



Image Description for Cover: three high quality masks (N95, KN95, KF94) in a row which have the zine's title on them. This zine is called *Resisting Mask Bans*. To the left of the masks is a heart with anti-fascist arrows. On the top right is a star with a rainbow trail. On the bottom right is a smiling masked person emoji surrounded by hearts.

Resisting Mask Bans

Most COVID cautious crews have relied on one tactic besides distributing masks to encourage their usage: sharing COVID facts. Over two years have passed since most people stopped masking. Those same two years had numerous viral Instagram and Tik Tok posts made about the true danger of COVID. Your friends have viewed these same facts multiple times on your instagram story which encouraged them to wear a mask in public. Yet the majority of them are still not masking, along with most of society. Formations like the CDC is lying about COVID being only dangerous for disabled people. Most “regular” people also recognize that COVID is at least dangerous for the disabled population. These “regular” people still don't mask. Their actions speak that they don't care about disabled people.

Two years have gone by since the “great unmasking” and the state is now testing out mask bans. Efforts to ban masks would probably have not been attempted or would had carried a higher social consequence for the state if more people listened to legit COVID facts and masked up. But most people are not masking right now and not enough have budged their behavior after absorbing proper information on the virus. It is time to reconsider tactics on spreading COVID cautiousness to resist the deaths that these mask bans will cause.

Still, there is a place for sharing legit facts on COVID. A noteworthy amount of COVID cautious people are still masking due to being exposed to proper information. There are also people who will wear masks if their educated on how dangerous COVID actually is. Numerous people probably would mask up again too if masks are easily accessible for them. However, these tactics will be much stronger if they existed in a lush ecosystem of many different approaches toward spreading COVID cautiousness. The social

movements in recent times which have carried the deepest impact utilized a **diversity of tactics**, meaning that different approaches toward propelling the movement forward are respected no matter how soft or militant each tactic is. Movements that embrace a diversity of tactics made space for “chiller” actions like spreading information and “aggressive” approaches like directly confronting state entities, recognizing that each role has a place within the struggle. Participants of the COVID cautious movement should consider embracing a diversity of tactics, because the situation is that serious.

COVID cautious people have to recognize also that this period of mass COVID denial is more than a public health crisis. They should reflect on how so many white people have refused to mask throughout the pandemic, and all the white folks that won't mask after seeing many “please wear a mask” posts on their instagram story feed. Since it is documented that COVID cautious people were at the free Palestine college encampments handing out COVID facts and masks, it should be considered why so many participants who masked at the camps were unmasked in their 2024 college graduation ceremonies and outside camp generally. Same should be reflected on why most people don't mask despite have some idea that COVID is very dangerous for disabled people. The public health framework for addressing COVID is perhaps not providing an accurate picture on the root of the mass denial. Actions done by the state with support of the broader colonial civil society point to COVID denial being rooted in an ableism that is both racist and patriarchal. **Since ableism is a form of oppression, the framework of fighting COVID denial as a resistance struggle must be considered.** Those who approach COVID denial by taking on a path of resistance should at the very least be supported like those who take on the public health approach.

The following examples about struggles that embrace a diversity of tactics are all anti-colonial resistance movements. They include Stop Cop City (specifically on stolen Muscogee Creek land aka “Atlanta, Georgia”), the Wet'suwet'en struggle against both the Coastal

Gaslink Pipeline and the Canadian state, as well Operation Al-Aqsa Flood in Palestine. All three struggles are currently ongoing and are fighting against white supremacist forces. These examples are relevant because COVID has been especially deadly for disabled BIPOC marginalized genders (maGes). Resources for surviving the virus are harder to acquire in the Black neighborhoods, the reservations and Indigenous neighborhoods, and the barrios. Those places also are both often poor in air quality and environmentally toxic, due to racist urban planning and/or resource extraction occurring within those areas such as oil drilling. The medical system is racist, and BIPOC in general are treated badly by doctors. Lower medical treatment quality though is reserved for disabled BIPOC maGes. It is also hard to secure an income that can allow for more isolation if you are altogether not white, not abled bodied, and are not cis. These factors are why Black and Indigenous people are having the highest death rates from COVID. Lets also acknowledge that approaching COVID denial as a resistance struggle is not new. Numerous prison revolts took place in response to murderous COVID policies in 2020. Anti-maskers back when they were mainly white fascists often experienced counter-violence by the people they oppressed. The context which COVID denial is fought as a resistance struggle has been in anti-colonial revolt, specifically leading up and during the George Floyd rebellion. This is notable as mask bans will for sure be prioritizing repression upon Black and Brown people. To divorce the struggle against ableism from anti-colonial resistance will mean a doomed battle against the mask bans.

Disclaimer: not every tactic described in these following struggles are endorsed by the writers of this piece, nor are they suggested as the tactics for COVID Cautious people to use against the mask bans. These descriptions are written to demonstrate the range of approaches that a movement which embrace a diversity of tactics can nourish toward positive results.

Stop Cop City on occupied Muscogee Creek land.

Social tensions grew during the early period of pandemic where millions were in quarantine. Hunger strikes in Amerikkkan prisons began in mid March 2020 because prison officials murdered incarcerated people through neglecting COVID safety. White supremacists were rejecting mask mandates everywhere as the vanguard against mask usage. Some prisons would have uprisings against the cops as their refusal to both mask and practice COVID safer measures became too oppressive for numerous prisoners. In a short time after these prison uprisings begun people outside the prison walls were protesting the police for murdering Black people. Ahmaud Arbery's death sparked outrage especially in so-called "Georgia", causing people to protest his murder by "civilian" fascists. Fury escalated and spread especially when George Floyd's death was retaliated against with the destruction of cop cars, looting, and the burning of the 3rd precinct in so-called "Minneapolis". Parts of occupied Muscogee Creek land called "Atlanta, Georgia" would become a hot bed of this extended insurrection. Cop cars were destroyed there too, stores were rightly looted, and major media companies like CNN got their headquarters smashed up due to them airing anti-Black narratives constantly. The attempted co-optation of the insurrection by instagram influencer activists during June 2020 would fail as a Wendy's was burned because workers called the cops on Rayshard Brooks, causing him to be lynched by the police. Although people who burned the Wendy's (allegedly including his girlfriend) were arrested due to social media posters snitching on them, an occupation formed on top the smoldering remains of the property which lasted from June 12th to July 14th 2020. Creation and maintenance of this cop-free zone would lay a major precedent for tactics that would later be used against the cops in "Atlanta".

A cop city for "Atlanta" police to develop urban warfare skills is being built as a definitive strategy to repress future insurrections throughout Amerikkka. Yet this energy developed from the George Floyd rebellion in "Atlanta" has been channeled into the

resistance effort against cop city since 2021. There already are numerous pieces that share the narrative around this struggle. What will be described though are its range of tactics.

People have been resisting cop city by flooding city council meetings with public comments. People also have been doing non-combative protests that involve parading with signs and chants. There also has been occupations developed on and around the site of cop city where people used the space to carry out attacks against the construction site. Equipment for developing cop city has been commonly sabotaged through various means. The shops of contractors for cop city had often faced destruction on their property, ranging from window smashing to arson. Cultural events such as bike rides against cop city and concerts in the forest would also frequently take place. The diversity of tactics practiced by the movement were especially apparent as an anti cop city music festival happened while simultaneously a crowd of militants destroyed the construction site for cop city in March 2023. Multitudes of tactics to stop the construction are still taking place, and this diversity is actively encouraged by the movement instead of it facing repression by those who desire only “tamer tactics”. **The fruits born from the Stop Cop City effort accepting tactical diversity is a cop city which still has not been built yet and is far behind its deadline.** Other results have emerged from this resistance such as efforts arising against other police facilities being built across Amerikkka. However, the embrace for diversity of tactics have literally prevented cop city from being completed on occupied Mucogee Creek land.

Wet’suwet’en Struggle Against the Pipelines

A definitive strategy of colonialism is land seizure through extractivist projects, which are capitalist efforts aimed to destroy the land in order to extract usually one specific resource like oil or coal. They break collective land arrangements, displace people from the land, and allow a resource to be gathered for profit. Extractivism is a common approach for imposing colonial domination.

In so-called “British Columbia” of Klanada **there is an 8500 square mile territory ran by the Wet’suwet’en people that has never been ceded to Klanada. No formal treaties were signed to compromise or give up land ownership to the colonizers.** Yet three different pipelines were attempted to be built on the territory that would pollute the land and make reliance on the land much more difficult for Wet’suwet’en people. Resistance efforts against these pipelines began in 2009 with a checkpoint being built on an entrance to the territory so that pipeline workers were prevented entry. Cabins were built in the slated path for these pipelines one year later to not only prevent extractivism but also to assert sovereignty over the land as Wet’suwet’en people. More infrastructure was developed by Wet’suwet’en and accomplice land defenders including a healing center to nourish Wet’suwet’en culture, to cook meals made with ingredients gathered from the land, and to conduct treatment locally. Barricades and action camps were also formed to stop both pipeline workers and cops from invading the territory. Large scale invasions by the state of Klanada would often cause widespread solidarity actions. One of the most significant periods for solidarity however was a series of rail blockades that occurred between 2019 and 2020 which placed a notable dent on Klanada’s economy. The resistance effort also utilized more “conventional” tactics such as using the court system to get their way, disrupting politicians, and organizing non-combative demonstrations as a show of stance. Sabotage to the pipeline and pipeline construction equipment also have taken place. **The Wet’suwet’en resistance movement delayed construction for the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline by over 10 years, prevented two other pipelines from being built so far, and has strengthened control of their land in the face of colonial oppression.** The movement is not over as the Wet’suwet’en effort to stop the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline and maintain land sovereignty is ongoing.

Operation Al-Aqsa Flood

Palestinian resistance has a long lineage, with anti-colonial tactics beginning to solidify during the 1936-1939 revolt against both British and Zionist colonialism. The 1930s revolt is foundational in solidifying the colonial dynamics throughout Palestine, which involved an exterminationist approach against Palestinian presence by Zionist forces. Gunpowder being the main language the Zionist spoke upon Palestinians would shape the anti-colonial resistance.

The history of Palestinian resistance is long and varied, something other writers have done a better job covering. The more immediate history that led to Al-Aqsa Flood is necessary to address here though. From 2018-2019 in Gaza there were a series of marches by Palestinians to the Gaza border to protest the prison conditions of the Gaza strip and the Zionist blockade over Gaza. These largely peaceful demonstrations were met with gunpowder by the Zionist forces with 223 Palestinians slain and 9,204 Palestinians injured. The march had little impact on conditions in Gaza. A revolt across Palestine then emerged in 2021 against encroachment toward the Al-Aqsa mosque and Zionist eviction efforts on the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Al-Quds/Jerusalem. 2021 sparked a new generation of militancy among Palestinian youth, giving initiative by 2022 for armed efforts in the West Bank to grow on a large scale for the first time since the Second Intifada. Palestinian armed groups of the West Bank like the Lion's Den in Nablus and Jenin Brigade in Jenin would set the precedent for the way Al-Aqsa Flood moved: armed attacks against the Israeli Occupational Forces, treating settlers as a military force rather than as "civilians", defending Palestinian neighborhoods from Zionist incursions, and military unity among the many Palestinian resistance factions that exist. Growing energy by the West Bank resistance fueled for militants in Gaza to attack Israel with Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. Since October 7th 2023 to the present, most Palestinian resistance forces label their attacks as part of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood to define it as an ongoing intifada for liberating Palestine.

Yet gunpowder is not the only tool employed by the Palestinian resistance with the ongoing Al-Aqsa Flood. Non-combative demonstrations are still used to show support for the resistance movement. Graffiti is utilized to boost morale and stake territory. Martyrs often have public funerals to communalize grief and encourage vengeance. Stones, molotovs, and barricades are regularly used against the Israeli Occupational Forces. Prisoners often fight through hunger strikes to maintain resistance even behind bars. Media as a tool against Zionist narratives is utilized both to demonstrate globally how genocide is happening in Gaza and concurrently how Al-Aqsa Flood is ongoing with resisting the genocide. Palestinian media serving as counter-media to Zionist domination is a definitive reason why the 2024 global student Intifada occurred, since it unveiled the true scope of genocide in Gaza. Although the genocide and Al-Aqsa Flood is not over, **the diverse tactics used by the Palestinian resistance effort have successfully prevented Israel from controlling all of Gaza 9 months into the war and has forced drastic actions from Israel such as causing the state's war cabinet to dissolve.** The Israeli Occupational Forces is one of the most technologically advanced armies in the world, and despite its extermination campaign against Palestinians it has failed to prevent the ongoing fracturing of Israeli society in the face of Al-Aqsa flood.

Resisting Ableism

All 3 struggles listed definitely have some flaws. The Stop Cop City effort has the largest settler contingent out of the 3 movements listed. Much of the settler formations who oppose cop city have invested more of their energy into attracting white progressives as opposed to supporting resistance by the dispossessed Black masses on occupied Muscogee Creek land. Too much capacity by these formations was spent on self indulgence instead of centering the energy for Black revolt which even allowed Stop Cop City to exist. There is largely a refusal from these white-lead contingents to treat the settler civil society on the

land as an enemy just like the state, a population that mostly supports the police and cop cities while displacing Black residents via gentrification. Wet'suwet'en struggle is hindered by certain leadership forces. Because the question regarding diversity of tactics was not as much addressed in comparison with the other struggles discussed here, spicier tactics were more controversial in the Wet'suwet'en sovereignty effort. The current Palestinian resistance is enacting meaningful damage to Israel's capacity for violence via their militant tactics and by treating Israeli society as an enemy due to its settler nature. Groups like Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad are waging a justified struggle against Israel and are a main reason why Israel is both weakening and failing to control the Gaza strip. However, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad are part of the right wing of the Palestinian national liberation struggle. They are also pushing for a statist and patriarchal society that undermines the autonomy for Palestinian maGes. A feminist wing does exist in the Palestinian resistance, but it is largely clandestine due to the patriarchal domination of the movement currently. Despite their imperfections, **the usage with diversity of tactics for all 3 movements have allowed them to wage a long term struggle that either significantly slowed down gains for the oppressor or prevented the oppressor from achieving its goals.**

The COVID Cautious public health effort has only been losing and losing more. Less people are masking each COVID wave despite more mask blocs existing now than any point since masks stopped being easily accessible in 2022. The big effort to get people to mask at pro Palestine protests have not translated into participants masking broadly in public. People were taught COVID facts at Palestine solidarity encampments and most of them don't mask in public still. The largely maskless "peoples graduation" ceremonies held on college campuses with the more active encampments damningly shows this truth. The numerous grassroots COVID public service announcements have not made a dent with increasing mask usage. There is a deeper problem than misinformation going on, and relying on just 1-2 tactics is not helping prevent the compounding deaths caused by mass

COVID denial. Its clear from the other 3 struggles described here that defeat is not inevitable, but that tactical dogmatism makes defeat a viable outcome.

We should consider who COVID denial is killing and hurting the most. At least 70% of disabled people in Amerikkka are outside the formal labor force. Most of them are part of the criminalized-survivalist class: a class of people whose existence is defined by both surviving through stigmatized means and by state repression. These stigmatized means include theft, reselling stolen items, sex work, drug dealing, begging, being on forms of welfare like paid disability, laboring as a prisoner, and other stigmatized methods for acquiring resources to survive. Disabled BIPOC maGes, especially if they have darker skin, are usually forced into this class because “legally sanctioned” forms of income are often denied to them. They tend to also come from nuclear or “unconventional” families that have less resources than the average white family. These nuclear families tend to withhold resources from its maGe members. Patriarchal and racist attitudes prevalent among medical and social workers makes disability income much harder for disabled BIPOC to access, forcing them to live through more criminalized means than the average white disabled person. Decent healthcare and avoiding COVID exposure as a disabled BIPOC maGe of the criminalized-survivalist class is harshly difficult to obtain, especially when incarcerated and after jail time. The necessity of stigmatized survival and the racist nature of policing bring disabled BIPOC maGes of this class into the crosshairs of state violence. Disabled BIPOC maGes of the criminalized-survivalist class, especially those with dark skin, will be the main targets for the mask bans and will be at the brunt of its violence.

Mass COVID denial is a genocidal project that is brutalizing disabled BIPOC maGes of the criminalized-survivalist class. It is doing the work of wiping out people who the state and colonial civil society deem as unfit for wage labor, unfit to be exploited to make a boss richer. It is also wiping out people who are considered outside of humanity according to this white supremacist world. It is a counter-insurgent measure against anti-colonial revolt in

recent times and against growing challenges to cishetero patriarchy, since disabled BIPOC maGes often partake in these uprisings as militants. Those who are altogether unfit for labor, are deemed not human, and refuse assimilation into patriarchy are considered enemies of this colonial world.

It must be acknowledged that COVID is merely just a definitive way disabled people are being killed in this era where ableism is escalating. Racialized and patriarchal ableist violence is also being carried out via the intensification of police capacity, anti-homeless measures by both the state and much of settler civil society, and the push against bodily autonomy. However, it is the settler civil society that is carrying out most of the killings through this period of mass COVID denial. The refusal to mask has been a white supremacist project from the start and has always been mainly supported by settlers. There are disabled BIPOC who don't mask just like there are Palestinians who support Israel and Wet'suwet'en who support the pipelines; however, this does not negate how it has been primarily Black and Indigenous people who mask and primarily disabled BIPOC who are being killed off right now. Mass COVID denial is being lead by the state and the most reactionary wings of settler society, and it has support throughout the settler masses and is being carried out through them. There is a reason why some mask bans are deputizing anti-maskers to coerce others to unmask. Their actions achieve the goal of killing off disabled BIPOC maGes, people who don't deserve to die. Those who learn COVID facts and refuse to mask despite being able to wear one are not misinformed sheep. Their actions are killing a lot of people and they have to be stopped.

The "radical" public health model for spreading COVID Cautiousness is failing to meet this historic moment. We should stop making ACT UP a main piece of inspiration, for it centered white people and failed to address how HIV has been weaponized globally to oppress Black MaGes. HIV's use to carry out anti-Black patriarchal violence especially in places like South Africa speak to how segments of the civil society exploit viruses to carry

out oppression just like the state. Same has been true historically with “civilian” white people weaponizing Smallpox against Indigenous people for colonization. **We should take inspiration from how COVID safety was fought for within over 50 different prisons during 2020, how prisoners used a diversity of tactics to win their demands whether via hunger strikes, suicide threats, collective escape attempts (that usually succeeded in bringing prisoners outside the walls), labor strikes, physical attacks on guards, non-combative protests, arson, and insurrections.** The push for COVID safety was directly intertwined with anti-colonial rebellion rather than either of the two being incorporated only symbolically. There was recognition about oppression going on and that the oppressors will not stop their violence unless they face resistance. We must recognize that 2020 was a year of mass anti-colonial revolt in Amerikkka where anti-maskers were often yelled at and beaten physically by pro-masking people since it was acknowledged how their recklessness on COVID was lethal. These brawls coincided with the revolt and were often directly tied with anti-fascist resistance instead of the two being treated as separate struggles. State repression is not what carried the weight to drive mask usage in 2020. In fact the state often fought against mask use in this period. Many folks even ignored or try to ignore the mask mandates, the state did not even enforce them most of the time. It was the diverse types of backlash against anti-maskers by those who supported masking that drove widespread mask usage in 2020. We have to remember that people did not immediately unmask all at once with the removal of the mask mandates in 2021-2022. **The unmasking became widespread when people realized that they won't get heckled or get their ass beat anymore for refusing to mask up in public.** We can see waste water data and by looking today in the local grocery store how successful the tactical switch from confrontation to polite fact sharing has been at encouraging mask usage and reducing COVID cases.

The COVID Cautious movement needs to embrace diversity of tactics and needs to step up its game. Too many people have shown that their “miseducation on COVID” by the

state is nothing but a thinly veiled excuse to enact ableist violence. It is the same kind of excuse applied to white supremacist and patriarchal violence, to claim that the perpetrators lacked the agency to know better. It's a denial that oppression is also carried out through individuals and collectives, not just systems. Oppression even needs the conscious support of individuals and collectives to exist. If any lesson should be taken from the 2020 COVID prison revolts, it is that oppressors do not stop their violence unless they're fought in some manner. A place is still around for proper education on the pandemic because there are some genuinely mis-informed people. However, there is also a place for those who choose to resist mass COVID denial with force. No matter where you stand on militant tactics, there needs to be a shift in how we approach COVID denial and anti-masking behavior by both the state and settler civil society because they are the ones driving the hundreds of weekly deaths via Short and Long COVID. Our tactical dogmatism is costing lives.

We need to stop the violence before more people die. No time is left to spare. Diversity of tactics have shown it wins shit. Singular tactics only successfully lead to defeat. The COVID cautious effort should directly be part of the anti-colonial struggle because COVID has been weaponized for white supremacist violence just like Smallpox and HIV. It has been the COVID safety fights embedded within anti-colonial struggles such as the 2020 prison revolts where the most effective outcomes were won. It should be noted in a communique for the Stop Cop City movement how that effort consist of a plurality of factions who hate each other. They also have been successful at delaying the cop city for years due to their multiplicity as a diverse array of autonomous groups. When thinking about diversity of tactics there should be encouragement toward the creation of many autonomous cells fighting the racist and patriarchal ableist oppression, just like how a diverse array of maroon communities as autonomous territories and bases for guerrilla action formed to resist anti-Blackness and settler occupation in the colonies. That way no leader controls the movement, and no white people are dominating over autonomous efforts

of Black and Brown people against ableism. Black Liberation Army veteran Russell Maroon Shoatz said on decentralized rebellion against anti-Blackness, referring to it as a Hydra—“a many headed monster whose heads regrew when struck off...Also the largest and longest constellation in the sky, but with no particular bright star.”:

“The Dutch imperialists tried their best to slay the Hydra! They failed. Was it because the Maroons decentralized formations prevented the Dutch from concentrating their superior resources against any one centralized leadership – any bright star? I think so. Have the various bush negroe ethnicities [in Suriname, former Dutch Colony] been able to maintain their autonomy over hundreds of years, against all oppressive forces, through their refusal to allow themselves to be subjected by any broad centralizing forces? I think so again.“

Long Live the Hydra! Intifada Against Ableism Now!

Relevant readings:

First 90 Days of Prisoner Resistance to COVID-19: Report on Events, Data, and Trends by Perilous on perilouschronicle.com.

[https://web.archive.org/web/20210703052038/https://perilouschronicle.com/2020/11/12/covid-prisoner-resistance-first-90-days-full-report/#5-hotspots-of-infection-and-rebellion-](https://web.archive.org/web/20210703052038/https://perilouschronicle.com/2020/11/12/covid-prisoner-resistance-first-90-days-full-report/#5-hotspots-of-infection-and-rebellion)

Decolonize Palestine: <https://decolonizepalestine.com/>

Unis’ot’en (the main website for Wet’suwet’en resistance): <https://unistoten.camp/>

The War In Front Of Us: <https://scenes.noblogs.org/post/2023/06/10/the-war-in-front-of-us/>



Image description: an unmasked person with a caption “you do you”. Above the unmasked person is a red triangle.



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