

What Ekolog died for

Vladimir Platonenko

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Heroes are often killed twice. First they die physically, fighting the enemy, and then those who talk about them begin to deliberately distort their position in life, portraying the dead not as they were, but as those who benefit from the portrayal. They have tried and are trying to portray Makhno as a nationalist (Ukrainian or Russian, depending on who is trying), Zheleznyakov (aka Sailor Zheleznyak) as a Bolshevik-Leninist. It will soon be said of Dima Ekolog (that is the name by which I knew him and will continue to call him so) that he fought for the Ukrainian state. Some people will say this with a sincere delusion, some to justify the struggle for the national state by his example, some out of a desire to discredit him ("He fought for the state!"). And all these claims will be just as wrong as the claims that Makhno was just a second Petlyura (or a second Budyonnyy), and that Anatoly Zheleznyakov simply did not manage to get a party card.

For Ekolog, the Ukrainian state was as much an enemy as the Russian one. Yes, at a given moment (and a year or two is a moment for history) he was at war with the Russian one. But when a man has to fight several opponents at once, even if only two, does he strike both at the same time? Sometimes, of course, that happens, and not only in movies, but more often a fighter will evade one opponent, while attacking another. Or he tries to bring one of the opponents close to the other, and hits the one who has closed the door. In a word, at any given moment the fighter is fighting with only one opponent. And this is no reason to suspect him of sympathising with the other. He would gladly grab them both by the arms and slam them against the wall. But you'd have to have a huge power advantage over them to do that. If the anarchists had an army of a hundred thousand men, they'd probably have to come to Bakhmut and, like the forester in the anecdote, kick everyone out so they don't shoot. But the anarchists haven't got such a big army yet.

Nevertheless, Ekolog has not merged with the supporters of the Ukrainian state. It's no coincidence that he ended up not in the army, but in the Territorial Defense Forces. And, as his letter suggests, he was one (and quite possibly one of the leading) founders of the Combat Organisation of Anarcho-Communists (BOAK), which does not even formally belong to the AFU. Yes, now it seems to have thrown all its forces into the fight against Russian power (although this is impossible to say for sure due to the fact that BOAK operates secretly and does not publish a report of its plans in the press and on networks). But at the moment Russian power is more dangerous. Not worse than the Ukrainian one, namely more dangerous. In a fight with several opponents, other things being equal, the first thing one tries to do is to knock out the most dangerous one. This is precisely the case here.

The balance of the war is changing rapidly, and a less dangerous force can become more dangerous at any moment. I do not know whether the anarchists in general and the BOAK in particular will miss this moment, as the Spanish anarchists missed it when the republicans began to disperse the anarchist communes behind their backs, taking tanks off the front for this purpose, and the anarchists never dared to throw their front-line units to defend the communes. I can only warn of the danger of such a mistake. However, until it has happened, it cannot be stated in advance that it will inevitably happen, or is likely to happen.

Distilled anarchists, who have long been wrong because they do nothing, once dug up the memoirs of Osip Tsebriy, a former Makhnovist, who in the war-time '40s sneaked back

home and created a unit that was to fight against both the Wehrmacht and the Red Army. But didn't the founders of the BOAK do the same? And if Ekolog only had time to fight against one side because he was killed, then Tsebriy's unit only had time to fight against the Wehrmacht because it was defeated and dispersed. In any case, what those people who are almost certain to enlist Ekolog as a Ukrainian Nazi (or maybe they already have (I think they enlisted me before the Maidan, or soon afterwards, why is Ekolog any worse?)), what these people were calling for in words, Ekolog has done in deeds.

In February 2014, Ekolog spent about ten days on the Maidan, travelling to Ukraine especially for this purpose. He took part in setting up Ukrdom, distributing food to positions and even in the fighting on 18 February. But at the same time he constantly tried to develop an anarchist component in the overall popular, complex and heterogeneous protest movement of Maidan. He took part in an attempt to create the Left Hundred, set up an "anarchist shelf" (with anarchist literature) in the Ukrdom library, and told Maidan participants about the protests in Moscow and the reasons for the protesters' defeat. He did not swim with the current, he participated in the creation of the current to the best of his ability. This did not only apply to what was happening in Ukraine. Both in ecological protests and actions and in fight against infill construction, he tried to go beyond the framework of private issues and to turn the fight against one of the manifestations of the system into a fight against the system itself. The Russian-Ukrainian war was no exception.

I do not know if I will live long enough to see a monument to Ekolog. But in any case, I wouldn't want that song, whose first verse and chorus are considered the anthem of the Ukrainian state, to be played at the monument's unveiling. In any case, to start with it. No, the song is not bad, and it is not necessary to put a nationalist or state-oriented meaning in it. But Ekolog deserves the "Internationale".

So, if anyone in Ukraine would like to commemorate him with a song, do not start with "Ukraine is not dead yet...". — start with "Hear: the trumpets are playing...".

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Original translation. "Dima Ekolog" has been identified as Dmitry Petrov, who died fighting
in the Battle of Bakhmut on 19 April 2023.

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