



INFILTRATION AT PROTESTS AND ONLINE

BACKGROUND

Ongoing protests nationwide highlight the need for vigilance against infiltration by both law enforcement and private bad actors.

Local and federal law enforcement agencies use informants and undercover agents to gather information covertly about movements, organizers, activists, and communities. Gathered information can potentially be used in criminal proceedings and can even include details of actions taken by individuals after being lured or pressured into criminal activity by those very same agents or informants.

Historically, informants and undercover agents have also been used to disrupt movements and sow distrust by breeding suspicion, divisiveness and insecurity.

As a note, you are never obligated to work as an informant or to help government agencies infiltrate social movements, no matter what law enforcement says or does to intimidate, pressure, or entice you.

Additionally, private actors such as white supremacists may not work directly for any government or law enforcement agency, but their goals for infiltration can be similar: disruption and distortion of leftist movements.

This information sheet shares strategies on how to protect your movement and organizing spaces against infiltration. The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) and CLEAR aim to raise awareness of the risk of infiltration and to provide people with the tools to carry on with the vital work of defending Black life.

There is no sure-fire way to identify an informant or undercover. However, they have been known to:

- Forcefully advocate for and encourage armed or violent action in situations where the broader crowd has not expressed interest or has explicitly stated they would not like to engage
- Repeatedly urge others to join them in their activities
- Try to divide groups and pit them against each other

HOW TO PROTECT EACH OTHER

- Cease your interactions with anyone you suspect of being an informant or undercover agent
- Discuss your concerns with leadership in your organization or community or with someone you trust
- Do your research before openly expressing support for groups or individuals
- Develop and use internal protocols to vet activists and respond to possible infiltration by suspected informants and undercover agents on a long-term basis and at one-off events like protests
- Adopt strong digital security practices to guard against infiltration in digital organizing spaces
- Designate security team members to defuse situations in person and online who have received training on the tactics used by infiltrators
- Develop specific security plans for dealing with armed white supremacists who appear at protests in person. This is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Each organization / coalition will have to determine what is best for them considering their locale.
- Consult trusted community members who study white supremacist movements to address any questions or suspicions around white supremacist activity
- Spread awareness by hosting a workshop with CLEAR and reach out if you have any questions or concerns



DISINFORMATION & MISINFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Misinformation and disinformation campaigns are not new. During protests and moments of upheaval, we should be especially careful not to trust everything that comes across our screen. Many who do not share the objectives of our movement will exploit this time to spread false information that can harm our movements in a variety of ways.

This information sheet shares strategies on how to ensure you do not accidentally spread misinformation. The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) and CLEAR aim to raise awareness of the risk of misinformation and to provide people with the tools to carry on with the vital work of defending Black life.

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST MISINFORMATION

- Approach information presented on unfamiliar accounts with a critical eye and a healthy dose of skepticism
- Verify or research information from unfamiliar accounts with a trusted source in your community or on the ground. You can also cross-verify by checking to see which (and how many) other accounts are sharing this information independently (meaning that they are not simply sharing the same post)
- Check the account's creation date and any biographical information, including linked accounts, who they are following, and associated webpages
- Quickly correct any false information that you may have shared, and be sure to flag it for others who may come in contact with its source
- Conduct reverse image and video verification searches when possible (Reversesee and InVid are good resources)