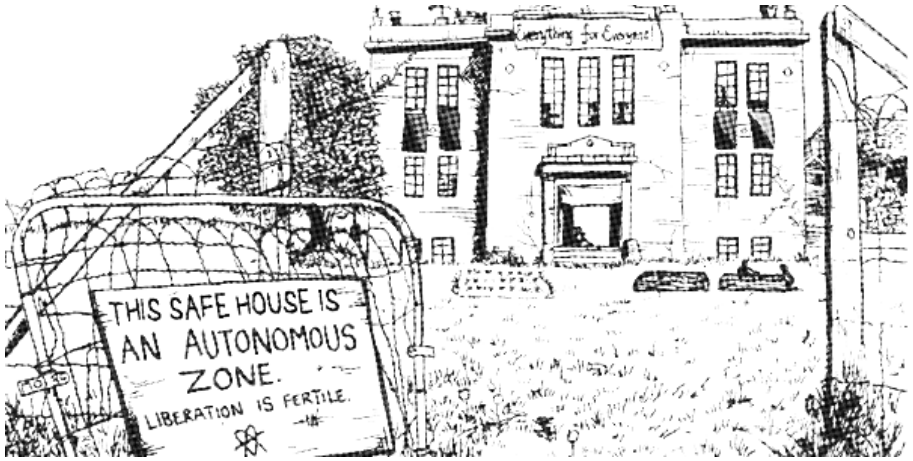
In the world of resistance without formal structures, especially within anarchist networks, security culture emerges as a foundational principle that permeates nearly every aspect of collective and individual life. […] The safe house, meanwhile, is the most tangible embodiment of that spirit. […] Nothing is ever truly "safe" in a world under perpetual surveillance, but the safe house becomes a space where survival—both physical and mental—remains possible to fight for.

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.

Security Culture and Safe Houses

Sustaining the Network, Nurturing Continuity



Security Culture and Safe Houses: Sustaining the Network, Nurturing Continuity

Original text in Indonesian

Security Culture dan Safe House: Menjaga Jaringan, Merawat Keberlangsungan

Immanuel Solus

2025

contemplativepublishing.noblogs.org/post/2025/07/30/security-culture-dan-safe-house-menjaga-jaringan-merawat-keberlangsungan-immanuel-solus

English translation

Anonymous

theanarchistlibrary.org/library/immanuel-solus-security-culture-and-safe-houses-english-version

Layout

No Trace Project

notrace.how/resources/#safe-houses

before encrypting conversations, plotting escape routes, or safeguarding shared spaces.

Build your own refuges—in small towns, on the village edge, in cramped rentals, or in old family homes. They need not be large or perfect. What matters is that they are cared for. Maintained. Agreed upon.

Because while they have offices, satellites, and prisons, we have only one thing: the network. And the network will not survive without a culture that knows when to speak, when to remain silent, and when to disappear.

Enough of being the target. Now is the time to become the shadow—and never be caught!

In the world of resistance without formal structures, especially within anarchist networks, security culture emerges as a foundational principle that permeates nearly every aspect of collective and individual life. It is not merely a set of technical procedures, but a way of living—rooted in deep awareness of risks, in the decision to safeguard one another, and in ethical choices when confronting repression. It grows out of lived experience and defeat, out of wounds that we refuse to repeat.

The safe house, meanwhile, is the most tangible embodiment of that spirit. It is not only a place of concealment but of care. It shelters those forced to disappear from the state's radar, those needing time to recover after direct action, or those facing legal, social, and psychological pressure. Nothing is ever truly “safe” in a world under perpetual surveillance, but the safe house becomes a space where survival—both physical and mental—remains possible to fight for.

These two concepts are intertwined. Without a living security culture embedded in daily habits, even the safest houses can be compromised. Conversely, security culture without physical spaces of refuge risks being reduced to sterile theory. It is at this intersection that they meet: in the silence of an unlisted house, in the unwritten yet lived discipline of resistance.

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These collaborations are not just technical but cultural, re-rooting values of trust, confidentiality, and collective responsibility in the practice of safe houses. In times of mounting repression against grassroots activism, such spaces remain among the few reliable sites for survival, reflection, and breath.

The journey, of course, is not without friction. Discipline falters, communication channels lack encryption, collective agreements sometimes slip. Emotional tensions are inevitable in cramped spaces shared for uncertain lengths of time.

Yet these failures are not the end. They are part of collective learning. Each mistake, lapse, or rupture becomes a living archive reminding us that security is never a guarantee—it is an ongoing struggle.

Conclusion: Build Your Own Spaces Before They Seal Off Everything

This world is already unsafe, and it will never be safe for those who refuse submission. What remains is only how far we go to protect each other, how resiliently we build sanctuaries amidst the ruins of a world stripping away privacy and freedom.

Do not wait for crisis before thinking about safe houses. Do not wait for raids before learning the basics of collective security. Do not wait for arrests

gained broader "social space" thanks to tacit sympathy among urban populations disillusioned with state and capital. A safe house might be a cramped apartment in the city, or a squatted building masked as a cultural collective.

Indonesia, too, has its quiet history. From the New Order[1] to today's waves of repression against environmental, labor, and student activists, safe houses have served both as hiding places and regrouping spaces. Though absent from official history, they survive in oral accounts and hidden footsteps. While perhaps less intense than in Greece or Latin America, Indonesia's anarchist milieu—with its informal character and intercity solidarity—proves the continued relevance of safe houses in local contexts.

The Past Two Years: A Quiet Affinity Growing

In recent years, there has been renewed growth in safe house practices across several Indonesian cities. Emerging first through collaborations between anarchist publishers and autonomous collectives, the network has expanded slowly but steadily. Without fanfare, small cells began building spaces of refuge—offering shelter to comrades under pressure, or simply space to heal without intrusion.

[1] *No Trace Project note:* The New Order was the regime of the second Indonesian President Suharto from his rise to power in 1966 until his resignation in 1998.

Why Safe Houses Matter in Anarchist Network

For networks operating outside formal systems—especially those organized in a decentralized, affinity-based way—the existence of safe houses is not merely a tactical option but a fundamental necessity. It is a place to breathe when the outside world becomes too hostile, a temporary shelter before returning to the streets, a quiet node in a constantly moving web.

Its functions are varied: a resting space for comrades fresh from an action, a transit point for those who must relocate suddenly, or a discreet storage site for materials that cannot be left behind. In certain situations, it becomes a hushed site of discussion, a place to regroup and recognize after chaos.

What makes a safe house truly essential. However, is not the physical space itself but the social relations that sustain it—trust, commitment, and the shared understanding that the house belongs to no one, but is held in common for the survival of something greater than the individual.

Practical and Cultural Challenges in Running a Safe House

As vital as they are, safe houses often confront complex challenges in practice. A common obstacle lies in romanticizing them—as cozy refurges

of escape rather than as integral parts of collective defense. This leads to dangerous lapses: weakened privacy, relaxed discipline, or disregard for agreed boundaries.

There are also issues deceptively small but potentially fatal: gossip. More often than not, information leaks not because of advanced surveillance but because of casual conversations dismissed as harmless. Many networks collapse not under enemy assault but due to negligence within.

Another recurring problem is the lack of internal education structures to transmit knowledge of security culture. With an aversion to hierarchy, many collectives struggle to create strong, sustainable horizontal learning processes. Newcomers are often thrust into risky situations without adequate awareness of the consequences.

Tensions also arise from the gap between expectations and reality. Not everyone is prepared for life in concealment. Psychological strain, isolation, and internal misunderstandings add burdens difficult to endure without strong support.

Traces of Safe Houses: From the World to the Archipelago

The history of underground movements is rich with examples of safe houses' importance. In the United States, The Weather Underground lived clandestinely for years, shifting from house to house to evade the FBI while continuing symbolic

strikes against state institutions. In Europe, the German *Rote Armee Fraktion* and the French *Réseau Jeanson* ran intricate networks to protect political fugitives and resistance militants.

In Asia, similar practices emerged, though often overlooked. In the Philippines, safe houses have long been lifelines for people's fighters and human rights activists facing military threats. In Myanmar and Thailand, they shelter political exiles, dissidents, and independent journalists hunted by military juntas. In such contexts, the house itself becomes a quiet form of defiance against brutal power.

One of the most strikingly organized examples comes from Greece, particularly after the 2008 financial crisis and the social upheavals that followed. Informal anarchist networks flourished as tangible social forces—through street protests, occupations of public space, sabotage, and direct action. Among the most well-known was the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire (CCF), a decentralized nihilist anarchist network active since the late 2000s. Known for symbolic arsons, parcel bombs to political figures, and incendiary manifestos blending existential critique, anti-authoritarianism, and armed individualism, the CCF relied heavily on safe houses.

Decentralized safe houses enabled members to move, hide, recover, or prepare actions while remaining difficult to track. Information circulated only within immediate circles, and each cell maintained high autonomy. In Greece, such practices