

Position on our solidarity work in Ukraine

Anarchist Black Cross Dresden

10 May 2022

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A few days before the start of the war of aggression, we exchanged views with comrades from Ukraine, among others. What to do in case of war? For us it was clear that we would answer the call for help of our friends. We saw our possibilities of support very concretely in starting a fundraising campaign to support Operation Solidarity directly in Ukraine and people on the run outside. It was clear to us that there were activists who were already planning to stay and fight in Ukraine. With this, we clearly positioned ourselves and were also criticized for it. Therefore, in the following text we would shortly like to explain why we are doing what we are doing.

1) How can you as anarchists support war?

We clearly position ourselves against this war. The trigger of this war is the hunger for power, imperialism and fascism of the Putin regime. He and his supporters want this war, not the people who live in Ukraine.

So, if we are against this war, the question is: how to stop the war? An anti-militarist point of view suggests that the Ukrainian armed forces could surrender and submit to the Russian regime. In our view, however, this would not lead to the end of the war, but would encourage Russia to expand further (e.g., into Moldova or Poland). Since we cannot currently expect a change of power in Russia, the only way out, in our view, is a defeat of Russia. This can look different, but in any case it includes that the people in Ukraine can defend themselves militarily against Russia in the best possible way.

So we want to support the people in Ukraine to defend themselves to end this war as soon as possible.

We also do not want to presume to decide whether it is right to defend against invaders by force of arms. Whether a person fights or flees is their choice. It is important to us that both fighting and fleeing people have our support. In our opinion, these two ways should not be played off against each other!

2) How can you as anarchists support the Ukrainian State/Ukrainian Army?

We do not support the state or the army of Ukraine directly. Our focus is to support people to defend themselves and their homes against a war of invasion. However, it is true that many people have decided to join the Ukrainian Army or the Territorial Defense Units because there are currently no alternatives in the form of independent units.

In 2014, there were independent groups fighting in Donbass that were primarily politically right-wing. For this reason, among others, the Ukrainian state has focused in recent months on preventing the establishment of independent groups or tried to integrate them into the army.

For libertarians and anti-authoritarians, the decision-making situation is currently neither simple nor free of contradictions. Either they remain true to their political principles and do not fight, or they compromise and join the military defense. The question of whether it is okay to make certain compromises in order to achieve larger goals is something we encounter again and again in our political organizing. In this case, we can well understand people wanting to defend themselves against living under Putin's regime with weapons. If joining the Ukrainian army is the only option for the duration of the fighting, we understand that too. However, it remains

important and unavoidable for us to continue to critically observe the Ukrainian state and thus also its army and not to unreflectively “celebrate” because right now they are “the good guys”.

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