

10 years of injustice: Anti-fascist leader recounts Odessa massacre

written by Melinda Butterfield

May 2, 2024



After driving activists into the Odessa House of Trade Unions, Ukrainian neo-Nazis set fire to the building. Then they shot and beat to death people trying to escape the inferno.

May 2 marks the 10th anniversary of one of the biggest crimes of 21st century fascism - the massacre of nearly 50 activists at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa, Ukraine. Despite extensive video and photographic evidence, the Ukrainian government has never prosecuted any of those responsible. This attack on the anti-fascist resistance paved the way for today's U.S. proxy war against Russia and the Donbass republics.

The following interview with massacre survivor Alexey Albu was conducted by Struggle-La Lucha co-editor Melinda Butterfield in Simferopol, Crimea, in September 2014, and was originally published in October of that year.

Odessa Regional Council Deputy Alexey Albu, a member of the Ukrainian Marxist organization [Borotba \(Struggle\)](#), was a leader of the city's Anti-Maidan movement against the U.S.-backed coup of February 2014. Albu survived the May 2, 2014, massacre, when at least 48 people were killed by neo-Nazi gangs at the House of Trade Unions. Albu and his family were forced to flee to Crimea, where he continues his work as co-founder of the Committee for the Liberation of Odessa and leads an independent investigation of May 2. I spoke with Albu about his experiences.

Melinda Butterfield: How did you become active in the anti-fascist movement?

Alexey Albu: I first joined Komsomol, the youth organization of the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU). Later, I became a member of the KPU and organized its youth wing. I also took part in several local elections in Odessa. So I was always involved in political life as a communist.

The leaders of the KPU were afraid of openly demonstrating anti-fascist views. They didn't want to take responsibility for an open confrontation with the neo-Nazis or the actions of young people who were strongly against fascism. They took an opportunistic position.

In 2011, I accompanied friends who were members of Borotba to a couple of anti-fascist rallies. When the KPU leaders learned of my attendance at these protests, they planned to expel me.

I left the KPU and became a member of Borotba. I didn't plan to take people with me. Nevertheless, several comrades left the KPU and joined Borotba. One of them was Vlad Wojciechowski, who is now a political prisoner. Another was Andrey Brazhevsky, who was killed by the Nazis on May 2.

Borotba's role in Odessa

MB: What kind of work did Borotba carry out in Odessa?

AA: I was an elected deputy of the regional council, so I had the opportunity to speak for Borotba in the local government. We also had the opportunity to create an organizational headquarters in Odessa. Many people came to our organization. Odessa residents got to know us and our symbols, and a lot of journalists covered our activities.

We organized solidarity actions with Ukrainian sailors in England and supported the

struggle of dockworkers in the Odessa region. We organized anti-fascist meetings and demonstrations. We held a lot of protest rallies against the local government. We also helped organize immigration and education centers.

All of our protests were directed against the government of President Victor Yanukovych. But when the Euromaidan movement started, we understood that the people who wanted to use it to get power were even worse. Bourgeois democratic law was preferable to direct rule of Nazis and oligarchs. We were against them from the very beginning.

[Euromaidan was the pro-imperialist movement which took its name from Maidan, the central square of Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, where it held protests in late 2013 and early 2014. The backbone of this movement, which received extensive funding and political support from the U.S. government, were neo-Nazi gangs and political parties. Euromaidan culminated in the overthrow of President Victor Yanukovych in February. - MB]

When Euromaidan activists tried to occupy the Odessa Regional State Administration, our comrades protected the building. During the defense of the RSA, I became good friends with Regional Council Deputy Vyacheslav Markin, who was later killed at the House of Trade Unions.

Markin and I were the only deputies who openly said we were against the Nazis, the Euromaidan, the junta and all the crimes this movement brought to Ukraine.

Protest encampment

MB: How did the Anti-Maidan movement and the protest encampment develop?

AA: After Yanukovych was overthrown in February, the Anti-Maidan movement grew and became quite broad. It was based among common people who were not connected with any party. It was organized from below, from the people. The

coordinators of this movement included members of many organizations, including Borotba. Borotba was not the most powerful organization; it was just one of those that influenced the Odessa Anti-Maidan.

The biggest parties of Ukraine, the Communist Party and the Party of Regions, didn't participate in Anti-Maidan, although many of their members did.

The tent camp at Kulikovo Field [similar to the 2011 Occupy Wall Street encampments or the current student Gaza Solidarity Encampments in the U.S.] was the creation of all the groups that took part in the Anti-Maidan movement. For example, one group set up the area where people held speakouts. Others brought tents and supplies.

MB: How did you use your position as a regional deputy to help the movement?

AA: There was a lot of publicity when I introduced a draft law in the Regional State Administration, with help from Deputy Markin, calling for autonomy for the Odessa Region within Ukraine. This made Borotba very popular in Odessa. But unfortunately, most of the delegates didn't vote for the law.

By ignoring this draft law, the regional deputies forced people to protest. On March 3, they came to the RSA building and started clashing with police. I tried to bring the people into the building to give them the opportunity to speak with the deputies. I was injured trying to get people inside.

Afterward, I had problems with the Security Service of Ukraine [SBU, political police whose role is similar to the FBI in the U.S.]. They searched my apartment and tried to interrogate me. The growing repression had a great impact in Odessa society. By the end of April, the Anti-Maidan protests had become smaller. Fewer people came to Kulikovo.

People were also disappointed because they came to Kulikovo every day, or every

weekend, and saw that the leaders of the organizations couldn't agree with each other. Instead, one by one, these groups started to make deals with the government.

The local government wanted to remove the camp, using the annual May 9 Victory Day parade as an excuse. Some organizations agreed to remove their tents, but others decided to stay.

Target: Odessa

MB: Why do you think the Kiev junta and the fascists targeted Odessa on May 2?

AA: First of all, I should explain that the Odessa region is very important for the Ukrainian economy. [The administrative subdivision of] Odessa has seven seaports and 70% of the country's imports come through there.

Supporters of the junta in the local government wanted to stop the Anti-Maidan movement. They brought in neo-Nazis from Kiev in the middle of the night. They organized checkpoints inside the city, with 10 or 15 people at each checkpoint. They operated in around-the-clock shifts. They were fed by the government, and they earned money.

On April 29-30, Andriy Parubiy, head of the Defense and National Security Council, even presented the people at the checkpoints with bulletproof vests.

On one hand, they wanted the people from Kiev to radicalize the local Euromaidan movement, to ensure that they would enforce the new government's orders. On the other hand, they wanted to remove the activists from Kulikovo Field, to make sure there would be no organized opposition.

I don't think the government necessarily planned to kill people and cause so many casualties. But they organized everything and set the events in motion.

MB: Before the massacre on May 2, you planned to run for mayor of Odessa.

AA: What happened was that we held a strong anti-fascist demonstration on May Day, which worried the local government. That day, a lot of people from the Odessa Anti-Maidan movement agreed to back my campaign for mayor as the candidate of Kulikovo Field.

The following day, May 2, the tragedy began.

Deputy Markin was my campaign manager. He was killed by the Nazis. Afterward, anyone who tried to agitate for the candidate of Kulikovo Field was attacked by the fascists. So I decided to stop the campaign. I couldn't take part in such elections.

Anyway, I was soon forced to leave Odessa. The local government spread lies, saying that I was responsible for the deaths at the House of Trade Unions. They claimed I took people into the building and subsequently the building burned, so I was guilty. They planned to arrest me.

Actually, I was one of the last people to enter the building. Never mind the fascists who threw Molotov cocktails, shot people and beat to death those who leapt from the burning building!

Kiev suppresses evidence

MB: Along with other Odessa political exiles, you have been conducting an independent investigation of the May 2 tragedy. Can you describe your work?

AA: The main problem for us is that a lot of information was lost the day after the tragedy. Many people went there. The House of Trade Unions was cleaned out before facts and evidence could be gathered.

Also, all the material recorded by the police and Security Service of Ukraine was

never published and is classified top secret. So we have to look for information from open sources or solicit people who witnessed the massacre to share information. And of course many have been coerced by the new regime to remain silent or change their stories.

Our committee is sure that there were more than 48 victims on May 2. For one thing, the mother of an activist told us that when she went to the morgue to identify her child, the police showed her more than 60 bodies.

Officials of the government, the Security Service and the police do not provide any information, not even to the official investigation committee set up by the Ukrainian parliament. The leaders of the ultranationalist Ukrainian militia do not comment or make any statements. They are trying to avoid all questions about this tragedy.

But under the law they have to answer all the questions and turn over all the evidence and facts they have to the investigation committee.

MB: Do you have any parting message for workers and youth in the U.S.?

AA: The government in Kiev is doing everything in order to hide the real causes of this terrible tragedy and the real culprits of the massacre. We declare that we will pursue the investigation anyhow, and everyone guilty will answer for it and will be punished.

We are grateful to all the comrades who support the struggle of the Ukrainian people against the oligarchy and the Nazis. We are grateful to everyone who is helping us, and we call for solidarity because only together, by joint efforts, can we defeat the world capitalist system.

¡No pasarán!

Svetlana Licht and Marina Nova provided translation assistance.



May Day 2024: Resist the witch-hunts!

written by Melinda Butterfield

May 2, 2024

On International Workers' Day 2024, workers in the U.S. could swear that Senator Joe McCarthy and Minister Cotton Mather had returned from the dead.

More than 35,000 Palestinians, including 14,000 children, have died in just over 200 days of Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza - funded, armed and given political cover by Washington. Yet any expression of opposition to the mass slaughter of Palestinians is labeled "antisemitism" by politicians of both capitalist parties and the corporate media.

Congressional hearings reminiscent of the Red Scare anti-communist spectacles of the 1950s target university officials. Depending on how pliable they are, they are driven from office - like former Harvard President Claudine Gay, the first Black person to serve in that post - or they are [given marching orders to crack down](#) on student protesters, like Columbia University President Minouche Shafik.

After two weeks of violent police raids against campus Gaza Solidarity Encampments coast-to-coast, Columbia and other schools are now carrying out mass suspensions, threatening to prevent student activists from graduating. Right-wing politicians have called for students who participate in the encampments to be blacklisted from future employment.

Nor is it just Republicans. On April 29, [23 House Democrats](#) called on Columbia President Shafik to “end” the encampment that sparked a nationwide student uprising, or resign. And of course, [Genocide Joe Biden](#) himself joined fascist [House Speaker Mike Johnson](#) in threatening the heroic students and faculty resisting at Columbia.

This comes after months of police attacks, targeted arrests of organizers, and slander campaigns against pro-Palestine protesters.

Yet the student encampments continue to grow and spread day by day.

Whipping up anti-trans hate

At the same time, another witch-hunt is unfolding across the U.S. targeting transgender people.

In many ways, this hate campaign - now underway for three years and growing ever-more dangerous - set the stage for how opponents of genocide in Gaza are being treated.

So far this year, [550 anti-trans bills have been introduced](#) in state legislatures in 42 states, along with 47 national bills. This includes some of the most drastic measures yet - cutting off all access to gender-affirming health care regardless of age, banning all restroom access, threatening the livelihoods of teachers, librarians and other workers if they are queer or respect the rights of trans students, and generally attempting to force trans lives out of existence.

State hearings on trans issues have the same tenor as the Congressional anti-Palestine hearings, driven by fascist politicians who repeat long-discredited theories or bigoted political and religious ideology as fact. When trans people and supporters show up and try to be heard, they are often silenced, driven out, or arrested.

Typical of this approach is the [Cass Review](#) commissioned by the British government, where anti-trans attacks are also at a fever pitch. This so-called review to advise the National Health Service policy on treatment of trans youth dismissed over 100 scientific studies to cherry-pick a handful that reached anti-trans conclusions.

The supposedly impartial review was carried out by a team that excluded trans people, but included known transphobes who collaborated with Florida's DeSantis administration.

And yet the Cass Review is already being used by the British government to cut off access to care, not only for trans youth, but also trans adults. It is being favorably cited by U.S. far-right politicians and "liberal" media like the New York Times and The Guardian to manufacture consent for anti-trans genocide.

Like the opponents of genocide in Gaza who are unjustly accused of antisemitism, no amount of evidence will suffice to refute the witch-hunters' charges of "grooming" and "social contagion." Like those accused of witchcraft in 17th century New England, the only way trans people can prove their innocence is to stop existing - death.



No more Odessa massacres!

The witch-hunt rhetoric directed at pro-Palestine students and faculty and at trans people escalates the danger of fascist violence, whether from "official" repressive

bodies of the state (police and national guard) or “unofficial” neo-Nazi aligned movements. It’s an attack on the rights of the whole working class and all oppressed people, and must be fought with unity and urgency.

Ten years ago, on May 2, 2014, fascist gangs were given the green light by the U.S.-backed coup government in Ukraine to carry out a bloody massacre of nearly 50 activists and workers at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa. The working class movement in Ukraine was smashed and thousands of organizers driven into exile in its wake.

Anti-fascists from Ukraine to the U.S. warned then that Washington’s support for neo-Nazi terror abroad would boomerang here. Now this is visible for all to see.

The working class is making important gains in organizing, from Starbucks to Amazon to the United Auto Workers victory at Volkswagen in Tennessee. But this progress is threatened by the attacks on the political and civil rights of students, teachers, and LGBTQIA+ people.

The bigoted politicians, the neo-Nazis and the big capitalists behind them will not stop with demonizing the Gaza solidarity movement and trans community. The purpose of the witch-hunts is to shatter the ability of the working class and oppressed to resist.

Don’t wait for an Odessa massacre to happen here! Mobilize to resist the bosses’ witch-hunts!



'Support those on the front line against imperialism and fascism'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 2, 2024



The following solidarity message was sent to participants in the April 10 New York protest opposing U.S.-Ukraine war threats against Donbass and Russia:

Dear comrades,

You are going to hold a rally in support of the Donbass resistance and against fascism in Ukraine. We are very happy about it and soon we will also do the same in Italy.

In recent years you've supported the Donbass with a big effort that is very useful: It is so important to hear a different voice from the main center of imperialism. It helps us to explain that the population is not guilty for the government's crime. Italy too is an imperialistic center, a smaller one, but not all the population supports it.

Now the situation in Donbass is very difficult; the war has been going on for seven years, people are tired and the economy is destroyed. But Donbass will resist. It will be a victory for the anti-fascists all around the world.

Today the situation in Donbass is different compared to seven years ago, but the result will not change: Ukraine will lose and the anti-fascists will win.

It will also be done through our political efforts, so we have to support our comrades on the front line of the war against imperialism and fascism.

Obviously, the background is a geopolitical clash between the U.S. and Russia. This is a long and difficult story, too big to approach in this message. Actually the most important thing about this clash is to remember that they are two countries with atomic bombs, so it is better if one does not try to go closer to the border of the other.

Thanks for what you do and good luck with your rally.

Anti-imperialist greetings,
Coordinamento Ucraina Antifascista - Italy



To fight war danger, 'strengthen international workers' solidarity'

written by Struggle - La Lucha
May 2, 2024



The following solidarity message was sent to participants in the April 10 New York protest opposing U.S.-Ukraine war threats against Donbass and Russia:

Dear comrades!

The Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic welcomes the participants of the action of solidarity with Donbass in New York.

On April 14, 2014, the illegitimate Kiev regime, which came to power as a result of a coup d'état, unleashed an aggressive war against the people of Donbass, who had chosen the path of self-determination. This resulted in huge civilian casualties in the region and massive destruction of production facilities and infrastructure.

For the seventh year now, the people's republics of Donbass have been living in conditions of incessant hostilities. The systematic violations of the ceasefire by the Ukrainian side indicate that Kiev and the Western imperialists behind it are not

interested in a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Our response must be to strengthen the international solidarity of the working people, the cooperation of the progressive forces of the world.

No to war in Donbass!

Yes to self-determination of the Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic!

Translated by Greg Butterfield



From Donbass to Chicago: Stop the U.S. war on children

written by Struggle - La Lucha
May 2, 2024



The U.S. government is once again pushing the world to the brink of war. Just a few months ago, Donald Trump pushed us to the brink of war with Iran. Now Joe Biden is risking a war with Russia. We say no! People in this country need universal health care and vaccine equality. We need to cancel rent. We need to end racist police killings and anti-Asian violence. We don't need another war.

On April 3, 5-year-old Vladik Shihkov was [killed by a Ukrainian military drone](#) in the independent republic of Donetsk in eastern Europe. Why does that matter to us in the United States? Because for the last seven years the U.S. government has used Ukraine to fight a proxy war against the people of Donetsk and Lugansk. It's all about expanding NATO's military power to the border of Russia. At least 14,000 people have died in that war, and most people here don't even know about it. But the government we pay taxes to is responsible.

When I think of little Vladik being blown up by a drone strike, I also think of Adam Toledo, the [13-year-old boy killed by Chicago Police](#) March 30. I think of the children in Flint, Michigan, poisoned by lead in their drinking water, and the [thousands of migrant children](#) in cages at the U.S.-Mexico border — first under Trump, and still today! I think of the kids as young as 2 months old [deported back to Haiti](#) under the Biden administration while that country is in turmoil because of decades and centuries of racist U.S. policy. I think of the kids in Yemen and Palestine who are dying in other U.S. proxy wars.

The U.S. system, the capitalist system, is waging war on children all over the world and in our own streets. Why? For profits. To protect the loot of Wall Street and Big Oil and the landlords.

Why was Vladik Shikhov killed in Donetsk? Why is Washington sending money and weapons to a Ukrainian government infested with neo-Nazis? Because the government of Ukraine, the one the U.S. helped to install in 2014, is selling off the country to U.S. and European businesses. They are selling off the land, the factories, and the skilled labor of Ukrainian workers at rock-bottom prices.

And something else: Trump and now Biden are desperate to stop the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline that would allow Russia to sell gas directly to Germany and other countries in Europe. Big Oil doesn't want that. Trump's friends in the fracking industry don't want that. Biden's pals at the big banks don't want that.

Trying to provoke an armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia is a means to an end to keep oil and gas profits under U.S. control. And they don't care how many children, or seniors, or mothers and fathers, or soldiers on either side die.

We're taking to the streets to share this information that's been hidden from the public in the U.S. We want workers to think about it, research it, ask questions. Is

war with Russia, is killing civilians on the other side of the world, really in our interests? Or is it in the interests of the same wealthy class that thrives on racism, bigotry and inequality right here — like the Amazon bosses that sabotaged the union election in Bessemer, Ala.?

Read, endorse and share the statement, [“Justice for Vladik! No U.S.-Ukraine war on Donbass and Russia.”](#) Follow [Solidarity with Novorossiya & Antifascists in Ukraine](#) on Facebook. Sign up and get involved. Let’s build a movement to stop the U.S. war on children — not just in Donetsk and Lugansk, but everywhere.



Solidarity to be organized with the people in Donbass against war and militarization

written by Struggle - La Lucha
May 2, 2024



In view of the imminent threat of war in the Donbass on the part of the right-wing Ukrainian government with the support of U.S. and NATO forces, the permanent bombing of the civilian population and anti-fascist forces, with the most recent drone strike murdering a 5-year-old child and injuring his grandmother, a petition is circulating, which speaks out against military aggression, against war, for peace in Ukraine and in the entire region.

On the initiative of members of the Anti-imperialist Front, who want to unite forces against war and militarization, an online emergency meeting was held on 8th of April to exchange information with a comrade from the political movement Borotba in Donbass. It was joined by 16 individuals and members of different antifascist organisations from USA, Italy, Austria, Greece, UK and Belarus

The situation is really serious. With the pretext of Russia pulling together troops, with the help of the mainstream media, attempts are being made to fuel and legitimize a war in the region.

The military presence and maneuvers of NATO troops from the Balkans to the Black Sea are completely hidden in the same media.

According to the information from Donbass, about 30,000 people's militias in Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics face 95,000 Ukrainian soldiers, accompanied by an undefined number of far-right forces.

The only thing currently restraining Ukraine from attacking the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics is the Minsk agreements on a cease-fire. Therefore, the fascist Kiev junta is now looking for every possible way to "legally" disrupt the Minsk agreements, including by accusing the Donbass people's militia of violating the ceasefire regime.

Should Ukraine, accepting all consequences, attack the Donbass, it can be assumed that Russia will also become active in defense, which in turn will call NATO to the scene to rush to Ukraine's aid with immense military equipment. The consequences are difficult to calculate.

In this sense, today every voice against this dirty war of interests is vital for the people of the Donbass to take a stand together to preserve peace against this aggression...

In view of already planned large rallies in Greece on 17 April, where nationwide demonstrations against wars and military bases are to be held, the date was seen as an option to stand up against the immense military mobilization and war threats towards the people in Donbass in different countries.

We urge you to join the international action on April 17 against the war in Donbass and to hold events available to you on that day in your countries. Please give us a response to this letter about whether and in what form you can organize anti-war actions in your countries. Also, initiatives and suggestions for our joint anti-

imperialist work are always welcome.

Source: anti-imperialistfront.org



Justice for Vladik! No U.S.-Ukraine war on Donbass and Russia

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 2, 2024

Stop provocations □ Stop drone strikes on civilians □ Stop killing children!

The right-wing government of Ukraine, supported by the U.S., has been at war with the people of the independent Donetsk and Lugansk republics in the Donbass region of eastern Europe for 7 years. More than 14,000 people have been killed, according to the United Nations. The people of Donetsk and Lugansk live under a blockade by Ukraine and its Western allies. Workers in Ukraine suffer repression, joblessness and price hikes while their government sells off the country to Wall Street.

On April 3, a Ukrainian military drone strike killed 5-year-old Vladik Shikhov and

wounded his 66-year-old grandmother in Aleksandrovskoye, Donetsk. On April 4, another Ukrainian drone strike wounded a civilian in Nikolaevka, Lugansk. On March 22, a 71-year-old pensioner was killed by sniper fire near the capital of Donetsk. Many members of the anti-fascist People's Militia have also been killed while defending residents.

Since January, Ukraine has been building up its military forces on the front line of the conflict. It uses prohibited weapons, targets civilians, schools and homes in violation of international law and regional ceasefire agreements. Battalions of troops affiliated with neo-Nazi groups have been sent to the region, replacing regular Ukrainian Army troops. But the Ukrainian and U.S. governments and mainstream media blame Donetsk and Lugansk for taking steps to defend themselves, and threaten Russia for pledging to protect the people there if Ukraine invades.

The Biden administration, as the Trump administration did before it, wants to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project that would allow Germany and other Western European countries to purchase Russian gas. Children, elders and other civilians in Donetsk and Lugansk are considered expendable targets by Kiev and Washington as they try to provoke a crisis to give them an excuse to further NATO military expansion and punish Russia.

In recent days, the U.S. and NATO have been warning of a Russian military buildup near the Ukrainian border, but never mention that one of the largest U.S. Army-led military exercises in decades has begun and will run until June: Defender Europe 2021, with 28,000 troops from 27 countries operating in a dozen countries from the Balkans to the Black Sea. This is where the real danger of war is coming from.

We say no! People in the U.S. don't want war with Russia to protect the profits of Big Oil and U.S. banks. We don't want the U.S. proxy regime in Ukraine to kill our sisters and brothers in Donetsk and Lugansk. We don't want U.S. troops to be sent to fight and die in another needless conflict. We need an end to racist police

brutality and anti-Asian violence. We need money for jobs, housing, healthcare and schools, not war.

End U.S. aid to the Kiev regime! End all U.S. wars and sanctions! Shut down NATO and bring the troops home!

Initiated by [Solidarity with Novorossiya & Antifascist in Ukraine](#)

Endorsers (list in formation):

Individuals: Jose Maria Sison, Chairperson Emeritus of the International League of Peoples' Struggle*; Phil Wilayto, Coordinator, Odessa Solidarity Campaign; Berta Joubert-Ceci, Coordinator, International Tribunal on U.S. Crimes against Puerto Rico; William Camacaro, Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle; Sharon Black, Peoples Power Assembly; John Parker, Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Los Angeles; Joe Lombardo, National Co-Chair, United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC)*; Professor Vijay Singh, editor, Revolutionary Democracy journal, New Delhi (India); Bridget Dunne, Solidarity with the Anti-Fascist Resistance in Ukraine (UK); Theo Russell, International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (UK); Andy Brooks, General Secretary, New Communist Party of Britain; Gedrius Grabauskas, Chairperson, Lithuanian Socialist Front; Donatas Shultsas, Chairperson, Lithuanian Union on Human Rights; Heinrich Bücker, Coop-Anti-War-Café Berlin; Panagiotis Papadomanolakis, Editor, GuernicaEu (Greece); Gerry Downing, Socialist Fight (UK)

Organizations: Anti-Imperialist Front; Socialist Unity Party (U.S.); Struggle-La Lucha newspaper; Borotba (Ukraine-Donbass); Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic; Union of Political Emigrants and Political Prisoners of Ukraine; Women In Struggle-Mujeres En Lucha; Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network; Workers Voice Socialist Movement (U.S.); International Action Center; No Pasarán Hamburg (Germany); Anti-NATO Group Berlin-Brandenburg (Germany); "Frente Unido América Coordinamento Ucraina Antifascista (Italy); Latina" Berlin

(Germany); Communist Revolution Action - KED (Greece); Liaison Committee for the Fourth International (LCFI); Frente Comunista dos Trabalhadores (Brazil); Tendencia Militante Bolchevique (Argentina); Socialist Workers League (U.S.); Trotskyist Faction/Consistent Democrats (UK); Socialist Solidarity Party of Bangladesh; Molotov Club; Panhellenic Antiwar Kinematic Coordination - PAKC (Greece); Red Banner Anti-Imperialist Collective (U.S.)

**For I.D. only*

To endorse or for more info, contact:
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In New York City, an emergency protest is planned for Saturday, April 10, 2:30 p.m., at the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station in Times Square, W. 43rd Street and 7th Avenue, Manhattan. Visit the [event page on Facebook](#).



Alexey Markov: anti-fascist

commander, communist hero

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 2, 2024

On Oct. 24, Alexey Markov, commander of the anti-fascist Ghost Battalion in the Lugansk People's Republic, died in a car accident. His spouse Marina Markov was also killed.

Alexey Markov, a communist from Russia, came to the Donbass region (formerly the eastern part of Ukraine) to fight fascism and protect the people after Ukraine's government started a bloody war at the behest of Washington and NATO in 2014.

First, Markov gathered humanitarian aid and brought it to Donbass. Then, together with his comrade Pyotr Biryukov, he organized the Volunteer Communist Detachment, made up of internationalist fighters from former Soviet republics and eventually all over the world, and returned to join the battle as part of the anti-fascist Ghost Brigade led by Alexey Mozgovoy.

Markov and Biryukov quickly proved their mettle, becoming Mozgovoy's trusted deputies. The communist fighters played a crucial part in the battle to liberate the town of Debaltseve and push back the Ukrainian invaders in early 2015, perhaps the single most important battle in the war.

After Mozgovoy's tragic assassination in May 2015, Markov took on more leadership responsibilities in the Ghosts. Eventually, when the brigade was reorganized as a 14th Territorial Defense Battalion of the Lugansk People's Militia, he became its commander.

The warm, modest Markov was a beloved and inspiring figure to solidarity activists across the globe, and to the communities he defended and served. His fellow soldiers had given him the military call-sign "Dobry" — "Kind," in Russian — and

those of us who had the chance to know him agreed it was well deserved.

Markov was not a military man. Born in Omsk, Siberia, he trained as a nuclear physicist and mathematician at the University of Novosibirsk. Later, he was an IT worker in Moscow. But after the May 2, 2014, massacre of anti-fascist activists in Odessa, and the Ukrainian bombing and air raids against civilian targets in Donetsk and Lugansk, he said that he had to join the fight against resurgent fascism on the territory of his true homeland, the Soviet Union.

"The death of 'Kind' is a great loss for the entire communist movement," wrote Alexey Albu, a survivor of the Odessa massacre and coordinator of the banned Ukrainian group Borotba. "He was an example for many communists. He was the defender of the disadvantaged people of Donbass, thrown under the roller of the Ukrainian-American military machine. He was a real anti-fascist, fighting with arms against the brown plague."

I corresponded with Markov and interviewed him several times during these years. I considered him a friend as well as a comrade in the struggle.

In 2016, when I attended an anti-fascist conference in Lugansk, Markov invited me and several other international activists to visit the Ghosts defending the front line against the Ukrainian Army and fascist militias near the town of Kirovsk. We were able to meet with the internationalist soldiers living in dugouts and digging trenches at the edge of the narrow "no man's land" that separated free Donbass from the area under Ukrainian occupation.

A look through a gun scope was all that was needed to see the enemy forces across the valley — flying the flag of the neo-Nazi Right Sector.

Today, the Ghost Battalion continues to defend this area. Despite an international peace agreement, Ukrainian forces regularly test the republic's defenses by

attempting to seize additional territory. Shellings and shootings by the Ukrainian side are frequent, targeting not only the defenders but the civilian population as well. Many Ghosts have died.

Despite working day and night to coordinate the defense of the area and frequently travelling to meetings of militia commanders, Markov prioritized political education for the Ghost fighters and support for the civilian population, hard hit by the effects of six years of war and blockade.

Markov was an important force for left unity for the former Soviet republics and beyond. The Volunteer Communist Detachment and the Ghosts united communists, socialists and anti-fascists of many organizations, backgrounds and languages into a cohesive fighting force. His dedication to building solidarity around concrete goals and rejecting sectarianism was unmatched.

He also prioritized internationalism. No matter how busy he was with daily life-and-death matters, Markov felt it was important to stay in touch with the international movement. He always responded to requests for solidarity statements and interviews from foreign activists.

In an [interview with Struggle-La Lucha](#) in 2019, Markov explained: “The world is entering a phase of another economic crisis, and for big capital it is very natural to try and channel the discontent of the masses by setting some nations against others. Uninformed people will sooner see the cause of their impoverishment in ‘illegal immigrants’ or the machinations of treacherous neighbors, than realize that their poverty is a necessary condition for the further enrichment of a handful of super rich.

“This was already the case at the beginning of the 20th century, when global capital relied on the Italian and German fascists in their struggle against the world labor movement. So, the current oligarchs set Ukrainians against Russians, Europeans

against Asians, and white residents of the U.S. against African Americans in order to distract them from their real enemies.”

Tributes to Alexey Markov



Commander Markov’s funeral was held Oct. 27 in the town of Alchevsk, the Ghosts’ original headquarters. He was buried next to Ghost Brigade founder Alexey Mozgovoy. Words of tribute were offered by his comrade Pyotr Biryukov, now commander of the 4th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade; Alexander Borodai, first prime minister of the Donetsk People’s Republic; and Kirovsk Mayor Gennady Kartsev.

Vivien of No Pasaran Hamburg told SLL: “I had the luck and the honor to take part in the anti-fascist forum that was held in Alchevsk on May 7, 2015. Comrade Alexey Mosgovoy said, ‘We will not bow. We will not accept the exchange of one oligarch by another.’ It was made clear by both Mosgovoy and Markov that they appealed to the class to unite — including to the Ukrainian soldiers on the other side of the front — to build socialism.

“They had established or were establishing socialist elements already,” she explained. “And they had an army: arms, and a group of fighters of high ethics and motivation. They had a clear vision for the future and solid knowledge of the past. This is one reason why it hurts so much to lose our dear commander: He personified the idea that socialism is possible, when we study, love, dare and fight — even nowadays, in Europe.”

The [Union of Donbass Volunteers](#), an organization representing the interests of anti-fascist soldiers, remembered “our close friend and comrade, a member of the Council of Commanders of the Union. ... Condolences to the family and friends of Alexey Markov, the servicemen of his unit, the entire Lugansk People’s Republic, which has lost its brave defender, one of the best.”

[Yakov Osadchiy](#), spokesperson for the People’s Militia of the LPR, said: “Standing up to protect the Lugansk people, [Markov] remained faithful to the common idea and his own ideals until his last breath. The importance of his services to the Republic cannot be assessed, since it is difficult to imagine a person who cares more for the people of Lugansk than Alexey.”

Osadchiy stressed that “he was and remains an example of courage and heroism for his comrades.”

[A Ghost Battalion soldier](#), responding to fears that Markov’s death might mark the end of the Ghost’s internationalist, anti-fascist commitments, wrote: “The battalion commander worked at 100, 150, 200 percent. ... You can write for a very long time and a lot about what kind of person the battalion commander was, how much he did. You can write even longer and more about the fact that it is impossible to abandon our duties because of his death. But there is no time for that. The truth is, our responsibilities must be done.

“‘Kind’ will stay with us. ‘Ghost’ will remain ‘Ghost.’ So say we all.”

And not only in Donbass.

“The name of our local group of activists, No Pasarán Hamburg, derives from Markov’s call that we received on the 2018 Antifascist Caravan; to continue spreading the truth about the war against the people of Donbass,” says Vivien. “After returning to Hamburg, we founded the group in this spirit: To uphold anti-

fascism everywhere, to fight for a better world. To kill fascism by ending capitalism and aiming for socialism.

“He was my commander. We will continue his fight.”

Commander Alexey Markov, ipresente!



The meaning of Victory Day in the Donbass Republics

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 2, 2024

In 2016, I participated in the Victory Day parade with the Lugansk Communists and Komsomol members in Lugansk, capital city of the Lugansk People's Republic. May 9, celebrated as Victory Day throughout the former Soviet Union, marks the final defeat of Nazi Germany by the Red Army and partisan forces in 1945, after the loss of more than 27 million Soviet lives.

Coming out of the Lugansk Communists' office in the city center, I saw tens of

thousands of people streaming down the main street to the gathering site: youth, elders, veterans, workers, parents with young children, and teenagers. Almost all were carrying signs bearing photos of relatives who had fought and died in the Great Patriotic War, as the Soviet anti-fascist struggle in World War II is called. Many carried the Victory Flag, the hammer-and-sickle banner of the Red Army division that had entered Berlin and planted a red flag on the Reichstag.

As I entered the crowd, I thought how difficult it would be to explain this experience to people back home. I've been to many demonstrations, including some very large ones, probably bigger than this, but the feeling of single-minded unity and determination was something I'd never felt before.

And I remembered that this was not only a deeply felt day of history, shared tragedy and triumph over nigh-impossible odds seven decades earlier. I remembered that just two years ago, fascists were at the gates of the city again — shells fired by the U.S.-backed Ukrainian Armed Forces and neo-Nazi "volunteers" were destroying apartment buildings, schools and hospitals. A woman was literally torn apart on the street in front of the government building occupied by the anti-fascists. Tanks were on the roads, and there was gunfire on the streets.

On our way to Lugansk, we had stopped at a memorial by the side of the road — a wrecked tank, less than 2 km. from the city. In the spring of 2014, the four-person tank crew volunteered to hold the line against advancing Ukrainian forces, to give the anti-fascist resistance time to prepare a defense of the city. All of them were burned alive inside the tank.

In just the few minutes that we international visitors pulled over to photograph the memorial, at least a half-dozen cars driven by locals pulled over too. Families brought flowers and ribbons to lay on the tank, an offering of memory and thanks, heaped on top of dozens and hundreds left before.

On that Victory Day, I stood beside Lisa Chalenko, then two years old. She was an infant when Lugansk was besieged. Her parents remember that time, only too well. Thousands of other parents, children, teenagers and grandparents in Lugansk also remember.

For them — and for people throughout the Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, in Odessa, in Ukraine — the struggle against fascism is not history. It is their life, now, today.

[Read more about the author's trip to Donbass.](#)

SLL photos: Greg Butterfield



On sixth anniversary, Ukraine's war on Donbass takes ominous turn

written by Struggle - La Lucha

May 2, 2024

Late in the afternoon of April 9, 25-year-old hotel worker [Miroslava Vorontsova was](#)

[killed](#) by a Ukrainian military drone strike on the front-line town of Gorlovka in the Donetsk People's Republic. A 59-year-old neighbor was seriously wounded in the blast.

The drone strike occurred while Ukrainian military units and neo-Nazi "volunteer battalions" shelled the town's outskirts with traditional weaponry — a regular occurrence — despite a ceasefire under the international Minsk Agreements.

Vorontsova is believed to be the first casualty of Ukrainian drone warfare. Up till now, Kiev has used drones only for spying missions over the independent Donetsk and Lugansk republics of the Donbass mining region, to seek out targets for bombing and assassination.

April 14 marks the sixth anniversary of Ukraine's war against the residents of Donbass. In the midst of a deadly global pandemic that has caused [violent panic inside Ukraine](#), the adoption of "remote control killing" by President Vladimir Zelensky sounds an ominous new note in a war that has cost more than 13,000 lives, according to the United Nations.

Coup regime targets workers

On April 14, 2014, less than two months after a U.S.-backed coup d'etat overthrew the elected government of Ukraine, tanks rolled into the country's eastern Donbass region to attack civilian protesters. People in the multinational, working-class, predominantly Russian-speaking mining area had overwhelmingly rejected the new government headed by pro-Western politicians, oligarchs and neo-Nazis under the umbrella of right-wing Ukrainian nationalism. Local residents held mass protests and took over local and regional government buildings.

Soon Kiev sent fighter planes to bomb the regional capital of Lugansk. Heavy weaponry was directed against the capital of Donetsk and other population centers.

The popular uprising in Kharkov was repressed. In the port city of Odessa, fascists bused in from the West slaughtered at least 48 local activists trapped in the burning House of Trade Unions on May 6.

This was the last straw for Donbass residents, who voted overwhelmingly in a referendum on May 19, 2014, to declare independence from Ukraine. They established the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. Locals established popular militias to defend their homes, and supporters from across Ukraine, other parts of the former Soviet Union and beyond came to help them.

In early 2015, the popular militias scored a decisive military victory when they encircled the demoralized and ill-equipped Ukrainian forces and liberated the embattled town of Debaltsevo.

Since then, Ukraine's forces have been unable to carry out a successful military offensive against the people's republics. But they continue to routinely launch heavy artillery attacks on front-line towns and cities, often killing and maiming civilians and causing costly damage to civilian 'infrastructure.

U.S.-NATO upgrade Ukrainian forces

Since the ignominious defeat of Ukraine's military by the poorly armed but highly motivated people's militias in 2015, the U.S. and its NATO military alliance have worked to steadily upgrade Ukraine's military technology and organization. The death-dealing killer drone that stole Miroslava Vorontsova's life is but one example.

Despite intense repression, including the jailing of thousands of political prisoners and assassinations of opponents, Ukraine was wracked by anti-war protests when soldiers were being sent into combat in the eastern regions.

U.S. military and political bosses had already learned to deal with this problem using remote-controlled drone attacks. These caused the maximum carnage to "enemies"

with minimal danger to U.S. troops.

Murder by drone [first became routine](#) under the government of Republican George W. Bush, as part of the so-called “War on Terror.” Under Democrat Barack Obama, who wielded a widely publicized “kill list,” drone attacks [grew 10-fold](#).

As with so many other policies of repression and austerity, the bipartisan drone war directly laid the basis for the policies of Donald Trump.

It should be noted that Obama’s vice president and now presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Joe Biden, served as the unofficial colonial governor of Ukraine. He shuttled back and forth between Washington and Kiev frequently, wielding both carrot and stick to encourage repression and austerity measures against Ukrainian workers and harsh war against Donbass.

Zelensky, U.S. and Nazis

Most people in the U.S. first heard of Ukrainian President Zelensky during the impeachment proceedings against Donald Trump. Trump reportedly twisted Zelensky’s arm and temporarily withheld aid for dirt on Biden’s very real dirty dealings in Ukraine.

Zelensky was elected last year in very unfree elections that excluded opponents of the 2014 coup. Many Ukrainians voted for him in the hopes that he would make peace with Donbass and reverse the worst excesses of his predecessor, Petro Poroshenko.

But Zelensky, a former TV comedian, is equally beholden to the coalition of far-right forces that wield the true power in Ukraine on behalf of U.S. and European Union imperialism. In fact, military attacks have increased under his administration. Two days after Miroslava Vorontsova’s death, [Zelensky was photographed](#) on a tour of the front lines wearing a military jacket with the emblem of a neo-Nazi group

modeled on the German SS “Totenkopf” Division, which he received last year.

Take action!

In response to an appeal by the [Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic](#) for solidarity actions to mark the war anniversary on April 14, Struggle-La Lucha newspaper has joined with others to call for an [“Online Day of Action to Fight Covid-19 Not Donbass.”](#)

Readers are encouraged to take a selfie while holding a sign calling for an end to the war and blockade of Donetsk and Lugansk. Post the photo on social media with the hashtags [#StopWarOnDonbass](#) and [#FightCovid19NotDonbass](#). Send a copy of your photo to solidarityukraineantifa@gmail.com.

Also, send emails of protest to Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. Volodymyr Yelchenko <emb_us@mfa.gov.ua>, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Kristina Kvien <kyivacs@state.gov>, former Vice President Joe Biden <<https://go.joebiden.com/page/s/contact-us>> and President Donald Trump <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>>.

Sample text for email: “April 14 marks six years since Ukraine’s illegal war on the people of Donbass began with U.S. assistance. More than 13,000 people have been killed. These war crimes must end! I demand an immediate end to U.S. financial, political and military aid to the Ukrainian government and its allied far-right groups. End the bombing and blockade of the Donbass region immediately. Recognize the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics and adhere to the Minsk Agreements.”



<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/donbass/>