

WELCOME

This zine is a resource for anyone wanting to start an Anarchist Black Cross group. It was a collective effort of people from various ABC groups across Europe and the United States. We hope you find it inspiring and useful.

Over the past several decades, we have witnessed various forms of crisis emerging around the world and, while resisting and fighting back, we as anarchists are paying close attention to the changing patterns and tactics of state repression. To save the status quo and powers that be, they divide and rule. They co-opt struggles and pacify subversive movements. Meanwhile, we are striving to break free.

We need to destroy all the prisons, and free all the prisoners. Our position is an abolitionist stance against the state and its prisons. Of course, the easy solutions to complex problems like prisons are false

solutions. Abolition is not a simple answer nor an easy solution—it will take a long and arduous journey. That is why exactly we are talking about the Anarchist Black Cross and not liberal, statist or reformist ways of organizing.

Our tactics are based upon sharing and solidarity, not charity. More than ever, it is critically important to share the knowledge and organizational tips with people that want to take action. That is why we wrote this zine: shared knowledge is an important tool in fighting repression.

The best defense against repression is preparation. We hope this zine can support you in organizing where you are and building more resilience to repression in your movements and struggles for liberation. If you would like support or have questions about this zine please email:

tillallarefree@riseup.net



WHAT IS THE ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS AND WHY DOES IT EXIST?

The Anarchist Black Cross is an international network of anarchist groups and individuals engaged in practical solidarity with prisoners and broader anti-repression struggles.

Prisoner Support

We support revolutionaries, anarchists and others trapped in the prison system. We support and publicize prisoners' efforts to organize and resist the system from the inside. We carry on this work through letters, visits, material aid, as well as demonstrations, campaigns and spreading information—about prisoners, the reality of prisons, and the class system which created them. Fundraising and material support are key parts of our work.

Many of us also support prisoners and those affected by repression emotionally, with friendship and solidarity as our weapons. In all of what we do, we try to create links in and out of prisons.

Anti-Repression and Movement Defense Work

The state and those that wish to destroy movements for liberation attack on many levels. The Anarchist Black Cross network aims to build the infrastructure to be resilient to repression so that we can continue fighting for liberation and support comrades harmed by state violence. Many groups organize ongoing long-term solidarity campaigns with those affected by various waves of repression across the world. Indeed, many ABC groups start in response to a repressive operation in their region.

Movement and community defense can involve many things. The Anarchist Black Cross has been engaged in diverse forms over decades – from legal defense campaigns and committees, to maintaining physical solidarity against the police during factory and school occupations, performing roles of security and physical defense against white supremacist and neo-fascist attacks, as well as engaging in armed defense of social movements. ABC groups also often organize workshops, zines and other materials to support people in learning about repression, security culture, and solidarity.

• abcjacksonville.wordpress.com
ABC Mexico

Netherlands

- abcnijmegen.wordpress.com – ABC Nijmegen

Russia

- abc-msk@riseup.net – ABC Moscow.
- https://twitter.com/A4K_MOSCOW – ABC Moscow's Twitter.
- <https://www.facebook.com/abc.russia.spb> – ABC St. Petersburg
- abc38.noblogs.org – ABC Irkutsk

Sweden

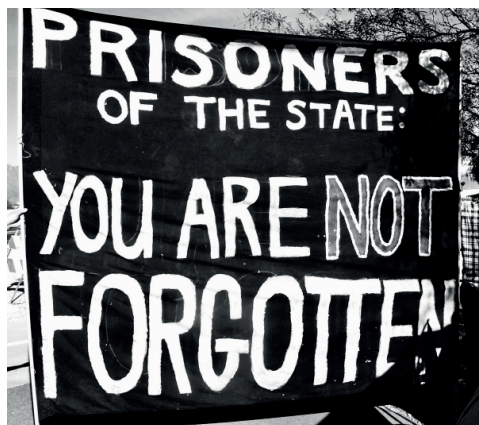
- abcstockholm@riseup.net – ABC Stockholm
- abcumea@riseup.net – ABC Umeå

USA

- abcf.net – Anarchist Black Cross Federation
- bloomingtonanarchistblackcross@riseup.net – Bloomington ABC
- blueridgeabc@riseup.net – Blue Ridge ABC
- abcchicago.noblogs.org – Chicago
- instagram.com/detroitabc – Detroit
- ieabcf@protonmail.com – Inland Empire ABCF
- jamesriverabc@protonmail.com – James River ABC
- timABCF@aol.com – Lancaster ABCF
- la@abcf.net – Los Angeles ABCF
- mvable@riseup.net – Lowell/Lawrence ABCF
- nycabc.wordpress.com – New York City ABCF
- abcfoc@disroot.org – Orange County ABCF
- phillyabc.org – Philadelphia ABCF

Phoenix ABC

- portlandabc@riseup.net – Portland ABC
- riviannaabc@protonmail.com – Rivanna ABC
- scissortailabc@pm.me – Scissortail ABC (Tulsa, Oklahoma)
- instagram.com/abc.sfl – South Florida ABCF
- triangleabc@proton.me – Triangle ABC (North Carolina)



of anarchist and anti-authoritarian support groups from different parts of the planet.

solidarity.international

- TGI (Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex) Justice Project - TGI Justice Project is a group of transgender people—inside and outside of prison—creating a united family in the struggle for survival and freedom. tgijp.org

Anarchist News Sites

- Act for Freedom Now - News of insurrection and resistance from around the globe.
actforfree.nostate.net
- Anarchist Library - Site that collates many publications for reading/download.
theanarchistlibrary.org
- Anarchist News - Non-sectarian source for news about and of concern to anarchists.
anarchistnews.org
- Avtonom - News about political prisoners in Russia avtonom.org
- Contra-Info - is an international multi- language counter-information and translation node, maintained by anarchists, anti-authoritarians and libertarians across the globe.
en-contrainfo.espiv.net
- Dark Nights - For mutual aid and solidarity darknights.noblogs.org
- Elephant Editions - Collection of ideas, dreams and experiments.
elephanteditions.net
- It's Going Down - a digital community center for anarchist, anti-fascist, autonomous anti-capitalist and anti-colonial movements. itsgoingdown.org

support or attack practices and international revolutionary solidarity lanemesi.noblogs.org

- Untorelli Press - Anarchist publishing project.
untorellipress.noblogs.org

Anarchist Black Cross Groups Worldwide

NOTE: We understand the nature of social media, who owns it, and how it can be used by the state and other bad actors, but for some groups it is the best way to connect to others and share updates

Austria

- www.abc-wien.net – ABC Wien

Belarus

- abc-belarus.org – ABC Belarus

England

- bristolabc.wordpress.com – ABC Bristol
- greenandblackcross.org – Green and Black Cross

Germany

- abcdde.org – ABC Dresden
- instagram.com/abc.koeln – ABC Köln
- abcrhineland.noblogs.org – Rhineland ABC
- abcruhr.noblogs.org – ABC Ruhrgebiet

Indonesia

- sesam.noblogs.org – Palang Hitam Anarkis

Ireland

- abcireland.wordpress.com – ABC Derry
- dublinabc.ana.rchi.st – ABC Dublin

strengthen struggles for freedom and liberation by providing mental, emotional, material, and physical support to individuals, groups, communities, and movements. Ultimately, we want to help ensure the strength of our movements from the inside out. We want to support struggles to be a threat to state, capitalist, white supremacist, patriarchal power and other forms of domination.

The History of the Anarchist Black Cross

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation in the United States has written an overview of the history of ABC which we share below:

Since the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), has been on the frontline in supporting those imprisoned for struggling for freedom and liberty. Until recently, the history of the ABC movement has been lost to the pages of time. The present generation of ABC collectives were left rootless with little known information about this organization. Now, specific questions regarding our origin can be put to rest. We have begun to rediscover our roots.

The year of origin has been a nagging question regarding the history of the Anarchist Black Cross, also known as the Anarchist Red Cross (ARC). According to Rudolph Rocker, once the treasurer for the Anarchist Red Cross in London, the organization was founded during the “hectic period between 1900 and 1905.” Despite his involvement in the early stages, we do not feel these dates are accurate. According to Harry Weinstein, one of the two men who began the



organization, it began after his arrest in July or August of 1906. Once released, Weinstein and others provided clothing to anarchists sentenced to exile in Siberia. This was the early stage of the ARC. Weinstein continued his efforts in Russia until his arrival in New York in May of 1907. Once he arrived, he helped to create the New York Anarchist Red Cross.

Other accounts place the year of origin in 1907. Between June and August of 1907, Anarchists and Socialist Revolutionaries gathered together in London for two conferences. It is believed that Vera Figner, a Socialist Revolutionary, met with Anarchists to discuss the plight of the political prisoners in Russia. After this meeting, the Anarchist Red Cross organized in London and in New York. In addition to this information, we know that members of the organization were on trial in 1906-1907 in Russia. Therefore, We feel the most accurate date of origin for the Anarchist Red Cross would be late 1906-early 1907 for the Russia section; June or August 1907 for the creation of the International section.



However, the reason for the creation of the Anarchist Red Cross is not in dispute. It was formed after breaking away from the Political Red Cross (PRC). The PRC was controlled by the Social Democrats and refused to provide support to Anarchist and Social Revolutionary Political Prisoners, despite continued donations from other Anarchists and Social Revolutionaries. As one former Political Prisoner and member of the Anarchist Red Cross stated, "In some prisons there was little distinction made between Anarchists and other Political Prisoners, but in others Anarchists were refused any help."

The newly formed ARC considered these actions criminal and vowed that any prison where Anarchists were in the majority, the ARC would provide support to all Anarchist and Social Revolutionaries Political Prisoners.

Because of their support for Political Prisoners, members of the group were arrested, tortured and killed by the Tsarist regime. The organization was deemed illegal and membership was reason enough for arrest and imprisonment in Artvisky Prison, one of the worst hard labor jails in Siberia. ARC members and prisoners who managed to escape

from Russia creating chapters in London, New York, Chicago and other cities in Europe and North America.

The 1917 Revolution caused a celebration throughout the Socialist, Anarchist, and Communist communities. The

ARC liquidated and members began to make plans to return to Russia in hopes of participating in the new society. Sadly, their return was met by Bolshevik repression, similar to that of the Tsarist era. After a few years of hibernation, the group was forced to resurface to assist the Political Prisoners in the new Bolshevik society. Once again the organization was made illegal and membership meant imprisonment and/or death.

During the Russian Civil War, the ARC's name changed to the Anarchist Black Cross to avoid confusion with the International Red Cross, also organizing relief in the country. It was also during this period that the organization organized self-defense units against political raids by the Cossack and Red armies.



Salvador (Puig Antich) is Spanish film directed by Manuel Huerga. It is based on the Francesc Escribano book *Compte enrere*. La història de Salvador Puig Antich, which depicts the time Salvador Puig Antich spent on death row prior to his execution by garrote (the last one by mean of this), under Franco's Francoist State in 1974.

Sacco e Vazetti (1971)

The story is based on famous events surrounding the trial and judicial execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two anarchists of Italian origin, who were sentenced to death by a United States court in the 1920s.

The Shawshank Redemption (1994)

The Shawshank Redemption is a drama film based on the 1982 Stephen King novella Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption. It tells the story of banker Andy Dufresne, who is sentenced to life in Shawshank State Penitentiary for the murder of his wife and her lover, despite his claims of innocence.

Zero for Conduct (1933)

The film draws extensively on boarding school experiences to depict a repressive and bureaucratized educational establishment in which surreal acts of rebellion occur, reflecting anarchist view of childhood.

Organizations and Projects

- Anarchist Black Cross Federation - Federation of groups supporting prisoners, political prisoners and prisoners of war. <http://www.abcf.net>
- Audre Lorde Project's Safe OUTside the System Collective - organizing

resisting police violence. alp.org/programs/sos

- Bent Bars Project - a letter-writing project for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, gender-variant, intersex, and queer prisoners in Britain. bentbarsproject.org
- Critical Resistance - Building an international movement to end the prison industrial complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. criticalresistance.org
- Incarcerated Workers organizing Committee - A union for the incarcerated fighting for prison abolition started by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Mostly in the US and the UK. Supported prisoners to organize the biggest prisoner work strike in history in September 2016. incarceratedworkers.org
- INCITE! - Activist organization of radical feminists of color advancing a movement to end violence against women of color and through direct action, critical dialogue and organizing. incite-national.org
- Przeciwno Więzieniom_ A project of ABC Warsaw and virtual library of anti-prison and anti-repression zines. przeciwnowiezieniom.noblogs.org
- Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP Campaign - Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP Campaign rappcampaign.com
- Sisters Inside - Australian based group who work from an abolitionist perspective sistersinside.com.au

We chose couple of our favorite pop culture (not only) films about prison. For more, follow: <https://solidarity.international/index.php/2018/06/05/movies-for-screenings> and check out larger list of films.

Brubaker (1980)

Brubaker is a 1980 American prison drama film directed by Stuart Rosenberg. It stars Robert Redford as newly arrived prison warden Henry Brubaker, who attempts to clean up a corrupt and violent penal system.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (2008)

Set during WWII, a story seen through the innocent eyes of Bruno, the eight-year-old son of the commandant at a German concentration camp, whose forbidden friendship with a Jewish boy on the other side of the camp fence has startling and unexpected consequences.

Escape from Alcatraz (1979)

Take the tour around San Francisco's notorious Alcatraz prison island and you'll hear that nobody has ever successfully escaped – but one man broke out and disappeared, and this movie tells his tale. Clint Eastwood is as fine and understated as ever as Frank Morris, and the movie manages to sidestep the majority of prison movie cliches.

Escape from Sobibor (1987)

Escape from Sobibor is a story of the mass escape from the extermination camp at Sobibor, the most successful uprising by Jewish prisoners of German extermination camps.

The Green Mile (1999)

The lives of guards on Death Row are affected by one of their charges: a black man accused of child murder and rape, yet who has a mysterious gift.

Sacred Ground is a six-part British drama miniseries set in early 1970s London, against the backdrop of the Immigration Act 1971 and British black power movements, such as the British Black Panthers and Race Today Collective. A plot is a love story set in the atmosphere of one of the most politically explosive times in UK history.

Hunger (2008)

IRA fighters are struggling in a Northern Irish prison and setting up a hunger strike.

Kiss of the Spider Woman (1985)

The film tells of two very different individuals who share a prison cell in Brazil during the Brazilian military government: Valentin Arregui, who is imprisoned (and has been tortured) due to his activities on behalf of a leftist revolutionary group, and Luis Molina, a transgender woman in prison for having sex with an underage boy.

The Stanford Prison Experiment (2015)

Stanford University psychology professor Philip Zimbardo conducts a psychological experiment to test the hypothesis that the personality traits of prisoners and guards are the chief cause of abusive behavior between them. In the experiment, Zimbardo selects fifteen male students to participate in a 14-day prison simulation to take roles as prisoners or guards.

In The Name Of The Father (1993)

In the Name of the Father is Irish-British-American biographical courtroom drama film co-written and directed by Jim Sheridan. It is based on the true story of the Guildford Four, four people falsely convicted of the 1974 Guildford pub bombings, which killed four off-duty British soldiers and a civilian.



During the next seven decades, groups would continue under various names, but always as part of a larger Anarchist Red Cross/Anarchist Black Cross formation. ABC's support for Political Prisoners spread to the four corners of the globe. What was once a typically Russian-Jewish organization, now had many faces and ethnicities.

During the 1960s, the Anarchist Black Cross was reformed in Britain by Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer with a focus on providing aid for anarchist prisoners in Francisco Franco's Spain. The reason for this was Christie's experience of the Spanish State's jail and the importance of receiving food parcels. At that time there were no international groups acting for Spanish anarchist and Resistance prisoners. The first action of the re-activated group was to bring Miguel García García, whom Christie met in prison, out of Spain upon his release. He went on to act as the group's International secretary, working for the release of others.

In the 1980s, the ABC began to grow and new ABC groups began to emerge in North America. In the United States, the ABC name had been kept alive by a number of completely autonomous groups scattered throughout the country and had grown to support a wide variety of prison issues.

The 1990s and 2000s brought several ABC formations in North America (ABCC, ABCN, ABCF). Prior to 2003, the relationship between these formations was considered strenuous. With the Break the Chains conference in August 2003, along with side bar discussions between collectives, a better working relationship between the ABCF and ABCN formations was forged. (The ABCC was a short lived formation, dying off in the early 1990s.)

Various ABC groups have existed in Europe in different forms for decades.

HOW DO ABC GROUPS ORGANIZE?

There are a lot of different ABC groups around the world. Each of them has autonomy to decide how the group functions and the core principles of the group. Autonomy and decentralization help us make sure that no group or individual is capable of forcing other groups to do things against those groups' principles.

To make sure that decisions within the groups are made with consideration of all the members of the group, we encourage everybody to make decisions based on a consensus model. However, some groups choose to use simple majority or super majority voting.

Ultimately, it is up to you to decide what kind of decision making fits your group. However, it is important to talk it through before hand forming a group to avoid misunderstandings with other members.

Types of organizing

Depending on the political situation in different countries, groups can decide on the type of organizing itself, ranging from open groups with open membership to clandestine groups that are known only to the people facing repression. All types have pluses and minuses that should be taken in consideration when you start your own group.

Open Group

This type of organizing is not often used and is more common in liberal democracies, where solidarity work might be not a risk repression of activists. In this form, the group is

open to new members and has processes established to let new people join decision making processes.

With an open process, we can bring passionate people to the work of solidarity without complicated procedures of building up a reputation and earning trust from the movement. With more energy in the group, more can be achieved. It is also quite easy to fundraise, as real faces representing the group tend to earn more trust among than masked anonymous activists.

As for the negatives, it is easy for police or other bad actors to infiltrate the group and disrupt internal

- Dying with cancer: a booklet for prisoners. Guide produced by Macmillan Cancer Support
- Treatment Industrial Complex - A new report from the US on how for-profit corporations are undermining efforts to treat and rehabilitate prisoners for corporate gain.
- The Prisoner's Herbal by Solidarity Apothecary - A resource for prisoners who would like to learn more about plants growing in prison courtyards, while also being a generally accessible and practical guide to herbs.

Gender and Queer Struggles

- Lockdown: prison, repression and gender nonconformity - A 22-page zine analyzing the enforced gender segregation and classification in prisons as well as strategies for resistance.
- Prison Abolition is a Queer issue - A4 handout on why prison abolition is a queer issue
- Prisons Will Not Protect You - An anthology by the radical LGBTQ group "Against Equality"
- Resource section on Prisons by Against Equality_ A full library of links and articles about queer struggle and prison
- Still We Rise - A resource pack for transgender and non-gender conforming people in prison
- The Queer, feminist and trans politics of prison abolition toolkit
- Resisting Gender Violence Without Cops or Prisons Talk by Victoria Law
- Decolonization Means Prison Abolition Film of a discussion at a conference in Portland.
- Crimethinc Ex-Worker #4: Prisoners of the World Unite
- Crimethinc Ex-Worker #6: Making Police Obsolete
- Crimethinc Ex-Worker #8: Prison Abolition and Community Accountability
- Crimethinc Ex-Worker #17: Conspiracy! State Repression Strategies and Anarchist Resistance
- Crimethinc Ex-Worker #27: Anti-Police Riots in Ferguson
- Crimethinc Ex-Worker #50: The History and Future of Prison Strikes and Solidarity
- A-Radio Berlin. Presentation: the Prison Strike in the USA 2016
- A-Radio Berlin: Belarus. Former anarchist prisoner about his experiences on how to survive jail
- A-Radio Berlin: Interview with Anarchist Black Cross Belarus on the repression, Ukraine and the refugees
- A-Radio Berlin: Chile. The hunger-strike of Mapuche Political Prisoners in the Iglesias Case
- A-Radio Berlin: Anarchist Black Cross in Czech republic. Antifemix Presentation
- The Channel Zero Network. Network of anarchist podcasts and radio broadcasts



- Never Alone - A zine about supporting prisoners by those on the outside. Produced by the Empty Cages Collective and Bristol ABC.
- Fire Ant - Fire Ant is a publication focused on spreading the words of anarchist prisoners and generating material solidarity for our imprisoned friends.

Prison Industrial Complex

- Captive Genders: Transembodiment and Prison Industrial Complex - Book about gender and the P.I.C. An important read.
- Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex: Activism, Arts, and Educational Alternatives - Book about how to creatively challenge the prison industrial complex.
- Close Supervision Centres - Torture Units in the UK #2_ Publication produced by Bristol ABC about Close Supervision Centres.
- The Prison Works. Occasional texts on the roles of prison and prison labour - By Joe Black/Bra Bros. Published by the Campaign Against Prison Slavery and Brighton Anarchist Black Cross

Prison Abolition

- Abandoned: Abolishing female prisons to prevent sexual abuse and herald an end to incarceration - Article by David W. Fran. Exploring examples in the US and the UK.
- Abolition Now! Ten years of strategy and struggle against the prison industrial complex - Short book of different articles around prison abolition, mainly US focused but still very real and inspiring.
- Are Prisons Obsolete? - Incredible book by Angela Yvonne Davis, 2003,

- Instead of Prisons: Handbook for Abolitionists_ Comprehensive text on alternatives to prison and the decarceration movement
- Prison Abolition is Practical - Article by Nathan Goodman
- The Abolitionist Toolkit -Toolkit for abolitionists developed by Critical Resistance

Policing and Repression

- On the Out - A zine about life after prison, produced by Bristol ABC.
- Under the Yoke of the State - Selected anarchist responses to prisons and crime, vol 1. 1886 – 1929
- On Repression Patterns in Europe - A zine from ABC Dresden bringing analysis and interviews with anarchist folks who encountered repression and terrorist charges in European context in last several years.

Organizing and Resistance

- How Nonviolence Protects the State - Written by Peter Gelderloos.
- Winds from Below: Radical community organizing to make a revolution possible. Book produced by the Team Colors
- Under the Enemy's Blade: A Search for Anarchist Practices Against Torture by No Trace Project
- Confidence. Courage. Connection. Trust.: A Proposal For Security Culture by No Trace Project
- Developing Action Capacity: A Path by No Trace Project
- Surviving A Grand Jury: Three Narratives From Grand Jury Resisters by CrimeThinc
- Interrogations: A Survival Guide

and think through how to confront this in case it appears.

Finally, it is quite easy to determine group membership and bring the group down by direct repression as membership is transparent.

Semi-Open/Closed group

This is a type of group that only allows trusted or well-known folks into the group. These groups might be made up of individuals, but also members of local anarchist organizations that are aware of upcoming or existing repression.

In this type of structure, membership in the group may or may not be publicly known, deciding in advance by the membership.. This might help members avoid possible repression in future, even if risks are minimal at the current stage of state repression.

The benefit of this group structure is the atmosphere of trust that might push group activity further in different directions. It is harder for the state or capital to disrupt activity of the group. On top of that, many such groups develop into affinity groups, which is hard to do with open groups.

Apart from that, in the event of repression targeting the entire group, it will be hard for the state to attack all members, meaning that semi-open or closed groups have a higher probability of surviving direct repression.

One of the main downsides of semi-open/closed groups is the greater dependence on individual members. Due to the complicated procedures of building trust, it



might be complicated to find new people to join the group instead of those who have decided to change their activity focus.

It is harder for people to get in touch with the collective in cases of repression or with questions connected to expected future repression. This can be addressed by building up additional ways of contacting the group. For example, mail that is checked every day, or even one or two people from the group who are known within anarchist circles as ABC organizers.

Organize locally

Ultimately, ABC work done locally is heavily connected to the specifics of the region. That's why, for example, it is quite hard for people from Russia to directly support activists from Finland and vice versa. We discourage local groups from forming one big group covering a big region for that reason. When we decentralize our structure, we make it hard for the state to hit everyone at once.

However, local organization doesn't mean isolation. We encourage organizing with different groups and learning from each other. Solidarity

Regions or even from distant parts of the world are extremely important for ABC work. Decentralized, we are strong, but real power comes in cooperation.

Decentralization also allows us the possibility to go different ways. There have been situations where one group decides against supporting some activists/cases due to political principles, while others were eager to help. This level of group autonomy eliminates paralysis in contradictory situations.

It is worth learning about other groups in your region that might be

projects. Most likely, there already are! If not, don't get discouraged—there are groups that prefer working independently, but that doesn't mean that all groups do. Keep asking and searching and you might find a group that you work with for years to come.

Don't get surprised if some groups are more open than the others. Different political situations build different political profiles, where activists might be suspicious of new groups/people before they figure you out. This is a process that most of us have to go through one way or another to build up networks of trust.

WHAT DO ABC GROUPS DO?

To make this section more interesting, we published interviews with ABC organizers from around the world. They share what their different groups have been doing, as well as the highlights and challenges they have experienced.

"I got involved in ABC a few months after a close friend was murdered in prison in Texas. I wanted to do something productive with the anger I felt after his death.

Our group does all kinds of stuff, from fundraisers (we have started doing monthly burger nights as one of us is an amazing chef) to letter writing, to demos. It's important because of how non-judgmental the approach is—we aren't looking for "worthy" people to support, but want to show love and solidarity to all people in prison, en route to destroying the prison system altogether.

The group itself keeps me going, because whilst the crew is super on it,

they are also super kind and thoughtful. I only hope I can do the same for them!

My advice would be take care of the other people in your crew, and yourself. You have an incredible potential to change so much, so take care of each other."

...

"I joined a new group that formed in Warsaw at the very beginning of 2014 or 15. I already knew about ABC and how it works in Poland but the situation in Warsaw started to be complicated for some activists and there was a need to have a supporting group here. Plus I was skeptical and critical about how support for the politically repressed people looks like

In this chapter you will find links to materials in the English language, which are useful before, during and after prison.

This category is very broad—a category for literature, films, and practical knowledge. Since you're reading a zine, we will primarily include other zines, as well as films and some books. The choice of materials we present and link to in this section are influenced by our personal preferences and experiences, and relate to our organizing in so-called European and North American contexts. We also copied some brief descriptions for films from pop culture media. Some of the films may seem cheesy and you might be surprised why some of them are included on the list.

Watch, read, wonder, explore, think. Sometimes you can find great material to analyze in things you would otherwise consider wastes of time.

Zines and Books

Transformative Justice

- Creative Interventions - Toolkit to stop interpersonal violence
- Furthering Transformative Justice, Building Healthy Communities - An interview with Philly Stands Up
- Towards Transformative Justice - pdf produced by Generation Five
- What About the Rapists? - Zine Collection of articles representing different approaches to the problem of harm and domination in our communities, from transformative justice-based accountability processes to retributive-based acts of survivor-led retaliation.

Racism and Colonialism

- Beyond Walls and Cages - Prisons, borders and global crisis Important book linking migration and the P.I.C. Edited by Jenna M Lloyd, Matt Mitchelson and Andrew Burridge, 2012.
- The New Abolitionists: (Neo)slave Narratives And Contemporary Prison Writings Written by prisoners

about the contemporary prison system in the US

Prisoner Writing and organizing

- An Updated History of the New Afrikan Prison Struggle - Written by Sundiata Acoli
- Solidarity Without Prejudice - Long term prisoner John Bowden asks what criteria could be used when supporting prisoners
- Tenacious, Art and writings by women in prison - Regular zine coming out of the US produced by prisoners
- Rattling the Cages: Oral Histories of North American Political Prisoners edited by Josh Davidson with Eric King
- Thoughts on Prisoner Support - Written by long term prisoner John Bowden
- Shadows in the Struggle for Equality: The History of the Anarchist Red Cross by Boris Yelensky, edited by Matthew Hart, illustrated by N.O. Bonzo

- Autonomy—building a group where folks feel control and agency over their own work and tasks
- Having regular check-ins with your group about how you are all feeling/coping and support you might need
- A culture where everyone calls each other out/flags up when the pace is unsustainable or potentially harming
- Paying attention to the partners of prisoners who often do the most support work, practically and emotionally, while coping with their own grief and loss about their partner's imprisonment
- Destroy machismo! We can encourage prisoners to write honestly about how they are feeling, make sure in workshops and talks we talk about the reality of prison and not try to dismiss people as weak if they are finding situations harder or expressing their vulnerability more visibly
- Don't judge people for drinking or drug use if this is connected to trauma or repression, everyone is at a different point of their journey in healing and finding coping tools
- Center the person who is experiencing repression and make sure they have as much power and agency as possible. A lot of traumatization relates to feeling powerless. Make sure anyone you support is actively involved in decision making about the support they want and need.
- Valuing people might involve: challenging multiple and intersecting forms of oppression in groups, supporting people that have experienced abuse or violence, squashing machismo, having support for folks experiencing repression, supporting people that

- not treating each other like we are disposable.
- Having fun!!! Trying to make tasks enjoyable, like cooking a fundraising dinner and listening to music, or taking snacks to court, et cetera.
- Express care for each other in any way you can. Whether it is sending each other silly memes or bringing cakes to a meeting. These small acts of care can really help people feel loved and appreciated.

These are just a few ideas! Explore more in your ABC groups about how you can make this work a little bit easier by caring for each other better.

In the words of Kevin Van Meter:
“Our task is to care together as we struggle together. By pushing forth the complexity of experience and realities that arise in caring for those who are mentally and physically ill, traumatized, dying, survivors of intimate violence and incarceration, addicted, suffering from chronic pain, struggling against the imposition of binary gender, and working in the care and medical industries, our movements deepen our relationships with one another and construct new fronts for revolutionary struggle. It is these everyday realities that need to be considered on the long arc of sustained organizing and revolutionary change”

Feeling like this small group of people are very dedicated to this work and we are building good relations in the group step by step.

We are trying as much as it's possible to skip the way of 'bureaucracy' and trying to take an individual decision about individual cases. We are also interested in communicating about the values and political beliefs that this group works on.

I believe this work really needs to be done—that's my biggest reason for starting in this group and keeping it together in the hard times. I think that we need to build not just network, infrastructure, critiques, resistance but we need to take care of each other at the same time.

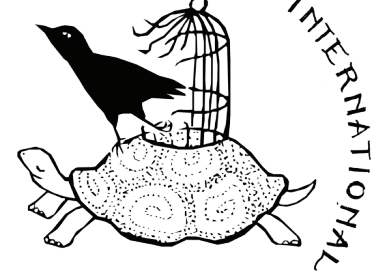
I think the biggest challenges for me were:

- How to deal with keeping this group open and accessible and working well the same time. How to communicate that you can join it, support it and how to leave a space for different ideas and expressions and not lose the feeling that you know exactly with whom you work and who should be involved in the decision making process.
- How to create new way of working in this group in the sense of who you support and how to overcome mechanisms that people already get used to.

I think that the first huge benefit on the new years eve that we made was worth remembering—this was my favorite moment.”

...

“... A close friend was murdered in prison in Texas. I wanted to do something productive with the anger I felt after his death ...”





“The value of ABC is also in it’s political core of solidarity, where support is not just humanitarian aid, but a political statement that unites us in struggle.”

inspiring friend who made me aware of the importance of supporting people on the inside and I saw how few people give time to it. Our group spends a lot of time fundraising (gigs/meals/raffles) and then a small amount of time quickly giving that money away to groups all over the world that are in need because of state repression. We organize letter writings and demos and act as occasional rent-a-mob for other prison groups that we may or may not be a part of. It’s important because prisons are incredibly isolating and so staying in contact with people on the inside can make a massive difference to peoples lives.

ABC means solidarity to me, the threat of prison is a relentless form of state intimidation and repression for many people and so our solidarity must also be relentless!

The challenges have been trying to make people write letters—it’s unglamorous work and often doesn’t get as much support as it should. My favorite ABC moment was hearing first hand from an ex-prisoner how the letters of a friend of mine and ex-ABC-mum changed his life.

The sense of support in the group has been memorable, and it keeps me going with the work that we do. I have also been blown away at the international solidarity that gets spread around through the ABC network. This is a rare thing and should be fucking cherished! Prisoner support also keeps me going with wider prison struggles—whilst our long term aims are to bring down the prison system helping people on the inside in various ways can bring little victories which are important!

One piece of advice is don’t get sad if you don’t get a reply to your letter, and don’t let that be a sign that the other person doesn’t want more letters”

...

- Organizing for each other, making people feel supported that they can take a step back if they need.
- Have adequate expenses policies/financial support when appropriate to support people to participate—this might mean using ABC funds to pay for healthy meals when touring so we are not just getting sick doing this work because we cannot afford to pay for lunch.
- Ensure solid introductions to how groups work/how to do things and give support for new people. Create opportunities for people to learn new skills.
- Pay attention to the division of labour in your group and don’t take each other for granted! Be especially aware of race, gender, class, and other factors that can often deeply affect who does what.
- Be aware of who is often setting the pace in the group and check in with each other if it’s sustainable for you all.
- Talk about how you communicate as a crew and what you expect from each other. Find a way of getting things done and tracking your action points so it’s not just one person reminding everyone, which can be exhausting and disempowering for people.
- Organize fun/nice/adventurous opportunities for yourselves, like traveling to an event in a different city, or doing a speaking tour in a different city. These ‘perks’ can help keep us going when we may have done years and years of heavy things like endless prison visits
- Getting training for our groups e.g. workshops, courses, reading groups, gatherings, and skillshares (especially around trauma and burnout prevention)
- Organize accessible counseling or fundraising to pay for a counsellor



- for people experiencing repression so that people have solid, reliable support and the weight of emotional labour is not all on each other
- Medical and health support—for example, connecting with local herbalists who can make herbal medicines to help bodies cope with stress, like the J20 in the USA, who received support from the herbal community during their stressful trial
 - Creating collective models of care for childcare, elder care, supporting people with chronic illnesses, et cetera (and respite for caregivers)
 - Creating face-to-face time together to work together so we are less isolated and feel more connected to each other. Invest time in building your friendships!
 - Working collectively, especially when shit gets distressing (so we all feel more supported)
 - Ensuring appropriate decision making in groups so people feel able

Resources on vicarious trauma suggest some strategies that can help. These include:

- Escaping - taking time off, watching movies, reading, et cetera
- Resting - making sure we get adequate rest and respite from it all
- Playing - Doing fun things, exercising our bodies, et cetera
- Nurturing a sense of meaning and hope - finding things that keep us inspired, that could be reading about historical comrades, going to gatherings, spending time with particular people, et cetera
- Mourning our losses - grief is such a huge part of ABC work at times, finding a way to mourn in a healthy and nourishing way is super important
- Marking transitions - this may include celebrating small achievements, like having a successful event or completing a new zine, or reflecting at the end of the year
- Investing time in ourselves - this means investing energy in ourselves beyond our political work, this might involve studying, or learning self-defense, gardening, and more. Whatever we also yearn for, we need to cultivate it too.
- Being aware of our risk factors - knowing your signs when you are teetering on the edge, learning to listen to your body and take action to meet your needs, so that you can set better boundaries with projects and the amount of support work you can realistically do
- Connecting with other people - especially those who have a shared sense of understanding of what you are going through, or have been through



- Trying to cultivate a sense of joy and wonder - check out the book 'Joyful Militancy' which shares a different understanding of joy (which is not necessarily skipping in the meadow or even happiness), but more becoming who we are in working for liberation

Building Care into our Collectives

A lot of the 'self-care' suggestions create some idea that it's our fault if we burn out because we haven't taken care of ourselves well. While our personal actions for sure contribute to our health and survival, they are part of a much bigger system than ourselves—from how our collectives share labour to how capitalism destroys our access to healthcare, and so forth. So no blame or shame—let's just all care for each other better so we can better destroy what destroys us!

Here are some suggestions and ideas for what ABC groups can do to take care of each better in our groups:

became clear to many of us in the anarchist movement in our country that we will get repressed by the state sooner or later. We started ABC to get organized before the state strikes. After almost a year of existence, we did get in trouble with the state after a massive wave of arrests and detentions of anarchists and antifascists.

The main focus of the group is supporting prisoners and people on trial. This is also the main part of spendings. Apart from that, we publish our own brochures on security culture, how not to talk to police and so on. We also run our website where we try to track all the repressions against anarchists and antifascists around the country. We are also one of the groups trying to push the international week of solidarity with anarchist prisoners.

For me, ABC is somehow this wall you build in front of the repressive regimes that allows activists to do their stuff without worrying about the necessity to gather money or bother about organizing your own solidarity campaign in case of repression.

Apart from that, the value of ABC is also in its political core of solidarity, where support is not just humanitarian aid, but a political statement that unites us in struggle.

Our challenges have been surviving! For all the years the group has existed, it's been underground with invitation only membership. With that in mind it is worth mentioning that we try to act in most of the cases without bringing the ABC brand to the table as it might potentially cause some troubles for those who are calling themselves ABC members. But



those who need to know, know it anyway.

Another challenge is always the collection of money. It might be one of the most boring jobs ever. At the same time, if you do it properly it might turn into fun. But it is a real challenge not to end up broke after another wave of repressions that the state starts against the movement.

I think the most inspiring moment was when we organized an infotable with letter-writing at one of the big events. A really young girl came with her mother to write letters to prisoners. Her mother was crying, while the daughter was writing something on the postcard. I think moments like that boost my faith in humankind even if sometimes it crumbles.

What keeps me going? I think there is this egoistic approach that if something happens to me, I would love people to help me out. This is one of the reasons, and the other thing is that through the years of work in ABC it is becoming clearer what solidarity means and how important it is. Not just the words, but actions that move the walls around the people and make repressions a little bit less successful.

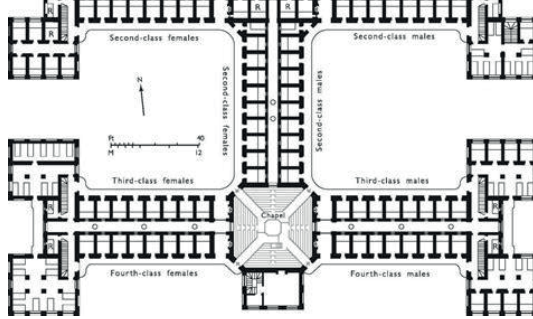
groups if you are hesitant about how to start. Some support from collectives now far from you might help you understand how the things are working way faster and you can start spreading your solidarity very soon! And try it! It is a lot of fun although at the very beginning it might look overwhelming.

Just start doing and trying to support people and it will give you this burst of doing something that makes difference. Starting from the small letters and ending up supporting people during the trial. Every drop in the ocean of struggle counts.”

...

“I actually first received support from an ABC when I was in prison. This solidarity and support from the group made a huge impression on me, and when I was released and then finally free of these state conditions, I joined the group.

Our ABC group has engaged in many activities over the years. At some points, we have friends and comrades we know personally who are in prison, and our work may be more directly supporting them – like prison visits, writing letters, fundraising, et cetera. Other times, our work is more focused on international solidarity. We try to organize at least one monthly event; this could be anything from a vegan burger night to raise money, to hosting a speaker who is touring and talking about a certain situation. We also try to keep our website updated with news from around the world. We have produced a number of publications and also write articles. Fortunately, there is another group in our area that focuses on supporting defendants before



prison, so our main focus can be supporting people in prison. We also get involved in national campaigns against prison expansion and more. We also organize actions as part of international days of action.

I feel that ABC is beautiful and necessary for many reasons. I feel it is really important that the anarchist movement builds up the infrastructure that enables us to be resilient to repression. It's clear from history that effective struggles will always be met by state and capitalist forces.

We need to learn from history and be prepared. It's useful to have ABC groups in existence so that when the shit hits the fan, we are ready and can respond. It's also meaningful to be organizing international solidarity and constantly developing and strengthening these relationships. For myself, on a very personal level, ABC gave me hope and strength in prison. Knowing that one day I could get out and meet these kind people who supported me really meant the world. It kept me going and it gave power to my heart knowing these people existed!

I think our main challenge has been finding enough people willing to organize in a dedicated way. It is very

signs can include:

- Hyperarousal symptoms (e.g., nightmares, difficulty concentrating, being easily startled, sleep difficulties)
- Repeated thoughts or images regarding traumatic events, especially when you are trying not to think about it
- Feeling numb
- Feeling unable to tolerate strong emotions
- Increased sensitivity to violence
- Cynicism, Anger, Disgust, Fear
- Generalized despair and hopelessness, and loss of idealism
- Guilt regarding your own survival and/ or pleasure

Behavior and relationship signs may include:

- Difficulty setting boundaries
- Feeling like you never have time or energy for yourself.
- Feeling disconnected from loved ones, even when communicating with them
- Increased conflict in relationships
- General social withdrawal
- Acting out/exhibiting the “silencing response” – finding yourself unable to pay attention to other's distressing stories because they seem overwhelming and incomprehensible, and directing people to talk about less distressing material
- Decreased interest in activities that used to bring pleasure, enjoyment, or relaxation.
- Sexual difficulties.
- Irritable, intolerant, agitated, impatient, needy, and/or moody. Impulsivity.
- Increased dependencies or addictions involving nicotine, alcohol, food, sex, shopping, Internet, and/or other substances

- Changes in spirituality and beliefs around meaning and purpose. We may start to question what we believe or lose hope or lose our sense of purpose. Our political worldviews and beliefs may change over time, too, in response to the ongoing trauma we witness. For example, for many going to prison may increase their rage and keep them going in their fight. For many others, prison will make them feel that fighting back is pointless and hopeless and they may abandon the movements that were once a huge part of their life.

- Changes in identity – you may feel disconnected from certain identities that you once held dear (such as calling yourself an anarchist or feminist). You may find that you can't cope with organizing any more and this affects your sense of who you are.
- Changes in beliefs related to major psychological needs (e.g., beliefs regarding safety, control, trust, esteem, and intimacy). In an ABC context, this might mean that perhaps you no longer trust certain friends because they let you down while you were in prison. Or it can mean that after police infiltration that intimate relationships feel impossible.



EACH OTHER

ABC work can be hard, stressful and emotionally challenging at times. Seeing our friends and comrades arrested, beaten, have their houses raided by police, sit through trials, go to prison, and more can be seriously tough. Many people in ABC groups might also be active in other groups so may be simultaneously experiencing repression and supporting others to survive repression.

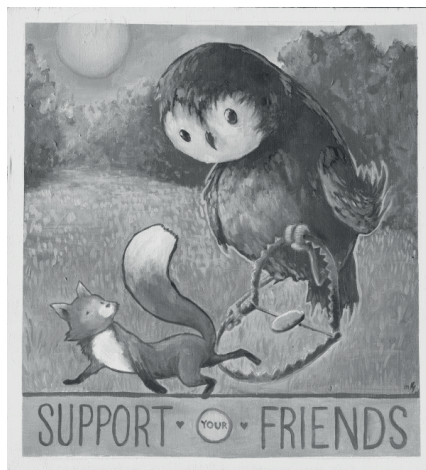
Prisoner support work can mean an intimacy with death. We may lose the people we love due to medical neglect, suicide or even at the hands (or guns) of the police. Coping with grief and managing chronic stress are important skills for ABC organizers.

Many people burn out from prisoner support and anti-repression work and this is why taking care of ourselves and each other is super important! This section of the zine aims to explore this topic and share some resources.

Vicarious trauma & ABC work

As anarchists, as people resisting the dehumanizing nature of capitalism and the state, we see a lot of fucked up shit. We may experience this ourselves directly (like prison), or we may support people we are close to surviving certain chronically stressful and traumatic situations. Or we may just be reading and writing about what other people are going through. Either way, we are exposed to a lot of heavy and upsetting things and it is obvious this is going to begin to affect us (otherwise we wouldn't be human).

One way this is recognized is in the concept of "vicarious trauma." Vicarious trauma has been described by the Headington Institute as the "process of change that happens because you care about other people that have been hurt, and feel committed or responsible to help them. Over time this process can lead to changes in your psychological, physical, and spiritual wellbeing."



Increasingly, trauma conversation and writing acknowledges the effects of long-term and complex trauma, beyond one-off traumatic incidents like a car accident. It shines a light on the potential cumulative consequences of bringing other people's grief, fear, anger, and despair into our own awareness and experience over a longer period of time. Some of these changes might be noticed through different signs.

certain events, like doing cooking, but it has been harder at times to have enough people who will do this more boring or invisible work like checking emails or updating the prisoner list. There have also been some challenges with the gendered division of labour but this is improving!

Sometimes, the emotional work involved in ABC can be challenging, too. Like when you hear from comrades who have been tortured or beaten in prison, or are just struggling with imprisonment. organizing can help you to feel less powerless, but you still feel like you just want to go there and destroy the walls and get these people out! I think this feeling of 'not doing enough' is something that many people feel who are engaged in struggles, it's not exclusive to ABC.

My favorite moment is I think definitely visiting one prison on the New Year's Eve solidarity demos and making noise outside. Inside the women were shouting back, and banging on the doors – and it's like the whole prison came alive with noises of defiance. It was amazing! We later heard from a woman in this prison at the time who said it really 'kicked off' in the prison that night and everyone there felt amazed that people would come on NYE to support them.



What keeps me going is knowing that these systems of oppression and exploitation still exist and that the necessity to fight remains."

What keeps me going? It sounds really cheesy to say things like "Until All Are Free" or "Until Every Cage is Empty" but I really feel this way. That, we simply cannot stop until all the cages and prisons in this world are destroyed. What keeps me going is knowing that these systems of oppression and exploitation still exist and that the necessity to fight remains. Emotionally, what keeps me going is friendships that I have gained through the ABC network. There are some incredibly inspiring people active in this struggle and it is an honor to know them.

My advice for new groups is to ask for support when you need it – contact one of the longer running groups and simply ask for help. We have all made so many mistakes and learned so much over the years that people are happy to help others to get started. Also, make sure you take care of yourself and each other! And fuck macho bullshit :)"

...

the existence of such a group in our city. I rather felt it is something super-secret and to me it was a kind of 7th level of anarchism or something. Now it sounds really ridiculous, but I guess it was so because it was vital to not talk about who is doing what and who is who, you know.

My involvement started with a wave of repression which also hit me and my comrades, and anti-repression work got much wider scale than before and involved more people. After some time, I realized that actually we are doing things which ABC is doing for a long time, and the only difference is that I don't meet other people from the group, who don't necessarily do public things and don't want many people to know about their involvement.

So after some time I got closer and took some responsibilities that I wanted to take care of. It was simple because we are just bunch of friends and see each other very often, and it is actually hard to name the day when I got involved as our ABC group doesn't have ritual for accepting new people, like oaths around the campfire when it's a full moon—which is really nice ritual I think!

My favorite moment—I think I really liked how we were inventing nicknames for all these police and state assholes who were trying to send us to prison. Making jokes about all of them while writing an article and sometimes trying to write it in the most funny way we could—I think I could count so many hours that we spent laughing about the police.

And I think all these organizing moments were not how many people

and taking a lot of time. Because it is not activism. Our case is a bunch of friends, cooking food together and having a good time, and meanwhile actually doing things. But also I got to say that there are things which start to be hard after some time, like publishing things on the website, especially if you have dozens of other things to do.

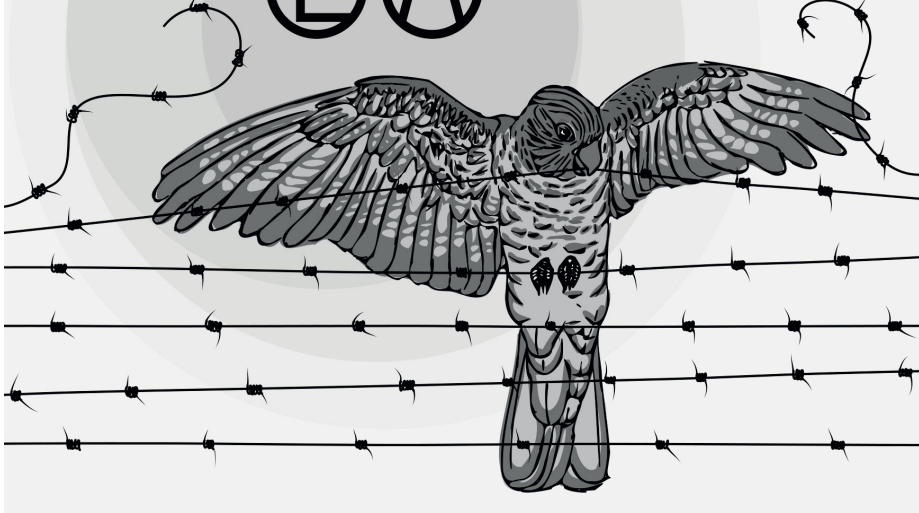
It is good to share these responsibilities and not to create hierarchies. I mean, for example, really try to avoid a situation when there is only one or two people who know how to put things on a website or have access to e-mail, because these things are very routine or they start to be routine very soon. So share it, and when you feel that tasks are hard for you, share them with people in your group to give yourself a small reward. I think it's a tip for how to make things a bit more inspiring.”

...



- What kind of anti-repressive or abolitionist work is missing in our local area?
- What is something that your ABC group could organize around, from an anarchist tactical perspective, for fighting prisons and the State that hasn't been present in your area and could be meaningful?
- What kind of projects or initiatives inspire you?
- Are there any legal support groups that you can be in contact with? Does it make sense to start one?
- How could you organize periodic educational events, connected to raising awareness of security culture? Are there ways how you could make such events more interesting, interactive and easy? What can be done to get more people interested?
- Think through organizing benefit events to raise funds for your project and/or for prisoner support. How can you make such events more effective and get more people involved? How can you connect such events to other ideas you've been having within your group?
- Look out for events that you could participate in as a group and present your ideas, perspectives, and work that you are doing.
- Have there been any large and/or known state repression cases in your area that you are familiar with and that could be highlighted as a lesson for people in your area and beyond? Can you offer in-depth analysis of what happened and what it can potentially teach you?
- Think of starting cooperative and common projects with other ABC groups and other friendly collectives near your area and even further.
- What are some possible short-, middle- and long-term goals for your ABC group?
- What are the practical ways in which you could connect your ABC work outside of prison with things that are happening on the inside? How can that can deepen and widen the struggle?
- What are the limitations of your ABC group?
- Is there anything that can bring people in your ABC group closer together as friends and comrades? What could empower you as a project, or as a group of active individuals?
- What is your relation to the dichotomy of political and social, especially in relation to 'political' and 'social' prisoners? What are the limitations of such divisions and where do these divisions rise from?
- What can be done to keep your group activities more sustainable?

**Go on and talk to your comrades.
Share ideas, make things happen, organize—the sky is the limit!**



mutual understanding of punishment, prison, and life without them towards an uncompromisingly deep and radical analysis of how they work, what can be done to destroy them, and what social relations we want. Of course, all of these go together. We can't create an analysis first, then destroy prisons, then think of how we want to live. We do it all at once, and that is what makes our abolitionist ideas strong.

The positions presented above means a damn huge amount of work to be done. And that's why your local ABC group should go on. As destroying prisons is a hell of an effort, it has to be said also that repression never stops.

What might be done to keep an ABC group going?

First, think of repression in a wider context. It might seem that repression is a relatively short-term situation but repression is actually a part of The Situation. That means that The Repression is always present. The

State is always out there and its control over people's lives itself means repression and social warfare. Whatever it is: a fine; laws and the whole mechanism and collective illusion that make them work; borders; a criminal case; the cop which passes by in a police car on your street; the papers; the courts; the whole so-called public order and so on. Not all repression is visible: some is insidious such a part of our everyday life that we don't necessarily consider it repression in our usual understanding—whether the state is opening a large criminal case against our comrades or cops are beating us up on the streets. Our desire for liberation is equally in conflict with 'small' and 'big' repressions, and prisons uphold all of them.

As a long-term, infrastructural undertaking, discuss particular goals within your ABC formation. This can be much more useful than a manual. Some things to discuss that we have found useful include:

... nearly 10 years and, as an anarchist, I was always interested in organizing as an ABC group and doing anti-prison projects. There was an ABC group somewhere else in the country in the late 90s/beginning of 2000, when I just started by myself doing things in the radical left and I had some loose contact.

Later, I was organizing with an anti-repression-group that did legal support service for demonstrations and so on. I left this group because of some big differences concerning the political goals we were fighting for and my personal affections to radical theory and practice. Then some people in my home town started an ABC group in 2008. It took some years because of different personal and political issues but then I joined them.

One of my favorite moments was when we organized the Anti-Prison-Days some years ago and an anarchist long-term-prisoner joined the meeting. He was 16 years behind bars and was released 10 days before he traveled to the meeting. It was really impressive to meet him and listen to his words during the discussions. He was so open-minded and talked about his experiences in prison. For me, it was the affirmation of why I'm fighting against the prison industry and that we are right.

What keeps me going? It's fucking important. Yes, it's hard work and nothing fun about that, but it has to be pushed forward. We are not just doing anti-repression work, we are enemies of the state and capitalism and ABC is just one part of a lot. I cannot stop. There will be always repression as long there is the state, so we will continue.



My advice to people starting—do your work and fight. It's not a hobby or some kind of project that you can quit when you are interested in something new or more fascinating.

For me, it makes no sense to start an ABC group and then stop with it some years later because nobody is interested in the things you are doing or the fights you are going through. Of course not. Anti-Repression is never some fun-stuff. It's hard work. And it's hard to continue. But don't give up. Some small breaks, ok, but don't give up. It's also a story of trust and dependability for other people in the same or similar fights."

...

"We are not just doing anti-repression work, we are enemies of the state and capitalism and ABC is just one part of a lot. I cannot stop. There will be always repression as long there is the state, so we will continue."

years ago, when I started to get involved with a quite active punk scene. At this time, there was an active ABC group in the south of this country and one of the people was also doing a DIY Punk Zine and I ordered it. And with and within the zine was also ABC Material. I immediately had the feeling that this is important and got drawn to this topic. And so a friend and I made an ABC Solidarity Benefit Compilation on Tape. We spread and printed flyers and pamphlets about ABC and prisoners. Over the next years, the topic was still important for me and I did some solidarity stuff for ABC groups but it would take almost 10 more years to start our own group in my city in 2008.

Prison or Anti-prison perspectives were not a topic in the anti-authoritarian movement at all and the anti-repression groups did not have an anti-prison/anti-authoritarian perspective. We wanted to change this.

In the first years, our main focus was to spread the ideas of an anarchist view against prisons and make prisons/repression and solidarity a bigger topic within the anti-authoritarian movement. After a while, the banners on solidarity demonstrations changed from “freedom for all political prisoners” to “freedom for all prisoners” ;) haha. But we did a lot of talks about why we as anarchists are against prisons and that there can't be a free society with

movement seemed to have a hard time with these ideas at least at first. We also did an Infotour through the country about this topic.

We made and printed flyers and zines about prison related topics, made talks about current cases and prisoners and always collected money to support prisoners and other groups. We took part in international gatherings and also organized Anti-Prison-Days.

We participated in solidarity actions and for 6 years now, we organize a solidarity-festival once a year. For the last 4 years, we've published a monthly printed newsletter. We have a regular updated website with current events and an incomplete list of prisoners.

And we have an always growing book and zine distro. Sometimes, we manage to travel around and give talks about ABC-related topics and/or the history of Anarchist Black Cross in general. We are always happy to get asked to do talks.

We consider ourselves more an anti-prison group than an anti-repression group, but also do anti-repression work. Starting about one year ago, we do a monthly letter-writing workshop.

I think ABC is important because such a part of anarchist struggle. We have to support (our) prisoners and also have to keep the struggle against

HOW TO TALK ABC GROUP GOING

One could say that the fuel ABC goes on is active work around cases of repression that the group is familiar with. That is to say, when repression is not happening, anti-repressive groups like ABC might go into “sleeping mode,” if not just disappear. People stand up and leave, like after a film finishes, and folks go home since an action is over.

Sometimes this is the case with ABC groups, too. Some contemporary ABC groups have stopped being active after the most visible and active parts of repression happening in their communities are over. But it doesn't mean it should always be this way.

There are plenty of reasons why ABC groups might stop existing after repression. For example, very often people who are involved in ABC group are part of other projects, and starting an ABC group might be a practical necessity to organize against repression, especially if no anti-repressive groups already exist. Among other reasons, there might be some traumatic experiences that were connected to the support work that had been done. All of this is understandable. But many of us who participated in ABC noticed a continuing need to keep it going. Why?

ABC, as a type of organization, and as one of the ways anarchists have tactically fought against states and supported those who got caught, has a great tradition. And the Anarchist

Black Cross organizational philosophy is still an abolitionist philosophy.

More than 100 years ago, anarchists in the same type of organization were actively opposing the tsarist regime, and just few years later they became an enemy to the Bolshevik state— just as to all other states on Earth. Coming through both Tsarist and Bolshevik prisons and executions back then, and today fighting against prisons and state repression all around the world, Anarchist Black Cross as an idea gains historical perspective on revolution, the State and its prisons, but also brings a clear abolitionist perspective to ABC's long term goals and everyday struggle.

It's clear: we absolutely need to destroy all prisons; this institution of control fills a role as a connecting glue to other systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, classism, and racism. Prisons have never solved problems, but instead created countless numbers of them; destroying so many lives, cultures, and beautiful human and animal beings.

We know it's not as simple as destroying prisons in a single act of liberating violence, but rather a complicated and long-term process of building other kinds of relationships within society. It is about moving our

“It sometimes does not feel like much what you can do, but then you get letters from prisoners and they still have so much fight in them and they let you feel how important your support is to them.”





Monthly donations

Many antiauthoritarian and anti-fascist groups have the option for people to donate regularly, typically a small amount per month. This creates a sustainable income source and is a good model to replicate if you have a bank account and this structure. It can be more difficult if you are informal without an account (many groups do not have a formal account for security reasons).

Anarchist Defense Fund

An International Anarchist Defense Fund was launched in 2018. It collects funds from members who join and then contribute to decision making in response to applications for the fund. The collective solidarity structure provides support to anarchists around the world who are persecuted or find themselves in a difficult life situation because of their political ideas or activities. <https://afund.info>

Whether it is a dinner or a party, infotour or single presentation, it is important to understand that fundraising events also build an atmosphere of solidarity inside anarchist movements. If today people are taking care of comrade A. when he/she/they are facing repression, then it means that tomorrow nobody is going to give up! This feeling of support from your comrades is extremely important in building revolutionary community that embarks on revolution.

So don't hesitate. If you don't have experience, ask other groups or your friends to help you out. Be creative and embrace the hard parts of fundraising so you can later enjoy the good parts of it. Disclaimer: We don't want to list only legal options or discount more traditional ways of fundraising anarchists have utilized in previous centuries, e.g. expropriation ;)



a useful label under which different groups can also connect more easily. There is a lot of material to use from other ABC groups and the ABC also has a long history we can look back and try to learn, but also take inspiration, from.

Most people who are somehow involved with an anti-authoritarian movement or just the punk scene know what ABC is. There are punk-festivals all over Europe in solidarity with ABC groups who want to support this cause even if they are not part of groups themselves.

On the other side, I think it is important to get organized and have anarchist structures to support prisoners, which keep on going and not form new from case to case. And also not to completely rely on the German Rote Hilfe, for example, who managed to print in the last two years at least two articles in the Rote Hilfe-Newspaper celebrating authoritarian communism (who killed and incarcerated anarchists/anti-authoritarians). Of course many of the "sub-groups" who are part of Rote Hilfe are not like this, but I think this over-reliance in



dangerous. And it also shows somehow that we are everywhere! ;) And that we are connected in a loose international network.

The challenges have been to keep going and not to burn out. In this line of work, so to speak, there are not so many moments of success, where you immediately see a result. We started with a group which was more than twice the size than we are now. Many people lost interest in the group, the ideas, the struggle... But I guess otherwise the usual stuff like life in a capitalist society in general.

The best moment is often just a letter you get from inside prison. The last two years we also got invited to talk at a festival about our work and they wrote some really nice words about our group and our work and why they do a benefit especially for us. It felt really nice to get appreciated for the work you do. It's not why we do it, but to be honest it felt really good.

What keeps us going? It is really important and it's just part of our struggle as anarchists. It sometimes does not feel like there is much you can do, but then you get letters from prisoners and they still have so much fight in them and they let you feel how important your support is to them. And most of the time you never met them but you read their words and you feel this strong bond and affinity. I personally get a lot of power and energy back from these letters.

Also meeting people over the years who are involved since the 80s and even 70s in anti-prison-struggles is always very inspiring for me. Or people who do this work living in far more repressive countries. And their experiences and how they manage.

capitalism and no liberated society, so there is also still the need of ABC. ;)

My advice to new people is don't do it because it's cool or trendy, or because you think it gets you scene credibility or shit like this. Don't do this if you see this as "activism," what you do for a while, get disillusioned because things don't work as you want them, or prisoners are difficult, or you just get bored and just quit again. Anarchism and solidarity

Give yourself realistic goals (for the start). I mean of course, anarchist revolution is the main goal, but you know what I mean. ;) You will need a lot of stamina and it will take a lot of energy. Maybe get in contact with other ABC groups—there is a lot you can learn from their experiences. You don't have to start at zero."

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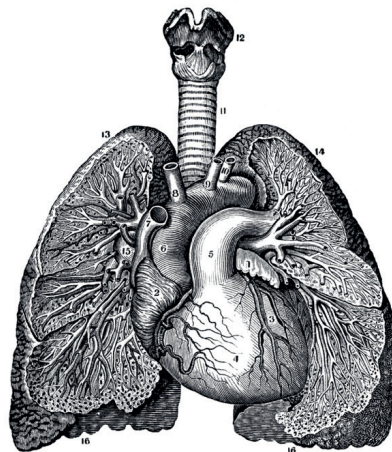
INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF SOLIDARITY

Many international days and weeks of action take place throughout the year in solidarity with prisoners. This list represents a few of those that take place. These days can help keep prisoner support active and visible in our movements and struggles—but we are not limited to them.

ABC groups organize many other events and actions throughout the year. Shared days of action help us to build momentum, share resources and gain strength for particular prisoners and struggles. These days are the same each year, but many new days and weeks of action are announced spontaneously when solidarity is urgently needed.

New York ABC also produce a poster each month of political prisoner birthdays. This is a great resource for regular letter writing events: nycabc.wordpress.com

JUNE 11TH INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH MARIUS MASON & ALL LONGTERM ANARCHIST PRISONERS



Many ABC and other autonomous groups raise money for prisoners through organizing Tattoo Circuses. These are events where tattoo artists give their time for free. People pay to get tattooed and all this money goes to prisoners or support campaigns. They can raise many thousands of euros over one weekend. Tattoo Circuses also have programs of workshops and presentations to raise awareness about different cases of repression and different struggles. Many groups also organize music, food, and drinks to sell to raise funds over the weekend.

Benefit Gigs/Shows/Concerts

Fundraising gigs are a great way to raise money. However, if you are paying the bands or even just paying their travel expenses, sometimes it is hard to simply "break even." Benefit gigs are often best when bands give their time for free so all the money can go to prisoners. They can be a good opportunity to do an info-table and prisoner letter-writing too.

Many groups find they make more money from music events that draw in more people, such as a rave or a hip hop night compared to a punk show. Then again, some groups organize whole festivals that raise a lot of money through punk/metal/crust music—see the Fest in Vienna for inspiration!

Some individuals and groups will raise money through sponsoring. They will ask friends to give them a donation if they do a 10k run for example. Some people even do this with shaving their head or other silly things! It takes a lot of energy and commitment but can be a nice way to fundraise.

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) and supporting groups also organize an annual "Running Down the Walls." These sponsored runs raise much needed funds for their work. People can also walk/bike/roll the 5k routes. See <https://www.abcf.net/rdtw> for details.

Raffles

Raffles are simply where people buy a ticket and potentially win a prize. They can be a great addition to any event, such as a presentation or benefit gig. You can ask supporters to donate prizes and can get extra-nice things through five-finger discounts at your local stores!

Merchandise

Merchandise never goes out of fashion. People always seem happy to buy benefit t-shirts, patches, and other items. They can be expensive to print and organize, but costs can be reduced through doing the screen printing yourselves or finding volunteers to do it, as well as finding t-shirts in thrift/charity shops. Some groups also appropriate blank t-shirts, ready to be screen printed on, from corporate stores!



spend it on drinks or they just donate more when in a good mood.

However, good parties require a lot of effort from multiple individuals. There is nothing worse than organizing a bad fundraising party. If you get a reputation of being a bad party organizer, there is little chance that this way of fundraising will be open to you for long.

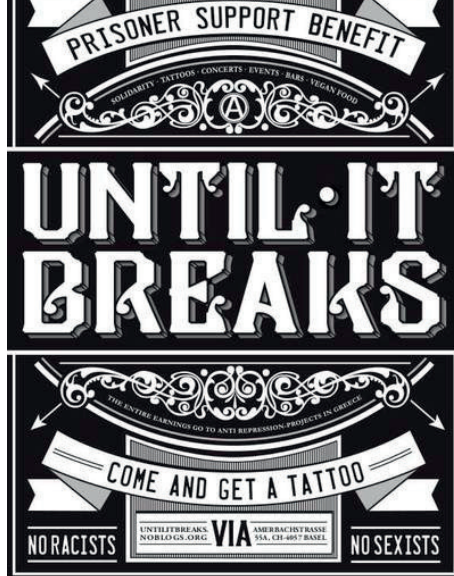
That's why parties should be original and fun. For political and strategic reasons, some groups do not sell alcohol or any other drugs at their soli-parties.

Infotours

Infotours are a more advanced version of a presentation event/party. An infotour is a set of events that happen around different cities with the goal of informing people about a situation, but also raising funds for the cause.

Not only are they good for raising funds, but also for establishing networks with other organizers. Connections that you build on the road are irreplaceable in your struggle. People that you meet during an infotour might become comrades till the end of your life.

However, it is also a lot of work. In many cases, infotours have an intensive schedule and we would suggest not to do it longer than a couple of weeks, otherwise your head might give up before your body.



and Solidarity

January 22
This grassroots project was initiated by Marius Mason, a trans prisoner in Connecticut, USA. This annual event is lead by trans prisoners and their supporters from around the world. It is a chance for those on the outside to remember those behind bars, give real solidarity and support and raise awareness about issues facing trans prisoners. It is a chance for those on the inside to have a voice and organize together.

International Women's Day March 8

While this day continues to be whitewashed and channeled into liberal and capitalist feminisms, many anarchists and others use this day to fight against patriarchy and remember the radical history of Women's Day. ABC groups have organized letter writing events and info nights about incarcerated women worldwide.

International Day Against Police Brutality March 15

The International Day Against Police Brutality is observed on March 15. It first began in 1997 as an initiative of the Montreal based Collective Opposed to Police Brutality and the Black Flag group in Switzerland. Acceptance of March 15 as a focal day of solidarity against police brutality varies from one place to another.

Palestinian Prisoners Day April 17

During this day, people worldwide organize rallies, events and actions in solidarity with Palestinian Political Prisoners. Every year, Palestinian prisoners carry out an open-ended hunger strike, while those on the

INTERNATIONAL TRANS PRISONER DAY OF ACTION AND SOLIDARITY



outside seek to amplify their voices.
<http://samidoun.net>

International Workers' Day/May Day May 1

May Day is held in commemoration of four anarchists executed in the USA in 1886 and all the thousands of others who have struggled for the working classes. Many groups in this period organize solidarity actions and use it as an opportunity to highlight prison labour and all the incarcerated workers in prison.

Read more about the history here:
<https://libcom.org/history/1886-haymarket-martyrs-mayday>

International Day of Solidarity with Long-term Earth & Animal Liberation and Anarchist Prisoners June 11

Each year, June 11th serves as a day for us to remember our longest imprisoned anarchist comrades through words, actions and ongoing material support.



The June 11 website shares many resources and a listing of prisoners who value increased support in this period. People are encouraged to take actions all over the world and report them back. Each year, a zine is created of writings and reports.
<https://june11.noblogs.org>

Prisoners Justice Day August 10

August 10th is a day set aside to remember all those who have died unnatural deaths inside Canadian prisons. The day of action started in Canada in 1974 when prisoner Edward Nolan bled to death at Millhaven Maximum Security Prison in Bath, Ontario. This date has now become a marking point for prison struggle across the world.
<http://prisonjustice.ca>

International Week of Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners 23 - 30 August

This is a global week of action dedicated to anarchist prisoners. Solidarity can express itself in many forms; from graffiti to attacks to letter writing evenings. A collective poster and call-out is written and shared online and then groups make autonomous actions and can send reports for the website if they wish. The beginning of the week was chosen because of the historical execution date of Sacco and Vanzetti,

1927. They were convicted with a very little amount of evidence, and many still consider that they were punished because of their anarchist views.
<https://solidarity.international>

International Trans Day of Remembrance 28 November

The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialise those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. It honors the dead, and fights for the living. Many anti-prison groups have taken actions against prisons on these days, remembering trans prisoners who have died inside.

New Year's Eve Noise Demonstrations

It has become tradition, that on the noisiest night of the year we also make noise for prisoners. Internationally, noise demonstrations outside of prisons are a way to remember those who are held captive by the state and a way to show solidarity with imprisoned comrades and loved ones. We come together to break the loneliness and isolation. Demos take place all over the world to let prisoners know they are not alone.



Fundraising is one of the biggest parts of our activity. Whether we want it or not, a lot of solidarity work requires money. Starting from lawyers for the legal aid and ending up with parcels to the prisoners and support for those that are at the financial bottom due to repression.

Some people find it to be a nasty business, others turn it into quite a positive experience. It is up to you to decide which approach you take but it should be clear that if you are taking your ABC activity seriously you won't be able to avoid fundraising.

Here are some tips from our own experience on how you can make some money. Some of it might not fit into reality due to political repressions. This list is for updating for sure. So if you or your group have something to add—feel free to write us back with your experience.

Fundraising Evening/Presentation

These are some kinds of presentations, discussions or workshops that are connected with the matter for which you are fundraising. For example, a presentation on repression against activists protesting against G20, that might be a platform to raise solidarity funds. These are quite good in case you want to collect money for causes that are not really present in your region. Through these events you can inform people and potentially inspire people to start being active in support of this or that cause. However, you shouldn't expect a lot of money from these kinds of events, as people are normally not eager to donate money directly after a presentation. The interest in donating might be encouraged with some materials for sale/donation on the topic. Even such things as t-shirts or patches might be a small connection to the topic for some people.

You can also go away from a traditional presentation format and organize a solidarity dinner. Some

groups report that a well-organized dinner might raise more funds and attract more people than just a presentation.

Solidarity Calls

Sometimes it is worth to making a call to anarchist movements for help. It might be that other groups have more access to funds than you do. For example, western countries have more wealth than eastern or southern countries.

In that case, such a call can provoke other people to take action in their own town and raise funds for you. Do not underestimate the power of solidarity—you might be positively surprised how people are eager to help those they don't know, but with whom they share ideas.

Party

This is one of the most popular ways of fundraising in western countries. In most cases you can openly advertise the cause of the party and give people an opportunity to party for the cause. It is a great way to raise