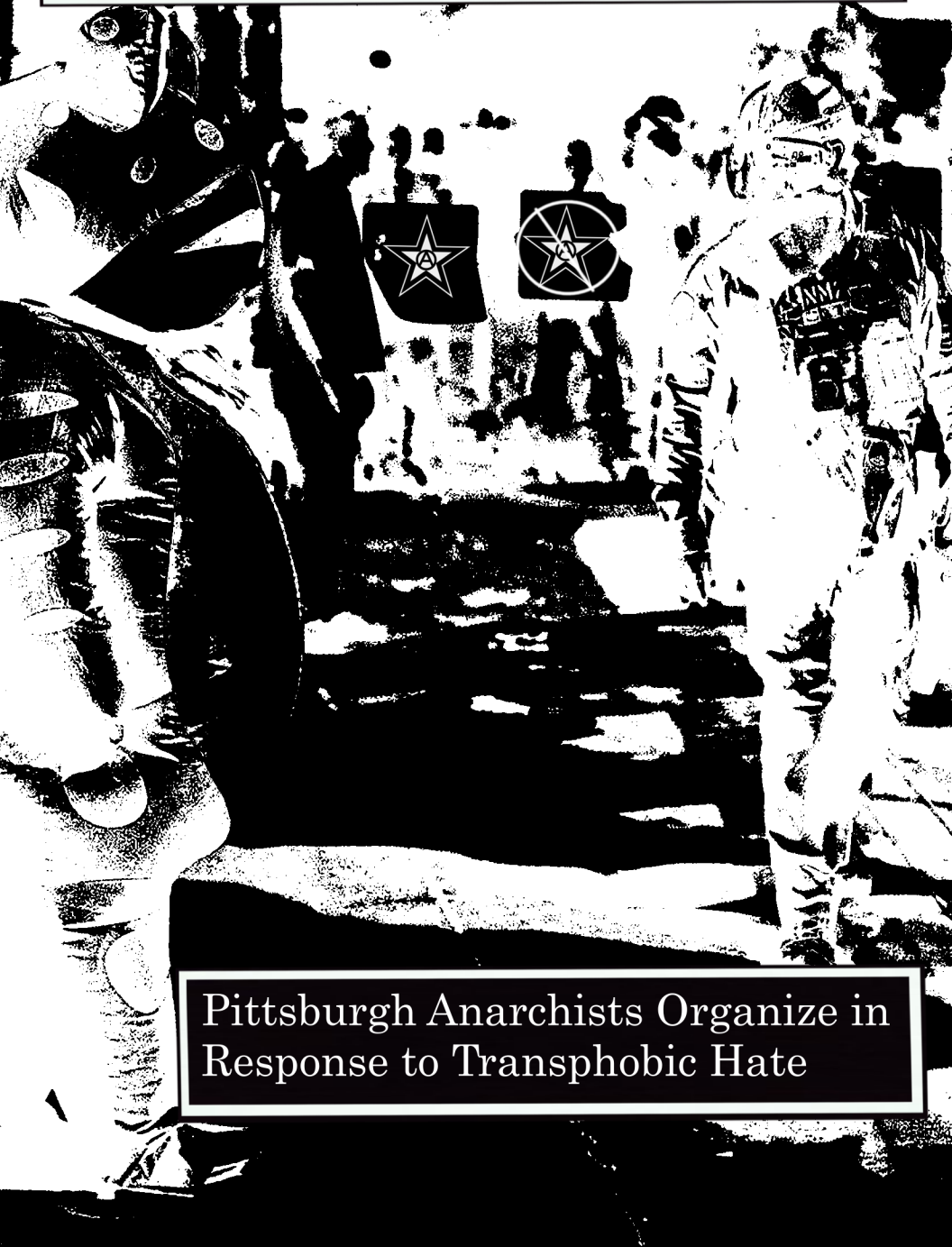
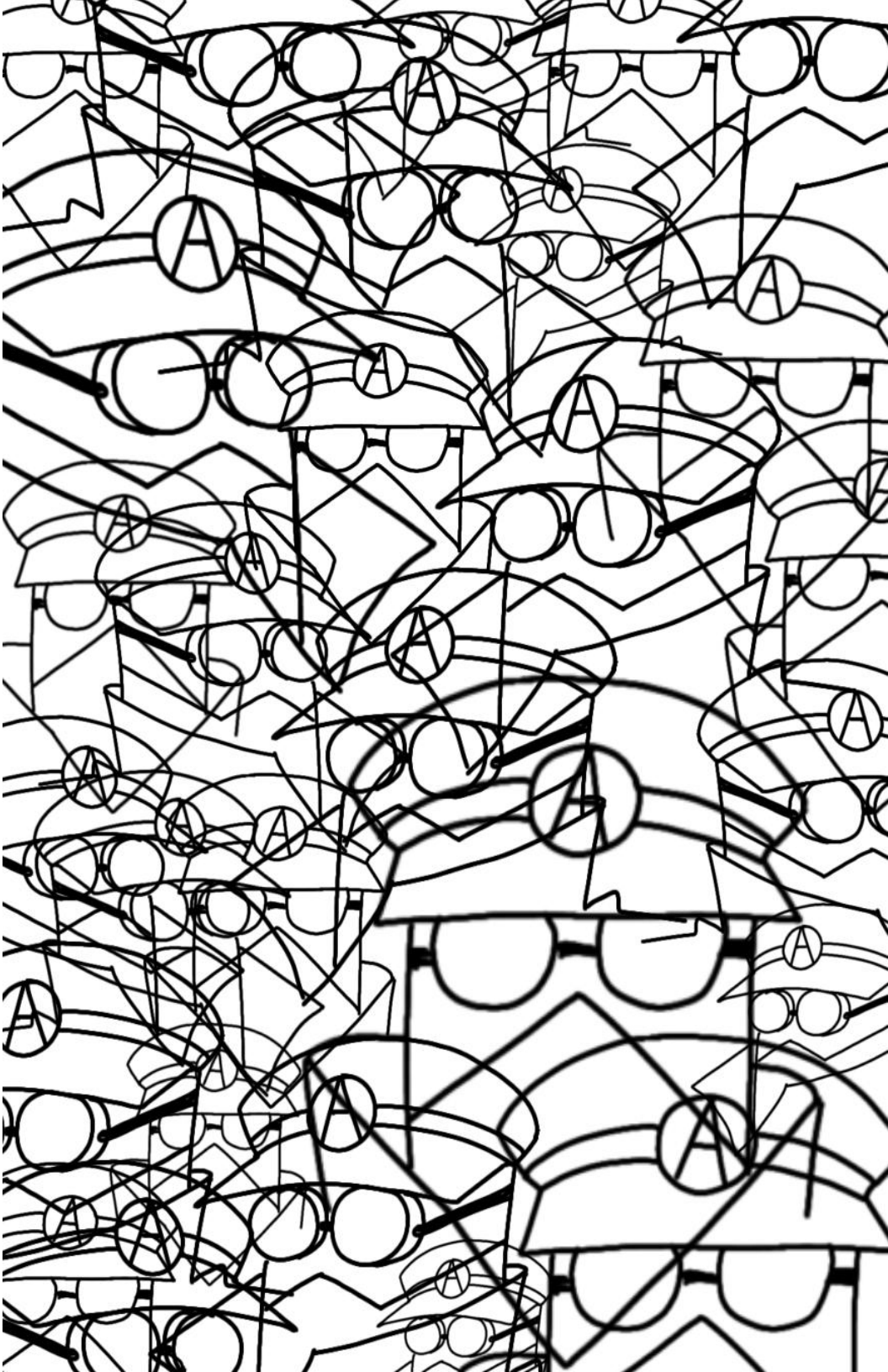


AGAINST THE LIBERAL PROTEST



Pittsburgh Anarchists Organize in
Response to Transphobic Hate



ANARCHO

TANKIESM



DISTRO

AN ANARCHO-INTRODUCTION



This is a story poached off of Filler Distros WordPress in a 2023 anonymous submission about the power of anarchist action.

This is a story of anarchist resistance against do nothing, peaceful protesting, state-supported organizers.

This is a story to inspire you, to horrify you, to convince you of the power of anarchist and queer violence, brought from my city to yours

REPORT ON RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN PITTSBURGH AGAINST ANTI-TRANS GRITTER MICHAEL KNOWLES.

The rise of fascism and transphobia is an existential threat to the queer and trans community.

As anarchists, we must overcome not only our enemies who want us dead, but also our so-called allies who would keep us passive in the face of this danger.

On April 18th, nearly 300 members of the Pittsburgh community came together to fight back against transphobic hate.

People took concrete steps to disrupt Michael Knowles' attempt to advocate genocide on the University of Pittsburgh campus, and in doing so, overcame attempts by liberals and moderates to pacify and defang resistance.

Here's what went down.

SETTING THE SCENE

When news of Michael Knowles' April 18th appearance on Pitt campus began to circulate in mid-March, it was also revealed that two other transphobic speakers would precede him, Cabot Philips on March 24th, and Riley Gaines on March 27th.

Since 2020, and long before then, Pittsburgh has had consistent problems with liberal "organizers" claiming ownership of movements and giving themselves the responsibility of deciding what is and isn't a legitimate way to protest.

Of course, slapping your organization's logo on a flyer for an action means the police can easily find you if anything 'illegal' happens, so placing yourself in these leadership roles inherently invites state repression.

"Organizers" quickly take on the role of peace police, scolding anyone who so much as yells at a cop in order to protect themselves from legal consequences they could have avoided by simply remaining anonymous.

On March 24th and 27th, this exhausting pattern repeated itself again at actions organized by a liberal student group and a "community organization," respectively.

These actions accomplished nothing, except to signal to the Pitt administration that they could safely host Michael Knowles' event without fearing a militant response from students and the wider community.

SOME OF US LIVE
LIBERATION
FOR

SHUT DOWN MICHAEL KNOWLES



5PM AT SCHENLEY PLAZA

Frustrated by these boring and ineffective actions, many resolved to make April 18th different and decided to be the first to put out a flyer, organize the event themselves, and push back against anyone who claimed to be in charge.

On March 28th, as liberals were patting themselves on the back for doing nothing, flyers began circulating for the 18th.

The call to action did not contain any organizations' logos or defined leadership, but rather a meeting place, a time, and a simple goal: "Shut Down Michael Knowles."

Weeks later, the Pittsburgh chapter of Socialist Alternative released their own flyer for the 18th, but it was too late.

The scene was set for a militant action they would not be able to control.

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

On April 18th, the O'Hara Student Center began allowing attendees to enter at 7pm, with Knowles' event scheduled to begin at 7:30.

Liberal organizers were on the scene too, instructing the crowd to stay on the sidewalk across the street from the student center, almost 30 feet away from the entrance.

They were prepared for a passive night of chanting, listening to speeches, and avoiding even the slightest confrontation with the fascists who want us dead.

Around 6:45, the bloc showed up, making a grand entrance onto O'Hara Street led by a 15-foot-long banner reading "THESE QUEERS BASH BACK," immediately distinguishing themselves as a separate group from the liberal organizers, and demonstrating that they represented a different perspective and set of tactics.

Initially, their chants of, "Off of the sidewalks, into the streets!" were met with applause from the still-stationary crowd, but after a short time many protesters began joining them in the streets.

With this entrance alone, the bloc completely changed the character of the action. Instead of watching passively from the sidewalks, the crowd would confront fascism; and the cops who defend it, in the streets.

THESE QUEERS
BASH BACK

CONFRONTING FASCISM

The bloc positioned their banners at the end of the metal barricades erected to protect the sidewalk where attendees would enter the event, immediately forcing the police to respond by forming a line of officers behind the barricade.




This was quickly followed by using a road flare to ignite an effigy of Michael Knowles in the street, again demonstrating that demonstrators would not confine themselves to the tactics deemed “appropriate” by liberal organizers.

As transphobic chuds trickled in to attend the event, they were confronted by a militant crowd that hurled insults, smoke bombs, and other projectiles at event attendees and the pigs defending them.

Relatively low-risk actions like shaking the barricades police had set up forced them and the chuds to consider what might happen if the crowd decided to rush the building (although the crowd did not have the numbers or militancy to actually do so).

Event attendees later told reporters they were “terrified,” as is proper for someone supporting an event where a speaker will advocate for the genocide of trans folks.



As the attendees finished entering the building, the protest entered a different stage.

Rather than staying relatively stationary in front of the building, the crowd repeatedly moved between the front entrance on the north side and the back door to the south.

These repeated movements forced the pigs to move too, creating moments of disorganization for them and opportunity for protesters.

The most notable of these moments came after the group's first flank to the south side of the building.

Just as they took positions around the back door, a firework sailed over the crowd, landing directly in the midst of the gathering cops.

People reached the back door before the cops, who were forced to reposition themselves in a hurried and sloppy manner.

The resulting boom scattered the pigs, and sent a clear message to the attendees inside the event.

A perfect throw, with perfect timing.

This event was followed by a specific liberal "organizer" trying to take charge and lecture the crowd, telling them, "This is not how we do this," and that only complete non-violence is an effective protest tactic.

This "organizer" aggressively shoved a protester who objected to their policing of the event, showing us that their non-violence applies only to their opponents, and not to our own movement.

Ultimately, their attempt to control the crowd failed when the bloc kept moving, raising a chant of, "Stonewall was a riot!," to succinctly point out the flaw in their thinking without getting caught up in a yelling match.

In no time at all, the disruption was back underway on the north side of the building.

The few in the crowd who stayed behind eventually came to join the energetic group, followed by their deflated "leaders" who had fully lost control of the action.

WRAPPING UP

Throughout the night, chants, drums, and a sound system could be heard inside, preventing the fascists from holding their event in peace.

After the talk concluded, attendees were forced to sit in place for close to 45 minutes while police tried to figure out how to get them out of the building.

Eventually, the cops decided to hurry attendees out a back door, telling the student organizations there was no time to gather their belongings or clean up after the event.

They scurried into the night like the rats they are, fearing the presence of antifascist demonstrators.

After the building was cleared, the crowd moved down the street as a group, making sure to keep eyes on each other and stay vigilant for police looking to make arrests.

Ultimately, protesters were able to disperse without incident and keep each other safe.

As of now, there have been no arrests made*, and there were no reports of significant injuries on the side of the protesters.

*<https://freepep.pyandkrystal.noblogs.org/>

TACTICS

The same set of on-the-ground tactics allowed the bloc to overcome both state repression and the influence of peace policing liberals.

1. **KEEP MOVING.**
Cops love a stationary crowd, it is easy to surround, surveil, and attack.

A crowd that constantly moved between different locations around the building where Knowles' talk occurred kept police scrambling and unable to stay in control of the situation.

Similarly, the peace police found themselves unable to control an organically moving crowd.

When they tried to lecture people about the proper way to protest, people simply kept moving.

The crowd showed over and over they would rather participate in a disruptive, energetic protest than stand in one place and be lectured.

Folks could have argued with the peace police about what flyer came out first, that the bloc was also queer and trans folks, that non-violence is ineffective, and that we have as much right as anyone to employ the tactics we deem appropriate.

But rather than wasting time with an exhausting discussion, people simply ignored them and did what they were there to do.

2. **DIVERSITY OF TACTICS.**

The crowd had a healthy mix of experienced protesters and fired up college students.

Many students were excited to move with the bloc and be disruptive, while others stood further back on the sidewalk.

This mostly-passive crowd of onlookers provided crucial cover, a place for individuals to retreat away from the front lines when needed, and made it impossible for the police to surround the demonstration from behind.

No one was pressured to employ tactics they didn't feel comfortable with, their presence alone was a valuable asset, regardless of individual risk level.

In addition to the demonstration outside, some protesters managed to get tickets for the event and disrupt it from the inside with chants, until being removed by security.

Employing a wide variety of tactics made the cops' jobs far more difficult, and guaranteed that if any one tactic failed others would be immediately available.

3. MESSAGING

Unlike the liberals who constantly identify themselves as being "leaders" and seek media attention, those who remained anonymous had a more difficult challenge in getting their message out there.

One important way that people did so, was letting their actions speak for themselves.

Not everyone will see the benefit in throwing fireworks at cops, but to others it is immediately obvious.



Banners and chants were also an important way to help the crowd understand intentions without lengthy discussions that might take away from the momentum of an action.

Identifying as trans radicals also made it harder for liberals to paint the bloc as "outside agitators," although that did not stop them from trying.

LOOKING AHEAD

April 18th was the most successful action Pittsburgh has seen in years.

For a city with a long history of militant leftist organizing, folks have been too quiet for too long.

Despite a successful mobilization on April 18th, protesters were ultimately unable to fully shut down Knowles' talk.

The missing ingredients were simple – a larger crowd, and more protesters willing to get their hands dirty.

With double the numbers, demonstrators could have fully surrounded the building, creating an impossible situation for the police when it came time for the attendees to go home.

With more militancy, people could have pressed their advantage in key moments, fully pushing the police out of their positions around the building, which would have forced them to immediately cancel the event.

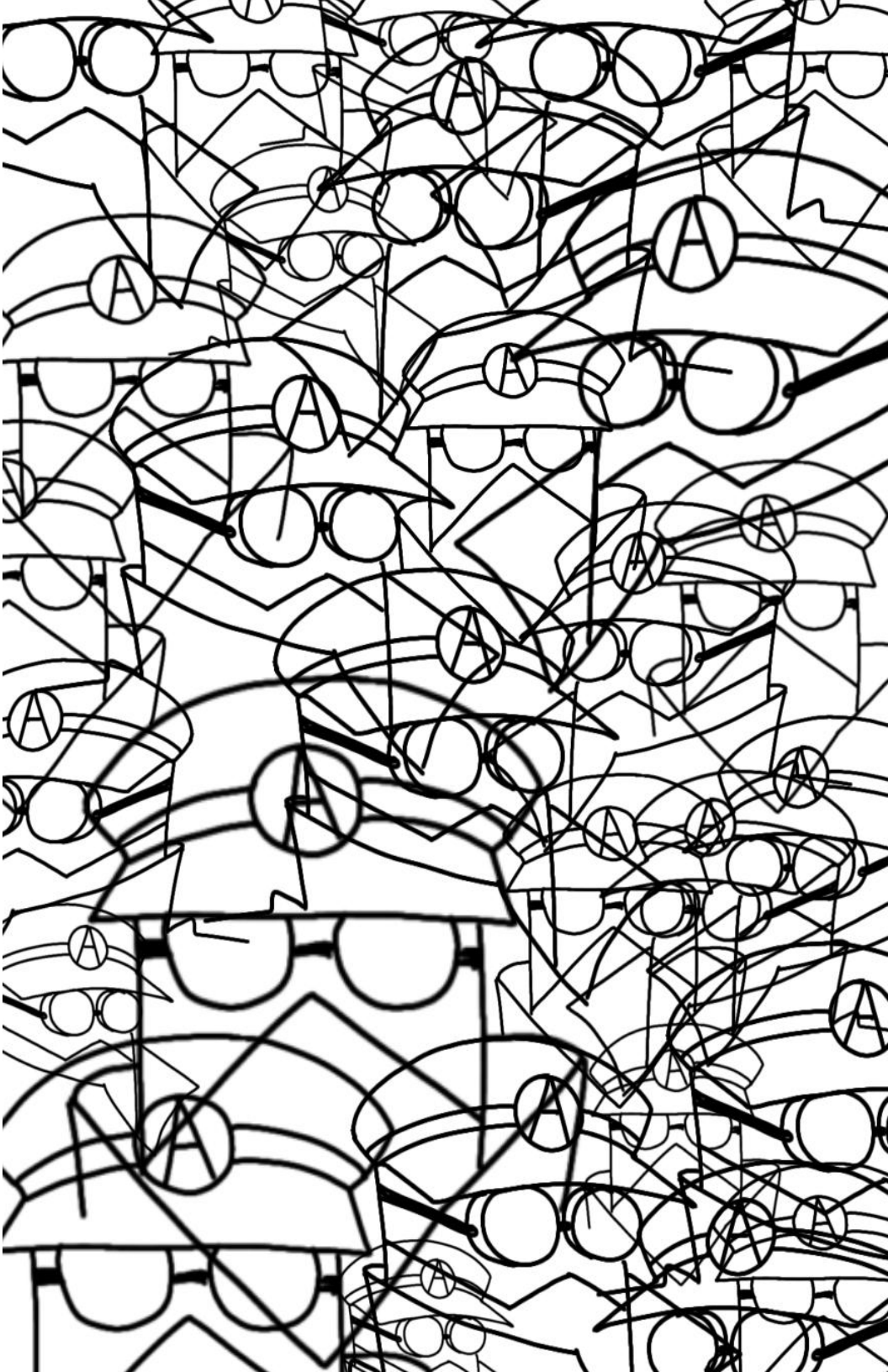
We hope that the victories folks did achieve, not just over the pigs but over the liberal peace police, will show crews in this city that our time is returning.

It is possible to have militant, effective actions and still have all of us get home safely at the end of the night.

There are a lot of people in this city who would like to participate in militant actions but have given up on the possibility of them taking place in Pittsburgh.

We don't have to cede the streets to the liberals anymore.

The next time fascists show up in our city, we'll be back, and we'll be stronger than ever.



DEATH TO THE LIBERAL PROTEST

NO TRANSPHOBIA IN
PITTSBURGH, NO
TRANSPHOBIA
ANYWHERE!



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DICTATORSHIP OF THE AMPHETAMINE