



УХАДІ

An experienced group of progressive activists associated with the Anarchists Black Cross is calling for support in the current uprising. Your donations will go directly and entirely to Belarusian street activists in their struggle against authoritarian rule.

Money is needed for several essential areas:

- 1) a self-organized strike fund allowing people to take time out of their jobs and stay in the streets;
- 2) the printing budget for tactical leaflets and analysis (of what?) to be distributed on the streets;
- 3) social media production and design work;
- 4) a fund to rent flats to safely house individuals who may be under threat of arrest.

While they are asking you to send funds to the Anarchist Black Cross account, they will be prioritizing whatever money is gathered for the movement activities listed above. A few anarchists are detained, but fortunately their legal costs and care packages are currently covered. Further, the majority of those arrested for participating in mass disorder charges are given status of political prisoners and supported by human rights funds. In the case any funds exceed the needs of the activities listed above, they will be allocated to the ABC and other connected groups.

The groups receiving funds have been active for many years in Belarusian and European anarchist networks before the uprising. Their activities have ranged from running a self-organized library, a publishing and translation project and an educational initiative, to holding "really free markets" and Food Not Bombs, etc.

Article from group providing analysis of developments in past week (in Russian, easily readable with GoogleTranslate):
<https://avtonom.org/news/evolyuciya-protesta-i-repressiy-v-belarusi-glazami-anarhistki>

Link for contributions (please notify donation is for "street fund")

https://abc-belarus.org/?page_id=8661&lang=en

Q&A

Q1: What would you say is currently significant about the contributions of the more experienced activists, in your circles, for the current uprising?

A1: So first of all, I would say that our contribution from the very beginning could not be very significant, because anarchists, as well as all other progressive social activists, are not very influential in the country or in the opposition movement. However, because most of the opposition leaders and parties were repressed, the protest is very different from the protests we've seen previously. Most of the people do not use any symbols – I mean any identification symbol(s) of their affiliation – so we cannot really say which forces or political movements/initiatives take part in the protest, but all of my friends are involved, and these range from those in the anarchist movement, the punk scene, to the ex anti-fascist football club, as well as the LGBTQ+ circles, and so on.

Anarchists also decided to not use the classic black bloc tactic. This was in part because people who hesitate to assume such a visible identity in a social situation that was rapidly changing and difficult to decipher patterns of repression in. For example, it was not clear what to expect and if people would really support the protest after the elections.

Our most significant contribution was setting an example of how to resist police assaults: for example there were several groups of people, who would join the protest as affinity groups and try to protect each other and [other]

people from detentions, which is showing a massive effect on other people, because many people are afraid and they are running away, so even just staying there and shouting at the people that we should not run would sometimes be helpful.

Further, I would say that most of the demonstrations that were a bit more radical were organized or supported by people who have experience with collective action — this also includes football hooligans from the right-wing, but they too did not show any affiliation. While present, right wing groups not calling any type of nationalist slogans or anything like that, or racist and so on, so for the moment nobody's actually promoting their own agenda, everybody's supporting the same demands: that Lukashenka has to go, and all the political prisoners and the people that were detained should be free, and [that] a new political process should start.

So the thing that progressive activists could do in this way is, like I said, to either show by example, or to try to inform people about something that they're not informed about through popular social network channels. These networks, for instance, have not circulated technical information on how to protect oneself from tear gas and other techniques police use to disperse crowds. **We are making efforts to spread this information through street leaflets and media.**

Also, at the moment the movement is going through a split along the lines of violence and non-violence. In turn, we're trying to bring in our own analysis of the facts: this kind of split is very dangerous and we should not stick to these polarizations if we want to stay together and win. And I think this

found a lot of support among many people, because it looked like the protest was going to transform into [a] totally hippie movement, and this was partially prevented by **anarchists spreading thousands of our leaflets with well argued tactical analysis.**

While we could've done some other things like volunteering with the street medics or going and volunteering by the detention centers, but we're trying not to invest our energy in areas that are already covered: there's a lot of solidarity from elsewhere and many of the possible channels that anarchists could join are already taken care of. So at the moment we're not dealing with it – not because we don't care or [because] we don't have experience, but rather we're trying to focus on areas where we could be useful or the areas that are not yet taken by anyone else.

The thing is that at the moment, everyday the protest takes a new form or people are doing a different thing, so even if we're trying to plan everyday, the next day our plans most often do not work, so we also have to adapt really fast and, of course, sometimes we're losing control or time, or people.

That's basically it, so I wouldn't call it a significant contribution, but at least we're trying-.. at the moment we're not trying to promote the banner of anarchism so to say, but rather the ideas behind it, and the practices that could be useful in this kind of protest.

Q2: So there's a lot of different fundraisers that are circulating on social media now. What would be some argument points for people to give funding for this one? And for what exactly would you use these resources?

A2: At the moment there are really a lot of possible ways to give funding to Belarusians, not necessarily to grassroots anarchist groups. For example, there is a campaign that is collecting money for people who have either paid fines, suffered from violence, whose cars were damaged by the cops, or died because of the protest and so on. These funds bring in a lot of money. If an anarchist is detained or beaten up they can also count on this money. There are also several human rights organisations helping with legal support. The thing is that this support clearly depends on what happens. For instance, **most human rights organisations would probably not support someone involved in a direct clash with the cops.** This is why we have this chapter of the Anarchist Black Cross that is specifically collecting money for anarchists and antifascists that need support for cases that could not be covered by other organisations and funding structures.

In contrast to past protest cycles, in this uprising there were only a few people in our circles who experienced searches and preventive arrests. Regardless, everyone active in our scene has taken precautionary measures and changed residence. **To make this happen, we pool money and rent a**

few flats for people to stay in. There is no active hunt for anarchists now, but that could quickly change.

There are also some funds where you can support the workers who are striking. At the moment we didn't hear about any dismissals, as the strikes are actually quite symbolic, such as striking during lunch break or after work or half of the day. We don't know if there is going to be a national strike and if people would be able to hold down such a strike for an extended period of time.

Many people are not working now in order to participate in the protest and they are going to earn less than half their salary. After some time they will not be able to chip into our communal fund or continue protesting, having to return to work. Thus, having some extra money could be put to use for a kind of protest strike fund, supporting people on the street who need to go on living while continuing to do political work.

We've got a few requests from comrades in different countries about how they could support us and we have said that with more money we could think about scaling up or activities and media efforts. something bigger. As for now we're constrained to activities that can be covered with our pocket money. **If we had funds we could start to think on a much wider scale.**