

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation



Who we are? What do we do and why?

What is the Anarchist Black Cross?

The origins of the ABC date back to the 1905 Revolution in Russia. It was originally formed as the Anarchist Red Cross to organize aid for Political Prisoners and their families as well as organize self-defense against political raids by the Cossack army. During the Russian Civil War, its name changed to the Anarchist Black Cross to avoid confusion with the International Red Cross, also organizing relief in the country. It has continued, at times very sporadically, serving its purpose of organizing aid for Political Prisoner and Prisoners of War (PP/POWs) for over 100 years.

In the 80s, the ABC began to grow and resurfaced once again in the North America. Since then the ABC name had been kept alive on the continent by a number of completely autonomous groups scattered throughout the North America and has grown to support a wide variety of prison issues.

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 & Prisoners of War are not in prison for committing social "crimes", nor are they criminals. Different PP/POWs participated in progressive and revolutionary movements in 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.

“Political Prisoners & Prisoners of War are not in Prison for committing social ‘crimes,’ nor are they criminals.”

See the ABCF website: www.abcf.net



SUPPORT THE WARCHEST

“Making sure PP & POW’s are a part of their own support is crucial and one of the greatest strengths of the ABCF”.

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 backwards and criminal.

How do we support PP/POWs?

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 we can practically provide this support. The ABCF has established a Prisoners’ Committee made up of 5 PP/POWs who have shown the most interest in our work and helping it grow. These PP/POWs serve on the ABCF’s Prisoners’ Committee (PC) for a one year rotation before another 5 PP/POWs are selected.

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

Raising material assistance is a crucial responsibility in the support for PP/POWs. 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 cannot allow this to continue, and we don’t. We do so in part through the Warchest Program and the Anarchist Subsistence Program.

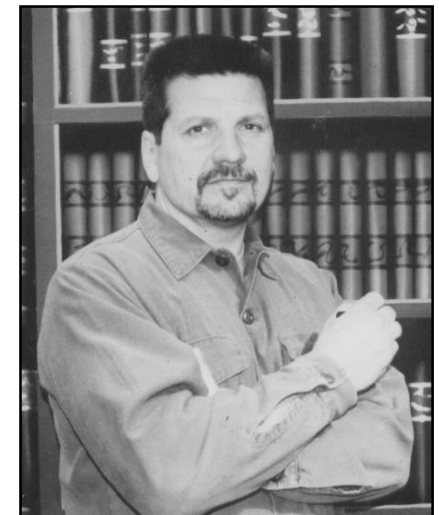
Since 1994 the Warchest has collected monthly donations from our own ABC groups and monthly or one-time pledges from other supporters from around the country. With these funds, we provide reliable non-partisan financial support of monthly checks of up to \$60 to those revolutionary PP/POWs who are receiving the least financial support to our knowledge.

The Anarchist Subsistence Program is like the Warchest, except it is designed to support those PP/POWs who come from our own anarchist/anti-authoritarian community. Our first Anarchist Subsistence Program campaign provides a check and 40 postage stamps every month to a New Afrikan Anarchist POW.

Still, financial support and communication are but two forms of direct support needed

to demonstrate to their keepers PP/POWs are not forgotten.

As enemies of the state, they serve the hardest time. The government often attempts to lock them away from their families, friends and supporters. We must not allow them to be isolated. When geographically possible we go into 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 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. For more information, get in touch.



Political Prisoner Jaan Laaman