

Examples of Mass Noncooperation Tactics

Mass noncooperation tactics are powerful tools of civil resistance that enable people to challenge oppressive systems without the use of violence. By strategically refusing to participate in economic, social, or political activities, individuals and groups can disrupt the functioning of institutions and signal widespread dissent. These tactics range from economic boycotts and mass strikes to social withdrawal, tax resistance, and civil servant noncooperation. Historical and contemporary examples demonstrate how such actions can undermine unjust authority, shift public opinion, and lay the groundwork for systemic change.

Economic noncooperation includes tactics such as divestment, strike, or boycott.

Social noncooperation requires refusing to engage in expected social behavior. Tactics in the category include withdrawal from a system, ostracizing an individual, or refusing to cooperate with specific events or customs. For example, one may withhold religious rights to political leaders whose practices violate the tenants of religion, as the Burmese monks did to military officials in 1990.

Political noncooperation requires withdrawing cooperation from a political system or institution. One example is inter-agency noncooperation, such as when, in 2015, the Korean fire department turned off fire hydrants in order to prevent security forces from water hosing protestors.

<https://www.tactics.nonviolenceinternational.net/index>

<https://www.tactics.nonviolenceinternational.net/categories>

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1. Economic Boycotts

- [The Power of Boycotts](#)
- [History of Successful Boycotts | Ethical Consumer](#)

Economic Boycotts, the act of refusing to buy or use goods or services from a specific entity as a form of protest, are a long-standing and effective method of expressing dissent and advocating for change.

Past boycotts have targeted cosmetics brand [L'Oreal](#) over its animal testing policy, [Barclays Bank](#) over its investments in fossil fuels, and online giant [Amazon](#) over its egregious tax avoidance.

Potential questions for this group:

- Who is the individual in power whose actions we seek to change?
- What is our demand to that individual?
- Who will we seek to participate in this boycott?
- What alternatives will we offer to people to meet their needs?
- Who will serve as our negotiators to the company?
- How will we spread information to the people who we seek to participate?
- Map out a cross section of the business pillar to show how you will move your target and get to a better future.

2. Worker/Mass strikes

- [What would a general strike in the US actually look like? | Waging Nonviolence](#)

Worker/ Mass strikes involve the deliberate withdrawal of support and collaboration from a person, institution, or system in order to challenge their authority or policies and disrupt the economic status quo. In the US, there have been only a few general strikes – defined as coordinated work stoppages by trade unions across different sectors, and never a nationwide one.

Past US strikes include the Seattle general strike in 1919 , the 1936-1937 Flint Sit-Down Strike where workers remained inside the GM automobile plants and the Memphis sanitation strike of 1968 when Black sanitation workers struck in protest of dangerous working conditions and discriminatory practices.

Potential questions for this group:

- What sectors of workers hold key power?
- How will we know we are ready to strike/ ready to win?
- What are the legal rights or regulations for this sector?
- What are the material needs would we need to make sure are met if workers went on strike?
- How would information spread about a strike?
- Map out a cross section of the gov't worker and/or business pillar to show how you will move your target and get to a better future.

3. Tax resistance

- [National Tax Strike](#)

Tax resistance is the act of refusing to pay taxes as a form of protest against government policies or actions. Tax resistance can involve various legal and illegal methods, such as:

- Legal: Reducing taxable income through simple living, paying under protest, or using tax avoidance techniques.
- Illegal: Evading taxes by working off-the-books, redirecting taxes to charities, refusing to pay specific taxes (like the telephone tax), or simply refusing to file or pay.

The American Revolutionary demand "no taxation without representation" referred to the colonists' refusal to pay taxes to the British regime. Henry David Thoreau refused to pay his poll tax to protest slavery and the Mexican-American War. War Tax resistance focuses on refusal to pay taxes that fund war, often based on conscientious objection.

Potential questions for this group:

- How could we signal to tax agencies that people are beginning to get ready to withhold taxes?
- What barriers would we need to overcome for people to become ready for this idea?
- What is the best first step for a campaign like this?
- Map a cross section of the pillar of tax paying entities to show how you will move your target and get to a better future.

4. Social noncooperation

- Danish 10 Commandments: <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/danish-citizens-resist-nazis-1940-1945>
- <https://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/peace/73Sharp/Sharp73-ch4.pdf>

Social noncooperation is a deliberate withdrawal of support, cooperation, or participation in activities deemed harmful or unjust, with individuals or groups refusing to participate in or support social structures, customs, or institutions they oppose.

These types of actions can include suspension of social and sports activities, boycotts of social affairs, student strikes, withdrawal from social institutions, denying communion, and sex strikes.

A text from 1940 of the “Ten Commandments for Danes”, laid out resistance to German occupation, calling for a refusal to work for the Germans, minimal effort in assisting the Germans, the destruction of German machinery and tools, a boycott of German goods, and the providing of protection for anyone oppressed by the Germans.

Potential questions for this group:

- What would social noncooperation look like in your community?
- What groups would be the most important to engage?
- How can you provide on ramps for people to participate in social noncooperation?
- What kinds of support systems can you put in place to ensure wider participation?

5. Opposition fraternization

- ICE, Military, Police
 - <https://www.tactics.nonviolenceinternational.net/tactics/Fraternization>
- Electoral /Political Party Infrastructure

Opposition fraternization is a practice by members of an opposition movement attempting to build relationships and establish positive dialogue with members of the repressive group with the aim of fostering sympathy, understanding, and potentially even support for their cause.

One goal is to encourage security forces to question their loyalty to the ruling authority and potentially disobey orders to use violence against protesters, or even defect. Another goal could be to infiltrate political party opposition and force change from inside.

Belarusian protests (2020-2021): Protesters actively sought to fraternize with state forces, and studies indicate a negative correlation between successful fraternization attempts and occurrences of state repression. Egyptian Revolution (2011): Protesters actively used fraternization, including instances of protesters "hugging soldiers" to win them over, and a committee was formed to negotiate directly with the military.

Potential questions for this group:

- What would Opposition fraternization look like in your community?
- What groups would be the most important to engage?
- How can you provide on ramps for people to participate in Opposition fraternization?
- What kinds of support systems can you put in place to ensure wider participation?

6. Building Alternative Structures/ Institutions/ Support

- [ICNC - Alternative Institution-Building as Civil Resistance](#)
- <https://www.mutualaidhub.org/resources>

Alternative institutions, in the context of civil resistance, refer to the process by which organized civilians establish new practices and organizations that are parallel to and aim to challenge existing structures viewed as unjust and oppressive. These alternative institutions can serve various purposes, including self-rule, with alternative governance, or to challenge or reform existing systems, or provide mutual support within communities, particularly for marginalized communities facing systemic inequalities.

Formal "shadow governments," or "shadow cabinets" often consist of a senior group of opposition spokespeople who shadow the government's cabinet members, scrutinizing their policies and presenting alternative policies. Alternative infrastructures, resource platforms can also be part of building resilience in the face of perceived societal collapse or instability.

Potential questions for this group:

- What "people's systems" or alternative structure, institutions or support have you/ your communities participated in?
- Who in your community has the knowledge about how these systems work/worked?
- How can you help your community learn from them?
- How might the practice be expanded in a way that is both equitable and resilient in these times?

7. Judicial Jury Participation/ Nullification

- [What is jury nullification?](#)
- https://fija.org/file_download/inline/b6542064-ee54-418d-8e9e-58242ad2bd92

Jury Nullification happens when the jury in a criminal trial gives a verdict of not guilty even though they think a defendant has broken the law. It is also known as conscientious acquittal, juror veto, or jury pardon.

In United States constitutional history, nullification is a legal theory that a state has the right to nullify, or invalidate, any federal laws that they deem unconstitutional with respect to the United States Constitution (as opposed to the state's own constitution).

Examples in the USA include rejection of the Fugitive Slave Laws and alcohol prohibition. When jurors in capital cases convict the accused, but refuse to impose the death penalty, this can also be considered nullification.

Potential questions for this group:

- What would move jurors to nullify juries?
- How would we inform people about this tactic? What would they need to know?
- What would need to be in place to take this tactic to scale?
- Map out a cross section of the justice system pillar to show how you will move your target and get to a better future.

8. Civil Servant/ Internal Regime noncooperation

- [Serve the People - We're Worth Fighting For. A civil servants guide for 2024 & Beyond](#)-- for civil servants /federal employees/military on their options.:
- Civil Servant Option Charts:
<https://drive.proton.me/urls/AK4JV8JS40#UOJIIP1PhzF>

Anyone employed by the regime or in professional positions within the system can consider active resistance: slowing down implementation of or refusing actions they believe are illegal or immoral. This includes activities from malicious compliance to whistleblowing, intentional incompetence to ethical refusal to do harm, and public resignation from key positions to subversive ongoing harm prevention work.

Examples from WorldWar II include manufacturing munitions to incorrect standards for the Nazis, smuggling documentation of atrocities out to the world, and creating official documents for vulnerable people so they could leave the country.

Potential questions for this group:

- What sectors of civil servants hold key power?
- What are the legal rights or regulations for this sector?
- What are the material needs would we need to make sure are met if civil servants are targeted for their actions?
- How would information spread about a internal regime noncooperation?
- Map out a cross section of the civil servant or federal worker pillar to show how you will move your target and get to a better future.