



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

5 years after Ukraine coup, ‘Building communist organization is first priority’

written by Greg Butterfield
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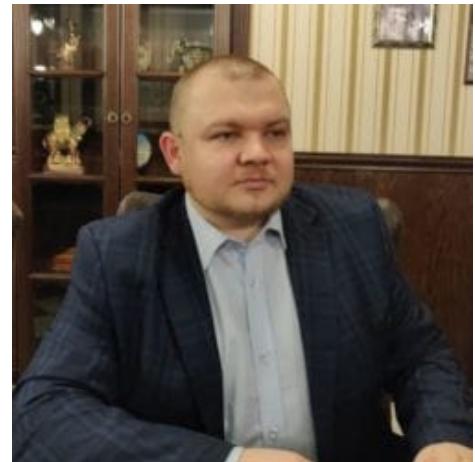
Borotba flag flies over Antimaidan rally in Kharkov, April 2014. After the fascist crackdown, the Lenin monument was destroyed. Photo: Borotba

In February 2014, a U.S.-backed coup overthrew the elected government of Ukraine and installed a far-right regime representing Western imperialist interests, local oligarchs and neo-Nazis. The new government launched a war against the rebellious Donbass mining region, which has cost at least 13,000 lives so far.

Struggle-La Lucha spoke with Alexey Albu, a former deputy of the Odessa Regional Council and a leader of the revolutionary Marxist organization [Borotba \(Struggle\)](#), which is outlawed in today's Ukraine. Albu survived the fascist massacre at the Odessa House of Trade Unions on May 2, 2014, and was forced to leave Ukraine. From outside the areas controlled by the current government in Kiev, he has been

working for the country's liberation since then.

Struggle-La Lucha: It's been five years since the culmination of the Maidan coup in Kiev. Soon, we'll mark five years of the war against Donbass and the massacre in Odessa. As someone who was forced into political exile in 2014, what is your situation today? What is the position of political exiles from Ukraine generally?



Alexey Albu

Alexey Albu: Five years ago, the ultraright forces unleashed a civil war in Ukraine. On one side of the conflict were the oligarchs and their chained dogs — the ultranationalists. On the other side were the people who did not agree, but who, unfortunately, were not unified in their outlook.

The united resistance movement was called "Antimaidan." We were united by three main ideas: anti-fascism, anti-oligarchism, and integration with Russia and other countries that emerged as a result of the collapse of the USSR. Personally, my comrades and I consider the true separatists as those who separated Ukraine from the USSR in 1991, which means that in our worldview the war is taking place on the territory of the Soviet Union. It is for this reason that we do not consider ourselves political exiles, since we are in our own country.

If we talk about the conditions in which people who consider themselves political emigrants live today — they are certainly difficult. Anti-fascists who left the occupied part of Ukraine found themselves in countries with different laws, without official status, without regular work, with broken social ties. In fact, everyone had to start their lives from scratch.

In order to improve their position in society, various organizations and associations were created, such as the Union of Political Prisoners and Political Emigrants of Ukraine, the Committee for the Liberation of Odessa (Committee on May 2), the Committee for the Salvation of Ukraine and others. But because all the participants had roughly the same social status in the new “post-emigration world,” no one could help each other.

On one hand, this circumstance gave rise to some internal conflicts, and on the other, it strengthened certain opposition groups. The conditions which we all fell into became a kind of test. Some passed it with dignity, some did not.

The situation is worsened by the fact that the parts of the former USSR — Belarus and Russia — which are closest to Ukraine in culture and language, could not provide full assistance to people who temporarily left the occupied territory of Ukraine. In this regard, people have a lot of problems associated with the immigration authorities.

Legally, Russia and Belarus do not have the right to grant political asylum status. And the status of temporary asylum was granted only to residents of two regions of Ukraine: Donetsk and Lugansk. Thus, the residents of Odessa, Kharkov, Zaporozhye, Kiev and other cities that were forced to flee from repression found themselves in the situation of illegal residents.

This worries us communists, but we understand that if the left forces were stronger in Russia and Belarus, there would be no such problems.

I and many comrades from Borotba are in the Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics (LPR and DPR). There are no legal problems here, because many comrades have Ukrainian passports. However, there is a rather difficult social situation caused by the war.

SLL: What are your political activities now?

AA: Today, our main task is to support those Borotba activists and supporters who remained in the occupied territories. The methods and forms of work and political struggle have changed significantly, and under the neofascist dictatorship in Ukraine we cannot do what we could during the period of bourgeois democracy. Therefore, we are constantly searching for openings.

We continue to conduct small agitation campaigns — to paste up leaflets explaining the class essence of Ukraine's problems, to draw graffiti, to hang out red flags. But we are unable to openly hold a rally or a demonstration. Even closed roundtable meetings are blocked by representatives of the special services and the nationalists.

We also continue propaganda work on social media and in those Russian media that are read in Ukraine. We focus on personal communication with many people, on interaction with friendly organizations that remain on the other side of the front line.

Also, our comrades are busy developing a draft of a new Constitution of Ukraine, in order to offer it to the public.

Unfortunately, solving everyday problems takes up a lot of time that could be spent on the revolutionary struggle. Therefore, we believe that gradually it is necessary to return to a professional approach to work. To this end, we are doing a lot of work to raise funds for Borotba. However, due to the fact that most of our comrades live in difficult social conditions, this process is rather difficult.

SLL: For five years, the U.S./EU-backed regime in Kiev has carried out economic

“reforms” aimed at further privatization and penetration by Western capitalists, including austerity measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund. How has this affected the situation of workers in Ukraine?

AA: We are quite familiar with the works of V.I. Lenin, and we know that class consciousness cannot emerge from the working class by itself. It can only be brought in from the outside, by the communists. To this end, large-scale propaganda and organizational work needs to be carried out. Naturally, in the conditions after the defeat of the Antimaidan, it is extremely difficult to carry out such work.

We all see the result: the working class is disorganized, morally depressed, and worst of all, it doesn't recognize itself as a working class.

Many politicians who opposed the Kiev junta believed that the more the social conditions of the workers deteriorated, the sooner they would rise up to fight. However, we Ukrainian Marxists fully understand that in order for the working class to rise up to fight, a communist organization must appear in society. Building such an organization is our first priority.

SLL: How do you assess the upcoming presidential election in Ukraine scheduled for March 31? Do you think that President Petro Poroshenko will be re-elected? Does the left have any role in these elections?

AA: We believe that the part of the population that opposes the current state of affairs is simply not represented in the Ukrainian political process. Parties and organizations that could represent their interests are simply banned or are under the complete control of the security services.

Therefore, we discussed this situation with our comrades and prepared [this appeal](#) to the citizens of Ukraine:

“Since the coup d'état and beginning of the civil war, a complicated political

situation has developed in Ukraine. Today, there is not a single presidential candidate who advocates for an alternative point of view on the future socio-political and economic development of Ukraine, or for the peaceful resolution of internal and external conflicts, while respecting the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens.

“There can be no free will according to the rules of the nationalist dictatorship, who are henchmen of external forces.

“For a large part of the population — for example, Russian-speaking citizens and left-wing parties — it has been impossible to nominate a candidate who is untainted by cooperation with the current bloody marauders.

“Under these conditions, Borotba declares a categorical rejection of the next electoral farce imposed on the Ukrainian people by the illegitimate Kiev regime.

“Mass political repression against dissidents, war crimes against their own people, unparalleled enslavement and subjugation of broad sections of working people — this is the result of the rule of the current government. So what reason do sensible people have to believe that they will be given a ‘democratic choice’?

“Recognition of the legitimacy and participation in the electoral process is a betrayal. Only resistance, only systematic work to dismantle the criminal regime, makes sense for us.

“We will never forgive the oligarchs who unleashed the war; we despise their Nazi dogs, who carry out the evil will of the fat cats. We do not accept the logic of the naive, who see ‘oppositionists’ in those who have been quietly working for the past five years according to the rules of the governing clique of war criminals and state terrorists.

“As long as the Kiev regime of usurpers and executioners is not deposed, and the

villainous clique of Poroshenko and his minions does not receive a well-deserved punishment, we will not accept any elections or other attempts to legitimize the 'Maidan regime.'

"The only real choice for the Ukrainian people is a victory over the oligarchic and neo-Nazi power in Ukraine! We urge everyone who hates this power to unite with their friends and loved ones, with like-minded people!

"We encourage the establishment of communication and coordination with other people who want to dismantle this system! We urge you to join the already existing resistance of the Nazi, oligarchic pack!

"We have no other way but to fight and resist! The real revolution is ahead!"

End of part 1

