

# **Anarchists and Antifascists in the War in Ukraine**

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## when you're under attack

It's an understatement to say that the war in Ukraine has divided anarchist and antifascist opinion. But by listening to the voices of the people *in Eastern Europe*, it's clear that this is a war launched by one country ruled by a fascist regime against a far from perfect but still relatively free one. This collection exists to center the voices of the people whose lives and freedom are now under direct threat.

Vladimir Putin's authoritarian regime in Russia has overseen the murder and imprisonment of thousands of anarchists and antifascists. Wherever dictators have needed support, in Belarus (where the most valiant acts of the 2020-2021 uprising were led by anarchists), in Syria (where Kurdish Anarchists and Socialists have established an autonomous zone commonly referred to as Rojava), in Myanmar (where anarchists are fighting an authoritarian, genocidal military regime), or in Venezuela where a "socialist" regime has plundered the country's resources while millions starve, Putin has been the first to help. In Putin's Russia, antifascists and anarchists are murdered with impunity by cops and fascists.<sup>1</sup> That is the dark future our Ukrainian comrades face, if Putin's invasion were to succeed.

## stand up, fight back!

Our comrades in Ukraine find themselves under attack. And for those with the ability and the courage to do so, they are standing up and fighting back. Not in defense of a state, but in defense of their communities, their families, and themselves. ***They are fighting for our shared values as anarchists and antifascists.*** The Anarchist Black Cross Dresden and others organized Operation Solidarity to support anarchist and antifascist fighters in Ukraine. Food Not Bombs chapters across Poland have been cooking non-stop since the war began, helping to feed the millions of refugees fleeing Putin's forces. Many of our Belarusian and Russian comrades who aren't already rotting in one of Lukashenka's or Putin's torture chambers are in Ukraine to fight back.

Meanwhile, some comfortably in the so-called US or Western Europe stand idly by, waiting for the second coming of Nestor Makhno and the magical reappearance of the *Makhnovshchina* in Ukraine. Or worse yet, they denounce those who fight as traitors to our values, yelling in an echo chamber with their jeremiads published on *It's Going Down* or some random noblogs.org site. Would they feel the same if they were in Kyiv or Kherson? Would they sit around in Kharkiv sipping espresso while Russian bombs fall on apartment buildings and artillery rumbles 20 kilometers away? My guess is 'probably not.'

I am fortunate to count many Ukrainian antifascists as my friends. The one I am still in frequent contact with has been sending me occasional updates: how he's holding up, maybe a photo of him or a stray dog or whatever, nothing revealing. I think about him often and how much I hope that he and every anarchist and antifascist resisting the invasion will make it to the other side. It is thanks to him and those he is fighting with that one thing about this war

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<sup>1</sup> eg., from 2005: the murder of Timur Kacharava (Rest in power Timur!); or from 2014: "Russian anti-war activists kidnapped and seriously injured", libcom.org

has become so clear: **resistance to the Russian invasion of Ukraine is an antifascist act.** The Russian government now exhibits many of the characteristics that define fascism. And while it may make us as anarchists uncomfortable to align ourselves even slightly with one side, we should follow the lead of our Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian comrades now fighting and dying for their lives and their freedom on the front lines.<sup>2</sup>

**Solidarity is our weapon!** And there is nothing stronger.

— silberfuchs

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<sup>2</sup> See especially "Anti-Authoritarian Collective of Ukraine's Territorial Defense Forces Releases New Manifesto" and "In the Spirit of Sholem Schwarzbard"

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