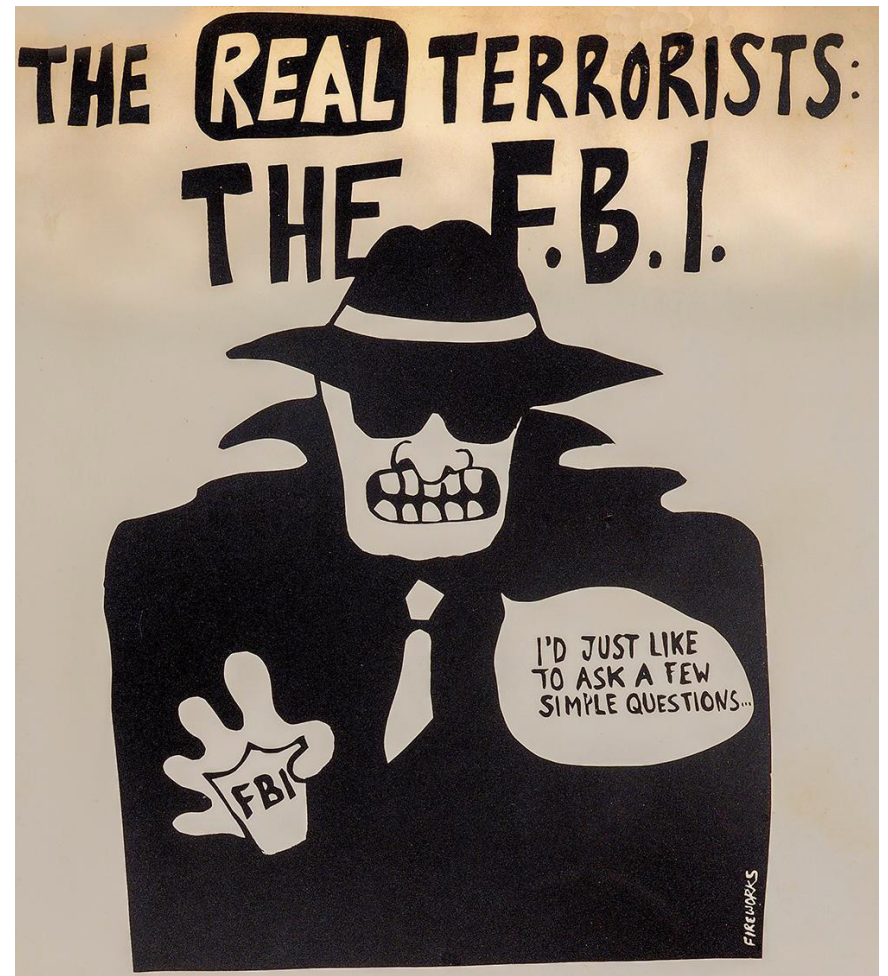


*We're struggling against capitalism in this area. We're on the offense as much as we can, not defense. Yes, they're going to have files on lots of people, they'll photograph us, etc. But we're fighting, and that's even in the small sense. Pick your battles but people are fighting. They always have.*

# A TALK ON SECURITY

with J. Sakai



## **PART TWO: Q&A**

**Q:** *I was just wondering, do we really need to figure out if someone is an agent or not, in order to figure out that they shouldn't be in one of our groups? One of those things that used to drive me nuts. Nobody wants to be the bad guy. That person is being sexist all the time, they shouldn't be in the group, right? A person who is disruptive so that we can't do our business during meetings shouldn't be in the group. I don't know, maybe it's different here, but a lot of people think it's the worst thing to be like, No you shouldn't be in this group. It's just really tough for some groups—maybe not every group—to say that somebody needs to take a time out.*

**J:** Yes, you're right. Can't say any more than that.

**Moderator:** *It's time, the meeting is over.*

*This informal talk was originally given on May 27, 2013, in Montreal, as part of Festival of Anarchy.*

Cover by Fireworks Graphics Collective

his line was, “Well, in order to get your thesis approved we want things like a psychological assessment of every person in this radical group. We want all their correspondence. We want to know their personal friends, etc, etc. We want to know this and we want to know that. This is all part of your thesis work. Just do this academic work and if you don’t give us this we’re throwing you out.” She was a rich kid at a fancy university. So, of course she said “I have to do this.” She was like a complete spy inside the group, but instead of being on the police payroll she was actually paying *them* lots of tuition money to get university credit for being a spy? You do know that capitalist culture is really weird, right?

This whole thing of hierarchy of roles thing, you know, really a bad idea, and not at all the same thing as practical division of labor. Working in the gray areas because we had to, we just looked up people, we thought about who they had worked with before. This wasn’t a big witch-hunt or anything. Just because we checked out peoples’ stories and looked at people’s background a lot because we had to, because we had bad experiences otherwise. This idea that we must automatically assume that everyone is good and trustworthy is just as crack as the idea that we must assume that everyone must be under suspicion and thought to be untrustworthy. Neither is realistic. We play the hand that we are dealt. And you do have to trust your gut and sometimes while you’re working it out you put people in a bubble. They’re in theory at the meeting, but actually you’re working around them, you’re protecting everyone from them but you’re just not saying anything, i don’t know, it sounds Machiavellian or whatever, but it’s a war here. We’re doing what we can, and if there are better ways then hopefully people will find them.

**Moderator: So if anyone has any questions?**

**Q:** *When you said that the amerikan police had a security file on everyone in this room, I was wondering what you were basing that on. I was wondering if it would apply to people just in this room or if it would apply to people outside on the street.*

**A:** Well, i don’t know how many people on the street they have investigative files on, but i’m pretty certain that if you’re a Canadian revolutionary or a radical in any real way, other than reading a magazine once a year, they’re definitely going to be interested in you. They’re absolutely into accumulating as much personal information as they can. It makes their job easier. That’s just the long and short of it, and they’re paid for it, so it’s a major activity of theirs. Remember, to Washington some young activists in Canada equals “international terrorists,” a non-u.s. citizen category in which anything goes, there are no rules or limitations on what they can do.

And these are questions that never get asked enough, among ourselves, about what it means. **And the reason we need to push the whole underlying question of politics is because a lot of people particularly guys try to present security as an area essentially where it’s about cool techniques or it’s technology. That’s completely not what it’s about.** And in terms of bad politics of every kind on this, there’s a lot of it around.

For example...i actually brought with me...this is a curiosity piece from the past that i plucked from my bookshelf. This is the Communist Party Manual on Organization printed

here first in the 1930s by the u.s. communist party which by that time had 200,000 members or something, controlled entire industrial unions, had strong arm squads to deal with people who bothered them and in fact, although it's not publicly admitted, sometimes had assassination units to deal with special comrades who they considered traitors. So this was like a real deal, this was not six guys alone in a room. But although it comes from the 1930s, it got reprinted and distributed all over again in 1975 to help guide that new generation of Marxist-Leninists rebuild in the u.s. It keeps getting recycled all over again.

So they had a whole chapter on how they should safeguard the party against informers and spies. And it says:

“Agent provocateurs are planted in the party either by the police department, Department of Justice, patriotic organizations or counterrevolutionary Trotskyites disrupting the work of the party. The methods they use are: A) Creating sentiment against the leadership of the party B) Systematic disruptive criticism against the line of the party.”

This goes on and on. This is like clearly total bullshit, right? On all these different levels. Clearly, this has nothing to do with security. They want to browbeat everybody into following their orders from the central committee or whoever. And if you're not following their orders then maybe you're a spy or agent, and that kind of arm-twisting bullshit.

So you think, hopefully you think, well this is kind of stupid. You think this was way back in the 1930s. It's gone forever in our modern age. Well it isn't. **Sometimes people still**

they sometimes didn't say anything at meetings. They'd say something fawning like: “Listen, I don't know too much about all these politics. I just wanna help and do your mailings, help do that kind of stuff.” And some groups in the old days, hopefully not now, there was a hierarchy of roles: the important people didn't do any work, physical work, they gave orders and talked, whatever. And all the way down the hierarchy, the kind of new, “unimportant” people that nobody knew, they were left to do a lot of the practical whatnot.

It always sounded a little backwards to me, but anyways... So time and again, we just learned that this was like unbelievably backward on our parts...

When Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz left Boston's Cell 16, the first radical feminist group in the united states, to start a branch that they called the Southern Feminist Revolutionary Union or Women's Union or something like that in New Orleans, along the way they picked up this young woman who was a graduate student and who said as usual something like, “I love this feminism, I'm all for you, I don't talk much, I don't know much about it, but, you know, I just want to help. Like I'll do all the paperwork. I'll keep minutes of every meeting. I'll do all the correspondence. You creative leadership people, I want to free you to just go out and I'll just take care of little things.”

So, of course, one day they came back to the office and discovered copies of letters that she had inadvertently left. It turns out of course, she really was a grad student and her professor apparently had been contacted by the FBI. So

formed a small informal but no nonsense work group to not have it happen again. That wasn't a secret at all, but they didn't share all the details of the work with everyone, which was understood as just common sense. One of the techniques they used was they dug up a sympathizer who owned a small business, and had access to doing credit checks and bank info. Anyone they had questions about, they ran a credit check to see if their identity and work record matched with what they said about themselves. They also did other similar things, sometimes with unanticipated results. As well as checking with movement sources more. As an old Chinese philosopher once said, "No investigation, no right to speak."

And oh, here's another thing that came in our movement experience a lot: there were people, there wasn't anything on the surface wrong with them, they were nondescript,

*This new idea that the movement has to be completely transparent to everyone as a principle, especially to people whom we don't trust, to me **this is an unconscious influence from the liberal culture or something.** That no one should be held back from knowing everything that any part of the movement is up to? This is really new but not too fresh. To be blunt, this is an idea that has come about from the current distortion of the left as part of the cultural zone of "play nice" middle-class reformism. As though bourgeois civil liberties mindsets developed in part by interaction with cops and courts should define how we in the struggle relate and work with each other. As though we aren't outlaws and rebels. This didn't exist in earlier eras when the movement was primarily made up of oppressed working people fighting to survive, guarded in their trust, and for good reasons. "Necessity knows no laws."*

use "security" as a club against people they disagree with or don't like in the movement. An ultra bad idea. To be specific, an ultra bad *opportunist* idea. Many activists think opportunism is only about someone selling out for a good job or some cash courtesy of the ruling class, and we do see that. But more I commonly we get hit with another kind of opportunism, that's people—sometimes even with what they believe are good motives—putting factional interests, the little interest of their group or tendency or their own political interests ahead of the needs and health of the struggle as a whole.

Like about a year ago or something, somebody pointed out to me that there was a letter in "Anarchy" magazine which said that a certain anarchist, whom we know as a real pain in the ass personally, was not born in the u.s. The guy was an immigrant and therefore under the actual letter of the u.s. laws, being a publicly identified anarchist, the FBI could deport him. So the letter-writer went on, given that he is really well known, doesn't the fact that they're *not* deporting him mean that he should be considered an agent by us?

i read this letter and i thought, "This is completely full of it." So we're supposed to let the FBI decide by their actions who we label as an agent or not? You know, by what the other side does? If they don't arrest you or something then that somehow "proves" you're an agent?! This is like crack addict thinking, frankly. Why did they even print that malicious letter?

Anybody who's done any security work knows that if you said to someone who really is an agent, "We are going to kick

you out of the movement unless you agree to follow the line of whoever, you know follow the line of Noam Chomsky or Joseph Stalin or whatever.” This guy’s an agent, most of the time he doesn’t care about left ideas! He’s going to say, “Oh yeah, i agree with whatever leadership 150%. i’ll agree to any dumb idea you have since i don’t care about your movement anyway!”

What does he care? He’ll agree to any idea you have. There’s no amount of brown nosing or yessing an agent will do to get inside, if that’s what his job is. As opposed, say, to causing fights and personal disputes and throwing sand in the wheels. So the Communist Party that printed that bullshit, 20 years later was being completely crushed by McCarthyism during the 1950s Cold War. Historians now estimate that 1 out of every 3 of their members was a police agent by that time. Well, good job on security, you guys!

You know, it turns out that following the leadership blindly, agreeing to everything, no matter what, it’s not a good idea from anybody’s point of view. The more critical, the more open, the more many-sided our dialogue and our thinking is and our examination of politics is, the more agents tend to stand out because they’re not of us in that sense.

*Q: You were mentioning how Czarist police had this division and more political policing has this division between “line them up and shoot them all” and something much more nuanced. I don’t know if you have heard of Frank Kitson? The Brigadier General, the British General, he wrote the manual on counter-insurgency based on Malaysia and Northern Ireland. I’ve taken it based on what i’ve read as the default basis that anglo-amerikan policing is based on.*

*because of guilt and still include them in everything that you might not want to include them in. I think that people could take a more balanced approach to it and be straightforward about it and try not to alienate everyone they have suspicions of. I don’t know what you think about that. It’s something that we tried recently.*

**J:** It’s true, a lot of security questions when it comes to infiltration are gray, they’re not black and white. Like most of them are gray. So you have to figure out how to deal with it. It depends on how much work you put into it. This may sound funny to you, but **we used to simply investigate people. It’s not a big deal to me.**

Once the main anti-war group in Chicago was in a crisis because the guy who had the mailing list, they couldn’t reach him by phone and they had to do an emergency mailing. So people went out to his house and they knocked on the door and he wasn’t home. “Where the hell is this guy? he’s a retired bookkeeper he told us, so where the heck is he? Oh, he’s probably at the neighborhood tavern.”

And so they went to the neighborhood tavern and said “Hey, you know so-and-so? Did you see him lately? You know, has he been here today?” And they said. “Oh, you mean so-and-so the cop?” And the anti-war people could only say, “What!?” It turns out the guy was a full-time on duty Chicago police detective, right? He had the only copy of the movement mailing list for this citywide group...

They threatened him with a lawsuit to get the only copy of the mailing list back, but it sure changed things. Among other stuff, the comrades involved felt like fools. So they

and pistols. They came in and did the assassination in front of 200 people and 2 of the 3 got away. (One was grabbed by the crowd). Even though all of them were known to the state, the 2 who escaped were never caught or publicly named. Although the police did arrest innocent people afterwards, of course, as they usually do. Malcolm's security didn't do anything to protect him, because it wasn't *his* security anymore. New York police who were normally all over revolutionary meetings, disappeared for that night, totally not in sight. What a coincidence, they decided to take the night off. So it all worked out really well for the oppressors. Not so well for our side.

This happened to us over and over and over again in one way or another, coast to coast. It didn't happen just once, it happened 50, 100, 200, 300 times and you know something, we hardly learned a damn thing from it. So if people are beyond that and they know that, that's excellent—sorry it's just ABCs, but it cost us a lot to tell you this, i mean the knowledge, people died and only then did we get the knowledge in effect that we're dealing with. It's not nothing.

**Q:** *I don't necessarily know if this is a positive example or not. I've had experience of groups I've been a part of having been infiltrated and I feel that one of the things that people have talked about a lot is about how much do you trust your gut? Like how do you go about trusting your gut if you think people are infiltrators without calling people out for being infiltrators when you could be wrong?*

*I would just caution people to not have just such a black-and-white... you have suspicions about people so they're an informant and you treat them like a spy, but at the same time you don't react against that*

*He talks about three stages, which combines both. So the first stage is when movements just exist, and what they should do is just find out everything about them, which reinforces what you were saying about how they want to have all the information.*

*The second stage is when those movements become more disruptive and the third is when they become revolutionary. The point is: When they become revolutionary you have all the names, you know who to kill. But in the meantime you should be more subtle about it.*

*In Quebec for example, the second stage was during the October Crisis, when they had all these names of people to arrest, or who they thought they should arrest. The 3rd stage was seen in Chile in the Pinochet Coup or after the Suharto Coup when they literally killed hundreds and thousands and millions of people, so I'm wondering whether we should posit these things as opposites or whether they can actually coexist, knowingly coexist as political policing.*

*Reading this 3 months later, i mostly remember how exhausted i was by that point in the discussion, and how it was hard for me to even keep in mind what the point was never mind being coherent. Our comrade was insightful bringing Gen. Frank Kitson and his counter-insurgency work up, because people speculate that he represents the most sophisticated repressive strategy in use. Certainly he's a real "name" in the field. Several other comrades at the meeting also informally asked us to discuss Kitson, which I completely didn't do. So here's finishing this up better.*

*To start, there's several questions wrapped around each other here. One is whether the classic tension has been overcome between the "let's just round 'em up, shoot them & imprison them" school of policing versus the more strategic police approach of manipulating and trying to permanently manage dissent? Have the two been blended by innovations*

*like Kitson's counter-insurgency plan into one smoothly integrated club?*

*The quick answer is no. One big reason that the old-school tendency of simply attacking dissent with raw often illegal state violence never dies is simple: that's what many police and military innately want to do, what they love doing! Same with the ruling class. This is their subculture, their default setting, which they revert to at every opportunity. These opposing state security tendencies may appear in public relations as a harmonious strategy, but in reality are always in inner conflict pushing to dominate one over the other.*

*This is the real world not the theory world. Like, in my neighborhood last holidays, between xmas and New Year's, the police did a coordinated series of over 20 drug raids to remind all the Mexican emigrants and poor New Afrikan families that santa claus was a white man with a club ruling them. "Happy New Year!" First we heard the rapid footsteps of big guys racing upstairs. Then the ritual shout of "Police! Open up!" followed a second later by a big smash as they broke into the next door apartment. It was the "B team." Not the SWAT dudes with all black combat garb, military helmets and assault rifles. But the "tactical intervention" squad, a half-dozen tall, young white boys in dark blue "tac" police coveralls and shotguns and pistols. Then we heard the "thud" after "thud" as they charged inside and knocked down to the floor and cuffed everyone in the apartment. This all took only seconds. All i could think of that moment, was to admire how disciplined their little daughter was, how she didn't cry or scream even though she must have been terrified.*

*Then an hour of capitalist fun overturning and smashing open all the furniture and cabinets searching for something illegal. Finally, after not finding anything except the big illegal thing—poverty—the euro-settler "tac" team uncuffed the undocumented Mexican family and just left*

and he had trained them, too. This is a guy who basically almost created the Fruit of Islam, the Nation of Islam's security people that cast a long shadow we all respected. So how did he get killed so easily in the Audubon Ballroom?

Answer: Eugene Roberts, police agent, who presented himself as war veteran, top martial artist...like, "I like roughing up bad guys. Anybody who causes trouble with you, Malcolm, well don't worry. I won't let anyone...blah, blah, blah"...

Malcolm liked that. Sounded really tough, man-competent, you know? He made him head of security. So, did Eugene Roberts have good security? Absolutely—for *his* mission. He had painstaking security. Everybody who walked into the Audubon Ballroom meetings was shaken down, patted down, their bags were emptied, you know, questioned, scrutinized, pushed around. Nobody was going to get past Eugene Roberts and his guys. After awhile, of course, many people stopped coming to Malcolm's speeches because they didn't feel like getting messed up and patted down on the way in, and people were complaining to Malcolm about it. So Malcolm said, "Well, this is counterproductive, this security thing!" So he said, "Okay, no more security, no more searching people at the door, no more patting everybody down, no more looking in their bags, just open the doors. It doesn't matter."

Bingo! Eugene Roberts struck the jackpot, got what he was aiming at with this murderous cop scheme. The minute he did that and then you got 3 dangerous other guys known to police coming into the weekly public meeting with shotgun

*What we do and don't do in our small spheres of political work, often has larger effects in the struggle far beyond us. Taking responsibility for that is hard.*

**Q:** *I wonder if you want to speak to...good politics is obviously a defense against infiltration and you gave a lot of examples that you can identify this person as an infiltrator because of their bad politics or because of our bad politics this person got a long way. But it also seems like branding people infiltrators, this is obviously really dangerous. I wonder if you could speak to some of the other preventative values of good politics or ways it may protect us that don't involve us identifying people as traitors, which is probably not even our biggest security problem.*

**J:** **It isn't. Security is like all politics, all living. It's art and craft in as much as you need to know how to practically do it. You need experience at it.** You can't go around saying, "oh, you have bad politics, you're an agent," that's like harmful and silly, frankly, i don't want to get into too much tactical stuff because tactical stuff depends on the actual situation, it isn't a big principle that you're going to run out and apply like a cure-all lotion kind of thing. And when i talk about egotism or patriarchy, in part that's because if i overemphasize it...in the sense that they seem to need cooler people as agents now, you know, who can fit in better. But of course in the '60s and '70s over and over and over again, we saw the same pattern. Only we couldn't stop ourselves. It was beyond our ability, because our politics weren't good enough. And not in any abstract way.

Like, you ask people how was Malcolm killed? If you say it was a conspiracy, then it must have been an operation and so how did it work, practically speaking? Malcolm had security

*like Batman, running down stairs for their squad cars laughing and shouting at each other happily, still on an adrenaline high. Give this everyday violence up, you got to be kidding? They live for this shit.*

*During the 1980s, some left writers in the u.s. began pointing to Kitson as a source of important warnings. This was mostly because small groups there & then such as the Revolutionary Armed Task Force and the black liberation army-coordinating committee were pursuing urban guerrilla activity in a still undeveloped way. Comrades needed to see what world-class capitalist anti-guerrilla strategy and tactics looked like. In particular, Kitson's heavy reliance on the tactic of pseudo-gangs or counter-gangs rang warning bells in our minds back then. To best check out that earlier discussion, you can read the paper "Pseudo-Gangs" in the June 1983 issue of the anonymous left journal "S1" on the kersplebedeb website.*

*But, no, Gen. Kitson's writings don't represent the latest shape of modern political policing. He rose up through the commissioned ranks through three British imperial counter-insurgency campaigns of the 1950s–60s—in Kenya, Malaya, and Northern Ireland. His campaigns are important as part of capitalist warfare in the era of the old Western colonial empires. But they have been superceded by newer strategy in this neo-colonial world.*

*It is true that he helped draw the tactic of pseudo-gangs or counter-gangs out of the bloody closet of Britain's Special Branch cops, who had used it way way back in the Palestine colony days against both Arab and Jewish underground organizations (not that it did them much good). That is, Kitson was relying on a specific political police tool that went back all the way to the founding fathers, i.e. the Czarist Okbrana who had used it. But like today's CIA drone warfare this was and is only a tactic used in specific situations not an overall strategy.*

*A pseudo-gang or counter-gang, incidentally, is when the political police form an imitation underground revolutionary cell or band; usually using some former guerrillas or rebels they have captured and convinced to “flip” and work for them. In order to infiltrate and often not simply to do arrests but to misdirect the whole insurgency. This goes beyond getting a few more comrades arrested. This type of tactic particularly extended into public mass movements, can have strategic impact. Even stalling and then derailing struggles. For instance, when particularly counter-productive left cults get artificially energized with hard-working agents and a tankful of government cash. They can appear to be a very successful “vanguard” that absorbs more and more new activists into a political crash and burn.*

*Gen. Kitson neither developed nor led the counter-gangs that he became so famous for after “Mau Mau” in the 1950s; that was all done quietly by the British empire’s police Special Branch. But Kitson saw the opportunity to grab all the public credit and get famous for work the army didn’t even do. Incidentally, the Special Branch officer who developed and personally commanded the counter-gangs in Kenya was expelled in the 1960s after Kenyan Independence, of course; he ended up spending 20 profitable years running the feared secret police for the royal family of Bahrain.*

*Also, remember what the most basic thing is we learned about capitalism’s “experts” on repression? That they are always lying to us. Like, just a few years ago, the public was told how u.s. Gen. Petraeus had supposedly brilliantly led the amerikan occupation to victory in Iraq over the “terrorists,” right? Mostly b.s. in reality. Kitson is just the previous NATO generation’s “Petraeus.” What Kitson did is nothing like what he claimed in print.*

*Gen. Kitson’s work was part of the warfare of the previous colonial era*

*So “A” wasn’t bothered by everyone’s disbelief in the two agents in his clique.*

*While we dismissed them and laughed it off, the two fumbling agents had tripped over a very useful piece of information: “A” who was an experienced player in the left could be a security “aircraft carrier” for their whole team, a controversial though respected activist but one who could be manipulated to give political cover to more police infiltrators. How valuable that one piece of information could be.*

*“A” himself got deeper into the struggle over the years, being smart and curious and important. Wanting to be closer to “real” hard-core struggles such as Black nationalism and working-class organizing and even supporting urban guerrilla politics in other countries. Inevitably, we now understand, as he got deeper into the struggle in at least one important situation he was used to run cover for and validate a police agent who outwardly was his “comrade.” How often this happened we aren’t completely sure, but the magic number isn’t likely to be zero.*

*This is something those of us back in early days never understood or foresaw, because his major league egotism was just so “natural,” so common for many of us in the movement back then that it didn’t stand out. It was accepted as normal static on our political radios. Sometimes the most cutting secrets are the ones hidden in plain sight, hidden it turns out by our own hands from ourselves. **So human agents aren’t just walking “ears” for the police. They are themselves catalysts as all people are, changing things and transforming things that might have not been otherwise.** The problem in the end turned out to be not with the two clumsy agents but with the smart and “political” comrade who wasn’t thought to be dangerous like an agent would be—and we totally didn’t see it coming.*

bottles if we'd ever had any actual secrets to protect (yes, it was also true that any remotely sensitive discussions these clowns were kept away from).

So that "Dynamic Duo" was a good example of complete political police ineptitude, or a badly failed attempt at intelligence-gathering which we had deftly foiled? No, unfortunately, in the slippery long range of things it worked out in a way that shouldn't have surprised me but did.

James Yaki Sayles always told his New Afrikan comrades, over and over, "We have to take ourselves more seriously." This is a lesson which was really borne home to me, for instance, in this case. And, by the way, this relates to whether agent infiltration is so important to them anymore in an age of total electronic surveillance? This is a question that is raised all the time now not just by that comrade but whenever the issue of movement security comes up. The interesting fact is, our enemy has a "spare no expense" agenda when it comes to fighting the movement, weak though we are. They want it all, every tool, every weapon, and **definitely always see a priority need for human informers and agents. We can make it plain.**

While everyone in our little group back then laughed off these two obnoxious and obvious white guy agents, what we weren't thinking of was any larger picture. Like, to start with, if they were so isolated then how did they stay in contact with things at all? The answer was that they were part of a small dissident tendency led by one very smart comrade who wasn't considered an agent. Who was politically well educated from the IWW to Leninism, much more so than myself or most other young comrades. Let's call him "A." So what did that relationship mean? "A" turned out to have a bad weakness which we saw but didn't see. His critical faculties got suspended whenever someone was willing to be his follower, to praise him and politically support his personal agendas.

of the 1930s–1950s, and is not directly transferable to today's more complex neo-colonial period (what capitalism calls "Globalization" and academics call "neo-liberalism"). His writings are part of modern total warfare in and against the colonial periphery, not so much policing inside the imperialist metropolis. Although Kitson himself didn't agree, of course. In his once-classified paper for the Imperial General Staff, "Low-Intensity Operations," Kitson rashly outlined how their army units should be spread out to be a secret part of all British local governing down to the village level, using pseudo-gangs to crush things like trade union strikes, ethnic minority protest campaigns and other social "problems." He even rashly revealed that pseudo-gangs were then being used in the u.s. empire against New Afrikan militants. That was all supposed to be secret. The resulting leaks and liberal scandal and public outrage put the ever-ambitious Gen. Kitson back in his cushy place.

Kitson's abstract pronouncements about neat stages of intelligence-gathering and deployment of dead white men's tricks like pseudo-gangs, are nothing like his own dirty military reality. **Intelligence-gathering doesn't quietly precede repression as its own stage of well-behaved activity, rather it itself is the product of constant intervention and repression in peoples' lives.** In order for his beloved pseudo-gangs to work in Kenya (the first and only war where they became the primary combat tactic), two much larger weapons had to be rumbled out of the garage and put into play.

That was what in today's CIA terminology were "population regroupment" and "enhanced interrogation" programs. Out of the 1.5 million Kikuyus alive in Kenya then, fully 1 million were uprooted from their traditional villages at riflepoint and forced to move into new locations chosen for them, into improvised guarded settlements. Where their movements were restricted and their access to food kept at starvation

levels so that no supplying of the rural guerrillas could take place. Massive interrogation activities went on constantly, particularly of the over 77,000 Kikuyu arrested or captured as “Mau Mau” and held separately in prison camps at their height. These British interrogations were based on mass executions as coercion and mass torturing and mutilations such as castration. Rape was such an ordinary activity that it wasn’t even thought of as part of torture, but rather as a “perk” that the “civilized” British had granted their Afrikan mercenary troops and themselves to do at will.

Robbing families of their scant money and possessions, extortion, torturing to death, killing to settle personal scores and spontaneous killing for the enjoyment of it, were common British military activities against the unarmed civilian population. It reached scandalous proportions even by European colonial standards (which is a statement by itself), and Kenya’s British police commissioner Arthur Young resigned rather than be further implicated. In 2013, after a long grassroots campaign that went mostly unreported here, some 1500 Kikuyu torture interrogation survivors received official letters of apology from the Crown, as well as promises of small cash reparations. But most of the many thousands of torture victims were long dead. Officially the British Empire claimed 11,000 “Mau Mau” deaths by their forces in the 1952–1956 “Emergency,” but actually the daily killing was so widespread and constant that no real body count was kept. Figures in the many tens of thousands are heard.

Now, can you imagine the capitalist state being able to get away with or even desiring such a disruptive bloodbath in Manhattan’s Upper West Side or at Montreal’s Concordia University? If what happens here was proportionate to what Kitson & Co. did in the Kikuyu uprising, we would be talking about forcibly moving millions of Euro-settlers to tent cities in barren areas, behind barbed wire and under armed guards,

need it for the movement, use it,” and walked away. Serious.

So it isn’t true—and look at Private Manning and all that—it isn’t true that we’re just on the defensive. We’re fighting politically with them. We’ll never stop them from doing some messing with us and causing us casualties and they won’t stop us from winning people over.

*So it’s just like, when i came into the movement at 18 and didn’t know anything but was glad to find others and do something political. And within a year i met people in or around the group who were agents. So earlier i’ve mentioned this one college dropout guy acting like a Hollywood version of a revolutionary who turned out to be working for the FBI. There was another settler guy, his close “comrade” and friend in the group, who turned out to be a part-time informer for a county sheriff’s office.*

*You know what i said about terrain, about knowing what the changes and moves in our terrain mean? Well, this second guy stood out like a dead spot to everyone because...he really hated us! i mean, hated us all personally, as people. He was a student at a conservative bible college, and he truly hated and feared all of us lefties so much that he couldn’t even hide it. That stood out. He was acting like the pope trying to be undercover at a convention of Judas fans. Which made comrades think: why is a fundamentalist bible college student who seems to really hate almost everyone in the group even around us at all? There was nothing natural about it. Definitely, this second guy was a candidate for world’s worst agent award.*

*It was so pathetic that comrades mostly laughed it off. And anyway, our social-democratic group wasn’t exactly shaking capitalism from its foundations, we would have rejoiced and broken out the champagne*

**Q:** *In your presentation you talked a lot about infiltration, I was just wondering especially today how important you think that technique is versus acquiring information through surveillance of social media or photo video surveillance?*

**J:** Well in reality today, they're both important, i mean the thing is maybe we think they don't need to infiltrate a group because they got it wiretapped and videotaped and everything only, that isn't how they think really. They really want their people there. It isn't just information in an abstract sense. The biggest problem they have politically is that they have information that they don't understand. And that's their biggest problem actually, when we fight. They need people to stir the mix, cook the dish.

This is a war, which means that we're never going to not have agents or infiltrators. That's like saying you'll have a war but you'll never have casualties, that's silly. Of course there'll be infiltrators. Just like they'll never stop us from reaching and influencing and winning over people on their side. Which we do.

i have a friend who convinced a cop to leave their side, to not be a cop. Had him as a student in Ethnic Studies, an Asian cop, and he got convinced—because it's pretty convincing—that cops are the complete enemies of people of color and oppressed people. Just practically speaking, unless you really like shooting people who look like you, you know, who are poor and struggling, you shouldn't be a cop. And the last day of the course he came to my friend after the others had left, he thanked him for what he'd done, he unbelted his holster with his 9mm and gave it to my friend and said: *"If you ever*

*torturing hundreds of thousands of young white women and men in an uncontrollable bloodbath. Even done on a much lesser scale it would be a big systemic shock. That's what Kitson's actual strategy would mean if applied to the privileged metropolitan population of empire and its often spirited but frustrated left.*

*To say that this would be hugely counterproductive as a way of coping with the actually existing left here is a big understatement. Which is why the more experienced and practical levels of state power gently spanked Gen. Kitson and reminded him to follow orders and confine his insane homicidal schemes to indigenous and neo-colonial societies, to the Bantustan, to the ghetto and the rez and the barrio. Not to dream of putting settler anti-nuke committees into concentration camps or gleefully maiming white trade union dissenters. Unnecessary overkill and rocking their whole boat were out, to say the least.*

**Q. continued:** *And the other one was about bad politics. So bad politics is sexist, macho behavior, but it strikes me that in 2013, the political police know that and practice feminist anti-oppressive kinds of behavior. In a really superficial way that movie "Zero Dark Thirty" which is highlighting female CIA agents who were essentially responsible for finding out where Bin Laden was, using techniques that were more using the mind rather than macho torture or what have you. There are examples of infiltration where it is not the Brandon Darby type macho person but rather a more subtle, listening and nurturing type person who gets a lot of information by being a good stereotypical feminist or what have you. So I'm wondering whether we have to modify our idea of what bad politics is because political police knows that well enough and knows that that macho person will be more targeted.*

*My 3rd point is: I find that the fear of the police knowing everything debilitates people from being active and the statement that you made*

*that every revolutionary has a file on them—is there more of a nuance to that? In terms of if you're politically active, if you're publicly active, if you've done certain things maybe? It strikes me as sometimes the fear of what the state can do debilitates people from being active rather than what they're actually doing and certainly there's plenty examples of infiltration and stories we can share of their overwhelming power, but there are also examples of people being able to overcome that despite their resources.*

*Those are 3 really big things I wanted to get it all out and have you respond to.*

**J:** Well, the thing about security, i agree about a lot of things you say. In terms of them learning to be more nuanced, absolutely. Though, you know, a lot of times they use a range of agents, approach wise, as well as short-term and long-term infiltration with different characteristics, always have. But this is a funny world about fear...

This isn't a defensive battle is the main thing. When we conceive of security as an area of struggle, that doesn't mean what security is, police are trying to harass us, arrest us, whatever infiltrate our organizations and we have to defend ourselves. This is not what it's about. We're struggling against capitalism in this area. **We're on the offense as much as we can, not defense.** Yes, they're going to have files on lots of people, they'll photograph us, etc. But we're fighting, and that's even in the small sense. Pick your battles but people are fighting. They always have.

For example, it used to be a custom that a lot of people in the movement didn't get their picture taken. Family photo?

and compromises, which can only be discussed in practical details. So you and i would be going back and forth between ourselves on this forever, i'm sorry, but it's too big for here.

**Q:** *Can you say what you mean in more detail by security itself, like in a general sense. Because we keep saying it, and the examples tend to help, but i thought it was about the art of attack and defense, and we're always talking about defending ourselves. Could you tell us what you mean by security?*

**J:** i'm not certain i quite understand, but the thing is this: **security is not just stopping infiltration.** That's a big thing. Because we're actually fighting in an area of the overall struggle, fighting capitalism and its state. Not as an idea or something far away that we protest, but in this area quite intimately.

When you go to school, there's a branch of capitalism that's interested in selling you a tuition. And there's a branch of capitalism that's interested in selling you shoes. And there's a branch of capitalism that's interested in nullifying everything we do as rebels and if necessary killing us, right?

Security is fighting that branch of capitalism. That's what it's about. It's not basically defensive in nature. It's about the same political struggle we do in our mass demonstrations, you know, in actions or teaching, in whatever, when we go into this and security blends into the edges of the larger struggle. That's why when we start talking about these examples, they blend into organizing and they blend into it because it's part of one political whole.

how you do things. **Do serious politics with your homies, people who you really know**, if you want to do whatever, i'm just saying you should be careful about how you do politics because it changes your life one way or another. This is like a little lesson about how to do it or not do it." Well you see, nobody said this to these guys necessarily.

But who takes responsibility for these things? A movement really has to set up mechanisms. Just like there's a book fair here and people take responsibility for all the manifold functions, glorious and unglorious of the book fair. And if you have a movement people have to take responsibility for all its functions. Hey, security is one of these functions and it's not just being a marshal, and it's not just having a few official roles, right. It's a communal political activity.

**Q:** *This question is because I have been thinking about the challenge of making good security compromises. For instance if you make use of a secure encrypted form of email, because you don't want to be monitored, that inconveniences you somewhat. And because there is a great deal of uncertainty about how closely we're being monitored and what the most secure ways of doing things are, we might be sort of shooting ourselves in the foot rather than just getting stuff done. You said earlier that the security stuff is part of a bigger picture of what we're trying to do, right. So if we make bad security compromises, we're actually going backwards a little bit. We go backwards sometimes we go forwards sometimes, not every decision we make has to be perfect. I read about security in general (inaudible)... What do you think about, how do you make good security compromises?*

**J:** Sorry, but i won't answer this question. (stir and comments in audience) It's too big. It's a huge subject of trade-offs

include me out! You go to their house, no pictures of them, no photos of them at all. They were laughed at, "Oh man, you're just out of it! The cops have ten thousand pictures of you at demonstrations so why do you have to worry about that?"

That's true, but the thing is, **they like us have lots of room to mess up in daily life, in the daily details of work. We want to give them every opportunity on every practical detail to do it wrong**, and we want to work it that way. So for example when Assata Shakur popped in New Jersey—so suddenly she's not buried in prison but a fugitive, suddenly she's gone, wanted posters go up all over the country put up by the FBI. One problem: the photo they used of Assata was a surveillance photo from what i could tell, and you actually would never recognize Assata meeting her on the street from that photograph. Funny thing

*A few years ago a comrade was telling me about an "outrage" that happened to him at a protest march. He had taken his young child, carrying the kid finally at the head of the march, and suddenly some black bloc or someone behind them he couldn't see started throwing stones and bottles at the cops. The cops charged them with clubs, of course, and he was really scared that his kid would get hurt. And really pissed at the "anarchists," not that he knew who had started shit irresponsibly he thought—he angrily called them "agents provocateurs" even. My own take: what's that old left saying, "A revolution is not a tea party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined..."? Many children have been hurt in the struggle. Times i took my kids when they were little on a demo, and was worried for them. Don't take your kid to a demo if you want them to be completely safe. And if you want the movement to do completely guaranteed safe actions, sign up in a different world not this real one.*

happened: a group was putting out one of those support Assata posters, with a accurate picture of her face on it. And rads had to go tell them, “Hey, good work but you should blur her picture up some, make her less recognizable.” It never occurred to the comrades that the FBI had missed the ball completely and we didn’t want to accidentally do some of their job for them.

So why did they do it? Why did they use a non-functional wanted picture? Who knows. But i want to give them every chance to do it. That’s not a stray thought, but a basic principle of our work. You better believe i’m not mailing photos to the FBI, because they can mess it up too.

Marilyn Buck, the settler anti-imperialist urban guerrilla, exact same thing with her. She became a fugitive, escaped from prison, etc. They put out a government wanted poster. Photograph from what i could tell came from an old college newspaper, kind of like a junky social news article or something. Absolutely would not recognize her after many years in prison and the struggle from that photograph.

Their use of these things, this is part of their political work. They’re not doing it just to arrest us, they’re doing it to criminalize us, to create fear, to picture us as the evil people, to get the people to be afraid, shouldn’t be near them, etc. And we fight them on this.

There was a young artist who took part in a militant demonstration against the previous settler-colonial government of South Afrika (before it went neo-colonial) which sent its Springboks sports team, famous team, to tour

struggle with their security agencies—just another area—with capitalism.

*Q: I was wondering, you pointed out before, there’s no “Security for Dummies” book where you can learn various techniques and various strategies but that seems like that’s something that’s widely deficient within our movement and people are getting infiltrated quite easily by police surveillance. As you were pointing out, it’s the tradition that that information get handed down orally, but if we don’t have that information how would you recommend that we cultivate a stronger sense of security within our movements?*

*J: i can’t say that i know the answers, i don’t. Like for example the NATO 5 in Chicago, who were set up to be guilty of trying to throw Molotov cocktails at Mayor Emmanuel’s house. Popular idea, of course. But you shouldn’t let the police agent set you up to do it, right? In every mobilization, in every organization, people have to quietly organize themselves to take responsibility for teaching and training.*

So, you start to learn things and when there are problems like with radical environmental actions or the NATO 5, well... The problem wasn’t with these guys who were perhaps injudicious in how they related to this cop, it’s the fact that if we don’t assume responsibility for politics this is the result. People come, who are not educated, they’re let’s say naïve, they’re vulnerable to being worked up by the cops, let’s say. This is one problem. It’s not the biggest problem, necessarily. There’s nobody looking out after them. There’s nobody saying, “If you want to be doing controversial stuff, don’t be doing it with people you didn’t know before yesterday. And you have no idea who this guy is. You know, that’s not

arrested at some other point somewhere else, not in their neighborhood, but the women said, “No, you stay right here honey.”

And the cops and the FBI descended on the whole block and are banging on doors and there’s a crowd of young kids suddenly who were entranced by them. So they’d go in and there would 4 or 5 cops and there would be kids, little kids in the way, who were yelling and laughing and throwing balls and saying play with me. What are they gonna do? They can’t shoot this little kid. On the other hand they can’t be doing anything because they’re dragging this little kid. And everyone is in the way. Meanwhile this woman was being moved...where the cops weren’t, right? ...At one point this young woman was hidden for a long time all the way up on a building roof, guided by a young New Afrikan lesbian (our girl later said that it was nice, with a furious FBI raid going on below them as the two were enjoying the great view of the neighborhood and comparing notes on Chicago’s main lesbian bar, which they both had tried out).

After about 6 hours the state finally gave up. The whole damn block united against them and they couldn’t do a bloody thing. So they had attempted to make it their terrain, the security police, it was going to be their terrain. They were going to terrorize everybody. They were going to show that nobody could defy them, that they ruled it. But it became the oppressed peoples’ terrain, particularly the women and children’s terrain, because they turned out to be the winners.

So when i’m talking about security i’m not talking about simply defending ourselves. It’s not that. It’s the constant

amerika and build support for their regime, their colonialist racial dictatorship. There was a very militant and small demonstration when they were at the JFK airport in New York against them in the course of which one of cops protecting them was injured. They arrested a young woman artist and said she did it. i don’t know whether she did, i wasn’t there, i don’t know what happened. But she didn’t like her chances, ‘cause they were talking like about 20 years. She didn’t like her chances going to court, so she got bailed out, she disappeared, and hasn’t been seen since in public here, never was caught.

So they issued a special wanted poster. It wasn’t your normal wanted poster. It went up in the subways. It was a long strip of 5 wanted felons’ mug shots. There’s her, the young woman artist in the middle, and there’s 2 guys on each side of the strip: on each side there’s one rapist and one murderer. A rapist and a murderer and then her. That’s who she is supposed to be like. They don’t think they’re going to catch her that way. No, it’s their whole part of criminalizing us, right? Like, they’re saying “This wasn’t a political struggle, it’s these vicious, criminal, violent people.”

So there’s this wave of spontaneous anger from the women’s community in New York (she was a lesbian), from anti-war people who supported the struggle against apartheid in South Afrika. People just saying, “I have a couple of hours this evening I’m going to the subway.” People just walking the trains car to car ripping down these damn wanted posters. Within a week there weren’t any, basically, people couldn’t find any. And the pigs figured out that, “Oh, we better not put them up because when we put them up, they’ll just rip

them down.”

So they try to maneuver, this has nothing to do with crime stuff, it's a political thing. They try to maneuver against us and we answered them spontaneously and basically wiped their gambit out. Well, that's part of security, it's part of how we should think about things.

Once we were in a struggle where security and guarding ourselves against FBI attack kept merging into the larger struggle against the system, in a way we couldn't forget. We were based in a New Afrikan poor community, a “black” neighborhood and the FBI was concerned about it and they didn't like the struggle which was revolutionary and against the system, against the government and stuff. And so they started a political campaign which had 2 stages. They figured out the first thing to do was to criminalize the activity politically so they picked out this one young white woman—and this shows that they know things—and she was important because there were two main elements in the struggle. There were the young street guys and women who were teenagers or young 20s who were the tactical force, and there were the older women who were the strategic leadership mostly like mothers and grandmothers. And that one woman activist was one of the various links between the two elements, because she was running with both groupings. However it came about, that's just how it worked. Their intelligence figured that out.

So one day we wake up and her photo is on the front page of every daily newspaper in the city. “Communist Agent Trained in Cuba in Infiltration Techniques Found in Negro

Community Misleading those Poor Innocent People Into Rebellious” type shit, it was that crude. As if this young woman could ever create a mass rebellion in a New Afrikan neighborhood, right?

Then their next step was they were going to raid the block that she was staying in, squatting in that neighborhood, they were going to have a big raid. They could've just sent two guys in, made an appointment and arrested her, but that's not what they wanted. They wanted to make a big show of force, right, that “we're in charge,” that they have the power and they were going to arrest her in front of everybody; they literally brought in like dozens of agents and cops, to search the whole block and seize people and do all this shit.

Now the night before this guy who was like “Silky”—he would dress like a pimp but he was actually a full-time police informant, he was actually a major “black” informer on the South Side of Chicago at the time and everybody knew that and he didn't hide it. And so he's also armed and a really dangerous guy, he wouldn't have been alive otherwise. He came up to some of us in a bar and he said, “They're going to do this raid tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock, they're going to come get so and so, so you should tell her, just spread the word” and he left.

So that night we talked to the mothers and grandmothers who were the leaders and said, “You're going to get raided by the cops tomorrow, that's what so and so said.” One of the women got angry and said, “There's nothing that the white cops can find that we don't want them to find.” So our young woman was going to leave the block, so she'd get