



Behind the Black Bloc

An Overview of Militant Anarchism and Anti-Fascism

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Samuel Hodgson, and Austin Blair

June 2021



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Acronyms

BAMN	By Any Means Necessary
CHAZ	Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone
ELF	Earth Liberation Front
FAI	Informal Anarchist Federation (Federazione Anarchica Informale)
FRI	International Revolutionary Front (Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale)
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ISIS	Islamic State (aka Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham)
ITS	Individuals Tending Toward Savagery (Individualidades Tendiendo a lo Salvaje)
IWW	International Workers of the World
NOS	Nucleus of Opposition to the System
SDGT	Specially Designated Global Terrorist
YLF	Youth Liberation Front
YPG	People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel)

Introduction

In 2020–2021, the United States saw a discernible rise in armed politics and violent activism. Multiple factions and movements resorted to violence or the threat of violence to pursue their objectives, and the United States witnessed scenes it had not experienced for decades, such as armed citizens patrolling the streets in Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and elsewhere.¹ Militant anarchists and anti-fascists often took to the streets during this period. On August 29, 2020, Michael Reinoehl became the first anti-fascist responsible for a killing in the United States in 25 years when he shot Aaron Danielson, a member of the far-right group Patriot Prayer, at a rally in Portland, Oregon.²

In 2020, *Antifa* became a household word and a contested topic in presidential debates. However, it is clearly difficult for many observers to differentiate anti-fascist and anarchist efforts from a broader set of protest activities. Militant anarchists and anti-fascists see themselves as responding to an oppressive state and the rise of fascist organizing. While militant anti-fascists and anarchists view themselves as the protectors of marginalized communities, other militant actors see anarchist and anti-fascist groups as the aggressors to whom *they* are responding.

This report analyzes militant anti-fascism and anarchism within the broader domestic tapestry of armed politics and also explores transnational movements connected

to anarchism and anti-fascism. Ideologically, anarchism and anti-fascism are similar but not identical. Anarchism is resolute in its opposition to the state, whereas anti-fascists focus on opposing institutions, groups, and individuals they perceive as fascist. However, the two ideologies influence one another, and the two movements have notable commonalities. While neither is inherently violent, both ideologies have adherents who embrace the use of violence to achieve their goals. This report examines *why* and *how* these groups carry out violence, and how they interact with partners.

Anti-fascism and anarchism are not new ideologies. There is a rich history of global anti-fascist and anarchist organizing. Militant anarchists and anti-fascists are active in Europe, Latin America, and beyond, participating in acts of street violence similar to those recently seen in the United States. In some countries – particularly in Chile, Greece, Italy, and Mexico – militant anarchists also perpetrate violence outside of protest situations, including arson, bombings, assassinations, and assaults. Fortunately, militant anarchist and anti-fascist movements in the United States have conducted such attacks less frequently.

Experts view militant anarchist and anti-fascist activity as largely decentralized. Many of these militant groups exist solely at the local level, in small units called *affinity groups*. Members largely focus on limited violence during protests and other mass actions rather than carrying out targeted attacks. Militant anarchist and anti-fascist groups worldwide emphasize indirect communication with one another. Public blogs

1. See, for example: Benjamin Fearnow, “Armed Black Militia Challenges White Nationalists at Georgia’s Stone Mountain Park,” *Newsweek*, July 5, 2020. (<https://www.newsweek.com/armed-black-demonstrators-challenge-white-supremacist-militia-georgias-stone-mountain-park-1515494>); Jared Goyette, “Citizen Patrols Organize Across Minneapolis as Confidence in the Police Force Plummet,” *The Washington Post*, June 7, 2020. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/citizen-patrols-make-statement-in-minneapolis/2020/06/06/cc1844d4-a78c-11ea-b473-04905b1af82b_story.html); Stephen Montemayor, “Inside Minnesota’s Boogaloo Movement: Armed and Eager for Societal Collapse,” *Star Tribune*, July 18, 2020. (<https://www.startribune.com/inside-minnesota-s-boogaloo-movement-armed-and-eager-for-societal-collapse/571821151>)

2. Reinoehl claims that the killing was an act of self-defense. Topher Gauk-Roger, “Portland Shooting Victim Wasn’t an Agitator or Radical, Friend Says,” *CNN*, September 1, 2020. (<https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/01/us/portland-shooting-victim-aaron-j-danielson/index.html>); Nigel Jaquiss, “Portland Police Arrest Warrant Includes New Details About Fatal Shooting of Aaron Danielson,” *Willamette Week*, September 4, 2020. (<https://www.wweek.com/news/2020/09/04/portland-police-search-warrant-includes-new-details-about-fatal-shooting-of-aaron-danielson/>); Lois Beckett, “Anti-Fascists Linked to Zero Murders in the U.S. in 25 Years,” *The Guardian* (UK), July 27, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/27/us-rightwing-extremists-attacks-deaths-database-leftwing-antifa>)

and news sites function as clearinghouses to issue communiqués, claim attacks, and publicize violence. Select conflict regions – particularly Rojava in Syria and the Donbas region in Ukraine – and major protests present opportunities for in-person exchanges.

Though militant anti-fascists and anarchists engage in violent activity, both movements embrace some elements of pacifism or nonviolence. Militant anarchists, for example, typically prefer attacking property and infrastructure over people. For attacks employing bombs, for example, they often strike at times when fewer people are expected to be at the attack location. However, anarchist groups in Latin America and Europe have intentionally engaged in lethal violence.

In the United States, the First Amendment protects advocacy of anarchist or anti-fascist goals and ideologies decoupled from the use of violence. Individual members of a single group may vary in their willingness to deploy violence to achieve shared goals. Groups and individuals who engage in violent activity may mingle with those who do not but espouse similar rhetoric or beliefs.

There may be a shift in militant anarchist and anti-fascist activities under the Biden administration. The activity of these groups tends to be cyclical, dependent upon the degree to which “fascists” are thought to be gaining power. These groups saw former President Donald Trump as fitting into this category. As a result, under his administration, the United States saw a significant increase in activity by anarchist and anti-fascist groups, reaching heights not seen in decades. Now that the apparent peak of civil unrest has passed and Trump has left office, militant anarchist and anti-fascist activities may decline. That said, militant anarchists and anti-fascists are motivated by a wide range of goals, many of which are unlikely to change under the new administration. Numerous groups

that fall under this umbrella vociferously disagree with many of the Biden administration’s policies, which they believe do not go far enough to the left. Regardless, if militant anarchist and anti-fascist groups try to maintain a similar operational tempo under the Biden administration, they may attract less support. The biggest countervailing factor that may enable continued large-scale mobilizations is the information environment, which makes such mobilizations easier than ever before.

Origins of Contemporary Anarchism and Anti-Fascism

Anarchism emerged as a political ideology in Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Rooted in socialist ideals of class liberation, European anarchism offered an alternative to other constructs of the state: an association of autonomous communities bound by ideology.³ The anarchist movement spread to Latin America and the United States, fueled by immigration and native anti-capitalist and anti-statist sentiments. In the United States and Europe, anarchists sought influence via the labor movement (anarcho-syndicalism).

Central to the anarchist movement’s adoption of violence was the concept of *propaganda by deed*, which holds that violent action is the best way to draw attention to a political cause.⁴ Toward the final decades of the 19th century, violence associated with the movement hit an historical peak. High-profile attacks included the 1886 bombing in Chicago’s Haymarket Square and the assassination of President William McKinley in 1902. The federal government subsequently moved to deport foreign anarchists and prevent immigrants with anarchist beliefs from entering the country. The Immigration Act of 1903, which made foreign anarchists an inadmissible class, was the “first measure to provide for the exclusion of aliens on the grounds of

3. Martin A. Miller, Arif Dirlik, George Woodcock, and Franklin Rosemont, “Anarchism,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, November 25, 2019. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/anarchism>)

4. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 3rd Edition (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2017), page 5.

proscribed opinions.”⁵ European governments similarly cracked down on the anarchist movement, causing the ideology to fade.⁶

Modern anti-fascism is inspired by opposition to fascism in Europe in the inter-war period. The movement of that era included anarchists, communists, socialists, and adherents of other left-wing ideologies. Many, though not all, anti-fascists during that period were explicitly violent, fighting their ideological opponents in the streets. As fascist parties took power in Spain, Italy, and Germany, anti-fascism embraced forms of guerilla warfare. One such group was the German organization Antifaschistische Aktion, the namesake for contemporary “Antifa” groups. Antifaschistische Aktion’s fight against Adolf Hitler’s genocidal Nazi party in the 1930s contributed to the enduring prominence of the group’s name and symbology. German communists and socialists who survived Nazi rule formed Antifa groups immediately after the war’s end, but these were – like the contemporary Antifa movement – inspired by the pre-war group rather than direct successors to it. However, militant forms of anti-fascism largely disappeared in the immediate post-war period due to the Allied victory, the subsequent division of Germany, and the dominance of Soviet communism in Eastern Europe. The emergence of neo-Nazi skinheads in the United Kingdom and the United States in the 1970s and 1980s led to the return of street-level anti-fascism. In West Germany, left-wing opposition to the government adopted the name and symbology of Antifa.

When anarchist militancy gradually re-emerged, its greatest traction could be seen in Southern and Southeastern Europe. In Italy, insurrectionary anarchism was first promulgated during the Years of Lead, a period of elevated violence by both left- and right-wing extremist groups that began in the late 1960s.⁷ In Greece, anarchism influenced resistance to the military junta that ruled from 1967 to 1975. Virulent anti-American sentiments were common at the time, as anarchists viewed the United States as supportive of the regime. The 17 November Revolutionary Organization assassinated CIA station chief Richard Welch in 1975.⁸ Militant anarchism in Greece found new vigor in popular resistance to austerity measures imposed by the European Union and Greek government in response to the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent Greek government-debt crisis (leading to the slightly paradoxical sight of anarchists violently protesting cuts to government).⁹

In the United States, militant anarchism lay largely dormant until the 1990s. Militant groups regained national prominence at the “Battle for Seattle” protests at the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference. The previous year’s WTO ministerial in Geneva had been marked by riotous violence, but law enforcement saw the problem as “unique to Europe and highly unlikely to migrate to the U.S.”¹⁰ This proved to be a significant misreading. The raucous anti-WTO protests that gripped Seattle included a contingent of protesters bent on violent disruption.

Police in Seattle observed the use of “non-criminal protesters to buffer smaller pockets of protesters

5. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Legislation from 1901-1940,” accessed January 17, 2021. (ilw.com/resources/Immigration_Legal_History_Legislation_1901-1940.pdf)

6. Martin A. Miller, Arif Dirlik, George Woodcock, and Franklin Rosemont, “Anarchism,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, November 25, 2019. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/anarchism>)

7. Francesco Marone, “A Profile of the Informal Anarchist Federation in Italy,” *CTC Sentinel*, Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2014, pages 21–25. (<https://www.ctc.usma.edu/a-profile-of-the-informal-anarchist-federation-in-italy>)

8. Geoge Papadopoulos, “Crisis in Greece: Anarchists in the Birthplace of Democracy,” *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 10, Issue 14, July 2012. (<https://jamestown.org/program/crisis-in-greece-anarchists-in-the-birthplace-of-democracy>)

9. Ibid.

10. Seattle Police Department, “The Seattle Police Department After Action Report, World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, Seattle, Washington, November 29 – December 3, 1999,” April 4, 2000, pages 10 and 17–18. (<http://media.cleveland.com/pdextra/other/Seattle%20PD%20after%20action%20report.pdf>)

engaging in significant criminal acts,” including assaulting officers with laser pointers and rocks and smashing windows. Donning black clothing to obscure their identity (*black bloc*), the protesters seized intersections, started fires, and assaulted officers with chemical irritants.¹¹ While no deaths or serious injuries occurred, the Seattle Police Department acknowledged that “tactically, it was taught a hard lesson by a well-trained and equipped adversary.”¹²

After that, anarchist militancy in the United States spent the next 15 years largely unnoticed, save for a few moments of public attention. In January 2002, for example, anti-fascist counter-protesters violently clashed with white nationalists and white supremacist extremists marching in York, Pennsylvania.¹³ Some contemporary anti-fascist networks and organizers also mobilized as part of the Occupy movement, which protested perceived economic and social injustice. However, anarchist and anti-fascist movements both became more active and gained national prominence during Trump’s candidacy and presidency. Key events during this period, including the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville (discussed subsequently in this report) and racial justice protests galvanized both anarchists and anti-fascists across the United States.

Key Tenets and Trends of Anarchism and Anti-Fascism

Anarchism and anti-fascism, while often conflated, are distinct ideologies and movements. Anarchism is defined by opposition to the modern state, generally seeking to replace it with alternative systems. Anti-fascism is shaped primarily by opposition to perceived fascism and racism. Despite its distinct characteristics,

contemporary anti-fascism is in some ways influenced by anarchist ideology and tactics; many anti-fascists are also anarchists. But anti-fascism is a broader movement that encompasses activists with vastly different visions of an ideal government.

Neither anarchism nor anti-fascism possess universally accepted doctrines. The movements in some ways lend themselves to variegated definitions. As one self-described anarchist put it, “anarchism allows for absolute personal freedom.”¹⁴ Thus, the definitions that follow are not *the* anti-fascist or anarchist positions. Rather, this report describes a collection of prevailing beliefs among militant factions of highly diverse and largely decentralized movements. This report uses the term *Antifa* only in the context of groups that explicitly adopt that label. *Anti-fascism* better encapsulates both the core element of the ideology (opposition to perceived fascism) as well as the range of groups that organize around this principle. This distinction avoids the erroneous implication that there is a single, unified Antifa organization within the United States or abroad with a coherent structure or defined ideology.

Anarchism

Anarchists, both militant and non-militant, believe that individual freedom is paramount, and that hierarchies of authority and power are generally infringements upon that freedom. They oppose traditional forms of government, instead advocating for decision-making by consensus, direct democracy, and the organization of society by mutual association. Anarchists typically oppose private property rights, which they view as an element of centralized authority.¹⁵

11. *Ibid.*, pages 36–39.

12. *Ibid.*, page 3.

13. Rick Lee, “‘The Battle of York’ Was Here. Who Knew?” *York Daily Record*, August 13, 2017. (<https://www.ydr.com/story/news/2017/08/13/battle-york-here-who-knew/562969001>)

14. Colin Clarke and Michael Kenney, “What Antifa Is, What It Isn’t, and Why It Matters,” *War on the Rocks*, June 23, 2020. (<https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/what-antifa-is-what-it-isnt-and-why-it-matters>)

15. See, for example: “To Change Everything: An Anarchist Appeal,” *CrimethInc*, 2018. (<https://crimethinc.com/tce>); David Graeber, “Are You an Anarchist?: The Answer May Surprise You!” *The Anarchist Library*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/david-graeber-are-you-an-anarchist-the-answer-may-surprise-you>)



The “Circle A” symbol is commonly associated with anarchism.

To achieve their goals, some anarchists, referred to here as militant anarchists, employ violence. However, **anarchism is not an inherently violent ideology.** Anarchists embrace a wide range of tactics to achieve their goals, the majority of which are nonviolent. Some anarchists eschew violence in any form. Many anarchists condone violence only as a means of self-defense, believing they can dismantle the state through nonviolent means. Other anarchists may accept violence as necessary to achieve their political goals but do not themselves engage in violence or directly support it. Peaceful activities by anarchist groups include civil disobedience, protest, and community organizing.

“Many anarchists condone violence only as a means of self-defense, believing they can dismantle the state through nonviolent means.”

A key element of many anarchist movements is *direct action*. While the term has many meanings and connotations, direct action is best understood as an attempt to achieve concrete aims through specific actions rather than by relying on appeals to the state

or to local authorities.¹⁶ The term typically indicates a degree of militancy that stops short of insurrection. As David Graeber writes in a book published by an anarchist press, “if one is doing more than marching around with signs, but not yet ready to take to the hills with AK-47s, then one is a direct actionist.”¹⁷ While direct action can be violent, the term refers to a wide range of political activity, including community organizing and mutual aid societies.¹⁸ For militant anarchists, violence against state institutions, private businesses, or other perceived institutions of power can be an element of direct action.

Anti-Fascism

The term *anti-fascism* also has diverse meanings. Simply defined, anti-fascism is opposition to fascism and its proponents. However, anti-fascists often target a wider array of political opponents than a literal definition of fascism would imply, either because they adopt an overly broad definition of fascism or because they seek to combat a broader array of ideologies that they see as “far-right.” The single-issue nature of the anti-fascist movement brings together participants from disparate political ideologies, typically on the political left, including socialism, communism, and anarchism.¹⁹ Organizers often intentionally keep the movement broad, focusing on combating a set of beliefs rather than on establishing a particular political program. Because the movement’s interpretation of fascism tends to be broad, it may define numerous objectives as effectively anti-fascist. For example, one anarchist, anti-fascist organizer and kickboxer with the Anti-Authoritarian Movement in Greece – where treatment of migrants is a major issue for the anti-fascist movement – claimed that “if you show solidarity with the refugees, you are an anti-fascist.”²⁰

16. Direct action is distinct from civil disobedience, which is intended to pressure the state or another entity to take action. Rob Sparrow, “Anarchist Politics and Direct Action,” *The Anarchist Library*, 1997. (<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/rob-sparrow-anarchist-politics-direct-action>)

17. David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009), page 204.

18. Rob Sparrow, “Anarchist Politics and Direct Action,” *The Anarchist Library*, 1997. (<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/rob-sparrow-anarchist-politics-direct-action>)

19. Colin Clarke and Michael Kenney, “What Antifa Is, What It Isn’t, and Why It Matters,” *War on the Rocks*, June 23, 2020. (<https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/what-antifa-is-what-it-isnt-and-why-it-matters>)

20. Mark Bray, *The Antifascist Handbook* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2017), page 103.



The logo of Antifaschistische Aktion, used by many anti-fascist groups.

Within the anti-fascist movement, militants occupy a small niche. **Anti-fascism is not an inherently violent ideology**, and not all direct action by militant anti-fascists is violent. However, when militant anti-fascists resort to violence, they wield three main rationales. First, anti-fascists believe that rational debate and government action have historically failed to halt fascism, and thus violent direct action – sometimes reactive, sometimes preemptive – is justified and necessary. Second, anti-fascists argue that militant organizing has historically succeeded in reducing fascists’ activity and disrupting their organizing power.²¹ Finally, they hold that violent self-defense is appropriate in the face of fascist violence. Militants sometimes justify violence as speaking to fascists “in their own language.”²²

The definition of self-defense adopted by militant anti-fascists can be expansive. Some consider preemptive violence to be self-defense.²³ Additionally, militant anti-fascists recognize that the utility of violence must be measured in part by public perception. In other

words, they assess the public’s willingness to tolerate violence, which influences both the level of violence and also the specific targets that militant anti-fascists might consider.²⁴

The growing number of domestic anti-fascist and anti-racist groups dedicated to armed self-defense is noteworthy. Numerous anti-fascist “gun clubs” enthusiastically embrace the Second Amendment. Most of these groups and their members are not violent extremists and are not directly connected to violence. They see guns as an important element in defending themselves and marginalized communities from fascists, racists, and other hostile groups.²⁵

One such individual who did resort to violence was Willem van Spronsen, a member of a John Brown Gun Club chapter, a prominent anti-fascist gun club. In July 2019, he attacked a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center in Washington state, armed with a gun and Molotov cocktails.²⁶ He died in the attack. While his Gun Club chapter did not explicitly endorse his methods, the group posted a commemoration of van Spronsen on its website on the anniversary of his death:

He was a hero in many ways. There has not been a single event that we’ve attended where at least one person doesn’t come up to us to tell us how Will has changed their life. Even those who didn’t know him personally but who have read his words say his ideology has become a driving force in their lives. “you don’t have to burn the motherfucker down, but are you going to just stand by?” ... He lives on in those that loved him and those who continue his work. Rest in power, Will.²⁷

21. Ibid., page 169.

22. Ibid., page 65.

23. Ibid., page 169.

24. Ibid., page 185.

25. Ibid., page 120.

26. Hannah Allam, “I am Antifa: One Activist’s Violent Death Became a Symbol for the Right and Left,” *NPR*, July 23, 2020. (<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/23/893533916/i-am-antifa-one-activist-s-violent-death-became-a-symbol-for-the-right-and-left>)

27. “Rest in Power, Will, One Year Later,” *Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club*, July 13, 2020. (<https://psjbgc.org/blog/rest-in-power-will-one-year-later>)

Related Movements

The militant anarchist and anti-fascist movements intersect with ecological and animal-rights movements as well as with separatist and indigenous-resistance movements. Anarchist movements may embrace ecological extremism as part of their broad program of anti-state and anti-capitalist resistance.

Militant environmentalist and animal-rights groups use violence to disrupt business practices and industries they view as damaging the environment. This violence includes attacks on infrastructure and facilities, such as laboratories conducting animal research; government facilities; banks; and other institutions symbolic of the capitalist system.²⁸ Ecological and animal-rights militant groups such as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and Animal Liberation Front have claimed attacks on anarchist media outlets, and anarchist groups express solidarity with imprisoned ecological and animal-rights militants.²⁹

“Anarchist movements may embrace ecological extremism as part of their broad program of anti-state and anti-capitalist resistance.”

Anarchists and anti-fascists also support numerous separatist and indigenous movements. For example, they may act in support of American Indian and First Peoples movements in the United States and Canada.

Oil pipelines and other elements of the energy industry – frequent targets of both environmental and indigenous activism – are sometimes a focus. American anarchists were involved in protests opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota; participants clashed with police and burned construction vehicles.³⁰ Anarchists in Canada have sabotaged rail infrastructure in solidarity with First Peoples activists opposing the oil industry.³¹ Recently, two women were arrested in Washington state on terrorism charges for placing a series of shunts on railroads, devices that would have interrupted an electrical current that enables the tracks’ safety features. The attacks were claimed on an anarchist website in solidarity with the indigenous peoples of Canada.³²

Domestic and Foreign Militant Groups

Militant anarchist and anti-fascist networks have historically emphasized local, community level-organizing. *Affinity groups* – small, local groups of individuals that organize actions – typically represent the basic unit of organization for both movements. Within anarchist networks, cells may form only to carry out limited actions, often only one, before disbanding. Thus, attributing violence to a single persistent organization can be difficult. When national or international groups are formed, they are usually (but not always) informal, demonstrating limited coordination over time.

28. For more on environmental and animal-rights militancy in the United States, see: Jerome P. Bjelopera, “Domestic Terrorism: An Overview,” *Congressional Research Service*, August 21, 2017. (<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R44921.pdf>)

29. See, for example: Synapses of Ignition for the Polymorphous Anarchist Struggle - ELF, “Athens: The Earth Liberation Front Takes Responsibility for an Incendiary Attack Against a Poultry Company in Solidarity with the Prisoners Struggle (Greece),” *325*, April 13, 2015. (<https://325.nostate.net/2015/04/19/athens-the-earth-liberation-front-takes-responsibility-for-an-incendiary-attack-against-a-poultry-company-in-solidarity-with-the-prisoners-struggle-greece>); see also the entry for Marius Mason in: “Prisoner List,” *International Week of Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners*, June 2020. (<https://solidarity.international/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/prisoner-list-en-2020.pdf>)

30. “Report Back from the Battle for Sacred Ground,” *CrimethInc*, November 1, 2016. (<https://crimethinc.com/2016/11/01/feature-report-back-from-the-battle-for-sacred-ground>)

31. See, for example: “Toronto: Explorations in Rail Disruption in Solidarity with the Wet’suwet’en (Kanada),” *325*, January 16, 2020. (<https://325.nostate.net/2020/01/16/toronto-explorations-in-rail-disruption-in-solidarity-with-the-wetsuweten-kanada>)

32. U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Washington, Press Release, “Pair Charged with Interfering with Safety on Railroad Tracks,” November 30, 2020. (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdwa/pr/pair-charged-interfering-safety-railroad-tracks>)

Anti-Fascist Groups

This section identifies a selection of anti-fascist organizations and collectives that have engaged in violence or have members who have participated in militant activity. The level of these groups' organization varies within and between countries.³³ Prior to 2020, membership attributed to U.S.-based affinity groups was typically no greater than 15 per group.³⁴ However, the recent emergence of militant anti-fascist groups with large online followings suggests that this model has the potential to change and, in fact, could be changing already.³⁵

The most notable of the new anti-fascist networks with large online followings is the **Youth Liberation Front**, sometimes referred to by the name of its original Portland-based chapter, the **Pacific Northwest Youth Liberation Front**. First appearing on Twitter in May 2018, the group now has affiliates in multiple cities.³⁶ Its founders embrace militant action.³⁷

While many other militant affinity groups intentionally remain obscure, **Smash Racism DC** has gained attention for its involvement in militant protests and



Logo of the Pacific Northwest Youth Liberation Front.

for issuing threats. While the group can be viewed as part of the broader anti-fascist movement in the United States, it has no close organizational ties that could be determined through open sources and appears to operate exclusively in Washington, DC. In addition to helping organize a protest against Trump's inauguration, which involved multiple violent incidents, members have doxxed government officials, Republican politicians, and Fox News hosts.³⁸ In one instance, members appeared at Fox News host Tucker Carlson's house and shouted threats, prompting a police investigation.³⁹

33. See: "Forming an Antifa Group," *It's Going Down*, July 2012. (<https://itsgoingdown.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/howtoantifa-revised.pdf>); "How to Set Up an Anti-Fascist Group," *Anti-Fascist Network*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://antifascistnetwork.org/how-to-set-up-an-anti-fascist-group>)

34. Matt Zapotosky, Robert Klemko, and Jacqueline Alemany, "In Trump's Campaign Against Antifa, Observers See an Attempt to Distract from Protesters' Genuine Outrage," *The Washington Post*, May 31, 2020. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/trump-antifa-minneapolis-protests/2020/05/31/4f66c7a6-a36a-11ea-b473-04905b1af82b_story.html)

35. Joel Finkelstein, Alex Goldenburg, Sean Stevens, Pamela Paresky, Lee Jussim, John Farmer, and John K. Donohue, "Network-Enabled Anarchy: How Militant Anarcho-Socialist Networks Use Social Media to Instigate Widespread Violence Against Political Opponents and Law Enforcement," *Network Contagion Research Institute*, September 14, 2020. (<https://ncri.io/wp-content/uploads/NCRI-White-Paper-Network-Enabled-Anarchy-25-Sept-259pm.pdf>)

36. Hal Bernton, "Meet the Youth Liberation Front Behind a Militant Marathon of Portland Protests," *The Seattle Times*, July 13, 2020. (<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/meet-the-youth-liberation-front-the-militant-group-promoting-a-marathon-of-angry-portland-protests>)

37. Ibid.

38. See, for example: Smash Racism DC, *Facebook*, January 19, 2017. (<https://www.facebook.com/events/national-press-club-529-14th-street-nw-washington-dc-20045/protest-the-fascist-alt-right-deploraball/913163212152908>); Lauren Gambino, "DeploraBall: Trump Lovers and Haters Clash at Washington DC Event," *The Guardian* (UK), January 20, 2017. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/20/deploraball-trump-lovers-and-haters-clash-at-washington-dc-event>)

39. Brian Stelter, "Police Launch Investigation After Antifa Activists Descend on Fox Host Tucker Carlson's Home," *CNN*, November 8, 2018. (<https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/08/media/tucker-carlson-protesters/index.html>); Allyson Chiu, "'They Were Threatening Me and My Family': Tucker Carlson's Home Targeted by Protesters," *The Washington Post*, November 8, 2018. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2018/11/08/they-were-threatening-me-my-family-tucker-carlsons-home-targeted-by-protesters>)

The Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration and Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (commonly known as **By Any Means Necessary**, or BAMN), has similarly gained national attention for its use of violence. BAMN is an anti-racist group founded in 1995 in Southern California that focuses on racism, immigration, and youth issues.⁴⁰ The group is opposed to “fascist” forces possessing anti-immigration beliefs.⁴¹ BAMN views racism and anti-immigration as “twin temptations.”⁴² Opposition to fascism does not feature in BAMN’s stated foundational beliefs, though BAMN frequently protests against “fascists” whom the group believes espouse racism. The group has been involved in riots and violent clashes with some groups that can legitimately be defined as fascist, including the white supremacist extremist groups Golden State Skinheads and Traditionalist Workers Party.⁴³ In 2016, one BAMN leader was charged with felony assault and inciting a riot.⁴⁴ The group has utilized violent “deplatforming” tactics in the past, denying its opponents physical space for speech and assembly.

Affinity groups may form larger networks or federations with varying degrees of organization and coordination. Some networks merely share a commitment to certain ideals and principles, while others may facilitate

inter-group coordination and cooperation. Regardless of the level of activity at the network level, individual chapters have a high degree of independence in their activities and ideology.

In the United States, the most notable and long-standing network is the **Torch Network**, a loose confederation of anti-fascist organizations. It was born out of the now-dormant Anti-Racist Action and has chapters across the United States, including the country’s oldest extant Antifa organization, Rose City Antifa.⁴⁵ Torch Network was founded in 2013 by various groups, including the **Hoosier Antiracist Movement**, some of whose members served prison sentences for their role in a 2012 assault on members of a white identity politics group at a restaurant in Tinley Park, Illinois.⁴⁶ The Torch Network is, in practice, an idea-sharing network that gathers for certain actions or events.⁴⁷ Member organizations commit to five core “points of unity,” which emphasize opposition to fascism and “all forms of oppression and exploitation” through direct action.⁴⁸ The group’s core points allow for significant autonomy in ideology and activity.

Similar networks exist throughout Europe. The **Anti-Fascist Network** is a network of UK anti-fascist organizations, likely the largest in the country

40. “BAMN Pledge to Become a Leader of the New, Independent, Integrated, Youth-Led, Civil Rights/Immigrant Rights Movement,” *By Any Means Necessary*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://www.bamn.com/bamnpledge>)

41. “Yearning to Breathe Free: BAMN Declaration on Immigrant Rights,” *By Any Means Necessary*, May 26, 2006. (<https://www.bamn.com/yearningtobreathefree>)

42. Ibid.

43. Josh Meyer, “FBI, Homeland Security Warn of More ‘Antifa’ Attacks,” *Politico*, September 1, 2017. (<https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/01/antifa-charlottesville-violence-fbi-242235>)

44. See: Madeleine Gregory, “Judge Denies Request to Drop Felony Charges Against Berkeley Teacher, Activist Yvette Felarca,” *The Daily Californian*, May 10, 2018. (<https://www.dailycal.org/2018/05/10/judge-denies-request-drop-felony-charges-berkeley-teacher-activist-yvette-felarca>)

45. “Chapters,” *Torch City*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://torchantifa.org>); Colin Clarke and Michael Kenney, “What Antifa Is, What It Isn’t, and Why It Matters,” *War on the Rocks*, June 23, 2020. (<https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/what-antifa-is-what-it-isnt-and-why-it-matters>)

46. Wes Enzinna, “Inside the Underground Antiracist Movement that Brings the Fight to White Supremacists,” *Mother Jones*, May/June 2017. (<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/04/anti-racist-antifa-tinley-park-five>)

47. Colin Clarke and Michael Kenney, “What Antifa Is, What It Isn’t, and Why It Matters,” *War on the Rocks*, June 23, 2020. (<https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/what-antifa-is-what-it-isnt-and-why-it-matters>)

48. “Points of Unity,” *Torch Network*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://torchantifa.org/points-of-unity>)

today.⁴⁹ Much of Anti-Fascist Network’s activity has been carried out in opposition to the right-of-center English Defence League. The name **Anti-Fascist Action** (Antifascistische Aktion) is commonly used by local anti-fascist chapters in Northern Europe and was previously used by larger multi-chapter networks. In its current form, however, Anti-Fascist Action is best understood as a loose anti-fascist movement that emerged from the German tradition.⁵⁰

Some anti-fascist groups are militant labor guards who defend workers’ right to organize and who draw membership from the labor movement and existing unions. Some such groups also work to combat “fascist” organizing, seeking to proactively defend workers and minorities. The most notable is the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) **General Defense Committee** (GDC), a subsection of the broader IWW.⁵¹ While the GDC primarily focuses on labor issues, it has also developed an anti-fascist organizing capacity.⁵² GDC’s most prominent branch is in Minnesota’s Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Twin Cities branch takes a proactive and sometimes violent approach.⁵³ GDC sees itself as bridging the gap between anti-fascism and working-class self-defense and employs a strategy that allows for physical confrontation.⁵⁴

In February 2017, Twin Cities GDC members gathered for an IWW rally outside the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Individuals from a right-wing group known as Alt



Logo of the Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club.

Right MN arrived at the museum and argued with IWW supporters. The members of Alt Right MN then entered the museum, only to be attacked by members of Twin Cities GDC who followed them.⁵⁵ Kaywin Feldman, the institute’s director, later observed that “the IWW fellows were going through the galleries looking for them, for their opponents.”⁵⁶

Another subset of anti-fascists organizes around armed self-defense. For the minority of anti-fascists who join these organizations, gun ownership is seen as a right and as essential for defense against fascists. The most notable anti-fascist gun clubs are **Redneck Revolt** and **John Brown Gun Clubs**. Redneck Revolt is a national coalition of local gun clubs that formed in 2009 and, though dormant for a few years, was revived in 2016.⁵⁷ Redneck Revolt grew out of the first John Brown Gun Club, which formed in Kansas in 2004. Many Redneck Revolt chapters refer to themselves as John Brown Gun

49. “Anti-Fascist Network: Independent & grassroots groups fighting fascism around the UK,” *Anti-Fascist Network*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://antifascistnetwork.org>)

50. Federal Republic of Germany Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, “Verfassungsschutzbericht 2019 [Constitutional Protection Report 2019],” July 2019, pages 119–120. (<https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/embed/vsbericht-2019.pdf>)

51. The IWW itself is not a militant organization. Only limited elements within the General Defense Committee embrace violence.

52. Mark Bray, *The Antifascist Handbook* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2017), page 201.

53. *Ibid.*, page 117.

54. *Ibid.*, page 118.

55. Randy Kennedy, “Two Groups Scuffle Amid Art Inside a Minneapolis Museum,” *The New York Times*, February 27, 2017. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/27/arts/design/anti-trump-protest-minneapolis-institute-of-art.html>)

56. *Ibid.*

57. Mawa Iqbal, “Left-Wing Groups Take Up Arms in Name of Abolitionist John Brown,” *Flatland KC*, July 23, 2020. (<https://www.flatlandkc.org/news-issues/left-wing-groups-take-up-arms-in-name-of-abolitionist-john-brown>)

Clubs.⁵⁸ The name Redneck Revolt represents an effort to reclaim the term *redneck* from individuals the group perceives as racist, and to emphasize the term's origins within the working class.⁵⁹ Redneck Revolt has about 40 chapters nationwide.⁶⁰

The organization believes that poor workers of all races share a common enemy in the rich – and that the division between rich and poor is exacerbated by an inherently white supremacist capitalist system.⁶¹ The group holds that borders, capitalism, and all elements of the law enforcement system should not exist, and that these structures serve only the rich and exacerbate class differences.⁶² Redneck Revolt's members are dedicated to arming themselves in part because they believe it is their duty to overthrow the state if doing so becomes necessary.⁶³

Chapters in border states tend to be involved in migration issues. These chapters assist with what they describe as “humanitarian efforts,” including asylum support and search and rescue.⁶⁴ They seek to provide an alternative presence to other militias that patrol these areas, organizations that these chapters associate with the far right. As is true of the broader anarchist and anti-fascist movements, anti-fascist gun clubs are not inherently violent. However, there are exceptions, including the previously noted incident in which Willem van Spronsen attacked an ICE facility.

Anarchist Groups

Militant anarchists, like anti-fascists, organize into small affinity groups.⁶⁵ These groups are sometimes connected to larger, possibly transnational, networks. While some cells coordinate, others are linked only by violent acts committed under a common name. The broader networks do not appear to exercise centralized control. The extent to which cells interact beyond public communiqués is also unclear.

Through early 2020, violence perpetrated by militant anarchists in the United States was primarily attributable to individuals or small groups engaged in direct action at protests. Militant anarchists seem to coordinate closely when conducting direct action at protests. Isolated cells or individuals are more commonly the perpetrators of arson attacks and bombings.

Outside the United States, numerous militant anarchist networks engage in overtly violent activities. While some of these networks are strictly national in scope, several have affiliated cells in multiple countries, sometimes on multiple continents. However, it is possible that cells claiming affiliation with the same network – particularly those in different regions or on different continents – do not have direct links and are instead connected largely or entirely by shared ideology.

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58. Virginia Bridges, “They’re Leftists with Guns. Meet the Redneck Revolt,” *The Herald Sun*, September 1, 2017. (<https://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article170840742.html>); Teal Ruthschild, “Multiplicity in Movements: The Case for Redneck Revolt,” *Contexts*, Volume 18, Issue 3, 2019, pages 57–59. (https://docs.rwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1362&context=fcas_fp)
59. Teal Ruthschild, “Multiplicity in Movements: The Case for Redneck Revolt,” *Contexts*, Volume 18, Issue 3, 2019, pages 57–59. (https://docs.rwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1362&context=fcas_fp)
60. Kalli Holloway, “Six Gun Groups That Are Expanding Gun Culture Beyond White Right Wingers,” *Redneck Revolt*, September 4, 2017. (<https://www.redneckrevolt.org/single-post/2017/09/03/SIX-GUN-GROUPS-THAT-ARE-EXPANDING-GUN-CULTURE-BEYOND-WHITE-RIGHT-WINGERS>)
61. Teal Ruthschild, “Multiplicity in Movements: The Case for Redneck Revolt,” *Contexts*, Volume 18, Issue 3, 2019, pages 57–59. (https://docs.rwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1362&context=fcas_fp)
62. “Principles,” *Redneck Revolt*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>)
63. Teal Ruthschild, “Multiplicity in Movements: The Case for Redneck Revolt,” *Contexts*, Volume 18, Issue 3, 2019, pages 57–59. (https://docs.rwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1362&context=fcas_fp)
64. Beth Strano, “‘Camobagging’ in the Desert,” *Redneck Revolt*, May 25, 2019. (<https://www.redneckrevolt.org/single-post/Camobagging-in-the-Desert>)
65. Jerome P. Bjelopera, “Domestic Terrorism: An Overview,” *Congressional Research Service*, August 21, 2017, page 14. (<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R44921.pdf>)

In Italy, the most active network is the insurrectionary **Informal Anarchist Federation** (Federazione Anarchica Informale, or FAI).⁶⁶ FAI is likely the world's largest anarchist network, based on the number of cells claiming attacks. The group's public materials say it embraces leaderless resistance, with no hierarchy or formal membership. Rather than holding meetings, communication within the group ostensibly occurs through "an anonymous and horizontal debate between groups or individuals who communicate through practice."⁶⁷ FAI cells have engaged in attacks on individuals, infrastructure, and property. Other cells claiming affiliation with FAI have been active in the United Kingdom, Greece, and Russia, with additional activity in Belarus, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine.⁶⁸ FAI also established the **International Revolutionary Front** (Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale, or FRI) in early 2011. Cells often proclaim allegiance to both groups simultaneously.⁶⁹

Another notable network operates in Greece: **Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei** (Synomosia Pyrinon tis

Fotias, also translated as Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, and abbreviated as CCF). The U.S. State Department has designated CCF as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). The group has conducted attacks against both individuals and property. CCF launched a firebombing campaign in 2008 and sent a series of parcel bombs to various targets in 2010.⁷⁰ The group targets installations and symbols of the Greek government and foreign governments, including the European Union and United States. In addition to its domestic activities, CCF propaganda indicates that cells affiliated with CCF, sometimes in conjunction with FAI/FRI, have been active in Belarus, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Russia.⁷¹

Greece is also home to numerous other anarchist groups that are notable for their violence but do not have an international presence. Some, such as the insurrectionary **Organization of Revolutionary Self Defense** (Organosi Epanastatiki Aftoamyna) and the **Durruti Brigade**, have proven short-lived, with members arrested following a small number of attacks.⁷² Others, such as the **Group of Popular Fighters** (Omada

66. *Insurrectionary anarchism* refers to a particularly violent trend in anarchism that emphasizes immediate, violent direct action over formal organization and other forms of resistance. Francesco Marone, "A Profile of the Informal Anarchist Federation in Italy," *CTC Sentinel*, Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2014, pages 21–25. (<https://www.ctc.usma.edu/a-profile-of-the-informal-anarchist-federation-in-italy>)

67. Informal Anarchist Federation, "Open Letter to the Anarchist and Anti-Authoritarian Movement," *Escalation: Some Texts Concerning the Informal Anarchist Federation (FAI) and the Insurrectionist Project*, "Redux" Edition (2012), page 2. (Archived version available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200829210543/https://325.nostate.net/library/escalation1.pdf>); see also: "Interview by CCF – Imprisoned Members Cell with Alfredo Cospito (Greece, Italy)," *325*, December 1, 2014. (<https://325.nostate.net/2014/12/01/interview-by-ccf-imprisoned-members-cell-with-alfredo-cospito-greece-italy>)

68. CCF-FAI/FRI, "PDF: New Flyposter Mapping the Attacks of the Informal Anarchist Federation / International Revolutionary Front (Global)," *325*, October 2014. (Archived version available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20191112015240/https://325.nostate.net/2014/10/22/pdf-new-flyposter-mapping-the-attacks-of-the-informal-anarchist-federation-international-revolutionary-front-global>)

69. Informal Anarchist Federation/Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, "Informal Anarchist Federation / Conspiracy of Cells of Fire Claim Responsibility for the Incendiary Package Sent to the Minister of Justice (Greece)," *325*, February 2011. (Archived version available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200922013102/https://325.nostate.net/2011/02/16/informal-anarchist-federation-conspiracy-of-cells-of-fire-claim-responsibility-for-the-incendiary-package-sent-to-the-minister-of-justice-greece>)

70. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, Media Note, "Terrorist Designation of Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei," October 13, 2011. (<https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/10/175362.htm>)

71. CCF-FAI/FRI, "PDF: New Flyposter Mapping the Attacks of the Informal Anarchist Federation / International Revolutionary Front (Global)," *325*, October 2014. (Archived version available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20191112015240/https://325.nostate.net/2014/10/22/pdf-new-flyposter-mapping-the-attacks-of-the-informal-anarchist-federation-international-revolutionary-front-global>)

72. Europol, "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2020," June 23, 2020, page 59. (<https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2020>); "Greek Far-Left Group Claims French Embassy Grenade Attack," *Associated Press*, November 14, 2016. (<https://apnews.com/article/2352864d228341c786ed2c4d63f84ad5>); "Greece: 2 Arrested for Attacks on Extreme-Right Party," *Associated Press*, December 17, 2019. (<https://apnews.com/article/6bdca09e99e45ae1e7f9e27acfa15480>)

Laikon Agoniston, alternatively translated as either Group of Popular Rebels or Popular Fighters Group), remain active.⁷³ These groups have targeted foreign embassies, opposing political parties, media outlets, banks, and government institutions in shootings and bombings. **Revolutionary Struggle**, an insurrectionist anarchist group, was also designated as an SDGT by the State Department. The group claimed its most recent attack, a car bombing targeting a bank, in 2014 after a five-year period of inactivity and its leader's escape from prison (he has since been recaptured).⁷⁴

“Latin America, too, is home to a number of anarchist cells responsible for arson, bombings, and murder. Numerous cells in Latin America claim affiliation to FAI/FRI, CCF, or both.”

Latin America, too, is home to a number of anarchist cells responsible for arson, bombings, and murder. Numerous cells in Latin America claim affiliation to FAI/FRI, CCF, or both. These cells have carried out attacks against people and property, including shootings, bombings, and arson attacks. FAI-affiliated cells have conducted attacks in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and

Peru.⁷⁵ In addition, several countries have local-origin anarchist networks or independent cells not known to be affiliated with any network.

Mexico is a significant hub of recent anarchist activity. Between 2008 and 2016, about 50 Mexico-based anarchist groups carried out at least 220 attacks.⁷⁶ In addition to hosting cells aligned with FAI/FRI and CCF, Mexico saw the rise of **Individuals Tending Towards Savagery** (Individualidades Tendiendo a lo Salvaje, or ITS, also translated as Individualists Tending Toward the Wild). ITS is a green anarchist group sometimes referred to as eco-anarchist.⁷⁷ ITS departs from other anarchist networks in its adoption of an extreme outlook that embraces nihilistic violence.

ITS opposes technology, especially nanotechnology, believing that it harms the Earth and robs humans of their freedom.⁷⁸ In 2011, an ITS cell sent parcel bombs to two researchers at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. The group also sent bombs to another university research facility that year. The attacks, which targeted nanotechnology facilities, injured a number of people but did not kill anyone.⁷⁹ While the majority of ITS activity takes place in Latin

73. Niki Kitsantonis, “Greek Militants Say They Bombed Media Offices to Protest ‘Capitalist’ Agenda,” *The New York Times*, January 9, 2019. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/world/europe/greece-bombing-group-of-popular-fighters.html>)

74. U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2019,” June 2020, pages 297–298. (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Country-Reports-on-Terrorism-2019-2.pdf>)

75. CCF-FAI/FRI, “PDF: New Flyposter Mapping the Attacks of the Informal Anarchist Federation / International Revolutionary Front (Global),” 325, October 2014. (Archived version available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20191112015240/https://325.nostate.net/2014/10/22/pdf-new-flyposter-mapping-the-attacks-of-the-informal-anarchist-federation-international-revolutionary-front-global>)

76. This figure includes attacks by ecologically focused groups heavily influenced by anarchism, including ELF and ALF. Zósimo Camacho, “XI. 50 Células Anarquistas en Guerra Contra el Capitalismo y el Estado Ed. 510 [XI. 50 Anarchist Cells at War Against Capitalism and the State Ed. 510],” *Contralínea* (Mexico), October 16, 2016. (<https://www.contralinea.com.mx/archivo-revista/2016/10/16/50-celulas-anarquistas-en-guerra-contra-el-capitalismo-y-el-estado>)

77. Zachary Kallenborn and Philipp C. Bleek, “Avatars of the Earth: Radical Environmentalism and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Weapons,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Volume 43, Issue 5, May 3, 2018, page 364. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1471972>); Leigh Phillips, “Anarchists Attack Science,” *Nature*, Volume 485, Issue 7400, May 31, 2012, page 561. (<https://www.nature.com/news/anarchists-attack-science-1.10729>)

78. Zachary Kallenborn and Philipp C. Bleek, “Avatars of the Earth: Radical Environmentalism and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Weapons,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Volume 43, Issue 5, May 3, 2018, page 364. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1471972>)

79. Leigh Phillips, “Anarchists Attack Science,” *Nature*, Volume 485, Issue 7400, May 31, 2012, page 561. (<https://www.nature.com/news/anarchists-attack-science-1.10729>)

America, it has a presence in continental Europe and has falsely claimed murders in the United States.⁸⁰

Chile is also home to a number of anarchist groups. At least 80 cells claimed around 200 attacks in Santiago between 2005 and 2014, almost none of which injured anybody. While some cells have claimed association with FAI/FRI or CCF, the Chilean government has struggled to determine whether other cells are independent or part of networks.⁸¹ Anarchist cells in Chile may also be playing a role in the ongoing protests and violence initially sparked in 2019 by an increase in Santiago transit fares. While anarchists are almost certainly attempting to exploit the protest movement, their ability to shape the movement or push it toward violence is unclear.⁸²

Violent Activities

While militant anarchists and anti-fascists engage in a range of violent activity, the kinds of violence and the targets against which violence is employed vary by group, location, and ideology. While militant anarchists and anti-fascists in the United States, Europe, and Latin America engage in militant street actions and

arson attacks targeting property, U.S.-based anarchists and anti-fascists largely eschew assassinations, murder, bombings, and targeted violence outside of protests. From 1994 to early 2020, American anti-fascists were not linked to any victim deaths in politically motivated attacks.⁸³ However, that changed in August 2020, when an anti-fascist killed a participant during a Trump rally in Portland, Oregon.

That killing aside, the use of violence by militant anarchists and anti-fascists may be constrained by their ideological commitments. Militant anarchists and anti-fascists are generally more likely to engage in what they dub “defensive” violence, or violence intended to protect protesters from interference or harm by political opponents or law enforcement.⁸⁴ Militant anarchists target property more often than they target people, viewing attacks against property as a less violent means of combating capitalism and the state. When using tactics intended to cause property damage or draw public attention, such as bombings or arson, many anarchist groups do so late at night at locations likely to be devoid of people, thus mitigating the risk of injury or death. These groups sometimes attempt to evacuate potential casualties prior to carrying out bombings.⁸⁵

80. Individualists Tending Toward the Wild-Spain, “[En] (Spain) 52 Communiqué of the ITS,” *Maldición Eco-Extremista*, April 23, 2018. (<http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/en-spain-52-communicue-of-the-its>); Individualists Tending Toward the Wild-USA, “[En] (USA) 90 Communiqué of ITS,” *Maldición Eco-Extremista*, November 9, 2019. (<http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/en-usa-90-communicue-of-its>). The reasons the authors assess their claims of carrying out murders in the United States as false can be found in: Mike Moffitt, “Police: Tushar Atre was Murdered by People Who Worked for Him,” *SF Gate*, May 21, 2020. (<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Police-Tushar-Atre-murder-arrests-suspects-15287085.php>); Melia Russell, “A 33-year-old Tech Founder Went to Silicon Valley on Business and was Found Dead in Her Car a Week Later. Her Cause of Death Was Just Identified as ‘Natural Causes’ Following ‘an Acute Manic Episode,’” *Business Insider*, February 6, 2020. (<https://www.businessinsider.com/erin-valenti-cause-of-death-2020-2>)

81. Gideon Long, “Chileans Baffled by Persistent Bomb Attacks,” *BBC News* (UK), August 20, 2014. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-28850708>)

82. Sebastian Pinera, “Chile Protesters: ‘The Rich and Powerful Threw the First Stone,’” *Al Jazeera* (Qatar), December 6, 2019. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2019/12/06/chile-protesters-the-rich-and-powerful-threw-the-first-stone>); Federación Anarquista Santiago, “Chile Bajo Estado de Emergencia [Chile Under State of Emergency],” *A Las Barricadas* (Spain), October 21, 2019. (<https://www.alasbarricadas.org/noticias/node/42361>)

83. Lois Beckett, “Anti-Fascists Linked to Zero Murders in the U.S. in 25 Years,” *The Guardian* (UK), July 27, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/27/us-rightwing-extremists-attacks-deaths-database-leftwing-antifa>); see also: Seth G. Jones, “Who Are Antifa, and Are They a Threat?” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, June 4, 2020. (<https://www.csis.org/analysis/who-are-antifa-and-are-they-threat>)

84. In the case of law enforcement, this may include using violence to block arrests or attempts to disperse protests.

85. See, for example: Luis Andrews Henao, “Arrests in Chile Bomb Attack Focus on Anarchists,” *WTOP News*, September 18, 2014. (<https://wtop.com/news/2014/09/arrests-in-chile-bomb-attack-focus-on-anarchists>). Following two bombings in Chile claimed by CCF, the group stated, “We called (the emergency number) more than 10 minutes before the blast, waiting for police to react by evacuating.”

Groups that have employed lethal violence, particularly nihilist groups such as ITS, are generally rejected by the broader anarchist community, including by other militant anarchists.⁸⁶

Street Violence and Riots

The most common anti-fascist and anarchist violence in the United States and Europe is street fighting at marches and protests. Such activity can be an attempt to advance a cause (such as anti-capitalism or environmentalism), to counter political opponents, or to prevent or retaliate against law enforcement interference in anarchist or anti-fascist projects and spaces (such as squats).

Street violence is of growing concern in the United States and intersects heavily with the trend toward armed domestic politics. The tactic does not often command the fear or destructive power of assassinations or bombings, but its capacity to inflict harm remains potent. In 2016 and 2017, a number of major protests and rallies were disrupted by militant anarchists and anti-fascists assaulting demonstrators and law enforcement. Three people were stabbed in clashes between anti-fascists and Ku Klux Klan members in February 2016. Anarchists and anti-fascists took to the streets of Washington, DC, during Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2017. They damaged property, committed arson, and attacked police officers.⁸⁷ During these protests, a demonstrator

famously punched white nationalist Richard Spencer as he was giving an on-camera interview.

The following month, a violent march that included militant anarchists and anti-fascists prevented the controversial right-wing speaker Milo Yiannopoulos from appearing at the University of California at Berkeley. The group destroyed equipment, broke windows, and attacked police officers with fireworks, ultimately leading to the event's cancellation. Five people were injured.⁸⁸ The violence was a textbook example of violent deplatforming. Militant protesters physically denied Yiannopoulos a platform from which to speak, viewing him as a fascist spreading dangerous ideas.

In August 2017, a coterie of individuals, a number of whom were prominently identified with far-right or white nationalist movements, gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia, for the "Unite the Right" rally, dedicated in part to protesting the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. The rally quickly became a national show of force for the far right and white nationalists. Counter-protesters included militant anti-fascists who used homemade weapons and chemical irritants to fight rallygoers. The rally ended in tragedy when white supremacist extremist James Alex Fields drove his car into a crowd of counter-protesters, killing Heather Heyer and injuring 19 others.⁸⁹ Berkeley saw further violence the

⁸⁶. See, for example: "'ITS, or the Rhetoric of Decay' (Joint Statement of Insurrectional Groups in Mexican Territory)," 325, July 12, 2017. (<https://325.nostate.net/2017/08/03/its-or-the-rhetoric-of-decay-joint-statement-of-insurrectional-groups-in-mexican-territory/>). In this statement, militant anarchist groups state that "ITS undertook a totally opposite route to the fundamental principles of Anarchy, moving away from the ethics of freedom and the radical critique of power; Renouncing not only the 'air of family' but everything that exalts us as anarchists." They claim that ITS is not committed to anarchist principles, but rather is characterized by "proto-fascist decadence."

⁸⁷. Farah Stockman, "Anarchists Respond to Trump's Inauguration, by Any Means Necessary," *The New York Times*, February 2, 2017. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/02/us/anarchists-respond-to-trumps-inauguration-by-any-means-necessary.html>); Keith L. Alexander and Paul Duggan, "Inauguration Protesters Were 'Playing a Role in the Violence and Destruction,' Prosecutor Says," *The Washington Post*, November 20, 2017. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/trial-begins-for-six-charged-with-rioting-during-trump-inauguration/2017/11/20/f0587738-ce04-11e7-9d3a-bcbe2af58c3a_story.html)

⁸⁸. Veronica Rocha and Peter H. King, "UC Berkeley Blames Violent 'Black Bloc' Protesters for 'Unprecedented Invasion,'" *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 2017. (<https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-black-bloc-uc-berkeley-protest-20170203-story.html>)

⁸⁹. For an overview of violent activities surrounding the rally, see: Joe Heim, "Recounting a Day of Rage, Hate, Violence and Death," *The Washington Post*, August 14, 2017. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/local/charlottesville-timeline/>). For discussion of violence carried out by white supremacist extremists at this rally, see: Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Samuel Hodgson, "Skinheads, Saints, and (National) Socialists," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, June 2021. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2021/06/14/skinheads-saints-and-national-socialists/>)

same month, when militant anti-fascists fought Trump supporters at a protest.⁹⁰

The threat of violence by militant anarchists and anti-fascists at protests extended into 2020, most prominently coinciding with racial justice protests. Portland, Oregon, was gripped by violence involving anarchists for several months, and this violence extended well into 2021. The *Los Angeles Times* noted that the violence produced tension with black community leaders, who “denounced an arson attack by protesters on a building that houses a police station and Black-owned businesses on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.”⁹¹ It is clear that some perpetrators of violence during the 2020 civil unrest were militant anarchists or anti-fascists,⁹² but the amount of violence attributable to anarchists or anti-fascists or to specific networks is unclear.⁹³

Militant anti-fascists and anarchists have used a number of low-grade, commercially available weapons or self-modified tools for offensive and defensive purposes. Clubs, poles, and bats can serve multiple purposes.

Offensively, they can beat opponents. Defensively, they can counter advancing law enforcement or counter police batons and other weapons in the hands of opponents. Bricks, bottles, cans, and other makeshift projectiles are common.⁹⁴ Pepper spray or other chemical irritants are sometimes used, both for personal protection and for assault.⁹⁵ Militant anarchists and anti-fascists also frequently make use of makeshift shields.⁹⁶ Some groups use shields together to form a wall.

In addition to simple weapons, some anarchists and anti-fascists use more novel tools, including low-grade explosives or incendiary devices such as Molotov cocktails, fireworks, and lasers.⁹⁷ Fireworks are often used at protests to disorient law enforcement and can cause bodily harm. Protesters frequently engage in simple arson, burning trash cans, debris, or other objects, often to attract attention.⁹⁸ Lasers may be directed at the eyes of opponents, especially law enforcement. This tactic can cause physical harm and is illegal in many places. In Chile, lasers have reportedly been used to bring down police drones.⁹⁹

90. James Queally, Paige St. John, Benjamin Oreskes, and David Zahniser, “Violence by Far-Left Protesters in Berkeley Sparks Alarm,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 27, 2017. (<https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-berkeley-protests-20170827-story.html>)

91. Richard Read, “Portland’s Anarchists Say They Support Racial Justice. Black Activists Want Nothing to Do with Them,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 2020. (<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-11-16/portland-protests-anarchists-backlash>)

92. See, for example: U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Massachusetts, Press Release, “Worcester Man Charged with Civil Disorder and Possession of a Destructive Device,” June 3, 2020. (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/worcester-man-charged-civil-disorder-and-possession-destructive-device>)

93. Alanna Durkin Richer, Colleen Long, and Michael Balsamo, “AP Finds Most Arrested in Protests Aren’t Leftist Radicals,” *Associated Press*, October 20, 2020. (<https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-race-and-ethnicity-suburbs-health-racial-injustice-7edf9027af1878283f3818d96c54f748>)

94. William Gagan, “Black Bloc Protesters Hurl Pepsi Cans at Police, Set Newspaper Boxes on Fire in the Portland Street,” *Willamette Week*, May 1, 2017. (<https://www.wweek.com/news/2017/05/01/black-bloc-protesters-hurl-pepsi-cans-at-police-set-newspaper-boxes-on-fire-in-the-portland-street>)

95. “Black-Clad Anarchists Storm Berkeley Rally, Assaulting 5,” *CNBC*, August 28, 2017. (<https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/28/berkeley-protest-rally-stormed-by-anarchists.html>)

96. u/Tomek_Hermgavorden, “This Would be Horrible,” *Reddit*, June 6, 2020. (https://www.reddit.com/r/PraxisGuides/comments/gxm20p/this_would_be_horrible)

97. “Neo-Nazis and Anti-Fascists Clash in Sweden on Yom Kippur,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), September 30, 2017. (<https://www.dw.com/en/neo-nazis-and-anti-fascists-clash-in-sweden-on-yom-kippur/a-40760414>)

98. William Gagan, “Black Bloc Protesters Hurl Pepsi Cans at Police, Set Newspaper Boxes on Fire in the Portland Street,” *Willamette Week*, May 1, 2017. (<https://www.wweek.com/news/2017/05/01/black-bloc-protesters-hurl-pepsi-cans-at-police-set-newspaper-boxes-on-fire-in-the-portland-street>)

99. Gustavo Rodríguez, “Desde Algún Lugar: Carta a Un(a) Chileno(a) Sobre la Situación Actual (II) [From somewhere: Letter to a Chilean about the current situation (II)],” *Contra Info*, December 2, 2019. (<https://es-contrainfo.espio.net/2019/12/02/desde-algun-lugar-carta-a-un-a-chileno-a-sobre-la-situacion-actual-ii>)



*Black Bloc formation at a 2019 rally in Portland, Oregon.
(Stephanie Keith/Getty Images)*

Militant anti-fascists and anarchists committing violent acts at protests often do so as part of *black blocs*. Black bloc is an organizational tactic often employed by anarchists and anti-fascists when engaging in protests or direct action.¹⁰⁰ When in black bloc, individuals wear masks, bandanas, and head-to-toe black clothing to project strength and group uniformity while maintaining anonymity.¹⁰¹ The primary rationale for black bloc is to prevent identification of individual actors by authorities or other opponents.¹⁰² Black blocs form and disassemble within the marches and protests; they are often formed by a coalition of groups rather than by a single organization.¹⁰³ The tactic originated with Germany's

“autonomous movement” (*Autonomen*) during the late 1970s and 1980s and received attention in the United States following the 1999 Battle for Seattle.¹⁰⁴

Black bloc is useful for militant actors. Defensively, it protects both nonviolent activists and extremists from surveillance and possible law enforcement action. It allows disparate groups to create larger, more powerful units and affords them mobility.¹⁰⁵ Offensively, militant anarchists and anti-fascists can use the anonymity that black bloc affords to carry out various forms of direct action, ranging from vandalism to assaults on law enforcement and political opposition.

Black blocs also facilitate “de-arresting” tactics reportedly deployed in the Battle for Seattle in 1999, in protests by the Occupy movement in 2012, and in racial justice protests in 2020.¹⁰⁶ According to one anarchist, de-arresting can be summarized as “the very basic principle of no comrade left behind, that we do not leave people in the police lines and decide to flee, and for that the black bloc is deeply courageous.”¹⁰⁷ When law enforcement officers try to detain or arrest a member of the black bloc, other members will intervene by engaging the officers, often violently. This intervention theoretically allows individuals being detained to escape back to the anonymous mass of the black bloc, where they are protected and cannot be identified again.

100. Mark Bray, *The Antifascist Handbook* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2017), page 194.

101. Francis Dupuis-Deri, *Who's Afraid of the Black Blocs?* (Montreal: Lux Editeur, 2007), page 2.

102. Mark Bray, *The Antifascist Handbook* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2017), page 194.

103. Francis Dupuis-Deri, *Who's Afraid of the Black Blocs?* (Montreal: Lux Editeur, 2007), page 2.

104. Heather Gilligan, “The Black Bloc Protestors in Hoodies Started in Germany in the Late 1970s,” *Timeline*, February 17, 2017.

(<https://timeline.com/black-bloc-started-1980s-e228bf3981b4>)

105. Ibid.

106. ACME Collective, “A Communique from One Section of the Black Bloc of N30 in Seattle,” *The WTO History Project*, December 4, 1999. (https://depts.washington.edu/wtohist/documents/black_bloc_communique.htm); “Battle for the Soul of Occupy: Round 7 – The Black Bloc Anarchist Turn,” *Adbusters*, May 7, 2012. (Archived version available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20120604014710/http://www.adbusters.org/blogs/adbusters-blog/black-bloc-anarchist-turn.html>); blazedroots, “Occupy Congress Protesters De-Arrest Fellow Protester,” *YouTube*, January 18, 2012. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFjG7wD8DXQ>); Teetron 9000 News, “BLM Protesters ‘De-Arrest’ One of Their Own in Portland, OR, on Aug 24 2020,” *YouTube*, August 25, 2020. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFaLc7fwOfI>)

107. Harsha Walia, “10 Points on the Black Bloc,” *Rise Like Lions*, accessed December 9, 2020. (Archived version available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/201202041954/http://riselikelions.net/pamphlets/14/10-points-on-the-black-bloc>)

In rare instances, street violence, or the threat of it, allows militant anarchists and anti-fascists to establish control of small, autonomous spaces. These spaces may then be used for protest activities, community organizing, or as a refuge for populations they believe to be victimized (such as undocumented immigrants). Autonomous spaces have been formed in both the United States and Europe. The most prominent in Europe – and the one most closely associated with anarchists and anti-fascists – is the Exarcheia neighborhood in Athens, an area from which law enforcement is largely excluded, and which has become home to numerous undocumented immigrants.¹⁰⁸ In the United States, anarchists helped violently defend protest camps established in 2016 to block the Dakota Access Pipeline against attempts by law enforcement to clear them.¹⁰⁹ On June 8, 2020, street violence and political pressure led the Seattle Police Department to withdraw from its East Precinct, allowing protesters to occupy the building and establish the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ).¹¹⁰ The zone was defended by members of the Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club.¹¹¹ CHAZ was marred by violence in the absence of law enforcement. While its most visible areas were home to murals and community gardens, two teenagers were murdered just blocks away. In total, four people were shot with firearms in CHAZ during its short existence.¹¹² In addition to these incidents, a rape, arson, and

burglary ultimately drew Seattle police back to the zone on July 1, spelling a quick end to CHAZ.¹¹³



A sign marking the boundary of Seattle's Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone. (David Ryder/Getty Images)

Arson

Beyond using incendiary devices during protests, anarchists in the United States, Europe, and Latin America have employed arson. Past targets in the United States have included:

- *Vehicles.* In 2012, an anarchist in Portland threw a Molotov cocktail at an empty police cruiser.¹¹⁴ On May Day in 2020, militant anarchists firebombed an Amazon delivery vehicle in Los Angeles County in retaliation for Amazon's provision of cloud servers to ICE.¹¹⁵

108. Molly Crabapple, "The Attack on Exarchia, an Anarchist Refuge in Athens," *The New Yorker*, January 20, 2020. (<https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-attack-on-exarchia-an-anarchist-refuge-in-athens>)

109. "Report Back from the Battle for Sacred Ground," *CrimethInc*, November 1, 2016. (<https://crimethinc.com/2016/11/01/feature-report-back-from-the-battle-for-sacred-ground>)

110. Ashitha Nagesh, "This Police-Free Protest Zone Was Dismantled – But Was It the End?" *BBC News* (UK), July 11, 2020. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53218448>)

111. Kim Kelly, "Meet the Gun Club Patrolling Seattle's Leftist Utopia," *The Daily Beast*, June 14, 2020. (<https://www.thedailybeast.com/seattles-capitol-hill-autonomous-zone-chaz-has-armed-guards>)

112. Ezra Marcus, "In the Autonomous Zones," *The New York Times*, July 1, 2020. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/style/autonomous-zone-anarchist-community.html>)

113. Deborah Horne, "'This is About Life or Death': City Says SPD Will Return to East Precinct," *KIRO*, June 22, 2020. (<https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/this-is-about-life-or-death-city-says-spd-will-return-east-precinct/IS6LKAKPCVBV3PQZBUDOPGSVXA>)

114. "Man Who Threw Molotov Cocktail at Portland Police Car Gets 30 Months," *KOMO News*, April 1, 2014. (<https://komonews.com/news/local/man-who-threw-molotov-cocktail-at-portland-police-car-gets-30-months-11-21-2015>)

115. "Incendiary Attack Against Amazon in Los Angeles County (USA)," *325*, May 4, 2020. (<https://325.nostate.net/2020/05/04/incendiary-attack-against-amazon-in-los-angeles-county-ua>)

- *Political Offices, Government Officials, and Law Enforcement.* On September 11, 2014, an anarchist attempted to firebomb the local office of a member of Congress in Kansas City using Molotov cocktails that failed to ignite. The attack took place early in the morning, and the office was unoccupied at the time.¹¹⁶ Illinois state prosecutors accused three anarchists of plotting to use Molotov cocktails and other incendiary devices to attack law enforcement, President Barack Obama’s campaign office, and Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s home during the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago.¹¹⁷ The men were ultimately acquitted of the most serious charges – providing material support for terrorism and conspiracy to commit terrorism – but were convicted of mob action and possession of an incendiary device.
- *Infrastructure.* An anarchist group calling itself the Bristling Badgers Brigade set fire to a cell tower at Philadelphia’s Navy Yard.¹¹⁸
- *Construction Sites.* Housing developments have been targeted in areas where gentrification is a concern. A group referring to itself simply as

“Some Anarchists” claimed responsibility for the February 2014 burning of a housing development under construction in Seattle.¹¹⁹ In Philadelphia, a May 2017 fire at a housing development may have similarly been the work of anti-gentrification anarchists. While no one directly claimed the attack, it was noted in a Philadelphia anarchist periodical. The attack also occurred around the same time as other anti-gentrification activity likely committed by Philadelphia anarchists.¹²⁰

In European countries with significant militant anarchist or anti-fascist activity, arson is more common and is aimed against a more diverse array of targets. Here are some examples:

- In *Germany* in 2020, militant anarchists burned an Amazon construction site, a vehicle belonging to the French Embassy, telecommunications infrastructure used by a company developing a coronavirus tracking application, and a police station.¹²¹
- In *Greece* in 2019, militant anarchists set fire to NATO barracks, vehicles, a small business, ATMs,

116. Tony Rizzo, “Man Who Threw Molotov Cocktails at Rep. Emanuel Cleaver’s KC Office Gets 10-Year Sentence,” *The Kansas City Star*, June 28, 2016. (<https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/crime/article86417757.html>)

117. Steve Schmadeke, “NATO 3 Found Guilty of Mob Action and Arson, but Not Terror Charges,” *The Chicago Tribune*, February 6, 2014. (<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/chi-closing-arguments-underway-in-nato-3-trial-20140206-story.html>); “Who Are the ‘NATO 3?’” *The Chicago Tribune*, February 18, 2014. (<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/chi-who-are-the-nato-3-20140121-htmlstory.html>)

118. Bristling Badger Brigade, “Philadelphia (USA) – Anarchist Group ‘Bristling Badger Brigade’ Burns Cell Tower,” *The Plague and the Fire*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://plagueandfire.noblogs.org/philadelphia-usa-anarchist-group-bristling-badger-brigade-burns-cell-tower>)

119. “Attack on Seattle ‘Green’ Development,” *Puget Sound Anarchists*, March 3, 2013. (Archived version available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20130607204925/http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/content/attack-seattle-green-development>); “Anarchists Claim Responsibility for Judkins Park Arson,” *KIRO 7*, March 5, 2013. (<https://www.kiro7.com/news/anarchists-claim-responsibility-judkins-park-arson/246221291>)

120. “What Went Down,” *Anathema*, May/June 2017, page 2. (<https://anathema.noblogs.org/files/2017/05/Issue-IV-Print-final.pdf>); Jillian Kay Melchior, “Anarchy in the Streets of Philadelphia,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 2020. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/anarchy-in-the-streets-of-philadelphia-11592264144>); Sam Newhouse, “So-Called Summer of Rage Anarchists Arrested for Allegedly Trashing Developing Block,” *Metro Philly*, May 2, 2017. (<https://philly.metro.us/so-called-summer-of-rage-anarchists-arrested-for-allegedly-trashingdeveloping-block>)

121. “Incendiary Sabotage of an Amazon Construction Site in Achim, Germany,” *Abolition Media Worldwide*, August 20, 2020. (<https://www.amwenglish.com/articles/incendiary-sabotage-of-an-amazon-construction-site-in-achim-germany>); “Berlin, Germany: French Embassy Vehicle Torched in Schöneberg,” *Act for Freedom Now!*, July 5, 2020. (<https://actforfree.nostate.net/?p=38136>); “Bremen, Germany: Police Station Attacked in Solidarity with Linksunten Indymedia,” *Act for Freedom Now!*, February 7, 2020. (<https://actforfree.nostate.net/?p=36353>); “Berlin, Germany: Arson Sabotage Attack Against Developers of the New ‘Corona-App,’” *Act for Freedom Now!*, April 20, 2020. (<https://actforfree.nostate.net/?p=37180>)

and the offices of the far-right Golden Dawn party, which the Greek judiciary has since banned.¹²²

- In *Italy* in 2019, insurrectionary anarchists carried out at least 16 arson attacks, targeting commercial and government vehicles, telecommunications and rail infrastructure, government buildings, and ATMs.¹²³ The previous year, FAI set fire to a robotics lab.¹²⁴

Bombings

Militant anarchists and anti-fascists in the United States rarely use explosive devices beyond Molotov cocktails and fireworks. However, one notable exception was an attempt by five anarchists to detonate C-4 on a bridge near Cleveland, Ohio, in 2012. The plotters had considered numerous other targets, including financial institution signs on rooftops throughout the Cleveland metropolitan area, before settling on their final plan.¹²⁵ The plot was foiled by federal investigators.

By contrast, explosives are a frequent – and often preferred – tool of militant anarchists abroad. They are used in attacks targeting people and property. Most are crude improvised explosive devices, used to destroy property. Designs vary, but some have been as simple as gunpowder placed inside a fire extinguisher.¹²⁶ Some attacks in Latin America and Europe have involved dynamite.¹²⁷ European anarchists have on rare occasion used grenades and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). Revolutionary Struggle used an RPG to attack the U.S. Embassy in Athens in January 2007.¹²⁸ The rocket flew past its target – a large American seal on the embassy’s façade – and exploded inside the embassy’s third floor in the early morning. While the attack did not cause casualties, it served as a reminder of Greek anarchists’ lethal capabilities. In March 2019, an FAI/FRI cell detonated a grenade outside the Russian Consulate in Athens.¹²⁹

122. The barracks attack occurred shortly before the U.S. ambassador was scheduled to arrive in the city. “Greek Anarchist Group Claims Arson Attack Against NATO Barracks,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, December 3, 2019. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/greek-anarchist-group-claims-arson-attack-against-nato-barracks.html>); “Anarchists Claim Multiple Arson Attacks In Greece,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, December 30, 2019. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/anarchists-claim-multiple-arson-attacks-in-greece.html>); “Anarchists in Thessaloniki, Greece Claim Arson Attack Against ATMs and Vehicle in Solidarity with Prisoner,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, February 25, 2019. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/anarchists-in-thessaloniki-greece-claim-arson-attack-against-atms-and-vehicle-in-solidarity-with-prisoner.html>); “Greece: 2 Arrested for Attacks on Extreme-Right Party,” *Associated Press*, December 17, 2019. (<https://apnews.com/article/6bdca09e99e45ae1e7f9e27acfa15480>)

123. Arson was the most common form of terrorist attack conducted by left-wing extremist groups in that year. In Italy, groups and individuals belonging to the insurrectionist anarchist milieu represented the most significant threat in the left-wing and anarchist terrorist scene. Europol, “European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2020,” June 23, 2020, page 59. (<https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2020>)

124. Europol, “European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2019,” June 27, 2019,” page 57. (https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/tesat_2019_final.pdf); “Saronno, Italy: ATM Torched in Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners Silvia, Anna and Nat,” *Anarchists Worldwide*, July 13, 2019. (<https://anarchistsworldwide.noblogs.org/post/2019/07/13/saronno-italy-atm-torched-in-solidarity-with-anarchist-prisoners-silvia-anna-and-nat>)

125. U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Ohio, Press Release, “Cleveland Man Guilty of Trying to Destroy a Bridge with Explosives,” June 13, 2013. (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndoh/pr/cleveland-man-guilty-trying-destroy-bridge-explosives>)

126. Gideon Long, “Chileans Baffled by Persistent Bomb Attacks,” *BBC News* (UK), August 20, 2014. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-28850708>); “Anarchists Claim Explosive Devices Targeting Buses & Gas Station in Chile,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, June 26, 2020. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/anarchists-claim-explosive-devices-targeting-buses-gas-station-in-chile.html>)

127. Gustavo Rodríguez, “Desde Algún Lugar: Carta a un(a) Chileno(a) Sobre la Situación Actual (II),” *Contra Info*, December 2, 2019. (<https://es-contrainfo.espiv.net/2019/12/02/desde-algun-lugar-carta-a-un-a-chileno-a-sobre-la-situacion-actual-ii>); “Anti-Fascist Group Claims Greek Far-Right Party Bombing,” *Reuters*, December 8, 2012. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-bomb/anti-fascist-group-claims-greek-far-right-party-bombing-idUSBRE8B708A20121208>)

128. Ian Fisher and Anthee Carassava, “U.S. Embassy in Athens Is Attacked,” *The New York Times*, January 12, 2007. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/12/world/europe/12cnd-greece.html>)

129. The consulate was closed at the time, and there were no injuries. “Greek Anarchists Claim Russian Consulate Grenade Blast,” *Voice of America*, April 18, 2019. (<https://www.voanews.com/world-news/europe/greek-anarchists-claim-russian-consulate-grenade-blast>)

Anarchists in Europe and Latin America have used parcel bombs to target political officials, finance and energy executives, foreign embassies, politicians, and military bases. This tactic has also been used by some groups, particularly FAI cells in Italy, to conduct attacks abroad. In 2010–2011, FAI cells attacked targets in Italy, including the Italian tax agency, a military installation in Tuscany, and three embassies in Rome as well as foreign targets, including the director of Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, the headquarters of a Swiss nuclear industry group, and IBM’s nanotechnology facility in Switzerland.¹³⁰

“Anarchists in Europe and Latin America have used parcel bombs to target political officials, finance and energy executives, foreign embassies, politicians, and military bases.”

In November 2010, CCF attacked EU offices in Germany and Italy along with embassies in Greece.¹³¹ In March 2017, CCF sent a parcel bomb to the German finance ministry. That same month, CCF sent a parcel bomb to the International Monetary Fund’s European representative in France.¹³² ITS has used parcel bombs to target scientific research facilities in Mexico.¹³³

Assassination, Murder, and Targeted Assault

Some militant anarchists and anti-fascists engage in targeted assaults against specific individuals or groups. Other militant groups, particularly abroad, have attempted to assassinate their enemies. In the United States, such incidents are rare. When preplanned attacks against specific individuals have occurred, they have typically targeted political opponents (usually perceived fascists) with non-lethal violence. The most notable incident was the 2012 assault by members of the Hoosier Anti-Racist Movement against a white power organization in a Chicago restaurant.¹³⁴

Assassinations and targeted assaults are more frequently carried out by insurrectionary anarchists in Southern Europe and Latin America, including cells associated with CCF, FAI/FRI, and ITS. Common targets include business executives and employees, political opponents, and politicians or government officials. For example, in Greece, two militant anti-fascists from the group People’s Struggling Revolutionary Powers murdered two members of Greece’s Golden Dawn party in a drive-by shooting in retaliation for the murder of an anti-fascist rapper.¹³⁵ In Chile, anarchists have broken into the homes of police officers, with the intention of

130. “Rome Parcel Bomb Injures Equitalia Tax Official,” *BBC News* (UK), December 9, 2011. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16120156>); Rachel Donadio, “Mail Bomb Defused at Rome Embassy,” *The New York Times*, December 27, 2010. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/28/world/europe/28italy.html>); “Anarchist Group Says Behind Swiss Parcel Bomb,” *Reuters*, April 1, 2011. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-swiss-nuclear/anarchist-group-says-behind-swiss-parcel-bomb-idUSTRE73035V20110401>); Leigh Phillips, “Anarchists Attack Science,” *Nature*, Volume 485, Issue 7400, May 31, 2012, page 561. (<https://www.nature.com/news/anarchists-attack-science-1.10729>)

131. See, for example, the U.S. State Department’s designation of CCF as an SDGT following the group’s transnational parcel bomb attacks targeting EU officials and attacks on foreign embassies: U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, Media Note, “Terrorist Designation of Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei,” October 13, 2011. (<https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/10/175362.htm>)

132. “Greek Militants Claim Parcel Bomb Sent to German Ministry,” *The Local* (Germany), March 16, 2017. (<https://www.thelocal.de/20170316/explosive-parcel-at-german-ministry-sent-from-greece>); Lizzie Dearden, “Anarchist Terror Threat Emerges Across Europe After Parcel Bombs Sent to French and German Officials,” *The Independent* (UK), March 17, 2017. (<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/imf-france-paris-letter-parcel-bombing-german-finance-ministry-anarchists-terror-greece-conspiracy-fire-cells-a7636116.html>)

133. Leigh Phillips, “Anarchists Attack Science,” *Nature*, Volume 485, Issue 7400, May 31, 2012, page 561. (<https://www.nature.com/news/anarchists-attack-science-1.10729>)

134. Mark Bray, *The Antifascist Handbook* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2017), page 113.

135. “Greek Leftist Group Claims Golden Dawn Assassinations,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), November 17, 2013. (<https://www.dw.com/en/greek-leftist-group-claims-golden-dawn-assassinations/a-17232477>); Colin Clarke and Michael Kenney, “What Antifa Is, What It Isn’t, and Why It Matters,” *War on the Rocks*, June 23, 2020. (<https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/what-antifa-is-what-it-isnt-and-why-it-matters>). In October 2020, a Golden Dawn supporter was found guilty of fatally stabbing the rapper, Pavlos Fyssas.

attacking them. In one instance, an anarchist stabbed an officer.¹³⁶ ITS has attempted murder in Latin America, including targeting the president of Metro de Santiago in Chile and a priest in Mexico.¹³⁷

Targeted attacks by militant anarchists and anti-fascists rarely involve firearms. In Europe, however, one example of firearm usage is the aforementioned murder of two Golden Dawn members by Greek anti-fascists. In Mexico, an FAI cell (Insurreccional Cell Mariano Sanchez Añon) used firearms in attacks on law enforcement.¹³⁸ Some firearm attacks were apparently not intended to be lethal. An FAI cell member shot an executive from an Italian nuclear company in Genoa in May 2012, aiming at the victim's leg.¹³⁹ This tactic, which still represented an escalation in violence, may have aimed to echo the "kneecapping" tactic used by the earlier Italian Red Brigades, a communist militant group.¹⁴⁰

Guns play a unique role in American anarchism and anti-fascism. The United States has a prevalent gun culture that is often associated with the political right. But, as discussed earlier, some within the American anti-fascist movement promote the use and ownership

of guns and have used them (for example, in the attack on the ICE detention center in Washington state).¹⁴¹

Intimidation and Doxxing

"We have the names, the addresses and the photos of the faces of the fascist scum. We can start visiting them in person... We are not peaceful, we are not tolerant... and we interact with them with the only language they understand: force, violence and intimidation."¹⁴² This statement by Brazilian anarchist group **Nucleus of Opposition to the System** (NOS) is emblematic of how militant anti-fascists and anarchists can use doxxing to intimidate and incite violence against opponents.

Doxxing involves publishing private or personal information about an individual or organization (such as home addresses, the names of the target's children, and the schools they attend). It is commonly used by both violent and nonviolent anti-fascists and anarchists in America to neutralize opponents. Doxxing can be used to "out" violent extremists to their employer, community, and law enforcement, but it can also be used to incite or invite violence against people due solely to their beliefs.

¹³⁶. Gustavo Rodríguez, "Desde Algún Lugar: Carta a un(a) Chileno(a) Sobre la Situación Actual (II) [From Somewhere: Letter to a Chilean About the Current Situation (II)]," *Contra Info*, December 2, 2019. (<https://es-contrainfo.espio.net/2019/12/02/desde-algun-lugar-carta-a-un-a-chileno-a-sobre-la-situacion-actual-ii>)

¹³⁷. "Eco-Nihilist Group Claims Responsibility for Attempted Murder of Chilean Mass Transit Official," *SITE Intelligence Group*, May 10, 2019. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/eco-nihilist-group-claims-responsibility-for-attempted-murder-of-chilean-mass-transit-official.html>); "(Mexico) Black April for the Catholic Church," *Maldición Eco-Extremista*, May 16, 2018. (http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/en-mexico-black-april-for-the-catholic-church/?doing_wp_cron=1528461790.6676220893859863281250)

¹³⁸. "Reportan Tres Muertos y un Policía Desaparecido en Valle de Chalco [Three Dead and a Missing Police Officer Reported in Valle de Chalco]," *Zócalo* (Mexico), September 18, 2020. (<http://www.zocalo.com.mx/seccion/articulo/reportan-tres-muertos-y-un-policia-desaparecido-en-valle-de-chalco>); Insurreccional Cell Mariano Sanchez Añon - Fraction of the Informal Anarchist Federation of Mexico, "Mexico: Responsibility Claim for Armed Attack on a Municipal Police Patrol Car in the Municipality of Valle de Chalco in EdoMex," *Contra Info*, September 21, 2012. (<https://en-contrainfo.espio.net/2012/09/21/mexico-responsibility-claim-for-armed-attack-on-a-municipal-police-patrol-car-in-the-municipality-of-valle-de-chalco-in-edomex>)

¹³⁹. Leigh Phillips, "Anarchists Attack Science," *Nature*, Volume 485, Issue 7400, May 31, 2012, page 561. (<https://www.nature.com/news/anarchists-attack-science-1.10729>)

¹⁴⁰. Tom Kington, "Kneecapping of Italian Nuclear Power Firm Boss Prompts Terrorism Fears," *The Guardian* (UK), May 7, 2012. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/07/kneecapping-italian-boss-terrorism-fears>)

¹⁴¹. Hannah Allam, "'I Am Antifa': One Activist's Violent Death Became a Symbol for The Right and Left," *NPR*, July 23, 2020. (<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/23/893533916/i-am-antifa-one-activist-s-violent-death-became-a-symbol-for-the-right-and-left>)

¹⁴². "Brazilian Anarchists Dox Army General Over Government COVID-19 Failures," *SITE Intelligence Group*, June 26, 2020. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/brazilian-anarchists-dox-brazilian-general-over-government-covid-19-failures.html>)

Doxxing has been utilized across the extremist spectrum. It was used recently in advance of January’s Capitol Hill riots. A now-banned Facebook page called “Red-State Secession,” which helped organize the January 6 protests, featured calls for violence. Page members listed the addresses of “enemies,” including federal judges, members of Congress, and progressive politicians.¹⁴³ NOS has doxxed prominent military and government officials as part of its efforts to make Brazil’s government accede to the group’s demands related to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴⁴

“Militant anarchists and anti-fascists often accompany doxxing with direct threats against individuals and organizations.”

Militant anarchists and anti-fascists often accompany doxxing with direct threats against individuals and organizations. As noted above, members of Smash Racism DC descended upon Fox News host Tucker Carlson’s house and shouted threats, including, “We know where you sleep at night.” The group previously publicly shared Carlson’s home address.¹⁴⁵

Transnational Connections

Transnational networks of militant anarchists and anti-fascists reflect the role of affinity groups and horizontal organizing within the movement. Bound together by shared ideals, these groups stress indirect communication via public statements and the exchange of information at a distance.

Solidarity Through Violence

Militant anarchists and anti-fascists use violent actions to express solidarity with their comrades. Particular actions and accompanying statements demonstrate commitment to a common cause. The U.S.-based group Bristling Badger Brigade committed arson in solidarity with fugitive British anarchist Huw Norfolk, known as Badger.¹⁴⁶ The group set fire to a Philadelphia cell tower (cell towers and other telecommunications infrastructure were frequent targets of Badger’s). FAI/FRI and CCF also style some of their attacks as solidarity measures with imprisoned anarchists.¹⁴⁷ The frequency of violent actions on May Day broadcasts a message of support for the labor movement.¹⁴⁸

143. Sheera Frenkel, “Facebook Bans a Page Used to Coordinate Pro-Trump Protests After Calls for Violence,” *The New York Times*, January 6, 2021. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/us/politics/facebook-bans-a-page-used-to-coordinate-pro-trump-protests-after-calls-for-violence.html>)

144. “Brazilian Anarchists Dox Army General Over Government COVID-19 Failures,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, June 26, 2020. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/brazilian-anarchists-dox-brazilian-general-over-government-covid-19-failures.html>)

145. Brian Stelter, “Police Launch Investigation After Antifa Activists Descend on Fox Host Tucker Carlson’s Home,” *CNN*, November 8, 2018. (<https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/08/media/tucker-carlson-protestors/index.html>); Allyson Chiu, “‘They Were Threatening Me and My Family’: Tucker Carlson’s Home Targeted by Protesters,” *The Washington Post*, November 8, 2018. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2018/11/08/they-were-threatening-me-my-family-tucker-carlsons-home-targeted-by-protesters/>)

146. Bristling Badger Brigade, “Philadelphia (USA) – Anarchist Group ‘Bristling Badger Brigade’ Burns Cell Tower,” *The Plague and the Fire*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://plagueandfire.noblogs.org/philadelphia-usa-anarchist-group-bristling-badger-brigade-burns-cell-tower/>)

147. Jake Hanrahan, “Meet the Nihilist-Anarchist Network Bringing Chaos to a Town Near You,” *Vice*, February 13, 2013. (https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/mvpyyy/the-fai-are-the-worlds-true-anarchists)

148. Avi Selk, “Anarchists Crash May Day Rally in Paris, Burning Cars and Smashing Shop Windows,” *The Washington Post*, May 1, 2018. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/05/01/anarchists-crash-may-day-rally-in-paris-burning-cars-and-smashing-shop-windows/>); Sandhya Somashekhar, “Marches, Sit-Ins and Arrests at May Day Protests,” *The Washington Post*, May 1, 2017. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/marches-sit-ins-and-a-few-arrests-for-may-day-protests/2017/05/01/2243377e-2ea0-11e7-9dec-764dc781686f_story.html)

Armed Conflict as a Transnational Nexus

Anti-fascists and anarchists, including Americans, have traveled abroad to fight in armed conflicts that attract militants from other foreign countries. Connections forged between militant anarchists and anti-fascists fighting in these conflicts may form the basis for future transnational coordination.

Rojava, a predominantly Kurdish area in northeastern Syria, ranks among the most important foreign nexuses for these movements. Anarchists and anti-fascists from the United States and Europe have traveled there to fight with the Kurdish People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel, or YPG) against the Islamic State (ISIS) and to participate in the "Rojava Revolution." Since Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad withdrew his troops from Kurdish areas of Syria in 2012, YPG members have worked to establish their own structures of governance. The YPG's principles of direct democracy, feminism, and egalitarianism are drawn from the ideals of imprisoned Kurdish nationalist ideologue Abdullah Öcalan.¹⁴⁹ The Rojava Revolution has become a beacon for anti-fascists and anarchists globally. They liken it to the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s.

Not all of the YPG's foreign fighters have been anarchists, anti-fascists, or even left-leaning. However, a contingent of left-wing American and European foreign fighters organized their own English-speaking platoon, called "Antifa International Tabur." Scrounging equipment from the YPG and sometimes from battlefield rubble, the Antifa platoon fought in the battle to seize the Taqba Dam from ISIS. Over time, the Antifa group's ideological purity moderated in the face of pragmatic need. The platoon maintained its anti-fascist orientation

but expelled a handful of anarchists who, as *Rolling Stone* writer Seth Harp noted, "didn't want to submit to military discipline." The group also added to its ranks Western ex-soldiers who were markedly less ideological than the original cadre.¹⁵⁰

The Antifa platoon made a name for itself in the fight against ISIS. The platoon's leader, Karim Franceschi, was admitted to the YPG's council of generals, and the platoon contributed to the YPG's anti-ISIS fight.¹⁵¹ Even if platoon fighters provided hyperbolized accounts of their victories to media outlets (a common habit for foreign fighters), they saw legitimate action in the anti-ISIS war.

A smaller number of anti-fascists and anarchists have traveled to Ukraine to take part in the fighting there, with militant antifascist and anarchist fighters joining both sides of the conflict. Some fighters who joined the pro-Moscow side told reporters they were motivated by opposition to ultranationalist and fascist ideologies held by certain pro-Kyiv factions.¹⁵² A few volunteers from the Antifa International Tabur who fought in Syria have made their way to Ukraine.¹⁵³

Transnational Protests and Activism

Major protests, particularly in Europe, attract militant anarchists from multiple countries. These protests are typically organized around multi-day international conferences, such as NATO and G20 summits. Protests may involve street violence, primarily between the protesters and law enforcement. The protests' use of black bloc tactics, their collaborative and relatively leaderless nature, and their wide mix of actors varying in group size and compliance with the law all complicate attribution. Regardless of the

¹⁴⁹. Seth Harp, "The Untold Story of Syria's Antifa Platoon," *Rolling Stone*, July 10, 2018. (<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/untold-story-syria-antifa-platoon-666159>)

¹⁵⁰. Ibid.

¹⁵¹. Ibid.

¹⁵². See, for example: Sara Merger, "War Junkies: Why Foreign Fighters Are Flocking to Ukraine," *ABC* (Australia), May 3, 2019. (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-04/ukraine-foreign-fighters-merger/11054728>)

¹⁵³. Seth Harp, "The Untold Story of Syria's Antifa Platoon," *Rolling Stone*, July 10, 2018. (<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/untold-story-syria-antifa-platoon-666159>)

opacity inherent in these protests – and the difficulty of identifying specific participants – they present opportunities for networking and collaboration between militant anarchists and anti-fascists from different countries.

Blurred Lines: Reciprocal Radicalization and Fringe Fluidity

One set of challenges related to militant anarchists and anti-fascists stems from the way extremists interact with each other. In the current polarized climate, the presence of opposite extremes tends to strengthen both sides and provides average people a reason to drift toward extremes. Theories of *reciprocal radicalization* and *fringe fluidity* reveal how this dynamic impacts the ecosystem of extremism.

The concept of reciprocal radicalization describes how the increased power of groups aligned with one extremist ideology will fuel recruitment and encourage activity by groups aligned with ostensibly opposing ideologies, in what becomes a mutually reinforcing cycle. Interactions between groups locked in reciprocal radicalization can result in “a bizarre mixture of cooperation, competition, and overt fighting between different groups.”¹⁵⁴

Anti-fascist groups, in particular, tend to be reactive. They most often mobilize when the movement perceives a fascist or racist threat. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, for example, the United States saw a significant increase in anti-fascist groups that challenged racist skinheads and the Ku Klux Klan.¹⁵⁵ In 2016 and 2017, anti-fascists mobilized in a similar fashion in response to perceived “fascist” threats. The emergence of the alt-right, the Trump presidency, and the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville all served as catalysts for anti-fascist activity.¹⁵⁶

Conversely, right-of-center extremist groups use public awareness of anti-fascism, including militant anti-fascists at violent protests, to recruit and mobilize followers. The Proud Boys, a controversial group that has a history of engaging in street violence and embraces what it calls “Western chauvinism,” has been particularly effective in organizing marches and rallies aimed at countering anti-fascists.¹⁵⁷ White supremacist extremists and militia groups have similarly leveraged anti-fascist activity to promote public events.¹⁵⁸

Opposing extremists can reinforce each other’s worst fears, drive each other’s recruitment, and provoke one another into “tit-for-tat” retaliation.¹⁵⁹ They can confirm one another’s narratives by telling the same stories, with the role of *victim* and *demon* reversed.

154. Julia Ebner, *The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017), page 215.

155. Mark Bray, *The Antifascist Handbook* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2017), pages 66–71

156. *Ibid.*, page 106; Colin Clarke and Michael Kenney, “What Antifa Is, What It Isn’t, and Why It Matters,” *War on the Rocks*, June 23, 2020. (<https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/what-antifa-is-what-it-isnt-and-why-it-matters>)

157. For more information on the Proud Boys, see: “Proud Boys,” *Anti-Defamation League*, accessed December 9, 2020. (<https://www.adl.org/proudboys>); “Far-Right Group Organizes Protest Against Antifascists, Counter Protestors Prepare,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, August 15, 2019. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/far-right-group-organizes-protest-against-antifascists-counter-protestors-prepare.html>)

158. See, for example: “Far-Right Advertises Upcoming Protest in Seattle Against Autonomous Zone,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, June 15, 2020. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/far-right-advertises-upcoming-protest-in-seattle-against-autonomous-zone.html>); “Promoting Police Disbandment, Far-Right Community Calls on Whites to take ‘Defensive Action,’” *SITE Intelligence Group*, June 15, 2020. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/promoting-police-disbandment-far-right-community-calls-on-whites-to-take-defensive-action.html>)

159. Julia Ebner, *The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017), page 33.

For example, in Europe, militant Islamists and far-right extremists have opposing perspectives (that is, *The West is at war with Islam* or *Islam is at war with the West*), but the story they tell is the same. They provide one another with a *raison d'être*. For this reason, some observers call them opposite “sides of the same coin.”¹⁶⁰

When extremes answer extremes in this manner, society writ large suffers. Neutral parties can be drawn to militant groups. The media, including online echo chambers, may amplify material that reinforces and provokes the extremes, thus normalizing their narratives. Extremists can thus *dictate the conversation* and push neutral parties into the same dichotomous camps the extremists inhabit.

Another dynamic at play in the extremist ecosystem is fringe fluidity, a radicalization pathway in which individuals who come to accept and act on an extremist ideology transition from the embrace of one form of violent extremism to another. In cases of fringe fluidity, the pathway to the new form of violent extremism can be understood in the context of the individual’s prior ideology. Often, the perception of a shared enemy forms an important commonality between the two ideologies.¹⁶¹

Militant anarchism advocates violent rejection of the state, capitalism, and other principles of contemporary liberal democratic society. Some forms of militant anarchism intersect with other ideologies that reject similar principles, forming hybrid ideologies. One such hybrid ideology is *national anarchism*, which advocates

opposition to the state in order to advance racist ideals – a combination antithetical to most other anarchists’ outlooks. National anarchists view anarchy as an opportunity to advance an ideology of white separatism and to create new white ethno-states from the chaos. They desire racially divided “national autonomous zones.” National anarchists also emphasize elements of environmentalism. The most prominent group in the United States is the **Bay Area National Anarchists**, which claims to have members from both far-right and far-left political persuasions. National anarchist groups have previously formed in Europe and Australia.¹⁶²

“Militant anarchism advocates violent rejection of the state, capitalism, and other principles of contemporary liberal democratic society. Some forms of militant anarchism intersect with other ideologies that reject similar principles, forming hybrid ideologies.”

ITS, an anarchist and ecological extremist group, openly expresses admiration for terrorists and terrorist groups subscribing to ideologies very different from its own. ITS, as previously discussed, is distinct from most anarchist groups in its attitude toward indiscriminate violence. Fueled by nihilism, the group applauds mass violence of all kinds. Thus, ITS has praised members of ISIS and issued calls for jihadist attacks, writing that they “call on the mujahadin [*sic*] to attack indiscriminately. If you lone wolves have the ability, do it, against Christian targets or any other objective of Western civilization.”¹⁶³ At the same time, ITS has celebrated anti-Muslim

160. Ibid., page 185.

161. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Madeleine Blackman, “Fluidity of the Fringes: Prior Extremist Involvement as a Radicalization Pathway,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, January 2019. (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1531545>)

162. “California Racists Claim They’re Anarchists,” *SPLC Intelligence Report*, May 2009. (<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2009/california-racists-claim-they%E2%80%99re-anarchists>)

163. “ITS Releases Seventy-First Communique, Promising to ‘Indiscriminately Kill’ Until Stopped by Force,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, January 7, 2019. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/its-releases-seventy-first-communicue-promising-to-indiscriminately-kill-until-stopped-by-force.html>); “Eco-Extremist Says That Groups Should Learn Strategy from Islamic State,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, November 23, 2016. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/eco-extremist-says-that-groups-should-learn-strategy-from-islamic-state.html>)

terrorist attacks, including the March 2019 mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand.¹⁶⁴

Technophobia and eco-extremism provide a potential nexus between violent right-wing and left-wing extremism. Individuals with a wide range of political beliefs have planned, threatened, or executed attacks against 5G cell towers and advanced technology laboratories.¹⁶⁵ Stated justifications for these attacks vary, from purported environmental and health impacts to antisemitic conspiracy theories, but they share a skepticism of the rapid advance of science and technology, and of their impact on human society. Both Brenton Tarrant, the perpetrator of the 2019 Christchurch attack, and Patrick Crusius, who killed 22 people in a racially motivated attack at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, in August 2019, expressed ecofascist beliefs, merging violent racism with environmental extremism.¹⁶⁶

Fringe fluidity demonstrates how extremists can prioritize common grievances and goals even when their overarching ideologies conflict. As scholars Jacob Davey and Julia Ebner put it, “ideological pragmatism increasingly blurs the lines between traditionally separate movements.”¹⁶⁷ Extremists of differing ideologies share a susceptibility to overgeneralizing and

dividing the world into camps of good and evil. They may share a common search for identity, belief in an inevitable civil war, or goal of state collapse. They may share a common enemy or common target audiences. Such patterns may enable the switch from one extreme to another despite the apparent paradox of doing so.

“Extremists of differing ideologies share a susceptibility to overgeneralizing and dividing the world into camps of good and evil.”

Individuals may shift between extremes before ultimately carrying out violent acts. For example, Brenton Tarrant shifted between several extremist ideologies, ultimately declaring himself an ecofascist at the time of the Christchurch mosque attack.¹⁶⁸ Pittsburgh-area anarchist Brian Bartels co-opted a protest in his city on May 30, 2020, focused on racial justice, spray-painting the anarchist “A” symbol on a police car before jumping on its hood and smashing its windshield. This triggered further violence during an event that had been peaceful up until that point.¹⁶⁹ In an era of heightened political polarization, extremists may seize the opportunity to draw recruits and mobilize from a growing menu of overlapping and sometimes conflicting militant ideologies.

164. ITS-Mexico, “(Mexico) 77 Comunicado de ITS: Sobre la Macacre Eco-Fascista En Nueva Zelanda [(Mexico) 77th ITS Statement: On the Eco-Fascist Massacre In New Zealand],” *Maldición Eco-Extremista*, March 27, 2019. (<http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/mexico-77-comunicado-de-its-sobre-la-macacre-eco-fascista-en-nueva-zelanda>)

165. See, for example: “Phoenix Project #14: ‘Live Wires FAI/ELF’ take responsibility for 4 Arsons against Bristol’s cellular transmission infrastructure over 24 Hours (UK),” *325*, June 11, 2014. (<https://325.nostate.net/2014/06/11/phoenix-project-14-live-wires-faielf-take-responsibility-for-4-arsons-against-brisstols-cellular-transmission-infrastructure-over-24-hours-uk>); Leigh Phillips, “Anarchists Attack Science,” *Nature*, Volume 485, Issue 7400, May 31, 2012, page 561. (<https://www.nature.com/news/anarchists-attack-science-1.10729>); “Neo-Nazi Channel Promotes Attacks Against 5G Towers,” *SITE Intelligence Group*, May 20, 2020. (<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right/-Far-Left-Threat/neo-nazi-channel-promotes-attacks-against-5g-towers-2.html>)

166. Joel Achenbach, “Two mass killings a world apart share a common theme: ‘ecofascism,’” *The Washington Post*, August 18, 2019. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/two-mass-murders-a-world-apart-share-a-common-theme-ecofascism/2019/08/18/0079a676-bec4-11e9-b873-63ace636af08_story.html)

167. Jacob Davey and Julia Ebner, “The Fringe Insurgency: Connectivity, Convergence and Mainstreaming of the Extreme Right,” *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2017, page 29. (https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/The-Fringe-Insurgency-221017_2.pdf)

168. Tarrant details his various inspirations and beliefs in his manifesto, in which he observes that “when I was young I was a communist, then an anarchist, and finally a libertarian before coming to be an eco-fascist.” He attributes his inspiration to a number of ideologies, figures, and cultures, some of which are seemingly in conflict with one another.

169. U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Pennsylvania, Press Release, “Suburban Pittsburgh Man Pleads Guilty to Destroying a Pittsburgh Police Vehicle During May 30th Protest,” September 22, 2020. (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdpa/pr/suburban-pittsburgh-man-pleads-guilty-destroying-pittsburgh-police-vehicle-during-may>)

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Militant anarchists and anti-fascists present a challenging issue set. Countering the growing propensity for a variety of militant groups to dictate the American political conversation raises challenging questions in a democratic society. While militant groups may imperil public safety, much of their activity – including their advocacy of extreme ideas and engagement in aggressive protest activity – is constitutionally protected. To address the growing set of domestic challenges, this section outlines concrete steps that the U.S. government and society more broadly can take to curb the pull of violent extremism and the threat that it poses.

Legally Address Doxxing Tactics Designed to Threaten Violence

Doxxing is a gray-area tactic employed by militant anarchists, anti-fascists, and extremists of other ideological persuasions. The difficulty in prosecuting doxxing lies with proving intent. In many cases, the legality of doxxing can hinge on the presence of malicious intent, which, if not proven, can leave the victim with no recourse.¹⁷⁰ Doxxing can be employed to intimidate and to threaten violence – for example, by exposing personal information (such as home addresses) of individuals targeted by these campaigns. The U.S. government must better protect against harmful doxxing. While there are complex speech-related issues at play, doxxing increasingly stifles speech. Tech companies can also play a role in countering doxxing by rapidly responding on their platforms.¹⁷¹

Work With International Partners to Disrupt Transnational Collaboration

Compared to other spheres of extremism, militant anti-fascists and anarchists are seemingly less internationalized. Nevertheless, the transnational elements of these movements deserve attention. The U.S. government should collaborate with international partners to study transnational activity among both groups and individuals. A number of militant anarchist groups have cells or affinity groups in multiple countries, while individual anti-fascists and anarchists have traveled to combat zones. The highest levels of anarchist violence are currently in Europe and Latin America, and the United States could see an uptick in violence if these foreign groups increasingly penetrate U.S.-based activism.

The U.S. government should study relevant trends to prepare for potential new avenues for the internationalization of militant activity and possible transnational collaboration by these groups, with an eye toward disrupting such efforts. Such awareness would empower U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies to respond more effectively to future acts of anarchist and anti-fascist violence.

Resist Deplatforming Under Threat of Force

Deplatforming, or physically denying platforms to individuals with whom one disagrees, is a tactic used by anarchist and anti-fascist extremists, sometimes violently. To prevent this tactic from being normalized, efforts must be mounted to resist it. While the initial effect of physical deplatforming may be to deny speech to a single individual, deplatforming has broader impacts. First Amendment-protected speech is denied under threats of violence, due to the perspective of the speaker.

¹⁷⁰ Megan Frank, “Dangers of Doxing: Internet Users Release Addresses, Phone Numbers of Election Officials,” *WLVT*, December 11, 2020. (<https://www.wlvt.org/blogs/warren/dangers-of-doxing-internet-users-release-addresses-phone-numbers-of-election-officials>)

¹⁷¹ See the recent example of Facebook’s removal of a group that featured “direct calls for violence” and doxxing, including sharing “addresses of perceived ‘enemies’ in the nation’s capital”: Sheera Frenkel, “Facebook Bans a Page Used to Coordinate Pro-Trump Protests After Calls for Violence,” *The New York Times*, January 6, 2021. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/us/politics/facebook-bans-a-page-used-to-coordinate-pro-trump-protests-after-calls-for-violence.html>)

A whole-of-society approach is needed to protect speech and resist deplatforming. The tactic can also be a driver of reciprocal radicalization. Denying speech and operating space, sometimes by force, serves only to further radicalize and galvanize those who have been deplatformed or support the denied perspective. The potential for such activities to spark violence should be apparent. It is important that institutions, be they universities, government offices, or other entities, protect people's right to free speech, including those who are controversial.

Understand the Influence of Reciprocal Radicalization and Fringe Fluidity

As noted, fringe fluidity and reciprocal radicalization deserve attention. In the current age of extremism and armed politics, fringe fluidity may become an increasingly powerful force. Likewise, evidence of reciprocal radicalization among extremist groups demands attention. In today's political climate, extremists of one political persuasion have no shortage of opposing actors and events to radicalize them.

Washington should devote resources to studying these phenomena. Doing so would afford an understanding of how extremist organizations and ideologies can overlap and interact with each other, and could open new avenues for reducing the size of extremist ecosystems.

Resist the Temptation to Pick Sides Between Extremist Groups

In recent years, U.S. government officials have spoken ambiguously and unclearly about extremist violence. This is highly problematic. Political leaders must recognize the role they play in furthering extremist narratives. Reacting to violent extremism by choosing a side to make a political point serves to prioritize goals and enemies *as the extremists would*. As political factions and movements in the United States resort to the use or threat of violence, politicians must be unified and precise in their messaging: Political violence is intolerable in a democratic society. Such language would deny political legitimacy to extremist groups and individuals seeking to use violence to advance political goals.

About the Authors

Dr. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross is a scholar, practitioner, author, and entrepreneur who is the founder and chief executive officer of Valens Global. Valens, a private firm focused on fashioning creative solutions to complex 21st-century challenges in the national security domain and beyond, has twice been named to *Entrepreneur Magazine's* E360 list of the top small businesses in the United States. Dr. Gartenstein-Ross is a senior advisor on asymmetric warfare at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, where he previously served as a senior fellow. He also previously held positions in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, at Google's tech incubator Jigsaw, and at Georgetown University. He has been described as "a rising star in the counterterrorism community" by *The International Herald Tribune*.



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Editorial images in cover background (clockwise from top left):

Counter-protesters wear black clothes during an Antifa gathering in Portland, Oregon, on August 17, 2019.
(Photo by Stephanie Keith/Getty Images);

Members of Antifa in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 11, 2018.
(Photo by Logan Cyrus/AFP via Getty Images);

Members of Antifa line up during an alt-right rally in Portland, Oregon, on August 17, 2019.
(Photo by Stephanie Keith/Getty Images);

Black bloc protesters prepare for the start of a march in Grant Park during the NATO Summit in Chicago, Illinois, in 2012.
(Photo by Al Podgorski/*Sun-Times*);

A person wearing a gas mask waves a flag during an anti-fascist rally in Boston, Massachusetts, on July 11, 2020.
(Photo by Jonathan Wiggs/*The Boston Globe* via Getty Images);

Members of Antifa line up during an alt-right rally in Portland, Oregon, on August 17, 2019.
(Photo by Stephanie Keith/Getty Images).



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