

THE ANTIFA F.A.Q.



**Frequently Asked Questions
and Answers About Today's
Anti-Fascist Movement**



What is Antifa?

“Antifa” is simply an abbreviation for “anti-fascism.” Anti-fascism has been around for as long as fascism has existed as a political ideology. The first anti-fascist group was probably the Italian Arditi del Popolo, founded in 1921 to resist Mussolini’s squads of fascist thugs.

Antifa come from all walks of life and all corners of the globe. Antifa do not subscribe to a single political ideology or philosophy - Antifa is a big tent that welcomes all comers, so long as they meet the sole requirement of being opposed to fascism and being willing to step up and do something about it (although some political leanings are more congruent with anti-fascism than others).

What is fascism?

Most political scholars agree that it is difficult to pin down a single definition of fascism, but there are some common elements that make it recognizable, such as:

- A powerful form of ultra-nationalism as an expression of collective identity, often accompanied by leadership cults of personality. The nation-state for fascists is the foundation of a sort of “political religion” - a living, sacred thing to protect and revere.
- An obsession with the decline, victimization, and humiliation of the community, contrasted with a fixation on energy, purity, and unity.
- A preoccupation with internal “cleansing” and external expansion, particularly through violence. This often comes with attempts to unify the masses with the racist hatred & scapegoating of “outsiders” as enemies. National security is considered to be the top priority & human rights and individualism are both viewed with great disdain. Great emphasis is placed on getting “tough on crime.”
- Rampant racism, homophobia, misogyny, and sexism.
- Fascists valorize violence both as a political tactic and as a philosophical principle, seeing it as a good quality that creates commitment. Fascists emphasize violence for its own sake. Political violence is legitimized & fetishized. The military and the militarization of all aspects of society is emphasized. Historically, this has led to a rejection of democracy and support for the violent overthrow of the existing order, as well as organized mass murder of opponents and “enemies.”
- Contempt for academia, intellectuals, and the arts.



- Increasing control of mass media. [REDACTED]
- A flexible & shifting approach to economic systems. Fascists will violently defend corporate interests and destroy trade unions and labor power so long as the existing system takes a back seat to military buildup and war preparation and so long as it provides opportunities for cronyism and corruption (e.g. ownership / control of economic resources by an individual or small fascist elite.

If you're reading this list carefully, you might recognize some disturbing parallels with current events; you're not alone in making those connections!

Is Antifa violent? [REDACTED]

Anti-fascists stand up to and oppose fascists— people who have chosen a bankrupt political ideology that sees violence as the ultimate form of its political expression. Every year, fascists maim and murder hundreds of people around the world. In both Europe and North America, the deadliest terrorist groups are fascist.

This means that anti-fascism can be dangerous work. We'd love it if we could defeat fascists and prevent them from victimizing and murdering people with polite discussion, but that does not work. As Holocaust survivor Frank Frison said, *"If fascism could be defeated in debate, I assure you that it would never have happened, neither in Germany, nor in Italy, nor anywhere else. Those who recognised its threat at the time and tried to stop it were, I assume, also called 'a mob'. Regrettably too many 'fair-minded' people didn't either try, or want to stop it, and, as I witnessed myself during the war, accommodated themselves when it took over ... past experience should teach us that fascism must be stopped before it takes hold again of too many minds, and becomes useful once again to some powerful interests."* [REDACTED]

We may not like it, but we all must prepare to defend ourselves and our communities every time fascists crawl out from under their rocks and attempt to organize and promote bigotry and genocide. History has shown us what happens when we don't stand up to them.

That said, it should be noted that 99% of anti-fascist work doesn't involve violence at all. The day-to-day research, communications, education, and solidarity work that comprises the overwhelming majority of what anti-fascists do might not make headlines but it's what gets the job done. Most antifa will never encounter a violent situation in the course of their activities.



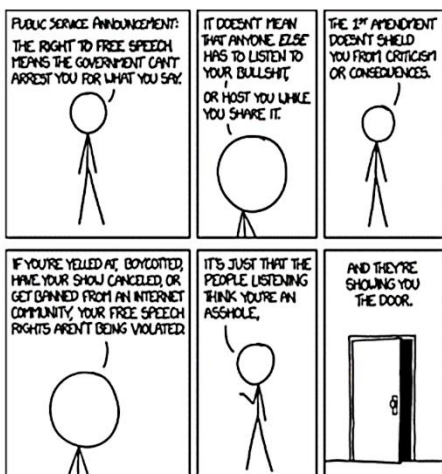
Violent antifascist thugs pose with a banner stolen from a gathering of right wing demonstrators, 1944



But what about free speech?

Fascists are quick to moan and cry about the supposed denial of their free speech rights, but are also the ones most active in attempting to deny the free speech of others via threats and violence. Fascists have forced the cancellation of public talks by an academic on the Black Lives Matter movement and a comic book launch by a trans woman. They've set leftist bookstores on fire. They've literally shot people to death at places of worship. As Erika Heidwald said *"if the only time you defend free speech is when the speech is racist, sexist, or homophobic...you don't love free speech. You love bigotry."*

Antifa generally don't call for the censorship of fascists. Censorship is something a government does by enacting laws (something that every government in the world has done to one degree or another - yes, even in the US!).



Instead, the position Antifa generally takes regarding people abusing free speech rights to advocate and promote bigotry and genocide is "no platform." Antifa don't believe free speech entitles fascists to unfettered access to mass media, lecture halls, or any public space to spread their filth. Nobody owes it to them to provide them with the means to broadcast their bullshit. We believe it is our duty to do whatever we can to deny them access to platforms to amplify their calls for racism, homophobia, and genocide and to disrupt their activities as much as possible and to counter their message directly every time they do gain access to any kind of platform.

This position might seem intolerant. As philosopher Karl Popper explained, tolerating intolerance is a paradox that ultimately leads to the extinction of tolerance altogether, as the intolerant expand and make good on their threats to get rid of the tolerant. For this reason, intolerant views must be out-of-bounds.





THE PARADOX OF TOLERANCE

BY PHILOSOPHER KARL POPPER*



IT'S A PARADOX, BUT UNLIMITED TOLERANCE CAN LEAD TO THE EXTINCTION OF TOLERANCE.



*Source: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Karl R. Popper

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Why do antifa wear masks?

In most places, the fascists and the police (who are often more interested in criminalizing anti-fascism than stopping fascist violence and hate crimes) will both be interested in photographing antifa so they can be identified later. Several anti-fascists have been murdered by fascists who were able to identify them and track them down to their homes or workplaces. For this reason, concealing our appearance is a matter of self-defence. Masking up prevents fascists from doing harm to ourselves and our families by identifying us and tracking us down.



How can I support Antifa?

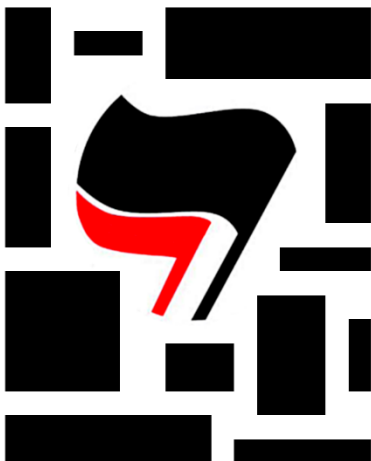
There are too many things that you can do to support Antifa to list them all here! Some things that come immediately to mind:

- Coming out to support antifa actions & events.
- Putting up anti-fascist and anti-racist posters and flyers in your community.
- Wearing antifa apparel to put local bigots on notice.
- Raising money for Antifa causes (e.g. your local antifa crew, The International Anti-Fascist Defence Fund, etc.).
- Supporting migrants, ethnic & religious minorities, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and anyone else targeted or victimized by bigots.

Here's a list of 30 anti-fascist actions that most people would be able to pull off in their own communities with the help of some friends: <http://bit.ly/2rFZU8m>

How do I join Antifa?

Antifa is a movement, not an organization. There is no single organization you can fill out a membership form for and join. That said, in many places in the world antifa have established groups or crews that do antifa work in their communities. If you are looking to join one, we'd suggest starting by looking for an established, legitimate antifa crew near you. How do you do that?





If there is an established antifa network near you, start with their chapters.

- In North America? Check out The Torch Antifa Network or the Anti-Racist Action Network.
- In the UK? Check out the Anti Fascist Network.
- In France? Check out La Horde antifa.
- In the Netherlands? Check out Anti-Fascistische Actie.

If there isn't an antifa network where you are, a thorough internet search should help you find an established, recognized antifa crew near you to reach out to. If you are making contact with an antifa group who you don't know personally, check to see if they are truly legitimate or a fake honeypot/spoof chapter set up by fascist trolls. Antifa Checker (<https://twitter.com/antifachecker>) is a good place to start with that. Also, see if the crew in question has been around for a long time or just recently. Have they actually done anything? Do legitimate antifa crews recognize them? Do your research before giving personal information out or agreeing to meet with anybody. More research/security tips: <https://bit.ly/2HJQ0JI>

If you've done all that and can't find a nearby antifa crew or the local one won't return your inquiries, start your own! Check out the resource list for out tips on how to do that: <https://bit.ly/2jZghal>

“We should be warier of those who are truly neutral toward fascism than those who honestly espouse their opposition to racism, genocide, and tyranny.”

— Mark Bray, *Antifa: The Anti-fascist Handbook*



Antifa International is a social media collective of anti-fascists in five different countries. Established in 2014, we disseminate news about anti-fascist initiatives around the world, provide communications materials for anti-fascists, and promote and support the Antifa movement generally. Find us:

**Instagram: @antifaintl
antifainternational.tumblr.com**

Twitter: @antifaintl

In 2015, we founded The International Anti-Fascist Defence Fund, which provides emergency support for anti-fascists whenever they experience negative consequences due to their work combatting bigotry and hatred. Since then, the Defence Fund has donated over \$75,000 USD to over 400 anti-fascists in eighteen countries.

**To find out more about the Defence Fund, visit our blog:
<http://intlantifadefence.wordpress.com>.**

**To make a donation to the Defence Fund:
<http://bit.ly/34YKPNr>**