

To the International Anarchist Movement Three Security Proposals



To the International Anarchist Movement: Three Security Proposals

Original text in English

No Trace Project

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notrace.how/blog/three-proposals/three-proposals.html

This text is addressed to the international anarchist movement, which we'll define as the sum of individuals fighting for anarchist ideas around the world. This movement is in conflict with its natural enemies—the State, fascist groups, and so on—and must protect itself if it is to survive in this conflict. In this text, we make three proposals for the international anarchist movement to consider in the coming years in order to allow anarchists to continue attacking while limiting their chances of getting caught.

1. Share knowledge internationally

Our enemies organize internationally through cooperation between police and intelligence agencies and new developments in science and technology—the increasing precision of DNA forensics and the proliferation of drones being just two examples. This means that a repressive technique used in one country may soon appear in another where it is not yet being used. It also means that an effective countermeasure used by anarchists in one country may be effective in another. **We should therefore share knowledge of repressive techniques and countermeasures on an international level.**

Ideally, any experience of repression or experimentation with countermeasures that might be of interest to other anarchists should be written up, translated into several languages, and made public. When anarchists are arrested and brought to trial, we can often obtain court documents that reveal how they were caught: we should exploit this and publish analyses of such documents, bearing in mind that information obtained in this way may be partial or distorted. We should experiment with new countermeasures and write and publish reports on these experiments (except in cases where the State might adapt and weaken the countermeasure by reading the report). We should try to collect information at the source: read police training manuals, steal police files, analyze data leaks from police servers.

A specific feature of the international anarchist movement is its decentralization. We see this not as a weakness but as a strength: in addition to preventing the hierarchies inherent in centralized organizations, it makes it harder for our enemies to target us because they cannot topple the whole

movement by disrupting one part of it. However, this decentralization also makes it harder for us to share knowledge across borders. To overcome this, we see two options: developing informal bonds with other anarchists by meeting at international book fairs and other events, and using the Internet. We propose using the No Trace Project as an international platform to share the knowledge that is suited for sharing on the Internet, not as a replacement for informal bonds but as a useful supplement to spread information beyond existing informal networks.

2. Establish a security baseline

Anarchists who carry out direct actions should analyze the risks associated with their actions and take appropriate precautions: dress anonymously, be mindful of video surveillance and DNA traces, and so on. However, this is not enough. If only those who carry out actions take precautions, it is easier for our enemies to target these individuals. This is, firstly, because they stand out: if only a handful of comrades always leave their phones at home, for example, this could be an obvious starting point for an investigation with no other specific leads. And secondly, because our enemies can get information about them through their friends who do not carry out actions: if someone doesn't use social media but is mentioned on their friends' social media, for example, an investigation could query their friends' social media to get information about them. **We should therefore establish a security baseline that everyone in anarchist networks agrees to follow, including those who have never carried out direct actions and have no intention of doing so.**

We can't say what this baseline should be, as it will depend on each local context, but we can give some ideas. As a bare minimum, everyone should help hide information from our enemies by not speculating about who is involved in an action, not bragging about one's own participation in an action, not talking to the police, and encrypting any computer or phone used for conversations with other anarchists using a strong password. Discuss sensitive matters exclusively outdoors and without electronic devices, and don't make it obvious to your social environment who you are having sensitive conversations with (e.g. don't ask someone to “go for a walk” in front of people who aren't involved in the project being

discussed). In addition, we think everyone should stop using social media (and definitely stop posting photos of other anarchists, even with their consent, because this helps the State map anarchist networks) and leave their phones at home at all times (not just during actions). Carrying your phone with you has security implications for everyone you interact with.¹

It can be difficult to convince people to follow such a security baseline, especially if they think they have no personal interest in following it. If someone is reluctant, we should remind them that it's not just their security that's at stake, but also the security of other anarchists around them who may be carrying out or planning to carry out direct actions. Everyone who wants actions to happen has an interest in making anarchist networks as difficult as possible for the authorities to repress.

3. Explore new horizons

Our enemies evolve over time as they refine their strategies and techniques. We should prepare not for the battles that already took place, but for those yet to come. **We should therefore go beyond our current security practices, anticipate the evolution of our enemies, and develop new countermeasures.**

Here are three issues we think the international anarchist movement should explore in the coming years.

Drones

Aerial surveillance is rapidly becoming cheaper and more efficient. How should we react to the presence of police drones at riots, anarchist events, and so on? How can we detect or take down drones? Should we prepare for the risk of drones being used for routine aerial patrols, and if so, how?

Facial recognition technologies

In 2023, a journalist tracked down German left-wing militant Daniela Klette, who had been in clandestinity for decades, by using facial recognition technology to match a decades-old photo of her with a recent

¹<https://anarsec.guide/posts/nophones>

photo from Facebook taken during a dance class. What can we do against this threat? How can we prepare for the increasing integration of facial recognition technology into public video surveillance systems?

Lack of insight into police activity

Until a few years ago, radio scanners were used by anarchists to monitor police frequencies, for example to learn about nearby police activity while carrying out a direct action. In most contexts, this is now impossible because police communications are encrypted. Can we develop new techniques to functionally replace radio scanners or, more generally, to gain insight into police activity in a given area?

About the authors

We're the No Trace Project. For the past three years, we've been building tools to help anarchists understand the capabilities of their enemies, undermine surveillance efforts, and ultimately act without getting caught. We plan to continue in the years to come. We welcome feedback. You can visit our website at notrace.how, and contact us at notrace@autistici.org.

This text is available as a zine (in Letter² and A4³ dimensions).

Let's prepare ourselves, and may luck be on our side.

²<https://notrace.how/blog/zines/three-proposals/three-proposals-booklet-letter.pdf>

³<https://notrace.how/blog/zines/three-proposals/three-proposals-booklet-A4.pdf>

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No Trace Project / No trace, no case. A collection of tools to help anarchists and other rebels **understand** the capabilities of their enemies, **undermine** surveillance efforts, and ultimately **act** without getting caught.

Depending on your context, possession of certain documents may be criminalized or attract unwanted attention—be careful about what zines you print and where you store them.