

A sidenote to one statement

The Internationale of Anarchist Federations has made a statement on the war in Ukraine, but we consider it insufficient.

Czech and Slovak Anarchist Federation

18 April 2022

The Committee on Relations of the Internationale of Anarchist Federations (CRIFA), which met in Marseille on 19–20 March, discussed, among other things, matters relating to the ongoing war in Ukraine. Although there are different views among the member federations on some points, they agreed to continue the discussion. The debate resulted in common positions which were summarised in a compromise statement entitled “Against war, for global solidarity”.

The Czech Anarchist Federation (AF) agreed to the statement because it expresses some general principles that are our own, but is nevertheless very dissatisfied with it internally, and is therefore engaging in further discussion. We come to the joint debate with a statement of our positions, a reference to our activities and the points we consider to be essential. But this is not just an internal debate within the Internationale of Anarchist Federations (IFA), our comments are directed towards the wider anti-authoritarian movement (in particular) in Europe.

So here are the very brief discussion points from AF:

1. We understand the joint IFA statement as a compromise, but it does not fully express our positions.
2. We advocate first and foremost that movement should listen to anarchists in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus.
3. We consider any disregard of their positions and decisions to be arrogant, unempathic, and an expression of ideological supremacy, which we find unacceptable. Eastern Europe has been treated this way by the Western power bloc for long. We do not intend to tolerate anything like this in the international anarchist movement.
4. We fully support both combat and non-combat activities of anarchists in Ukraine. We are familiar with their attitudes and dilemmas. We appreciate their difficult decisions. We refuse to ideologically judge them from the comfort of peaceful areas.
5. We recognize the need to quickly repel the Russian invasion, for the sake of the working class in Ukraine, as well as in Russia and Belarus. The only way to stop this war is

through the military defeat of the Russian army. There is currently no sufficiently strong anti-militarist movement in Russia and Belarus to effectively sabotage the attack, and this situation cannot be expected to change in the near future.

6. We find it impertinent to claim that both sides of the war in Ukraine are the same. Putin's regime is infinitely more brutal than a capitalist democracy, where there are at least some possibilities for the development of anti-authoritarian networks and relationships. Moreover, the Russian army has absolutely no respect for any international human rights conventions; on the contrary, it systematically massacres the civilian population in order to undermine the morale of the defenders. Supporting the armed struggle against the occupiers is therefore a duty for anyone who does not want to completely discredit themselves in the eyes of the Ukrainian people.
7. We disagree with the claim that this is a war between Russia and NATO. Some NATO states are pro-Russian (Hungary), most are staying away or employing only declarations and limited sanctions, aiming to not damage the domestic capital. NATO's practical support for Ukraine is utterly trivial, hesitant and alibist. NATO has practically sacrificed Ukraine with this approach, leaving the entire burden of the Russian invasion on Ukraine and its people.
8. We actively support the repression-stricken anarchists in Russia and Belarus.
9. We regret that at the international level, anarchists are not able to take a clearer position and, as a whole, provide practical help to the comrades of the affected countries. We are afraid that the defeatist statements will discredit many organisations and collectives in the eyes of our friends from Eastern Europe. We regret to say that Eastern European organisations will unlikely for example cooperate more with the IFA in the face of its failure in responding flexibly and with empathy. This will create a vicious circle of domination by federations not directly affected by the current conflict.

We could, of course, elaborate more, but we do not consider it expedient. We want to listen and provide practical solidarity instead of slogans that appear to be useless in the face of reality.

We want to show that the positions of anarchists outside the imperial centres of Western civilisation are valuable and deserve respect. We understand anarchism as a set of principles capable of responding dynamically to what is happening around us, not as a rigid ideology with no connection to reality. We want to primarily see people and communities, not our own egos trapped in ideological and cultural frameworks.

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A response to the International of Anarchist Federation's statement: "Against the war, for global solidarity".

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