

**Title:** No Fascist USA!

**Designed by:** Kate Hill and Chris Dragga

### **Facilitator Information:**

Players: Four players. One Facilitator

Time: One hour play time. 1/2 hour for each of warm up and debrief

Required Materials: Four foot-long pieces of yarn in four colors, name tags, a table, tape.

### **Preparation:**

Gather required materials and cut out the character sheets on the last page.

### **To Begin:**

Welcome all players into the space, give them a chance to chat, drink some coffee. When things have settled, introduce the following safety mechanics that will be used in the game. Then, read the **Scenario Setting Text** aloud and go through the **Creating Characters** section. Once players have created their characters, go through **Character Introductions** and cover the rules in **Running the Meeting**. Then, start the game. Once finished, go over the **Debrief**.

### **Safety Mechanics (Read aloud):**

- The Door is Always Open: Players can leave at any time, with no explanation.
- Cut: Say “Cut” loudly if a scene needs to be stopped immediately, such as if a person is in physical danger or the scene has gone to an uncomfortable mental or emotional place. Everyone stops what they are doing and deals with the situation at hand.
- Largo: Say “Largo” to another player if the scene has gotten a bit overwhelming in intensity. If you hear largo, pause, step away from the speaking player, and continue at a lower level.

### **Scenario Setting Text (Read aloud):**

This larp was developed to explore how groups nominally working on the same side often disagree and have to overcome serious ideological and methodological conflicts to work together. When they do, however, they can create a powerful, united effort in which each group plays a role. But there are certain things that are so fundamental to each ideology that they cannot be compromised on. How can you work together while still standing by what you believe?

In this game, you play a representative of one of four movements who have come together in a meeting to plan a counter-action against a group of white supremacists threatening to march on your town. You all have connections with one another, some deep, some more in passing, but your paths have crossed numerous times and you find yourselves pulled together often by more than just politics. What your action looks like and how effective it will be will depend on how well you can cohere as a united front.

This game does use actual activist and political groups, all of which the authors have been involved in to varying degrees. The characters all care deeply about the country and truly believe their ideas are the best for building a strong future. They should be treated with dignity and respect, not as stereotypes. They are also not meant to be representative of the entire movement of which they are part. Though we have had larp designers of color consult with us, it should be noted that the authors of this work are two white people. While we are attempting to capture aspects of each of these groups, we do not claim that the characters here can even attempt to capture the complexity of these movements and their considerations.

## Creating Characters (Read aloud):

As a character you belong to one of four groups. They are the Indivisibles, Antifa, The Council of Churches and Black Lives Matter. Please read over each group's character sheet before you decide who you want to play. Note that either the Black Lives Matter or Indivisible character will be responsible for organizing the meeting. The organizer is responsible for guiding the group through the three main questions they need to answer before the end of the meeting. Once you have selected a character, grab four pieces of the same colored yarn and write your character's name on a name tag.

## Character Introductions:

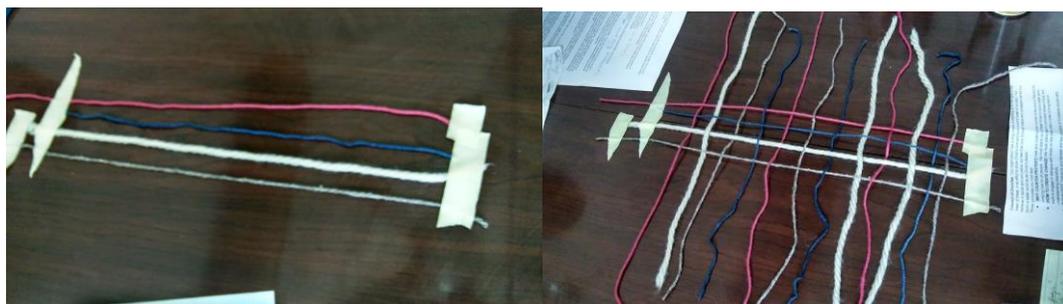
Have the players sit in a circle and introduce themselves. Once everyone has been introduced, have the player leading the meeting turn to the player to their left and state how they have worked together in the past. This can be related to activism but it does not have to be. Be sure to allow for the player on the left to offer their own suggestions and modifications to the initial player's statement. Once the player is done, the player to their left should repeat this with the player to their left; have the players continue until all players have established a connection. The players should then decide whether the Black Lives Matter character or the Indivisibles character is leading the meeting.

## Running the Meeting

The game starts with all players sitting around a table. Have the facilitator go over what is known about the meeting and the rally:

- There are three central organizational questions that must be answered before the counter-protest can proceed.
- They have the room for only one hour.
- The counter-protest takes place in less than a week.
- The White Supremacist group plans on holding a march to a central rally space where there will be speakers.
- Turnout is expected to be large. This has been planned for a long time, and numbers expected range from hundreds to thousands.

Each player starts with four pieces of yarn. To begin the game, each player should introduce themselves and state what they want out of this meeting. Once a player has introduced their character, they should place their first piece of yarn. These pieces will form the warp of the eventual loose weave of fabric the group will create, with the three other pieces each player holds forming the weft, as can be seen below (unfinished on the left, finished on the right):



Once all initial pieces of yarn are laid on the table, the organizer should read the list of three questions that need to be decided before the end of the meeting. The facilitator should keep track of time and

announce when 30, 45, and 55 minutes have passed. Questions should be tackled in the order presented here. However, can go back to a previous question for further discussion after you have initially moved on.

The questions are:

- What form will the protest take? Will it be a rally, a march, a confrontation, or something else?
- What will the tone of the protest be? Angry, family-friendly, joyful, mocking?
- What will the protest need to do in order for you to consider it successful?

Each question should be discussed, and every player should get at least one chance to make their point. Once a player has agreed with another person on the answer to a question, they can weave one strand of yarn in between the four taped pieces of yarn on the table. Pieces of yarn can be removed if conversation shifts and the placing player no longer agree with the direction. The group moves onto the next question once everyone can at least live with the decision, even if it is not ideal, represented by one piece of yarn from each player having been woven together on the table. The same process is repeated for the second question.

On the third question, play works the same way except that at this stage, a player can remove any number of yarn pieces from the table. If the player removes more than just the last piece put down, this indicates they want to revisit an agreement to a previous question. Negotiation on that question needs to start over again. At this stage, a player can also remove all of their yarn, including their first piece, and leave the conversation. If a player decides to exit the conversation, the game ends. Otherwise, the game ends when all pieces of yarn have been woven together on the table, or the hour ends, whichever comes first.

### **Debrief:**

Once the game is over, decide how successful your counterprotest might be. Did all characters come to an agreement on all points and present a strong, united front? Was there enough internal strife that only some points were agreed upon, resulting in a protest that, while possibly effective, came across as a bit muddled and maybe got dangerous? You should discuss these and other matters among yourselves, out of character. Try to come to a consensus, if possible.

### **Characters:**

**The Indivisibles:** These are a coalition of small, grassroots community progressive organizations that developed after the election of 2016. Passionate about enacting political change within the system, they are dedicated to helping the Democratic party retake all levels of government.

Four principles you hold dear:

- **[WHY COUNTER-PROTEST]** White supremacy is at the heart of Trumpism and the root of what is destroying America.
- **[HOW TO CREATE CHANGE]** Working within the current political system is the best way to enact change.
- **[EQUALITY]** You stand for inclusion, tolerance and fairness among all people.
- **[AUTHORITY]** The police and government officials are a flawed but important organization that should be worked with when possible.

What you know about the situation:

- Recent protests in which counter-protesters have turned violent have been used to drive recruitment for white supremacist groups.

**Antifa:** Your organization is dedicated to fighting against fascism, racism, and anti-egalitarianism in a direct and often confrontational way. You exist outside mainstream parties and often bring the fight to the other side.

- [WHY COUNTER-PROTEST] Fascism, in any form, must be resisted by any means necessary.
- [HOW TO CREATE CHANGE] Political solutions invariably come up short; direct action is the only viable means of effecting change.
- [EQUALITY] Radical equality is the only way to achieve a just society.
- [AUTHORITY] We keep us safe.

What you know about the situation:

- The fascist groups have a strong tendency towards violence, often coming with clubs, shields, and even guns.
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**Council of Churches:** Your organization has a long history of standing up for the rights of the least of these, in an effort to show Christ's love and build a world closer to his vision. You believe in social and civil justice, but feel that only through peace and compassion can we truly build a better world as be Christ's people.

- [WHY COUNTER-PROTEST] Hate and violence are counter to the word of God and His undying love for all people. We must stand up to these forces to build a better world.
- [HOW TO CREATE CHANGE] We must stand fast in nonviolent shows of force, and work to engage in dialogue with those on the other side in order to bring them to understanding peacefully.
- [EQUALITY] Tolerance and fairness are key precepts of Christianity and are sadly rarely shown in this world
- [AUTHORITY] The police should not be disobeyed lightly.

What you know about the situation:

- You have elderly congregants and congregants with children who plan to attend the counter-protest.
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**Black Lives Matter:** Your organization was born to directly confront the murder of black people by police. You support an agenda of radical equality for all but are deeply rooted in promoting the value of Black Lives and standing up to patriarchal, white supremacist, colonial culture.

- [WHY COUNTER-PROTEST] White supremacy is what permits the brutality we face daily. Its naked expression cannot go unchallenged.
- [HOW TO CREATE CHANGE] The system is consistently deployed against us, and we won't win by playing by its rules.
- [EQUALITY] The struggle for equality is everything we stand for.
- [AUTHORITY] The police and many people in authority are part of a system of ingrained racism that seeks to end us violently and cannot be trusted.

What you know about the situation:

- Due to past history, there is concern over undue arrest and death of black and POC protesters, so additional precautions may be needed.