

AUGUST 2022 + FEBRUARY 2023 + FEBRUARY 2024

INTERVIEW WITH THE UKRAINIAN ANARCHIST GROUP ASSEMBLY



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On the title picture: “We love Kharkiv – we hate capitalism!” (in Ukrainian)

source:

<https://www.anarchistcommunism.org/2022/09/11/interview-with-the-ukrainian-anarchist-group-assembly/>

<https://libcom.org/article/war-has-become-daily-routine-two-conversations-kharkov-underground-journal>

<https://libcom.org/article/despair-and-anger-concentration-camp-assemblys-interview-second-anniversary-big-war-ukraine>

INTERVIEW WITH THE UKRAINIAN ANARCHIST GROUP ASSEMBLY

We publish below an interview between comrades of the Italian Anarchist Federation (FAI) and the Ukrainian anarchist group Assembly, based in Kharkiv.

We thank the FAI for supplying the interview to us and for the valuable information provided by Assembly.

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International Relations Commission of the Italian Anarchist Federation (CRINT-FAI)

With this interview, we wish to present to Italian-speaking (and international) publics the Assembly group that is active in the city of Kharkiv where it produces an online counter-information newspaper, to which several links are provided in the text of the interview, and operates in local solidarity networks in a city that is currently being bombed every day. Being our first contact with this reality, it is an important opportunity to know the opinions of this group on the controversial international debates on which our Federation has recently expressed its positions, and on the concrete needs of those who perform social, solidarity and humanitarian work not far from the front line.

CRINT-FAI: Given the lack of information among the Italian public on the situation in Kharkiv, can you tell something on the history of your group and your insertion in local political dynamics?

Assembly: In general, we have really been active since March 30, 2020 – as soon as there was a feeling in the air that this habitual status quo had finally cracked. The start of a global pandemic took us by surprise! It was unusual to stay at home all the time. At some of our comrade's workplaces, the salary was cut by 20% and there was a fear of staff layoffs. But a couple of weeks after the start of quarantine, she started development of our website and so began to talk about acute social problems and help people unite to directly help each other in the face of a crisis.

Our reasoning went something like this: if at least 10% of the population of our city understands, for example, the public transport system better than the mayor and the city council do, then why do we need their administration? Something like that... The journal soon became a place where the peaceful segment of social struggle and self-organisation could meet with the radical underground, and began to really live up to its name. We covered street events, workplace struggles, and urban development issues in our metropolis. We have also tried to restore historical memory on the revolutionary workers' traditions.

Since the outbreak of hostilities, our magazine has become a platform for presenting and coordinating self-organized humanitarian activities, as well as for highlighting how the local ruling class is benefiting from this massacre. And if in the last year we had 20-30 thousand visits per month, then since the beginning of spring it's jumped to between 80 to 120 thousand!

CRINT-FAI: You managed to keep activity alive during the conflict. How is it deployed in daily work?

Assembly: Fortunately or unfortunately, we are the only anarchist collective in Ukraine whose fame has grown significantly during these 6 terrible months. Probably, because we give useful information for workers in their daily con-

frontation with bosses or officials, and our position with the condemnation of both warring states – the aggressor commits open genocide against everything Ukrainian, the «small suffering democratic victim» keeps most of the population as hostages to show more bloody pictures abroad demanding more money, also robbing its serfs by all available means, while not a single Russian missile has yet flown into the government quarter – is quite close to those who have nothing to defend in this bleak hole with no clear future. The main problem that is such support does not transform into a desire to study anarchism and spread its ideas – even grassroots volunteers and other active parts of society are maximally de-ideologized here...

CRINT-FAI: What about Zelensky's government? We read about the new labour legislation. What are the implications of the state of emergency on daily life?

Assembly: If for Russia defeat in the war means some political changes (at least a palace coup, and possible disintegration into parts or partial loss of sovereignty), the future of Ukraine seem to be very sad in any case. Long before the war, Zelensky was often compared to young Putin not without reason, and as a result of victory, we can get a regime no less dictatorial than the Russian one. A very telling example came this month when he stated that the borders for men would not be open until the end of martial law, don't caring that it's the most popular petition topic on his website.

With regard to labour legislation, it is very indicative that we see only Europeans concerned about this. Because at least half of those employed in Ukraine work in the informal sector, and even officially employed ones rarely hear anything about the compliance with labour rights and guarantees – it all depends on individual agreements.

Most of all, the working class is now worried about other things: the already mentioned street raids for the issuing of subpoenas (the most active in the eastern and western borderland regions) and the need to open departure from the country for those who are liable for military service. Yes, petitions make only information sense, however it is the first attempts of Ukrainian workers on

our memory to express their own agenda at the nationwide level. Since street actions are now impossible, they resort to the only remaining mean of communication with the authorities.

We can only imagine how many Ukrainians would be happy if the state loosened its grip as the result of the international anarchist movement's campaign. If this movement had taken its anti-war statements as more than just words, we would have seen its massive rallies for opening the borders near Ukrainian embassies many months ago. What to talk about, if even on the May Day you found more important affairs? It seems that there is nowhere to wait for help, and one can only guess how many more Ukrainian families will die, because they don't want to part with each other. How do you differ from politicians if you declare things that you are not going to fulfill?

The only mass libertarian structure whose words did not differ from deeds is the EZLN. Shortly after the invasion, they filled the streets of their municipalities, unconditionally condemning this aggression, calling for the immediate withdrawal of the Russian military, at the same time not considering the Ukrainian bourgeois state as something principally better. This protest was symbolic, hardly anyone in the Kremlin even saw it at all, but it seems they did the maximum that is possible in their mountain jungle...

CRINT-FAI: Are there any other activist or solidarity realities/networks with which you are in connection that emerged during the conflict making social work?

Assembly: Of course, there is, and not even one. Firstly, our large information partner is Telegram channel «Subpoenas giving. Kharkov» with almost 75,000 of subscribers, appeared at the end of May, where people promptly warn each other about raids on conscripts and other arbitrariness of law enforcement structures. We also cooperate with a volunteer organisation Build Help for the prompt repair of houses damaged by shelling in poor areas. To discuss broader issues of the post-war development, we participate in the Alternative Kharkiv (founded exactly two years ago) and Kharkiv Loadstone (born about a month ago). It is an informal, horizontal coalition of urban planners, environmen-

talists, architects and local historians committed to making our city more decentralized and less commercially oriented. The general concept of our joint vision was presented at the end of May.

Obviously, we will be able to seriously start implementing these ideas only when the invaders stop destroying the city with ballistic missiles every night and 220-mm cluster rockets when people go to work – if by that time it does not get completely empty – but there are already some successes. Kharkov authorities and developers associated with them plan to demolish historical buildings damaged by bombing for the construction of commercial facilities instead of their restoration. And their attempt to finish off in this way one of the oldest houses in our city, almost 200 years old, has already been stopped by the intervention of us and our readers. Monitoring of the situation must be continued daily, because they are hoping precisely for weakening our vigilance.

As for solidarity at the international level, this is a completely different matter. Last year, the international anarchist movement raised 5,000 euros for Afghan anarchists in about a month – we received from foreign comrades 1,500 euros in half a year. This is despite the fact that our work is in the public domain, while in that case nothing is known about their activities either before emigration or after (although we donated them too). What can be said here?

CRINT-FAI: How can we help you through concrete international solidarity in humanitarian help to victims of war?

Assembly: Since the occupiers have regularly bombed critical civilian infrastructure throughout the siege, the upcoming heating season may be the biggest problem for our places. We are now preparing a community heating point in the house of our participant on the marginal industrial outskirts of Kharkiv. You can support both this and the purchase of humanitarian goods from local farmers (though we have suspended it in August as funds are limited and how long the war will last is unknown). The lowest fee should be if you donate directly to our fundraiser's bank card in dollars or in euros, but we don't know if it is available from Italy. For such cases please join our main

fundraising: <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/mutual-aid-alert-for-east-ukraine/>

CRINT-FAI: What is your position on matters of desertion and conscious objection as for both the Ukrainian and Russian armies?

Assembly: Oh, comprehensive coverage of anti-war boycott, sabotage and other direct action is the main topic of our English international rubric since the first days of the full-scale invasion! Along with this, we should understand that the national unity of Ukrainians around Zelensky's power rests only on fear of an external threat. Therefore, anti-war subversive acts in Russia are indirectly a threat to the Ukrainian ruling class as well, and that is why we consider its informational support to be an internationalist act.

It should be also taken into account that despite the absence of a qualitative difference among the warring states, they differ quantitatively: if all Russian soldiers stop fighting, the war will end, if Ukrainian soldiers do this, Ukraine will end. The zone of occupation begins 20 km from the ring road of our city, and we know what this means: the «disappearance» of all at least a bit of active and the Stone Age for the rest of population. At the same time, after the Russian troops mostly lost their offensive potential, a wave of social discontent began to show up in Ukraine as well – we have already talked about this.

CRINT-FAI: What effects did the war on Ukrainian anarchist and radical movements?

Assembly: Some groups just disappeared, the rest – except for us – continue to operate as state units, but as a political entity (even if far from anarchism) are actually dead, and no prospects for their revival in this capacity are now visible. It should be noted that different Ukrainian anarchists joined the army for different reasons. Black Flag rather tried to promote the anarchist agenda in the ranks of the military and broader defense movement. We consider their experience valuable, although unsuccessful, and assumptions about this were expressed by us in an interview from the first days of the war. Others, on the

contrary, rather protect the Ukrainian state from attacks by anarchists – therefore, we treat them as negatively as we treat the state as such.

In words all of them are not for the state, but only for the Ukrainian people, however even such Jesuit rhetoric they cannot use in a revolutionary way. If you want help the Armed Forces, many of whose soldiers don't even have body armor, not to mention other ammunition – okay, help them, make useful contacts for the post-war time, as Malatesta supported the Cuban rebels against Spain and the Libyan ones against Italy... But why even Zelensky's right-wing opponents are not shy to use every case of such injustice to undermine trust in the Ukrainian authorities, while they, on the contrary, only advocate Ukrainian state interests in the libertarian circles? Those who don't want to obey any government have no reasons to see such groups as a real alternative to it, and those who love the state don't need such schizophrenic exoticism – there are ordinary nationalist parties and movements for them.

We do not think that this would radically change the situation: the example of the same Black Flag shows that any revolutionary agitation in the Ukrainian troops is now meaningless, as soldiers are generally satisfied with their salaries, quite solid even by European standards (100,000 hryvnias or about 2700 euros at the front line). Nevertheless, the majority of those who identify themselves as anarchists in Ukraine were not even going to do this, but immediately merged with the ruling class in a single nationalist impulse.

Meanwhile, the number of the Ukrainian army is approaching a million people, and a few dozen fighters under black flags are a drop in the ocean, unable to demonstrate anything but their own futility and helplessness. However, the relative success of our media in comparison with pre-war times also should not give us the illusion that anarchist views have become more popular in at least one of the regions of Ukraine. We need to be ready for the fact that the political situation in the country may be like in Afghanistan, Yemen or Somalia for a very long time, and nothing can guarantee the growth of the influence for anarchism, but the only chance for this is the refusal to flirt with some or another authorities/politicians as a «lesser evil», and a resolute and uncon-

ditional opposition to them all. Otherwise, the masses will increasingly perceive anarchists as strange and incomprehensible clowns which don't need to pay attention at all.

CRINT-FAI: We heard from collectives such as former Operation Solidarity, and from some Black Crosses of Eastern Europe, international calls to make pressure on our respective governments for supporting the Ukrainian Armed Forces, even evoking an ongoing “alliance” between the people and the state there. What is your opinion?

Assembly: The same Zapatistas rightly noted at the very beginning of the war: «Big capital and its “Western” governments sat down to contemplate and even to accelerate the deterioration of the situation. Once the invasion had begun they were anxious to see whether Ukraine would resist and to calculate what they could get out of each possible outcome. Now that Ukraine is resisting they eagerly extend offers of “help” for which they will expect payment later». Western governments and the military-industrial complex have their own financial interests, and these interests are not in a quick victory for Ukraine, but in making the war protracted. Otherwise, they would have already delivered enough heavy weapons to Ukraine, and the war could have ended until this autumn. From a purely everyday point of view, it would be more comfortable for you if the West again hid its head in the sand, as in the case of Chechnya and Syria. If you lived even one day here, most likely, on the contrary, would begin to blame your authorities for the ongoing appeasement of the botox midget, due to which our city becomes a shooting gallery every day without any fire punishment. In any case, the objective reality is that the Western leadership is interested precisely in the gradual weakening of its imperialist rival without excessively sharp confrontation.

As for the collectives you mentioned, their lamentations about «free Ukraine defending the entire civilized world» are too boring to even waste time on their analysis. For those who are very worried about the Ukrainian democracy from abroad, we can only advise to renounce their European/American citizen-

ship, apply for Ukrainian resident card and quickly move to here for delights of life!

This is not relevant to anti-war resisters in Russia and Belarus. These people are really taking a huge risk to stop this carnage, and that is enough to be grateful to them. With the exception of not numerous far-rights, we support them regardless of whether their position is pro-Ukrainian or internationalist.

Of course, our own agenda, if desired, can also be called beneficial to the bourgeois class: mass departure of angry unreliable proletarians will prevent a social explosion in Ukraine, which is possible in the case of a further prolongation of the war, and European bosses are very interested in cheap Ukrainian labour. But where are the more favourable conditions for a strike movement – in a warring country or in a peaceful one? And why not to develop cooperative self-employment in Europe, involving Ukrainian migrants in it?

CRINT-FAI: We likewise heard calls to defend “liberal democracy”. What is your take of this concept, and how important is for you the concept of class-struggle anarchism?

Assembly: Apparently, you are talking about the Ukrainian state, if we understand correctly? Such speeches usually come from a comparison of government-controlled territories with total devastation, famine and white terror in the occupied territories of the country. But does the fact that one gang makes less outrage than another mean that hundreds of thousands of people should die and be maimed for it, and millions of others should drag out a half-starved existence under bombs locked in a cage? We don't think so!

If we compare the government-controlled part of Ukraine with the EU countries... Believe it or not, even the historic downtown of a typical Ukrainian city, including ours, may be a much less habitable thing than the Western slums. We have nothing to defend here, except for the thrones of authorities and the fields of corporations. That's why our officials are so afraid of free departure: army service to defend the plantations of the oligarchy is not the most desirable option for many soldiers but the single available income in such

conditions. Ukrainians are not forced to fight by police repressions, because those who really don't want to do it can avoid mobilisation even without bribes. At the same time, economic forcing is really strong: in our city, for example, there are 19 job seekers on each civil vacancy...

CRINT-FAI: How central are gender and LGBTQ+ matters in today anarchist and radical movements in Ukraine?

Assembly: Within our team there are different points of view on this issue: someone personally identifies themselves as a feminist, someone thinks in Ukraine this topic is so discredited by the right-wingers that it has completely lost any revolutionary potential. Before the full-scale war, the feminist and LGBTQ+ movement in Ukraine was closely associated with nationalist, clerical and militaristic circles. After February 24, those who advocated the expansion of women's service in the army, etc. fled en masse from Ukraine to European countries, often not even bordering on it, and from there they call to fight men, who cannot afford the luxury of free emigration. What will be with this movement next – we will not guess. Our activities are currently organized on a class and territorial basis, although, if such initiatives appear, at least partially close to our views, it would be nice to work with them.

CRINT-FAI: Some comrades told us how much nationalist rhetoric penetrated Ukrainian society, especially since 2013-14 and the Crimea war? What are the existing or potential political spaces for political activism excluding nationalism?

Assembly: Anarchy is the youth of the world, and to build it first of all by the young. Like in Italy, the problem of nationalism in Eastern Europe goes hand in hand with the extinction of the nation and its sliding into senile mara. Ukraine, like Russia, before the war has long been a country of alcoholics, pensioners, officials and cops, and when free exit becomes possible, even those workers and intelligentsia who still remain will probably go out from here, especially from the destroyed regions. There are figures that about 100,000 men voluntarily returned to Ukraine from abroad since February 24. But then again – will

they stay here after the war? In general, the Ukrainian demographics are not very conducive to the spread of libertarian ideas, as you can see.

The only chance for a happy ending is such huge investments from the West, China and Turkey that we will not only rebuild what was destroyed, but also make an economic leap from pre-war levels, which will attract many migrants from the Global South. Then a mass working-class movement, a revolutionary situation, etc. will really become possible. But so far, even the restoration of what we had before the war is not being seriously guaranteed, mostly promises.

Beyond any doubt, in this case, interethnic conflicts are also possible. However, already in the first months of our work, we almost exclusively supported the protests of Arab and African students against the provocation of bribes at the final exam. So, we hope that we will be able to find a common language with new foreigners too.

CRINT-FAI: Finally, is there anything else you wish that Italian-speaking anarchists know?

Assembly: We understand that Ukrainians in Italy are treated with clear prejudice, and that Ukrainian communities are notorious for their reactionary views. But they will never change it for the better if anarchism in Italy is just a beautiful rhetorical figure turned into a void. Agitate among them, educate them, help them fight employers and landlords, contact us if need to prepare texts in Ukrainian or Russian!

If refugees from Africa and the Middle East are reading this, we know many of you are angry because Ukrainian refugees have some better status in Europe. Please keep in mind that this is only half the truth. The other half is that the safety and income here are comparable with your countries, while the cost of living is comparable to the European one. We have common interests and need to look for ways to act together!

And also we would love to sincerely greet the Olga Taratuta Solidarity Initiative in France, Final Straw Radio in the USA, Enough 14 in Germany, 161 Crew in

Poland, alasbarricadas.org in Spain, aitrus.info in Russia, all other our readers, translators and donors. Your contribution to our work is startling, and we try to do the maximum that is possible in these conditions!

No borders, no nations! Peace to the huts, war to the palaces!

31 August 2022

source: <https://www.anarchistcommunism.org/2022/09/11/interview-with-the-ukrainian-anarchist-group-assembly/>

THE WAR HAS BECOME A DAILY ROUTINE: TWO CONVERSATIONS WITH THE KHARKOV UNDERGROUND JOURNAL

The collective of Assembly gave the first interview in the past six months to the Swiss resource Das Lamm at the end of February. It was published on March 13 with significant cuts due to the format of this media. We share the original, more detailed version and express our sincere gratitude to Timo Krstin for the work done. On the title photo - Russian strike with two missiles on the Kharkiv downtown, the morning of February 5, 2023.

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Can you tell me a bit about you organisation?

Assembly.org.ua is an online counter-information magazine based in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv (Kharkov), the country's second largest city, about 40 kilometers from the Russian border.

What are you doing?

Our work is organized on a horizontal basis and we have three main projects. The first is about the war: we provide legal advice and publish information about raids that helps people in our city avoid being forcibly drafted into the Ukrainian army, also we observe and translate into English for our column on Libcom.org all the news about grassroots anti-war sabotage in Russia beyond the Ukrainian state units. The second direction is urbanistic: we monitor the

preparations by local authorities for the post-war city restoration and discover their using it for personal purposes or in the interests of developers associated with them.

You spoke about three main projects. What is the third?

The third is material support for people in need. Almost immediately after a previous interview with us, since mid-September, regular Russian missile strikes began on Ukrainian civilian energy infrastructure facilities. Our city was no exception, having been subjected to them more than a dozen times. And if now blackouts usually do not exceed 3-4 hours a day, then in December blackouts often lasted 7-8 and even 12 hours. Of course, this dramatically increased the demand for humanitarian aid.

What kind of humanitarian aid is needed?

On the one hand, on December 1, the Kharkiv municipal authorities opened the distribution of free hot food in schools, and the state began to equip street "points of invincibility" where people can warm up and charge their gadgets for free. At the same time, so many people have lost their jobs due to business closures or have lost wages due to employers compensating for losses caused by blackouts from the workers' pockets, that volunteer groups like ours still have a lot of work to do. This has to be done pretty carefully so as not to meet with a military patrol. Please join our main fundraising Mutual Aid Alert East Ukraine.

Since winter has entered its last week, it's time to take some stock of it. We can say that we survived it much easier than expected. First of all, thanks to the abnormally warm weather: the temperature here did not fall below -10°C, and even then not very often. Secondly, the Ukrainian energy system was not destroyed completely, and the remaining energy networks managed to adapt to the new conditions. Finally, the consumption of electricity by the economy also fell sharply due to the shutdown of large industrial enterprises. If in the fall they even tried to start again after each blackout, now they seem to be completely stopped. Thanks to donations from our European comrades, we

were able to set up a community heating point in our member's private home on the relatively safe southern outskirts, and the need for it turned out to be less than it could have been.

When did you start your work?

In general, we have really been active since March 30, 2020 – as soon as there was a feeling in the air that this habitual status quo had finally cracked. The start of a global pandemic took us by surprise! It was unusual to stay at home all the time. At some of our comrade's workplaces, the salary was cut by 20% and there was a fear of staff layoffs. But a couple of weeks after the start of quarantine, we started the development of our website and so began to talk about acute social problems and help people unite to directly help each other in the face of a crisis.

You said one focus is on journalistic work. What kind of information do you provide?

Recently, a number of materials have been published on our own resource that have become resonant in the city - for example, about how the mayor's office makes PR for itself on the Master Plan for the post-war reconstruction of Kharkov from British architects, in reality applying exactly the opposite things. No less important was the presentation, exclusively covered by us, of several urban development horizontal collectives appeared last year to discuss how to make the city comfortable for everyone and have an active community after the war.

At the moment of founding, our reasoning went something like this: if at least 10% of the population of our city understands, for example, the public transport system better than the mayor and the city council do, then why do we need their administration? Something like that...

Do the people except [accept] your work?

Yes, even at the peak of the December blackouts, when views of all media dropped sharply, our magazine showed a positive trend. In that month, we overtook the municipal media by almost 25 thousand visits!

The journal soon became a place where the peaceful segment of social struggle and self-organisation could meet with the radical underground, and began to really live up to its name. We covered street events, workplace struggles, and urban development issues in our metropolis. And have also tried to restore historical memory on the revolutionary workers' traditions.

Do you feel a political impact of your texts?

In the spring, the Kharkiv City Council presented a so-called volunteer initiative to restore the city, headed not by an architect or urban planner but by a clothing designer affiliated with City Council – obviously, to rob the budget under this cover by the officials – but after we published the exposure of who is this jabrone and what is known about his part, he backed out of this project. Because if the restoration is organized by a person who has nothing to do with this by profession, but is close to the authorities, it's obvious that this is a fictitious project of the authorities themselves. Kharkiv municipality is very corrupt even by Ukrainian standards, so just to list all the schemes how they rob the budget would require a separate interview.

Before the start of regular missile attacks on the energy infrastructure, we hoped that the war would end a little more, at least for our region, so we were preparing an offline volunteer campaign to restore the wounded neighbourhoods. But there is no end to the war on the horizon, so instead of these plans, we began to control what the city authorities are doing under the pretext of post-war rebuilding of the city or its adaptation to wartime conditions. We are glad that we are not alone in this field and that we have someone to provide media support, but most of all Kharkov workers now, of course, are concerned about the issues of everyday survival, and not the conceptual problems of their environment.

How is life in this state of emergency? How is politics in this state of emergency (are you still able to follow your ideas, to act according to your politics)?

Since the summer of last year, spontaneous anarchism has noticeably increased among the masses - many already believe that the choice between two right-wing Latin American dictatorships is not a choice. This has significantly increased the popularity of our website - news about military and police brutality is now easily gaining thousands and thousands of views.

This is important because at the same time, street protests in such conditions are impossible. For example, several rallies of sailors took place in Odessa in the fall, demanding that they be allowed to leave the country to work on foreign ships.

What did happen after the protests?

They ended with the fact that the protesting men were given subpoenas to the military commissariat (enlistment center), and a criminal case was opened against the female leader of the Ukrainian Sailors Union on suspicion of smuggling them with purchased documents (probably because she is not liable for military service). But a huge amount of bail was quickly raised, so she left the pre-trial detention center a week later.

What political tendencies are there in the group?

Our editorial policy is generally social anarchist, nevertheless we don't have any exams in ideology and theory as during admission to a Marxist party. We are ready to cooperate with different persons and initiatives, if they are not controlled by politicians or bureaucratic structures, if they support horizontal direct action from below and want to be useful to the local community, despite the threat of possible persecution.

Did the war change your policies and political tactics?

In principle, there are two main points of view within the team: the first is that all efforts should be devoted to counteracting the authoritarian policies of the states that are at war on our land. The other is that we should try not to pay attention to this and instead engage in the fight against insolent employers, city land grabbing and other things from peacetime as if nothing had happened. In our news feed, you can see such and such materials.

What do you think about the Zelensky government?

We live in a military dictatorial regime, similar to Russia in the 2000s, but rapidly approaching the current one, therefore, in such conditions, the only real ways of social resistance remain mutual information and evasion or boycott (this is not only about mobilization, but also, for example, about companies that do not pay wages using the wartime conditions. The conscripts are now more and more behaving like street guerrillas: they saw a military patrol with subpoenas - they crossed to the other side of the road, lay down behind the curb, crawled under parked cars and left by the yards. It is sad that the whole city, where now there is about a million people, is afraid of several hundred camouflaged "postmen", but until the Russian army turns its bayonets against own power, radical social struggle in Ukraine is practically suicidal. And everyone understands this.

Do you have international support?

We have actually been working for a year thanks to the help of foreign comrades. Let me not list specific names, especially since this list is very large. It is easier to say who does not support us: those who want the workers to continue to be the obedient expendables of the owners instead of taking their lives into their own hands.

Many leftists in Europe represent unconditional pacifism and would rather sacrifice Ukraine than support the war. What can you say to them?

We can tell them that pacifism is not an alternative to war, because it does not question the existing order, the contradictions of which lead to such slaughters. Of course, anarchists cannot support the strengthening of the Ukrainian army, like any other one. But rather than wasting time on protests against the supply of weapons, it would be 100 times more useful to help Russian deserters and political prisoners (of course, if these leftists are really against the war, not bashfully pro-Kremlin). Only the formation of horizontal solidarity beyond the borders can give rise to new relationships in society!

Talking about horizontal solidarity. Are you ready to work with people from Belarus and Russia if they find against the state?

These people are really taking a huge risk to stop this carnage, and that is enough to be grateful to them. With the exception of not numerous far-rights, we support them regardless of whether they have internationalist position or pro-Ukrainian illusions. We are not FSB or KGB investigators to go into such details very deeply!

What is the state of Ukraine doing right in the fight with Russia?

The question is not correct by definition. The state does everything only in the interests of itself and the ruling class, the existence of which is no longer good in itself. Why should anarchists give them advice on how they should properly defend what they have stolen from the people?

Do you work with the regular army?

At the beginning of the war, one of our members was indeed engaged in volunteering to help Ukrainian soldiers, and this allowed him to establish many contacts in the military circles, but things did not go any further. Therefore, we are now mainly addressing to those who do not want to serve in any army. Whoever has something to defend in this country - let them fight for their property themselves, but do not keep the rest locked in a cage. All the same, there is no benefit from unmotivated people in military service.

What is the situation of the working class in the war?

If Ukraine before the war was the country with the most miserable wages in Europe, then last year the situation worsened even more. At least half of the economy in our city and at least a third of the country's economy has been destroyed, jobs have been lost, and leaving the country for men from 18 to 60 years is prohibited. Therefore, they can be exploited for two or three, since they have no other options in civilian life, and protests are impossible. Summoning raids are carried out every day throughout the city, but many do not show up on them, so they often began to be issued at enterprises, or simply by force to take passers-by into the car and take them to a medical

examination, followed by waiting for a call to the training center (for failure to appear for sending to the military unit, in contrast to the failure to appear at the medical examination, is threatened not with an administrative fine, but with a prison term). Because of this, the bosses were afraid that they would lose a lot of specialists, so last Friday the government expanded the list of enterprises that have the right to exempt 50% of their employees from mobilization. It is logical to assume that as a price for being included in this list, workers will have to endure even worse working conditions. The fact that losses from blackouts due to Russian bombing are compensated by staff and customers, we have already said at the beginning.



A typical working day morning in Kharkov all exits from the metro station near the machine-building plant Turboatom are blocked in anticipation of clients for summons

How do you feel about the historical anarchist movement in Ukraine (e.g. Makhnoshina)?

Together with several of our acquaintances from outside anarchist movement, we are constantly engaged in the study and publication of materials about the rich libertarian past of Kharkov. This is not only the Makhnovshchina, whose command council, by the way, was elected near Izyum in the south of our region. In the center of our city there was even Anarchy Street, now called Darwin Street, where at that time were located the anarchist headquarters in the expropriated mansions. Luckily, this street was not hit by shelling, so a colorful photo tour of it is still actual!

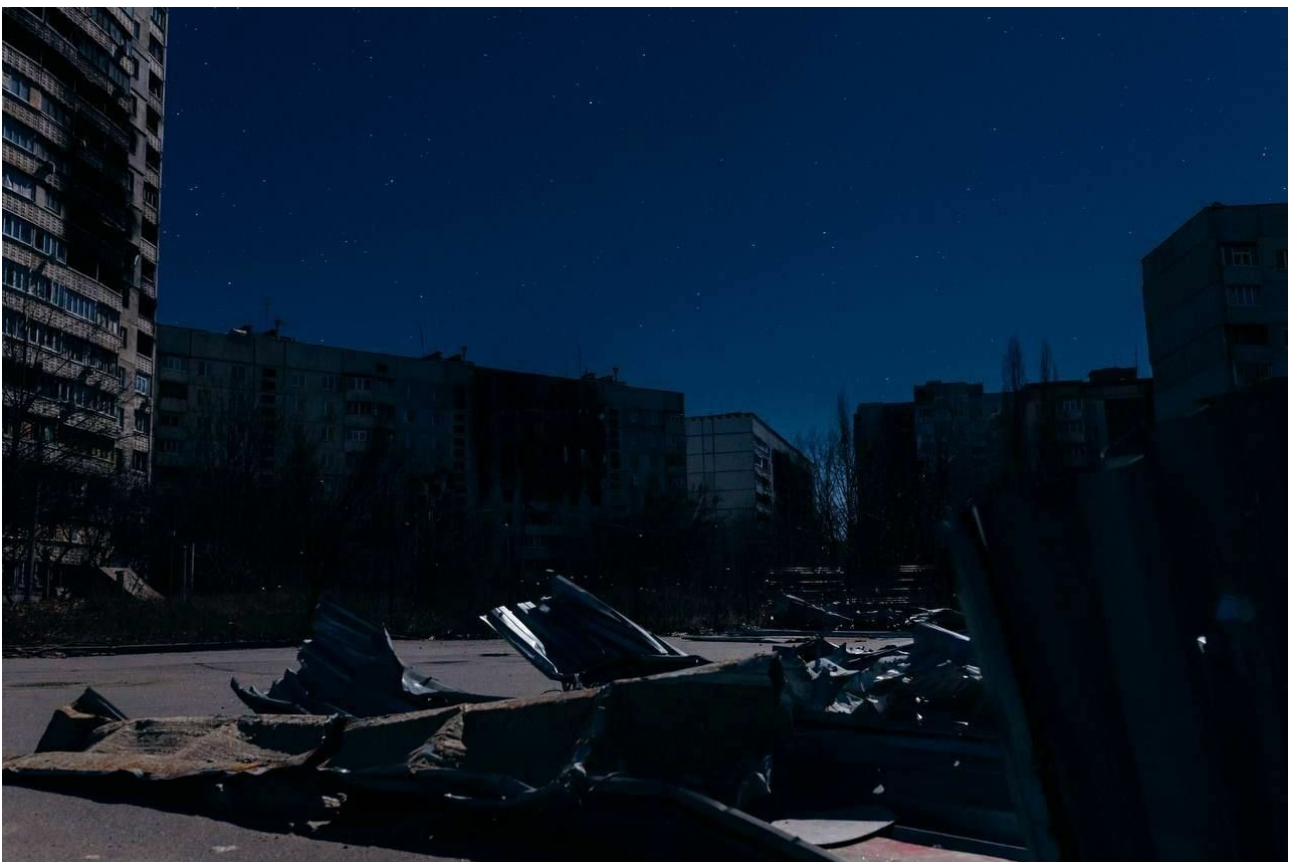


At numerous roadblocks, this is also done every day

Is this a tradition still relevant in the current movement?

Anarchists played an important role in the local events of late 1917 and the subsequent revolutionary transformations, when Kharkov became the first

capital of Soviet Ukraine. But now this is not very relevant, because if at the beginning of the 20th century Ukraine was a country of workers and peasants, now it is primarily a country of pensioners, bureaucracy and various law enforcement bodies. Like Russia, by the way, with the exception of the Caucasus and some Asian regions. At the same time, among the remaining workers and intelligentsia on both sides of the front, the nationalist frenzy is already much less than last year. That's why it is now impossible in Ukraine for the emergence a third force that would wage an armed struggle against both states. Although, due to the outflow of the most economically active elements to the front, they still don't have enough boldness to think about a new world, we need to prepare for a possible revolutionary situation if the war drags on for a few more years. Therefore, if in France a few years ago the slogan "Fuck 68 - fight now" was popular, for us is now relevant "Fuck 1917 - fight now!"



Dead area of Saltovka (the eastern city district devastated by Russian carpet rocket bombing last year) on a winter night

Also our letter two weeks ago to comrades from the Czech group Make Tatoo Not War whose benefit action helped us and our community to survive the winter during the constant power and heating outages. We tell how we disposed of their donations and how the spring Kharkiv lives now:

"Good evening!

To sum up the season in the most general terms, the Ukrainian energy system was not completely destroyed and the remaining energy networks were able to adapt to the new conditions. Electricity consumption in the economical system also fell sharply due to the shutdown of large industrial enterprises. If in the autumn they had tried to restart after each outage, now it seems that they have stopped completely. So it turns out that the need for a communal shelter not as big as we thought. Nevertheless, your kind support helped us incredibly, and we tried to spend all the funds as economically as possible, so that part of them would remain for other areas of activity.

It's so symbolic that we are doing this report on the day when Kharkov was again plunged into a total blackout. At 2-3 o'clock last night, 11 cruise missiles hit the city's civilian infrastructure again, for the first time in more than a month. And only a couple of hours ago, the light slowly began to return. Fortunately, spring has already come into its own - today it was +12°C - so no one really felt the lack of heating.

As for the heating point. In fact, this is just a large entrance hall in a private house, capable of accommodating from about 30 to 50 people maximum, however since nature turned out to be favorable to us this winter, there was always a lot of free space and people usually came only for a few hours. It so happened historically that only one of our members lives in a private house, and the marginal southern district of Osnova, in which the private sector is located, has a rich revolutionary past. Exactly 105 years ago, at the end of 1918, when Kharkov was occupied by the Kaiser troops, the Bolshevik and anarchist underground was based there. On New Year's Eve 1919, they raised

an armed workers' uprising and took control of the city, knocking out Ukrainian nationalists from it (they were left without the support of the Germans, who wanted to quickly go home and elected a soldiers' council, which took a friendly position towards the rebels). Almost immediately after that, the anarchist militia was dispersed by the Bolsheviks, but that's another story, which is the subject of our big article in Russian. As in those days, Osnova is still the site of a railway depot, where the working conditions are just as terrible as they were during the First World War (in the best case, the salary is 12,000 UAH per month, you have to live on the road in a trailer and to eat useless porridge, working for 12 hours, you will never get time off, gloves will be issued two times a month, though according to labor protection standards they must be every day; if you work in Kharkov, the salary will be no more than 7500 UAH and for this money you will beat with a sledgehammer and a crowbar all day. It was all the more interesting to have a deeper conversation with the locals who came to warm up.

It wasn't an easy task, because it's the same district with Osnova Lake (former Komsomol Lake) where the infamous concrete checkpoint. The cops and military regularly stop shuttle buses and hand out summonses to conscripts, sometimes simply take men away with them. If someone had told them that there is an anarchist social center in the area, the consequences for us can only be guessed at, but they would hardly have been pleasant. Therefore, we tried to talk with focus on news and events in other countries.

However, a funny thing happened once. One of our participants living in other district came to visit and, sitting in the hallway along with people who had come to warm up, accidentally told a comrade that an article for Assembly is almost finished. An unfamiliar guy of 30-35 years old heard this and opened his mouth in surprise: "Really for Assembly? Wooow...!" Happily, he managed to explain that anyone can send material there via the contact form, and for this it's not necessary to be part of a team. It's one thing to deliver goods to people on the other side of the city and dissolve in its wilds, but just to give out our base to everyone - it would be too risky...

It's worth noting that even in not so ancient times - in the second half of the 1990s - the police were afraid to enter this neighbourhood, they were simply beaten there. Of course, now everything is completely different: the average age of the population is about 50 years, if not more; there are several schools, no other educational facilities. But even in the less depressed areas of Kharkiv, people now largely survive on humanitarian aid, foreign remittances, and petty spontaneous trade. Therefore, we cannot talk about the class struggle in the city yet. Despite the fact that with the reduction of blackouts in February, manufacturing and the service sector began to gradually revive, even half of the pre-war level of the economy is impossible to speak of - too many enterprises have been destroyed or evacuated.

The only significant winter event with our participation was the presentation, exclusively covered by us, of several urban development horizontal initiatives appeared in Kharkov last year to discuss how to make the city comfortable for everyone, less commercially oriented and have an active community after the war. See in Ukrainian.

That's all for now. Thank you very much once more for all!"

9th of March, 2023

source: <https://libcom.org/article/war-has-become-daily-routine-two-conversations-kharkov-underground-journal>

DESPAIR AND ANGER IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP, ASSEMBLY'S INTERVIEW ON THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF BIG WAR IN UKRAINE

*Winter conversation for a book project on the revolutionary left against the war currently in the making by communaut.org and diebuchmacherei.de.
Published before the release of the German version with the consent of the interviewer.*

#

How can we imagine everyday life in Kharkiv at the moment? By everyday life I don't mean your political work, which I'll come to in a moment, but the day-to-day life of a normal worker. Is there still work, how well can you live from it at the moment? How is the welfare state and its infrastructure, is there unemployment benefit and enough medical care? Do people sometimes sit in cafes and bars and talk about something, is there anyone left to talk to - or is everything completely subsumed under the war or reduced to the bare essentials?

This is such a voluminous question that a separate conversation can be devoted to it. In very general terms, on the eve of the New Year we published a large analysis of the prospects for 2024, where we called it a decisive year for the maturation of a revolutionary situation that will make it possible to turn the war of states into a war against them. It is available in Russian, English, French, Italian and Spanish. As for our city specifically... If Ukraine is the

backyard of Europe, then Kharkov, located almost on the Russian border, is the backyard of Ukraine. People here live either out of love for thrills, or out of complete hopelessness. A prison where lights out at 9 pm, roughly speaking. If in 2020, according to then-mayor Kernes, the average age in Kharkov was 35 years old, then at the beginning of a full-scale war there were mostly pensioners, and now the average age of the population is about 50. Although this is only a visual impression of public places, because men of conscription age (in Ukraine it is from 18 to 60 years, and leaving of the country is prohibited for most of them) often do not risk leaving the house and try to move along the streets only by car. Depression, alcoholism and complete sadness. The ship has been at the bottom already for a long time, but the passengers have locked themselves in their cabins and think that there will be enough air until someone saves them...



Daily busification on the streets of Kharkov. Winter 2024

A positive thing: utility services in Kharkov are provided normally; if there were any outages this winter, they were for no more than a few hours due to technical faults. Electricity, gas, heating – everything is there. Russian troops

are now bombing not power plants, but what they consider to be military enterprises, warehouses or places of deployment of personnel. Officially, there are now 1.2-1.4 million people in the city, out of an estimated 2 million before the full-scale invasion. But this is largely due to immigrants from more front-line territories. How many locals remain is unknown. In addition to this, the Kharkov region is in third place in Ukraine in terms of area of arable land, and at the end of 2023 it was the absolute leader of the country in terms of its sale. The disappearance of the population is quite beneficial for part of the bourgeois class.

One can also only guess about the real situation with unemployment, because many do not want to register in job centers for fear of being drafted. But half-year ago we published an article about how women and pensioners are replacing men liable for military service at Kharkov enterprises due to mobilization. The parallels with Western Europe during the First World War are perhaps obvious. Despite this, as noted in our January material about mobilization kidnapping in Kharkov, there is a severe shortage of workers in many areas of the economy. If this continues, then the only public transport in the city will remain “buses of invincibility,” as people call cars for catching passers-by (a reference to the cliché “Invincible Kharkiv” from officious propaganda). Due in part to increased insecurity on the streets, coupled with decreased donations, our group has had to refocus its efforts this winter from providing humanitarian aid to residents in need to developing media activity. We do not want to change the look of the website – connection here is often bad, and with a more complex design it may be difficult for our local readers to open it. Rather, we will focus on improving the quality of content and involving more audience. To support this you are welcome to join our fundraising Mutual Aid Alert for East Ukraine.

Among other things, on the evening of February 9th, Russian drones attacked an oil depot in the middle of private housing sector in our city. That enterprise has already been minimally fined twice for violating fire regulations, but it seems no measures have been taken. Burning fuel spilled throughout the area,

causing two families with three small children to burn alive, and at least four rivers got blackened by oil products. Our team joined the fighting of this environmental disaster, searching the coastal bush for wild birds stained or poisoned by oil.



Poisoned rivers and springs of Kharkov: from our report on the ecological catastrophe this month

The Ukrainian military is currently running out of soldiers. A new law on recruitment has therefore been passed. Men of military age who receive a notification must report back within 48 hours and will then be drafted. But morale seems to be exhausted. You have reported in your last article on numerous protest actions directed against the continuation of the war, e.g. women protested in numerous cities for the release of their husbands from the military. How do you assess the current mood of Ukrainian women and their attitude towards a continuation of the war? Is the mood in Ukraine changing?

There are also no exact figures about what Ukrainian women think, because many are afraid to express their real view in opinion polls. Even among those of them whose male relatives are fighting, the opinions are directly opposite – somebody want the maximum tightening of mobilization so that everyone else suffers in the same way like they (just as someone who does not have the strength to get out of a quagmire tries to drag others into it). Others, on the contrary, want an immediate end to hostilities through peace negotiations of just freezing.

It is noteworthy that while in Kharkov talking about collective defense from pixel Sonderkommandos remains just talking, in Transcarpathia this began to come real: women there begin to resist their raids. That is, the situation in different parts of Ukraine is largely different. Firstly, Uzhgorod is a relatively small city, and those living there are not as alienated from each other as in a metropolis, where many do not even know their neighbors on the landing. Secondly, the Transcarpathian population is not exhausted by chronic stress from shelling and curfew; there is a vibrant economic life there, with businesses and money flowing in from all over the country. Moreover, in the westernmost region there is no such pressing feeling that “rocking the boat” indirectly plays into the hands of the aggressor, as near the Russian border. In other words, if in 1917 Kharkov was at the forefront of the class struggle as a rear industrial hub, and the west of Ukraine was devastated by the war, now everything is exactly the opposite.

From the very beginning, your political work and agitation was strongly focused on facilitating desertion and anti-war boycotts. How has this work changed in the last year?

Not really. The Assembly is an online newsletter, and if we can help the deserters in any way, then only by giving them a political justification for their acts, so that they do not suffer from remorse, but are proud of their refusal to choose between serving either Vladolf Putler or François Zevalier, personifications of the darkest reaction that only possible in today's Europe, refusal to choose between the occupying colonial expedition and the defense of what has been grabbed by the Ukrainian ruling class since 1991. Help to deserters is being provided by the Russian liberal initiative Go to the Forest, which has dozens of volunteers and much more experienced organizers than us (By the way, the number of requests to them is growing rapidly: if for the entire 2023 they gave 727 consultations on desertion issues and provided assistance in this matter 235 times, in January 2024 alone – already 161 consultations and 35 assistance provisions, at that such stories usually take place precisely in borderland of our region with Donbass, where the majority of Russian mobilized

soldiers serve). We are in contact with them and share their information, but it is impossible to do the same in Ukraine due to the much smaller size of the country (that means a higher likelihood of catching the one who has escaped from a unit) and a ban on departure even for men who are not serving in the army. That's why we only strive to become some kind of ideological core for those who do not want to fight (not only military but also civilians), in order that this is not just a manifestation for their self-preservation instinct, but a conscious position – disagreement to kill and to die for other's villas and yachts. Even adherents of pro-Ukrainian positions already often understand that there are no other options: last year convincingly showed that if Russian troops do not leave the occupied territories themselves, the Ukrainian army also will not be able to drive them out, so this will yield nothing except meaningless disposal people. Since there is no reason to believe that the Kremlin is preparing to surrender them, hope remains for processes from below. Soldiers should understand that the real enemy is not on the other side of the trenches, but on the other side of the fence around the administrative buildings.

Until the Russian army collapses from the within, passive resistance will probably prevail in Ukraine – the desire to remain as little as possible in the state's field of view, the withdrawal of assets abroad, flight from the country by any remaining ways. According to NBU estimates, the amount of transfers from those traveling abroad, which used to be one of the main channels for the influx of currency into the country, is decreasing. If in 2021 it was \$14 billion, then in 2022 it became \$12.5 billion, and in 11 months of last year – \$10.6 billion. At the same time, after the start of a full-scale war, the outflow of funds from Ukrainian bank cards in the “travel” category increased significantly: \$20 billion the year before and \$18 billion last year. Every public tirade of professional patriots like “everyone should fight, but I'm more needed in my warm place” only strengthens the desire to break with this country as quickly as possible. However, a real civil war has started on Ukrainian social networks for the last half-year now between the conditional parties of “defenders” and “evaders,” comparable in severity to the events of 1919 in Germany. Time will

tell whether it will go offline after the active stage of hostilities with Russia ceases, but steps must be taken now to ensure that this is a fight for a new vision of the future, and not a primitive settling of personal scores.

By the way, individual acts of “spontaneous black terror” already take place in Ukraine, although the anarchist movement still exists virtually. In addition to the episodes from this autumn survey, we recorded another case in Zhashkiv of the Cherkassy region: on the night of December 25th, some unknown person threw an F-1 grenade into the private yard of some enlistment serviceman; its fragments damaged a fence and a gas pipe. And on February 8th, an unemployed 33-year-old resident of Nikopol shot dead the deputy mayor in his car on suspicion of corruption. The investigation claims that he also was preparing attempts on other city officials. From our point of view, such desperate steps do not pose a threat to the system as a whole. This is only an indicator of growing tension in society. Just imagine that your neighbor (Russia) set fire to your house, you or someone from your family is inside, and outside, someone who lives off your taxes, at gunpoint, forbids to get out and demands to burn down along with the house. Did you imagine? This is the relationship between the people and the state in Ukraine...

In the previous interview, you wrote that many people made use of your structures, but that there was hardly any politicization. Has anything changed in this respect?

Yes, many people actually contacted us through the contact form on the website and emailed their needs for food or medicine, after which we tried to help them. But such informal aid networks at the beginning of a full-scale war spanned the entire region. The Assembly was not something unique, but only one of many pieces of the puzzle. Now the population is indeed gradually becoming politicized, however not on the basis of horizontal self-organization but on the basis of dissatisfaction with the acts and plans at the top. On February 7th, the draconian bill to tighten mobilization was adopted in the first reading. We cannot know what changes will be then made to it, the only clear thing is that this will not help the agonizing regime. If parliamentarians and the Presi-

dent's Office nevertheless push through the adoption of this bill, the critical mass of dissatisfied people will not disappear anywhere, but will only become even more embittered. All the same, hardly anybody will go to fight for them except those who will be thrown onto a bus on the streets!



A cry from the soul in the village of Kamenka, one of many completely destroyed settlements in the east of the Kharkov region

In addition to the measures to recruit new soldiers, the Zelenskyi government took other authoritarian measures last year. For example, elections were suspended for the duration of the war. Is political work still possible at all under these conditions or do you have to work under conditions of clandestinity? How is the Ukrainian population reacting to these government measures?

It's true. Russian strikes on December 29th against a number of cities, including Kharkov, and a Ukrainian attack the next day on Belgorod, which cost the

lives of dozens of civilians on each side, stopped the growing trend in the fall towards the gradual fading and curtailment of hostilities. Despite this, bills 10378 and 10379 on tightening mobilization and responsibility for draft dodgers, introduced into the Ukrainian parliament on December 25th to ensure the recruitment of approximately 500 thousand recruits, blew up the information field. It has demonstrated that a critical mass of those tired of the militaristic frenzy has already formed in the country: for too many, it no longer makes a fundamental difference under what flag they will be robbed. This dull hopeless despair, on the one hand, paralyzes the will to any social activity, on the other hand, it can make the people wonder how to do that no one robs them at all. It is for this reason that we say that a revolutionary situation is approaching.

The October thesis of the Assembly that men of conscription age will have to sever contacts with the state as much as possible and go into the gray zone came to the center of the national agenda: the whole country started talking about massive withdrawal of funds from bank cards, transferring property to non-conscripted family members and other panicky things. You probably know the words of Erich Maria Remarque that those who most want to fight are those who will not end up in the war. However, with the decline in trust and loyalty to all state institutions that occurred in this half-year after the failure of summer counter-offensive, the cornerstone of the current policy – “reaching the 1991 borders” – got being opposed not only the silent majority but even part of the passionate minority. The electorate of the war until victorious end (that still exists among women, emigrants, pensioners and men with various deferments) is being pulled over by the chocolate king who wants to return to the presidency again, so the support of the Ze-gang this year will remain the repressive and bureaucratic vertical, and only as long as there is money to pay them.

The role of right-wing groups within the Ukrainian state and military apparatus in particular is repeatedly emphasized. How has this spectrum

developed over the past year? Is there a consolidation or even an expansion of power of these structures as a result of the ongoing war?

At the moment, we do not see any signs of an increase in the influence of right-wing ideologies and movements in Ukraine compared to 2022. We can only say that they are behaving more aggressively in terms of rhetoric, feeling that their time is running out, and trying to compensate in this way reducing of own ranks. The growth of their influence in the future is also doubtful, given that 30 years of dominance of the right-wing political spectrum have brought nothing to the country except devastation, death and emigration. At the same time, the far-right can exploit any popular sentiment to their advantage – in Western countries this became evident during the coronavirus quarantine, when their rhetoric sometimes resembled anarchists and leftists. Therefore, it is by no means excluded that we will still see attempts by some of them to oppose the war as “a conspiracy to destroy the Slavic peoples by the hands of each other.” Anything is possible, especially with such a level of anti-Semitism as in Eastern Europe.



Russian assault on the village of Sinkovka in the east of the Kharkov region. Winter 2024

What is the situation within Ukraine's ruling class and politics? What shifts in power have been observed over the past year? Can you comment on this?

In short, the ruling class of Ukraine is in a political crisis and is divided into two conditional factions: Ze and Za. As you know, on February 8, the president dismissed the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Such a scandalous decision regarding a popular general during the war had its own forced reasons. With the onset of a vacuum of legitimacy of power after the end of the official powers of the president at the end of March 2024, Zaluzhnyi can become his main competitor in the fight for this post. And in his role as acting commander-in-chief, he has more opportunities for such a fight than in retirement. Therefore, despite the inevitable scandal from this decision, the President's Office wants to carry it out until the end of the legal term. As for the rumors circulating about the possibility of a military coup in this case, it can be assumed that the Office bet on the deterrent factor of the Russian threat worked: Russia could take advantage of the coup and the temporary loss of control of the army to break through the front and seize new territories, so the Western allies could not allow such a scenario. And after the removal of the commander-in-chief without the threat of a coup, the usual political intrigues began, in which the current government is experienced and has a great chance of winning. In short, the country until recently resembled Latin America of the last century: at the crossroads between civilian officials trying to build a military dictatorship, and simply a military dictatorship. And for now, the first option has won.

Are you in contact with other left-wing and revolutionary groups? In the August 2022 interview, you painted a rather bleak picture of an anarchist left almost completely absorbed by the war. Have there been any resurgences of groups or have they really been mutilated beyond recognition by the war?

Since last year, we cooperate with two leftist projects appeared in Ukraine – the Organization of Students Activists (OSA) and the news channel NMOdessa (something like “Don't Keep Silence Odessa”). OSA operates in several cities, including Kharkov, and at the end of December, thanks to their action for which

we provided media coverage, the deprivation of scholarships to many students of the Kharkov Polytechnic Institute was canceled. You can read about this in Russian, English and French (the report also tells how our pressure helped return the tram line to the Kharkov downtown the same month). The second ones in September were among the first to respond to the torture by mobilizers of two men from Kharkov and Krivoy Rog, who were detained while trying to cross the border with Poland. Thanks to the scandal that arose, a criminal case was opened against those involved and recently went to the court (see about this in Russian or in English). Now this channel distributes free pepper sprays in Odessa for self-defense against military kidnapping teams.

Both initiatives do not consider themselves anarchists; moreover, while the OSA positively assesses the Maidan obscurantist coup of 2014, NMO sometimes post Anti-Maidan fables from Kremlin propaganda despite their own characterizing the Russian state as fascist (and even more mature fascism than the Ukrainian one). Therefore, we are not completely same-minded ones. However, the emergence of such groups shows that outright social chauvinism and militarism in Ukrainian left-wing circles are no longer a trend, and the demand for it on the public agenda is becoming a thing of the past. This means that the Assembly's ideas enter into the broad masses consciousness and our work is not in vain!

At the end of the interview with the Italian comrades in 2022, you were asked what you would like to say to Italian-speaking readers. Now you are conducting a conversation for a book with a Berlin publisher. Is there anything you would like to tell the German-speaking readers from Kharkiv?

Okay. Germany is now becoming the most popular country for Ukrainian refugees. Ukraine is such a "free country" that its authorities consider all people with a Ukrainian passport to be their personal property in the most literal sense of this word. Therefore, they, as slave owners, have the exclusive right to earn money from them and exploit them. If they went abroad, this is a loss for the owners, and they want either compensation in their pocket, or the return of the slaves back to the stable. Something similar happened in the 19th

century before the US Civil War (Again, this comparison is not rhetorical but literal: escaping to the EU across the icy Tisza differs from the escape across the winter Ohio River in the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin only in the using of drones and thermal imagers by the pursuers, and already 20 guys have already died during such attempts in this river (two weeks ago, along with this, our compatriot from the Kharkov region drowned in the border river Prut, as reported the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine). Slaves fled from the South to the North, and slave owners demanded either to return the fugitives back or to pay money for them – and here the head of state is now calling on Germany to transfer him funds allocated for social support to Ukrainian refugees (his recent interview to ARD you can find without us). Naturally, with every statement by him or representatives of his gang that men who left the country during the war should be deported back or their standard of living in Europe should be lowered to Ukrainian standards, more and more refugees want to settle down in new place. This, in turn, opens up the opportunity of their integration into the revolutionary movement of the host country – after all, it is now very difficult for Ukrainians to have the illusion that the state interests are identical to the interests of working people. Take advantage of this opportunity and let's actively exchange experiences with each other!

To do this, we are going to participate in the International Week of Action, to take place in Prague on May 20-26. We invite everyone interested to join, although the form of our participation is still unknown (no one knows what will happen tomorrow). Everyone who reads this interview and thinks like us – you are in the same ranks with us, because we work thanks to you and for people like you, in these dark times of widespread apathy and hopelessness.

Thank you for everything and let's not turn off the chosen path! To Anarchy!

Mid-February 2024

source: <https://libcom.org/article/despair-and-anger-concentration-camp-assemblies-interview-second-anniversary-big-war-ukraine>

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APRIL 2024

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