

# FIGHT TO WIN



**PROTEST TACTICS AND STAYING SAFE**

**WITH PRIDE WAS A RIOT, SAC**

## **We absolutely hate drawing horizontal lines.**

We genuinely believe your time and energy would be better saved by being proactive and striking first, rather than reactive and responding to the aggression of others. Much of the spirit of “direct action” comes from understanding that our goals for peace, freedom and liberation cannot be won on the back foot.

Building an affinity group with strong, concrete goals on how to weaken the opposition, cripple fascist organizing and inspire hope into our siblings is not only one of the bravest positions you can be in, but often the safest.

Choosing to fight on your own terms, under scenarios you can control and with risks you can mitigate will always be safer than charging at an enemy who has declared a horizontal line using the same strategy,

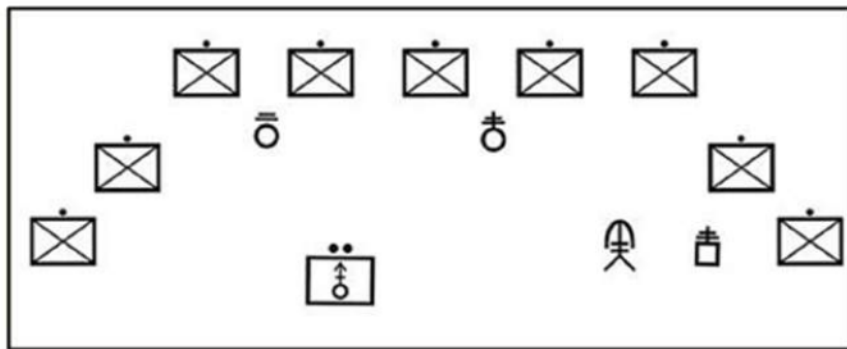
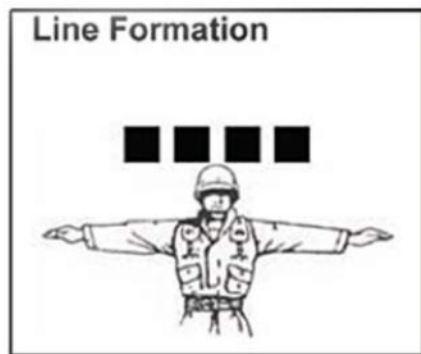
## **However, we also will not win by surrendering ground to the fascist.**

Caring for each others means that we treat our lives, and the lives of those around us, as if they have meaning and importance. If one genuinely believes the risks we face, and that human life is valuable, we will be constantly training and practicing together with that same seriousness.

Counter demonstrations are one of the most dangerous places to be. It is on the fascists terms, with heavy law enforcement, and extensive documentation. We should not become comfortable running headlong into battle every time a fascist wants to play King of the Hill. This will burn out your movement and kill those you love.

However, when it must be done, we must do so with intention and with a clear plan for victory. We hope this guide will serve you well, provide a map on how to find what success looks like, and how to achieve it while keeping everybody safe. And as always, we protect us.

# UNDERSTANDING HORIZONTAL LINES



When organizing or attending a counter-protest, it's important to recognize that our opponents are playing from a manual. They use these manuals because they work. While we can often over-whelm them through sheer numbers, we can't count on it, or disregard the utility of formation training. A more organized force will frequently defeat larger crowds of disorganized opponents through skill and training alone. We must understand these things going ahead.

Infact, most teams are playing with the same manuals. They're publicly available and can be ordered online or through your nearest Army Surplus store. It's no secret, and they're frequently used by fascists and right-wing militias who are training to kill us. We can view these horizontal lines in sports like football, where two horizontal lines struggle it out to gain ground and score points.

**We must both recognize the utility of the tactics used in field manuals, while recognizing that these tactics will never usually work for us as protestors and activists.**

The field manuals they study from are almost entirely pointed towards counter-insurgency and suppression. It relies on an abundance of resources and the ability to hold permanent land, which we frequently lack on both accounts. Infact, some of our greatest strengths are to act as water and be the most uncontrolled force we can possibly muster. The truth is that this works!

While we view what works well for us as protestors and activists, vs what works well in the formations used against us, we believe its important to point out that these manuals conventiently mention their own weaknesses. They are required to openly admit to their weaknesses in order to compensate for the hole in their defense. Knowing this, local community defense groups, self defense formations and affinity groups can incorporate field manuels into their regular reading and training practices. This allows teams to recognize the tools used against them, but also, to counter-organize them when they present themselves.

# HARD TARGET



# SOFT TARGET



# BE ROWDY

# STAY DANGEROUS

A crowd that will not defend itself is an easy target to attack by police and fascist groups. Police work to train this helplessness by pushing the horizontal line until its at your front. When they breach this space between your two lines, called “**no mans land**”, they use this to identify threats inside the crowd, pick off key-activists, intimidate, and straight-forward attack with direct force. Fascists will do this to build confidence, often attacking the weakest target in the crowd in order to draw out stronger combatants. When those combatants make themselves visible, they are baited to the front to be overwhelmed by opponents or arrested by law enforcement.

**Its important to understand that a dangerous protest is a safe protest.**

The act of breaching no-mans land is a confidence building gesture used by our opponents to gain the confidence to attack. We should be doing the same thing frankly, but speaking from a purely defensive position, we must maintain our “no mans land” through tactical superiority or even force.

A group that begins throwing bottles, trash and debris at their opponent keeps enemies at bay from picking away easy targets. It creates an apperance of a more hostile crowd, even if the key agitators are only a few brave risk takers. A crowd willing to pepper spray an attacker breaching no-man’s land will set an example to other enemy combatants that a head-on approach will not be easy. Law enforcement will even keep a healthy distance, at first, due to their rules of engagement on officer safety.

**Your opponent is dangerous. You must be, too.**

A crowd that does not maintain their own no-man’s land will have their opponent move their no-man’s land over you. Letting your opponent bring their line of fire to your front is an invitation for their aggression. While violence for violence sake is not a strategy we should subscribe to, protest organizers, community defenders and risk takers must be prepared to defend no-man’s land with deterrents (and repercussions), and to accept these engagements on their own terms. Often, a small, calculated use of force early will work to prevent many violent attacks against your crowd in the fight ahead. This means crowd self defense is simply the path of least resistance in order to preserve crowd safety, health and retention for the event.

**Note: One does not have to be individually capable of rowdiness to support a rowdy crowd. Healthy ways to do so would be to announce a respect for a diversity of tactics, protect risk takers during events and defending their actions after.**

# WHAT IS SUCCESS?

# WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Success is a relative goal which often gets little credit or recognition during counter protest organizing. The truth is success is subjectively defined by the goals of the beholder, and abstracted many ways through every attendee's personal views on what counts as "success." A counter-demo organizer might choose that a "Noise Demo", or a demo which means to "noise"-out opponents, is successful if it disrupts the ability of the target to achieve their stated goal, whether by nuisance or sabotage. However, an attendee might say that if this tactic falls short of deplatforming the target, demonstrating an example of what two different peoples version of what success looks like.

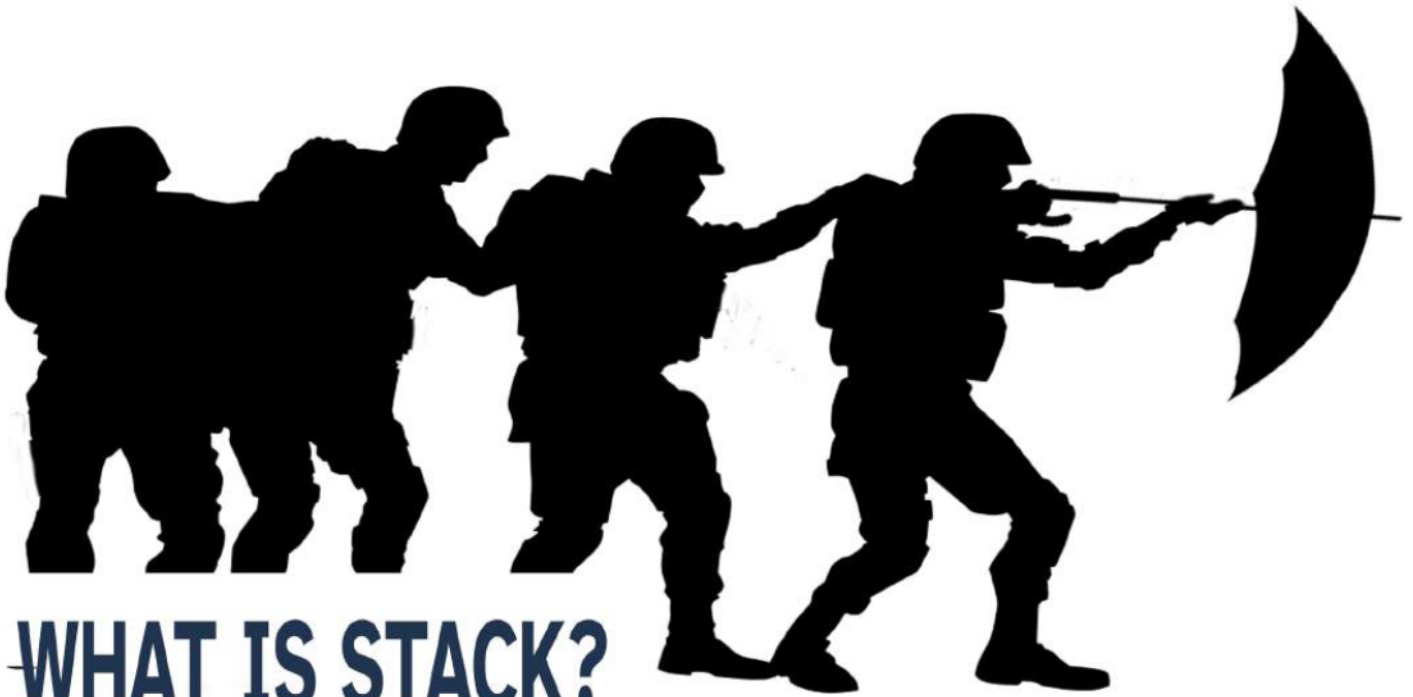
**So what does success look like? What are our goals? What strategy will help us achieve these goals? And what tactics should we use that fits our strategy for success?**

Speaking purely of counter-demo's, the name of the game is defined in the description. To counter someone else's events means the rules of success are defined by the opponents view of failure. While protest demonstrations will often define success as "bigger turnout", this rarely yields failure to your opponent, but may serve to provide the publicity they require for their own definition of success. Knowing this, a strategy for success built for a counter-demo should always begin with what your organizing group is capable of, but also with counter organizing the definition of success used by your opponents.

**For example**, a counter-demo announced with a weeks before a fascist demonstration will result with many protestors and activists who will likely be too preoccupied to contribute to the counter-demonstration in time. With a shorter hand of resources, it might not be safe for community defenders to take a head-on approach against the fascist demo. That said, a few highly motivated teams could decide to physically block parking for the event, seed disinfo into the opposing media circles, and aim down a political target for a cartoonish "creme pie" or "soup-ing", effectively lowering attendance, increasing event dysfunction & poisoning the message of their propaganda by shadowing it with humiliating or devastating antics.

**Note: By mapping out your opponents goals, you can build an effective counter-strategy for success that meets the individual capabilities of your team. If your success is defined by their failure, then imagine what a well-timed hiccup could do to ruin your own plans and work your way up! Often the simpler the plan, the easier it is to share with others, increasing its chance of success.**

# UNDERSTANDING FORMATIONS



## WHAT IS STACK?

A “stack” formation is popularly recognized for its use by military and law enforcement actors when assaulting a building. A **“stack” is when a line of people grab each other by the back as they move in a line.** Activists and community defenders have practiced the use of building a stack to replicate “de-arrest” groups, stay close to team members while crawling through dense crowds and maintain the edges of marches. A stack takes 30 seconds to train and looks like a line of activists grabbing each other by the back or backpack, and can be used both moving forward, backward or while stationary.

The image of a stack, while a quick and easy trick to learn, is helpful when a team is crossing through dense crowds of law enforcement, or needs to maintain the edges of a bloc from another crowd. The image demonstrates an intentional professionalism, and the grip to your teammates make it difficult to break the line, including for easy arrests or breaking rank.

A **stack requires strong communication** from those in front and back, with the middle obligated to yell “call outs” in between the two sides to ensure clear communication. A form of tapping on shoulders should be included to pass along unannounced, short hand codes among the stack. A third person walking the edge of the stack, issuing instructions, can be useful to navigate and lead the stack while watching out for threats along the side or rear.

Rehearsing a stack is a short and effective practice of keeping your team tight when everything else is in chaos. You can practice stack with as little as one or two team members, remembering to grab your team mate while walking through large crowds and rehearsing your shorthand communication skills.

**Note: You can always grab someones shoulder in the absence of a backpack. It’s not always grabbing and can even be light contact until a “fork grip” is necessary.**



## WHAT IS DEARREST?

Dearrest is a beautiful thing. While dearrest can be defined as the liberating of our friends, comrades and activists by the process of direct action, such as opening car doors or retrieving them from the clutches of opponents, dearrest starts as a common practice among crowd attendees.

Similar to stack, the goal of **dearrest is to make yourself difficult to be grabbed or arrested**. This can be done by linking arms, grabbing bags, throwing yourself in the middle of a capture attempt and all things that keep our siblings inside our community and outside of enemy hands!



One of the best dearrest formations look like crowd members linking to each other, elbow-cross-elbow, while continuing to move or march together. A dearrest formation can stop police from entering a crowd to grab a person of interest, and even be used to **grab a person of interest** out of the clutches of our aggressors.

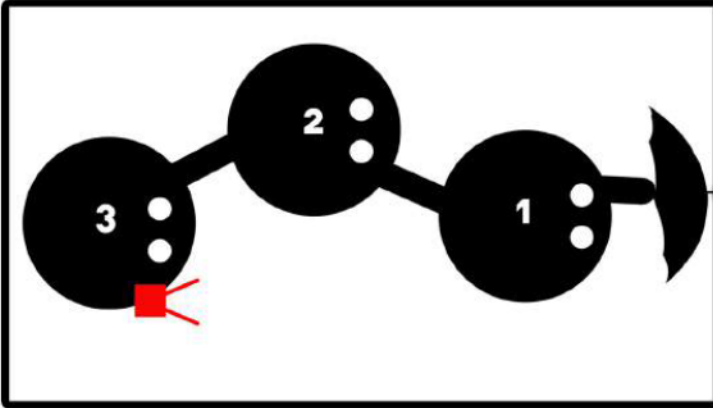
Whats important about a dearrest formation is that its a tactic you can (and should) continue to employ before the risk of arrest occurs. By using these methods of protecting each other, our enemies second guess penetrating a crowd and our crowd members demonstrate the power of working together!

While there are forms like a **dearrest pyramid, a dearrest stack and a dearrest box**, we recommend groups of straight rows crossing arms while those behind them hold them in a stack. Its especially useful for those on the second or third line to deploy deterrents to protect the crowd as necessary, then duck into the crowd to avoid identification or capture.



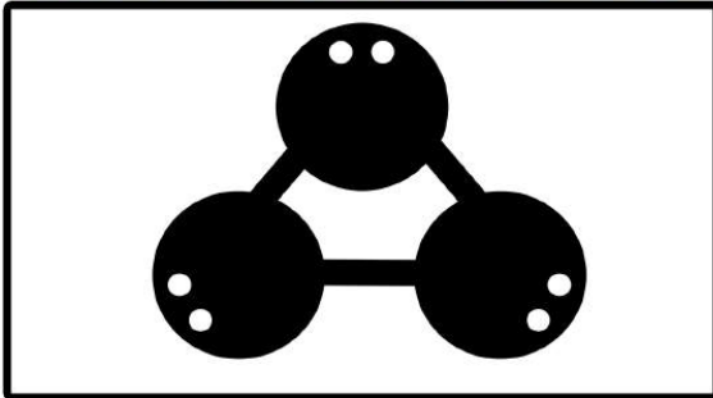
# THE RULE OF 3

## THREE PERSON STACK



1. Maintains forward cover, obscuring crowd from camera surveillance.
2. Defends #1 by guiding them from behind and alerting #3 when deterrents are necessary. Pulls #1 away from potential harm.
3. When enemy combatants cross into your no-mans land, peak forward to apply deterrents and return to cover.

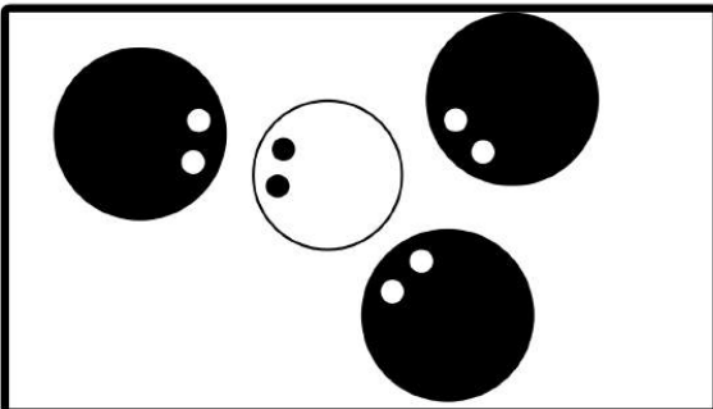
## THREE PERSON PYRAMID



When fights break out among the crowd and chaos is evolving, creating a back-to-back pyramid can be used to assess danger and give your team visual coverage of the field.

When you are surrounded by law enforcement and feel arrest is certain, you can go out fighting by linking arms, making your pyramid tight and heavy.

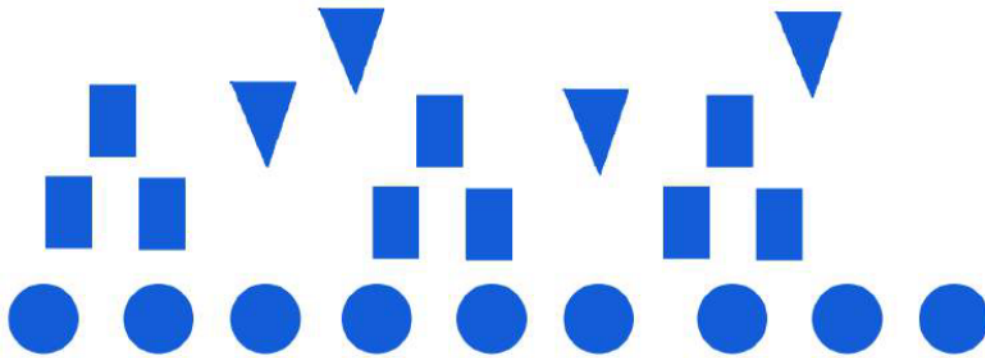
## THREE POINT SURROUND



When ejecting a bad actor from a crowd, or initiating combat with an opponent, it is often best to produce a three-point surround to better control the engagement.

Even while issuing peaceful orders during an ejection, keeping someone on their heels will induce panic in the target. The person from behind should be prepared to grab the opponent while the other two use deterrents or force to neutralize the threat.

# MAINTAINING ROWS

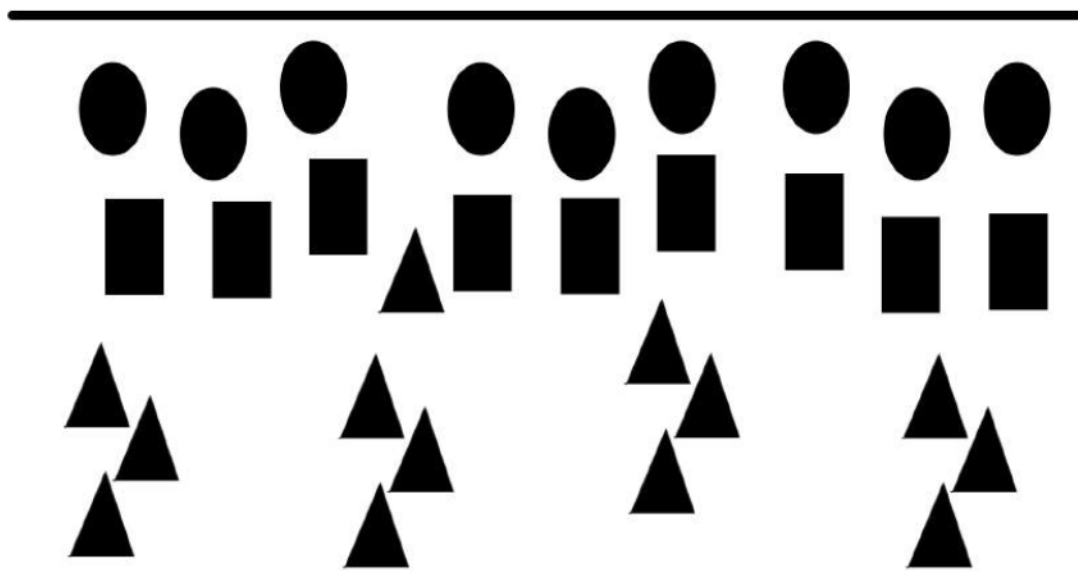


Riot Munitions

Arrest Formation

Police Line

NO MANS LAND



Umbrella / Banner Line

Frontline Defenders

Secondline Defenders

Risk takers, projectiles  
Deterrent pokes  
Crowd Mass

## Never turn away from enemy combatants.

Whether marching to or from, keep a forward line facing combatants. Use your crowd calls, deterrents and projectiles to maintain no mans land. Keep in mind that your opponent will punish you for turning your back. The second line should be managing the safety of your frontline while risk takers move barriers into the road, poke, and chip away combatants with deterrents. There should be a similar formation facing the opposite direction, with the midsection communicating.

# FIGHT WITH TOOLS



**Obscure their senses.  
Maintain creativity.  
Play dirty.**

Never bring a tool you aren't prepared to use. Some tools come with duties. If you aren't prepared to fill that role, pass it to someone who will. Don't be afraid to turn down any risk you aren't prepared to accept!



Use umbrellas/banners or shields to obscure vision into the crowd. You are working! Keep your cover high, and communicate loudly when you need to shift with someone or a break.



Your senses are site, taste, touch, hearing and smell. Police use alarms, lights and tear gas to obstruct these senses and cause panic. **Don't panic.** They are limited by the same senses you are. Utilize this weakness and join in on the fun! Flash lights, road flares and fire works go a long way.

Pepperspray, bear mace and fire extinguishers are great tools for keeping enemy combatants at a safe and healthy distance.

# DON'T FORGET TO DE-BLOC!

While black bloc has many advantages, your primary goal should be to have **no identifying features** escaping your bloc. This is because police tend to spot and arrest actors but not crowds. This means, when a community defender deploys a deterrent to defend themselves or others, police will be seeking to arrest the actor who deployed deterrents.

This is challenging against black bloc, as their radio call outs become “black shirt, black shoes, black backpack”  
However, just because your bloc is concealing your identity doesn't mean they won't recognize you later! Once you've done your dirt, change quickly!

During a break in the storm, or as urgently as possible, tell others to cover you while you make an outfit change.

Make sure you have a second outfit either under your black bloc, or ready to pull from a nearby bag. You can ask for clothes from others when things get dire. Practice your bloc / de-bloc speeds at home as part of your equipment check and preparation exercises.



# PARKS ARE YOUR BEST FRIEND



## Bathrooms, tree cover and plenty of places to change.

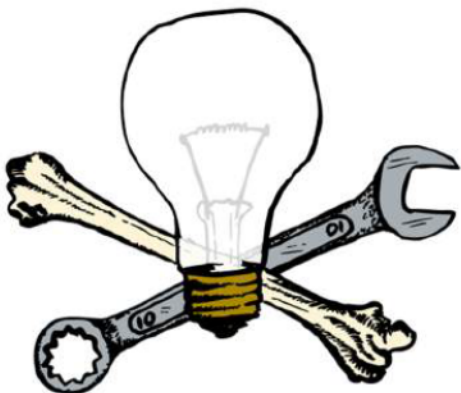
While tree cover and bathrooms obscure you from helicopter surveillance, most parks give you a 360 view of where enemies are approaching. There are normally endless places to stash equipment and clothing changes.

Parks also grant for great assembly and disbursement areas. Police can almost never surround a whole park and lack the resources to pursue and trap those leaving. That said, if you got into any trouble, try not to look like yourself while you leave!



# **NEED MORE TIPS FOR KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE?**

**We recommend  
The Femme Guide to Riot Fashion.**



**This seasons hottest looks for the  
discerning anarchist femme.**

**Published by Elle Armageddon to Crimethinc.com  
10-16-2017**

**[tinyurl.com/femmeguide](http://tinyurl.com/femmeguide)**

# BASH BACK!

THEY ARE PROMISING TO ELIMINATE US.  
PLAN ACCORDINGLY AND BASH BACK!



HERE IS A LIST OF TOOLS TO GET STARTED.



- WHAT IS ANTIFA?
- WHAT IS FASCISM?
- 40 WAYS TO FIGHT FASCISM
- AFFINITY ORGANIZING & MORE!



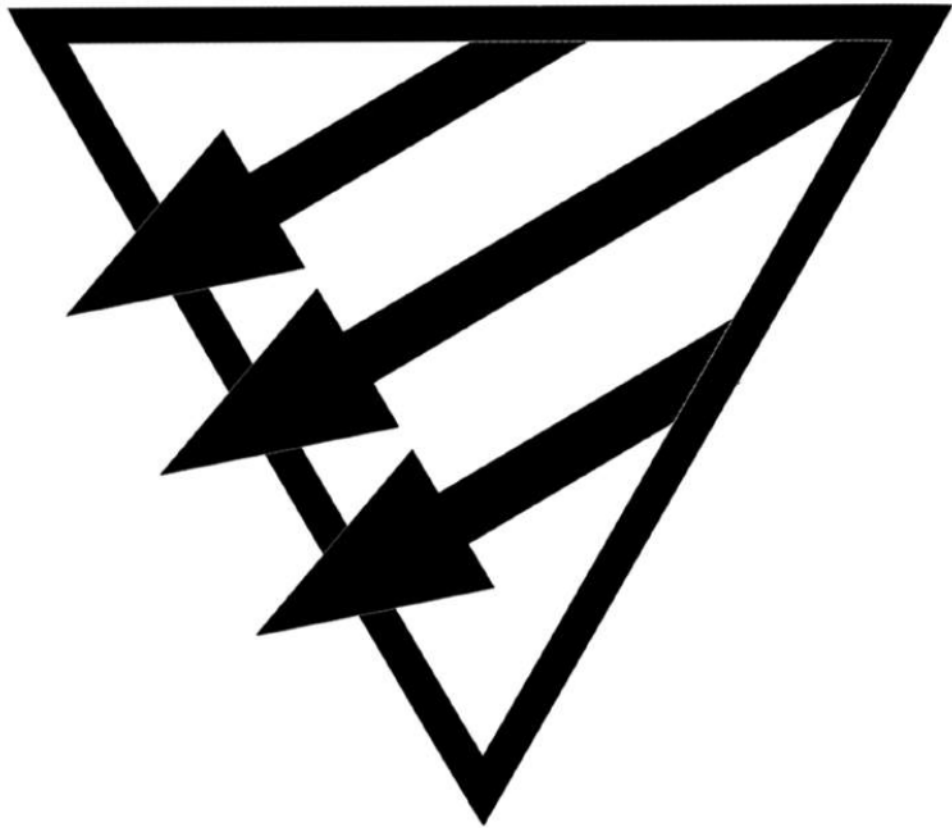
**WEST COAST UNITED AGAINST FASCISM**

Follow our link tree for videos, zines,  
journals and updates on fascist activity.

**FIND OUR LINKTREE**

[LINKTR.EE/COMMUNITYANTIFASCISTLINKS](https://linktr.ee/COMMUNITYANTIFASCISTLINKS)

# **WARNING**



# **QUEERS**

# **BASH BACK**

**You are entering an antifa zone.  
Bigots, transphobes and racists beware.  
Queers known to bash back here.**