



Why BASE and Roses says 'A.C.A.B.' (All Cops Are Bastards)

When we say A.C.A.B., we aren't literally saying that every copper bathes in blood and has human bones for furniture (but it seems like that sometimes!). Instead, it's a short way to discuss the role that police play in this rotten system. For us, it ties into ideas of communities organising themselves for real justice and safety, as well as our hatred of racism, fascism, capitalism, and patriarchy.

Police exist to enforce the will of the State and the interests of the wealthy – to keep us trapped in a deeply unfair social order.

That's not a secret, or a conspiracy theory. The police have always tried to block positive change: Civil Rights? LGBT+ rights? Anti-war movements? Anti-colonial freedom movements? Women's suffrage? They have always been on the wrong side of history, and have often been the main obstacle to progress. That's their job. Change happens through years of struggle, usually by those suffering the most under the current system.

So how do the police uphold these power systems? By claiming a "monopoly on violence" – we are taught that their violence of batons (and guns, teargas, and tazers), cells, and fines is legitimate, while any attempts we make to stand up for ourselves are 'criminal'.

We can't view the police as individuals: they act as an institution, and that's where their loyalties lie. No matter how 'nice' a cop is, before long they're ordered to act brutal; either they obey, or they don't stay cops long!



Saying "there are just a few bad apples" ignores the reality of the role the "good" apples play in protecting the "bad" ones. Over 1,700 people have died in police custody/contact since 1990, without a single conviction; other cops often refuse to testify.*

Of course there are some things that the police do that are useful. But why mix those up with the power of enforcement and violence?

A.C.A.B. means imagining something different. It means abolishing the police to go beyond the police. It means finding forms of justice that heal the roots causes of harm, and growing collectively in ways that don't rely on threats or control. It also means collective self-defence. True community power means being able to protect each other from fascism and racist policing. We'd like to see Bristol communities organising to make this a reality.

So we say A.C.A.B. We can do better, and we recognise our enemies. So let's change everything.

*www.inquest.org.uk/deaths-in-police-custody

Also, see the following:
Bristol Defendant Solidarity . **tel:** 07510 283424 . **email:** bristoldefendantsolidarity@riseup.net
Network for Police Monitoring . **web:** netpol.org

BASE and Roses is a collective providing food for free to anyone in Bristol who wants or needs it, whenever we can.

Our project is based in solidarity and mutual aid, not charity; we do not means test.

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