

“You can’t stay away from battle”

BOAK

2023

From the position where we are standing, war doesn’t really change anarchists’ point of view. But rather it makes the differences between groups clearer. We heard the same arguments and discussions in 2014, when some ‘anarchists’ were stating that people in Maidan in Kyiv were not anarchists, and that’s why we shouldn’t take part in this struggle. And the same voices during the 2020–2021 Belarusian protests said: “This isn’t an anarcho protest; it’s just a protest. We shouldn’t take sides with these people. The time for our revolution hasn’t come yet.”

And here is what we have to say to this: this is just bullshit from people who aren’t ready to fight and would never be ready to fight the state.

In times of struggle – and especially wars – you can’t stay away from battle. The best you can do is try and create your own force, fighting for the anarcho ideals. But if you can’t create such force and you choose to stay away from the battle, to be “against both sides of conflict” by doing nothing, you actually begin acting in favor of one of the sides. Not acting against the bigger evil, not trying to stop it – that means helping it. And just to have possibility to fight lesser evil – you need to stop bigger evil first. Even if to stop the bigger evil you need to in some way cooperate with the lesser evil.

And we believe that through this conflict, the anarcho-movement will become clearer, without “talking heads” and “passengers” doing nothing but talk about how “both sides are bad and therefore we should do nothing”. Because people – inside and outside the movement – will see, in such extreme times, what’s true anarchism and what’s just comfortable lifestyles in times of peace.

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Boyevaya organizatsiya anarkho-kommunistov (BOAK; Combat Organization of Anarcho-Communists) as part of the Belarusian and Russian partisan movement, has existed since 2020; since February 2022, BOAK has claimed responsibility for actions designed to disrupt the logistics of the Russian Army in the Russian Federation and in Belarus.

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