

Full Spectrum Resistance



*Discussion Questions
for Reading and Action Groups*

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(Version 1.0 – July 2020)

This booklet is a compilation of discussion questions you could use in an informal setting like a book club or community group, or in a more formal strategic planning session or academic context.

This resource is organized chapter by chapter with questions (and exercises) based on the book *Full Spectrum Resistance*. The intent is not for you to try to answer every question, but simply pick and choose a handful of questions that seem most relevant to you and most likely to generate productive discussion in your context.

For example, if you are a new community group trying to generate ideas and understand some common ground, you might want to pick a facilitator to choose some questions from the first three chapters to discuss. If you are an established group, you might want to set aside time going through each of the capacity-oriented chapters—to talk about recruitment one day, security another day, and so on.

The questions in most chapters are action-oriented and ask about “our movement” or “our group”. But you could use them for study or discussion by asking the same questions about another campaign or movement. If you are not in an action group already, I encourage you to pick one that is in the news or active in your community.

There are other resources that might be useful for your group, including a quick reference guide to the book, at FullSpectrumResistance.org

Are there exercises or questions you've found especially useful? Do you have ideas to add to a future version of this booklet? Send feedback with resources@fullspectrumresistance.org.

1. Why We Fight

Why do we need resistance movements?

One sentence summary: An introduction to the entire book and its purpose: we live in a world beset by serious crises of justice and ecology, but the traditional left and progressive movements have been whittled down to a few ineffective tactics; we need a resistance movement if we want to achieve any lasting justice and to save our planet.



Discussion Questions

What current or historical movements inspire you most?

How many groups or campaigns have you worked on as an activist? Which have you won? Which were lost? Which were complicated?

Have the movements you worked in been able to generate political force? (Or economic force, or social force, etc.) How did they do that?

What made you want to read this book?

Why do you think it's important to fight?

For people who don't like the idea of "fighting," how do you respond to Barbara Deming's comment: "The challenge to those who believe in nonviolent struggle is to learn to be aggressive enough."?

Why do *we* need resistance movements right now?

2. Fighting to Win



How do movements fight when they want to win, and what holds us back?

One sentence summary: Much of the left has forgotten, mythologized, or sanitized social movements of the past and does not understand how those struggles were actually won; movements win by developing political force, by developing cultures of resistance, and by taking action.

What are some of the things that “fighting to win” means for us?

Questions for Action Groups

Where does our group fall on the spectrum of **liberal to radical**? [p. 41] Is that position a conscious choice that we have discussed?

Where do our group’s *individual members* fall on the spectrum of liberals to radicals? Does that match the position of the group as a whole? If not, why?

Where does our group fall on the spectrum of **militant to moderate**? [p. 41] Is that position a conscious choice that we have discussed?

Where do our group’s *individual members* fall on the spectrum of militants to moderates? Does that match the position of the group as a whole? If not, why?

Do we see some of the features of a **culture of defeat** in our movement? [p. 44] What about in our community?

Remember: A culture of defeat includes an emphasis on personal purity, horizontal hostility, loneliness and withdrawal, symbolic actions, and vague goals and no strategy.

Do we see the **iron law of involution** at work in our movement? [p. 50] What about in our community? In our group?

If we do, what incremental gains can we identify to mobilize people around? How can we deliberately reach out to new people?

What role does **the liberal class** play in our movement or our community? [p. 53]

How does the liberal class contribute productively? (*E.g., access to resources, political influence.*)

In what ways is the liberal class an obstacle to radical progress in our movement? What can be done about this?

What historical people and movements are the most important models for action for our group? What about in our movement more generally?

What forms of distortion or bias affect how we remember and understand those historical examples? (*See the **myth of pacifist persuasion**, p. 56.*)

Do we have the qualities of a **culture of resistance** in our movement and in our community? [p. 77]

If we do, what can we do to extend this culture of resistance to a larger number of people?

If we do not, which of those qualities should we focus on strengthening? Where are we weakest? What actions can we take in the next month or the next year that will help us build a culture of resistance?

In which qualities are we strongest? How does that affect the kinds of action we can take effectively? How can we use those strengths to shore up our weaknesses?

3. Full Spectrum Resistance



What shared factors make movements effective?

One sentence summary: Those in power rule by divide and conquer; resistance movements can win by building shared understanding and solidarity, and by using a diversity of tactics and approaches to build powerful movements that can use disruption and militancy.

Discussion Questions

Consider the movements you have supported or participated in before; would they best be described as dissident movements, resistance movements, or revolutionary movements?

What kinds of movements would you most like to be part of now and in the future? Dissident, resistance, or revolutionary?

The Overton Window & Radical Flanking [p. 84]

Where do our tactics and beliefs fall on the spectrum of the Overton Window? Are they “unthinkable” or “popular” or somewhere in between?



Where do other groups working on similar issues fall? Are their tactics more accepted than ours or more unthinkable?

If our group is in the most on the most “radical” part of the Overton continuum, what new ideas or tactics would need to come in to “bump” us over to a more accepted position?

If our group is in the “sensible” or “acceptable” part of the Overton continuum, are we maximizing our ability to push for social change? Is there a risk we are “preaching to the choir” or simply repeated widely-accepted beliefs when we could be advocating for bigger changes?

How have you seen the right wing use the Overton Window?

Are we making effective use of **radical flanking**? (*That is does our movement have overtly militant or radical groups that make more moderate groups seem appealing by comparison?*)

Does our current level of militancy maximize our impact?

How would our impact change if we shifted our tactics slightly, to become more or less militant?

Examples: If our next action were slightly less militant, would we attract more people? Would those extra people (at a less militant action) have more impact, less impact, or the same impact? If the impact is the same or less, will having a lower impact action with more participants allow us retain those people in a future, more militant actions?

If our next action were slightly more militant, would we attract fewer people? (Or, as discussed at the beginning of Chapter 4: Recruitment & Training, could escalation actually attract more participants?) As asked above; would a slightly more militant action with fewer participants have a great impact, a smaller impact, or the same impact?

Remember, it's okay to vary the militancy levels from event to event, but our campaigns are most effective when they are part of some trajectory of increasing impact, possibly increasing militancy, and definitely increasing people or participation.

What are examples, for our movement, of some actions that could potentially be taken at each location on the Overton Window spectrum?

Note: There are many more action planning questions as part of Chapter 11: Actions & Tactics.

Diversity of Tactics [p. 98]

Look at our movement from the position of an imaginary “movement architect”—what combination of tactics would be most effective *in an ideal world*, assuming that we have roughly the number of movement participants we do now?

In comparing that ideal scenario to the current situation, which tactics are we missing right now? Should our group try to embrace or carry out those tactics? If we want to see other people using those tactics, how can we support or encourage those? What kinds of training or logistical support will encourage those tactics happen?

What combination of tactics would be most effective if we had a constantly growing supply of new people to our movement?

What combination of tactics would be most likely to draw more people into our movement?

*Note: As discussed in Chapter 4: Recruitment & Training, the **bandwagon effect** [p. 159] is more likely to be triggered by actions that are highly visible or dramatic. As discussed in Chapter 11: Actions & Tactics, actions are more likely to be imitated if they are **bazaar-type**, meaning simple and require minimal planning and few logistical supports [p. 543].*

Currently, what tactics are used (or likely to be used) that we *disagree* with? Is it that we simply don't want to participate in those tactics, or do we think they are harmful to the movement?

If we think they are harmful to the movement, why?

If those tactics were carried out in a different way, could we support or participate in them?

Are these simply things we have to tolerate if we believe in the principle of a diversity of tactics? Is it appropriate to speak to the people using these tactics and try to develop a stronger shared analysis of the tactical or political situation?

Disruption and Poor People's Movements [p. 108]

What does disruption look like for us? What does militancy look like? (*I.e., it doesn't have to look like protest in the streets, but it should involve some confrontation or disruption of business as usual.*)

What does business-as-usual look like for the system we are struggling against?

If we don't undertake disruption directly, who in our movement *is* doing those things, and what can we do to support them? (*Suggestion: You could answer this question in terms of the various capacities discussed in this book, such as intelligence or fundraising.*)

Movement building [p. 112]

Have attempts been made to build stronger ties between groups within our movement? (*E.g., one-on-one meetings, joint strategy meetings, consultas, conferences, speaker exchanges, etc.*)

Who are our **bridge builders**? (*Experienced people who can build bridges between groups and movements; see Chapter 12, p. 612, for more discussion.*)

How can we support and encourage more bridge builders? Can we become bridge builders ourselves?

What other groups and movements do we feel the strongest sense of solidarity with? How do we want to demonstrate that solidarity through words or action? What actions could we take in the next month? What actions could we take in the next year?

What other groups or movements do we agree with in principle, but lack ties or direct relationships with? What immediate actions could we take to improve that situation?

What other groups or movements do we have common ground with? How can we build that common ground (e.g., attending events, co-organizing events, jointly organizing a campaign).

What regular action do we take to combat sexism or patriarchy in our movement? What regular actions do we take to deal with racism, homophobia, classism, or other forms of oppression in our movement? (*E.g., anti-oppression workshops, deliberately making space in decision-making groups for marginalized people, caucuses or safe spaces for women or for people of colour, reading and discussion groups, film screenings or guest speakers, etc.*)

Is our group is largely composed of people of privilege? (*E.g., men, white people, middle class or affluent people.*)

If so, what do we do to get different perspectives?

Are we trying to make our group more representative of people in general, and how?

If we are a group of privileged people, we may have more influence or impact than other groups in our movement (including people who are more directly affected by systemic problems). What additional steps can we take to make sure we aren't misusing our privilege? (*For example, privileged groups can misuse their power by speaking for people instead of consulting them, by setting movement agendas in a way that match only our own needs, etc.*)

How are we trying to understand the analysis of allied groups and movements? How do we work to synthesize a shared understanding of our world's problems?

Tug of War [p. 124]

Do we have a continuous chain for in the **tug of war**? Do we have ways for people to move between groups or are there cultural or social or other barriers?

Where is the “radical energy” in our movement?

Does our movement embody the qualities of **full spectrum resistance**? [p. 127] Those qualities include:

- diversity of tactics,
- cooperation between groups and movements,
- solidarity, and
- intersectionality and synthesis of ideas from different movements.

4. Recruitment & Training



How and why do people join movements, and how can we encourage them?

One sentence summary: Resistance movements are made out of people; to win they must constantly recruit new people, while strengthening communities of resistance and developing the skills of existing members.

The Making of a Radical [p. 140]

Exercise: (*If group is small enough.*) Let's have a go-around: have each person briefly describe how they became a radical or how they came to join this movement.

Does it match the model of the Radical Triad? (That is, does each person have radical experiences, radical catalysts, and action needs?) If not, why?

If so, were things like tools and time provided to people deliberately, or did the people in our group have to seek them out or stumble upon them?

Are there many other people we know who have been through some of the same radicalizing personal experiences, but who have not gone on to become radicals? What are the missing ingredients for them? How can our group or organization help to provide them those missing ingredients?

Effective Recruitment [p. 153]

Do we have a recruitment plan? Who is responsible for that? How often does this plan get revisited?

Recruitment is one of the most important factors for successful resistance movements, and recruitment considerations should affect almost everything a group does. When planning other events, communications, etc., it's worth asking: can we adjust this in a way that will increase the size and strength of our movement, or that will appeal to new people without undermining our long-term plans?

Think about a typical person who is sympathetic to our movement, but not active. What paths exist for them to find their way to being an active member of our group or a group like ours?

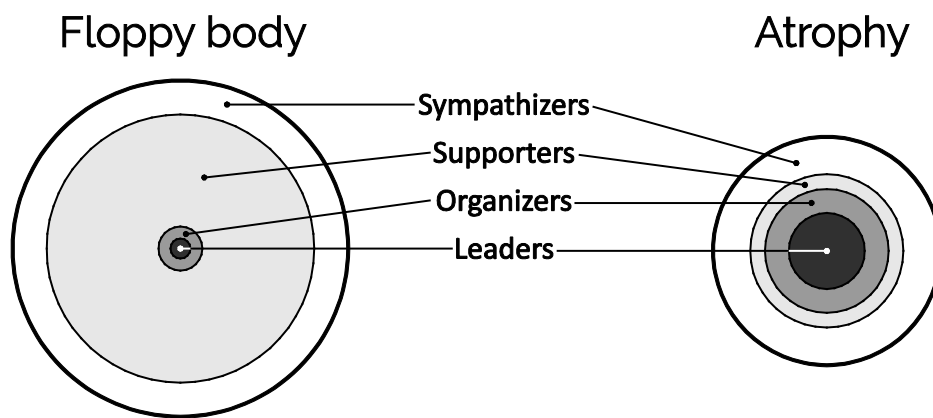
What are the biggest barriers in the way? (*E.g., fear, lack of skills, lack of welcoming groups, etc.*) How can we remove or reduce those barriers?

Consider the model of **engagement circles**. [p. 157] Does this model roughly correspond to our movement?

What different terms or labels could we use for the different circles that might be more relevant to our movement?

Consider each of the levels in turn. What can our group do or say that will move people up each level? (*You may want to draw a table on a flipchart or whiteboard.*) And what are the biggest barriers at each particular level?

Consider: An organization that doesn't pay attention to all of these transitions can also get disproportionate or out of whack. For example, if an organization spends too much time recruiting new members, and not enough time training existing leaders and organizers, it tends to lack coordination and direction. Like a body without a skeleton, it flops around, and has trouble accomplishing things consistently.



If an organization spends too much time developing existing organizers, and not enough energy reaching out to new members, it can end up with “too many cooks.” The pool of supporters tends to shrink. Without enough new people to draw on, organizers feel overworked, frustrated, isolated, and burned out. Instead of a body without a skeleton, it's a body without muscles. All movements have turnover, and without replacement leaders and organizers the whole organization can atrophy.

A healthy organization spreads out its efforts to encourage a good balance between fresh people and experienced people, between very involved people and lightly involved people. It keeps the circles proportional. If we want to keep things proportional, we have to focus our efforts on recruiting and training people into the areas where we are lacking.

What are our most promising sources of new recruits?

Are there people we *don't* want to recruit?

Can we find a place in our movement for everyone who wants to participate based on their gifts, their character, and their resources?

Biographical availability is a big factor in determining whether someone will be active in a movement. [p. 151] Can we organize our meetings or events in a way that reduces the amount of biographical availability required to participate? (E.g., childcare, timing of events, length of events, etc.)

Can we make use of the **bandwagon effect** in our movement now? [p. 159] How could we structure our campaigns so that we can use the bandwagon effect in the future?

Is our group and organizing set up in a way that encourages the development of **strong ties**? [p. 163]

Train & Retain [p. 173]

Consider the suggestions offered in this chapter to maximize retention, such as:

- Create a welcoming environment and develop good anti-oppression practices.
- Give newcomers a guide.
- Create and use practical points of unity.
- Meet less, act more;
- Understand and prevent burnout.
- Make people feel appreciated.
- Be efficient and run effective meetings.
- Pay attention to tasks.
- Balance professionalism and social time.
- Give ongoing training.
- Help people feel identified with the group.
- Understand what members want to get out of your group, and try to give it to them.
- Deal promptly and effectively with conflicts and difficult people.
- When people do leave, learn why and consider changes.

Are we doing these things now to maximize our training and retention? Which do we need to do more of, or to do better for improved retention and training? What immediate steps can we take to improve?

5. Groups & Organization



How do groups form and organize themselves to be as effective as possible?

One sentence summary: There is no one right way to organize, but a group's structure must match their strategy; the most effective movements aren't militant *or* well-organized, but are militant *and* organized.

Institutionalizing the Riot and the Tyranny of Structurelessness [p. 190]

In general, what is most missing in our movement; organization of groups, or militancy? What does that mean for our group's approach?

If our group is primarily a militant group, who is responsible for holding and institutionalizing the gains we hope to win through conflict and confrontation?

The answer could be particular other groups in our movement, or particular social, political, or economic institutions. Those could be institutions or relationships that already exist, or ones that we hope to create. We should be able to answer this question in a specific way.

If our group is primarily a moderate group, focused on institutionalizing change, what groups or forces will produce the crisis or disruption of business-as-usual needed to create change?

If we have trouble answering that question, does that duty fall on us?

Many new groups begin with very little structure; what are some signs that a group needs to develop more explicit structure? Have you experienced this in a group? What are some warning signs you have seen that unintended and dysfunctional structures are developing?

Organizational Tensions [p. 197]

What is the purpose of our group? What change do we hope to produce in the world?

Note: we must have a reasonably clear understanding of this in order to make good decisions about how to organize ourselves. There are further questions about clarifying this in the final chapter, Campaigns and Strategy.

Are we consciously organized in a way that makes as effective as possible given our purpose?

Did we explicitly decide on our group's structure? Or did it just sort of "come together"? Do we occasionally revisit our structure to ensure that it is meeting our needs?

1. Small vs. Big [p. 201]

How big do we want our group to be? How big do we want our movement to be?

Is there an optimal size for decision-making and action for our group or organization, given the kinds of tactics we plan to use?

If we desire for our group to be *small*, how do we coordinate with other groups in our movement to maximize our impact and our ability to generate political force? How do we keep from being isolated?

If we desire for our group to be *small*, how do we interact with larger organizations that could have more political clout and political acceptance?

If we anticipate that our group or movement will be relatively *small*, that implies that each person in the movement must generate correspondingly more political force; how do we maximize each person's capacity, training, commitment, and access to resources?

If we desire to be a *large* group or organization, is there a risk of "watering down" the beliefs and tactics of the founding members (as happened with the Mattachine Society)? How do we deal with this? How do we contend with pre-emption or co-optation?

If we desire to be a *large* group or organization, how do we maximize participation and cohesion in our organization?

2. Centralized vs. Decentralized [p. 205]

Is our group "combat ready" as Gamson uses the term (e.g., centralized and with formal organization)? What "combat readiness" mean for us?

Do we want to be combat ready? If we are not ready now, what would we need to do to become combat ready?

What kinds of tactics do we use or plan to use? Are these tactics more effective in a centralized or decentralized setting? (*I.e., how centralized should we be at the tactical level?*)

What kinds of strategies do we use or plan to use? Are these strategies more effective in a centralized or decentralized setting? (*I.e., how centralized should we be at the strategic level?*)

How do we avoid the destructive effects of internal division and fragmentation?

3. Formal vs. Informal [p. 211]

How formal is our group now? Do we have Gamson's three characteristics?

Note: For Gamson a group is formal if it has 1) a written document outlining purpose and operations, 2) a formal list of members, and 3) at least three layers of organization (such as an executive, a core of active members, and a group of supporters).

If we do not, would it benefit us to have all of those things? What immediate steps would we take to get them?

If our group is highly formal in its roles, how do we make sure it is also agile and able to adapt? How do we include or integrate people who do not yet have formal roles?

If our group is highly informal, then what positions or roles *do* exist in our organization? Do we have formal ways to bring in and train new people? (*Also: How do we ensure fresh ideas? How do we make sure our group is not simply a social club?*)

Do we have specialized roles in our group? (*For example: A staff system, or at least people who focus on recruitment, or intelligence, or other capacities?*)

If we don't, should we consider implementing that system?

If we don't want specialized roles, how do we ensure that we build and retain skills and skilled people over time?

4. Consensus vs. Hierarchy [p. 221]

What decision-making approaches do we use in our group? What do we do if our primary method breaks down?

Do we use different decision-making methods at different times? (*E.g., planning actions vs. carrying out actions.*)

What kinds of tactics need to happen in our movement? What kinds of decision-making systems will maximize the effectiveness of those tactics?

What kinds of tactics are best matched for our decision-making style?

5. Clandestine vs. Open [p. 226]

What reasons for underground or clandestine organizing could apply to our movement?

What reasons could apply to other movements we work with or are allied with?

Note: See Chapter 6 "Security & Safety, for more questions about aboveground and underground organizing.

6. Moderate vs. Militant [p. 230]

What "unruly" tactics have we used in the past? What unruly tactics could we use in the future? Does everyone in the group agree about which unruly tactics are appropriate?

Also see some questions about moderates and militants in Chapter 2: Fighting to Win.

7. Anything Goes vs. Code of Conduct

Does our group have a formal code of conduct? Does it need one?

Does our group have an informal code of conduct or group norms?

What is this informal code based on? Is this a set of good norms we have discussed in an organized way, or are there barriers around language-use, dress or appearance, age, etc., that might actually be excluding people we want?

Note: There is more discussion about behaviour norms at the end of the next chapter, under “Safety and Difficult People.”

Other Factors [p. 233]

Movement research shows that a societal crisis is an opportunity, and that many groups succeed if they can survive to a crisis of the ruling power. Are we in a good position to respond if there is a “crisis”?

What crises might we expect? Is it possible or desirable to provoke a crisis?

Organizational Snapshots [p. 235]

Exercise: Create an organizational snapshot for your group *as it is*. Here’s a blank one:

Our Group		
SMALL	<input type="checkbox"/>	BIG
DECENTRAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	CENTRAL
INFORMAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	FORMAL
CONSENSUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	HIERARCHY
OPEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLANDESTINE
MODERATE	<input type="checkbox"/>	MILITANT
ANY-GOES	<input type="checkbox"/>	CODE

Now create a snapshot for how you would *like* your group to be; what would you like to change? How is it different? (*Here’s an example of how you could draw that.*)

Our Group (example + changes)		
SMALL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BIG
DECENTRAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CENTRAL
INFORMAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FORMAL
CONSENSUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HIERARCHY
OPEN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CLANDESTINE
MODERATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MILITANT
ANY-GOES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CODE

What organizational qualities is our group most in need of, and how to we change or get those capabilities?

Create a few snapshots for other groups you work with in your movement. Are they the same, or complementary?

If some characteristics are missing (e.g., no large groups, no clandestine groups), is it okay that those characteristics are missing from your movement right now? What organizational qualities is your movement most in need of?

6. Security & Safety



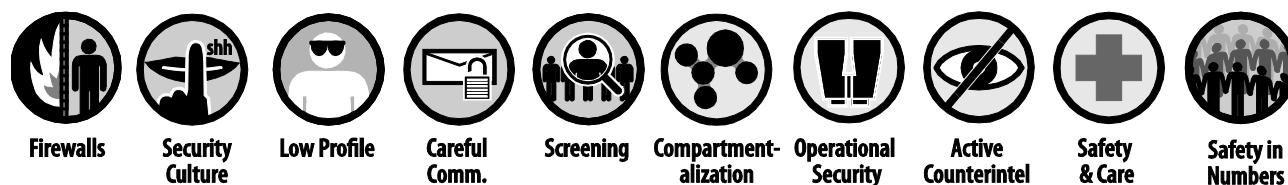
What rules and practices do groups use to stay secure, to protect themselves, and to limit infiltration and destructive people?

One sentence summary: Resistance movements are a threat to power and must consciously protect themselves from external repression and infiltration; they also have to keep their members safe from internally damaging or disruptive people; history shows us many tools for accomplishing this, and also demonstrates what happens when we fail to use those tools properly.

Tools for Security [p. 248]

Consider each of the tools in security toolbox. Which are currently the most relevant to our movement?

Here are those tools summarized:



What safety measures do we have in place now?

Which of these tools do we want to focus on using better or more effectively? What are our immediate next steps to doing that? (*E.g., training, equipment, discussions.*)

Are there any security and safety tools we want to use that *aren't* listed here?

What would be the *worst* way to apply some of these tools in our movement? How can we avoid that?

Any of these tools can be applied in an appropriate, dysfunctional, or damaging way. Examples: Keeping a low profile could be used when reaching out to new people and being visible might make us safer. Over-enthusiastic screening can be used to exclude people who would be valuable participants, but don't look like existing members of the group. Safety in numbers can be applied when compartmentalization is more valuable. Etc.

Is anyone in our group or movement specifically tasked with thinking about security and safety? Do we have security or safety discussions only reactively, when a problem shows up, or do we set aside time to think about these problems on a regular basis?

Does our movement have an underground wing? Does it need one?

If it does have an underground wing, how can best we support it?

If it doesn't have one, but it needs one, what would have to be in place for that wing to emerge?

Is there action happening that could be either aboveground or underground? If so, is a firewall and compartmentalization in place?

Exercise: Imagine that our country were taken over by a Fascist coup tomorrow. How would that change the security tools we use? How would that change how we organize?

Exercise: Imagine that our group or movement was targeted by right-wing vigilantes, the KKK, or a campaign of escalating death threats and intimidation? How would that change the security tools and how we organize?

Historical case studies

Review and discuss one or more of the historical case studies. Which security measures do you feel they used effectively? Which were counterproductive?

Every moment is shaped by its historical context and moment in time; in your current context, are people more or less likely to make those same mistakes?

Exercise: Have individuals or pairs in your group study a historical movement or campaign (from this chapter or elsewhere) and lead a short presentation and discussion on what they've learned.

Safety and Difficult People [p. 293]

How do we protect our members from destructive internal dynamics?

Have we had problems in our group with difficult people? How have we dealt with that? Are we happy with the results?

Have we ever *been* the difficult people? Is it possible that we are unintentionally excluding people because of group norms that we don't question?

7. Communications



How do people and groups communicate and stay connected so that they can spread their message, coordinate with allies, and navigate their relationship with the mass media?

One sentence summary: Resistance groups which can't communicate effectively might as well not exist; the mass media can distort our movements in predictable ways; there are many options for effective communication both aboveground and underground.

Resistance and the Mass Media [p. 357]

How important is mass media coverage for our movement's success?

If it's important, what kind of coverage do we want right now? (*E.g., informative coverage for the public, coverage emphasizing the urgency of our issues, coverage showing how powerful our movement is, etc.*) What kind of coverage might we want in the future?

What frames have been used in coverage of our movement in the past? What frames are being used right now? Are there any frames that we would find favourable?

How does the mass media coverage of our movement affect who we can recruit?

How does it affect the tactics we choose?

Communication for Radicals [p. 369]

What are some really effective examples of communications work in our movement (or allied movements)? What is so good about these? Can we apply the same principles in our own communication?

Consider the suggestions on communications for radicals:

- Understand your goal.
- Know your audience; converse in terms that resonate with them.
- Make it personal.
- Be specific, concise, direct. Then repeat.
- Engage your audience with emotional and visual appeal.
- Build trust and credibility.
- Set your own frames; don't argue on the adversary's terms.
- Mobilize for action.
- Measure success.

Which of these are we good at already? Which have the most potential for improvement?

Exercise: Consider a specific campaign or action that we are planning; which of these factors will be most important in the communications for that campaign or action?

Is there anything we could adjust in our plan that would enhance our communications potential without weakening the action?

Is anyone in our group specifically tasked with communications? Do we have a communications plan or strategy to maximize or effectiveness and to guide our actions?

Practical Outreach and the Media [p. 381]

What specific *audiences* do we want to reach?

What specific *messages* do we want to communicate to those audiences?

What do we want those audiences to *do* as a result of those messages?

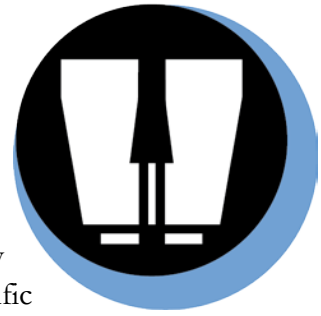
What kind of feedback do we need from those audience; what kind of conversation do we want to have?

What communications channels are a good match for us? Which do we need to develop?

How Underground Groups Communicate [p. 397]

Exercise: Imagine that we were threatened by the emergence of secret police, and had to communicate secretly and securely with other groups and allies. How would we do that? If we had a month's warning, what would we need to put in place to make that easier? Should we go ahead and do that now?

8. Intelligence & Recon



How do organizations gather the intelligence and information they need to make smart decisions and understand their adversary's weak points?

One sentence summary: Good intelligence allows small groups with few resources to defeat larger opponents; resistance movements have specific intelligence needs and ample sources for good information.

The Intelligence Cycle [p. 409]

What sorts of things do we need to know about our opponents in order to *achieve surprise*, to do something effective that our opponents would not expect or anticipate?

What do we need to know to *avoid surprise* so that our opponents are less able to do things that we don't expect or anticipate?

Do we have any specific people in our group tasked with intelligence? Do we need to task some people with that role? Do we need to enlist the help of people outside our group or organization (e.g., journalists, researchers, community members) to help?

Note: All resistance groups gather intelligence, even if they don't think of it as gathering intelligence (but perhaps only as watching the news or talking to other people). Gathering intelligence in an intentional way, with purpose, allows groups to collect information in a way that produces a more complete, unbiased, and actionable picture.

Who are the decision-makers tasked with guiding our intelligence process? Is time set aside regularly to prioritize intelligence goals and assess results?

Direction and Goals: What do we need to know to win? (*This is the key question.*) [p. 414]

Do we need information primarily about specific people? About infrastructure? About points of intervention and leverage within a corporation or a government? About an industrial or technological process? About land or geography? All of these things? (*Note: There is a list of intelligence research questions in a sidebar that you can refer to in the book.*)

If you have specific intelligence goals and sub-goals, feel free to write them down separately, because they may have different sources.

At what level—strategic, operational, or tactical—do we have the greatest intelligence needs? At what level do we have the greatest intelligence capacity?

Consider some of the other questions in this chapter from a strategic perspective; then ask them again from a tactical perspective. Would our answers be different?

Collection: Where can we find that information? [p. 415]

What sources do we already have? What sources do we need to develop or explore further?

Reminder: Potential intelligence sources for resistance movements include human sources, reconnaissance and scouting, open sources, allies, maps, government or private registries and databases, espionage and social engineering.

Analyzing Intelligence: What information is most important, timely, and accurate? [p. 428]

How can we rank, sort, and prioritize the information we have in a way that will make it easier to handle or share?

What kind of implicit biases do we have in our group or movement? (Can we get an outside perspective on this question?) How can we minimize the impact this bias will have on our intelligence analysis?

Intelligence Packaging and Products: *How can we package and share this intelligence?* [p. 430]

Who do we plan to share this intelligence with? (E.g., the general public, our immediate group, other people in our movement, combatants, etc.)

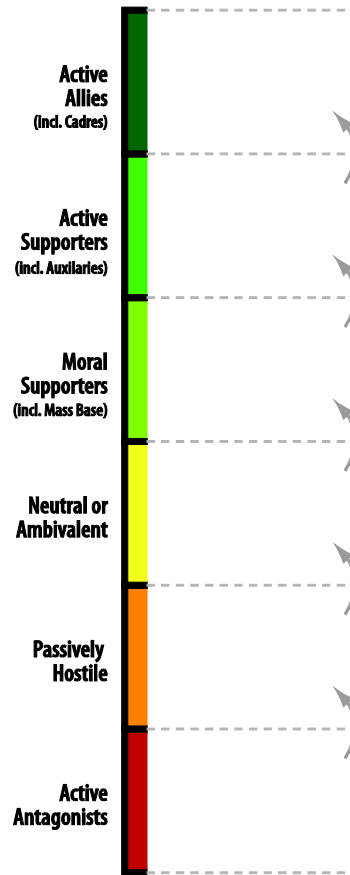
What intelligence products would be most useful for our group? **Exercise:** Write a “wish list” of the kinds of intelligence that would help us maximize our work.

Remember: Intelligence products can include warnings, general intelligence briefings, updates, and situation maps, social and political spectrum analysis, target lists, target profiles and reconnaissance, new tools and tactics, handbooks for struggle, and forecasts and predictions.

Next, prioritize these products? Which are more urgent and important? What immediate steps can we take to obtain or develop those products?

Exercise: Create a social and political spectrum on analysis for your group or an issue you are working on. Rank other groups, organizations, and institutions by their level of support and opposition.

For the next step, ask what actions could move these people higher on the spectrum. What would make supportive groups more positive and active collaborators with you? What would move people who are neutral or disinterested to action? And what could help neutralize the opposition?



9. Counterintelligence & Repression



How do resistance movements hamper their opponent's attempts to gather information about them, and how they cope with attacks on their movement through secret disruption or overt repression?

One sentence summary: Every effective movement will face repression—often concealed—and if we understand that repression we can withstand or counter it.

Which of the seven repressive patterns have we observed in our own groups and movements? Which have we observed in allied groups and movements?

Which of the seven repressive patterns are most active now, and most relevant to the work we are doing?

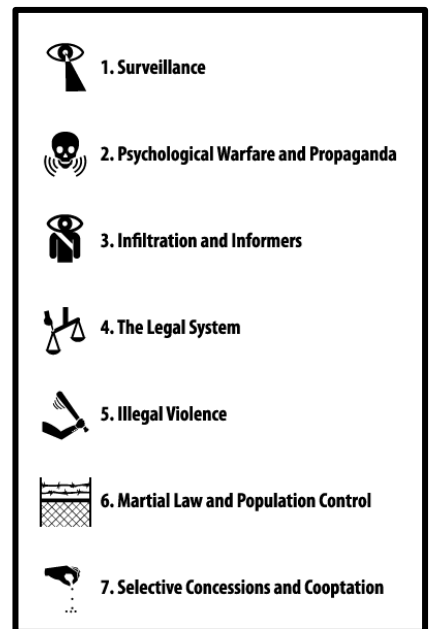
Which of these repressive patterns can we expect to become more pronounced or more relevant to our movement in the short-term future? What about the long-term?

Which forms of repression is our group most insulated from? (Perhaps because of where we live, because of the kind of work we do, because of our race, class, or other privileges?)

Exercise: Imagine you are a fascist or the head of a secret police agency, what would you do to attack or disrupt your group's movement?

Which forms of repression is our group or movement most susceptible to? What can we do to make our group or movement stronger in that respect?

Which forms of repression is our group strongest against now, or most able to resist? Can we share that strength with other parts of our movement, to make the whole more effective?



How has the threat of different kinds of repression changed our movements? How happy are we about those changes? Is there a way we could respond better?

For example: Surveillance and infiltrators don't just gather information; they are meant to make us paranoid and scare us away from collaborating with others. Is that sort of thing happening? Is our response to repression creating dysfunction? On the other hand, overt repression can sometimes cause people to strengthen their mutual aid and solidarity.

Repression in general is meant to divide movements into smaller, more isolated, and more easily defeated fragments. With these patterns of repression in mind, what are the **immediate next steps** we can take to counter divide-and-rule, to strength our movement as a whole, and to prevent or reverse fragmentation?

Selective concessions and co-optation are some of the most difficult and complex forms of repression to respond to; have we had to deal with that in the past?

How can our movement develop shared, deep, and radical analysis of what success looks like?

Is anyone in your group or movement tasked with active counterintelligence? Should there be? What would that look like?

10. Logistics & Fundraising



How do groups raise money, how they support themselves, and how they organize the fundamental logistics that underpin any long-term struggle?

One sentence summary: “Amateurs study strategy, professionals study logistics”; we must ensure our movements are adequately supplied and funded if our tactics and strategy are to accomplish anything; some movements ignore logistics in favour of flashy action and suffer the consequences.

What sources of funding are available to us?

How will pursuing those funds change us as an organization? Will pursuing each source make us more or less like the group we aspire to be? Will it let us spend more or less time doing the work that we want to do?

Has our group or movement been affected by the Non-Profit Industrial Complex? [p. 489]

How can we reduce our overhead costs (and increase our independence)?

Do we have people specifically tasked with fundraising or logistics? Should we?

Do we need more funding to do a better job at our core work? Is funding a limiting factor for us? (*See also the Law of the Minimum in Chapter 12, p. 585.*)

If the answer is yes, what immediate steps can we take to get better at fundraising?

Exercise: Imagine our country were taken over by Fascists tomorrow. How would we fund our movement? How would we provide supplies to ourselves and to action groups?

11. Actions & Tactics



How do movements take effective action and choose tactics?

One sentence summary: Action is the ultimate purpose of a resistance movement; effective action requires the supporting capacities described in previous chapters, combined with good strategy, planning, and target selection.

Consider the tactical principles discussed. [p. 530] Which have we used?

Which have we *seen* used?

Which have we *not* used? Is that because they are not a great match for our movement, or because we need to develop our capacity or try new things?

How do we obtain leverage with our movement? How do we generate and apply political force?

Do we currently use direct action? If so, for what reasons? [p. 532]

If not, is this a missed opportunity we should consider?

What kinds of operations do we tend to focus on: decisive, shaping, or sustaining? [p. 531]

Does our group conduct each of these in good proportion, or do we tend to specialize on one?

Does our movement have enough of each of type of operation, in proportion? Or is something missing, and if so, what do we do about that?

What kind of targets do we mostly focus on in our group? (Or, if we dislike the word “target”, what *points of intervention* or change do we focus on?)

Consider the target selection criteria discussed in this chapter; have we used these criteria in the past? [p. 540] What are some of the most promising targets for our movement, given these criteria?

Are we part of a **cathedral-type** organization or a **bazaar-type** movement? [p. 543]

Reminder: Cathedral-type actions are larger, centrally planned, more sophisticated, and less frequent. Bazaar-type actions are smaller, decentralized, simple, and more frequent or numerous.

If our organization is **cathedral-type**, are we effective enough to compensate for the short-comings of that kind of organization, such as reduced agility and longer action-planning times? (*Also see the Groups & Organization chapter for further discussion and questions.*)

If we are part of **bazaar-type** movement, what steps can we take to maximize our collective impact in concert with other groups in the movement?

Examples: Do we make sure that all of our actions are publicized so that other people can learn from them and imitate them? Do we keep our actions as simple and replicable as possible? Do we make sure to monitor actions by allies and promote them to our local community and supporters? Do we ever release communiques analyzing or debriefing our group's actions, how they are carried out, and how they could be improved? Do we share materials online, or information about other tools we use? Do we try to increase our operational tempo so that actions can happen more frequently with incremental improvements? Do we try to maximize the effect of our small actions by coordinating our targets (e.g., one major corporation) or timing (e.g., days of action, immediate responses to major events)?

Do we set aside time after each action to debrief and evaluate our success and lessons learned?

See also the specific "planning an action" and action debrief questions in the book chapter.

12. Campaigns & Strategy



What principles guide successful strategy and allow movements to integrate the different capacities above?

One sentence summary: Strategy is how movements use what they have to get what they want; to succeed they must build winning campaigns, find allies, develop capacity, and learn how to devise and improvise strategy.

Anatomy of a Campaign [p. 583]

What capacities are needed for the kinds of action we want to take?

Do we have *all* of capacities listed? Do we *need* all of these capacities in our group or organization, or can some of them be taken on by allies in our movement? (*For example, most NGOs may not see active counterintelligence as a priority.*)

In which capacities are we strongest compared to our needs? How can we use that to our advantage? Do those strengths suggest specific actions we could pursue?

In which capacities are we weakest compared to our needs? (See Law of the Minimum, p. 585) Is that resulting in wasted effort?

In the immediate or short term, how can we work around those weak capacities?

Examples: Can we work on our campaign with complementary organizations? Can we ask for temporary help from an expert in one of those areas?

In the medium or long term, how can we develop those weak capacities to be stronger?

Examples: Training and skills development, recruitment, resource allocation.

What are some intermediate steps to our ultimate goals?

Is local gradualism a strategic trajectory that could work for us? [p. 592] Why or why not?

Strategic Capacity [p. 623]

Do we set aside time regularly to talk about strategy, long-term visioning, and strategic planning?

Does our group have the key elements of strategic capacity? Can our strategic capacity be improved?

(Remember: those key elements are strong motivation, salient knowledge, heuristic processes, diverse leadership, and good organization.)

What are the practical next steps we could take to increase our strategic capacity?

*For example: **Heuristic processes**—we could set aside group time every two weeks to discuss a historical movement or group, and the strategies or tactics they used. **Diverse leadership**—we could recruit more members with ties to groups we want to organize with; hold leadership trainings to help bring some existing members into decision-making roles; ask ourselves and our allies whether we are creating unintended ideological or cultural barriers that make our leadership less diverse than it should be. **Good organization**—we could keep to our meeting agendas more rigorously, and make sure to set aside separate longer times for strategic planning.*

Four-part strategic planning [p. 629]

What is our ultimate goal in this group?

Try going through each step in the following:

1. What are your primary goals?

Make a short list.

2. What strategies and intermediate campaigns (or operations) are needed to achieve those goals?

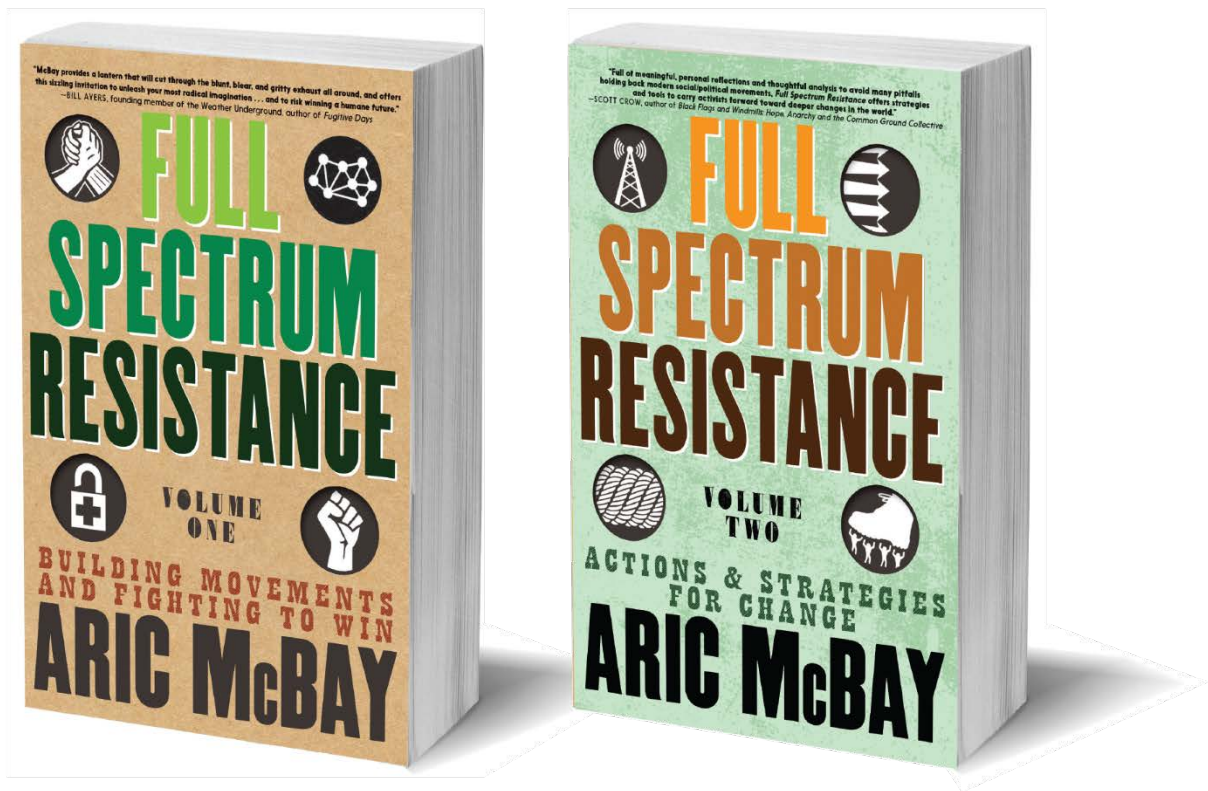
List strategies or intermediate campaigns for each of the goals you identified. It's fine for some of these strategies or campaigns to overlap. Also list decisive, shaping, and supporting operations for each campaign.

3. What tactics can you employ to advance these strategies?

You can brainstorm tactics that have worked so far as well as new tactics you want to try.

4. What are the capacities and alliances you must cultivate to succeed?

Use discussion questions from other chapters, and consider the political landscape analysis.



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