

South Chicago ABC Zine distro

Anthony Rayson

2004

Prisons are the essence of the state. But as Tom Big Warrior, historian for the traditional Lenape Nation in Pennsylvania puts it in the title of his essay, we must “Turn the Iron Houses of Oppression into Schools of Liberation.”

With the most conscious and articulate voices being muffled inside the jails, it seemed like the anarchist thing to do to get involved where the need was the greatest.

I started writing my own zine, Thought Bombs, and organized a distro of other good, anarchist, anti-racist/abolitionist and feminist zines. More and more, the people with the most to say proved to be courageous, conscious prisoners. I looked for the depth of what they had to say rather than what type of prisoner they were.

Whether they considered themselves New Afrikans, Muslims, anarchists, or whatever, if they had something of value to say, I'd often do a zine with them. I also applied this perspective to zines written by non-prisoners and by support groups. I'd add them to my distro.

I wrote and edited tons of such zines, mostly by and about prisoners and prisons. I send many publications to prisoners and try to broadcast their struggles. Trying to collaborate with some prisoners is often quite difficult. The screws and goon squads disrupt our correspondence, steal much of the prisoner's work, assault them physically, and move them to their evil supermax dungeons. The authorities can't stand the truth and censorship goes to ludicrous lengths.

The Chicago chapter, part of a growing network of ABC's (Anarchist Black Cross) groups, is organizing our third Prison Abolition Conference (PAC), August 13–15, at the University of Illinois-Chicago. We're looking for presenters. Email us at: ChicagoABC@hotmail.com, or write Anthony Rayson. South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430.

Related: “With Conviction: Art and Letters from Behind Prison Walls” *Fifth Estate* #391, Spring/Summer 2014

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