

Good people everywhere are fighting back. Because of this, racists, nazis, and those types are always having to find new ways to hide from us, taking on new symbols they don't want you to recognize.

You and your friends need to be aware of these symbols so you can defend your community and fight back.

We've nicknamed these symbols "*rattles*" – like the rattle of a rattlesnake. A warning that something dangerous is around. Hate groups are also a sort of "rattle" themselves, just one loud part of the larger beast of supremacy and empire.

"You see, we like our nazis in uniform. That way we can spot 'em just like *that*."

-Lt. Aldo Raine, "*Inglourious Basterds*"

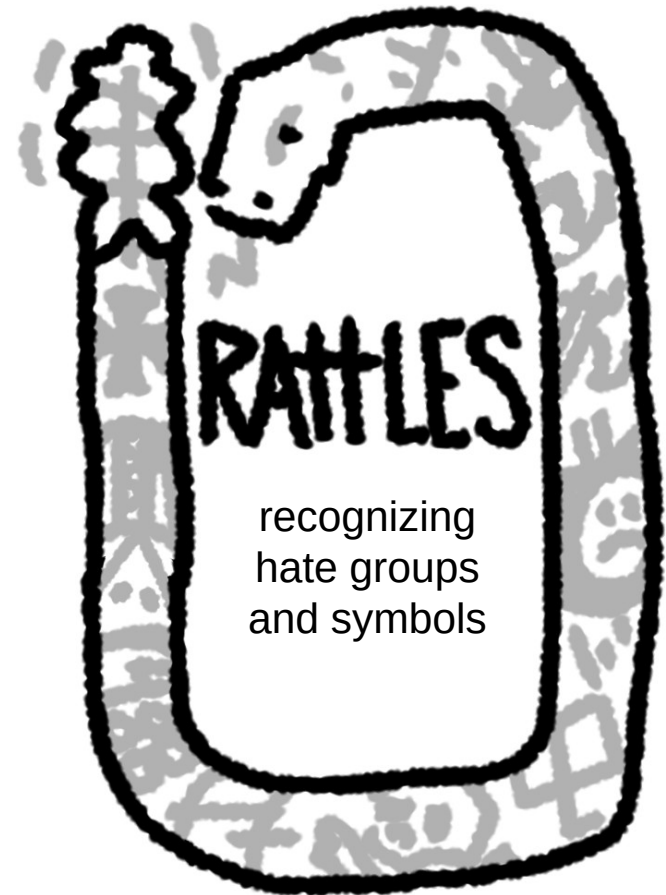
Spotting these symbols in real life can be scary, but your enemy is showing itself: let that give *you* the advantage.



a Foothill Fire zine
foothillfire.noblogs.org

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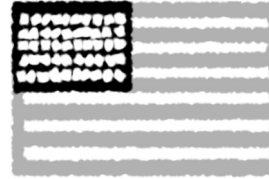
Foothill Fire is an organization of anarchists and communists fighting for a stateless, classless society.



a Foothill Fire zine

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Introduction: the united states of america



The united states of america (flag pictured: fifty white stars on a blue canton on thirteen alternating red and white stripes) is a supremacist colonial empire occupying stolen Indigenous land.

European colonizers came here for profit and murdered Indigenous people to do it. The colonies grew and continued that legacy, committing genocide to occupy this land from sea to shining sea.

Understanding this history is important for anyone trying to identify hate groups here. Without it, you won't understand why patriot front paints stencils that say "not stolen, conquered" – or why patriot front exists at all.

This guide was made to help you recognize hate groups. As you learn more about these groups and the purpose they serve, you might look closer and see they are the *rattle* of a larger beast. You might look closer, see the screaming, blood soaked nazi at the heart of this empire, and realize the whole thing has to come down.

Hate groups very rarely create their own original symbols. Most of these symbols are not original to the groups discussed here, and were stolen and used for hate. Some have active, ongoing efforts to take them back. When in doubt, consider asking someone what the symbol means to them.

This zine has quick summaries of historical events or concepts to hopefully prepare you to recognize supremacist patterns in groups and movements not included here, but these summaries absolutely do not adequately capture those events/concepts.

Rattles: recognizing hate groups and symbols
a Foothill Fire zine

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On July 4th, 1776, the thirteen colonies declared independence from britain, and after five years of fighting, the british surrendered on american terms.

The american revolutionary period gets referenced by a lot of modern day groups, particularly patriot militia types. This imagery can reference support for violent action ("this is our 1776!"), nationalism, patriotism, manifest destiny*, and american exceptionalism, but most of the time it is simply americana imagery worn by people with no conscious engagement with politics.



Fascism sometimes hides itself in this image of "rebellion" to make it seem like an underdog, to gain support, and to sell itself as a "bold new alternative" to current failing structures. More on fascism later. **Manifest Destiny* is the idea that the spread of "the american way of life" by any means necessary is destined by divine plan. "*Deus Vult*" is a latin slogan meaning "God Wills It".

Slavery, The Civil War & Reconstruction Era United States

The early period of european colonization began four hundred years of chattel slavery in what would become the united states. Most victims of enslavement were kidnapped African people forced to work land in the american south.

Racists might use chains or shackles to reference enslavement, whips to reference the torture of enslaved people, cotton picking to reference the labor enslaved people were forced to do, or may reference the thirteenth amendment to the constitution, which limits slavery to a criminal punishment.

Fights over whether slavery would be allowed to expand in the united states boiled up into the American Civil War (1861-1865). With chattel slavery ending in the union ("the north"), a total of eleven states left to form the confederacy ("the south"), which fought to maintain slavery.

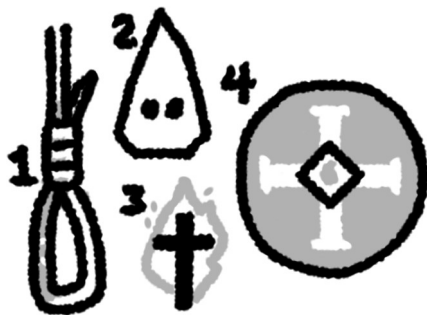
The so-called "**rebel flag**," (pictured; white stars on dark blue stripes on a red background) is a postwar version of the **confederate** battle flag that was created at the same time as the "**lost cause**" myth. This myth claims that confederates were heroes, that the war wasn't about slavery and that slavery "wasn't so bad". While some cry "heritage," it remains a symbol of racism, enslavement, and white supremacy.



After the war came the "reconstruction". Slavery became limited to prisons and Black people won important social and political goals. Still, the economic and social functions of slavery continued, and racists used arson, torture, murder, and the legal system to slow progress and force control over their racial, social, and political enemies.

Lynching is a type of murder committed by a group, usually used to mean racist mob killings of Black people. Racists might reference lynching with **nooses** (1) or references to **hanging**. **Sundown towns** threaten that any nonwhite person found in the area after sunset will be attacked or killed. This is why Placerville is nicknamed "hangtown".

The **Klu Klux Klan** (KKK, "The Klan") is a racist terrorist gang (1865-present). They're particularly known for white robes with **pointed white hoods** (2) and for burning crosses (3). **AKIA** stands for "A Klansman I Am". The **Blood Drop Cross** or the Mystic Insignia of a Klansman (MIOAK) (4) is a droplet of blood centered on a square white cross on a red background.

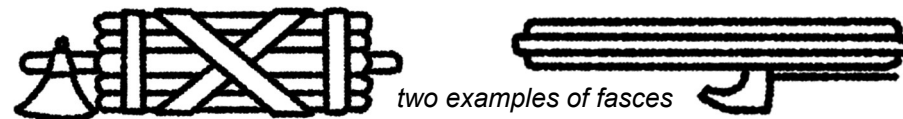


Fascism

Fascism is a far-right ideology characterized by a dictatorial leader, central authority, militarism, forced suppression of opposition, heavy regulation of society and the economy, and a belief in natural social hierarchy - a belief in "natural social hierarchy" usually meaning prejudice around race, sex and gender, ability, political affiliation, ancestry, religion, and sexual preference.

In 1920, local elections in communities across Italy were won by Socialists. The fascists reacted by attacking union organizers and municipal administrators. In August 1922 an anti-fascist general strike began, and the fascists declared they would "defend law and order" against the striking workers. In October the fascist blackshirts marched on Rome and the king granted the dictator Benito Mussolini power, making the coup a success.

Benito Mussolini promised Italy that he would restore the glory of the Roman Empire, and used the ancient Roman symbol of *fasces* (pictured below), which is where fascism gets its name. Fascists often promise to restore a glorious past (whether or not that past exists).



*In Germany, Adolf Hitler began to model the Nazi party after the Italian fascists, failing a coup attempt in 1923. For this Hitler was imprisoned for nine months, using the time to write his book *Mein Kampf*. Hitler lost the 1932 presidential election but Nazis became the largest party in parliament, and in 1933 he made a few deals and was appointed Chancellor.*

Hitler campaigned relentlessly on anti-communist, antisemitic (anti-Jewish), and nationalist rhetoric, using the economic crisis of the Great Depression to criticize existing leadership and promising living space, self-sufficiency, and a return to glory for Germany. Fascists still talk like this today, blaming social groups for systemic problems and giving excuses for taking control that may sound reasonable or helpful.

"Third positioning" is a fascist tactic where they claim to present an alternative outside capitalism or communism - a "third position".

Modern day fascists and neonazis reference Nazi Germany relentlessly. From 1941-1945 Nazi Germany murdered seventeen million civilians, targeting them based on ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, disability, and sexual orientation in a genocide known as the Holocaust. This gets referenced by neonazis pretending it never happened or by neonazis celebrating that it did. By far the largest group of victims in the Holocaust were Jewish people, with six million having been murdered. Neonazis make references to this, like wearing patches that say "6MWE" ("six million wasn't enough").



In 1928, the nazis put up posters of hitler with tape over his mouth, claiming he was being "censored," a bad faith argument made to play the victim and suppress opposition. Fascists still use this today: they cry "free speech," or my favorite: "so much for the tolerant left".

Fighting nazis is being intolerant... intolerant of nazis, which is a good thing. It's the **paradox of tolerance**: if a society's practice of tolerance is inclusive of the intolerant, then intolerance will ultimately dominate, eliminating the tolerant and the practice of tolerance with them. Basically, letting nazis in forces everyone else out until all you have left is nazis.

If you're looking for a resolution on the whole "fascism in early 20th century europe" story, mussolini was captured and executed by partisans, and on the 29th of April 1945, the bodies of prominent italian fascists were dumped in a square where they had recently executed 15 partisans. The corpses of mussolini and four others were hung upside down as a message to remaining fascists. hitler shot himself to death while hidden in a bunker on the 30th of April, 1945.

An arm extended up and out, palm down, hand flat is a **nazi salute** (aka "sieg heil") used to show obedience to hitler or associate with nazism.

Aryan refers to the people nazis believe are somehow superior to others: white and non-Jewish, especially if they're of northern European origin, blue-eyed, and have blond hair. "Aryan" is used in the names of a lot of racist gangs.

Untermensch (literally "under men," meaning "subhuman") was used by the nazis to refer to the targets of the Holocaust.

"**The Jewish question**" is a phrase that antisemites used starting in the 1880s that sometimes gets parodied today. It frames the existence of Jewish people in society as something that has to be debated, a framing still used on minority groups today. The nazis' murder of six million Jewish people in the Holocaust was called "**the final solution** [to the Jewish question]".

A **pogrom** is a violent mob action aimed at massacring or expelling a racial or ethnic group, usually Jewish people. The term originated from infamous pogroms in the russian empire in the 19th and 20th century.

14 refers to the fourteen words, a white supremacist phrase: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children". **88** uses eights to represent the eighth letter of the alphabet, H, to write HH, standing for Heil Hitler. Usually, the two are used together: **14/88**.

"**100%**" may claim that the person or organization is 100% white. **9%** is the percentage of the world they claim as "white". It's used to sound less powerful to downplay racist power structures, or make whiteness seem at risk of being "replaced". If they do talk about a supposed threat of white people being "**replaced**" by nonwhite people, they're referring to "**the great replacement**" or "**white genocide**" a racist conspiracy theory that claims white people are being destroyed by demographic changes, namely immigration and interracial marriage. Racists may claim this to frame racist terror attacks as "defensive". The phrase "**wake up white man**" is used to tell white people to "wake up" and see the great replacement.

What's so wrong with being proud to be white?

Well, this gets a bit heady, but “white” isn’t a race, it’s a social concept created by colonialism and used for racial domination.

The idea of a unified, distinguishable “white race” has no scientific basis and is a social construct that has changed over time, with the terms “white race” or “white people” only entering major European languages during the racialization of slavery in the late 1600s, within the context of the Atlantic slave trade. Some of the groups you think of as white were only considered white as recently as a hundred years ago and different people define white differently. White is not a race, ethnicity, or culture, it is the sale of culture to join a privileged, manufactured social category, and being “proud to be white” is a very different thing than, for example, being proud to be Irish.

Skrewdriver was a white power skinhead rock band in the 1970s; wearing a skrewdriver patch is the same as wearing a patch that just says “white power”, but they can deny it as “just a band”.

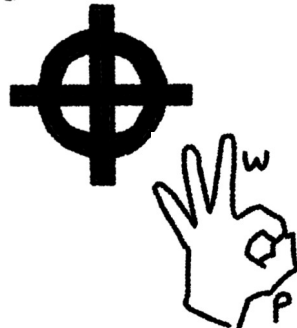
A “skinhead” or “skin” is a member of a subculture based around working class solidarity and social alienation, beginning with immigrant and working class youth in the 1960s and growing throughout the ‘70s and ‘80s. Neonazis successfully infiltrated parts of this subculture. Anti-racist skinheads call white power skinheads “boneheads”. **Boot laces** have a code, though this was more popular in the ‘80s-’90s skinhead scene than it is today. White boot laces are associated with white power and red boot laces are associated with neonazis. Anti-racists claim yellow laces. Usually people using lace code use “ladder lacing” where the laces don’t cross, and not everyone who wears colored laces knows what they mean.

The **Hammerskins** (sometimes known as “hammerskin nation”) are a neo-Nazi white supremacist group formed in 1988. Their logo is two crossed hammers over a gear. Sometimes abbreviated **HSN** and might use the phrase **HFFH** (hammerskins forever, forever hammerskins). **Peckerwood** is a racial epithet for white people that white racists sometimes use to refer to themselves.

A version of the Celtic cross is used by white supremacists, with some historical use by Nazi Germany and extensive modern use by white supremacists and neo-nazis.

The “Okay” hand gesture is sometimes used as a white power symbol (WP standing for White Power: pinky, ring, and middle finger make a W, pointer finger, thumb, and wrist make the P).

CELTIC CROSS



The **Rise Above Movement (RAM)** is a loose collective of violent neo-nazis and fascist gangs founded in California. It reformed in 2021 as the **Active Club Network**. A white pride hate group calling themselves **White Lives Matter** has been in the same region in recent years.

The **State of Jefferson** is a proposed new state taking parts of northern California and southern Oregon. The seal is two Xs, a claim that the region has been “double crossed,” by the Democrat-led central governments of each state. Supporters usually want to get out from under the leadership of blue cities, start logging, charge LA for water, and start a white haven free from pronouns and gun control.



The **Three Percenters** (logo shown on the left) are a right-wing militia group named for the misconception that only 3% of Americans fought in the Revolutionary War. On February 21, 2021, leadership dissolved the American National Group following violence on January 6th, 2021. **Oath Keepers** is a far-right militia group.

Patriot Front is a nationalist neofascist organization that drapes fascism in patriotic colors and Americana. It came out of **Vanguard America**, a group that had to be abandoned after one of their guys was charged with the hate crime murder of Heather Heyer in 2017. The ADL credits Patriot Front for 60% of all white supremacist propaganda reported in the U.S. in 2023. Note the fasces logo.



Patriot Front Logo



The **Proud Boys** (logos shown on the left) is an all-male Western chauvinist neofascist street-fighting gang founded in 2016. Common slogans include “**Stand Back, Stand By**” (which is what Donald Trump said when asked to condemn them), **POYB** meaning “**Proud Of Your Boy**,” and “**The West is Best**,” referenced by their west-pointing weather vane logo (see left).

PBs have teamed up before with **Patriot Prayer**, a far-right streetfighting gang based outside Portland, OR.

QAnon is a cult based around a version of the far-right conspiracy theory that a cabal of satanic, cannibalistic Jewish pedophiles secretly run this country. Q claims Donald Trump will save everyone in a day of reckoning called “the storm”. Common slogans include **WWG1WGA** (Where we go one, we go all), “**follow the white rabbit**” and talk of “taking the red pill” (more about red pills on the next page).





The **Thin Blue Line** flag (sometimes shown simply as a blue stripe across plain black) represents unflinching support for law enforcement. It is based on the claim that cops are the “thin blue line between order and chaos”. Created as a reactionary, racist retort to the Black Lives Matter movement demanding police accountability or abolition, and sometimes using the parody slogan “**Blue Lives Matter**”. They also use the skull logo from the marvel comic “the Punisher”.

“**What is a woman?**” and the response phrase “**adult human female**” are references to transphobic attempts to create a definition of women that does not include Transgender women. “**TERF**” stands for “Trans exclusionary radical feminist,” though TERFs are not actually radical or feminists. The slogan “My body, my choice” is a pro-choice slogan empowering people to make their own choices regarding abortion. “**Your body, my choice**” is a parody version that twitter nazis use to assert ownership over women. Anti-abortion activists call themselves “**pro-life**” and occasionally use **lifeguard** uniforms or hats to reference this. “**Repeal the 19th**” is a sexist demand to repeal the 19th amendment to the constitution, which grants women the right to vote.

“**RWDS**” means Right Wing Death Squad, which you might also see on “Pinochet Did Nothing Wrong” t-shirts, referencing the dead right-wing authoritarian Augusto Pinochet.

Pinochet led Chile brutally from the U.S.-backed military coup in 1973 (officially being declared president in 1974) until 1990.

Modern right-wing extremists mostly reference Pinochet's regime with jokes about “**free helicopter rides**” for leftists, a reference to the 120 prisoners the Chilean government reports that it flung out of helicopters, a small percentage of the estimated 1,200-3,200 prisoners murdered by the regime.

4CHAN's Time to Shine (Things you might only see online)

Taking the “**redpill**” (a reference to the 1999 film *The Matrix*) represents rejecting the reality you've been shown and accepting the “true reality,” which nazis appropriate to mean becoming a nazi. Antisemites may write an “echo”, using several parentheses around the name of a (((person))) or (((organization))) they claim to be Jewish. 4chan is an anonymous online image board. Its anonymous nature attracts school shooters and neonazis. **Kekistan** is a fictional country 4chan users created whose flag is a green version of the nazi war flag. **Pepe the frog** (pictured) is a meme that was co opted by the alt-right. A version of pepe called “groyper” is the namesake for “**groypers**,” a group of alt-right trolls led by the pundit nick fuentes.



“**They don't look like...**” “**But they have ___ friends...**”

A bigot or fascist can look like anybody. It benefits them when you assume they aren't around, when you make excuses for them, or when you overlook one because they aren't what you expect. There are plenty of white supremacists who aren't white, transphobes who are gay... the list continues.

You Might Be Right, You Might Be Wrong

You might get a funny feeling about someone at a show, a flag on their shirt, a rune you saw somewhere... but is it the one you read about? Be careful, trust your gut, ask others, or even ask the person what it means to them. In all these situations, if you can't get any more information, we recommend making assumptions that keep you safe.

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Displaying these symbols serves a *purpose* and recognizing and removing them *matters*.

If nazis actually just wanted to hide, they would. Instead, they put up these symbols... why? Well, when these symbols are seen, whether it's on a poster or t-shirt or a tattoo, in public or in private, it serves a *purpose*. Every time people see these things they become more normal, accepted, and eventually they become an expected part of life. This is a problem.

The *overton window* is the range of political positions considered reasonable. Two things are important to understand: 1) the window moves and 2) the window is defined by its extremes. By displaying these symbols and ideas, they are moving the window towards genocidal hatred.

You can't move the window back by trying to meet them or compromise with them. Going towards them means giving up your side of the window, and then you're helping move it even further. You have to push in the other direction – hard.

If you see one of these symbols out and about, you can do something about it. If you see a racist sticker, peel it off or cover it. If you aren't comfortable confronting someone with nazi tattoos or a racist tshirt, take a picture of them instead. Tell your friends and local groups what you saw. If you're sharing a picture of racist propaganda, consider scribbling over it or writing on it so you don't end up just sharing their propaganda for them. If you see something, do something.

When they choose to associate with supremacy, torture, and genocide, they're telling you who they are. Believe them, and *never* let them rest.