

# Full Spectrum Resistance Movement Security Tools

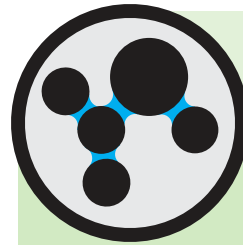
**Any effective social movement will provoke repression.** Now, more than ever, we need tools to help defend ourselves and our movements against repression from government, police, and right-wing hate groups.

Aric McBay's book *Full Spectrum Resistance* (Seven Stories Press, 2019) explores how we can build safer and more effective movements. Here are some of the tools discussed in Chapter 6, "Security and Safety":



## Firewalls

Movements protect themselves through a division between aboveground and underground organizing. **Aboveground organizations** work openly; they can communicate with and mobilize large numbers of people. **Underground groups** protect themselves through secrecy, compartmentalization, and other scrupulous security practices. (See pages 225-9, 248)



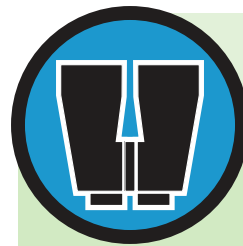
## Compartmentalization

Underground organizations don't just have external firewalls. Internal firewalls also divide the organization into compartments or cells. Underground groups are extremely careful about how they communicate. (See discussion and diagrams, pages 255-8)



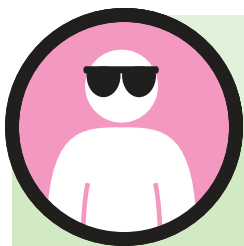
## Security Culture

**Security culture is a powerful tool for activist safety.** At its core, security culture is based on the principle of **need to know**. In security culture, you don't ask questions about illegal or persecuted things you don't need to know about—say, whether an acquaintance is a member of an underground group. (See "Security Culture at a Glance", pp. 249-251)



## Operational Security

Resistance groups also **use security techniques while carrying out actions**. Aboveground groups may increase their security at a disruptive march with highly visible legal observers and videographers to discourage police violence, or they might keep the exact route of the march a secret until the last possible moment, or use a radio scanner to adjust their plans. (p. 258 and also Ch. 8: *Intelligence & Reconnaissance*)



## Low Profile

People who want to use risky, underground resistance—either immediately or at some point in the future—try to keep a low profile. They want to avoid leaving a "paper trail" (literally or digitally) that would link them to militancy. Likewise, aboveground activists need to consider their privacy and protect their information from police or hate groups. (pp. 249-253)



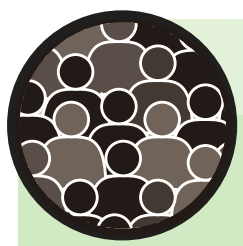
## Active Counterintelligence

Resistance movements need more than passive security. **We need conscious movement defense**, and that requires **studying history and current events** and understanding the many ways that movements are suppressed and destroyed so that we can recognize patterns and make the specific, appropriate responses. (See Chapter 9: *Counterintelligence & Repression*)



## Careful Communication

Because surveillance is used universally against resistance movements, members must be careful in communications. **Everyone should use encrypted email and messaging whenever possible.** And again: not everyone needs to keep a low profile. **It's important that many people speak openly and publicly in support of resistance of all kinds.** (See pages 253-4, and "Online Security Resources")



## Safety in Numbers

Resistance movements that focus on security to the exclusion of outreach and recruitment can be easily isolated and picked off. **Ultimate security depends on growing strong, diverse, inclusive movements**, making them difficult to contain or repress. (p. 295, and Ch. 4: *Recruitment & Training*)



## Screening

To maintain security and safety, organized resistance groups of all kinds **screen members for behaviors that could be destructive to the group**. This could mean anything from nasty attitudes to openly abusive behavior. (See p. 225-6 and appendix.)



## Safety & Care

If misapplied, security consciousness can be terribly damaging; paranoia can destroy organizations. Some groups face danger from harmful people within the movement. **Effective movements do whatever they can to ensure the safety of their members, and to take care of one another.** For most movements, this is the single most important tool to emphasize. (See 259 and 295 onward)

**Want more details and context?** Read Chapter 6 of *Full Spectrum Resistance* to learn how these tools have been used (or misused) by groups like the African National Congress, the Black Panther Party, and the Weather Underground—as well as more recent examples like the Green Scare.