

EXTREME LEFT GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES



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Key Points



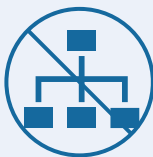
Far-left groups in the United States in the 20th century largely focused on issue-specific causes such as Puerto Rican independence or environmentalism.



Modern far-left groups largely focus on social justice issues such as racial equality and immigration rights. These groups often align with socialist or anti-capitalist values out of protest against wealth inequity.



Gun ownership is a central characteristic of far-left groups such as the John Brown Gun Club and Redneck Revolt, which believe they must arm themselves for protection from the far right. These groups appear at protests brandishing firearms and serving as security forces while instructing others on how to use guns.



Today's far-left groups largely do not have hierarchal or even organizational structures like their far-right counterparts. U.S. President Donald Trump has called Antifa a terrorist group, but it is less a cohesive group and more a broad ideological opposition to perceived fascism. Antifa's lack of a uniform doctrine or organization results in followers presenting sometimes opposing ideals.

Far-left extremism in the United States largely centers around the notion of correcting an injustice but is otherwise broad in its ideological catchment. In the 20th century, U.S. left-wing extremism was synonymous with either communism or causes such as environmentalism. In the 1960s and '70s, the Weather Underground declared war against the U.S. government and carried out a campaign of political violence.¹

According to the FBI, far-left extremism in the United States was most active during the period between the 1960s and 1980s. Special-interest extremism began to emerge on the far-left in the 1990s, resulting in the promulgation of groups such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and Earth Liberation Front (ELF). The FBI estimated that between 1996 and 2002, these two groups were responsible for 600 criminal acts in the United States that caused more than \$42 million in damages.²

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, ALF and ELF targeted animal research facilities and corporations for acts of vandalism and destruction of property. After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the U.S. government reevaluated how it approached terrorism abroad and at home. While the government focused on al-Qaeda as the primary foreign threat, federal authorities—partly in response to government lobbying by corporations victimized by ecoterrorists—considered ALF and ELF to be the primary

¹ Arthur M. Eckstein, "How the Weather Underground Failed at Revolution and Still Changed the World," *Time*, November 2, 2016, <http://time.com/4549409/the-weather-underground-bad-moon-rising/>.

² Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division, *Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC*, FBI, February 6, 2002, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

domestic terrorism threat in what media dubbed the Green Scare.³ By 2010, however, federal authorities had shifted their domestic focus to the threat of the far right, which continued to overshadow the radical far left in violent attacks while ALF and ELF focused on property damage.⁴ A July 2020 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) reviewed almost 900 politically motivated attacks since 1994. Researchers found that far-left attacks had resulted in only one fatality in that 25-year span, compared with 329 fatalities in attacks by the far right.⁵ In recent years, however, the radical far left has seen a resurgence in response to the rise of the far right, particularly since the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, when far-right protesters clashed with far-left counter-protesters. A revitalized American far left has emerged to lead protest movements against the far right and perceived injustices. Armed groups such as the John Brown Gun Club formed to directly confront the violent far right and a broad interpretation of fascism, which often include symbols of capitalism and corporations. These manifestations have been on display during 2020

³ Alleen Brown, "The Green Scare," Intercept, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>; Juliet Eilperin, "As eco-terrorism wanes, governments still target activist groups seen as threat," *Washington Post*, March 10, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/as-eco-terrorism-wanes-governments-still-target-activist-groups-seen-as-threat/2012/02/28/gIQAA4Ay3R_story.html; Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

⁴ Kristina Davis, "Ecoterror arsons unsolved 10 years later," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 14, 2013, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sdut-ecoterror-arsons-elf-fbi-2013sep14-htmlstory.html>; Alleen Brown, "The Green Scare," Intercept, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>.

⁵ Lois Beckett, "Anti-fascists linked to zero murders in the US in 25 years," *Guardian* (London), July 27, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/27/us-rightwing-extremists-attacks-deaths-database-leftwing-antifa>.

protests against police brutality, during which the far left have become increasingly visible and destructive, leading President Donald Trump in May 2020 to call for designating the broad anti-fascist ideology Antifa a terrorist organization.⁶

The president's desire to label Antifa a terrorist organization highlights the problematic nature of modern far-left groups in the United States, which are largely less organized than their predecessors. During the mid- to late 20th century, far-left groups dedicated to causes such as Puerto Rican independence carried out bombings and other violent attacks across the United States. By the 1990s, however, authorities had largely dismantled the leadership infrastructure of these groups.⁷ Today, the far left largely coalesces around ideologies and not specific individuals or structured organizations. Antifa and black bloc, for example, are centered around a broad opposition to fascism but are otherwise left open for individual interpretation, which results in varying tactics and even beliefs among adherents who may disagree on what is included under the fascist label. There are multiple groups in the United States that affiliate with the Antifa ideology, but they have no formal organizational relationship, formal leadership structure, or shared tactical approach. Similarly, black bloc is primarily a tactic used by

⁶ "Antifa: Trump says group will be designated 'terrorist organization,'" BBC News, May 31, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52868295>.

⁷ Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division
Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

far-left protesters rather than an actual group. But because of the tendency for black bloc agitators to dress all in black, including helmets, they draw more attention.

The far left encompasses multiple ideologies, but security experts believe that a large percentage of far-left radicals subscribe to at least one of three main classifications: anarchism, communism/socialism/Marxism, and autonomous radicals.⁸ Far-left groups have largely embraced social justice as a *raison d'être* in protest of perceived restrictions on liberty by the state. In the early and mid-20th century, the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) played a subversive role in promoting communism in the United States and aligned itself with the Soviet Union. Today, CPUSA promotes its dedication to human rights and personal liberties alongside communism, which it heralds as the only guarantor of those freedoms.⁹

Combined with a desire for violent confrontation and rejection of state authority, some on the far left have used social justice issues such as racial equality and immigration rights as a pretext to engage in violent retribution against symbols of the state. This is most prominently seen today in the use of black bloc tactics during protests, which ideological opponents have seized on to cast black bloc and Antifa as organized and unified groups. Anarchist groups such as the Youth Liberation Front are more organized

⁸ Jefferson Chase, "After G20: A look at left-wing radicalism in Europe," Deutsche Welle, July 10, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/after-g20-a-look-at-left-wing-radicalism-in-europe/a-39629507>.

⁹ "CPUSA Program," Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

on a local level but have no cohesive national network linking chapters across the country.¹⁰

Anarchism is a millennia-old philosophy that advocates a stateless society.¹¹ French writer Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was the first to label himself an anarchist in 1840.¹² Today's anarchists often cite modern anarchist writer Alfredo M. Bonanno as an inspiration. In his 1977 essay "Armed Joy," Bonanno exhorted followers to "shoot the policeman, the judge, the boss...."¹³ Bonanno's works derided capitalism and encouraged followers to tear down its symbols.¹⁴ In his 1993 essay "For An Anti-authoritarian Insurrectionalist International," Bonanno wrote that conservative voices had sidelined the radical left, causing it to regress. In response, Bonanno called for Mediterranean groups to coordinate an anti-authoritarian insurrection.¹⁵

The far left has not uniformly embraced anarchism. A common theme between anarchist and non-anarchist groups, however, is a rejection of authority. This manifests itself as opposition to colonialism, authoritarianism, and—in common with anarchism—

¹⁰ "About," PNW Youth Liberation Front, accessed September 21, 2020, <https://pnwylf.noblogs.org/about/>.

¹¹ Kory Flowers, "Understanding the Black Bloc," *Police Magazine*, January 30, 2015, <http://www.policemag.com/channel/patrol/articles/2015/01/understanding-the-black-bloc.aspx>.

¹² Arif Dirlik, George Woodcock, Franklin Rosemont, and Martin A. Miller, "Anarchism," Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/anarchism>.

¹³ Alfredo M. Bonanno, "Armed Joy," The Anarchist Library, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/alfredo-m-bonanno-armed-joy>.

¹⁴ Alfredo M. Bonanno, "Armed Joy," The Anarchist Library, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/alfredo-m-bonanno-armed-joy>.

¹⁵ Alfredo M. Bonanno, "For An Anti-authoritarian Insurrectionalist International," The Anarchist Library, accessed November 19, 2018, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/alfredo-m-bonanno-for-an-anti-authoritarian-insurrectionalist-international>.

state authority. The far left opposes state oppression and believes that strengthening government and security institutions is a path toward a police state or fascism, which should be confronted.¹⁶ According to German authorities, the extreme left believes that it can goad the state into revealing its true fascist nature by eliciting violent reactions.¹⁷ Far-left protesters have also engaged in violence against the far right as part of a self-declared opposition to racism and fascism, as can be seen by Antifa and black bloc actions during 2020 protests. According to Germany's Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, however, the extreme left only superficially opposes fascist movements, focusing more on undermining the capitalist system.¹⁸ U.S. Attorney General William Barr has directly accused Antifa and related groups of hijacking peaceful protests in the United States to promote anarchism.¹⁹

CEP has profiled



Far-left movements active today in the United States

¹⁶ "Left-wing extremists' fields of activity," Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/fields-of-work/left-wing-extremism/figures-and-facts-left-wing-extremism/left-wing-extremists-fields-of-activity-2014>.

¹⁷ "Brief summary 2017 Report on the Protection of the Constitution," Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2017, 20, <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/embed/annual-report-2017-summary.pdf>

¹⁸ "Left-wing extremists' fields of activity," Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/fields-of-work/left-wing-extremism/figures-and-facts-left-wing-extremism/left-wing-extremists-fields-of-activity-2014>.

¹⁹ Claire Hansen, "White House Addresses Trump Pledge to Designate Antifa a Terrorist Group," U.S. News & World Report, June 1, 2020, <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2020-06-01/white-house-addresses-trump-pledge-to-designate-antifa-a-terrorist-group>.

Organizations



Animal Liberation Front

Base of Operations: International.

Website: Not determined.

Social Media Presence: Not determined.

Leadership: ALF is a leaderless organization.

Membership Size and Relevance: ALF has no formal membership. It is comprised of anonymous, autonomous cells bound by a central ideology to halt animal testing and promote animal rights.²⁰ ALF organizes into these cells to prevent infiltration by law enforcement and accused animal abusers. ALF is present in at least 40 countries around the world.²¹

²⁰ "Animal Liberation Front," PetSide, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://www.petside.com/animal-liberation-front/>.

²¹ "Frequently Asked Questions About the North American Animal Liberation Press Office," North American Animal Liberation Press Office, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/f-a-q-s/#2>.

The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) is a far-left extremist group focused on animal rights.²² The group originated in the United Kingdom but has a presence in 40 countries around the world. In the United States, ALF has claimed responsibility for arson and vandalism against animal research facilities, farms, restaurants, and other businesses the group considers harmful to animals.

ALF's core ideology is built on four basic tenets: free animals from abuse; damage those profiting from the suffering and exploitation of animals; expose hidden cruelties against animals through non-violent actions and freeing of animals; and take all necessary precautions to prevent harm to animals or humans.²³ Despite this commitment to avoiding harm, ALF's actions have included bombings, arson, and other attacks that have resulted in injuries. In the 1980s and 1990s, several letter bombs and car bombs were attributed to ALF. ALF distanced itself from those attacks and they were later claimed by ALF breakaway groups called the Justice Department and Animal Rights Militia. Both groups allegedly broke from ALF because they sought more direct

²² Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division
Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

²³ "Animal Liberation Front," PetSide, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://www.petside.com/animal-liberation-front/>.

action, but some researchers believe the three groups maintain close ties and ALF uses the other two to maintain plausible deniability of violent activities.²⁴

The FBI closely associates ALF with the tactic of arson and accuses ALF of setting fire to several animal research facilities, fur companies, mink farms, and restaurants resulting in losses of more than \$45 million during the 1990s.²⁵ ALF has also released animals from farms and other facilities, such as in August 2003 when ALF claimed responsibility for releasing more than 10,000 mink from a farm in Washington state.²⁶ ALF allegedly believes it must break “the unjust laws” that allow the exploitation of animals.²⁷ Further, ALF justifies violent acts such as arson because they financially hurt those ALF classifies as animal abusers.²⁸ Between 1995 and 2010, ALF was responsible for 45 percent of 239 arson and bombing attacks recorded by the Department of Homeland security and attributed to environmental terrorists.²⁹ After the 9/11 terror

²⁴ “Violent Extremism,” AREInfo, accessed August 5, 2020, <http://www.animalrightsextremism.info/animal-rights-extremism/history-of-animal-rights-extremism/violent-extremism/>.

²⁵ Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division *Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002*, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

²⁶ Christopher Schwarzen and Jennifer Sullivan, “10,000 mink released from Sultan farm cages,” *Seattle Times*, August 26, 2003, <https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=20030826&slug=mink26m>.

²⁷ “Frequently Asked Questions About the North American Animal Liberation Press Office,” North American Animal Liberation Press Office, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/f-a-q-s/#2>.

²⁸ “Frequently Asked Questions About the North American Animal Liberation Press Office,” North American Animal Liberation Press Office, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/f-a-q-s/#2>.

²⁹ Steven M. Chermak, Joshua Freilich, Celinet Duran, and William S. Parkin, “An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States, 1995-2010,” Final Report to the Resilient Systems Division, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of

attacks, the FBI focused its efforts on domestic terrorist threats, while corporate lobbying pushed the government to take decisive action against ecoterrorists specifically. The FBI labeled ALF a domestic terrorist organization and the Justice Department began a campaign pursuing ecoterrorists as the nation's top domestic terrorist threat.³⁰ In 2009, an ALF spokesman said some members had turned to violence following the failure of years of peaceful campaigning.³¹ ALF members continue to vandalize and attack farms, restaurants, research facilities, and other targets they believe perpetuate the suffering of animals.³²

Following the 9/11 attacks, the FBI ramped up its surveillance and other activities against ALF and ELF. In December 2001, domestic terrorism section chief of the FBI,

Homeland Security, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR_TP_TEVUS_Bombing-Arson-Attacks_Environmental-Animal%20Rights-Extremists_1309-508.pdf.

³⁰ Alleen Brown, "The Green Scare," Intercept, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>; Juliet Eilperin, "As eco-terrorism wanes, governments still target activist groups seen as threat," *Washington Post*, March 10, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/as-eco-terrorism-wanes-governments-still-target-activist-groups-seen-as-threat/2012/02/28/gIQAA4Ay3R_story.html; *Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002*, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

³¹ Daniel B. Wood, "Animal-rights activists get personal in wave of California attacks," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 13, 2009, <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2009/0313/p02s01-usgn.html>.

³² "ALF Defaces McDonalds in Delafield, Wisconsin," North American Animal Liberation Press Office, October 12, 2019, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/2019/10/12/alf-defaces-mcdonalds-in-delafield-wisconsin/>; "McDonalds Continues to Incur the Wrath of ALF (Firestone, Colorado)," North American Animal Liberation Press Office, July 26, 2019, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/2019/07/26/mcdonalds-continues-to-incur-the-wrath-of-alf-firestone-colorado/>; "Fur Outlet Sabotaged by ALF in Ontario, Canada," North American Animal Liberation Press Office, December 29, 2016, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/2016/12/29/fur-outlet-sabotaged-by-alf-in-ontario-canada/>.

James Jarboe, called ALF and ELF “the No. 1 priority in the domestic terrorism program.”³³ In congressional testimony in 2004, John Lewis, deputy assistant director of the FBI Counterterrorism Division, called the investigation of animal rights extremists and ecoterrorism matters the FBI’s highest domestic terrorism investigative priority.³⁴

Recruitment and Propaganda

A website called the North American Animal Liberation Press Office (NAALPO) relays information from ALF. The website’s operators claim they are unaffiliated with ALF and do not know the people in charge of ALF, as it is an anonymous organization. Nonetheless, the NAALPO outlines ALF’s agenda and how to get involved. The website also publishes ALF claims of responsibility and defends the group against accusations of terrorism.³⁵

³³ Alleen Brown, “The Green Scare,” *Intercept*, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>; Juliet Eilperin, “As eco-terrorism wanes, governments still target activist groups seen as threat,” *Washington Post*, March 10, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/as-eco-terrorism-wanes-governments-still-target-activist-groups-seen-as-threat/2012/02/28/gIQAA4Ay3R_story.html; *Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002*, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

³⁴ Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Cas Mudde, “Ecoterrorism: threat or political ploy?,” *Washington Post*, December 19, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/12/19/ecoterrorism-threat-or-political-ploy/>.

³⁵ “Frequently Asked Questions About the North American Animal Liberation Press Office,” North American Animal Liberation Press Office, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/f-a-q-s/#2>.

According to the NAALPO, those who wish to join ALF should join with other like-minded individuals and start taking direct action. The NAALPO provides links to information on how to take direct action in line with ALF's ideology.³⁶

Violent Activities

– January 8, 2012

ALF activists set fire to a truck storage area at Harris Farms in Fresno County, California. The NAALPO issued ALF's claim of responsibility.

– March 7, 2009

Unknown individuals firebomb the car of University of California, Los Angeles professor David Jentsch outside his home because of his animal research. There were no casualties. ALF claimed responsibility.³⁷

– March 11, 1997

Douglas Joshua Ellerman set fire to the Fur Breeders Agricultural co-op in Sandy, Utah. He later turned himself in and was sentenced to seven years in prison and restitution of approximately \$750,000. ALF did not officially claim the incident but

³⁶ "Frequently Asked Questions About the North American Animal Liberation Press Office," North American Animal Liberation Press Office, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://animalliberationpressooffice.org/NAALPO/f-a-q-s/#2>.

³⁷ Daniel B. Wood, "Animal-rights activists get personal in wave of California attacks," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 13, 2009, <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2009/0313/p02s01-usgn.html>.

Ellerman admits that he belongs to the group.³⁸

– **June 1991**

ALF claimed responsibility for arson attacks on an Oregon State University mink research farm near Corvallis, Oregon, and the Northwest Farm Food Cooperative in Edmonds, Washington, which produces feed for mink farms.³⁹

– **February 28, 1992**

Rodney Coronado broke into the Michigan State University (MSU) office of researcher Richard Aulerich in East Lansing, Michigan, and set off a pre-dawn firebomb. Coronado reportedly believed Aulerich's research was funded by the commercial fur industry. The bomb destroyed Aulerich's office and damaged three others. The attack led to the loss of more than 30 years of research for Aulerich and caused more than \$1 million in damage. The morning of the attack, Coronado also vandalized an MSU-run mink farm near campus. ALF claimed responsibility in a press release, which Coronado admitted to writing. Coronado pleaded guilty in 1995 but claimed he was not the one who set off the bomb. He was sentenced to four years and nine months in prison and ordered to pay \$2.5 million in restitution to MSU

³⁸ Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division
Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

³⁹ Christopher Schwarzen and Jennifer Sullivan, "10,000 mink released from Sultan farm cages," *Seattle Times*, August 26, 2003, <https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=20030826&slug=mink26m>;
Associated Press, "Fedex Shipment Led To Animal Rights Activist Delinquent Account, Phone Records Helped Catch Fugitive Rodney Coronado," *Spokesman-Review*, August 16, 1995, <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/1995/aug/16/fedex-shipment-led-to-animal-rights-activist/>.

and other universities and farms he had targeted. In 2017, he admitted to acting alone on behalf of ALF.⁴⁰

– **1987**

An arson attack destroyed an animal diagnostics laboratory under construction at the University of California, Davis. It is the first arson attack claimed by ALF.⁴¹

Rhetoric

– **ALF statement, November 1, 2019:**

“For ‘World Vegan Day’, Ben & Jerry’s decided to advertise free plant based ice cream for a day. So we decided to show them that this advertising attracts actual vegans as well.

“The paint on the side of their building ensures that anyone who walks by will know what they are walking by; a company whose massive profits come from the sexual violation of millions of persons, all while pretending to ‘resist’ and be ‘woke’ in their online presence.

“We do not want your vegan capitalism. We don’t want vegan options. We want animal liberation. Take your cash grab and shove it.

⁴⁰ R.J. Wolcott, “Ecoterrorist admits firebombing MSU 25 years ago,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 23, 2017, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2017/02/23/ecoterrorist-rodney-coronado-firebombing-msu/98295732/>.

⁴¹ Alleen Brown, “The Green Scare,” *Intercept*, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>.

“Until all your exploitative business fronts and factories are rubble.”⁴²

– **ALF statement, October 12, 2019:**

“Anti speciesist action was taken against a McDonalds in ‘America’s Dairyland’.

“The locals are some of the most grim, unfeeling, and uncaring speciesists in the states. We are doing what little we can to throw a wrench in their gears.

“Multiple messages were painted on the sides of this location, and we planned on destroying some windows hadn’t there been a sudden police presence nearby.

“In solidarity with those caught in the ‘terrorist’ spotlight and spending decades of their life behind bars for victimless ‘crimes’.

“None of us are free until we are all free.”⁴³

– **ALF statement, July 23, 2019:**

“Solidarity with our comrades facing trial.

⁴² “ALF Targets Ice Cream Store in Denver (USA),” North American Animal Liberation Press Office, November 2, 2019, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/2019/11/02/alf-targets-ice-cream-store-in-denver-usa/>.

⁴³ “ALF Defaces McDonalds in Delafield, Wisconsin,” North American Animal Liberation Press Office, October 12, 2019, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/2019/10/12/alf-defaces-mcdonalds-in-delafield-wisconsin/>.

“Some activist showed up late in the week of solidarity action to redecorate and give a friendly knock to a local McDonalds. The bright red painted messages of peace were washed away quickly, but that window will take a few days to replace.

“We must use our privilege as humans to fight back against the system that keeps animals oppressed.

“Calling out everyone who talks the animal liberation talk but does not take action. You have temporary freedom to lose, the animals lose their entire lives. You feel nervous about getting caught, they feel nervous on their way to see their friends murdered in front of them.

“They can’t wait. The earth can’t wait. Get off your ass and FIGHT.”⁴⁴

– **Rodney Coronado, newspaper interview, 2017:**

“I won’t sugar coat it; we were about psychological warfare. We wanted researchers like Aulerich never to know when they came to work and opened their office door whether there had been an attack. We wanted them to live in fear.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “McDonalds Continues to Incur the Wrath of ALF (Firestone, Colorado),” North American Animal Liberation Press Office, July 26, 2019, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/2019/07/26/mcdonalds-continues-to-incur-the-wrath-of-alf-firestone-colorado/>.

⁴⁵ R.J. Wolcott, “Ecoterrorist admits firebombing MSU 25 years ago,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 23, 2017, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2017/02/23/ecoterrorist-rodney-coronado-firebombing-msu/98295732/>.

– **Craig Rosebraugh, ALF spokesman, October 2001:**

“If the U.S. government is truly concerned with eradicating terrorism in the world, then that effort must begin with abolishing U.S. imperialism. Members of this governing body, both in the House and Senate as well as those who hold positions in the executive branch, constitute the largest group of terrorists and terrorist representatives currently threatening life on this planet.”⁴⁶



Antifa

Base of Operations: International.

Website: Various Antifa groups have created individual websites. One group for example, New York City Antifa, has a site at <https://nycantifa.wordpress.com/>. Antifa Philadelphia has a site at <https://phillyantifa.org/>.

Social Media Presence: Various Antifa groups have created accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and other social media platforms.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Alleen Brown, “The Green Scare,” Intercept, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>.

⁴⁷ Zack Beauchamp, “Antifa, explained,” Vox, June 8, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/6/8/21277320/antifa-anti-fascist-explained>; Peter Beinart, “The Rise of the Violent Left,” *Atlantic*, September 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/the-rise-of-the-violent-left/534192/?utm_content=edit-promo&utm_campaign=the-atlantic&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_term=2020-06-01T16%253A31%253A00.

Leadership: Antifa has no central leadership or organizational structure. Individual Antifa groups exist but they are unrelated to each other and act independently.

Membership Size and Relevance: Antifa has no central organizational structure and thus no membership rolls. Multiple Antifa groups have formed across the United States, but they are largely independent of each other. These groups have turned to social media to spread their messages. Among them, New York City Antifa has more than 57,000 followers on Twitter.⁴⁸ ANTIFA Philadelphia has more than 18,000 followers on Twitter.⁴⁹ A group calling itself Antifa International has more than 29,000 followers on Twitter.⁵⁰ Hub City Antifa in New Brunswick, New Jersey, has more than 5,100 followers on Twitter.⁵¹

Antifa rose to national prominence in the United States following the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, when Antifa activists violently confronted far-right marchers. U.S. media has since reported on numerous protests by Antifa that have turned violent.⁵² In May 2020, U.S.

⁴⁸ New York City Antifa, Twitter account, accessed August 6, 2020, <https://twitter.com/NYCAntifa>.

⁴⁹ ANTIFA Philadelphia, Twitter account, accessed August 6, 2020, <https://twitter.com/PhillyANTIFA>.

⁵⁰ Antifa International, Twitter account, accessed August 6, 2020, <https://twitter.com/antifaintl>.

⁵¹ Hub City Antifa, Twitter account, accessed August 6, 2020, <https://twitter.com/HubCityAntifa>.

⁵² Jennifer Williams, "Antifa clashes with police and journalists in Charlottesville and DC," Vox, August 12, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/8/12/17681986/antifa-leftist-violence-clashes-protests-charlottesville-dc-unite-the-right>; Kyle Swenson, "Black-clad antifa members attack peaceful right-wing demonstrators in Berkeley," *Washington Post*, August 28, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/08/28/black-clad-antifa-attack-right-wing-demonstrators-in-berkeley/?noredirect=on>.

President Donald Trump tweeted that the United States would soon designate Antifa as a terrorist organization.⁵³

Antifa (an abbreviation of anti-fascism) is one of the most prominent far-left movements in the United States. Additionally, Antifa adherents in the United States are often associated with violent riots and confrontations with the far right, which has led U.S. officials to call for designating it a terrorist organization. The U.S. Antifa movement is rooted in anarchism, which pushes back against symbols of authority such as the police. Nonetheless, Antifa is not a coherent, centralized group but a broad ideology centered around the so-called opposition to fascism. While there are some formalized groups that call themselves Antifa, Antifa has no centralized and overarching leaders, membership rolls, or structure. Individual Antifa groups are thus unrelated to each other and, at times, promote differing tactics and ideologies.⁵⁴

The modern Antifa movement began in Europe in the 1960s and spread to the United States by the following decade. For years, U.S. Antifa activists largely remained a subset

⁵³ Maggie Haberman and Charlie Savage, "Trump, Lacking Clear Authority, Says U.S. Will Declare Antifa a Terrorist Group," *New York Times*, May 31, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/politics/trump-antifa-terrorist-group.html>.

⁵⁴ Maggie Haberman and Charlie Savage, "Trump, Lacking Clear Authority, Says U.S. Will Declare Antifa a Terrorist Group," *New York Times*, May 31, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/politics/trump-antifa-terrorist-group.html>; Jennifer Williams, "Antifa clashes with police and journalists in Charlottesville and DC," *Vox*, August 12, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/8/12/17681986/antifa-leftist-violence-clashes-protests-charlottesville-dc-unite-the-right>; Daniel Funke, "Despite Trump talk, antifa has not been designated as a terrorist organization," *PolitiFact*, July 21, 2020, <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/jul/21/instagram-posts/despite-trump-talk-antifa-has-not-been-designated-/>; Zack Beauchamp, "Antifa, explained," *Vox*, June 8, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/6/8/21277320/antifa-anti-fascist-explained>.

of anarchist and the punk rock movements, maintaining vigilance to keep far-right extremists from disrupting events.⁵⁵ Antifa groups began coalescing in 2015 with the rise of U.S. populism and a reinvigorated far right.⁵⁶ Antifa rose to national prominence in the United States following the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, when Antifa activists violently confronted far-right marchers. U.S. media has since reported on numerous Antifa protests that have turned violent. Antifa activists commonly consider the views of neo-Nazis, white nationalists, and similar far-right extremists to be repugnant and dangerous and therefore justify violence as a means to silence and delegitimize them. Antifa has also attacked journalists and police who defend far-right protest activities.⁵⁷ In addition to violence, Antifa groups largely utilize the tactic of doxing—publicly revealing personal identification details of opponents.⁵⁸

With a wave of protests against police brutality sweeping across the United States in 2020, various Antifa groups have denounced the police as representatives of a fascist system. Antifa protesters have accused police of shielding neo-Nazis and thus

⁵⁵ Zack Beauchamp, “Antifa, explained,” Vox, June 8, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/6/8/21277320/antifa-anti-fascist-explained>; “Who are Antifa?,” Anti-Defamation League, accessed August 6, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/who-are-antifa>.

⁵⁶ Zack Beauchamp, “Antifa, explained,” Vox, June 8, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/6/8/21277320/antifa-anti-fascist-explained>.

⁵⁷ Jennifer Williams, “Antifa clashes with police and journalists in Charlottesville and DC,” Vox, August 12, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/8/12/17681986/antifa-leftist-violence-clashes-protests-charlottesville-dc-unite-the-right>; Kyle Swenson, “Black-clad antifa members attack peaceful right-wing demonstrators in Berkeley,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/08/28/black-clad-antifa-attack-right-wing-demonstrators-in-berkeley/?noredirect=on>.

⁵⁸ “Peyton Turner: SMU fitness fascist,” ANTIFA Dallas, April 3, 2019, <https://antifadallas.wordpress.com/2019/04/03/peyton-turner-smu-fitness-fascist/>; “Kieran P. Morris,” New York City Antifa, March 13, 2020, <https://nycantifa.wordpress.com/2020/03/13/kieran-p-morris/>.

denounced police as collaborators.⁵⁹ In July 2020, the political advocacy group American Police Officers Alliance released a report accusing Antifa of contributing to political and social unrest in the United States with a goal of disbanding the police.⁶⁰ However, police reports, FBI intelligence, and court records have recorded little evidence of Antifa's participation in the anti-police protests across the country.⁶¹

Despite its broad opposition to fascism, Antifa itself stands accused of promoting anti-Semitism because of vocalized opposition to Zionism as part of a broader opposition to racism and inequality. In 2017, the *Canadian Jewish News* (CJN) interviewed three members about Antifa views on Jews and Israel. Each responded differently but the commonality was that all three felt safe and welcome as Jews within the Antifa movement. Views on Israel varied, however, with some calling it fascist and others saying it is not. One Jewish Antifa member said that Jews do tend to avoid Antifa events because they feel Antifa is demanding that all Jews abandon Israel. That same activist told CJN that "Nazis support the State of Israel" because they use the example

⁵⁹ New York City Antifa, Twitter post, August 16, 2020, 12:07 a.m., <https://twitter.com/NYCAntifa/status/1294848335854149632>; Antifa International, Twitter post, August 15, 2020, 12:39 p.m., <https://twitter.com/antifaintl/status/1294675052139618307>.

⁶⁰ "American Police Officers Alliance Announces Antifa Facts Campaign," PR Newswire, July 22, 2020, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/american-police-officers-alliance-announces-antifa-facts-campaign-301097351.html>.

⁶¹ Isaac Stanley-Becker, "Scant evidence of antifa shows how sweeping the protests for racial justice have become," *Washington Post*, June 13, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/protests-antifa-absent/2020/06/13/7f14b8fa-ab80-11ea-9063-e69bd6520940_story.html; Sarah N. Lynch, Mark Hosenball, Mica Rosenberg, and Brad Heath, "Little evidence of antifa links in U.S. prosecutions of those charged in protest violence," Reuters, June 9, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-minneapolis-police-extremists/little-evidence-of-antifa-links-in-u-s-prosecutions-of-those-charged-in-protest-violence-idUSKBN23H06J>; ArLuther Lee, "FBI finds no evidence of Antifa's involvement in national unrest," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, June 6, 2020, <https://www.ajc.com/news/fbi-finds-evidence-antifa-involvement-national-unrest/qVI3U9wb8Q6u1QEvsJ7AJ/>.

of a Jewish ethno-state to argue that whites should also have their own ethno-state and Jews expelled from this ethno-state could just go to Israel.⁶² Jewish Antifa activist Daniel Sieradski has told media that Jews are welcome in Antifa as its primary goal is to fight a common enemy, the Nazis.⁶³

In May 2020, U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted that the United States would soon designate Antifa as a terrorist organization.⁶⁴ Following Trump's announcement, the state-owned Turkish media outlet TRT World alleged that Antifa had been in Syria since 2014 aiding Kurdish militants and received training from them.⁶⁵ Representatives of the United Nations condemned Trump's declaration on Antifa as harmful to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.⁶⁶ Despite Trump's declared intention, actually branding Antifa as a domestic terrorist organization faces legal hurdles as the United

⁶² Evan Balgord, "Anti-Fascist and Anti-Israel; Jewish Antifa Talks Views on Israel and Jews," *Canadian Jewish News*, November 22, 2017, <https://www.cjnews.com/news/international/anti-fascist-anti-israel-jewish-antifa-talks-views-israel-jews>.

⁶³ Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "Here's what you need to know about the anti-fascist group Antifa," *Jerusalem Post*, June 1, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/international/heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-anti-fascist-group-antifa-629975>.

⁶⁴ Maggie Haberman and Charlie Savage, "Trump, Lacking Clear Authority, Says U.S. Will Declare Antifa a Terrorist Group," *New York Times*, May 31, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/politics/trump-antifa-terrorist-group.html>.

⁶⁵ "Antifa: Trained by terrorist PKK in Syria, may end up outlawed in the US," TRT World, May 31, 2020, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/antifa-trained-by-terrorist-pkk-in-syria-may-end-up-outlawed-in-the-us-36817>.

⁶⁶ "UN experts decry US rhetoric on designation of terrorist group," U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, June 19, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25980&LangID=E>.

States has no method to designate domestic terrorist groups. Antifa's decentralized structure further complicates the issue.⁶⁷

Recruitment and Propaganda

As there is no central, unified Antifa organization, various Antifa groups have largely adopted two primary symbols: a circle containing three downward-facing arrows and two side-by-side flags, one black and one red. The circle with the arrows is known as anti-fascist circle and was originally designed in the 1930s for the German anti-fascist paramilitary organization Iron Front. The black flag traditionally represents anarchy while the red flag represents communism or socialism. Both symbols have been adopted by various groups, including Antifa, which do not necessarily assign the same meaning to the symbols.⁶⁸ In order to appear more intimidating, Antifa protesters typically dress all in black with black masks to obscure their identities.⁶⁹

In terms of recruitment, each individual Antifa group has its own procedures for contacting and joining. Many of them offer methods to contact them online, where they also promote their own activities and ideologies.

⁶⁷ Daniel Funke, "Despite Trump talk, antifa has not been designated as a terrorist organization," PolitiFact, July 21, 2020, <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/jul/21/instagram-posts/despite-trump-talk-antifa-has-not-been-designated-/>; Zack Beauchamp, "Antifa, explained," Vox, June 8, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/6/8/21277320/antifa-anti-fascist-explained>.

⁶⁸ Sarah Friedmann, "This Is What The Antifa Flag Symbols Mean," Bustle, August 15, 2017, <https://www.bustle.com/p/what-do-the-antifa-symbols-mean-the-flags-often-feature-three-arrows-76629>.

⁶⁹ Rick Paulas, "Why Antifa Dresses Like Antifa," *New York Times*, November 29, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/29/style/antifa-fashion.html>.

Violent Activities

– August 29, 2020

Following a pro-Trump parade, self-described Antifa activist Michael Forest Reinoehl followed attendee Aaron “Jay” Danielson in a parking garage in Portland, Oregon. Danielson was wearing a hat for the far-right group Patriot Prayer. On September 3, Reinoehl told Vice News he had acted in self-defense because he believed he and a friend were about to be stabbed, but police claimed the murder was premeditated based on security footage of Reinoehl waiting in the parking garage. Later that day, police tracked Reinoehl to an apartment in Lacey, Washington, where they shot and killed him after an exchange of fire. Reinoehl’s Twitter account declared he was a proud supporter of Antifa. He told Vice that he was not a member but supported Antifa.⁷⁰

– August 12, 2018

Antifa activists protesting the Unite the Right Rally 2 in Washington, D.C., threw eggs

⁷⁰ Eileen AJ Connelly, “Antifa-linked Portland shooter appeared to target victim, images show,” *New York Post*, September 5, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/09/05/antifa-shooter-michael-reinoehl-appeared-to-target-victim-photos/>; Neil MacFarquhar, Mike Baker, and Adam Goldman, “In His Last Hours, Portland Murder Suspect Said He Feared Arrest,” *New York Times*, September 4, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/04/us/portland-shooting-michael-reinoehl.html>; “Man Linked to Killing at a Portland Protest Says He Acted in Self-Defense,” *Vice*, September 3, 2020, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/v7g8vb/man-linked-to-killing-at-a-portland-protest-says-he-acted-in-self-defense; Brie Stimson, “Portland’s Antifa-supporting gunman appeared to target victim, police say,” *Fox News*, September 6, 2020, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/portlands-antifa-gunman-appeared-to-target-victim-police-say>.

and water bottles and shot firecrackers at police and reporters.⁷¹

– **August 27, 2017**

About 100 protesters, including Antifa, broke off from a peaceful counter-protest to attack attendees at a far-right “No to Marxism” rally in Berkeley, California. Five individuals were physically assaulted, according to media reports.⁷²

– **February 2, 2017**

Ahead of a speech at University of California, Berkeley by right-wing commentator Milo Yiannopoulos, 150 black-clad and masked protesters threw rocks, M-80 flares, and Molotov cocktails at police and university facilities, causing \$100,000 worth of damage to the student union center and other parts of campus and injuring at least six people. Two protesters were arrested after physically attacking two members of College Republicans. The university canceled the speech in response. The university largely blamed black bloc but some members of Antifa are also among the protesters.⁷³

⁷¹ Jennifer Williams, “Antifa clashes with police and journalists in Charlottesville and DC,” Vox, August 12, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/8/12/17681986/antifa-leftist-violence-clashes-protests-charlottesville-dc-unite-the-right>.

⁷² Kyle Swenson, “Black-clad antifa members attack peaceful right-wing demonstrators in Berkeley,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/08/28/black-clad-antifa-attack-right-wing-demonstrators-in-berkeley/?noredirect=on>.

⁷³ Kyle Swenson, “Black-clad antifa members attack peaceful right-wing demonstrators in Berkeley,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/08/28/black-clad-antifa-attack-right-wing-demonstrators-in-berkeley/?noredirect=on>; Madison Park and Kyung Lah, “Berkeley protests of Yiannopoulos caused \$100,000 in damage,” CNN, February 2, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/02/01/us/milo-yiannopoulos-berkeley/index.html>.

Rhetoric

– **New York City Antifa, tweet, August 16, 2020:**

“stop believing the copaganda version of what policing is, if you still do. television shows lied to you. policing is about maintaining power and social control.”⁷⁴

– **Antifa International, tweet, August 15, 2020:**

“Cops & the Klan go hand-in-hand. #kkkops”⁷⁵

– **ANTIFA Philadelphia, tweet, March 15, 2019:**

“People critique us and what Antifa does but we exist to confront fascism in all it’s forms. Fascism breeds days like this, where scores of people are taken away from us all in the most repulsive of acts.

We will not sit on the sidelines, we will not allow fascists to be normal.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ New York City Antifa, Twitter post, August 16, 2020, 12:07 a.m., <https://twitter.com/NYCAntifa/status/1294848335854149632>.

⁷⁵ Antifa International, Twitter post, August 15, 2020, 12:39 p.m., <https://twitter.com/antifaintl/status/1294675052139618307>.

⁷⁶ ANTIFA Philadelphia, Twitter post, March 15, 2019, 10:39 a.m., <https://twitter.com/PhillyANTIFA/status/1106565478028398592>.



Black Bloc

Base of Operations: International.

Website: Not determined.

Social Media Presence: Not determined.

Leadership: Black bloc has no organized leadership structure.

Membership Size and Relevance: Black bloc does not have a formal membership structure.

Black bloc is an international protest movement of violent anarchists who largely want to eliminate the power of governments and financial institutions in the global system. Black bloc is primarily a tactic, not a cohesive group.⁷⁷ Groups of protesters dress in all-black and don helmets to conceal their identity and then violently confront symbols of authority and capitalism. The protest movement began in the 1970s in Germany with the goal of direct action against police brutality, economic inequality, and other perceived injustices. It has since spread worldwide through anarchist websites and online forums.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Martin Kaste, "Who Are The Protesters Who Make The Anti-Police Movement Not Entirely Peaceful?," Wyoming Public Media, July 30, 2020, <https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/who-are-protesters-who-make-anti-police-movement-not-entirely-peaceful#stream/0>.

⁷⁸ Paige St. John, "Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>.

The black bloc ideology is centered around anarchism and creating chaos.⁷⁹ According to U.S. officials, black bloc protesters tend to target businesses as representations of capitalism. Black bloc protesters often imbed themselves in larger demonstrations to conceal their presence, which led to the label of black bloc as piggyback protesters.⁸⁰ Black bloc tactics gained national attentions in 1999 during protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Washington. Since then, black bloc protesters have fomented violence at protests of President Donald Trump's 2017 inauguration and 2020 protests against police brutality.⁸¹

Black bloc protesters have no formal hierarchy and cells are typically temporary as protesters adopt black bloc tactics in protest against symbols of financial and political authority.⁸² Media and police have prominently linked black bloc to the 2017 G20 protests in Germany and anti-Trump protests in the United States.⁸³ German politicians

⁷⁹ Kory Flowers, "Understanding the Black Bloc," *Police*, January 30, 2015, <https://www.policemag.com/341767/understanding-the-black-bloc>.

⁸⁰ Keith L. Alexander, "D.C. prosecutors link violent protests on Inauguration Day to 'black bloc' tactics," *Washington Post*, February 21, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/dc-prosecutors-link-violent-protests-on-inauguration-day-to-black-bloc-tactics/2017/02/21/91463da0-f87d-11e6-be05-1a3817ac21a5_story.html?utm_term=.9267c3c4e886&itid=ik_inline_manual_13.

⁸¹ Martin Kaste, "Who Are The Protesters Who Make The Anti-Police Movement Not Entirely Peaceful?," *Wyoming Public Media*, July 30, 2020, <https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/who-are-protesters-who-make-anti-police-movement-not-entirely-peaceful#stream/0>.

⁸² Rebecca Staudenmaier, "G20: What is the black bloc?" *Deutsche Welle*, July 7, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/g20-what-is-the-black-bloc/a-39598505>; Paige St. John, "Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>; Francis Dupuis-Déri, "How Black Blocs have changed protest movements around the world," *The Conversation*, August 24, 2017, <https://theconversation.com/how-black-blocs-have-changed-protest-movements-around-the-world-80856>.

⁸³ Rebecca Staudenmaier, "G20: What is the black bloc?" *Deutsche Welle*, July 7, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/g20-what-is-the-black-bloc/a-39598505>; Paige St. John, "Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017,

across the political spectrum called for renewed focus on Europe's radical left after violent black bloc protests at the 2017 G20.⁸⁴ Protesters have destroyed property, specifically targeting symbols of capitalism, such as during summer 2020 anti-police protests that have targeted courthouses, prison construction sites, and other symbols of authority and capitalism in the United States. In August 2020, for example, black-clad protesters broke windows and vandalized private property during riots in Seattle, Washington.⁸⁵ Protesters organize on anarchist websites and online forums.⁸⁶ Groups on both the right and the left have condemned violent black bloc tactics and the cooption of protest movements.⁸⁷

Recruitment and Propaganda

Black bloc has no formal membership or recruitment process. Recruits are united by a broad ideology and organize independently while adopting black bloc tactics in protest

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>; Francis Dupuis-Déri, "How Black Blocs have changed protest movements around the world," *The Conversation*, August 24, 2017, <https://theconversation.com/how-black-blocs-have-changed-protest-movements-around-the-world-80856>.

⁸⁴ "We must stop ignoring left-wing extremism in Germany, Merkel's party declares," *The Local*, July 10, 2017, <https://www.thelocal.de/20170710/we-must-stop-ignoring-left-wing-extremism-in-germany-merkels-party-declares>.

⁸⁵ Jon Levine, "Antifa rioters storm through Seattle in night of mayhem while police do nothing," *New York Post*, August 15, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/08/15/antifa-rioters-storm-through-seattle-while-police-remain-inactive/>; Martin Kaste, "Who Are The Protesters Who Make The Anti-Police Movement Not Entirely Peaceful?," *NPR*, July 30, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/30/897345070/who-are-the-protesters-who-make-the-anti-police-movement-not-entirely-peaceful>.

⁸⁶ Paige St. John, "Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>.

⁸⁷ Martin Kaste, "Who Are The Protesters Who Make The Anti-Police Movement Not Entirely Peaceful?," *Wyoming Public Media*, July 30, 2020, <https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/who-are-protesters-who-make-anti-police-movement-not-entirely-peaceful#stream/0>.

against symbols of financial and political authority.⁸⁸ Black bloc protesters are unified by dressing in black as an intimidation tactic and attempt to appear unified.⁸⁹

Violent Activities

– August 2020

Protesters using black bloc tactics instigated violence and riots during demonstrations against police brutality in Seattle, Washington.⁹⁰

– June 20, 2017

Masked protesters in Washington, D.C., smashed windows at a McDonald's and a Starbucks, set fire to a limousine, and attacked at least one police officer during the inauguration of President Donald Trump. Some protesters carried hammers, crowbars, bricks, rocks, flares, and firecrackers. Washington police later referred to "black bloc" tactics used during the protest. Police arrested 231 people, 214 of

⁸⁸ Rebecca Staudenmaier, "G20: What is the black bloc?" Deutsche Welle, July 7, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/g20-what-is-the-black-bloc/a-39598505>; Paige St. John, "Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>; Francis Dupuis-Déri, "How Black Blocs have changed protest movements around the world," *The Conversation*, August 24, 2017, <https://theconversation.com/how-black-blocs-have-changed-protest-movements-around-the-world-80856>.

⁸⁹ Kory Flowers, "Understanding the Black Bloc," *Police*, January 30, 2015, <https://www.policemag.com/341767/understanding-the-black-bloc>.

⁹⁰ Joseph Guzman, "Several officers injured and 18 arrested following riot in Seattle," *Hill*, August 17, 2020, <https://thehill.com/changing-america/respect/512380-several-officers-injured-and-18-arrested-following-riot-in-seattle>.

whom were linked to black bloc tactics.⁹¹

– **February 2, 2017**

Ahead of a speech at University of California, Berkeley by right-wing commentator Milo Yiannopoulos, 150 black-clad and masked protesters threw rocks, M-80 flares, and Molotov cocktails at police and university facilities, causing \$100,000 worth of damage to the student union center and other parts of campus and injuring at least six people. Two protesters were arrested after physically attacking two members of College Republicans. The university canceled the speech in response. The university largely blamed black bloc but some members of Antifa were also among the protesters.⁹²

Rhetoric

– **Anonymous black bloc protester, February 2017:**

"I subscribe to self-defense in the very same sense that the Black Panther Party does

⁹¹ Keith L. Alexander, "D.C. prosecutors link violent protests on Inauguration Day to 'black bloc' tactics," *Washington Post*, February 21, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/dc-prosecutors-link-violent-protests-on-inauguration-day-to-black-bloc-tactics/2017/02/21/91463da0-f87d-11e6-be05-1a3817ac21a5_story.html?utm_term=.9267c3c4e886&itid=ik_inline_manual_13.

⁹² Kyle Swenson, "Black-clad antifa members attack peaceful right-wing demonstrators in Berkeley," *Washington Post*, August 28, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/08/28/black-clad-antifa-attack-right-wing-demonstrators-in-berkeley/?noredirect=on>; Madison Park and Kyung Lah, "Berkeley protests of Yiannopoulos caused \$100,000 in damage," CNN, February 2, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/02/01/us/milo-yiannopoulos-berkeley/index.html>; Paige St. John, "Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>.

and that Malcolm X does.”⁹³

– **Anonymous black bloc protester, February 2017:**

“Which means for me to recognize one type of violence, which is people being beat up for having certain types of political views and being brazen about them, compared to the everyday violence ... like I go through the Bay Area and there are people sleeping in the doorways of million-dollar condos that are empty. ... Is that not violent? That is the most cruel and violent thing I think I have ever seen.”⁹⁴

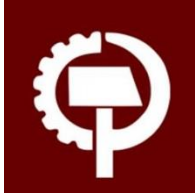
– **Anonymous black bloc protester after protesters targeted bank machines and a Starbucks on the University of California, Berkeley campus, February 2017:**

“Starbucks is a symbol of global capitalization.”⁹⁵

⁹³ Paige St. John, “Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>.

⁹⁴ Paige St. John, “Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>.

⁹⁵ Paige St. John, “Inside the black bloc militant protest movement as it rises up against Trump,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-black-bloc-20170212-story.html>.



Communist Party USA

Base of Operations: New York, New York, USA⁹⁶

Website: <https://www.cpusa.org/>

Social Media Presence: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#)

Leadership: CPUSA is led by co-chairs Joe Sims and Rossana Cambron.⁹⁷

Membership Size and Relevance: CPUSA is headquartered in New York City and has 29 chapters across the United States.⁹⁸ CPUSA claims to have 2,000 to 3,000 members around the country.⁹⁹ As of September 8, 2020, CPUSA had 4,730 subscribers on YouTube and 176 videos.¹⁰⁰ As of the same date, CPUSA had 31,500 followers on Twitter and 185,820 followers on Facebook.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Communist Party USA, Facebook account, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/cpusa>.

⁹⁷ "Remarks: CPUSA co-chair Joe Sims," Communist Party USA, July 10, 2019, <https://www.cpusa.org/article/remarks-cpusa-co-chair-joe-sims/>; John Wojcik and C.J. Atkins, "U.S. Communists elect new leaders to begin party's second century," People's World, June 25, 2019, <https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/u-s-communists-elect-new-leaders-to-begin-partys-second-century/>.

⁹⁸ "Contact," Communist Party USA, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://www.cpusa.org/contact/>.

⁹⁹ Aidan Lewis, "The curious survival of the US Communist Party," BBC News, May 1, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-26126325>.

¹⁰⁰ Communist Party USA, YouTube account, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheCommunistpartyUSA>.

¹⁰¹ Communist Party USA, Twitter account, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://twitter.com/communistsusa>; Communist Party USA, Facebook account, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/cpusa>.

The Communist Party USA (CPUSA) is a U.S.-based communist political organization founded in 1919 in Chicago, Illinois, to promote the interests of the American working class.¹⁰² CPUSA formed from the merger of two breakaway groups from the Socialist Party of America—the Communist Labor Party and the Communist Party of America.¹⁰³ CPUSA purports to be a “political party for the working class” and advocates for the implementation of socialism. According to the party’s program, the survival of the United States depends on its transformation to socialism. CPUSA blames the capitalist system, and the U.S. government specifically, for the exploitation of workers, widespread oppression, the destruction of the environment, and imperialism. CPUSA advocates socialism as the only system that can ensure human rights and peace in the United States and around the world.¹⁰⁴

U.S. authorities arrested several CPUSA members during the first so-called Red Scare, when federal authorities targeted communists between 1919 and 1921.¹⁰⁵ Between 1949 and 1957, dozens of CPUSA members were convicted of plotting to overthrow the U.S. government.¹⁰⁶ Most notable among these convictions were those of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, CPUSA members who were convicted and executed in 1953 for

¹⁰² “Authors: Communist Party USA,” Communist Party USA, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://www.cpusa.org/authors/communist-party-usa/>.

¹⁰³ Daeha Ko, “Communism in Washington State,” University of Washington, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://depts.washington.edu/labhist/cpproject/ko.shtml>.

¹⁰⁴ “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

¹⁰⁵ Daeha Ko, “Communism in Washington State,” University of Washington, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://depts.washington.edu/labhist/cpproject/ko.shtml>.

¹⁰⁶ “CPUSA - 1950s - Red Scare,” Global Security, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/usa/government/political-parties-cpusa-07.htm>.

conspiring to pass U.S. nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁷ CPUSA belonged to an international network that advocated communism and defended the Soviet Union, the Communist International or COMINTERN.¹⁰⁸ In the 1950s, the CIA dubbed CPUSA a “Russian-inspired, Moscow-dominated, anti-American, quasi-military conspiracy against our Government, our ideal, and our freedom.”¹⁰⁹ Today, CPUSA emphasizes its efforts in promoting civil rights and democracy, including what it calls a “Bill of Rights” socialism that protects civil liberties and adheres to the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution.¹¹⁰

CPUSA refers to itself as a Marxist organization, indicating that communism is its end goal. CPUSA’s platform posits that communism will result in “a society without exploitation, without social classes, without war, without constant attacks on our shared environment, and without any coercive apparatus,” while guaranteeing full democratic freedom and the “humane development of society and the individual—for human happiness.”¹¹¹ Nonetheless, CPUSA claims to fully support democracy and the guarantee of personal liberties, including voting rights and full democratic

¹⁰⁷ Joe Helm, “Sons of executed spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg ask Obama to exonerate their mother,” *Washington Post*, December 1, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/sons-of-executed-spies-julius-and-ethel-rosenberg-ask-obama-to-exonerate-mom/2016/12/01/a654c7ca-b7e6-11e6-b8df-600bd9d38a02_story.html.

¹⁰⁸ Emile Schepers, “A brief history of the world communist movement,” Communist Party USA, October 3, 2018, <https://www.cpusa.org/article/a-brief-history-of-the-world-communist-movement/>.

¹⁰⁹ “The Communist Party of the United States of America: What It Is, How It Works – A Handbook for Americans,” CIA, 1956, 1, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-00915R000600140037-0.pdf>.

¹¹⁰ Eric Lutz, “‘A leftward shift’: Communist party USA sees chance as progressives surge,” *Guardian* (London), June 23, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/23/communist-party-usa-chicago-cpusa-convention>; Roberta Wood and Dee Miles, “Bill of Rights Socialism,” Communist Party USA, May 1, 2016, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/socialism-in-the-usa/.

¹¹¹ “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

representation. According to CPUSA, capitalism presents the greatest danger to democratic freedom.¹¹²

Recruitment and Propaganda

CPUSA's propaganda centers around combating two primary ideological enemies: capitalism and the extreme right. According to CPUSA's platform, the extreme right has influenced the Republican Party and injected Islamophobia, ultra-nationalism, and authoritarianism into the U.S. government. CPUSA accuses the Trump Administration of being authoritarian while the extreme right seeks to use capitalism to extend its control over the entire country. Further, CPUSA alleges the U.S. government uses the threat of terrorism to curtail individual freedoms, including free speech and assembly.¹¹³ CPUSA obligates all party members to fight against racist ideologies and for full political and social rights for all. CPUSA opposes anti-Semitism and discrimination based on race, religion, nationality, or color.¹¹⁴

CPUSA offers a membership option through its website to individuals over the age of 18.¹¹⁵ The party charges annual dues of \$60 per year, or \$24 per year for low-income

¹¹² "CPUSA Program," Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

¹¹³ "CPUSA Program," Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

¹¹⁴ "New CPUSA Constitution (final draft)," Communist Party USA, June 10, 2014, https://cpusa.org/party_voices/draft-new-constitution/.

¹¹⁵ "Join Us," Communist Party USA, accessed September 8, 2020, https://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/51018/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup_page_KEY=10379.

individuals.¹¹⁶ CPUSA holds an annual convention for its members¹¹⁷ and also supports the online magazine People’s World, though it is published independently.¹¹⁸

Violent Activities

- CPUSA is not linked to recent specific acts of violence.

Rhetoric

- **CPUSA Program, April 13, 2020:**

“There is growing recognition that U.S. policies threaten not only world peace and the environment but the very existence of humanity.”¹¹⁹

- **CPUSA Program, April 13, 2020:**

“U.S. imperialism is home to the bulk of the dominant transnational corporations. It seeks control over the entire world, including over other imperialist powers. Under extreme right political leadership, U.S. imperialism has immense instruments for winning its aims—ranging from its direct military power to its various means of economic domination and political pressure, from sanctions to bribery to ideological

¹¹⁶ “Pay Dues,” Communist Party USA, accessed September 8, 2020, https://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/51018/p/salsa/donation/common/public/?donate_page_KEY=12980.

¹¹⁷ Eric Lutz, “A leftward shift: Communist party USA sees chance as progressives surge,” *Guardian* (London), June 23, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/23/communist-party-usa-chicago-cpusa-convention>.

¹¹⁸ “About People’s World,” People’s World, accessed September 8, 2020, <https://www.peoplesworld.org/about-the-peoples-world/>.

¹¹⁹ “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

attacks. But even with all of these instruments, U.S. domination is slowly weakening.”¹²⁰

– **CPUSA Program, April 13, 2020:**

“The problems facing humankind—of exploitation, oppression, environmental degradation and human survival—can only be solved, ultimately, by the elimination of the exploitative system of capitalism. Our survival depends on a transformation to socialism.”¹²¹

– **CPUSA Program, April 13, 2020:**

“Exploitation of workers for profit is inherent in capitalism and causes or exacerbates all the major social and environmental ills of our times.”¹²²

– **CPUSA Program, April 13, 2020:**

“The appeal of a communist society is a response to the real human needs of the masses of people. Communism will enable people to set aside worries about health care and education, about losing their livelihood and their dignity. Communism will

¹²⁰ “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

¹²¹ “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

¹²² “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

eliminate the economic insecurity of the masses of working people. Instead, it will offer us the opportunity to reach our full human potential.”¹²³

– **CPUSA Program, April 13, 2020:**

“U.S. colonialism has forced Puerto Rico’s economy into dependency. For Puerto Ricans to exercise their right to independence they must be able to break with the colonial dependency forced on them by the U.S.; otherwise independence would be a sham. We support the full transfer of all powers to the Puerto Rican nation and monetary compensation with no strings attached to Puerto Rico to make up for the super-exploitation of Puerto Ricans and for colonial oppression.”¹²⁴

– **CPUSA Program, April 13, 2020:**

“As a result of U.S. aggression throughout the Middle East, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, a substantial majority of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asian peoples in the U.S. have become active opponents of the extreme right. The U.S. has close relationships with the most reactionary forces in the region, supports Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, refuses to accept the rights of the Palestinian people to form their own autonomous state, and demonizes Muslims.”¹²⁵

¹²³ “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

¹²⁴ “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.

¹²⁵ “CPUSA Program,” Communist Party USA, April 13, 2020, https://www.cpusa.org/party_info/party-program/#Capitalism.



Earth Liberation Front

Base of Operations: International.

Website: Not determined.

Social Media Presence: Not determined.

Leadership: ELF is a leaderless organization.¹²⁶

Membership Size and Relevance: ELF does not maintain membership records. It is decentralized into anonymous, autonomous cells to prevent infiltration by law enforcement and accused animal abusers.¹²⁷ ELF cells act independently of each other¹²⁸

In December 2001, domestic terrorism section chief of the FBI, James Jarboe, called ALF and ELF “the No. 1 priority in the domestic terrorism program.”¹²⁹ In congressional testimony in 2004, John Lewis, deputy assistant director of the FBI Counterterrorism Division, called the investigation of animal rights extremists and ecoterrorism matters the

¹²⁶ “Frequently Asked Questions About the North American Animal Liberation Press Office,” North American Animal Liberation Press Office, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/f-a-q-s/#2>.

¹²⁷ “Frequently Asked Questions About the North American Animal Liberation Press Office,” North American Animal Liberation Press Office, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/f-a-q-s/#2>.

¹²⁸ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, “Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front,” Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, 2, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

¹²⁹ Alleen Brown, “The Green Scare,” Intercept, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>.

FBI's highest domestic terrorism investigative priority.¹³⁰ The ELF was the subject of a 2011 documentary film called "If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front," which documented the group's ideology and terrorist tactics.¹³¹

The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) is an ecoterrorist group made up of autonomous cells that carry out attacks on those the group accuses of damaging the environment. ELF emerged in the early 1990s as an offshoot of the British Earth First movement. ELF began operations in the United States later that decade by releasing wild horses and burning down a Bureau of Land Management building in Oregon in November 1997.¹³²

ELF's primary tactic is arson. It has set fire to research labs, homes, and businesses. ELF has also engaged in vandalism, including breaking windows and graffiti.¹³³ Between 1996 and 2002, the FBI estimated that ELF and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) were together responsible for some 600 criminal acts in the United States totaling more than

¹³⁰ Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Cas Mudde, "Ecoterrorism: threat or political ploy?," *Washington Post*, December 19, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/12/19/ecoterrorism-threat-or-political-ploy/>.

¹³¹ John Anderson, "Activist or Terrorist, Rendered in Red, White and Green," *New York Times*, June 8, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/movies/if-a-tree-falls-documentary-by-marshall-curry.html>,

¹³² North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, "Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front," Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, 1, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

¹³³ John Stossel, "Give Me a Break: E.L.F. and Arson," *New York Times*, January 6, 2006, <https://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=124096&page=1>; Al Baker, "Police Say an Anti-Sprawl Group Burned New Long Island Homes," *New York Times*, January 3, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/03/nyregion/police-say-an-anti-sprawl-group-burned-new-long-island-homes.html>.

\$42 million in damages.¹³⁴ Between 1995 and 2010, ELF was responsible for 55 percent of 239 arson and bombing attacks recorded by the Department of Homeland security and attributed to environmental terrorists.¹³⁵ After the 9/11 terror attacks, the FBI focused its efforts on domestic terrorist threats, while corporate lobbying pushed the government to take decisive action against ecoterrorists specifically. The FBI labeled ELF a domestic terrorist organization and the Justice Department began a campaign pursuing ecoterrorists as the nation's top domestic terrorist threat.¹³⁶ ELF mouthpiece North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office (NAELFPO) called the FBI's focus on the ELF a "clear sign that the ELF is successfully threatening that nation state which is destroying life on the planet."¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division
Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

¹³⁵ Steven M. Chermak, Joshua Freilich, Celinet Duran, and William S. Parkin, "An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States, 1995-2010," Final Report to the Resilient Systems Division, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR_TP_TEVUS_Bombing-Arson-Attacks_Environmental-Animal%20Rights-Extremists_1309-508.pdf.

¹³⁶ Alleen Brown, "The Green Scare," *Intercept*, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>; Juliet Eilperin, "As eco-terrorism wanes, governments still target activist groups seen as threat," *Washington Post*, March 10, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/as-eco-terrorism-wanes-governments-still-target-activist-groups-seen-as-threat/2012/02/28/gIQAA4Ay3R_story.html; *Testimony of Dale L. Watson, Executive Assistant Director, Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Division Federal Bureau of Investigation, Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, DC, FBI, February 6, 2002, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.*

¹³⁷ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, "Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front," Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, 31, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

ELF no longer carries out as many actions as it did in the 1990s or early 2000s, but federal agencies continue to be vigilant of the group.¹³⁸

Recruitment and Propaganda

The North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office (NAELFPO) distributed press materials on behalf of the ELF. The NAELFPO claimed to be “a legal, above ground news service dedicated to exposing the political and social motives behind the direct actions of the ELF.”¹³⁹ The NAELFPO admitted public support for the ELF and “acts of economic sabotage against those who profit from the destruction of the natural environment.”¹⁴⁰ Craig Rosebraugh and Leslie James Pickering founded the NAELFPO in 1999. Rosebraugh became known as the national spokesman for the ELF until he stepped down in the early 2000s while claiming disappointment with the escalation of the group’s recent attacks.¹⁴¹ The NAELFPO’s website is now offline.

¹³⁸ Kristina Davis, “Ecoterror arsons unsolved 10 years later,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 14, 2013, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sdut-ecoterror-arsons-elf-fbi-2013sep14-htmlstory.html>; Alleen Brown, “The Green Scare,” *Intercept*, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>.

¹³⁹ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, “Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front,” Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

¹⁴⁰ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, “Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front,” Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

¹⁴¹ Bryan Denson, “Once the ‘Face of Eco-Terrorism,’ former Portlander Craig Rosebraugh is now lawyer, filmmaker,” *Oregonian*, last updated January 10, 2019, https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2013/03/once_the_face_of_eco-terrorism.html.

Violent Activities

– **March 3, 2008**

Five “green” luxury homes were destroyed or heavily damaged by arson in Maltby, Washington. ELF signs were found at the site. There were no reported casualties.¹⁴²

– **August 1, 2003**

Suspected ELF members set fire to the construction site of a University City housing project in San Diego, California, resulting in \$50 million worth of damage. It was the costliest act of ecoterrorism in the United States. ELF banners were found at the scene. There were no reported casualties.¹⁴³

– **January 2, 2001**

ELF members set fire to Superior Lumber Company in Glendale, Oregon, causing \$400,000 in damages. There were reported no casualties.¹⁴⁴

– **January 2001**

ELF members set fire to new homes under construction in Suffolk County, Long

¹⁴² William Yardley, “Ecoterrorism Suspected in House Fires in Seattle Suburb,” *New York Times*, March 4, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/04/us/04homes.html>.

¹⁴³ Kristina Davis, “Ecoterror arsons unsolved 10 years later,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 14, 2013, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sdut-ecoterror-arsons-elf-fbi-2013sep14-htmistory.html>.

¹⁴⁴ Mindy Sink, “Radicals Take Responsibility for Burning Oregon Timber Office,” *New York Times*, January 11, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/11/us/radicals-take-responsibility-for-burning-oregon-timber-office.html>.

Island, New York. The homes were constructed on what was previously farmland. There were no reported casualties.¹⁴⁵

– **November 2000**

ELF claimed credit for burning down a \$2 million home under construction in Colorado. There were reported no casualties.¹⁴⁶

– **October 1998**

ELF activists burned down several buildings at a new ski resort near Vail, Colorado, causing \$12 million worth of damage. There were no reported casualties.¹⁴⁷

– **November 29, 1997**

ELF members released wild horses and burned down a Bureau of Land Management Horse Corral in Oregon, causing approximately \$450,000 in damage. There were no reported casualties.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ John Stossel, "Give Me a Break: E.L.F. and Arson," *New York Times*, January 6, 2006, <https://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=124096&page=1>; Al Baker, "Police Say an Anti-Sprawl Group Burned New Long Island Homes," *New York Times*, January 3, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/03/nyregion/police-say-an-anti-sprawl-group-burned-new-long-island-homes.html>.

¹⁴⁶ Mindy Sink, "Radicals Take Responsibility for Burning Oregon Timber Office," *New York Times*, January 11, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/11/us/radicals-take-responsibility-for-burning-oregon-timber-office.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Alleen Brown, "The Green Scare," *Intercept*, March 23, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>.

¹⁴⁸ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, "Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front," Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, 1, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

Rhetoric

- **Craig Rosebraugh, ELF spokesman, October 2001:**

“If the U.S. government is truly concerned with eradicating terrorism in the world, then that effort must begin with abolishing U.S. imperialism. Members of this governing body, both in the House and Senate as well as those who hold positions in the executive branch, constitute the largest group of terrorists and terrorist representatives currently threatening life on this planet.”¹⁴⁹
- **ELF banner left at arson site in California, September 2003:**

“Environmental murder. Nature demands justice. The E.L.F.s are mad.”¹⁵⁰
- **ELF banner left at site of firebombed construction site in San Diego, California, August 1, 2003:**

“If you build it, we will burn it. The E.L.F.s are mad.”¹⁵¹
- **Frequently Asked Questions about the Earth Liberation Front, North American ELF Press Office, 2001:**

“This hypocrisy and genocide against the horse nation will not go unchallenged! The

¹⁴⁹ Alleen Brown, “The Green Scare,” Intercept, March 23, 2019,

<https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>.

¹⁵⁰ Kristina Davis, “Ecoterror arsons unsolved 10 years later,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 14, 2013, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sdut-ecoterror-arsons-elf-fbi-2013sep14-htmlstory.html>.

¹⁵¹ Kristina Davis, “Ecoterror arsons unsolved 10 years later,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 14, 2013, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sdut-ecoterror-arsons-elf-fbi-2013sep14-htmlstory.html>.

practice of rounding up and auctioning wild horses must be stopped.”¹⁵²

– **Frequently Asked Questions about the Earth Liberation Front, North American ELF Press Office, 2001:**

“The choice to use economic sabotage is a very deliberate and purposeful strategy to target the real underlying threat to life – the quest for profit and power. The ELF does not engage in state sanctioned tactics or those which physically harm people or life in general due to the group’s belief that economic sabotage is the best, most direct way to take the profit motive out of destroying the planet.”¹⁵³

– **Frequently Asked Questions about the Earth Liberation Front, North American ELF Press Office, 2001:**

“The real violence and danger comes from businesses clear-cutting forests and destroying ecosystems, from pollutants carelessly pumped into our air by industrial and consumer society, from water being poisoned to the point of being undrinkable, by people eating commercially grown non-organic food, and many, many more. Very often by labeling the ELF as violent it is a means by which mainstream society,

¹⁵² North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, “Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front,” Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, 2, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

¹⁵³ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, “Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front,” Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, 28, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

government, and big business can attempt to forget about the real true violence which occurs everyday, the violence against life.”¹⁵⁴



Independent Media Center

Base of Operations: IndyMedia initially launched in Seattle, Washington, but has since grown into an international network of linked-but-independent sites.¹⁵⁵

Website: <https://indymedia.org/> is the network’s primary website.

Social Media Presence: The IndyMedia network maintains multiple accounts on Twitter and Facebook. The primary IndyMedia site also maintains a [Facebook](#) account.

Leadership: Each IndyMedia site is independently run. There is no leadership structure in place.

Membership Size and Relevance: The IndyMedia network has more than 60 affiliated websites around the world.¹⁵⁶

Independent Media Center (a.k.a. IndyMedia or IMC) is a loose international network of far-left news websites that international legal authorities accuse of promoting violence

¹⁵⁴ North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, “Frequently Asked Questions About The Earth Liberation Front,” Internet Archive, March 18, 2012, 28, <https://archive.org/details/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsAboutTheEarthLiberationFront>.

¹⁵⁵ Homepage, Independent Media Center, accessed August 14, 2020, <https://indymedia.org/>.

¹⁵⁶ Homepage, Independent Media Center, accessed August 14, 2020, <https://indymedia.org/>.

in pursuit of anti-globalist and anti-capitalist positions. U.S., Swiss, British, and other European authorities have all taken legal action against affiliated IMC sites for promoting violence.¹⁵⁷

In 2004, the FBI shut down 20 U.S.-based IndyMedia sites at the request of European police, though the exact reason was not made clear to journalists.¹⁵⁸ European far-left militant groups such as Greece's Revolutionary Self-Defense have used Indymedia websites to post claims of responsibility for terrorist attacks.¹⁵⁹ In December 2014, Nikos Maziotis, the jailed leader of Greek guerilla group Revolutionary Struggle, posted a document on IndyMedia entitled "Elections are not the answer, armed struggle is."¹⁶⁰ The German government linked IMC's Germany platform, Linksunten.indymedia.org, to violent protests at the 2017 G20 summit and shut down the site for "sowing hate against different opinions and representatives of the country."¹⁶¹ In December 2017, IndyMedia posted pictures of 54 German police officers in response to a police

¹⁵⁷ "US seizes independent media sites," BBC News, October 11, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/3732718.stm>.

¹⁵⁸ "US seizes independent media sites," BBC News, October 11, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/3732718.stm>.

¹⁵⁹ "Guerrilla group claims responsibility for attack at French embassy in Athens," Reuters, November 14, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-france-diplomacy-attack/querrilla-group-claims-responsibility-for-attack-at-french-embassy-in-athens-idUSKBN1392M6>.

¹⁶⁰ "Greek Police Fear Politicians, Judges Targets," *National Herald*, December 16, 2014, <https://www.thenationalherald.com/69107/greek-police-fear-politicians-judges-now-terrorist-next-targets/>.

¹⁶¹ Ben Knight, "Interior Ministry shuts down, raids left-wing German Indymedia site," Deutsche Welle, August 25, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/interior-ministry-shuts-down-raids-left-wing-german-indymedia-site/a-40232965>; Chloe Farand and Jon Stone, "Germany bans far-left extremist online platform accused of inciting violence at G20 summit in Hamburg," *Independent* (London), August 25, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-far-left-extremists-g20-summit-hamburg-violence-incite-online-platform-linksunten-a7913066.html>.

investigation of the G20 protests earlier that year. The authors asked for information regarding where the officers lived or “could be met privately.”¹⁶² In January 2019, the European far-left militant Group of Popular fighters posted a claim of responsibility for a December 17, 2018, bombing on IndyMedia.¹⁶³ After banning IndyMedia in 2017, German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière accused the network of inciting violence and spreading criminal content. He called the network the “most influential online platform for vicious left-wing extremists in Germany.”¹⁶⁴

Recruitment and Propaganda

IndyMedia bills itself as “a network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth.”¹⁶⁵ The main IndyMedia site allows visitors to publish content.

Violent Activities

- IndyMedia itself has not executed violent attacks, but the network stands accused of fomenting violence through propaganda, primarily in Europe. For example, after

¹⁶² “Far-left post photos of police officers online, leading to accusation of ‘terrorism,’” The Local, December 18, 2017, <https://www.thelocal.de/20171218/far-left-lash-out-at-police-by-posting-photos-of-them-online>.

¹⁶³ Niki Kitsantonis, “Greek Militants Say They Bombed Media Offices to Protest ‘Capitalist’ Agenda,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/world/europe/greece-bombing-group-of-popular-fighters.html>.

¹⁶⁴ Edmund Heaphy, “Germany, in a First, Shuts Down Left-Wing Extremist Website,” *New York Times*, August 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/world/europe/germany-bans-far-left-antifa-website.html>.

¹⁶⁵ “About IndyMedia,” Independent Media Center, accessed November 20, 2018, <https://indymedia.org/en/static/about.shtml>.

violent protests at the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, in August 2017, German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière accused IndyMedia of mobilizing violent protesters. Germany banned IndyMedia soon after.¹⁶⁶ IndyMedia website continue to post calls for rioting and criminal acts.¹⁶⁷ Violent far-left groups have also used the IndyMedia platforms to publicize their own violent activities. For example, French anarchist group Révolte Anarchiste des Gendarmes Exilés (Anarchist Revolt Against Exiled Gendarmes) claimed responsibility on a French IndyMedia site for an arson attack on a police parking lot in September 2017.¹⁶⁸

Rhetoric

– **Statement on state oppression of Indymedia sites, September 28, 2017:**

“For years, the sites in the Indymedia network have, among other things, lent visibility to the political nature of direct action. This new attack against free media outlets seeks to silence radical political opposition, and to criminalize the collectives and individuals who would communicate their political objectives without the distorting filter of traditional media outlets. This attack must also be viewed in light of the raids that, this week, targeted the anti-nuclear activists at Bure. Their computers,

¹⁶⁶ Edmund Heaphy, “Germany, in a First, Shuts Down Left-Wing Extremist Website,” *New York Times*, August 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/world/europe/germany-bans-far-left-antifa-website.html>.

¹⁶⁷ Simon Osborne, “Far left extremists urge riots, looting and violent uprising amid coronavirus chaos,” *Express* (London), March 19, 2020, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1257518/coronavirus-germany-far-left-extremists-riot-looting-violence>.

¹⁶⁸ Henry Samuel, “Ultra-Left group torch 50 police vehicles on day of anti-Macron protests,” *Telegraph* (London), September 21, 2017, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/21/ultra-left-group-torch-50-police-vehicles-day-anti-macron-protests/>.

along with the photocopier that they had been using to print flyers were seized by the police. All means seem to have been mobilized to repress the autonomous expression of movements of struggle.”¹⁶⁹

– **Statement on the German government shutdown of Linksunten Indymedia, August 28, 2017:**

“On August 25, the German government raided and shut down Linksunten Indymedia, an integral part of the global Independent Media Center network, and the most widely used German-language platform for radical politics and organizing. In Freiburg, riot police seized computers and harassed those they accuse of maintaining the site, justifying their actions on the grounds that the alleged administrators constitute an illegal organization intent on destroying the German Constitution. This represents a massive escalation in state repression against what the authorities call ‘left-wing extremism,’ disingenuously suggesting an equivalence between those who seek to build communities beyond the reach of state violence and Neo-Nazis organizing to carry out attacks and murders.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ “State Repression Against IMC Grenoble and IMC Nantes,” Independent Media Center, September 28, 2017, <https://indymedia.org/or/2017/09/988319.shtml>.

¹⁷⁰ “GERMAN GOVERNMENT SHUTS DOWN LINKSUNTEN INDYMEDIA: WHAT IT MEANS AND WHAT TO DO,” Independent Media Center, August 28, 2017, <https://indymedia.org/or/2017/08/988264.shtml>.



John Brown Gun Club

Base of Operations: National

Website: <https://psjbgc.org/>, <http://www.midmojbgc.org/>

Social Media Presence: [Facebook \(Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club\)](#) (deleted), [Twitter \(Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club\)](#), [Twitter \(Mid-Missouri John Brown Gun Club\)](#), [Twitter \(Steel City John Brown Gun Club\)](#), [Twitter \(Spokane John Brown Gun Club\)](#)

Leadership: The John Brown Gun Club chapters act independently and have no formal hierarchy.¹⁷¹ Members who have spoken publicly, including chapter founders, did not provide their full names.¹⁷²

Membership Size and Relevance: Gun Club chapters do not publish their membership numbers. In August 2020, Facebook deleted multiple accounts affiliated with John Brown Gun Clubs as part of a purge of extremist groups.¹⁷³ Various Gun Club chapters maintain a presence on Twitter. As of September 1, 2020, the Mid-Missouri chapter had 1,039 followers.¹⁷⁴ As of the same date, the Puget Sound John Brown Gun

¹⁷¹ "About," Mid-Missouri John Brown Gun Club, accessed September 1, 2020, <http://www.midmojbgc.org/about/>; "Say Hello to Spokane John Brown Gun Club!," Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://psjbgc.org/blog/say-hello-to-spokane-john-brown-gun-club/>.

¹⁷² Kim Kelly, "If others have rifles, we'll have rifles': why US leftist groups are taking up arms," *Guardian* (London), July 22, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/22/if-others-have-rifles-well-have-rifles-why-leftist-groups-are-taking-up-arms>.

¹⁷³ Alan Buddug, "The Great FB Purge of 2020," Mid-Missouri John Brown Gun Club, August 20, 2020, <http://www.midmojbgc.org/2020/08/20/the-great-fb-purge-of-2020/>; Natasha Lennard, "Facebook's Ban on Far-Left Pages Is an Extension of Trump Propaganda," *Intercept*, August 20, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2020/08/20/facebook-bans-antifascist-pages/>.

¹⁷⁴ Mid-Missouri John Brown Gun Club, Twitter account, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://twitter.com/MidMoJBGC>.

Club had 12,700 followers.¹⁷⁵ The Steel City John Brown Gun Club had 3,248 followers as of that date.¹⁷⁶ The Gun Club's presence at protests across the United States has garnered international media attention.¹⁷⁷

The John Brown Gun Club is a leftist gun-rights group originally based in Kansas. The original club was active between 2002 and 2008, but it has since given rise to spinoff groups such as the Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club. The original club sought to militarize the white working class and spur it toward a social-justice revolution.¹⁷⁸ Gun Club chapters claim to promote racial equality and social justice while seeking to abolish the police and other perceived symbols of oppression. The Gun Club firmly supports members' rights to bear arms for their own protection and as a safeguard against state overreach.¹⁷⁹ The Puget Sound John Brown Club in Washington state is one of the most visible chapters. According to that group, the John Brown Gun Club seeks to disrupt fascists and fascist organizations and events. The Gun Club arms itself

¹⁷⁵ Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, Twitter account, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://twitter.com/PugetSoundJBGC>.

¹⁷⁶ Steel City John Brown Gun Club, Twitter account, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://twitter.com/SteelCityJBGC>.

¹⁷⁷ Kim Kelly, "If others have rifles, we'll have rifles': why US leftist groups are taking up arms," *Guardian* (London), July 22, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/22/if-others-have-rifles-well-have-rifles-why-leftist-groups-are-taking-up-arms>.

¹⁷⁸ Devon Douglas-Bowers, "WHITE WORKERS RESISTING CAPITALISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY: AN INTERVIEW WITH REDNECK REVOLT," *Redneck Revolt*, July 29, 2016, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/single-post/2016/07/28/WHITE-WORKERS-RESISTING-CAPITALISM-AND-WHITE-SUPREMACY-AN-INTERVIEW-WITH-REDNECK-REVOLT>.

¹⁷⁹ Mawa Iqbal, "Left-Wing Groups Take Up Arms in Name of Abolitionist John Brown," *Flatland*, July 23, 2020, <https://www.flatlandkc.org/news-issues/left-wing-groups-take-up-arms-in-name-of-abolitionist-john-brown/>.

to defend against far-right violence and often appears as a security force at protests to protect against expected far-right violence.¹⁸⁰

John Brown was a 19th-century abolitionist who was part of the Underground Railroad and helped create the League of Gileadites, which helped protect escaped enslaved people from slave catchers. He eventually began leading guerilla raids in pro-slavery towns that resulted in multiple deaths. In 1859, Brown was convicted of treason in South Carolina and executed for his role in the failed raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry.¹⁸¹ The affiliates of the John Brown Gun Club have dedicated themselves to emulating Brown's brand of direct action in support of ideals of freedom and equality.¹⁸² One of the spinoffs of the original John Brown Gun Club is Redneck Revolt, which formed in 2009 after the original Gun Club disbanded.¹⁸³ The Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club in Washington state was founded in 2017 as part of the Redneck Revolt Network and broke away from Redneck Revolt in 2019. It claims to be a "public facing,

¹⁸⁰ Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, homepage, accessed August 19, 2020, <https://psjbgc.org/>; Kim Kelly, "If others have rifles, we'll have rifles': why US leftist groups are taking up arms," *Guardian* (London), July 22, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/22/if-others-have-rifles-well-have-rifles-why-leftist-groups-are-taking-up-arms>.

¹⁸¹ "John Brown 1800-1859," PBS, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1550.html>.

¹⁸² Mid-Missouri John Brown Gun Club, homepage, accessed September 1, 2020, <http://www.midmojbgc.org/>; Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, homepage, accessed August 19, 2020, <https://psjbgc.org/>.

¹⁸³ Redneck Revolt, homepage, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/>; Cecilia Saixue Watt, "Redneck Revolt: the armed leftwing group that wants to stamp out fascism," *Guardian* (London), July 11, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jul/11/redneck-revolt-guns-anti-racism-fascism-far-left>.

above ground, armed community defense group” that seeks to disrupt fascist activities.¹⁸⁴ Other independent John Brown Gun Clubs have since organized.

To date, Gun Club members have reportedly not engaged anyone with their weapons during one of these protests. Unlike other groups under the Antifa umbrella, Gun Club members typically do not cover their faces to maintain the appearance of an open, lawful organization rather than a militia.¹⁸⁵ One Gun Club member did engage in a violent attack on an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in 2019. He was killed after attempting to blow up the detention center.¹⁸⁶

Recruitment and Propaganda

John Brown Gun Club chapters promote themselves as community defense organizations dedicated to direct action and mutual aid.¹⁸⁷ The Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club offers firearms classes and distributes literature at community events

¹⁸⁴ “Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club Leaves Redneck Revolt Network,” Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, January 23, 2019, <https://psjbgc.org/blog/puget-sound-john-brown-gun-club-leaves-redneck-revolt-network/>.

¹⁸⁵ Kim Kelly, “‘If others have rifles, we’ll have rifles’: why US leftist groups are taking up arms,” *Guardian* (London), July 22, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/22/if-others-have-rifles-well-have-rifles-why-leftist-groups-are-taking-up-arms>.

¹⁸⁶ Claudia Koerner, “Police Shot And Killed An Armed Man Allegedly Attempting To Set Fire To An ICE Detention Facility,” BuzzFeed News, last updated July 14, 2019, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/claudiakoerner/tacoma-ice-shooting>; “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/>.

¹⁸⁷ “About,” Mid-Missouri John Brown Gun Club, accessed September 1, 2020, <http://www.midmojbgc.org/about/>; “Say Hello to Spokane John Brown Gun Club!,” Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://psjbgc.org/blog/say-hello-to-spokane-john-brown-gun-club/>.

around Washington, including at the Anarchist Book Fair and other events aligned with the group's far-left ideology.¹⁸⁸

Violent Activities

– July 13, 2019

69-year-old Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club member Willem Van Spronsen snuck into the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Northwest Detention Center facility in Tacoma, Washington, with a rifle. He set his car on fire and threw incendiary devices at propane tanks on the facility's grounds. Van Sponsen was killed by Washington State Police. There were no other casualties.¹⁸⁹

Rhetoric

– Spokane John Brown Gun Club, tweet, August 29, 2020:

"If there is a standoff against the cops, stick together to form a cohesive front. Stragglers are more susceptible to getting arrested, but it's hard to do that to a larger group. De-arresting is also important, if someone is getting dragged off, don't just

¹⁸⁸ "PSJBGC at the Seattle Anarchist Bookfair 2019!," Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, November 16, 2019, <https://psjbgc.org/blog/psjbgc-at-the-seattle-anarchist-bookfair-2019/>; "See Us Today at Debbie Bookchin's Speaking Tour!," Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, November 2, 2019, <https://psjbgc.org/blog/see-us-today-at-debbie-bookchin-s-speaking-tour/>.

¹⁸⁹ Claudia Koerner, "Police Shot And Killed An Armed Man Allegedly Attempting To Set Fire To An ICE Detention Facility," BuzzFeed News, last updated July 14, 2019, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/claudiakoerner/tacoma-ice-shooting>; "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/>.

stand and watch.”¹⁹⁰

– **Spokane John Brown Gun Club, tweet, August 8, 2020:**

“Why is the SPKJBC necessary? Put simply: racists, fascists, and cops. Below will be a regularly updated list of fascist/racist violence and threats, police brutality, and the bigotry of public officials. It won’t be a complete list, but it will show why solidarity is key.”¹⁹¹

– **Willem Van Spronsen, final statement, July 2019:**

“Fascism serves the needs of the state serves the needs of business and at your expense. Who benefits? Jeff Bezos, Warren Buffet, Elon Musk, Tim Cook, Bill Gates, Betsy de Vos, George Soros, Donald Trump, and need I go on? Let me say it again: rich guys (who think you’re not really all that good), really dig government (every government everywhere, including ‘communist’ governments), because they make the rules that make rich guys richer.”¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Spokane John Brown Gun Club, Twitter post, August 29, 2020, 5:16 a.m., <https://twitter.com/SPKJBGC/status/1299637136996663297>.

¹⁹¹ Spokane John Brown Gun Club, Twitter post, August 8, 2020, 7:05 p.m., <https://twitter.com/SPKJBGC/status/1292235389458173957>.

¹⁹² “On Willem Van Spronsen’s Action against the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma,” CrimethInc, July 14, 2019, <https://crimethinc.com/2019/07/14/on-willem-van-spronsens-action-against-the-northwest-detention-center-in-tacoma-including-the-full-text-of-his-final-statement>.



Redneck Revolt

Base of Operations: National¹⁹³

Website: <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/>

Social Media Presence: [Facebook](#) (deleted), [Twitter](#), [Twitter \(San Diego RR\)](#), [Twitter \(North Country RR\)](#), [Twitter \(Lake Ontario Redneck Revolt\)](#)

Leadership: Redneck Revolt's leadership remains largely anonymous in public.

Membership Size and Relevance: Redneck Revolt claims to have more than 30 chapters across the United States.¹⁹⁴

Redneck Revolt is leftwing pro-gun club that claims basic knowledge of weaponry is necessary for self-defense and to confront the far right and fascists, bringing it under the wide umbrella of Antifa (anti-fascist) groups. Redneck Revolt members provided security for protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, and other rallies against the far right and Confederate symbols.¹⁹⁵ Redneck Revolt first launched in 2009 as an offshoot of the John Brown Gun Club. Its founding members watched the nascent Tea Party of the

¹⁹³ Madison Pauly, "A New Wave of Left-Wing Militants Is Ready to Rumble in Portland—and Beyond," Mother Jones, May/June 2017, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/06/antifa-movement-anti-trump-politics-nazi/>.

¹⁹⁴ Madison Pauly, "A New Wave of Left-Wing Militants Is Ready to Rumble in Portland—and Beyond," Mother Jones, May/June 2017, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/06/antifa-movement-anti-trump-politics-nazi/>.

¹⁹⁵ Virginia Bridges, "They're leftists with guns. Meet the Redneck Revolt," *Herald-Sun*, September 1, 2017, <https://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article170840742.html>; Stephanie March, "Antifa: The hard left's call to arms," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, March 18, 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-15/redneck-revolt-and-the-hard-lefts-call-to-arms/9303758?nw=0>.

Republican Party attract working-class people but saw this as a contradiction because of a belief that the Tea Party promoted the values of the wealthy.¹⁹⁶

Redneck Revolt claims to be a community defense group against racism and fascism. Its two main goals are to counter the growth of white supremacy while strengthening community defense initiatives in marginalized communities. The group claims that physical defense is increasingly necessary to defend minorities and houses of worship under physical threat, though the group insists its members use physical force defensively only. Arming themselves is a direct response to threats of violence against marginalized communities, according to the group's propaganda.¹⁹⁷ Members insist on carrying weapons while patrolling protests in order to be ready to defend against an attack, but they also insist that their weapons are purely defensive.¹⁹⁸

In addition to opposing fascism and white supremacy, Redneck Revolt also stands against capitalism and the concept of the nation-state, including its symbols such as police, prisons, and courts. According to Redneck Revolt ideology, these symbols exist only to serve the rich and protect the wealthy class while oppressing the working class.

¹⁹⁶ Redneck Revolt, homepage, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/>; Cecilia Saixue Watt, "Redneck Revolt: the armed leftwing group that wants to stamp out fascism," *Guardian* (London), July 11, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jul/11/redneck-revolt-guns-anti-racism-fascism-far-left>.

¹⁹⁷ "Redneck Revolt Organizes Community Defense Against Racism and Fascism," Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, https://0d37a29d-b50d-4d43-8ae5-760bf0294308.filesusr.com/ugd/c1543a_b43e9ba0b15a4ace9b87ac8ca8d9768d.pdf.

¹⁹⁸ Stephanie March, "Antifa: The hard left's call to arms," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, March 18, 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-15/redneck-revolt-and-the-hard-lefts-call-to-arms/9303758?nw=0>.

Redneck Revolt seeks to eliminate capitalism and the oppressive patriarchy in order to fashion a new society that allows for the equal distribution of resources.¹⁹⁹

Recruitment and Propaganda

Redneck Revolt promotes the concept that the wealthy elites have enslaved the working class for their own benefit while the working class continues to suffer.²⁰⁰ Redneck Revolt is committed to bringing about a societal revolution that will uproot the patriarchy, capitalism, and exploitation of the working class while ensuring liberty and access to necessary resources for all. Redneck Revolt's guiding principles classify capitalism as a system that has ravaged the world and caused numerous genocides. The group recognizes the need to use "any and all means" to bring about this revolution, including violent methods.²⁰¹ Though Redneck Revolt promotes anti-racist positions, it also recognizes that its core is made up primarily of white people from the working class. Founding member Dave Strano wrote in 2009 that the white elite had particularly exploited the white working class, which had become the "footsoldiers of political and economic elites seeking to dominate and control land, resources, and wealth...."²⁰² According to Strano, the "rich whites" have used skin color and fear to turn the white

¹⁹⁹ "Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles," Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>.

²⁰⁰ Dave Strano, "Of Tea Parties and Patriots: Liberty for Who?," The Anarchist Library, 2009, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/dave-strano-of-tea-parties-and-patriots-liberty-for-who>.

²⁰¹ "Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles," Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>.

²⁰² "Redneck Revolt Organizes Community Defense Against Racism and Fascism," Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, https://0d37a29d-b50d-4d43-8ae5-760bf0294308.filesusr.com/ugd/c1543a_b43e9ba0b15a4ace9b87ac8ca8d9768d.pdf; Dave Strano, "Of Tea Parties and Patriots: Liberty for Who?," The Anarchist Library, 2009, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/dave-strano-of-tea-parties-and-patriots-liberty-for-who>.

working class against other races with ideas of “white supremacy” and “white pride” and “white nationalism,” all while the white elites enrich themselves.²⁰³

Redneck Revolt targets its recruitment to the working class. Its rhetoric conveys the message that the wealthy have used capitalism to oppress the working class, which must arm itself for its own defense.²⁰⁴ Redneck Revolt recognizes that the term “redneck” carries a demeaning connotation. The group seeks to reclaim the word as both a badge of pride in being part of the working class and resistance to the wealthy class.²⁰⁵ The group’s prime identifier is the red bandana worn by members and imposed on propaganda. The bandanas are reminiscent of the same red bandanas worn by West Virginia coal miners during a 1921 revolt against mining companies and the state.²⁰⁶ Redneck Revolt invites visitors to its website to seek out local chapters or create their own. It also offers classes on using tactical firearms as well as the role of firearms in creating societal revolutions.²⁰⁷

Various Redneck Revolt chapters maintain a social media presence on Twitter. The group’s Facebook pages appear to have been deleted. In addition, Redneck Revolt hosts a podcast, which is available on its website. As of September 1, 2020, however, the

²⁰³ Dave Strano, “Of Tea Parties and Patriots: Liberty for Who?,” The Anarchist Library, 2009, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/dave-strano-of-tea-parties-and-patriots-liberty-for-who>.

²⁰⁴ “Redneck Revolt Organizes Community Defense Against Racism and Fascism,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, https://0d37a29d-b50d-4d43-8ae5-760bf0294308.filesusr.com/ugd/c1543a_b43e9ba0b15a4ace9b87ac8ca8d9768d.pdf.

²⁰⁵ “About,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/about>.

²⁰⁶ Stephanie March, “Antifa: The hard left’s call to arms,” Australian Broadcasting Corporation, March 18, 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-15/redneck-revolt-and-the-hard-lefts-call-to-arms/9303758?nw=0>.

²⁰⁷ “Contact,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/contact>.

podcast had only two episodes that had been recorded in 2017.²⁰⁸ Redneck Revolt's website provides multiple options for visitors to donate funds, either directly to Redneck Revolt or to the John Brown Solidarity Fund.²⁰⁹

Violent Activities

- Redneck Revolt has not carried out specific attacks, but members have gotten into violent altercations with the far right during protests and rallies. The group remains dedicated to not initiating any violent confrontation.²¹⁰

Rhetoric

- **Jeremy Beck, Redneck Revolt member, July 2017:**
“If you haven’t noticed, we aren’t liberals. You know, if you keep going further left, eventually, you go left enough to get your guns back.”²¹¹
- **Facebook ad for a meeting in Durham, North Carolina, 2017:**
“Armed self defense is necessary for the survival and relevance of our future

²⁰⁸ “The Redneck Revolt Podcast,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/podcast>.

²⁰⁹ “Ways to Support,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/support>.

²¹⁰ Stephanie March, “Antifa: The hard left’s call to arms,” Australian Broadcasting Corporation, March 18, 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-15/redneck-revolt-and-the-hard-lefts-call-to-arms/9303758?nw=0>.

²¹¹ Cecilia Saixue Watt, “Redneck Revolt: the armed leftwing group that wants to stamp out fascism,” *Guardian* (London), July 11, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jul/11/redneck-revolt-guns-anti-racism-fascism-far-left>.

organizing in the face of a growing insurgent fascism.”²¹²

– **Dave Strano, Redneck Revolt founding member, 2009:**

“We now live in a country with a huge division between rich and poor. We live with a failed economy. We live in a nearly failed state. The government of the United States has systemically become a monstrous giant of bureaucrats and neo-tyrants. The whole government, every single politician, is part of this corrupt system.”²¹³

– **Dave Strano, Redneck Revolt founding member, 2009:**

“The blunt reality is that for the last five hundred years on this continent, white working class people have been used by mostly white rich people to colonize for, kill for, work for, and then better the living standards of those same white rich people, all the while sacrificing our own needs, wants, aspirations, and even lives. It really is as simple as that. No one denies the history of what has happened at working people’s expenses. Wars, poverty, homelessness, wage slavery... these are all ills created by someone, and perpetuated by us... the same workers who suffer these ills.

“For some five centuries we’ve been used by the rich among our own race to promote their agenda and suffered because of it. Yet, somehow, we’ve still been convinced that it is in our interests to protect the rights of the rich to own as much property as they can, to protect the right of the rich to even exist, to protect these

²¹² Virginia Bridges, “They’re leftists with guns. Meet the Redneck Revolt,” *Herald-Sun*, September 1, 2017, <https://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article170840742.html>.

²¹³ Dave Strano, “Of Tea Parties and Patriots: Liberty for Who?,” The Anarchist Library, 2009, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/dave-strano-of-tea-parties-and-patriots-liberty-for-who>.

same rich people who would just as soon see us die for their benefit.”²¹⁴

– **Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles, undated:**

“Police, prisons, courts, artificial borders, and other systems of social control only exist to serve the rich. The nation-state project came into existence to protect the propertied classes and keep us working people poor and without power, often using varying types of standing armies to enforce laws which disproportionately impact the poor.”²¹⁵

– **Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles, undated:**

“Capitalism is an economic system that methodically keeps the vast majority of people in the world impoverished while they labor to enrich a small minority of people. Since the very first arrivals of European settlers in what is now called the United States, the propertied classes established a serving class to maintain their power, and systematically murdered the native folks of this land for resisting their claim to ownership. We have nothing to gain by maintaining an allegiance to an economic system that has destroyed much of the natural world, committed countless acts of genocide, and ravaged our communities and natural resources in the name of profit.”²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Dave Strano, “Of Tea Parties and Patriots: Liberty for Who?,” The Anarchist Library, 2009, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/dave-strano-of-tea-parties-and-patriots-liberty-for-who>.

²¹⁵ “Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>.

²¹⁶ “Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>.

– **Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles, undated:**

“Our struggle against patriarchy is central to our struggle against capitalism and the nation-state. Just as the white working class has benefited from white supremacy, many men (especially those who are not trans) have benefited from patriarchy. Patriarchy benefits the rich by controlling those who labor for them and dividing the people against one another. Traditional “women’s work,” despite its importance to families and communities, is devalued in our society. The police and courts exist to protect the rich and powerful, not the people, and they are unable to provide justice for the victims of gender-based violence... and in fact often inflict the same violence themselves.”²¹⁷

– **Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles, undated:**

“We are not pacifists. Redneck Revolt believes in using any and all means at our disposal to gain our freedom and true liberty, provided those methods do not violate our basic humanity or integrity. We believe in the inherent right of every individual and community to defend themselves from those who exploit or oppress them.”²¹⁸

– **Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles, undated:**

“We believe in the need for revolution. Redneck Revolt believes that there will have to be a complete restructuring of society to provide for the survival and liberty of all people. We will fight for the end of predatory exploitation of our communities, and

²¹⁷ “Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>.

²¹⁸ “Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>.

the creation of a world where no one is without food, shelter, water, or any other means of survival.”²¹⁹

– **Redneck Revolt homepage, undated:**

“We need real formulated responses for the upsurge in reactionary and racist violence. We need armed community defense programs in every community. We need to be ready to rapidly respond to the armed right wing threat that menaces our communities. We need to stop being reactionaries when it comes to the topic of armed defense. We are approaching truly dangerous times. Will we be ready?”²²⁰



Youth Liberation Front

Base of Operations: The YLF is based in the Pacific Northwest region with chapters throughout Washington and Oregon.²²¹ The group also has chapters in Florida, California, and the Carolinas.²²²

²¹⁹ “Redneck Revolt Organizing Principles,” Redneck Revolt, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/principles>.

²²⁰ Redneck Revolt, homepage, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.redneckrevolt.org/>.

²²¹ “Chapters, PNW Youth Liberation Front, accessed September 21, 2020, <https://pnwylf.noblogs.org/chapters/>.

²²² NorCal YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/norcalylf>; Carolina YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/CarolinaYlf>; Bay Area YLF Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/BayYlf>; Ft. Lauderdale YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, https://twitter.com/fla_ylf.

Website: <https://pnwylf.noblogs.org/>

Social Media Presence: [Twitter \(Pacific Northwest YLF\)](#), [Twitter \(Youth Liberation Front Seattle Division\)](#), [Twitter \(NorCal YLF\)](#), [Twitter \(Carolina YLF\)](#), [Twitter \(Bay Area YLF\)](#), [Twitter \(Ft. Lauderdale YLF\)](#), [Mastadon](#)

Leadership: YLF is made up of independent, leaderless cells. The leaders of these cells remain anonymous.²²³

Membership Size and Relevance: YLF does not maintain public membership records. Each chapter acts independently. As of October 2, 2020, PNW YLF had 274 followers on Mastadon²²⁴ and 36,300 followers on Twitter.²²⁵ As of that same date, a Twitter account belonging to the Seattle Division had 5,782 followers and had been temporarily restricted but remained online.²²⁶ The NorCal YLF had 744 followers,²²⁷ while the Carolina YLF had 166 followers,²²⁸ the Bay Area YLF had 276 followers,²²⁹ and the Fort Lauderdale chapter had 223 followers.²³⁰

²²³ Hal Bernton, "Meet the Youth Liberation Front behind a militant marathon of Portland protests," *Seattle Times*, July 12, 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/meet-the-youth-liberation-front-the-militant-group-promoting-a-marathon-of-angry-portland-protests/>.

²²⁴ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Mastadon account, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://kolektiva.social/@PNWYLF>.

²²⁵ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter account, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF>.

²²⁶ Youth Liberation Front Seattle Division, Twitter account, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://twitter.com/seattleYLF>.

²²⁷ NorCal Youth Liberation Front, Twitter account, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://twitter.com/norcalylf>.

²²⁸ Carolina YLF, Twitter account, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://twitter.com/CarolinaYlf>.

²²⁹ Bay Area YLF, Twitter account, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://twitter.com/BayYlf>.

²³⁰ Ft. Lauderdale Youth Liberation Front, Twitter account, accessed October 2, 2020, https://twitter.com/fla_ylf.

The Youth Liberation Front (YLF) is a self-described “decentralized network of autonomous youth collectives dedicated to direct action towards total liberation....”²³¹ YLF describes itself as part of the umbrella of “anarchist projects” online.²³² YLF social media accounts call for attendance at rallies and protests against symbols of authority. These accounts also provide suggestions on how to prepare for protests.²³³ YLF groups began to emerge on social media in 2018 but gained greater prominence in 2020 with the spread of nationwide protests against police brutality and racial inequality.²³⁴ YLF has at least seven affiliates across the country, all of which act independently of each other.²³⁵ While YLF groups only loosely connected, a common denomination among them is their call for “direct action” in pursuit of their goal of tearing down the allegedly racist and inequitable political and capitalist systems.²³⁶

²³¹ “About,” PNW Youth Liberation Front, accessed September 21, 2020, <https://pnwylf.noblogs.org/about/>.

²³² PNW Youth Liberation Front, Mastadon post, September 22, 2020, 1:21 p.m., <https://kolektiva.social/@PNWYLF/104909721208356199>.

²³³ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF>; NorCal YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/norcalylf>; Carolina YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/CarolinaYlf>; Bay Area YLF Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/BayYlf>; Ft. Lauderdale YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, https://twitter.com/fla_ylf.

²³⁴ Hal Bernton, “Meet the Youth Liberation Front behind a militant marathon of Portland protests,” *Seattle Times*, July 12, 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/meet-the-youth-liberation-front-the-militant-group-promoting-a-marathon-of-angry-portland-protests/>.

²³⁵ “About,” PNW Youth Liberation Front, accessed September 21, 2020, <https://pnwylf.noblogs.org/about/>; NorCal YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/norcalylf>; Carolina YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/CarolinaYlf>; Bay Area YLF Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/BayYlf>; Ft. Lauderdale YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, https://twitter.com/fla_ylf.

²³⁶ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF>; NorCal YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020,

YLF is declaredly anti-fascist and anti-capitalist. Members who have spoken to media remain anonymous. During these interviews, they have declared YLF's belief that the current political system is broken and needs to be replaced rather than reformed. The nationwide protests that erupted after the May 25, 2020, death of George Floyd in police custody reportedly provided YLF with a recruitment boost over social media.²³⁷ YLF propaganda declares "the time for discussing reform is over," and calls for "full abolition for our communities to be safe and free from rampant police terror."²³⁸

Recruitment and Propaganda

YLF claims to be a network of "loosely connected autonomous groups of kids" fighting against fascism, the state, and capitalism.²³⁹ PNW YLF encourages visitors to its Twitter page to find "some other kids and form your own affinity group," suggesting that there is no formal process for creating YLF affiliate chapters.²⁴⁰ Per its name, YLF

<https://twitter.com/norcalylf>; Carolina YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/CarolinaYlf>; Bay Area YLF Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/BayYlf>; Ft. Lauderdale YLF, Twitter account, accessed September 25, 2020, https://twitter.com/fla_ylf.

²³⁷ Hal Bernton, "Meet the Youth Liberation Front behind a militant marathon of Portland protests," *Seattle Times*, July 12, 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/meet-the-youth-liberation-front-the-militant-group-promoting-a-marathon-of-angry-portland-protests/>.

²³⁸ "July 25th: Call For A Day Of Action In Solidarity With Portland & Against The Federal Invasion," PNW Youth Liberation Front, July 23, 2020, <https://pnwylf.noblogs.org/post/2020/07/23/july-25th-call-for-a-day-of-action/>.

²³⁹ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter post, September 30, 2020, 12:44 a.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1311165012573118464>.

²⁴⁰ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter post, September 30, 2020, 12:44 a.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1311165012573118464>.

targets youth for recruitment. The operator of the PNW YLF Twitter account admitted in a September 30, 2020, post to being a current high school student.²⁴¹

The YLF utilizes a black flag in its imagery to symbolize anarchy.²⁴² YLF chapters are active on social media, particularly Twitter. Twitter temporarily suspended the PNW YLF in September 2020, which led the group to create an account on the anarchist social media forum Mastadon.²⁴³

Violent Activities

- YLF has not be linked to specific violent attacks.

Rhetoric

- **PNW YLF, Tweet, September 26, 2020:**

“Great to see Portland show up today to oppose some piss babies, and the level of support infrastructure that folks built was fantastic. The day isn’t over and the threat from vacationing chuds continues. Stick with your crew, be alert and stay

²⁴¹ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter post, September 30, 2020, 1:50 a.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1311181556426313728>.

²⁴² K. Rambo, “Who is the PNW Youth Liberation Front at the center of recent Portland protests,” Oregon Live, June 2, 2020, <https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2020/06/who-is-the-pnw-youth-liberation-front-at-the-center-of-recent-portland-protests.html>.

²⁴³ NorCal Youth Liberation Front, Twitter post, September 22, 2020, 5:27 p.m., <https://twitter.com/norcalylf/status/1308518218768678912>; PNW Youth Liberation Front, Mastadon post, September 22, 2020, 1:21 p.m., <https://kolektiva.social/@PNWYLF/104909721208356199>.

dangerous. See ya in the streets!Black heart.”²⁴⁴

– **PNW YLF, Mastadon post, September 22, 2020:**

“Expect us to use this platform and other alternative media platforms more and more frequently, as anarchist projects continue to be censored from corporate social media.”²⁴⁵

– **PNW YLF, Twitter post, September 19, 2020:**

“we’d encourage bringing banners against the US Supreme Court and all other colonizer courts and judges.”²⁴⁶

– **PNW YLF, Twitter post, September 16, 2020:**

“Reduce the prisons to rubble”²⁴⁷

– **PNW YLF, Twitter post, September 13, 2020:**

“Youth Liberation: Burn the Schools and Destroy the Media!

<https://warzonedistro.noblogs.org/post/2017/09/07/youth-liberation-burn-the->

²⁴⁴ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter post, September 26, 2020, 11:59 p.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1310066570333487105>.

²⁴⁵ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Mastadon post, September 22, 2020, 1:21 p.m., <https://kolektiva.social/@PNWYLF/104909721208356199>.

²⁴⁶ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter post, September 19, 2020, 3:44 p.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1307405220541018118>.

²⁴⁷ PNW Youth Liberation Front, Twitter post, September 16, 2020, 6:28, p.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1306359249270902787>.

[schools-and-destroy-the-media/](#)²⁴⁸

– **PNW YLF, Twitter post, September 13, 2020:**

“Solidarity with Zoom (and Google Meet, etc.) bombers, DDOSers, and all brave school saboteurs in these trying times”²⁴⁹

– **PNW YLF, Twitter post, September 6, 2020:**

“Surveillance is crucial to extending the reach of the police state; not all the violence of policing is physical. Be real fucking conscious about the line between journalism and surveillance, because many of y’all keep crossing it. Stick to journalism, not surveillance.”²⁵⁰

– **Blog post, PNW YLF website, July 23, 2020:**

“Time and time again, the neo-liberal state has offered promises of ‘reform’ with no real action ever taken. The time for discussing reform is over, we need full abolition for our communities to be safe and free from rampant police terror.”²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ PNW YLF, Twitter post, September 13, 2020, 4:49 p.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1305247310637461506>.

²⁴⁹ PNW YLF, Twitter post, September 13, 2020, 3:55 p.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1305233551164502016>.

²⁵⁰ PNW YLF, Twitter post, September 6, 2020, 11:14 p.m., <https://twitter.com/PNWYLF/status/1302807487242854400>.

²⁵¹ “July 25th: Call For A Day Of Action In Solidarity With Portland & Against The Federal Invasion,” PNW Youth Liberation Front, July 23, 2020, <https://pnwylf.noblogs.org/post/2020/07/23/july-25th-call-for-a-day-of-action/>.

– **PNW YLF, Twitter post, July 5, 2020:**

“Be like water, keep moving. If you see someone smashing windows, shut the (expletive) up. Walk, don’t run. Hold the front and back lines.”²⁵²

²⁵² Hal Bernton, “Meet the Youth Liberation Front behind a militant marathon of Portland protests,” *Seattle Times*, July 12, 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/meet-the-youth-liberation-front-the-militant-group-promoting-a-marathon-of-angry-portland-protests/>.