

# BLOCING UP FOR PORTLANDERS

VOL II

Complete with  
tips and tricks and  
unsolicited advice!

Warning: highly  
condensed history.  
Consider diluting with  
further reading.

Why you should  
consider dressing  
in black with your  
closest pals



more at @headingnorther

Nice to see you again!  
I'm your friendly neighborhood  
anti-fascist, here to  
talk to you about bloc.

Black bloc is a  
strategy to avoid  
police surveillance by  
dressing in generic black.

## BLOC

- ☐ Cover face and hair
- ☐ Cover tattoos and piercings
- ☐ Carry a black bag

## TIPS

- Use black tape to cover visible logos
- No plain black shirt? Turn one inside out
- Try a t-shirt balaclava (but wear a mask underneath to protect against COVID-19)
- Change up your bloc often - including bag

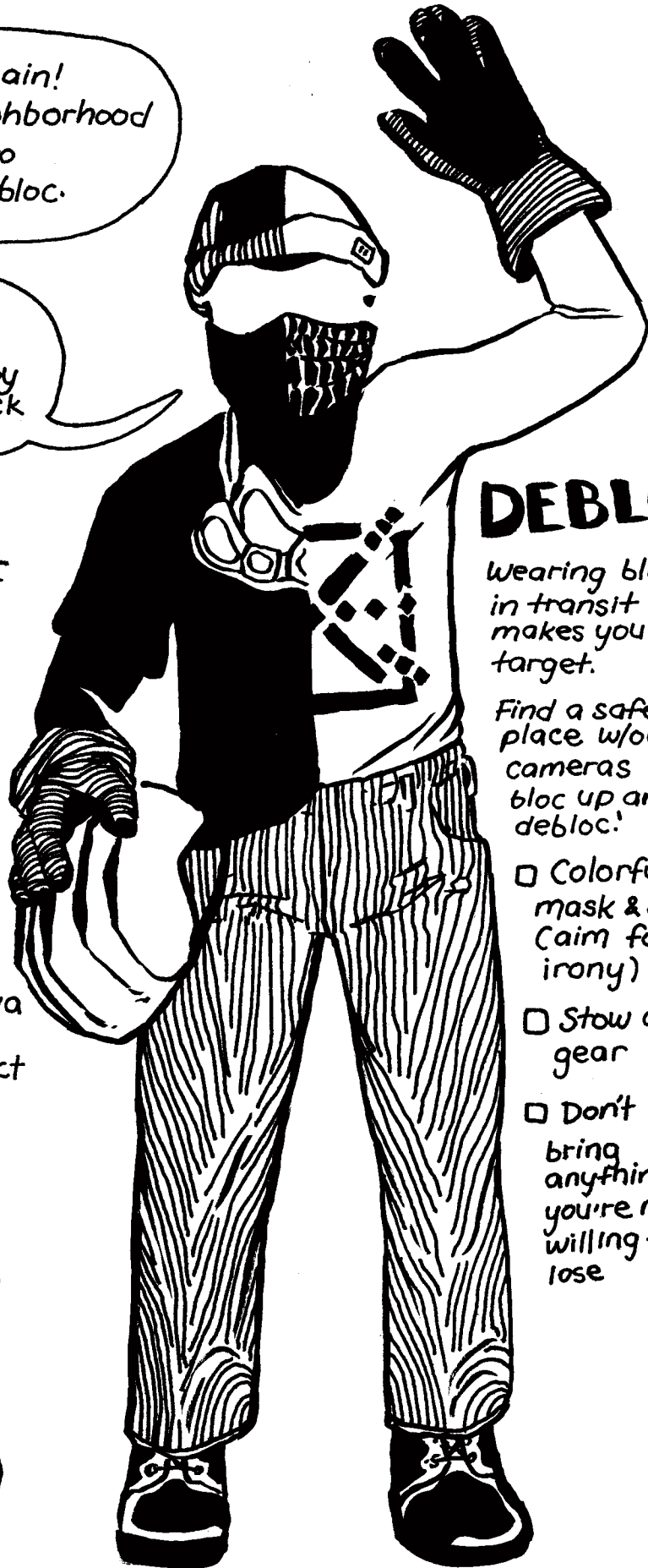


## DEBLOC

Wearing bloc  
in transit  
makes you a  
target.

Find a safe  
place w/out  
cameras to  
bloc up and  
debloc!

- ☐ Colorful mask & shirt (aim for irony)
- ☐ Stow all gear
- ☐ Don't bring anything you're not willing to lose



# History & Purpose

Black bloc originated in the Autonomen movement in West Berlin from 1980-81 when, facing a housing crisis thousands of people squatted in abandoned buildings.<sup>2</sup>



Black blocs are most often utilized to combat surveillance technology.<sup>4</sup> It's often associated with anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anarchist movements - but since its popularization it has been used by diverse movements including Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters.<sup>5</sup>



Over the next decade, bloc became common in Germany and then spread to the rest of the world.



Blocs are known for employing a diversity of tactics including resisting police dispersal and property damage.<sup>6</sup>



Berlin 1988: 80,000 protesters, 8,000 black bloc, disrupt IMF/WB congress.<sup>8</sup>



Seattle 1999: anti WTO protests mark first large black bloc in North America; national media attention.<sup>10</sup>

# of Black Bloc

Egypt 2013:



So why should you consider blocing up?

- To avoid surveillance & remain anonymous.
- Even if you don't think you're breaking any laws, police are arresting people for no more than their presence at protests.

Following revolution, Black Bloc formed to protect large anti-government protests & shut down public transit.<sup>12</sup>

Hong Kong 2019:

- To protect others: if you look the same as vulnerable people (eg, people on the front lines, people who are more marginalized) it's harder to identify them.
- It encourages widespread participation: anyone can wear black.
- It promotes unity & solidarity.<sup>13</sup>



Huge black blocs battle with police, vandalize shopping malls and more in pro-democracy protests, a direct result of proposed extradition bill.<sup>15</sup>



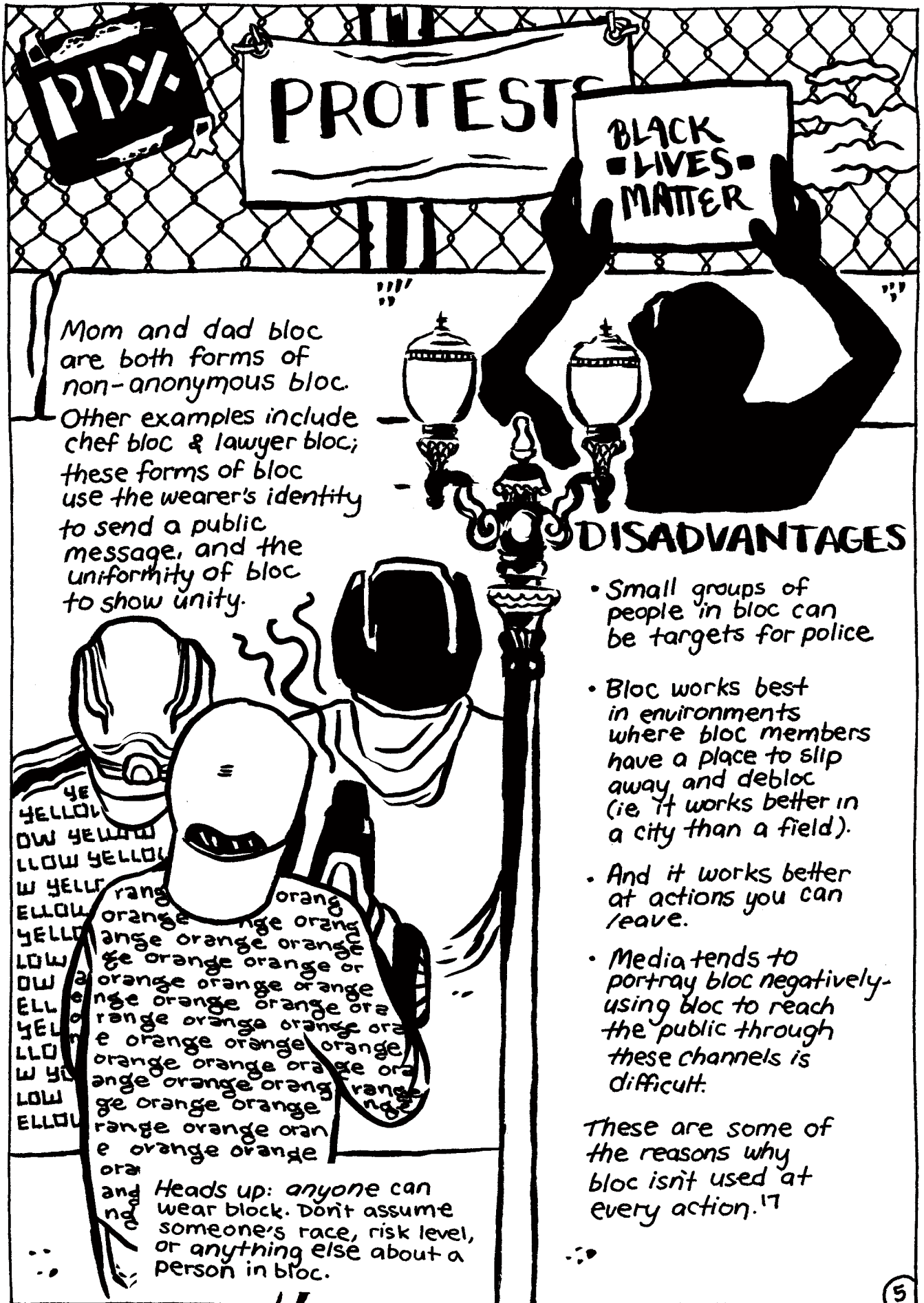
### Classic black bloc:

The bloc has no singular leadership, but it does have tactical strategy.<sup>16</sup>

Anyone can be part of the black bloc. Much of the black bloc is very young.

In Portland (and, generally, the US) blocs are most often made up of discrete affinity groups.

**Affinity groups** are based on trusted friendships. Groups come together to form a large, decentralized bloc that can accomplish goals.



Mom and dad bloc are both forms of non-anonymous bloc.

Other examples include chef bloc & lawyer bloc; these forms of bloc use the wearer's identity to send a public message, and the uniformity of bloc to show unity.

## DISADVANTAGES

- Small groups of people in bloc can be targets for police.
- Bloc works best in environments where bloc members have a place to slip away and debloc (ie it works better in a city than a field).
- And it works better at actions you can leave.
- Media tends to portray bloc negatively- using bloc to reach the public through these channels is difficult.

These are some of the reasons why bloc isn't used at every action.<sup>17</sup>

Heads up: anyone can wear bloc. Don't assume someone's race, risk level, or anything else about a person in bloc.



# SO YOU'RE AT A PORTLAND PROTEST



During a dispersal, it's easy to panic.

## Don't panic.

Running is a natural response to dispersal, but it leaves people behind and can lead to trampling.

It's important to keep in touch with your affinity group and protest buddies.

For all these reasons:

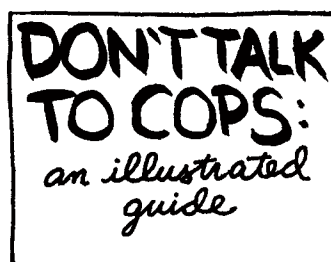
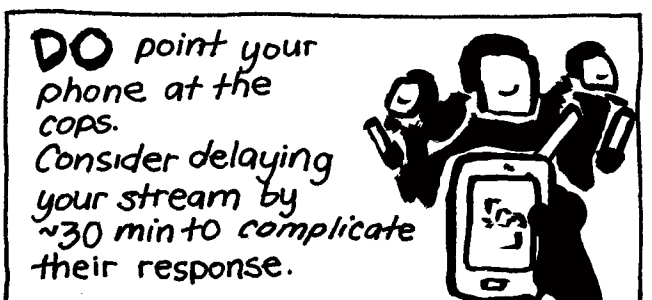
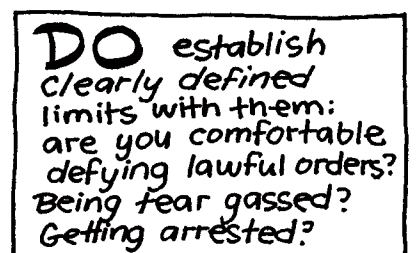
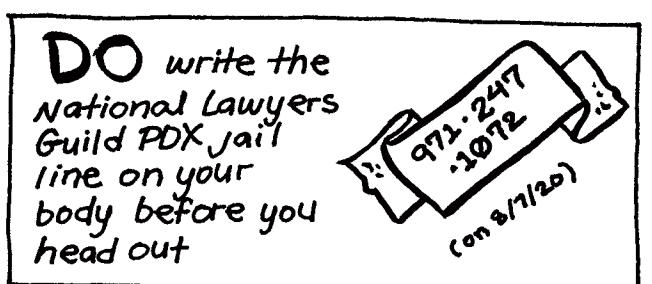
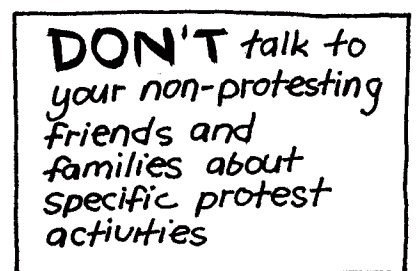
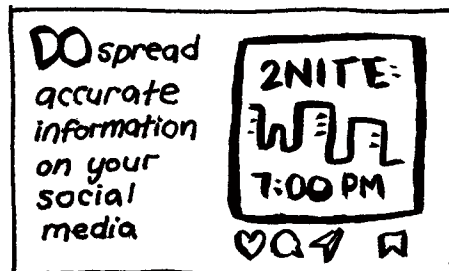
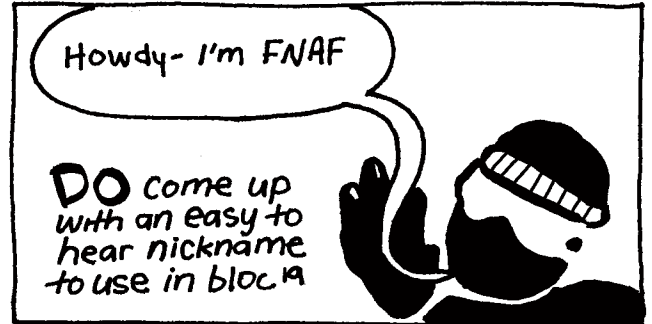


Walk don't  
run<sup>18</sup>

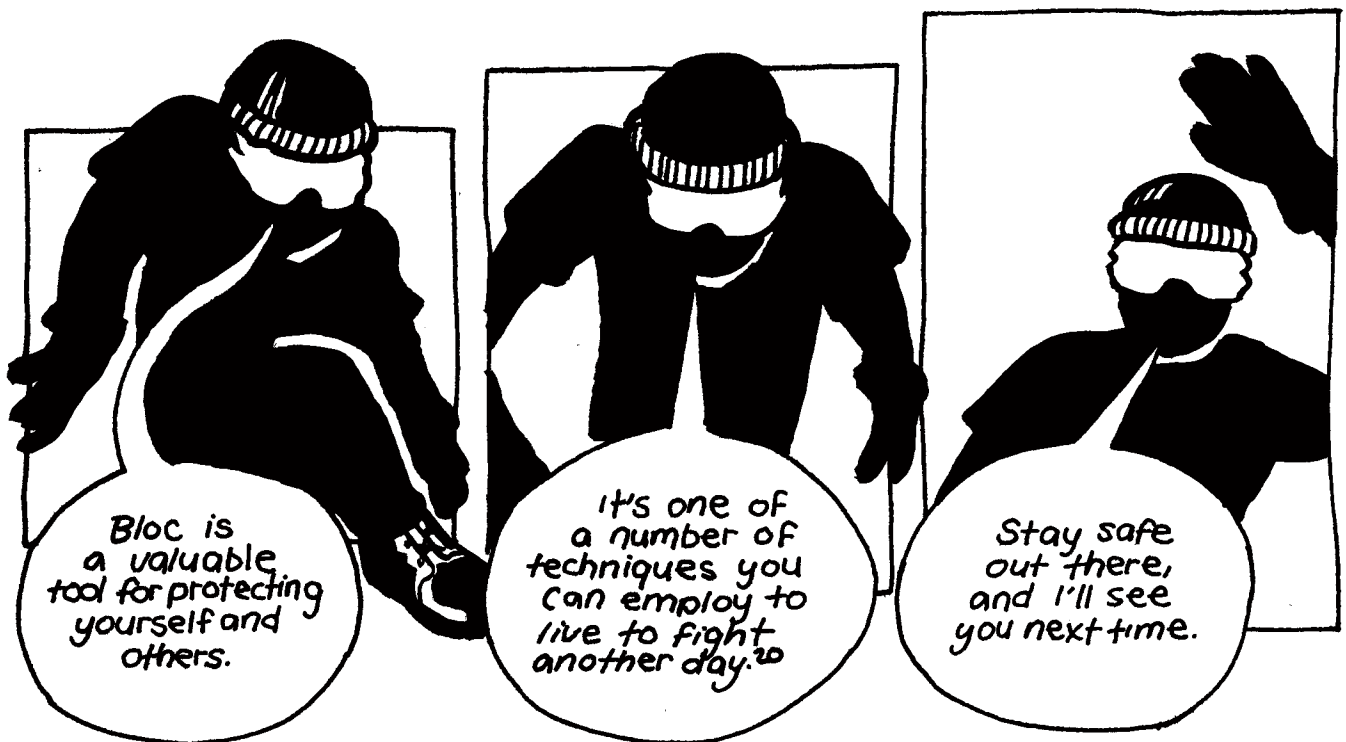
(and don't turn your back  
on the riot cops)

Walk don't run

# DOS AND DON'TS







## ACTION ITEMS

After a stressful protest, a narrow escape, or a daring action, you'll have some emotions to unpack. Being attacked by police is traumatic; talk to your protest partner and affinity group. Help each other process. Doing so will make you more effective in the long run.

As advertised: unsolicited advice

- Spend time with people outside of the context of actions
- Take breaks
- Quest Center is offering free mental health services & acupuncture for BIPOC protestors (as of June 19, 2020) [quest-center.org](http://quest-center.org)
- Rosehip Medic Collective has a collection of local resources at [rosehipmedics.org/links-and-resources/local-community-resources](http://rosehipmedics.org/links-and-resources/local-community-resources)

Bloc curious? For a lot more info on how to do bloc right, check out the zine "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"  
(see citations)



# Citations:

1. Crimethink, "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"
2. Autonomous Resistance, "Can't Stop Kaos: A Brief History of the Black Bloc"
3. T. Ordeman, *Squatters in Kreuzberg*, 1981, Wikimedia Commons
4. Autonomous Resistance: "Can't stop Kaos: a Brief History of the Black Bloc"
5. Vitalist International, "Summer in Smoke Report from the World's Biggest Bloc," 325 RSS, December 10, 2019
6. Crimethink, "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"
7. Autonomous Resistance, "Can't Stop Kaos..."
8. Autonomous Resistance, "Can't Stop Kaos..."
9. B. Keiser, *Demonstrators don sea turtle costumes* 1999
10. Autonomous Resistance, "Can't Stop Kaos.."
11. K. Desouki, 2013, Getty Images
12. W. Eskandar, "The Black Bloc: Evolution of the Revolution," Middle East Institute, April 25, 2013
13. Crimethink, "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"
14. A. Kwan, *Hong Kongers Protest*, June 12, 2019, Getty Images
15. Vitalist International, "Summer in Smoke Report from the World's Biggest Bloc," 325 RSS, December 10, 2019
16. Crimethink, "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"
17. Crimethink, "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"
18. Crimethink, "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"
19. Crimethink, "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"
20. Crimethink, "Blocs, Black and Otherwise"

Notice any patterns? If you want to learn a lot more about the history, implementation, and impact of bloc, check out the two zines:

"Blocs, Black and Otherwise" (Crimethink)

"Can't stop Kaos: a Brief History of the Black Bloc"  
(Autonomous Resistance)

Both of which are a quick google away.

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From southeastman  
and headingnorther