



# ANARCHIST EXTREMISTS

## Background

- Anarchism is the belief that society should exist absent of “oppressive” governments, laws, police, or any other authority. Anarchist extremists advocate violence in furtherance of this idea, typically focusing on sub-movements such as anti-racism, anti-capitalism, anti-globalism, and environmental extremism.
- Anarchist extremists, or those subscribing to the ideology that condones violence and the use of force, do not have a central leadership and lack organizational hierarchy. These extremists are event-driven and often take advantage of otherwise legal protests to conduct violent counter-protests, destroy public and private property, and attack law enforcement.
- Common attack targets, chosen for their symbols of capitalism and government, include commercial infrastructure and the financial sector. Vandalism and arson are the most common attack types.
- A majority of New Jersey-based anarchist extremists are affiliated with Antifa and focus on issues of racism, immigration, and other perceived social injustices. There are three loosely organized chapters in New Jersey, known as North Jersey Antifa, South Jersey Antifa, and HubCity Antifa based in New Brunswick (Middlesex County).



Anarchist extremist propaganda targeting the alt-right movement

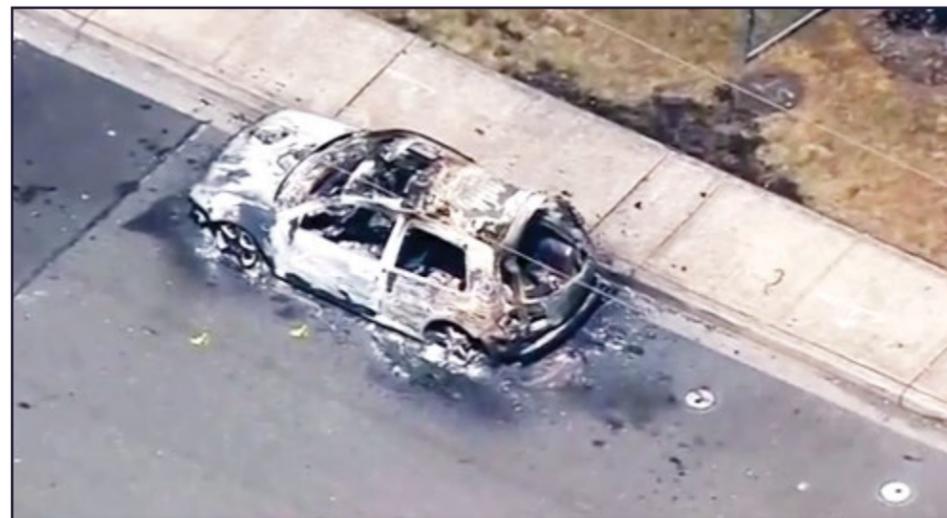


Anarchist extremist slogans found in Princeton (Mercer County) in January 2019

## Threat to New Jersey: Moderate

*In 2020, anarchist extremists will continue to attack government institutions, use violent counter-protest tactics against adversarial groups, and target political figures representing disparate views.* Despite the use of new tactics, anarchist extremists have not conducted an attack garnering favorable attention among the overall movement.

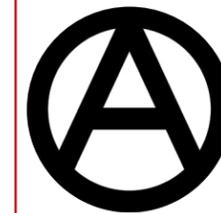
- In July 2019, a self-proclaimed anarchist extremist and anti-fascist (Antifa), Willem Van Spronsen, attempted to firebomb the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility in Tacoma, Washington, while armed with a rifle. He was killed in a confrontation with police. Van Spronsen tossed lit objects at vehicles and buildings, causing one car fire, and unsuccessfully tried to ignite a propane tank in order to disable a fleet of buses used to transport immigrants to the Yakima Air Terminal in Washington for deportation.
- On June 29, 2019, anarchist extremists and Proud Boys members clashed at a rally in Portland, Oregon, forcing law enforcement to declare a civil disturbance and use riot control methods to disperse the crowds. Additionally, anarchist extremists assaulted a journalist videotaping the event, resulting in a head injury. In May, the same journalist claimed he was pepper-sprayed by an Antifa member while recording a fight in Portland.



Firebombed vehicle near the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington

## ANTIFA

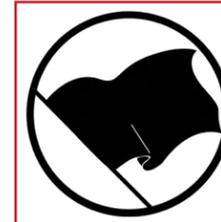
Antifa, or anti-fascists, is a movement that focuses on issues involving racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism, as well as other perceived injustices. The majority of Antifa members do not promote or endorse violence; however, the movement consists of anarchist extremists and other individuals who seek to carry out acts of violence in order to forward their respective agendas.



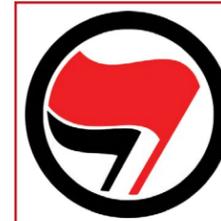
Anarchist extremists use the circle-A as one of their primary symbols. “A” represents “anarchism,” while “O” stands for “order.” Together, the letters mean “society seeks order in anarchy,” which stems from 19th century French literature.



The red flag was one of the first anarchist symbols, used until the 1917 October Revolution in Russia when it became primarily associated with communist ideologies.



Since the late 19th century, anarchist groups have used the black flag as a rejection of the concept of representation or the idea that an institution can adequately represent a group of individuals.



Antifa consists of individuals who adhere to some form of the far-left school of thought, encompassing communists, anarchists, socialist groups, and others. Red and black flags flying together represents coming together against a perceived enemy.

## Additional Resources

[2020 Terrorism Threat Assessment](#)