

Anarchist artist David Chichkan killed in Ukraine

Nikita Ivansky

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David Chichkan, a Ukrainian anarchist and artist who dedicated 20 years of his life to the struggle, was killed by Russian forces on 9 August in the area near Zaporizhzhia in south east Ukraine. Born in Kyiv in 1986, he began his creative career in the early 2000s. Joining the military over a year ago, he volunteered to fight alongside other anarchists in the infantry, defending the Ukrainian people against the so-called ‘Russian world’.

David was an artist well known globally for his depiction of social struggles within Ukraine and, later, his paintings of people fighting against the Russian invasion. Many activists in Ukraine and abroad can find themselves in his art, whether it is fighting with the police, the state, or capital. He was also among the people who, despite of all the challenges of war-torn Ukraine, never forgot about his comrades in Belarus and donated his art to raise funds for anarchist prisoners there.

One of his many comrades observed that “David’s ideas were not purely utopian, but rather practical, based on the real state of Ukrainian society. In his vision, community and anarcho-syndicalism required concrete implementation here and now: preserving and expanding the rights and opportunities of workers and women, overcoming colonial oppression, and redistributing wealth to those who did not have it. He considered Russian fascism to be the greatest threat to the implementation of these ideas today. David combined this ideology and practical approach like no one else and became a pillar and legend of the anti-authoritarian movement in Ukraine”.

It is hard to estimate how many people David touched through his work and his struggle. His exhibitions *Ribbons and Triangles*, 2022, and *Lost Opportunity*, 2017 were both vandalised by right-wing activists and some works were destroyed. The 2024 exhibition *With Ribbons and Flags* was cancelled due to threat and criticism but was to be dedicated to representatives of the anarchist and anti-authoritarianism movement defending Ukraine. Those influenced by his work will carry his legacy through the dark times into the world where people of Ukraine and all around the world can live in peace and enjoy the freedom that David gave his life for.

The story of David Chichkan is the story of many progressive journalists, artists, scientists, and workers in Ukraine—many of those fighting against Russian invasion today—who have dedicated their lives to fighting for an honest and equal society, where corruption, abuse of power and conservative dogmas can be left in the past.

The violence of the Russian state takes away the future not only of those people, but also the future of the society that could have been built by these brave souls. David's family and comrades are asking for support to fund his funeral and gravestone. You can also support Solidarity Collectives or other organisations that are organising support not only for the fighters but also for civilian population.

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