

## John Bowden on prisoner support

*“Firstly, ideological perspective is critically important, and we have to be absolutely clear that the purpose of prisoner support is not to seek improvement or reform of the prison system for its own sake, but rather to empower prisoners and fight for the complete abolition of all prisons - supporting prisoners therefore is an intrinsic part of the wider struggle against the state.*

*This clear politicalisation of prisoner support is absolutely vital, otherwise there's a tendency to drift into liberal reformist perspectives on the struggle for prisoners rights that lead inevitably to a legitimisation of prisons, and the focus shifts more and more*

*towards improving conditions within prisons and the treatment of prisoners.*

*Prisons cannot be reformed, they are intrinsically evil places and a central part of the states war on the poor. With that in mind, every struggle by prisoners that makes the system unmanageable should be supported, whereas campaigns for superficial reform of the prison system should be treated with suspicion.*

*The most important advantage of real prisoner support is that it assists prisoners in struggle to transcend their isolation and captivity and defeat one of the most central functions of prison - to isolate and disempower those held captive. Denied support and recognition on the outside, prisoners*

*struggles are quickly isolated, contained and destroyed, but with vocal and committed support outside those same struggles are strengthened immeasurably and provided with enormous political significance.*

*There are frontlines of class struggle throughout the whole of society, violent interfaces where the poor and their oppressors confront each other, and prison represents one of the most overt and undisguised frontlines of class struggle that exist. Prisoner support is therefore an intrinsically political activity that should be central to any wider struggle against the state.”*

## Some plans for 2011...

...a special letter writing night with Bent Bars, a pen-pal project for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, gender-variant, intersex, and queer prisoners in Britain.

...a benefit gig for the “Thessaloniki 4”, 4 activists arrested in Greece during the EU summit of 2003. Their trial will start in January 2011.

...and more! Check our blog for news.



# Prisoner Support Newsletter

Companer@s,

welcome to the first issue of Bristol ABC' irregular newsletter!

The Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) was first created at the beginning of the 20th century to provide support to anarchist and other revolutionary prisoners in Russia. Since then the organisation has become international and has been on the frontline in supporting those imprisoned for struggling for freedom and liberty.

In Bristol, the people involved felt it was important to form a local group as an extension of our political beliefs, and as a practical example

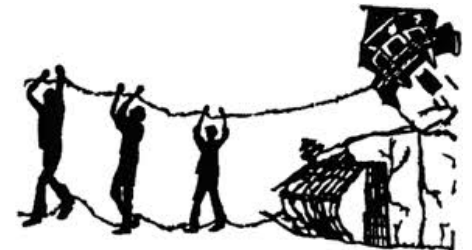
of the principles of mutual aid and solidarity.

We aim to practically support prisoners by: writing letters, sending books and magazines, and where possible financial contributions to those inside; supporting and publicising specific prisoners' cases, campaigns and projects involved in prisoner solidarity and anti-prison work.

For more info check out our newly revamped blog:

[bristolabc.wordpress.com](http://bristolabc.wordpress.com)

**JAILS AND PRISONS ARE DESIGNED  
TO BREAK HUMAN BEINGS,  
TO CONVERT THE POPULATION INTO SPECIMENS  
IN A ZOO - OBEDIENT TO OUR KEEPERS,  
BUT DANGEROUS TO EACH OTHER.  
ANGELA DAVIS**





## Nicole Vosper released!

Nicole Vosper was arrested in 2007 after 32 separate police raids in the UK, The Netherlands and Belgium. She was charged with "conspiracy to blackmail" Huntingdon Life Sciences and other companies involved. She was eventually sentenced in October 2010 and released soon after, in December... welcome back, Nicole!

## News from Marco Camenisch

Marco is a long-term eco-anarchist prisoner who has already spent more than 20 years in prison. In 2012 he should be granted conditional release; however he's been refused all special privileges and preparatory measures for release. Day releases and parole are refused on the grounds that he does not renounce his political convictions and has too many friends all over the world who might help him escape.

In October 2010 Marco was transferred from Zurich to another more isolated prison in Switzerland, out of the blue and without even enough warning to

## PRISON?



In September 2010 Bristol ABC, Bristol Anarchist Bookfair and Bristol Indymedia presented PRISON?, a one man performance written and performed by Charlie Ryder. Charlie spent 16 months in prison for taking part to an anti-BNP demo in London in 1993. *If you missed it you can now watch the entire performance online: <http://bristolindymedia.blip.tv/file/4356783>*

pack his things. This came only a few weeks after Marco had been organising a collective hunger strike with Luca Bernasconi (Billy), Costantino Ragusa and Silvia Guerini, also imprisoned in Switzerland. Despite the sudden transferral, Marco is in good spirits and keeps on with his incessant writing and translation work. In early December Marco did another short hunger strike dedicated in particular to Silvia, Costa and Billy and, in his own words, to "every living being kept in a cage, isolated, tortured, exploited, annihilated. And all the social warriors that, caged or free, fight to end this system of State and capital, of dominion, racism, oppression and exploitation".

## Solidarity with Russian activists

Over 2010 both Bristol ABC and Bristol Antifa had increasing contact with Russian groups and individuals who face increasing difficulties in their struggles against their authoritarian regime and the myriad racist, nationalist and fascist groupings (who naturally receive a degree of co-operation from the state). This has resulted in imprisonment of activists, attacks and several deaths. In January 2010 we hosted

## Free Jock Palfreeman!

Jock is an Australian activist who in December 2007 had the courage to stand up against 16 Nazis on a night out in Sofia, Bulgaria. He witnessed the group attacking 2 Roma boys and ran to their aid. The Nazis attacked him and there was a fight in which one of the Nazis was stabbed and killed and

together with Antifa a benefit gig which managed to raise £300 for our comrades in Russia. We managed to make contact with Moscow ABC and later on in the year we hosted a fundraising film night at Kebele to support a Russian anarchist who was forced to flee his home city due to threats from both the state and right-wing groups.

If you missed the event these are the films we showed: The first one was a DIY documentary entitled 'Actions versus

another was injured. The Roma boys ran away.

Jock has since been tried and sentenced for murder and attempted murder. He has been sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and has spent much of the time he has already served in isolation due to a legal loop hole used by the prison authorities.

His appeal continues. In a quite surprising turn of events at least 3 witnesses

Repressions', made by the anarcho-art group Children of Bakunin & Moscow ABC. *You can watch it online: [http://www.archive.org/details/ActionsVsRepressions\\_738](http://www.archive.org/details/ActionsVsRepressions_738).*

The second was Alix Lambert's 'The Mark of Cain' a documentary about the forbidden culture of prisoner tattoos in Russia (a major inspiration for David Cronenberg's 'Eastern Promises').



during the most recent hearings confirmed Jock's version of events and admitted that when they arrived to the scene their colleagues and other witnesses told them about the attack on the Roma boys before the fight with Jock started. Jock will probably be sentenced in January 2011.