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Talking about Donbas from the anarchist position

Alexander Volodarsky

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The only basic value around which the left and libertarian policies can be built up are people. Not states, not nations, not ideas, not myths, but people. And people are not like some abstract set, but each specific little person with his desires, needs and vices. Therefore, I precisely watch Donbas through looking at the people, without nationalistic phantoms as «the rights of nations to self-determination» on the one hand or «territorial integrity» on the other.

Let's not pay attention to the color of the flags and look at the main point. What is happening now in the East of the country is the transformation of Donbas into Somalia. Not in Huliaipole, as some pseudo-left bastards claimed, but Somalia, to the land where armed gangs rule all. Huliaipole in Donbas now simply can not arise. Because anarchy is not funny men wearing vests and carrying bayan, anarchy is not a carousel riding with shooting, anarchy is the ability of people to organize themselves, to interact with each other.

So, in order to create a community in some place that can be called «anarchist» or «libertarian» or «leftist», a critical mass

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of residents must be actively involved in this process. In Spain in 30's, hundreds of thousands or even millions of people were practicing anarchists. The Makhnovshchina relied not only on carts and rifles — it also relied on workers' councils, trade unions and at that time a living tradition of the peasant community, which in itself is an example of mass grassroots self-government. Every Zapatista is quite consciously part of the libertarian society, people perceive «the Common as Theirs» and collectively participate in the decision-making.

When armed gangs march around the city, the level of street crime goes off scale, and most of the population is sitting in their homes in horror and thinking about running away is not anarchy, it's its complete opposite. In Donbas now there are no prerequisites for building a libertarian community. Here is no mass labor movement (even an apolitical movement that could form a certain framework), there are not any influential political organizations. There are independent miners' unions — but these are islands in the ocean.

Someday, around these mines there will necessarily be something progressive, maybe the first anarchist freemen. But right now every active workers' movement in Donbas is doomed — as soon as it declares itself, it will be crushed immediately by an armed lumpen proletariat. A libertarian project in these parts is represented by a couple of dozens of disunited activists scattered around the cities, and some even apolitical than the left trade unions that cannot (and don't want to yet) become a militant force capable of any effective resistant to numerous trained and armed opponents.

At this stage, for the working people of Donbas and Slobozhanshchyna peace is an important point. In order to turn a bourgeois war into a class war, they need to have some kind of resource, first — an organizational one, which is not available at the moment. It is necessary to build up strength and strengthen ties, and this will take years. The

construction of Somali Region will throw back any prospects of any grassroots movements.

The only ones who benefit from this are politicians who fish in muddy bloody waters, consolidating people around authoritarian and nationalistic projects. And, of course, nauseating Western and Russian observers on their coaches, who have the opportunity to watch an entertaining show and threaten the monitor with a fist, support the chosen side of the conflict.

Going into the question of what is happening and thinking is not necessary, even harmful — you can't enjoy the show. Some aborigines kill each other, cool, right? Red flags, ribbons, Lenin, yackety-yak yadda yadda.