with the consequences of being arrested and/or charged with crimes. If your action is legally protected, knowing the specific local or federal statutes is helpful if you have to liaise with local state-security forces as an organizer of the event. Identifying yourself as an organizer should be avoided for any actions that are not legally protected.

A good **medic volunteer crew** is a simple necessity of most actions, with at least one individual trained in medical first-aid, heat exhaustion, CPR, and other basics and the gear necessary to deal with those situations. If the event is large enough, consider trained EMTs on-site with medic kits. In addition to security and medical volunteers it is sometimes important to have water and some dry food stuffs, like granola bars, on hand to provide for participants. These groups are generally organized as *affinity groups*.

A solid and energetic **drum corps** keeping the beat of the march or bringing the noise is a great idea for any physical action like a march or a protest. In the absence of a real drum corps a good speaker sound system works as well.

It is best for the organizers during an event to **operate in realtime** to keep in touch and stay aware of what is going on during the action, staying adaptive to ongoing events. This can be done over SMS and other chat messaging service, but during large events or when undergoing jamming by state security forces, these services can go down. 2-way radios are a good backup for your main organizers, march leaders, security, and anyone that needs to be in the loop on the action.

## **After the Action**

After the action you have organized it is important that you provide some level of aftercare to participants, especially if they are going to engage in militant action that could put them at odds with state security forces.

Someone got arrested at your direct action? Oftentimes the police will detain people for no reason and these days under NDAA(2012) you can face arrest and indefinite detention for doing absolutely nothing wrong. Avoid being detained or arrested by the Federal police as much as possible for this reason. However, if your allies do get arrested, you activate the bail fund. No allies should be left behind. If allies are imprisoned for long periods of time, organize jail support in the form of letters, commissary funds, additional legal support, media awareness campaigns, and everything you can do to show solidarity for those incarcerated.

# Mental Health

Mental health is a particularly important subject, and one that is often overlooked in the context of practical day to day considerations within radical movements. It is important to understand the historical, political, philosophical, and material context that affects our collective mental health as we seek collective liberation. However, the main focus of this section is to address the more practical concerns and approaches that we can employ to create radical mental health and wellness practices in our organizing spaces. To reach our goals for collective liberation, we must employ the principles of self-care and mutual aid, and approach mental health through a radical lens to avoid reproducing the harm that is institutionalized by oppressive states.

It is important to set boundaries and expectations for yourself clearly, so that you can know when and how to offer your help to others. Be very honest and clear about your skills and abilities, as well as your limitations, whether they are material, physical, or emotional. Often activists take on much more than they can handle or do not trust others enough to delegate, but this is unsustainable and can lead to burn out very quickly. Building trust and sharing skills in the community takes time, but it is important so that the movement can continue to grow and foster community/comradery. No one shows up perfectly the first, second, third times, and even a seasoned activist can under/overestimate their abilities or limitations. It is necessary to learn and grow from our mistakes, as we continue to build relationships within our activist communities in order to create a sustainable movement.

## **Questions you can ask yourself:**

1. What skills do I have that could contribute to the movement?
2. What am I comfortable doing? What am I not as comfortable doing?
3. Do I have accessibility needs?
4. What are necessary parts of my own self-care regime and how do I make time for them while balancing movement work and my day-to-day life?
5. Who are the people in my support system that I can ask for assistance?
6. How can I help my support my community in healing and recuperating during or after stressful or traumatic events?

If we take on too much, we run into the problems of many other activists' movements before us—BURN OUT! Burn out may become unavoidable, but the more we address the root causes of burn out we can hopefully minimize the damage and restore ourselves more quickly. Many movements fizzle out or implode due to unsustainable practices and a lack of sustained self-care and mutual aid that are necessary to replenish our energy so that we can get back to work more quickly. We all have varying skills, aptitudes, abilities, and interests—and this diversity is

necessary and a source of strength if tapped into strategically. We also must cultivate a practice of self-care and community-care that can help us create more viable and sustainable communities, and that means we must understand and appreciate the diversity within our communities and also take care of each other in ways that are more in line with our values—respecting the diversity of neurological, physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, and other needs/abilities of our communities.

Before going out to a direct action, there are many things you can do in order to prepare yourself mentally, physically, and emotionally. Attend trainings so that you can learn and discuss any important issues you might face or practice your response in a safe controlled environment. Many organizations will do direct action trainings and offer more specific trainings that are geared towards specific roles (street medics, legal observers, security etc.). Know your role and attend trainings to prepare yourself for what you might experience.

Build relationships in your activist community. You do this by showing up, being accountable, and building trust within your activist community. If you are new, have some humility—you may have specialized skills, but you first must show that you are willing to be a team player before given responsibilities of importance. Leave your ego at the door, the purpose of our movement is larger than any one individual, and it is important to realize that we may have different opinions and methods, but ultimately we share some common goals.

As we have said before, resistance movements are often infiltrated by agent-provocateurs and law enforcement agents that seek to derail or delegitimize social movements. It takes time to build relationships, so be patient with yourself and others. Let go of your ego and help according to your ability and the needs of the group. Keep showing up, even if you have a conflict. Conflicts can and do happen often in movement spaces. If you hurt people's feelings or make a mistake, be accountable and take action to restore trust. Accountability can take many different forms, but recognizing any harm done and making some amends in a tangible way can go a long way to restore trust. We keep our communities safe, and that requires that we know our communities and provide support and resources as needed.

**Also: slow down!** We're in this for the long-haul! Meditate and prepare yourself for the long game. Our work is not done after one action. The fight for freedom has been long and arduous, and we must prepare ourselves for the long-game. Take time to connect your mind to your body, listen to your body. If you are hungry, eat. If you are tired, sleep. Your body carries wisdom. Honor your needs and take the time to get to know your body. The need for perpetual motion and productivity is ingrained into us by a society that does not value our labor or our humanity, a society that views us as replaceable and disposable. We are not disposable or replaceable. We must use self-care (which was developed by the Black Panthers) to preserve our strength, to recharge ourselves, to heal ourselves in a society that would grate us down and destroy us.

## Preparation

Practicing breathwork can be extremely helpful for controlling anxiety. Breathwork is derived from the yoga traditions of south Asia. Do not underestimate the power of our breath. Breath work helps us learn how to shift awareness from our minds to our bodies, calm our nervous system, be aware of how our body is feeling, and become more alert to our present surroundings. Practicing breathwork before going into situations that may trigger fight/flight responses, can

help you access this mode of grounding in more chaotic circumstances. Breathe deeply through your nose, bring your breath and your attention to different parts of your body as you breathe. If you are feeling pain, direct your attention and breathing towards that part of the body. There are a number of free guided meditation resources available on the internet that utilize different methodologies including breathwork, sound healing, visualization, and more. Find some different guided meditations and see what works for you and build on your mindfulness and meditation practices to increase your ability to act with intention, rather than from a reactionary emotional place in more stressful situations.

Before going out to an action, make time to set intentions (what is your role, how will you perform this role, etc.) and mentally prepare yourself for the type of action that you are participating in. It can also be very helpful to declutter or clean your space, so when you come home you can relax more easily. You do not have to do a complete deep clean of your space. Prioritizing specific spaces that will make coming home after a draining and potentially traumatic experience can help reduce stress in the aftermath of an action.

Being prepared for potential risks and making sure that you are outfitted with all of the things that you need is a practical way to reduce anxiety and mentally prepare yourself for direct action. Make sure you have plenty of water, snacks with protein, electrolytes to add to water in case of dehydration, medications you may need, assistive equipment, and basic first aid gear. Additionally, while you are preparing make sure you write important information down for someone whom you trust that will be outside of the action containing your government name (in case of arrest), medical, and other important information that may be needed in case you are injured or arrested.

Pay attention to your triggers and know your boundaries. Triggers are anything that might cause us to make decisions in fight or flight mode, which can unnecessarily endanger your comrades or leave them with no support. You may not be comfortable performing certain tasks, and that is okay! Know what you are capable of and what you can say yes to. For instance, you may need to say: “I can’t do that, but I can do this instead.” Know what your skills, strengths, and weaknesses are and be honest about them to yourself and your group. Prioritize and set realistic goals. Be willing to adjust your plans or call people in to help when you are feeling overwhelmed or exhausted. Many times, activists take on too much or do not recognize or honor their boundaries—which leads to burn-out, resentment, injury, exhaustion, and conflict. Call people in to help if you feel overburdened or need to be relieved from your role. Make sure you prioritize self-care and healing during and after direct actions to avoid burn-out, exhaustion, injuries, or illnesses.

It is important to pay attention to your triggers, so that you can address your needs and be prepared for participating in the frontlines. Emotional first aid in the frontlines can take many forms, such as providing emotional reassurance and helping people stay grounded to keep people alert, focused on the mission, and safe. Emotional first responders should have a healer buddy they work with to check in with and to support each other during frontline actions. Make sure to do no harm while working in the frontlines or backlines of an action. Ask for consent before offering advice or support to your comrades and remember to lead with humility and empathy. Embed yourself within the frontlines in an intentional way, and make sure you continue to build relationships within your organization and the larger activist community. Having weak community relations makes it more likely that infiltrators and agent-provocateurs can derail your

operations or purposefully trigger emotional responses to escalate the situation. The last line of defense is one-on-one therapy in emotional first aid.

As an emotional first aid responder, develop a process for providing anxiety relief and emotional support. Let people know how you can help and where to go to find emotional first aid. Destigmatize mental health issues and normalize asking for help and emotional support within movement spaces. Help make sure people have a safe place to go or means of getting home or direct them to resources that can help them with any issues that might be causing them distress. Emphasize that mutual aid and self-care are integral to keeping everyone safe and healthy, and that there is no room for “rugged individualism” and toughing it out. Know who you can consult and put their number in your phone. Be open to receive feedback.

## Grounding

The frontlines, or the area of a protest where direct action is taking place, can change moment to moment. Flexibility and adaptability is very crucial in frontline spaces. Tensions can rise and fall quickly, depending on the circumstances. Violence and trauma are unfortunately a risk, particularly closer to police lines. The frontlines can be extremely stressful and tension can shift in a moment, so it is important to learn grounding techniques in order to stay focused on our roles and to act with care and intention when the moment calls for it – rather than to resort to reactionary fight/flight responses. Here are some techniques that can be used to ground yourself and others during actions:

- **Breath Work** – deep breathing can help you focus on bringing your attention to the present moment and out of fear/anxiety mode. Discussed in the previous section about preparing for direct action. 3-Part Breath can help stop anxious thinking and sensory overload and increase awareness of surroundings. Can be used to get people out of anxiety mode or dissociation.
- **Crisis intervention** – not everyone can do this. Read the moment and adhere to people’s needs. Find out what is going on, assess needs, take action, and direct people to supportive care and resources they can use later on. Have someone focus on an object to distract from their feelings. Objects provide a frame of reference so that people can pull out of flashbacks or dissociative states.
- **Connect to your five senses** – what can you feel, smell, see, touch, hear around you? Name 5 things you can see. This practice can get you out of anxiety mode, and serves to reorient your mind towards your current environment.
- **Herbal Tinctures** – Tulsi, Lemon Balm, Skullcap, Rose are all calming herbs that can help reduce stress. Mullein, Slippery Elm, Mint are herbs that can aid respiratory function, which can be especially important if people have been or may be subjected to tear gas or may be feeling congested due to environmental allergies. Natural and traditional medicines can offer a lot to ease tension and help people stay alert. Source your herbs sustainably and responsibly.

- **Release Tension in your body** – release tension held in various parts of your body, starting from the top and moving your way down. Tighten and release muscles in various parts of your body. Loosen your jaw. Rub your temples and the muscles just over your ears in a circular motion. Put your hands on your head. Turn your body to stretch your hips and neck. Gently stretch different parts of your body and notice where you are feeling tightness or pain. Pain is an indicator of possible injury, so move slowly and allow the stretching to release the tension being held in your muscles. Be careful not to overextend your stretches. Focus on drawing your breath into areas of your body where you are noticing pain or tightness to help relieve the tension. These are simple methods that you can use to quickly release tension and feel more comfortable in the moment.
- **Social Engagement** – Depending on the situation on the ground social engagement may require different considerations, read your situation and the mood. Check in with your friends and comrades, make sure they are doing okay. If you notice any signs of exhaustion, dehydration, or stress, offer assistance or gently remind your comrade to take some time to rest, refuel body with water and food, or access other resources that are available.
- **Dancing and Singing** – Also, don't forget that laughing and having moments of joy is also an integral part of resistance work. Emma Goldman said "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution." Finding joy in the moment can help us be more resilient and relieve some of the stress that is inherent to movement work. Feel free to incorporate dance, songs, and other practical ways to lift spirits and energize your group.
- **Music** – make sure the music matches the mood. Music is an important part of our lives and has immense power for healing, for comfort or for restoring energy. Sorrowful music for sorrowful times, uplifting music for times to get people energized.
- **Yell, swear, or discharge energy** if the stress is building up. Let it out.

## Backlines

During actions the backlines are often the base of operations in movements. The backlines often include areas where people can go to receive medical attention, to distribute resources (food, water, gear, etc. ), to provide jail support, and receive emotional first aid. These are often staging areas in public spaces, where people can gather before a march or facilitate political education/trainings. It's important to remember that frontlines and backlines can shift rapidly. And also remember to stay alert and emotionally grounded, so that you can respond appropriately.

Emotional First Aid – have a space or area dedicated to trauma-responders who have experience with mental health. They can work with or alongside street medics' tents. Yoga, art therapy, aroma therapy, somatics, massage therapy, or any other restorative practices might be appropriate depending on the skills and resources that are available in the community. Healing spaces should be held away from areas where there is a potential threat to safety. These can be areas where we share skills, hold space for personal healing and transformation, and provide information about different resources that are available.

Identify before actions folks that can be helpful in case of traumatic events. Ensure that you don't burn out. A good organizer's self-care is just as crucial as the actions they are helping

organize. It helps to remove ego and a results-driven mindset from your activism. Putting in work and being impatient for results, or even expecting results in your lifetime will bring more stress than it is worth and ultimately lead to burn-out and other negative events in your life. If you feel frustrated or hopeless, taking the time for self-care is important. There is no big bang pay-off you will miss out on. Shift your mindset. **Recognize** that people have been fighting for centuries and there is still work to be done. **Accept** that you won't see the final 'result' of the movement. **Conserve** your mental and physical energy, use it effectively and shift your activism into **lifelong** actions.

# Protest Democracy

If your protests achieve a level of success that they exist for an extended period of time, they will often have the opportunity to become more coordinated. Those in positions of respect will often be looked to to decide what sort of tactics will and will not be allowed proceeding forward. However, this is a dangerous path. The state has become *very* good at suppressing leaders and infiltrating hierarchical structures. It is much harder, however, for the state to infiltrate flatter and more democratic bodies.

This is why protesters should create horizontal council structures where consensus decides future action. These horizontal council bodies will not sideline organic leaders; they will merely remove their power to decide for everyone else. Indeed, if one wants to create a council body, one of the most effective first steps is to locate an organic leader and then convince them that decisions should be made through the democratic body instead.

There are many kinds of councils which can be built, outside of protests, during protests, and even enduring afterwards. Below is a list of different kinds of council bodies that can be created, from *Let Your Motto Be Resistance* by Kali Akuno:

- **Block Committees** – These Self-Defense units on the level of an urban or suburban block and/or street should be the foundation of all our efforts. This type of organizing entails building deep relationships with our neighbors and their families, identifying mutual interests, and building clear lines of communication.
- **Neighborhood Councils** – These Councils are sealed up extensions of the Block Committees, that unite several Block Committees into a joint structure that addresses the shared interests and needs of the community, including addressing complaints against the police or the government in general and resolving disputes within the community itself.
- **City Councils** – These Councils are scales up extensions of the Neighborhood Committees that serve to unite the strategies and activities of the New Afrikan forces throughout the city.
- **Youth Councils** – Youth Councils are safe spaces for youth to assemble to both resolve their own issues and disputes and to formulate their issues and concerns relative to the health and well-being of the larger community.
- **Survivors or Family Councils** – These Councils are composed of the victims of police violence, including the family members of those who were killed by the police or other law enforcement agencies. These Councils represent the interests of the victims to the community and should take the lead in the formulation of demands on the government, and the strategies and and tactics that will be employed to attain justice.

- **Women’s Councils** – These Councils are safe spaces for women to organize themselves to address their specific needs and issues. One of its primary functions will be to address issues of abuse and/or violence (domestic violence, assaults, rape, etc.), committees against women either by the police or other government agencies or by men in the community, including determining processes or rectification and healing.
- **People’s Assemblies** – The Assemblies are designed to be dual-power instruments that serve to direct vehicles of People’s Power. These Assemblies would be called to develop and institute autonomous solutions to various social issues and contradictions and to develop and advance various demands on the state.
- **People’s Tribunals** – These Tribunals are extensions of the Elder Councils, City Councils, or People’s Assemblies and are communal spaces to gather evidence regarding police brutality and state repression to shape a People’s response to these crimes against humanity to secure justice through the administration of People’s Power via boycotts, divestment measures, and various types of sanctions that bring the state and capital to heel or transform them altogether.
- **Copwatch** – These are collectives drawn from our independent organizations and various suggested committees that focus on monitoring the police and other enforcement agencies operating in our communities, documenting their activities, and when necessary, intervening to prevent state abuses and repression. Copwatch initiatives should also provide various types of self-defense and security trainings, including “know your rights” trainings and political education or the community.
- **Security Teams** – These are units that should be developed from our independent organizations and the aforementioned communities to secure our communities from various threats at public gatherings and events, to respond to forces that pose threats to the community, and to respond to social and natural crises that confront the community.
- **Militias** – Are in part extensions of our Security Teams and serve similar social purposes. However, unlike the Security Teams they are organized more explicitly to educate and train the community in the arts of self defense, defensive fortifications, and military operations. The other major function of the Militia should be to respond to major crisis like the floods in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and the rebellion in Oakland, CA, following the murder of Oscar Grant, to make sure our people’s safety is secure and that the state is not abusing our people.
- **Emergency Social Response Teams** – These Teams should respond to social crisis such as that posed by Hurricane Katrina, to make sure that in the midst of a crisis our people are physically safe, treated with dignity, have food to eat, clean water to drink, and medically treated and provided with adequate housing. These Teams should be prepared to set up autonomous clinics and other emergency response operations following a catastrophe, like the Common Ground Collective and Peoples’ Hurricane Relief Fund in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, or Occupy Wall Street after Superstorm Sandy in New York City.

Such council bodies may have many different purposes, as can be seen. One thing they do is create a way to arrive on an agreement about tactics. Lack of agreement on tactics leads to a

confused mass working on conflicting principles. Another one of the most important purposes is that they provide a form of mediation for disputes. **Do not let internal disputes get out of hand.** When two parties are having a dispute, find a neutral party to act as a mediator. This mediator should be agreed to by both of the people who are in the dispute and after the mediator hears the difficulties of both sides, they should offer a path toward remuneration and rehabilitation for those who are involved. Above all, deal with these disputes in a civil fashion. Fury is for the state.

It is recommended, if numbers are relatively small in the council you form, that full consensus be sought. That is to say, vote and negotiate on measures until the only votes remaining are only “yay”s and “abstains.” This is most recommended because it means that all concerns are brought to the table and dealt with and that everyone who is present actually believes in the action. No one’s views are discarded or marginalized. An example consensus model might work like this:

## **Strong Consensus Model**

- A resolution is presented by an individual in the democratic body. Following this, there is a discussion period about the resolution. After this discussion has concluded, the voters all place their first votes as a temperature check and the results are tallied. If the first vote is unanimous, the measure is passed and planning will begin.
- If not, those who voted against the measure are asked to qualify their concerns into deal-breakers or non-deal-breakers. Those who have said that their grievances are not deal-breakers put their complaints into one of several categories and each category of complaint elects a delegate to plead their case.
- After these delegates have each pled their case, voters are asked to weigh in on their agreement with the grievance and those with the grievance offer amendments that, if instituted, would garner their support. These friendly amendments are then voted on and a temperature check is taken to re-assess the status of consensus. If there is a unanimous vote, the motion is passed and planning will begin.
- If not, those who said that their grievance was a complete deal-breaker are asked to categorize their complaints and elect delegates to plead their case. Voters are then asked to weigh in on their agreement with these grievances and more amendments are gathered. If, after all amendments have been passed, turned down, or sustained, and the vote is unanimous, the motion is passed and planning will begin.
- Otherwise, the motion is tabled or dismissed.

The delegates mentioned here should be revocable at the whim of the council. They are not representatives in the sense of modern democracies; they are only given the power to carry through on the exact mandate that was stipulated when they were made delegates. If the council votes and reaches consensus that someone they have delegated to a duty does not meet their standards or desires, they can simply remove the delegate and then either replace them or scrap the need for that delegate.

Consensus can be difficult to manage when numbers grow due to the differences in needs, beliefs, and desires of those involved. If your council begins to grow too large to make decisions by consensus, you generally have two options:

**Option 1** is to split into smaller full consensus councils and then maintain what is called a Spokes Council. This new Spokes Council will be numbered by delegated members from the smaller councils called Spokes, which bring word of proposals in the Spokes Council back to their smaller Community Council, then have them reach a vote, then return to the Spokes Council to vote as their Community has voted.

**Option 2** is to weaken the consensus that is needed into what is called a Weak Consensus model. In such a model, if you cannot reach absolute consensus, you fallback to a 2/3 vote to settle and move forward, while maintaining an accountability process by the minority. We will lay out how such a weak consensus might work.

## Weak Consensus Model

- A resolution is presented by an individual in the democratic body. Following this, there is a discussion period about the resolution. After this discussion has concluded, the voters all place their first votes as a temperature check and the results are tallied. If the first vote comes to a 90% majority, the measure is passed and planning will begin.
- If not, those who voted against the measure are asked to qualify their concerns into deal-breakers or non-deal-breakers. Those who have said that their grievances are not deal-breakers put their complaints into one of several categories and each category of complaint elects a delegate to plead their case.
- After these delegates have each pled their case, voters are asked to weigh in on their agreement with the grievance and those with the grievance offer amendments that, if instituted, would garner their support. These friendly amendments are then voted on and a temperature check is taken to re-assess the status of consensus. If majority has now reached 90%, the motion is passed and planning will begin.
- If not, those who said that their grievance was a complete deal-breaker are asked to categorize their complaints and elect delegates to plead their case. Voters are then asked to weigh in on their agreement with these grievances and more amendments are gathered. If, after all amendments have been passed, turned down, or sustained, the majority has now reached 2/3, the motion is passed and planning will begin.
- After passage, the minority enters into a contention process during the planning phase of the resolution, such that they might still have some recourse before the resolution is fully implemented. If, during this contention phase, the majority drops below 50%, the resolution is tabled or dismissed.
- However, if the minority can't reach a simple majority during planning and implementation, the resolution is carried forward. The body now elects a delegate or numerous delegates to carry out the implementation of the measure under the strict mandate of what was contained in it.

- Otherwise, the motion is tabled or dismissed.

Above all else, **avoid formal leadership or centralization**. Organic leaders should never be given formal power. Avoid all cults of personality. Dissolve the power of all leaders to the councils. Those with formal positions of power are not strengths, they are liabilities. Any that remain will become a threat either during the protests or in whatever remains of the movement after the protests cease. It is not that it is bad to trust to the expertise of others, it is that they should never be given the power to dominate you. If they are truly organic leaders, then their suggestions will surely be held up by consensus or 2/3 majorities and they can then be delegated to carry out the tasks that leadership would have been given anyway!

If you are seeking to form a permanent organization of some sort, The Black Flag Catalyst has published four distinct frameworks which we believe will aid people in this process. Each of these default to the usage of the **Strong Consensus Model** listed above.

- **Discord Server**
- **Catalyst Group**
- **General Assembly**
- **Autonomous Zone**

We invite you to use these freely and modify them to your desires.

Ultimately, we must see times of rupture and revolt as opportunities to *build the new world*. In absence of the state, we must create the bodies of solidarity and consensus which will solve the problems of this world.

# Autonomy and Revolt

When a protest campaign proceeds for a long period of time, planning can enter into strategy instead of simple tactics. That is to say, the choice of how the protest will proceed in response to the broader approach of the police can become important. How do you choose whether to escalate or de-escalate? When is it important to focus on clashes with the state and when should you work to build protest democracy? The general rule is as following, although it should not be taken as ironclad: **when the state escalates, focus on the clashes. When the state de-escalates or stalls their tactics, begin building.**

One of the most useful things that can be done in de-escalation or static phases, is to create autonomous areas. That is to say, when the police have begun to respond with static tactics, so long as you have learned to respond, you should create permanent staging grounds in strategic areas which are close to your frontlines. The first priority of setting up these staging areas is to create a permanent autonomous zone wherein the police cannot enter. Barricades, as described earlier, can serve as a means to enforce this autonomy, but also placing your militants at these locations as to maintain autonomy from police, may be required. It is recommended that these areas use the document linked above titled **Autonomous Zone**.

Regardless, these staging areas can serve numerous purposes. First, they serve as a place wherein protesters can be safe before and after protests, as well as places for protesters to sleep and receive medical care, distribute food and water, and so on. Further, they should be made into cultural hubs. There is no reason that occupation here should be a purely military affair. Do not be afraid to let bands perform or enjoy yourselves. However, beware ever letting these activities distract you from your purpose.

These autonomous regions are also the area wherein it is best to practice protest democracy, because they are under less surveillance by police. Their existence will, however, also very likely escalate tensions with the police, as the creation of mutual aid programs and the assertion of autonomy for the protesters is a threat to police hegemony. Thus, these autonomous areas will have a tendency to escalate tensions.

These bodies are practicing what is called *prefiguration*. That is to say, what happens in these autonomous regions should, as best as conceivably possible, mimic the world you want to create. That means that you should treat them as spaces for radical experimentation and application of movement principlism, but also the enforcement of a new order of social harmony, as a thing which can sustain itself. In creating these autonomous regions, you are therefore seeding the bodies of revolution. This makes them a dire threat to the state and thus you must be prepared to defend them and to enact their principles fearlessly. In creating these regions in every major city in America, we are planting the seeds of a revolutionary future.

**ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE.**

# Appendix

## Discord Server Rules

### Structure

The organization is hosted on a Discord server called **Your Organization's Name** which consists of voice and text channels. The decisions made by the org must be voted on through the method in the section titled **Procedure** and members are admitted by way of the rules in the section titled **Membership**.

### Points of Unity

The following principles are the points which individuals must agree upon in order to be admitted as a member of **Your Organization's Name**. They represent guiding concepts which should animate the purpose and direction of the organization's decisions.

1. **Point 1:** Description.
2. **Point 2:** Description.
3. **Point 3:** Description.

### Server Principles

There are the principles which are modeled in discussions on the server.

**Due Representation:** Black, non-Black indigenous, non-white, LGBTQIA+, Women, neuro-divergent, those considered disabled by others or disabled by society through medicalization or therapization of need instead of being accomodated, and those who do not speak often should have their voices prioritized in discussions.

**Mutual Respect:** Even when having heated disputes, members should avoid insulting one another or assuming bad faith.

### Membership

New members may be added to the group, so long as they are vouched for by at least one existing member. After this, to become a member of **Your Organization's Name**, the user must agree to the **Points of Unity** in the channel #platform. If they do, they will be given the "member" role. Anyone who is a member of the group is subject to the rules listed in this document. A member may only be removed by going through the process listed under **Grievances**.

### Delegation

If a proposal requires a particular person or group of people to carry it out and the body deems it necessary, they may elect a delegate. A delegate is a person given the right to act to carry out whatever is within the bounds of a particular proposal that was passed by the server. A delegate can have delegate status revoked at any point by a vote.

### Procedure

Voting on the Discord server takes place by first presenting ideas in the channel #proposals. Once these ideas have been fleshed out and turned into an operable form, the person who is making the proposal should turn it into a clean and fully descriptive version then post it in #voting and use the @everyone prompt to get people to vote on it. Any proposal posted into #voting should get 72 hours for everyone to vote on it. In order to vote on a proposal, people should use up, down, or X (abstain) emojis.

A proposal only passes if it consists solely of ups and abstains. If it can be seen that there have been down votes, the user who made the proposal can ask all of those who voted down what their objections are during the 72 hours period. They should seek to amend the proposal to accommodate the concerns of the downvotes and if they do, the downvoters should turn their votes into up votes. If, after 72 hours, the proposal only has ups and abstains, it passes.

### **Grievances**

Although all of the processes listed above are created precisely to avoid grievances between members of the group, it is nonetheless the case that legitimate problems will arise between members.

### **Mediation**

When members are having a dispute with one another, all of those involved should choose a party that they all agree is neutral in order to hear out the issues of both sides. It is recommended that those involved in the grievance process not have pre-conditions before they are willing to enter mediation. After that, the neutral party should offer a path forward that they think will balance the needs of all involved parties. The parties may choose to accept or reject this path forward or offer changes to it. Alternatively, they may ask that another path to reconciliation be offered or that a new mediator be chosen.

### **Expulsion**

If it is determined that a member is violating the **Points of Unity**, **Sever Principles**, or any of the rules laid out in this document, they may have their member status stripped from them with a proposal and a vote where the vote of the member in question does not count. The member that is being expelled will have an opportunity to plead their case after their expulsion has been proposed and before voting begins. All other rules to voting and procedure must be followed in this process.

### **Bylaw Amendments**

Anything contained in this document can be edited by simply passing a proposal through the meetings. This is a living document and should be changed as the group desires.

## **Catalyst Group Platform**

### **Structure**

**Your Organization's Name** will be a democratic body functioning on a consensus model described in the section titled **Meetings** and will be composed of Members, as described in the section titled **Membership**.

Members within **Your Organization's Name** may also choose to form into Work Groups. These Work Groups should be formed when there is a particular interest or need which must be addressed in order for the group to function. Examples of Work Groups are: A Black Work Group, an Indigenous American Work Group, a Women's Work Group, etc... These Work Groups

are advised to also use the rules laid out in **Procedure** in order to make internal decisions, but regardless, they will meet separately from the main group meetings. One of the main functions of the Work Group is to discuss issues that the Work Group sees playing out and to form proposals to be brought to the group meetings in order to gain passage.

### **Points of Unity**

The following principles are the points which individuals must agree to in order to be admitted as a member of **Your Organization's Name** . They represent guiding concepts which should animate the purpose and direction of the group's decisions.

1. **Point 1:** Description.
2. **Point 2:** Description.
3. **Point 3:** Description.

### **Membership**

New members may be added so long as they are vouched for by at least one existing member of the group and that they agree to the **Points of Unity of Your Organization's Name** . They may only be removed by going through the process listed under **Grievance**.

### **Delegation**

If a proposal requires a particular person or group of people to carry it out and the body deems it necessary, they may elect a delegate. A delegate is a person given the right to act to carry out only what is within the bounds of a particular proposal that was passed by **Your Organization's Name** . A delegate can have delegate status revoked at any point by a vote during meetings.

### **Meetings**

In order for meetings to be carried out in a way where everyone gets their time to speak, the following procedures should be followed:

#### **Meeting Principles**

**One Mic:** Only one person speaks at a time.

**Progressive Stack:** The Stack Keeper should put any person that is Black, Indigenous American, LGBTQIA+, a Woman, neurodivergent, or even those who have not spoken yet, at the top of the stack. This is to make sure that those with marginalized voices are always heard and are not tread underneath those with majority perspectives or backgrounds.

**Mutual Respect:** Even when having heated disputes, members should avoid insulting one another or assuming bad faith.

#### **Roles**

The people in the following positions should rotate from different members of the group in order to prevent appearances of favouritism or erasure. At the beginning of each meeting, decide who should do each of these tasks.

**Facilitator:** The job of the facilitator is to moderate the meeting, but not to lead it. This is to say; the facilitator should make sure that the rules are being followed and they should keep the meeting on track, proceeding through the various parts of the agenda, but they should not intercede their opinions or direct discussion in any particular direction. The facilitator should be a neutral party that seeks to maintain good will and ease tensions, while keeping order in the discussions.

**Stack Keeper:** The job of the stack keeper is to keep track of everyone who needs to speak in the audience, keep a list, keep track of the order of those who have spoken, and enforce the Progressive Stack.

**Notekeeper:** The job of the notekeeper is to keep a record of the discussions being had and then, at the behest of the group, either keep the notes somewhere secure or discard them. The notekeeper should redact anything that the assembly does not want recorded.

### **Procedure**

The following is a description of how meetings should be structured:

1. **Updates:** This is an opportunity for individuals to give reports as to what has taken place in between meetings, especially the decisions of Work Groups and the outcomes of direct actions.
2. **Discussion:** This is a period where the floor is opened to discussion. It should be limited to some set amount of time for each meeting, so that it does not overflow and disallow time for proposals and voting. During this period, the facilitator may ask for what is called a temperature check, which is a non-binding vote, on the spot, of everyone that is present, in order to gauge support for an item under discussion.

3. **Voting:** A resolution is presented by an individual in the democratic body.

Following this, there is a discussion period about the resolution.

After this discussion has concluded, the voters all place their first votes as a temperature check and the results are tallied.

If the first vote is unanimous, the measure is passed and planning will begin.

If not, those who voted against the measure are asked to qualify their concerns and plead their case.

After they have pleaded their case, voters are asked to weigh in on their agreement with the grievance and those with the grievance offer amendments that, if instituted, would garner their support.

These friendly amendments are then voted on and the status of consensus is re-assessed. If there is a unanimous vote, the motion is passed.

If, after all amendments have been passed, turned down, or sustained, the vote is unanimous, the motion is passed and planning will begin.

Otherwise, the motion is tabled or dismissed.

4. **Closure:** After voting has finished, the facilitator should ask for final comments and announcements, then call the meeting to a close.

### **Grievances**

Although all of the processes listed above are created precisely to avoid grievances between members of the group, it is nonetheless the case that legitimate problems will arise between members.

### **Mediation**

When members are having a dispute with one another, all of those involved should choose a party that they all agree is neutral in order to hear out the issues of both sides. It is recommended that those involved in the grievance process not have pre-conditions before they are willing to enter mediation. After that, the neutral party should offer a path forward that they think will balance the needs of all involved parties. The parties may choose to accept or reject this path forward or offer changes to it. Alternatively, they may ask that another path to reconciliation be offered or that a new mediator be chosen.

### **Expulsion**

If it is determined that a member is violating the **Points of Unity, Meeting Principles**, or any of the rules laid out in this document, they may have their member status stripped from them with a proposal and a vote where the vote of the member in question does not count. The member that is being expelled will have an opportunity to plead their case after their expulsion has been proposed and before voting begins. All other rules to voting and procedure must be followed in this process.

### **Bylaw Amendments**

Anything contained in this document can be edited by simply passing a proposal through the meetings. This is a living document and should be changed as the group desires.

## **General Assembly Code of Conduct**

### **Structure**

The General Assembly is a democratic body functioning in a space which is open to the public with a consensus model described in the section titled **Meetings** and composed of participants, as described in the section titled **Participants**.

Participants of the General Assembly may also choose to form into Working Groups. Working Groups are formed when there is a particular interest or need which must be addressed in order for the General Assembly to function. (Ex: A Black Working Group, an Indigenous American Working Group, a Women's Working Group, etc...) These Working Groups are advised to use the rules laid out in **Procedure** in order to make internal decisions. Working Groups will meet on their own, apart from the General Assembly either in breakouts during General Assembly meetings or during separate Working Group meetings.

The General Assembly may create and pass proposals which affect the Working Groups, but the Working Groups may not create and pass proposals which affect the General Assembly, nor which infringe on the General Assembly's right to pass proposals concerning the structure of the Working Groups.

### **Points of Unity**

The following principles are the points which individuals must agree to in order to be admitted as a participant of the General Assembly. They represent guiding concepts which should animate the purpose and direction of the group's decisions.

1. **Point 1:** Description.
2. **Point 2:** Description.
3. **Point 3:** Description.

## **Participants**

All of those who are present for the General Assembly meeting and agree to the rules in this document are valid participants. All participants have the right to vote in the proceedings of the General Assembly, although non-participants may or may not be permitted to sit in on meetings. Participants can only be excluded by going through the process listed under **Grievance**.

## **Delegation**

If a proposal requires a particular person or group of people to carry it out and the body deems it necessary, they may elect a delegate. A delegate is a person given the right to act to carry out only what is within the bounds of a particular proposal that was passed by the General Assembly or Working Groups. A delegate can have delegate status revoked at any point by a vote in the General Assembly or the delegating Working Group.

## **Meetings**

In order for meetings to be carried out in a way where everyone gets their time to speak, the following procedures should be followed:

### **Meeting Principles**

**One Mic:** Only one person speaks at a time.

**Progressive Stack:** The Stack Keeper should put any person that is Black, Indigenous American, LGBTQIA+, Transgender, a Woman, neurodivergent, or even those who have not spoken yet, at the top of the stack. This is to make sure that those with marginalized voices are always heard and are not tread underneath those with majority perspectives or backgrounds.

**Mutual Respect:** Even when having heated disputes, participants should avoid insulting one another or assuming bad faith.

### **Roles**

The people in the following positions should rotate from different participants of the General Assembly in order to prevent appearances of favouritism or erasure.

**Facilitator:** The job of the facilitator is to moderate the meeting, but not to lead it. This is to say; the facilitator should make sure that the rules are being followed and they should keep the meeting on track, proceeding through the various parts of the agenda, but they should not intercede their opinions or direct discussion in any particular direction. The facilitator should be a neutral party that seeks to maintain good will and ease tensions, while keeping order in the discussions.

**Stack Keeper:** The job of the stack keeper is to keep track of everyone who needs to speak in the audience, keep a list, keep track of the order of those who have spoken, and enforce the Progressive Stack.

**Notekeeper:** The job of the notekeeper is to keep a record of the discussions being had and then, at the behest of the General Assembly, either keep the notes somewhere secure or discard them. The notekeeper should redact anything that the assembly does not want recorded.

### **Procedure**

The following is a description of how meetings should be structured:

1. **Updates:** This is an opportunity for individuals to give reports as to what has taken place in between meetings, especially the decisions of Work Groups and the outcomes of direct actions.
2. **Discussion:** This is a period where the floor is opened to discussion. It should be limited to some set amount of time for each meeting, so that it does not overflow and disallow time

for proposals and voting. During this period, the facilitator may ask for what is called a temperature check, which is a non-binding vote, on the spot, of everyone that is present, in order to gauge support for an item under discussion.

3. **Voting:** A resolution is presented by an individual in the democratic body.

Following this, there is a discussion period about the resolution.

After this discussion has concluded, the voters all place their first votes as a temperature check and the results are tallied.

If the first vote is unanimous, the measure is passed and planning will begin.

If not, those who voted against the measure are asked to qualify their concerns and plead their case.

After they have pleaded their case, voters are asked to weigh in on their agreement with the grievance and those with the grievance offer amendments that, if instituted, would garner their support.

These friendly amendments are then voted on and the status of consensus is re-assessed. If there is a unanimous vote, the motion is passed.

If, after all amendments have been passed, turned down, or sustained, the vote is unanimous, the motion is passed and planning will begin.

Otherwise, the motion is tabled or dismissed.

4. **Closure:** After voting has finished, the facilitator should ask for final comments and announcements, then call the meeting to a close.

### **Grievances**

Although all of the processes listed above are created precisely to avoid grievances between participants of the group, it is nonetheless the case that legitimate problems will arise between participants.

### **Mediation**

When participants are having a dispute with one another, all of those involved should choose a party that they all agree is neutral in order to hear out the issues of both sides. It is recommended that those involved in the grievance process not have pre-conditions before they are willing to enter mediation. After that, the neutral party should offer a path forward that they think will balance the needs of all involved parties. The parties may choose to accept or reject this path forward or offer changes to it. Alternatively, they may ask that another path to reconciliation be offered or that a new mediator be chosen.

### **Exclusion**

If it is determined that a participant is violating the **Points of Unity, Meeting Principles**, or any of the rules laid out in this document, they may have their status as a valid participant stripped from them with a proposal and a vote where the vote of the participant in question does not count. The participant that is being excluded will have an opportunity to plead their case after their exclusion has been proposed and before voting begins. All other rules to voting and procedure must be followed in this process.

### **Bylaw Amendments**

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## **Autonomous Zone Social Contract**

### **Structure**

The People's Assembly will be a democratic body functioning inside **Your Autonomous Zone's Name** with a consensus model described in the section titled **Meetings** and is composed of Members, as described in the section titled **Membership**.

Members within the People's Assembly may also choose to form into Councils. Councils are formed when there is a particular interest or need which must be addressed in order for the People's Assembly to function. (Ex: A Black Council, an Indigenous American Council, a Women's Council, etc...) These Councils are advised to use the rules laid out in **Procedure** in order to make internal decisions. Councils will meet on their own, apart from the People's Assembly either in breakouts during People's Assembly meetings or during separate Council meetings.

Autonomous Zone Security is appointed formally through the process listed under **Delegation**. Vigilante security forces should be formally absorbed into the Autonomous Zone Security, dissolved, or asked to leave the zone. The Autonomous Zone Security is fully under the control of the People's Assembly and is subject to all rules within this document.

The People's Assembly may create and pass proposals which affect the Councils and the Autonomous Zone Security, but the Councils and Autonomous Zone Security may not create and pass proposals which affect the People's Assembly, nor which infringe on the People's Assembly's right to pass proposals concerning the structure of the Councils or Autonomous Zone Security.

### **Points of Unity**

The following principles are the points which individuals must agree to in order to be admitted as a member of the People's Assembly. They represent guiding concepts which should animate the purpose and direction of the group's decisions.

1. **Point 1:** Description.
2. **Point 2:** Description.
3. **Point 3:** Description.

### **Membership**

All of those who originally voted to pass these bylaws and agreed to the **Points of Unity** are made members. Only members have the right to vote in the proceedings of the People's Assembly, although non-members may or may not be permitted to sit in on meetings.

New members may be added so long as they are vouched for by at least one existing member of the group and agree to the **Points of Unity**. They may only be removed by going through the process listed under **Grievance**.

### **Delegation**

If a proposal requires a particular person or group of people to carry it out and the body deems it necessary, they may elect a delegate. A delegate is a person given the right to act to

carry out only what is within the bounds of a particular proposal that was passed by the People's Assembly or Councils. A delegate can have delegate status revoked at any point by a vote in the People's Assembly or the delegating Council.

### **Meetings**

In order for meetings to be carried out in a way where everyone gets their time to speak, the following procedures should be followed:

### **Meeting Principles**

**One Mic:** Only one person speaks at a time.

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**Mutual Respect:** Even when having heated disputes, members should avoid insulting one another or assuming bad faith.

### **Roles**

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Following this, there is a discussion period about the resolution.

After this discussion has concluded, the voters all place their first votes as a temperature check and the results are tallied.

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### **Expulsion**

If it is determined that a member is violating the **Points of Unity, Meeting Principles**, or any of the rules laid out in this document, they may have their member status stripped from them with a proposal and a vote where the vote of the member in question does not count. The member that is being expelled will have an opportunity to plead their case after their expulsion has been proposed and before voting begins. All other rules to voting and procedure must be followed in this process.

### **Bylaw Amendments**

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## Example of points of unity

1. Direct Democracy – We believe that all people should have an equal voice in determining our common future. We organize for self-determination by having decision-making power come from the bottom up. All power to the people.
2. Anti-Hierarchy – We oppose all systems of domination. We fight against capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism, white supremacy, and all other forms of oppression, and lift up the voices of the most marginalized. We embrace Martin Luther King’s call for a radical revolution of values, and uphold feminist, egalitarian, and indigenous values against colonial, capitalist, and hierarchical values.
3. Ecology – The fate of humanity is intertwined with all other life on Earth. We embrace the holistic and reconstructive dimensions of indigenous knowledge and ecological science. Capitalism is killing life on our planet, and we are fighting to sustain life by reharmonizing human societies with the rest of the natural world.
4. Solidarity Economy – Economic democracy is essential for the preservation of our ecosystems and the self-determination of our communities. We seek to abolish the profit system and place economic decision-making in the hands of communities and workers through communal, cooperative economics and an ethic of mutual aid.
5. Revolution from the Ground Up – Our movement seeks to transform our oppressive society through collective resistance to the destructive capitalist system, together with the creation of living alternatives. We organize for dual power in our communities by building democracy and mutual aid outside the state, to confront the present system while creating the future that will replace it. We are building the new world in the shell of the old.
6. Unity-in-Diversity: We celebrate the fullest range of human identities and experiences in our movement. Our diversity and our relationships with one another are our greatest strengths. We believe that this whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and that our interdependence and common humanity unite us. The road is long, and we must walk it together.

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Black Flag Catalyst  
The Black Flag Catalyst Revolt Guide  
September 18, 2020

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