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Ukraine's oldest anarchist V. Kirichenko had died

Anatoly Dubovik

December 27, 2016

Ukraine's oldest active anarchist Vladimir Kirichenko had died on December 25, 2016, aged 68.

Vladimir Nikolayevich Kirichenko, born on October 7, 1947, started to feel that he was an "anti-Soviet person" from his teens, and he was first "condemned as an anarchist" when he was 15, for some school prank. However, he started to seriously identify himself as an anarchist when he was 20, under the influence of Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Two years later, he produced and distributed his first anarchist leaflet.

From the mid-1970s, Kirichenko was a member of a dissident group in Zaporizhia. It did not have any specific ideology but kept and distributed anti-Soviet literature. Kirichenko was acting as a messenger, maintaining links with Moscow and Odessa. He did not hide his own anarchist convictions from fellow dissidents, and in late 1970s converted to anarchism a young worker, Dmitry Dundich, who was a member of the same group. Around 1982 or 1983 the Zaporizhia dissident group was betrayed by the father of one of the readers, and some of its members were arrested.

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In 1987, Kirichenko and his comrades founded a small group in Zaporizhia called World Brotherhood of Anarchists (Mirovoye Bratstvo Anarkhistov, MBA). Its stated ideology was based on humanism, freedom and spirituality. Kirichenko was a co-founder of Dikoye Pole (Wild Field) publishing initiative, which reprinted Peter Arshinov's "History of the Makhnovist Movement" in 1995. He continued participation in trade-union and propaganda activities of anarchists in the 21st century. In 2007, Kirichenko was elected the honorary chairman of the Revolutionary Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists named after N. I. Makhno (Revolutsionnaya konfederatsiya anarkho-sindikalistov imeni N. I. Makhno, RKAS); he was a member of that platformist group.

Kirichenko worked as an astrophysicist. He led the Zaporizhia experimental squad of young cosmonauts named after Vladimir Komarov; one of its pupils, Oleg Skripochka, became a spaceman in 2011. Kirichenko was also president of the Skhodzhennya film club, and an actor at the city's New Theatre. He was buried at Zaporizhia's St Nicholas cemetery.