

Links & Other

Resources:

Anarchist Black Cross Federation

What is the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC)?

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 now be put to rest. We have now 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 very 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 stages of the ARC. He 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 origin in 1907. During June and August of 1907, Anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries gather 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 do 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 prison fled 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 Communists 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 Bolsheviks 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.

During the next 7 decades, the group would continue under various different names but has always considered itself part of the 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.

In the '80s, 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). The relationship between these formations has always been considered strenuous. The Break the Chains conference in August 2003, along with sidebar discussions between collectives, brought about a better working relationship between the ABCF and ABCN formations. (The ABCC was a short-lived formation, dying off in the early 1990's.)

What is the ABCF?

In May of 1995, a small group of ABC collectives merged into a Federation whose aim was to focus on the overall support and defense of PP/POWs.

Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War are not in prison for committing social "crimes", nor are they criminals. Different PP/POWs participated in progressive and revolutionary movements at varying levels. Some in educational and community organizing, others in clandestine armed and offensive people's armies. All are in prison as a result of conscious political action, for building resistance, building, and leading movements and revolution... for making change.

Many of us in some way or another are part of these very movements, part of that resistance that PP/POWs helped to build. As people continuing to struggle for change, we are obligated and it is our duty to support those people who are in prison as a result of struggling to make change.

Though some have a wider definition of Political Prisoners, we maintain that even if the definition of a Political Prisoner was expanded and widely accepted to include social prisoners of conscience, it needs to be clear that those prisoners who went to prison as a result of political action taken on the street would still demand our priority support. For movements to support other prisoners before we support the prisoners who have gone to prison for building the very movements we now participate in is backward and criminal.

How do we support Political Prisoners & Prisoners of War?

Making sure PP/POWs are a part of their own support is crucial and one of the greatest strengths of the Federation. We directly communicate with as many PP/POWs as we can. A large part of this communication is working together with them to find out what they need and how then we can practically provide this support. The Federation's Prisoners' Committee (PC), made up of 5 PP/POWs who have shown interest in our work and helping it grow, serves on the ABCF's Federation Council. Members of the Prisoners' Committee rotate yearly.

The ABCF also works to build alliances with the communities and the movements the prisoners participated in prior to their incarceration. Through these alliances, we work toward increasing the awareness about various liberation movements and the political prisoners associated with the movements. It is through these coalitions that we continue to ensure that imprisoned comrades are not forgotten by their movements or our own.

We also produce information about PP/POWs, the struggles they came from and the movements they represent. Booklets, fliers, video/audio tapes, T/sweatshirts and calendars are produced featuring these prisoners. This not only informs people about their existence and daily struggles behind bars (where the struggle continues), it heightens their visibility in our communities and funds from this merchandise are sent to them.

That's another important responsibility of supporting PP/POWs. Raising material support is crucial. It is not uncommon to find that PP/POWs are left with no financial support to pay for phone calls or postage stamps to communicate with their families, friends, and supporters; not enough money to pay for a news subscription or buy books; no funds to get proper footwear or summer/winter clothing. If we call these prisoners our comrades, we can not allow this to continue. And we don't.

We raise these funds mainly through the Warchest Program. Through the Warchest, we collect monthly donations from our own ABC groups and monthly or one-time pledges from other ABC's around the country, supportive groups, and individuals. With these funds, we send out monthly checks of up to \$30 to those PP/POWs who are receiving the least financial support to our knowledge.

Still, financial support and communication are but two forms of direct support needed to demonstrate to their keepers PP/POWs have not been forgotten. As enemies of the state, they serve the hardest time. The government often attempts to lock them far away from their families, friends, and supporters. We must not allow them to be isolated. When geographically possible, we go into the prisons and visit PP/POWs. This also brings the harsh reality of political imprisonment much closer to supporters. It reminds us that PP/POWs are not only names and figures, pictures on our T-shirts and leaflets, but people with personalities and personal needs. And if we forget this or neglect to include it in our work to defend them, our foundations will soon become weak.

What is the Prisoners' Committee?

The Prisoners' Committee (PC) is part of the governing body of the ABCF. It is a tangible effort to include political prisoners in their own support. The committee consists of 5 prisoners, nominated by ABCF chapters, who participate in developing the programs and strategies of the Federation. The committee's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- 1. Allocating funds of the Warchest Program to PP/POWs.*
- 2. Allocating Emergency Funds from the Warchest Program.*

3. Voting on policy and proposals of the Federation.
4. Confirming the legitimacy of prisoners claiming PP/POW status.
5. Submitting and help develop proposals.
6. Staying in communication with other FC members

<https://www.abcf.net/prisoner-info/>

Black And Pink

What is Black & Pink?

At Black & Pink, we coordinate a nationwide PenPal program in which we match incarcerated LGBTQIA2S+ people and people living with HIV/AIDS with PenPals who correspond, build relationships, and participate in harm reduction and affirmation. For an incarcerated LGBTQIA2S+ person, corresponding with someone on a regular basis is itself a harm reduction strategy, giving that person a support network outside of prison.

<https://blackandpinkpenpals.org/>

Certain Days

Knitting Together the Struggles

As the last years, decades, and centuries have taught us, our freedom is inextricably linked with the freedom of others. The anti-colonial struggles that raged across Africa during the mid-twentieth century inspired those fighting for liberation in the United States, leading to the Civil Rights Movement. In turn, the movement for Black Liberation was a catalyst for the second wave of feminism, and for the ongoing work of both the queer and trans communities. As Angela Y. Davis—who so masterfully combines Black feminism with prison abolition—continues to remind us, “Freedom is a constant struggle.”

It makes sense then, that if our freedom is interwoven, so therefore are our struggles. The fight to protect asylum-seekers and migrants, the ongoing battles to defend the environment and other living beings, the ongoing movement to abolish capitalism... the list is endless, and yet the struggle is singular. It is a struggle against oppression, against greed, but also a struggle against indifference and ignorance. It is a struggle for life itself.

There is tremendous power in creating connections between generations, between movements, across borders, and across prison walls. Yet all too often (and with the unswerving assistance of

corporate media), we are unable to connect the dots that unite our struggles. While we may notice that the ongoing imprisonment of children of color reflects the United States' internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII, we must also make the connection between these horrendous actions and the privatization of the Global South, the expansion of the carceral state, and the growing authoritarianism of state governments. Similarly, we see the threads that connect the Indigenous struggle for land (and against drilling and pipelines on their land) with the fight for a living wage, the growing demand for a more equitable distribution of resources, and the need to confront white supremacist policies and practices.

We hope that you will find examples to help deepen your own connections in our *Knitting Together the Struggles* calendar for 2020. Only by uniting our work to directly confront oppression will we see concrete results.

In a 1970 letter to a then-imprisoned Davis, James Baldwin wrote, "If we know, then we must fight for your life as though it were our own—which it is—and render impassable with our bodies the corridor to the gas chamber. For, if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night."

None are free until all are free.

p.s. Visit certaindays.org for more great art and articles from prisoners, supporters, and abolitionists.

-the certain days collective: Amy, Daniel, Helen, Josh, Sara

-supporting members: Aric, Erin, Tasha

One Movement, Many Fronts

By Dawson Barrett

We are living through many, overlapping crises.

Most overwhelmingly, on the global scale, the climate catastrophe has arrived. Its causes are also poisoning our water, our air, and our bodies. In many corners of the world, a rising authoritarianism is feeding on—and accelerating—economic inequality, police violence, endless war, the erosion of workers' power and funding for public education, and misogynistic attacks on reproductive freedoms. Refugees of imperial capitalism, meanwhile, are being caged to the rabid cheers of white nationalists throughout Europe, Australia, the U.S., and beyond.

These crises are legacies of injustices dating to the Cold War, the industrial revolution, chattel slavery, 1492, and earlier. They have been challenged by many human generations, and our struggles today connect us to that past.

Our crises are themselves also deeply intertwined. In 2010, an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon drilling platform dumped more than 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. It devastated marine life. It also killed a dozen platform workers, injured a dozen more, and poisoned hundreds of people involved in the clean-up. The spill bridged environmental concerns with the safety of workers, as the corporations involved ignored both in their pursuit of profit. Two of those companies were BP and Halliburton, further linking the mess to more than a century of imperialist violence around the world, from the 1953 coup in Iran to the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

More recently, opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline demonstrated that environmental campaigns—with local and global implications—are often also anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles. The Water Protectors at Standing Rock dared to oppose the will of some of the world's most powerful oil companies and banks, and so faced armed mercenaries, as well as the combined police forces of several state and local governments.

This intersection of ecology, human rights, and empire is also inseparable from incarceration. In California, prisoner labor is used to fight the dangerous wildfires that are exacerbated by the changing climate. When BP poisoned the gulf, incarcerated people in Louisiana were among those exposed to toxic chemicals while cleaning it up. And when increasingly powerful hurricanes have forced evacuations from coastal states, prisoners were often left behind.

Paralleling decades of “War on Drugs” legislation, recent years have also seen waves of laws criminalizing immigration, women’s reproductive rights, and forms of protest that target oil pipelines or white nationalists. Lawmakers and their corporate backers see these issues as connected, and their response has been to dehumanize their opponents—and to control their bodies.

We are living through many, overlapping crises, but we don’t have to face them alone. If the problems are connected, then so, too, are the movements against them. Standing Rock, Occupy Wall Street, #BlackLivesMatter, the airport occupations, the Women’s March, #MeToo, high school student walkouts, teachers’ strikes, prisoners’ strikes, the Poor People’s Campaign, protests against family separation, the Extinction Rebellion, and parallel efforts from India to South Africa to Brazil and beyond ... are all one big movement, with many fronts.

Or at least they could be.

The movement of our time is for water. It is for life. It is for people, for dolphins, for trees, and for sea turtles. It is an abolitionist struggle, an anti-war struggle, an Indigenous rights struggle, and a workers’ rights struggle. It is bold and massive. It is feminist. It is diverse, messy, and full of contradictions. A family with many relatives. A tree with many branches.

The future is ours to build, together. And we have work to do.

<https://www.certaindays.org/>

Atlanta Solidarity Fund

Protest is vital to a free society, but with resistance comes repression.

From the Civil Rights Era to today, Atlanta has strong traditions of dissent. Protest movements play a critical role in the struggle for social justice. But when people stand up for what's right, they often face the risk of arrest and imprisonment.

<https://atlsolidarity.org/>

Philly Anti-Repression Fund

About

The Philly Anti-Repression Fund is a resource for people in Philadelphia facing state retaliation for fighting against systemic control and exploitation. We understand that the state criminalizes activities that threaten to change the status quo, especially actions taken by already marginalized populations, people who are unaffiliated with activist organizations, and people who decide to take matters into their own hands to get free. The Anti-Repression Fund provides support for those types of actions in particular. Policing and repression have been increasing in the US for decades, making it much harder for people to push back against power and exploitation without being violently punished by the state and condemned by people around them. The Philly Anti-Repression Fund was founded in order to encourage resistance to structural power, and we offer resources on this site to support people acting in small or big ways to move towards freedom and take their lives back.

<https://phillyantirepression.wordpress.com/>

Tucson Anti-Repression

Crew

About

Working to contribute to cultures of resilience against state repression in southern so-called Arizona.

<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/prisonsupport>

Bukit Bail Fund

About

The Bukit Bail Fund of Pittsburgh is a coalition of individuals and organizations striving to provide support for those incarcerated at Allegheny County Jail, located in Pittsburgh, PA. We hope to not just provide bail, but also to increase our capacity for supporting people after they have been released. We are working to get people released from jail as quickly as possible. We call for an end to cash bail in Pittsburgh and everywhere. We believe no one should be in a cage.

<https://www.bukitbailfund.org/>

D.C. IWOC

About

The Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC), a project of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), functions as a liaison for prisoners to organize each other, unionize, and build solid bridges between prisoners on the inside and fellow workers on the outside.

IWOC's Washington, DC chapter is building relationships with incarcerated people in more than a dozen prisons and detention facilities in the greater Mid-Atlantic region. For the past two years, we have also provided Jail Support to our neighbors who are facing criminal charges at the DC Superior Court. Typically, people attend a pre-trial hearing (an arraignment or presentment) at the DC Superior Court after their arrest and detention; and once they are finally released, they leave the DC courthouse with none of their personal belongings and no money. The police even keep their shoelaces!

DC IWOC helps these fellow workers by tending to their immediate needs in a safe and judgment-free environment, providing them with phone calls, transit fare, shoe laces, hygiene products, snacks, water, and other basic necessities that people need, post-lock up, to reunite with their loved ones. Currently, DC IWOC provides this service on the first and last Saturdays of the month, aiding between 30-40 people each day. And with your support, we can expand our Jail Support to more days, more jurisdictions, and more people!

Please consider donating to this Patreon account. All donations will go toward providing more resources to DC IWOC's organizing efforts, including our ongoing Jail Support project at DC Superior Court, our efforts to build connections with Mid-Atlantic area prisoner-organizers on the inside and provide commissary money for those contacts, and to help raise awareness about upcoming prisoner-led actions.

To find out more about IWOC's efforts nationally, go to the national website at <https://incarceratedworkers.org>.

Contact DC IWOC:

Email: dciwoc@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dciwoc/>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/dciwoc/

<https://www.patreon.com/DCIWOC>



Prisoners To Write To

Eric King

#27090-045
FCI Englewood
9595 West Quincy Avenue
Littleton, CO 80123

David Elmakayes

#77782-066
FDC Philadelphia
P.O. Box 562
Philadelphia, PA 19105

Casey Brezik

#1154765
Jefferson County
Correctional Center
8200 No More Victims
Road
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Leonard Peltier

#89637-132
USP Coleman I
P.O. Box 1033
Coleman, FL 33521

Sundiata Acoli (Squire)

#39794-066
FCI Cumberland
P.O. Box 1000
Cumberland, MD 21501

Daniel Baker

#25765-509
FDC Tallahassee
501 Capitol Circle N.E.
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Shawn Collins

#77782-066
FDC Philadelphia
P.O. Box 562
Philadelphia, PA 19105

Joshua Lemar

Williams
#01292002
Potosi Correctional
Center
11593 State Highway O
Mineral Point, MO 63660

Smart Communications /PADOC

Russell Maroon Shoatz
#AF-3855
SCI Dallas
P.O. Box 33028
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Jamil Abdullah

Al-Amin
#99974-555
USP Tucson
P.O. Box 24550
Tucson, AZ 85734

Lore-Elisabeth Blumenthal

#70002-066
FDC Philadelphia
P.O. Box 562
Philadelphia, PA 19105

Steven Pennycooke

#69988-066
FDC Philadelphia
P.O. Box 562
Philadelphia, PA 19105

Michael Kimble

#138017/G1-24A
Easterling Correctional Facility
200 Wallace Drive
Clio, AL 36017

Marie (Marius) Mason

#04672-061
FCI Danbury
Route 37
Danbury, CT 06811

David Gilbert

#83-A-6158
Shawangunk Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 700
Wallkill, NY 12589