

Demonstrations

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In your travels, you may come to be involved in some form of public protest. Protests have existed in one form or another since recorded history as a way to show whoever has power that something they are doing is actively opposed by a group of people. Opinion varies as to if demonstrations are actually effective, the more successful ones are good at one thing: starting a discussion of an issue. The types of these gatherings vary from the picket line of a union, a march through a part of the city, and even the more traditional showing up at a building where a gathering is being held with signs and equipment. Protests and marches come in many flavors: religious to atheist, socialist to capitalist, green to cut down and drill everything for jobs, and all points between. It is almost guaranteed that if an issue exists, there is someone organizing a protest for that somewhere in the Empire.

Getting involved with groups that organize protests can be an excellent way to meet others who share your feelings and can be an interesting experience - if you have spare time. Indeed, the corporate world needs people working, because activism is more prominent with high unemployment. But, these protests can also be very dangerous as cops, opposing protest groups, the media, and even fellow protesters can easily escalate things where injuries, jail time, and even death is possible! Activist groups can also be a front to advance a small group of people's political career and financial well-being with little care for the cannon-fodder protesting if they succeed in ousting the current regime. Have fun and get your voice out, but always weigh if the risk to yourself is worth it and if there is any hidden agenda.

Police Surveillance

The pigs love to use cameras to frighten protesters. They have been proven to greatly reduce crowd volatility when there is a cop waving the camera, despite the resulting video being used for anything other than IDing violent protesters. If you can foul the lens, preferable through an "accident" it will greatly reduce the effectiveness of the camera.

Tiny breath spray canisters are easily concealed but only work up close, while cooking spray will gunk the lens if you can judge the wind right. Be careful as they will probably give a good beatdown and charge you if you are caught. Failing that use your signs, flags, and cloth to block the pig-cam as much as possible. Or you can make your own intelligence and bring a camera to the protest. Don't focus on the ladies in Keffiyehs, get badge numbers, names and incriminating evidence.

Police Formations

The most frequently used tactic is blocking protesters in and not letting them out until they get bored of shouting. Thin lines of police can be run at and broken, sometimes its as easy as squeezing through, rotating through the weak point - police arms. For a laugh you can try shouting "Left flank-right turn!" said authoritatively into a bullhorn.

Flash Mob

With proper warning the police have ample time to assemble thug teams and manage demonstrations reducing the effectiveness. With modern technology a flash mob can be quickly formed using SMS texting, email, instant messaging, or even a cleverly disguised signal by an insider on broadcast radio or television monitored by protesters. Those flash protesters need to have their demonstration gear ready to respond like an ambulance crew to the scene of the event. Organizers may do well to have hidden caches, bike trailers, or even vans ready to roll and full with plastic buckets for drums, screen printed signs, and radios or megaphones. Flash protesters can carry drumsticks, soft banners, and small radios with loud volume.

Black Bloc

The Black Bloc is a tactic originating in Germany as a reaction to mass arrests at squats in the 80s. By copying police in wearing a form of uniform it consequently provides anonymity, appears more intimidating and encourages unity amongst anarchists.

There are other variation of this tactic, though. Not as common is Red Bloc if you're going down with a group of friends and have sympathies with democratic communism color up in Red.

Another variation of Black Bloc was used during the recent 4chan/anonymous protests of Scientology, with the Guy Fawkes mask. It protected the protesters from the church, which in the past would use aggressive legal and media defaming practices against anyone who opposed them.

Defaming

Pieing

For some time now a favorite political 'assassination' technique is to pie the opposition in the face. Make a pie crust and fill with whipped topping, pudding, or other soft safe filling. No matter how smooth they normally are anyone looks like a half-ass looser when they are covered in pie filling, their appearance will be tarnished or ruined. It is best to use the cutest smiling assassin you can find to further the humiliation, as long as all the pictures show a smile it is just a joke to the public. Other attacks include emptying a large bag of flour onto the target from above, squirting or water ballooning with safe red paint or dye to simulate blood, chocolate syrup is perfect to make an oil exec appear to be soaked in oil. Some of these attacks could conceivably lead to assault charges against you so take that into account, you also risk a beating from the bodyguards at the scene, be ready to record this for bonus points. If you just can't manage to sneak a pie in, do a George W and throw your stinky old shoes!

Egging

Nobody looks appealing with egg running down their face. Be careful though, it will chip paint and egg shells can blind someone.

Shock Autograph

Ask for an autograph off a celebrity with a novelty electric pen, it will be a truly *shocking* experience.

Escrache

In Argentina a group of activists will go to the home or place of work of someone they wish to denounce for different reasons, in order to influence public opinion. Like an improvised press conference, weaponizing the paparazzi.

Signs

Your sign can be a shield if made correctly. Choose a sturdy, thick wood for the post and support your poster board with corrugated plastic as used on election signs.

Have an intelligent, but simple message on your sign. A confusing sign is worse than no sign. If you are an organizer use the plans in Starting a Printing Workshop to make a silkscreen and mass produce signs so you can easily convey a unified message in the print and TV media.

Keep a sense of humor when writing your protest signs. At an anti-war rally one of our contributors attended, one person held a sign reading "BETTER BENEFITS FOR OUR POLICE".

Radio

A small power-hacked FM transmitter is a way to communicate during a protest, revolutionary slogans or instructions can be sent from a transmitter hidden in a protest sign, bicycle, or other hiding place. Protesters can either blast your stuff with cheap boom-boxes or take orders with throw away transistor radios and headphones.

Trample Survival

In a large crowd a panic or greed reaction can turn regular movement into a trample. Most dangerous out of control mobs are the result of concerts and street protests. For experienced protesters, teach activist the importance of **NEVER RUNNING AT A PROTEST**. If the leadership is out in large enough numbers they can both marshal a slowdown and give the inexperienced protester a feeling of calm that will reduce the panicked desire to run for their life. The main causes of death and injury are either underfoot trample injuries or asphyxiation against walls or objects from crowd pressure.

Keep an eye on the mood of the crowd and any potential catalysts, like police lining up to charge, loading weapons, or just someone offering free concert swag. Just like in an avalanche it is important to have several locations nearby where there are obstacles to slow or stop a mob from running you over. If the crowd starts moving in one direction get to the edge where there is less pressure. Any kind of tanglefoot is potentially deadly in a push situation. If possible scout out the protest site for low obstacles and remove them. Use natural clues that a tripping hazard is coming such as parked cars or unbroken street signs to indicate a curb.

Wear boots in any situation where a crowd is expected, as many feet may step on the back of your shoes or sandals and remove them. This makes it difficult to stay standing in a moving crowd. It may take very strong legs and body weight to force your feet forward for every step, so the larger should keep an eye out for smaller people and children to keep them up.

Don't carry big packs to demonstrations..Your bag or backpack may become dangerous to you on your back, making you less stable and giving a place for panicked people to grab at you, yet ditching it during a push may cause a tripping chain reaction injuring or killing many.

The important thing is to stay with your protective group if possible and move together to an open area. If this is not possible just try to stay up and away from walls. If you fall you will be in trouble, so force yourself back upright and hope someone tries to pull you up. If others begin to pile on you get into the fetal position with your knees spread so that you will have room to breathe. Use your arms to protect your head and stay calm. If that is impossible try to find a position that will protect your chest, face, and neck best so you can breathe.

Dress

Police have access to new advanced technology - fortunately we have access to countermeasures.

- Sonic Stunner

The sonic stunner comes in two forms: the high-pitch 'mosquito', which only children and teenagers can hear, and a lower-pitch form which affects everyone. To counter this, carry a decent set of earplugs. Earplugs are inexpensive and can be bought from drugstores and hardware shops.

- Microwave Gun

This modern weapon heats just at the surface of the skin and causes intense pain. Its effects can be blocked by metallic-woven fibers. If a material pops and burns in a microwave, it should give some protection from this weapon. Lining a garment or cape with such a material or carrying a mylar space blanket (which may also provide very limited protection from infrared cameras) should offer some protection against microwave guns. It cannot penetrate any hard materials, so taking cover behind a dumpster, vestibule or wall will protect you from this one.

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- Leather Gloves

Be aware that modern CS gas canisters burn at several hundred degrees, far hotter than is safe for normal cotton or light work gloves. When handling a hot canister, you will need the full grain leather gloves or you risk burns.

- Canvas coats

The famous Carhartt-style of coat which is incredibly common everywhere it's cold can defeat tasers with it's bulk. The prongs won't penetrate, and therefore won't shock you. This might be a little conspicuous in the middle of an LA summer, but for our comrades in areas like the midwest, it's not only effective protection, but you'd be blending in with the crowds.

- Latex gloves

Often viewed as an easy way to avoid leaving fingerprints on stuff, but be aware: the latex glove itself leaves a unique pattern which can be traced to a specific glove... and you leave your fingerprints *inside* the glove. Be sure to thoroughly dispose of any latex glove used when fingerprinting issues may come up.

- Armoring

Back before the Quebec City summit in 2001, "armoring" was used as a response to police violence. This varied from taping rigid plastic or cardboard over kidneys to elaborate suits of plastic-barrel armor taken from SCA plans. For the most part, armoring is now unpopular. The Quebec City protests proved that mobility was more important than armor, and heavy armor is now rare. Most activists should content themselves with a jock-strap and maybe a chest-protector (both available from sporting goods stores). Knee-pads are useful, though especially if you're going to do a lot of kneeling at a protest – for example, being a street medic.

- Helmet. A good quality working helmet is the standard BMX helmet.(Pictured Here) (<http://img134.imageshack.us/img134/1484/bmxhelmeten0.jpg>) The BMX helmet is good because it is extremely lightweight, designed to stand up to repeated blows, comfortable, allows you to wear a gas mask, protects the ears, and can be painted with whichever rude slogans or symbols you choose.

Gas Masks

A modern (2006) gas mask will run anywhere from \$40-\$100, *if* one can be found – they’re pretty hard to come by post-9/11. Which is okay, since a military style gas-mask is a great big “arrest me” sign. If you insist on having one, then buy an American or Israeli mask with Plexiglass or Lexan eye-protection. A lot of old-fashioned Soviet gas masks are available, but the eyepieces are glass, and therefore breakable – Remember: the Revolution is all fun and games until someone loses an eye – so try to avoid them. A good model of mask, if you can’t get a new one, is either the German M10, or Israeli M15 both are practically bullet-proof, and will run you about 30-40 dollars online. Russian cold war surplus gas masks, while both cheap, and usable, have glass eyepieces, but these can be replaced at any decent hardware store for plexiglass ones for a couple of dollars. Unfortunately the filters from the cold war are rather large.

A good substitute to a military gas mask is an industrial respirator. These don’t protect the eyes, but are useful when equipped with *organic matter/particulate* filters – be sure of the filter rating, since normal filters only protect from dust and asbestos, etc. N95 (protects against 95% of particulate matter) and P100 ratings are good for CN gas (Mace) and CS gas (teargas). Respirators can be bought for \$40-50 at most large hardware and farm-supply stores, and the filters are commonly available. Buy a good set of swimming goggles to go with them.

Remember that, during an arrest, any gas mask or respirator is going bye-bye forever. If gas masks are unavailable or too expensive, or if you’re involved in an action where arrest is inevitable, you might want to fall back on the old standby: a bandanna soaked in a mix of cider vinegar and water. Get a large, good-quality bandanna (cheap dollarstore bandannas usually don’t fit the bill) and soak it in a mix of 1/3 cider vinegar to 2/3 water. You can keep it damp in a ziplock bag, and tie it around your face when the gas starts flying – it’s not perfect but it’s a hell of a lot better than nothing.

A fair warning to people looking to purchase a gas mask: many older gas mask filters are no longer usable, especially if they are over 10 years old. Make sure to do your research on any particular gas mask you are considering purchasing to make sure you can still obtain gas mask filters for it. Also check for damage and cracks that would compromise the mask’s effectiveness.

Current models that are most likely to work and have filters available: M17A1 NBC (nuclear, biological, chemical), M95, and more that you can research. A decent site to look at is <http://www.approvedgasmasks.com/>

Torches

Ingredients:

- Dowels, at least 1 " THICK (wooden table or chair legs workfine)
- Tin cans - small (15-ounce) or MEDIUM (26-OUNCE)
- Kerosene or lamp oil
- Old cotton t-shirts or cloth
- Hammer and nails or screws and screwdriver
- Ventilated working space

Nothing livens up a night march or gives titiat "peasant revolt" look like bright, flaming torches (and pitchforks). A festive, safe torch is easy to make. Begin by removing an paper from the outside ofyour tin can. Lay the can on its side and, with a hammer and nail, punch some holes along the top and middle ofthe can. This will allow more air to reach the center of the torch, making for bigger flames.

The wooden dowel serves as a handle for the torch, so it should be long enough that the flames wdll not be too close to your face or head. Nail or screw the tin can to the top of the dowel, mouth upward. You may want to use a drill to make a pilot hole in the dowel. The nail can be difficult to reach within the confined interior of the can; use the bottom of the hammer ifneed be. You may want to use a washer, too. The can should be securely attached to the dowel. You do not want that connection to fail out on the mean streets.

Take an old 100% cotton shirt or rag and wet it with kerosene or lamp oil. Place rags in a plastic bag or margarine container when you wet them, so you don't spill or waste any fuel. Do this in a well-ventilated space, away from any open flames. Store the rags in a scalable container. Rags can be stuffed into the cans and lit when ready.

Torches will last for roughly twenty minutes before they need to be relit or replaced. They can be extinguished by turning them upside down on the ground for several minutes. You can also extinguish them by covering the can entirely with a wet towel. If you are concerned about the rags falhng out, or if you may be running while carrying the torch, string metal wire through the holes you punched in the can and across its mouth.

Warning: Using fire always involves risk, and not just of arson charges. Being organized helps create a safe, romantically-lit environment, and keeps the chaos where you want it. Bring along fire extinguishers and designate people who are responsible for them. Make sure you keep torches away from heads and faces. Never add kerosene or flammables to a lit torch. Do not light a torch after handling soaked rags.

Other Equipment

For those considering investing in Kevlar body armor, note that while it is legal for civilians to own in the USA (for now), using it "in the process of a criminal act" is a Felony. Also remember that while Kevlar will stop MOST handgun bullets, it won't stop them all, nor will it block the massive force that the rounds will hit you with. Kevlar is totally useless against rifles. Any high-powered centerfire round (Which is anything the cops will have) can easily penetrate any body armor you can buy. Kevlar may help against beat cops, but against better equipped riot or SWAT, it's mostly useless. Armor UP sells Kevlar body armor, as well as listing lots of legal info on their website: <http://www.bulletproofme.com/>

The best vest won't stop a determined murderer; be ready to maneuver, get some cover and concealment, and return fire eliminating the threat.

A soft body battery powered RC airplane with a wireless camera that has an extended antenna or boosted transmit is a great way to get some recon on the pigs at a demonstration. Paint the plane grey and look for a model with a quiet propeller and the piggies might never even notice it. All you need is the toy airplane, a camera, and a pocket TV receiver. It might be useful to stick the 'pilot' in a tree along someone watching the video and helping guide the pilot, the video can be received by demonstration leaders to plot direction if they need a breakthrough.

If you're a born leader taking a megaphone to a rally will spur on protesters, but know when to give up if the people around you aren't keen on the idea of repeating you all day. If you do not have your own megaphone, on a day of protest taking over the local mall's intercom system to send a message will make news coverage, See Pranks and Stunts.



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