While there is a working class I am of it,
While there is a criminal element,
Then I am in it,
And while there is a soul in prison,
Then I am not free.

Zabalaza Books

"Knowledge is the Key to be Free"

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A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network

★What is the Anarchist Black Hammer?

As a result of the escalation of illegal pre-emptive arrests of Social Movement Indaba activists (some 72 from the landless people's movement, 98 from the soldier's forum, etc...) a group of Johannesburg-based anarchists today launched a new class war prisoner support group, the Anarchist Black Hammer (SA).

The Anarchist Black Hammer (Southern Africa) is a new support group for jailed class war prisoners, including revolutionaries, activists, dissidents, workers, peasants and the poor formed today in response to the dirty tricks campaign of the SA authorities. The ABH will draw on almost a century of proud history, starting with the formation of the Anarchist Red Cross in Russian-controlled Poland during the 1905 Russian Revolt. The ARC spread around the world and renamed itself the Anarchist Black Cross in 1919 following the Russian Revolution and ever since has worked for the relief and release of prisoners jailed for their political activities. We decided to adopt the name, Anarchist Black Hammer, both to remove any possible religious bias that could be inferred by the word "cross" and to symbolise the demolition of all prison walls.

Our aims are to:
1) publicise the plight of class war prisoners;
2) support them in jail to the extent we can;
3) network with other concerned organisations to try and win their release; and
4) demonstrate anarchist mutual aid in action.

News releases from the ABH will be filed to the Indymedia SA site at: http://southafrica.indymedia.org/ or will be filed to the anarchy_africa list.

***** For the liberation of our comrades from the Soldiers' Forum, the Landless People's Movement and the Anti-Privatisation Forum / Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee and the defense of working class organisations against state repression!*

-- ABH ad-hoc organising committee

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A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network

★Introduction

Former Black Panther, political prisoner and a long-time anarchist revolutionary named Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin wrote "A Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" in 1979. The ABC movement was one of those organisations instrumental in helping see Kom'boa free, and Kom'boa spoke passionately for the development of a united movement around issues of incarceration and prisoner support. In the 1990s, these ideas were a catalyst in helping many ABC groups find focus. His ideas, while written years ago, embody principles that define our movement:

> The stated purpose of the Anarchist Black Cross Network is to actively assist prisoners in their fight to obtain their civil and human rights, and to aid them in their struggle against the State/Class penal and judicial system. The prison system is the armed fist of the State, and is a system for State slavery. It is not really for "criminals" or other "social deviants," and it does not exist for the "protection of society."
>
> It is for State social control and political repression. Thus it must be opposed at every turn and ultimately destroyed altogether. The abolition of prisons, the system of Laws, and the Capitalist State is the ultimate objective of every true Anarchist, yet there seems to be no clear agreement by the Anarchist movement to put active effort to that anti-authoritarian desire. We must organise our resources to support all political/class war prisoners if we truly wish to be their allies, and we must give something more than lip service.
>
> Organising against the enemy legal and penal system is both offensive and defensive. It is carried on with individuals, groups and among the masses in the community. We must inform the people on a large scale of the atrocities and inhumanity of the prisons, the righteousness of our struggle, and the necessity of their full participation and support. We must organise our communities to attack the prison system as a moral and social abomination, and we must fight to free all political/class war prisoners.

Since Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin wrote those words, he has stated in recent lectures support for uniting with all prisoners, understanding the profound gulfs of race and

class as they relate to incarceration, and of anarchists taking a stronger role in putting prison abolition, incarceration and criminalisation on the global agenda of resistance.

The network proposal is the result of several dialogues over the last six months. Among the questions that arose was perhaps the most critical one, "in considering criminal injustice, rates of incarceration, racial disparities, the spirit and nature in which laws are applied and, of course, our collective analysis as people concerned about increasing repression, class warfare of haves against have-nots, and for a freer, more just society... what is political? And aren't we waging a common struggle, despite the 'single issue' work?"

What is political about the injustice system, how laws are applied, who goes to jail and how bias factors into that?

What is political about the factors that play into "crime" and how sanction is applied?

And are we, as revolutionaries, little more than collaborators in genocide if we do not stand up?

This understanding is not so much a critique of terms such as "political prisoner," but of analysing the politics of prisons, social control, law, sexism, racism and power. For years, the ABC and anarchist movements have grasped how each of these issues profoundly affects the lives of people, and have acted in the interests of freedom by building resistance. This must continue.

From country to country and state to state, figures are staggering, but the facts remain the same: Third World/indigenous/people of colour and the working class and poor are forced into existences in which communities are gentrified; in which they are targeted over race and class or worse if they are "illegal" immigrants or refugees; health care, child care, food and rents go out of reach in costs; and their "choices" are nothing more than set-ups to lock them away. Public policies target youth in systematic and institutional ways that hinder the realisation of human rights. Racist and discriminatory institutions and organisations, such as the police, prisons, and border controls and police target people, particularly Third World/people of colour and immigrants, via public policies. Revolutionaries who speak out and fight against the conditions of society are imprisoned or killed. And we are expected to stand by until they come for us, if they haven't done it already.

What follows is a new proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network. It reconsiders and adopts many of Kom'boa's old ideas, as well as makes practical suggestions for building an anarchist network of independent groups united in fighting incarceration, repression and injustice worldwide. Many of the European ABC comrades have already taken the initiative to start the building process of this network, so the idea is not new. This effort is merely to put an explanation to a tendency that is already developing and will continue to grow.

★ Acknowledgements

The following individuals and organisations are owed thanks for their feedback, support and ideas during this provisional period of network efforts: Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin; Gumby Cascadia; Chris Plummer; Ali Khalid Abdullah; Khalfani Khaldun; Syd Hawk Byrd; Eric Wildcat Hall; Robert Thaxton; Willie Milton; Jerome White-Bey; Yero Chaka (aka Bruce Cummings); Makis and New York City Anarchist Black Cross; Rabid and Noel M. of the North American and UK sections of the Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network, respectively; Tod (Portland); Heather; Northwest Anarchist Prisoner Support Network; International Campaign to Free Ali Khalid Abdullah; Anarchist Prisoners' Legal Aid Network, Political Prisoners of War Coalition; Crossroad Support Network; and many others who are not listed, but without whose support this project would not be possible.

-Ernesto Aguilar
on behalf of the network organising group

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The website of the Anarchist Black Cross Network can be found at: http://www.anarchistblackcross.org

of the prisoner support movement. We affirm that all collectives should abide fully and completely with the wishes of prisoners pertaining to support work, as well as when engaging in non-support-specific activities which could directly or indirectly impact the nature of support. In addition, persons or groups who take funds or materials from prisoners or comrades should be fully accountable (i.e. able to document where money is going; crediting a prisoner's writing or art; saving receipts; etc.) and never use such items for personal gain. We believe all parties should seek joint resolutions to conflicts.

We strive for new paths. The purpose of the Anarchist Black Cross Network is not to recreate the Anarchist Black Cross Federation in a different form. Clearly, our explicit political and organisational differences - especially the autonomous ABC movement's daily grassroots work in supporting prison organisers, political prisoners, class war prisoners and anarchist captives; its support for, and advocacy of, revolutionary change and resistance; and its work in movement defence - set our organising apart. We acknowledge the many correct criticisms of ABCF, as well as the efforts many of its chapters have made. Regardless of opinions of ABCF, we feel prisoners and their freedom is key above and beyond various differences. We discourage the spreading of false rumours or misleading information regarding any movement.

★Conclusions

Based on the feedback received, we feel the initiation of an Anarchist Black Cross Network is not only necessary, but also supported by many prisoners and outside supporters. As a result, Austin ABC will be hosting the first autonomous Anarchist Black Cross conference to be held in the U.S. since 1994. This event, which will take place in Austin, Texas, in July 2002, will seek to unite many tendencies and empower interested people to organise their own local ABC groups via a series of discussions, workshops and more. Please contact Austin ABC at the address below.

While this summation reflects responses to the majority of comments and concerns raised regarding "A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network," more questions have been and will be raised. We welcome the opportunity to dialogue and network, so please get in touch.

★Purpose

The Anarchist Black Cross Network should be a decentralised and egalitarian network of organisations committed to the original ideals of the Anarchist Black Cross movement - of seeing prisons and the poverty, racism and genocide that accompanies them to be symptoms of a social order whose last days are near. The proposed purposes of the ABC Network are:

*** To unite the many autonomous prisoners, activists and organisations working for prisoner support, defence and freedom in a decentralised, anti-authoritarian fashion.** There has been some fractionalisation of the struggle, for various reasons, over the years. Certain groups defended certain prisoners, while paying lip service to others. Certain activists stayed focused in a particular issue, but didn't have the resources to get involved elsewhere. The purpose of the ABC Network should not be one of waging battles over differences, but of finding ways to unite us in a way that is still decentralised and anti-authoritarian. Whether you do work around earth liberation prisoners, "social prisoners," those recognised internationally as political prisoners, anti-colonial/independence prisoners, juvenile injustice, refugee/immigrant criminalisation, the roots of prisons (i.e. poverty, capital, racism, et al.) should only be important to an ABC Network as far as how the unity of many groups that truly see 'an injury to one is an injury to all' can help your work. The job of a network, clearly, is not to change a group's current work, but to be a compliment to the work already being done.

*** To serve as a clear and easy-to-use communications tool for activists, prisoners, organisations, families and supporters around issues related to the movement.** If it is to be effective, the ABC Network must primarily serve as a communications and working base for prisoners, community people, activists, groups (i.e. autonomous ABC groups and anarchist, prisoner, liberation, freedom, justice, anti-colonial/independence and/or issue-oriented community groups, etc.) and others who engage in activities consistent with the basic spirit and vision of the ABC movement. So often, groups and organisers change, prisoners are transferred, new campaigns start and old campaigns end. This would be an effort to facilitate communication around varied issues - from the latest transfers, to disbanded collectives to international support efforts and so on.

*** To support, discuss, learn from and engage one another around the Defence and Freedom activities we engage in.** As state repression increases, more and more activists are facing fines, prison time, detention without charge, etc. for speaking out. Refugees/immigrants are being criminalised over race and class. Prisoners who were incarcerated for explicitly political acts are being denied parole again and again. Prisoners who went to prison for "social crimes" are coming to consciousness about the true nature of incarceration. And prisons will continue to be built in the

name of law and order. These are issues 'regular' people are aware of and which activists are often fighting around in a regional, sometimes isolated, way - not necessarily by choice, but because all-around support needs to improve. As those familiar with anarchist prisoner Ali Khalid Abdullah's "Where Was the Support for Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin and the Chattanooga 3?" will recall, one of our major issues is around unity. The ABC Network is aimed at getting prisoners, community people, activists, groups (i.e. autonomous ABC groups and anarchist, prisoner, liberation, freedom, justice, anti-colonial/independence and/or issue-oriented community groups, etc.) and others learning from each other, communicating and working together around the various campaigns, and finding ways of educating each other with our experiences in a clearer, yet anarchist, way.

*** To connect with a movement that understands the "single issues" are part of a much larger movement for freedom, and to work actively to see that struggle grow globally and in all communities.** On the surface, fighting for political/class war prisoners, supporting earth liberation prisoners, challenging juvenile injustice, political repression, dealing with criminalisation of communities marginalised by the state (such as refugees/immigrants, the homeless and the working class/poor), the death penalty and race/gender disparities in incarceration seem like a mix of issues. In reality, most anarchists and others see these as part of a campaign by the state to attack communities and people. The ABC Network should be part of a movement that understands we all wage a common struggle.

Clearly, a network could take on more goals, but these are merely a start.

★Goals

The ABC Network should serve to support collectives around the work they currently do rather than co-ordinate a set of tasks for collectives in which to participate. Tasks that most community people, activists, groups (i.e. autonomous ABC groups and anarchist, prisoner, liberation, freedom, justice, anti-colonial/independence and/or issue-oriented community groups, etc.) and others engage in already, and which affiliates of the ABC Network should serve to help with via strength in numbers include:

Defence and Freedom Work of the Network

Defence work involves meeting the needs of the prisoners: whether those needs stem from the daily oppression of the prisons, police, courts or the intense repression by State/Class authorities of prison organisers. Prison support by ABCs meets these needs in many ways:

1. Forming outside support groups on a local and national basis in order to ensure

sectarianism in struggling for a more just world.

We affirm our common politics in expressing solidarity. The new ABC Network should be based primarily in, with and among ABC/anarchist groups (with inclusion of others as consented to by all collectives involved in the network). What was forwarded in the "New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" was a vision for our potential. With increasing repression, the need for organisers in many communities to find ways to work together is becoming more important. At the same time, it is essential that any organisation purporting to be an Anarchist Black Cross Network be based primarily among ABC and anarchist formations, with inclusion of others, as affiliated groups deem necessary or helpful.

We affirm that organisations that profess anarchist/anti-authoritarian politics or use the word 'anarchist' in their names should make among their top priorities the defence of anarchists/anti-authoritarians in prison. A few feel such a position is sectarian; reality reveals many of these prisoners, by virtue of their politics, face extreme forms of repression and harassment. Even for prisoners who may not expressly identify as anarchists, but organise in an anti-authoritarian manner, repression is a constant threat. It is the duty of the aforementioned organisations to work with and in support of anarchist prisoners. At the same time, we believe in the principled support of all revolutionaries behind the walls, and all revolutionary prisoners are owed our honest efforts in solidarity.

Generally, we must be able work with all revolutionary prisoners and prison support groups, if they will work in sincerity and unity with us. However, we will not subordinate our ideals, nor will we sustain attacks or make apologies for our beliefs for an anarchist world. We won't moderate our struggle or still our tongues concerning any injustice we see anywhere, in order to accommodate anyone, friend or foe.

We support autonomy of collectives in their efforts. We support the autonomy of each collective to make their decisions of who they support and how on a case-by-case basis. We agree that the local efforts of organisers to aid prisoners in their regions and globally is where our strength lies; we should not uphold the ABC Network or creation of such to be a higher priority than the grassroots work going on today. We support collective decision-making in working together, while respecting our differences. We do not seek the creation of a vanguard, but rather the cultivation and support of resistance and organising all over the United States and the world. We believe that decentralised resistance can only help our movement grow; we strive "for one, two and many more Chiapas," in the words of Chicano prisoner of war Alvaro Luna Hernandez.

We support accountability. Many questions have emerged about how an ABC Network would be structured. We believe in accountability to our comrades, the prisoners with whom we are engaged, and to the broader anarchist movement. We believe in actively involving all prisoners in our work, and in working with all sectors

ly educated, develop revolutionary consciousness, and create revolutionary unity and institutions as they pursue the issue."

We believe that the police and the prison system are tools of the state, and a system for state slavery. Prisons, police and incarceration have become the panacea for all our social ills. Where once the U.S. looked to the welfare state to alleviate social problems, today the U.S. looks to prisons, prisons and more prisons. Likewise, police brutality is not the case of a "few bad cops," but of a system based on exploitation, colonialism, racism and oppression. Prison is not really for "criminals" or other "social deviants," and it does not exist for the "protection of society." Prisons serve the ruling classes and their colonial interests against all working-class and oppressed people. More than hold these beliefs, we believe the autonomous ABC movement should be actively engaged in exposing these issues and agitating for revolutionary solutions.

We are committed to the wider resistance in which prisoners are engaged. We see the setting up of anarchist defence organisations, such as the ABC, as a necessary part of the growth and development of an anarchist resistance movement, not divorcing ourselves from the revolutionary struggle or simply fighting for prison reform. We don't treat the struggle on the street as separate or secondary. Our effort is to build a movement in which the revolutionaries fighting for liberation from the belly of the beast, have support, camaraderie and people who identify their struggle as key to freedom for all of us. "Today we pay homage to the revolutionary spirit inside prisons," says former San Quentin Six political prisoner Luis Talamantez. "Understand that there are thousands of other George Jackson's in prison today just like him."

We want to make the Anarchist Black Cross into a mass movement against state terror and repression, one that can counter the drive of the state capitalists towards a police state, along with our work in the anti-prison struggle. We want to directly challenge the existence of prisons and this work also involves actively campaigning against prison conditions, and propagandising the actual cases of political/class war prisoners (i.e. prisoners jailed for specific political reasons and those who have become politically aware of the reasons for their oppression while in prison, as well as victims of frame-ups) to the largest possible audience.

We believe in direct resistance to achieve a stateless and classless society. Some balk at supporting anyone accused of so-called violent acts, thus insinuating that anyone who resists oppression and takes up arms in self-defence, engages in economic sabotage against the state or capitalists, or rebels during a revolutionary insurrection is not worthy of support. The message is clear: do not resist. Our message is exactly the opposite, and this is what we work to support. We share a commitment to anarchism as opposed to liberalism and individualism or legalism; self-defence as opposed to dependence on the state; and solidarity as opposed to

prisoners' defence and survival from enemy attack and from inhuman prison conditions.
2. Organising defence committees on behalf of prisoners framed or railroaded through the Capitalist courts for their political and social beliefs or prison organising.
3. Organising support for activists jailed for their outside work and/or repression by authorities.
4. Securing Anarchist and other revolutionary materials for prisoners to read, and fight for their right to receive this literature if prison officials try to ban or prohibit such literature for any reason.
5. Organising emergency response calls, letters, faxes and email to continually contact "corrections" and other authorities about the treatment of prisoners.
6. Organising legal defence funds to raise funds for legal fees and to assist prisoners and outside activists and groups.
7. Organising correspondence for people to write to prisoners and find out about prison conditions and to show their solidarity and human concern, and observers to go into the prisons, visit the prisoners, investigate their complaints, question the officials and monitor the prison for violation of prisoners' rights.

Freedom work means directly challenging the existence of prisons and this work also involves actively campaigning against prison conditions, and propagandising the actual cases of political/class war prisoners (i.e. prisoners jailed for specific political reasons and those who have become politically aware of the reasons for their oppression while in prison, as well as victims of frame-ups) to the largest possible audience.

Some protest activities many prisoner support, anti-prison and ABC groups engage in today:
1. Linking up the struggles against criminalisation and imprisonment with associated social ills: poverty, homelessness, hunger, gentrification, racism, racial/cultural profiling, anti-refugee/immigrant actions, privatisation, globalisation, the drug war and many other issues.
2. Exposing the fallacy of the Capitalist system of cops, laws and prisons being for the protection of society or as a social necessity.
3. Educating the community, prisoners and others about the class/racist nature of the prisons and the legal system and how to fight against it;
4. Holding protest rallies, marches and street demonstrations in support of prisoners' rights and against the repressive actions of State/Class authorities.
5. Writing press releases and holding news conferences for the Third World/people of colour, alternative and radical news media (and sometimes the Capitalist news media) appearing on television and radio news and/or talk shows to discuss prisons.
6. Organising and/or participating in coalitions with poor people's movements, prison support, Third World/people of colour, Women's rights, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender, Church, Left-wing, and other diverse groups, so as to win them over and to integrate the prison struggle into the general movement for social change.

7. Assisting prisoners in getting parole, probation or a pardon by demanding their freedom when they become eligible for parole or are seeking executive clemency.
8. Working against the death penalty and exposing it as an instrument of racial genocide and class and political repression.
9. Demanding the freedom and amnesty of political/class war prisoners, and the abolition of prisons. Especially demand the immediate release of prisoners who have served unnecessarily lengthy sentences.
10. Demanding the immediate closing of all control/isolation/supermax units in prisons.

Any ABC Network that forms, should encourage, but not mandate, a diversity of tactics as suggested here and more. The network's proposed communications purpose could certainly also be utilised to help build unity around regional cases and tactics (i.e. demonstrations at consulates, etc.).

★Structure and principles

The ABC Network should foremost intended to accomplish the goals above among the many autonomous groups that are doing the grassroots, day-to-day work around campaigns, prisoners, criminalisation and liberation. What unites us are the principles mentioned by Kom'boa - of struggling to expose injustice, corruption and oppression; supporting prisoners who (consciously or unconsciously) are combatants against the state; providing advice and support to activists who put their bodies on the line in defence of freedom and revolution; and seeing our continued activism, campaigns, etc. in the larger picture of prison abolition and revolutionary change - as well as our own experiences in creating conditions for change.

There should be no "party line" of the ABC Network. As anarchists, we believe in building a culture of resistance rather than legislating it. How you or your group conducts your effort must solely up to you, although you may want to link up to some activists and resources, work through ideas, learn together and help in others' campaigns. But regardless, how you organise your group must still be up to your local conditions and membership.

The ABC Network should do its work in a broad, non-sectarian manner. You should not have to be explicitly named an ABC group to join. Conformity to certain naming, uniform moral/"security" codes, focus, etc., all correctly criticised in previous work, cannot be part of a successful initiative. This is a fundamental difference between the proposed Network and previous initiatives - having the involvement, input, comments, criticisms and efforts of local organisers, prisoners and groups is a necessity and privilege for an ABC Network to take shape. It is not a necessity or privilege for a network to form and communicate with activists... loose, unannounced networks are already happening. This is merely an effort to make it stronger and unite many around the ideas we're already struggling toward.

★Summation

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, who has since stated his unity with the creation of an ABC Network, outlined the ideas that united the contemporary ABC movement in his original "A Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network." Kom'boa, in fact, made a number of clarifications and statements of beliefs that should guide the contemporary ABC movement. Some of these are paraphrased, in whole or in part, below. We hope these positions help to articulate the ABCN's direction to interested parties.

We want freedom for all class war prisoners locked down, and freedom for all prisoners held in state, city, county, juvenile and federal facilities. Class war prisoners are generally defined as those initially non-politicised prisoners who have been radicalised by their incarcerations to commit themselves to the revolutionary struggle. We recognise the importance of tapping into and bringing the voices of class war prisoners into wider revolutionary circles and making them a vital part of our movements.

While the release of all prisoners opens up a number of ethical and community questions, we raise this demand because of the understanding that the current state, built on the bodies of working-class and oppressed people, cannot mete out justice, and such matters should be handled on a community level. Clearly, how we deal with anti-social crime and violence requires a broad-based discussion, yet we need to be clear that our solution cannot be to turn that role over to the hands of the state.

We honour the just and righteous struggles of all political prisoners, and support the full and unconditional freedom of all political prisoners. Many movements use varied definitions of political prisoners. Regardless of definitions, we recognise that all prisoners, in whole or in part, are products of a war waged by the state, in the service of capitalism, colonialism, imperialism and genocide, against the people. We support these prisoners' fights for freedom, justice and liberation, affirm the correctness of their resistance and actively work to see all are free.

We want to bring attention to the plight of all prisoners, and through contact with and information about these prisoners, inspire an anarchist resistance and support movement on the outside. While we send regular financial aid to our comrades in prison, we also keep in regular contact with as many prisoners as possible, make visits and do whatever we can to prevent prisoners from becoming isolated. We believe in support as a strategic and tactical expression of our anti-authoritarian politics, and to reduce our efforts solely to fundraising, literature, etc. makes prisoner support activity little more than social service. As the Crossroad Support Network notes, "What determines the character of an issue is the political perspective that people bring to it; the class that leads the struggle around it; the class interest that the issue ultimately serves; whether the people become political-

Summation of Politics and Positions Following the Comment Period for "A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network"

★Introduction

In the fall of 2001, "A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" was released for public comment and feedback. The objective of this proposal was to create a new network of autonomous anti-prison/prisoner support organisations. At the end of that draft proposal, organisers requested comments by January 31, 2002. What follows below is a summation of issues related to the 2001 release of "A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network," as well as broad explanations of the political tendencies that can generally be said to unite autonomous anti-prison/prisoner support groups and potentially an Anarchist Black Cross Network.

Former Black Panther, political prisoner and a long-time anarchist revolutionary named Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin wrote "A Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" in 1979. In the 1990s, these ideas were a catalyst in helping many ABC groups focus their efforts. And it is with the growth of the autonomous Anarchist Black Cross movement worldwide over the last five years that "A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" was introduced.

During the comment period, there were many thoughtful, honest and forward-thinking replies to the idea of creating an ABC Network. And many ABC collectives, prisoners, prison organisers and others came out to sign on to the creation of an ABC Network. This effort would not be possible without the broad support "A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" received, and our heartfelt thanks are owed to the many people who took time to make their perspectives known, and for all the expressions of support.

Prisoners should be involved in discussions and with area collectives or those collectives supporting the particular prisoner. In many cases, collective-prisoner relations are already built, and everyone should seek to learn how those communications are co-ordinated and developed among groups. How prisoners feel about the development of the Network is critical to its success and they should be consulted about all of its facets.

Issues of racism and sexism are critical to deal with in the movement as a whole, and all groups should take genuine measures to involve women and Third World/indigenous/people of colour in campaigns and, as often as possible, local groups - not only by having their bodies around, but engaging minds and seriously taking those ideas/comments and criticisms to heart. Too often, male- and white-dominated groups have not made the efforts to broaden and involve other communities, or women's input has not been taken with the consideration and seriousness needed. Add to this the need to build stronger ties with women prisoners. This must be improved, and, ideally, an ABC Network can dialogue around strategies groups are utilising to be more egalitarian in approach.

If we are to improve an ABC Network, hearing comments and criticisms should be a regular part of discussions. About every six months, affiliated groups with the ABC Network, activists, prisoners and others should be asked to give their comments, criticisms and suggestions for how to make the Network better, stronger and more helpful to each others' needs. While the purpose of this is not to develop "legislation," it *is* intended to get people regularly thinking about how we work together and how the Network stays relevant to our unity. However, please know that the floor should be always open to raise comments/ideas/critiques, etc. We must welcome these ideas, because discussion, debate and joint resolutions are how we become more effective.

★Conclusion

In June 2001, Anarchist Black Cross groups from around Europe met in Ghent, Belgium. People from Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, France, Luxemburg, UK, Holland, Germany and Belgium agreed that a network of autonomous groups would be formed to further the aims of the ABC. In their post-conference statement, attendees concluded:

> "We believe in the abolition of the prison system, but not only that, but the destruction of capitalism and all kinds of authority. We believe the struggle against the (in)justice system, as it is against capitalism, is international. Therefore recent attempts by European governments (e.g. Europol in Spain 2001) to criminalise the anarchist movement must be opposed by all revolutionaries. We respect the variety of ways people resist government violence and terrorism, and will sup-

port those incarcerated by the state. We strive to provide practical and material aid for class struggle prisoners and to encourage support for them."

The groundwork is already laid for an international ABC network to unite autonomous groups. In Europe, this network has already come into being. It is a network that respects the autonomy of each group to act within the different circumstances of their own local situations. It is a network urging support for political prisoners. And it is one that understands that support is only one part of our true struggle - for freedom, revolutionary change and anarchy.

Over the last 15 years, the Anarchist Black Cross and anarchist prisoner support movements have inspired new awareness in repression, of the need to work with those criminalised by society in an effort to build a more liberated world, and to develop tactics and strategies addressing prisons, law and social problems. The ABC movement was building on these efforts long before these issues got attention from the mainstream media. Nevertheless, our struggle can continue to grow and see more victories.

Many of these ideas restate Lorenzo Ervin's original draft proposal, although many ideas presented therein are worth supporting, such as an ABC conference (to potentially unite the North American section of the network, since a European conference happened in 2001) or a newspaper that reaches out to people in incarceration. Uniting the many prisoner-written zines into a "news service" of information could also be helpful. In addition, working with various forces to create ABC-oriented radio/Internet programming could also come together. Uniting our organising to develop theory and strategy around crime, class and liberation is another possibility.

★Comments/Criticisms/ Interest

If you have comments, (any kind of) criticisms and/or suggestions to improve this proposal or are interested in dialoguing locally and possibly building a group or affiliating your own group, get in contact with the initiating group (Antiprison, Austin ABC, Houston organising group) via email at abc-net@anarchistblackcross.org or via post at P.O. Box 667233, Houston, Texas 77266-7233, USA.

All comments, criticisms and/or suggestions received by by January 31, 2002 will be compiled (we won't use your verbatim statements unless you ask) and an update sent to those interested. Get in touch.

New Draft Proposal issued on 5 November 2001.

Anniversary of the 1862 death sentence for 303 Santee Sioux for taking part in a Minnesota uprising. US President Abraham Lincoln commutes many sentences, but 38 chose to hang at Mankato, singing their death song on their scaffold.

Anniversary of the 1928 banana workers' strike in Colombia against the United Fruit Company, in which 1,000 workers were killed.

Anniversary of the 1916 Everett, Washington, Massacre, in which seven Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) labor activists are murdered by Everett's police as part of a campaign to suppress working class resistance.

Revolutionary love and solidarity!