

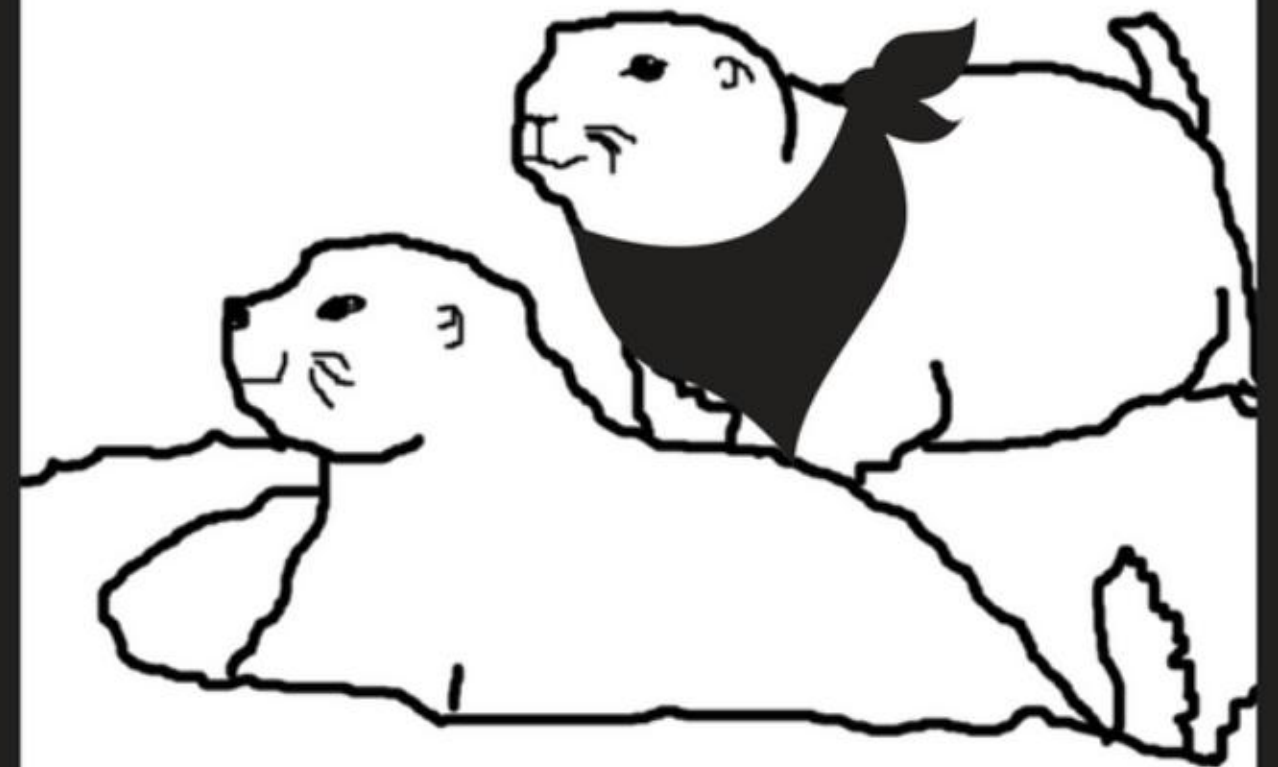


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THE INVISIBLE GROUND

*honoring each others
security needs as an act of
liberation & solidarity*



For those unfamiliar with the term “security culture” and the surrounding discussion, we have included...

Security Culture Basics

(stolen from a Crimethinc.com publication ,,, and paraphrased for updates)

A security culture is a set of customs shared by a community whose members may be targeted by a coordinated opposition such as government/fascists or corporate hegemony. These customs are designed to minimize risk.

Having a security culture in place saves everyone the trouble of having to work out safety measures over and over again from scratch, and can help offset paranoia and panic in stressful situations—hell, it might keep you out of trouble too.

The difference between protocol and culture is that culture becomes unconscious, instinctive, and thus effortless. Once the safest possible behavior has become habitual for everyone in the groups you work with, you spend less time and energy emphasizing the need for it, or worrying about how much danger you’re in, as you’ll already know you’re doing everything you can to be careful.

Security culture is a form of etiquette, a way to avoid needless misunderstandings and potentially disastrous conflicts.

Further reading:

- What is Security Culture https://www.sproutdistro.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/zine-what_is_security_culture.pdf

- Creating a Security Culture <http://assets.zinedistro.org/zines/pdfs/62.pdf>

- Security Culture Handbook <http://pdf.resistrnc.org/security.handbook.zine.pdf>

The Invisible Ground

Are we underground? Aboveground? Ground level?

The term “underground” can be taken to mean “hidden”. However, we also use these terms (especially “aboveground”) to define a relationship between our own behavior and standards of the mythological Legal Society, and to define our relationship with others relative to *their* participation in (or rejection of) the behavioral expectations of that myth. It’s time we admitted that, in this sense of the term, there is no “ground” to be “under” or “above”.

The invisible ground, that the state tells us is there, that we may somehow remain above and avoid their retribution even if we act against their interests — Clearly that ground does not exist. It’s only an idea, and one that the state has control over through its relationship with corporate media.

We have seen so-called “legal” activities met with the swiftest and most punitive retribution from the state, and we’ve seen it happen countless times. When an “aboveground” tactic that the state was happy to oblige before suddenly becomes an effective threat in some way, the state simply moves the invisible ground. Moving the ground is accomplished by presenting an action through corporate news media as an idea that is completely new to people, and then vilifying it. The concept of the ground itself is nothing more than a social control mechanism, a thing for which free people have no use.



There is no ground to be under or above. There is only action; with a choice between the actions of the people, or the abusive and oppressive re-actions of the state and its legions of fascists.

Fascists ARE the State

States uphold their own authority by maintaining a monopoly on violence. The state, through its police and military apparatuses, is considered the only actor that may legitimately commit violence. Fascism is a bargain struck between the state and certain privileged groups; that members of these groups may enact violence which is then legitimized by the state. As long as the violence serves the state's desires and ultimately upholds its authority, the state will not interfere.

Historically, when a state (especially capitalist states) finds its authority is in jeopardy it will commonly employ campaigns against an ideological "Other" in an attempt to reunify an increasingly skeptical population under its mythological authority and ensure its continued existence.

20th and 21st century fascism are examples of this practice, as is the colonial concept of whiteness itself.

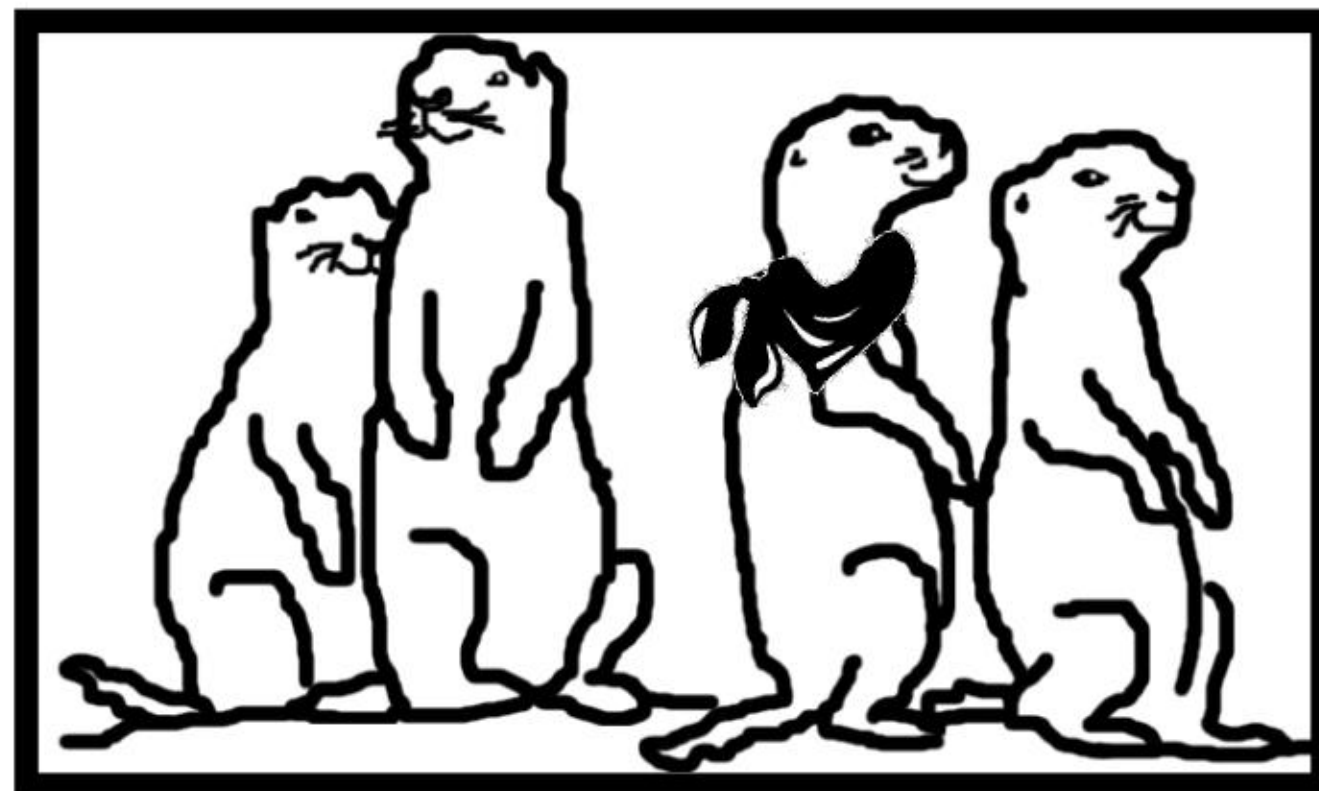
The myth of the Legal Society

There are many myths that are crucial in upholding behaviors that ensure the public's continued participation in, and identification with the nation state. Few of these myths are as pernicious as that of the Legal Society; the notion that the actions of the state are bound by a code of laws, and not simply motivated by the state's desires.

State atrocities committed through the police and military throughout history and in recent memory have proven the ideal of the free and legal society is a myth.

How many lived through the evictions of Oceti Sakowin and Sacred Stone Camp? How many more watched via livestream? How many injustices must we witness before we admit that the state is limited in action only by its own ability, and driven only by its own desire!

It doesn't matter if we believe our actions will be considered "legal". When the state feels threatened, legality becomes difficult to define.



Solidarity in Security

When we understand and honor our comrades' security needs, we act in solidarity to liberate our comrades. But, when we misunderstand our comrades' security needs we put ourselves and our comrades at risk. And, if we willfully dismiss, minimize or ignore the security needs of our comrades, we do the work of our oppressors.

Hi! We're some of your friendly neighborhood anarchists.

We wrote *The Invisible Ground* because we've had some difficult experiences in the fight against fascism. Namely, a lack of security culture. We think poor security culture is not OK because it puts people's lives at risk. Nevertheless, we do think it's totally OK to have difficult experiences, and we hope the insights we've shared here help us all work together to be in a position where we can win our battles against the fascists; whether those battles are physical, socio-structural, or ideological.—Debates over tactics will undoubtedly continue. That's a good thing. Diversity of tactics is good.

What should unite us is not the use of any particular tactic, but our commitment to security, to protecting one another from harm.

Using Good Security is Liberating

Security culture allows us to act together with confidence that we will be able to act effectively, and that our effective actions will not result in harm to us or our comrades.

To break free from the fascist world of states, police and militaries, and to feel SAFE among our comrades outside that old world is *extremely* liberating! When we feel like good security is being used, we feel like we can act without getting hurt. That good feeling leads to more frequent and more effective actions.

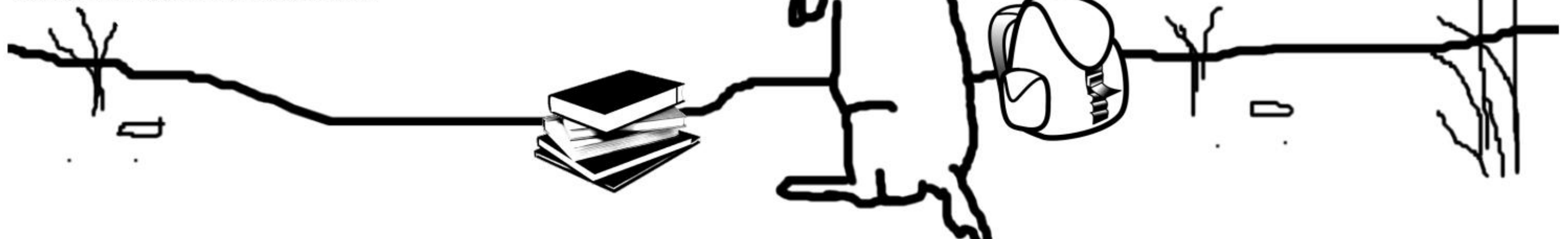
Without good security, we cannot confidently build communities of mutual aid capable of resisting attacks by fascists, capitalists and the state. **Security culture is not only liberating, but crucial to our liberation.**

Dismissing Security is Oppressive

When we neglect the security needs of our comrades we make it easier for our oppressors to harm them.

The fascists we organize against want our working groups to be transparent and easy to disrupt. A lack of security builds in-roads for fascists to attack us openly, and to infiltrate and undermine us.

Our oppressors the state want us to dismiss our own security concerns and turn to them for safety. Our comrades need us to value their security, so that we can work independently of our oppressors in order to end our oppression. So, when we dismiss the security concerns of a comrade, we do the work of our oppressors. No matter how understanding or reassuring we try to be in our dismissal, we make our comrades feel unheard, alone and afraid; exactly as our oppressors need us to feel.



Good Security is Intersectional

It has already been proven that intersectional mutual aid is an effective counterstrategy in denying the desires of our oppressors. What if we extended the concept of intersectionality to include honoring our comrades' varying levels of security need? - When we say that good security is intersectional, we mean that good security practices are those designed help protect the most marginalized and vulnerable from harm.

If I feel like I can act safely without a security measure, is that because of my privilege? If I act without that security measure, am I putting people at risk who I work with and who are less privileged than I am?

These are the questions we need to ask in order to build an intersectional security culture.

Security needs are simple and often easy to meet. The security needs of our comrades are similar to their other needs; emotional, physical, intellectual needs. We should work to mutually meet a long list of needs for one another. Security needs should naturally be a part of that list.

Good Security is Consent Based

As we work together, we make basic requests and discuss practices moving forward. We should ask our comrades what their security needs are before we act together. This way we do not burden our friends with risks they did not consent to take. - When we sense that communities are at risk and we want to protect them, we should reach out to those communities to see how (and if) they consent to be protected by us.

We must avoid being paternal, and build long term relationships with people already working in marginalized neighborhoods, offering opportunities to learn self-defense, so consent-based and cooperative planning process and response actions can be undertaken more easily and quickly when a need arises. Consensual security is empowering!