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FASCISM, MILITARISM AND ANARCHISM: A TALE OF THREE UKRAINIANS



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Sholem Schwarzbard, Simón Radowitzky and Nestor Makhno were three of the most infamous anarchists to ever come out of Ukraine. What do their lives, which were lived in a different historical period and under distinct conditions from our own, have to tell us about the Russia-Ukraine war of the past couple of decades, and what does their struggle as anarchists have to tell us about the relationship between militarism and fascism?

Schwarzbard's relevance to the ongoing war was implied as recently as December of 2025, when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky bestowed an honorary name on the army's 152nd Separate Jaeger Brigade, the reverential name in this case being that of the historic Ukrainian nationalist military leader Symon Petliura, whom Schwarzbard assassinated in France in 1926 as retaliation for mass pogroms that included the murder of almost a dozen members of his own family.

Schwarzbard had also been brought up back in April of 2022, in the context of the Russian escalation of the war into a full-scale invasion, when a group of anarchists from various parts of the United States mentioned him at the end of their article titled No War But Class War: Against State Nationalism and Inter-Imperialist War in Ukraine.

That article provoked a reply by a person either too slippery or too uncommitted to their own viewpoint to even bother coming up with a pseudonym. Their response, titled "In the Spirit of Sholem Schwarzbard": Addressing Confusion about the War in Ukraine, was published that same month, in this case at the Russia-based anarchist/anti-fascist website, Avtonom. Due to the author's casual decision to go nameless, and the lengthy title of their piece, I will refer to them throughout this article as "the Coward," for simplicity's sake.

I don't intend here to systematically address each point made by the Coward in their article, because there are wider matters to discuss, there are many things that they omitted, and most of what they write consists of outright lies, distortions and manipulations. It will suffice to point out some of the Coward's most egregious falsehoods, for example, the very first line of their article, in which they claim that the writers of No War But Class War were "decrying support for anarchists in Ukraine who are fighting against the Russian army," as if the authors in question were pacifists, as if fighting from within a state army was the only way anyone has ever fought throughout history.

Right off the bat, we find that the Coward is an anti-anarchist propagandist, and that the main purpose of their diatribe is to deflect from anarchist anti-militarist and anti-fascist critique, and from Schwarzbard's main claim to infamy, that being that he, on his own (as far as we know), not while fighting as part of a state army, assassinated the pogromist Petliura, who is still honoured by the Ukrainian state and its army today.

The Durruti Column Responds to the Militarization Decree (1936)

To the Council of the Generalidad of Catalonia:

The War Committee of the DURRUTI COLUMN, reflecting the feelings of the totality of the individuals enlisted in it, in light of the publication of the Decree on militarization of the militias, states the following:

The military-fascist provocation of July 19 gave rise to an authentic and indisputably popular movement which definitively condemned, among other things, hierarchical military organization and the Code of [Military] Justice referred to in article 2 of the aforementioned Decree.

This Column, formed spontaneously in the heat of the protest in the streets of Barcelona and swelled later by all those who have felt connected with our ideal, has unity in its structure and purposes, and its individuals discipline themselves as they strive to achieve their objective of defeating fascism. If discipline tends to seek greater performance in individuals, this Column can give good proof of its effectiveness: the work done at the front by our militiamen and the constant advance in our positions are our best indicator in favour of self-discipline.

The militiamen of this Column have confidence in themselves and in those who lead it by their explicit delegation, without reservation. Therefore they believe, and we identify with them, that the militarization Decree cannot improve our possibilities of struggle and will instead create suspicions, reservations and revulsions that have already pointed out and would further concretize a real state of disorganization.

The argument that the enemy is fighting "with large quantities of supplies" obviously finds no solution with the militarization of the militias.

In view of all the aforementioned, this Committee, echoing the clamour of protest raised in the Column in response to the aforementioned Decree, is required to not accept it.

Shedding light on this formal and concrete determination and considering that the struggle undertaken must not be hampered by this, we seek from the Council freedom of organization and ask for a precise response as soon as possible to put an end to the state of restlessness that has been created.

For the War Committee,
Durruti
Osera Front, November 1, 1936

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Front cover image: The 3rd Separate Assault Brigade of Ukraine holding German-Israeli MATADOR grenade launchers, field-tested by Israel on Gazans in 2009.

**Intervention of an Iron Column delegate at the Plenum of Valencia
(approved by the column and reproduced by its organ Linea de Fuego,
November 17, 1936, Teruel Front**

“... There is a government decree which provides for the militarisation of all the columns and there are comrades who believe that militarisation fixes everything. We say that it will not fix anything.

Faced with corporals, sergeants and officers from the academies, sometimes totally ignorant of the problems of war, we present our organization and we do not accept the military structure. The Iron Column and all the columns of the CNT and FAI, and even others that are not confederated, have not accepted military discipline.

... We do not accept anything that goes against our anarchist ideas, which are a reality, since we cannot act differently from what we think.

Therefore, we propose that our organization of groups, centuries or Column Committees and War Committees, formed by military and civilian elements, be accepted, in order to establish the coordination of all the militias that fight on the different fronts with the central headquarters...”

* * *

In 2023, the Coward’s article was recommended by the CrimethInc collective in their tribute to their comrade, the state soldier and statist propagandist Dmitry Petrov. The collective falsely describe the Coward’s piece as “a discussion of the complexities of formulating an anarchist anti-war strategy that does not effectively cede the field to state militarism.”

In reality, the Coward’s tract is much the opposite. It does nothing to help formulate an anarchist anti-war strategy and instead simply makes excuses for participation in imperialist war while suggesting that we eventually figure out some alternative, keeping our mouths shut in the meantime unless it’s to cheerlead for the appropriate side, that of the West. It seeks to hide anarchist participation in fascist organizations and it doesn’t so much address confusion about the Russia-Ukraine war as it seeks to create more of it.

In short, the Coward’s article is an exercise in campism, and if you replaced Ukraine as the subject with Iran, many Western anarchists would immediately decry it as such and say that nothing, not even Israeli and American attacks, could ever justify direct participation in such a regime (as it turns out, Ukraine is openly on the side of Western aggression against Iran and is arming the Gulf states to help facilitate that aggression, in keeping with Ukraine’s longer history of buying Israeli weapons, arming Saudi Arabia, and helping America and the United Kingdom occupy Iraq.)

CrimethInc were either too stupid to realize all this or too dishonest to admit it. A few other anarchist sites (such as The Anarchist Library) and distros (such as Scrappy Capy) have also uncritically featured the Coward’s article, which otherwise wouldn’t warrant much of a response.

Meanwhile, in their own article paying tribute to Petrov, CrimethInc admit that they don’t even agree as a group on anti-militarism in the first place, since some of them believe that serving in a state military can advance the anarchist cause, at least in this case, while other members don’t. Why the dissenters go along with the militarists within the collective is a mystery for the ages. Clearly their anti-militarist principles aren’t very strong. The anarchist unity of means and ends is apparently arbitrary and open to compromise.

In February of 2022, CrimethInc had already published an article titled War and Anarchists: Anti-Authoritarian Perspectives in Ukraine, in which the authors admit that some anarchist and anti-fascist volunteers for the Ukrainian army had “even joined the Azov battalion and the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists),” both of these being fascist organizations. As the anarchist writers in Ukraine further detail, “the reasons were mundane: they joined the most accessible troops,” and “consequently, some people converted to right-wing politics.”

CrimethInc, editorially, brushes this aside, taking the easy way out by adding a note stating that “obviously any supposed anti-fascist or ‘anarchist’ who joined a fascist-organized militia was never really an anarchist in the first place.” CrimethInc usually admonish us to “listen to voices,” but in this case

they actually tell us up front that the voices they themselves are amplifying are in fact wrong and that they as Americans know better than the anarchists in Ukraine, despite the distance and the fog of war!

As it turned out, it was CrimethInc who were wrong and the voices who were right, but the situation was even worse than the anarchists in Ukraine were letting on, and would only get worse as time dragged on.

How It All Began

What CrimethInc never mention, either in War and Anarchists, their subsequent tribute to their statist friend, or anywhere else, is that Petrov's so-called Anti-Authoritarian Platoon was started with the help of Yuri Samoylenko, a commanding officer in the fascist and OUN-associated Right Sector Volunteer Corps, that Samoylenko had used his crucial position within the military hierarchy to facilitate Petrov's project. The Solidarity Collectives in Ukraine now admit that Samoylenko's military position was important to the platoon project but neglect to mention that it was a position within the fascist Right Sector specifically. However, this is public knowledge in Ukraine, since the army is not a secret organization.

This is also likely what Petrov had meant in 2022, when he wrote that "I have concluded that we, as revolutionaries, should not be squeamish about making contacts within state institutions," and when he said, in a separate interview with The Final Straw podcast, that "we need to collaborate somehow with the state military structures." To my knowledge, none of his comrades have ever addressed let alone challenged these openly statist remarks. Nor do CrimethInc or any other anarcho-warmongers ever mention anywhere that Petrov later publicly supported conscription in an interview with the German media outlet Taz in 2023.

Petrov's aesthetically "anti-authoritarian" platoon was associated with the so-called Resistance Committee, that being little more than a branding exercise and a social network among soldiers, with a statist manifesto demanding, among other reforms, more militarism in Ukrainian society.

The Coward, in their disinformation piece, claims that "if the Resistance Committee had meaningful ties to fascists, you would think we would already have heard about it from other anarchists in Ukraine, Belarus, or Russia." In reality, anarchists in Ukraine had already vaguely admitted to such ties in War and Anarchists, and in fact, the term "ties" is quite the understatement, since Samoylenko was a commanding officer in the fascist Right Sector and was using that position to help set up Petrov's platoon. Eastern European anarchists, at first, purposely concealed the full extent of their fascist connections in Ukraine in order to keep the donations coming in from abroad. Once they realized that prominent Western anarchists were soft on fascism, the same level of subterfuge was no longer necessary.

In November of 2022, a few months after the Coward's disinformation

"Dissolve the army and immediately withdraw from Morocco."

-Fourth demand formulated by the workers at the CNT-FAI (labour-anarchist federations) rally in Barcelona, Spain on May Day, 1931

* * *

The Spanish Civil War: Army or Militia? (1936)

L'Espagne Antifasciste published an article:

... in Barcelona ... young folk enlisted in the [anarchist] militias, and some even wanted to set off immediately for Zaragoza. To spell out their point of view, they organized a huge gathering involving 10,000 of them, during which they passed the following resolution:

"We are not refusing to do our civic and revolutionary duty. We are keen to go and liberate our brethren in Zaragoza. We want to be militians for freedom, but not soldiers in uniform. The army has proven to be a danger to the people: the popular militias alone protect public freedoms: Militians, yes! But soldiers, never!"

The Mobilization and the Flight to Valencia

... On October 27 [of 1936], Frente Libertario (organ of the CNT-FAI militias in the Madrid sector) used violently critical language under the title: Militias or national army? For us: popular militias!

"In the high spheres of politics, work is being done in order to transform the popular militias into a National Army...

To turn the militias into an army is to want Spaniards to return to the past. It is to desire that the Spanish people lack their own personality ...

For us, the military is an integral part of fascism. The army is the characteristic instrument of authoritarianism. To suppress the army is to suppress the possibility of oppression that this same army presents to the people ...

We proclaim as much as possible, and in spite of everything, that we are antimilitarists. We do not want a National Army. We don't want the Popular Militias, which are the incarnation of the will of the people, to disappear. They alone can defend the freedom of the Spanish people.

As we did before this social war, we continue to shout:

Down with chains! The army is a symbol of tyranny! Abolish the army!"

an aberration but part of the long history of collaboration between liberals and fascists, and the evolution of democratic liberal militarism and colonialism into fascism itself.

Schwarzbard, Radowitzky and Makhno deserve much better treatment than the Coward, CrimethInc and other supposed anarchists are capable of, but they also point to how unnecessary and unproductive current day anarchist warmongering is. Militarism and fascism cannot be used against themselves. It's not necessary or even useful to sacrifice principles for pragmatics. Imperialist war has only ever bred more wars and genocide, and the unity of means and ends is not only an anarchist principle but also an increasingly practical stance.

* * *

piece was published, the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) of Dresden, Germany, wrote an article admitting that "some comrades, trying to get a place in the military ranks, directly joined units that are connected with Ukrainian fascist groups."

As they further explain, "some of the comrades unfortunately went into denial mode and tried to downplay the political organization of Azov, Right Sector and other fascist military-political groups."

ABC Dresden clarify that they personally don't want to support people in right-wing military formations, but they will accept others doing so through them, noting that "if you want to donate for anti-fascists and anarchists in right-wing units despite all contradictions, just write it in the donation note."

According to ABC Dresden, some of the donations that had already been made by anarchists abroad had been taken by the Ukrainian army and allocated to other units that don't have anarchists in them. It's not clear why this wasn't anticipated, since the Ukrainian state and its army are not anarchist organizations who need to follow anarchist principles or even basic standards of decency.

In the space of only a few months, the Coward was proven wrong about the anarchist-fascist connections in Ukraine, and in the time since, things have only gotten worse, and have been revealed as having been worse than we knew at first. Yet, we have never heard from the hit-and-run artist the Coward ever again, and why would we? They are not a principled and committed anarchist but a con artist and a statist.

In the end, Petrov's aesthetic anti-authoritarian platoon went nowhere, given the ultimate decision-making power of the state military hierarchy, and so it was disbanded, while its members, in some cases, were assigned to far-right military units such as Brotherhood (Bratstvo), whose members Petrov died fighting alongside.

If there was a lesson to be learned from Petrov's experience it would be the time-honoured negative example of a person thinking they could change the system from within only to end up being changed by that system instead.

If anarchists want to avoid being assigned to far-right military units and being deployed as cannon fodder, it's best to do what one can to avoid the armies that feature them, rather than "freely" enlisting and then doing propaganda for such armies, as Petrov did. Even if there's no option but to join the army, there's always the option to not do a side interview endorsing conscription and state collaboration. By CrimethInc's own logic, they should disavow their friend Petrov as having been "never really an anarchist in the first place," or, at the very least, a gullible type whose path is to be avoided at all costs.

It should also be noted that beyond Azov and the Right Sector there are several other openly fascist parts of the Ukrainian army, some of which even name themselves after various Nazi Germany military components (such as the Luftwaffe and Nachtigall) and adorn themselves with assorted Nazi

Germany insignias. The Ukrainian army's fascist 3rd Army Corps, which grew out the Azov movement and battalion of the same name, and is led by the notorious white supremacist Andriy Biletsky, now has some 20,000 soldiers and is expected to grow to 40,000.

The OUN's fascist history in Ukraine is extensive. During World War II, they publicly pledged to work with Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Germany, also reaching out to Benito Mussolini in Italy and Francisco Franco in Spain. Most seriously, they committed major pogroms against Jews and Poles during the war. According to historian Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, Franco, arch-enemy of the Spanish anarchists, offered the OUN leader Stepan Bandera sanctuary and met with OUN leader Yaroslav Stetsko more than once.

Today's anarchist apologists for militarism and fascism in Ukraine not only spit on the memory of past Ukrainian anarchists, on all the anti-militarist and anti-fascist anarchists of the past, but also on the anarchists who died in Spain at the hands of Franco and Joseph Stalin during that country's Civil War (and after).

An Eye for Thousands of Eyes

Before I go any further, let's look a little more closely at Schwarzbard's life. As mentioned, he was a Jewish anarchist from Ukraine, and he twice fled to France, where, ultimately, he assassinated the Ukrainian nationalist military leader Petliura in Paris in 1926. Schwarzbard told the court that he'd done it "to avenge the death of the thousands of pogrom victims in Ukraine who were massacred by Petliura's forces without his taking any steps to prevent these massacres." As mentioned, several members of his own family had been killed in those pogroms. Despite his admission of guilt, the French jury sympathized with Schwarzbard and set him free.

In today's Ukraine, however, it's not Schwarzbard who is regarded as the hero. Just the opposite. He is slandered and bad-jacketed by the Kyiv Independent as a secret operative of the authoritarian Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), despite the fact that he was an anarchist. He couldn't possibly have had his own personal and political motivations to oppose a pogromist, even if it concerned his own family, according to modern-day Ukrainian nationalist propagandists.

Instead it's Petliura who is celebrated and even officially lauded with street names, statues, official military patches and now, as mentioned, the honorary naming of a military brigade after him, signed by Zelensky himself. The Coward of course mentions none of this. In the latter case of the 152nd Symon Petliura Separate Jaeger Brigade, their honorary name was bestowed so recently that it couldn't have been included in the Coward's 2022 article anyway, but a mea culpa seems highly unlikely to be forthcoming.

The official lionizing of the pogromist Petliura is far from unique in

From Colonialism to Fascism and Back Again

Much as the first fascist movement, that of Mussolini in Italy, was grounded in militarism, including the disgruntled former soldiers and the supposed "mutilated victory" of WWI, fascism is also based in colonialism.

When the fascists took power in 1922, Italy already had colonies in Libya, and was hungry for more. Like Israel would do later, Italy portrayed the colonization of Africa as simply a return to a place they'd already been and unjustly had been cast out of, referring to the Roman Empire of old. Before WWII, the world stood idly by as Italy committed genocide in Libya, although the elder Omar al-Mukhtar fought as valiantly as he could against the fascists.

Then came the invasions of Ethiopia and Albania. The rest of the world didn't have to imagine what fascism would be like, it was already happening before their eyes, it just wasn't happening yet to them.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, the fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany came to Franco's aid, as the rest of the world continued to sit on their hands, aside from the USSR with their intrigues that only undermined the struggle. The USSR, furthermore, had already been supplying Italy with oil and didn't fully cut off trade with the fascists until 1941. The other Allies supplied Italy, Germany and Japan with crucial materials and technology just prior to the war as well.

In 1941, the OUN in Lviv declared the Restoration of the Ukrainian state, explaining that they would work with Hitler, and then took part in pogroms against the Jewish community. In today's Lviv, the blood-and-soil flag of those same pogromists flies outside the army recruitment center. A fascist would have no problem enlisting in such a place, would even feel welcomed, and wouldn't need to be violently shoved into a van by conscription agents, as the former anarchist Petrov supported, to the ongoing silence of his anarchist friends and comrades.

I contend that part of the reason that modern day anarchists like CrimethInc, Gelderloos and Gillis have such a poor analysis of fascism (and are soft on it) is because they have such a poor analysis of (and a lack of negative experience with) its parent ideologies, militarism and colonialism (and by extension, liberalism).

In contrast, as the fellow traveller of anarchists George Padmore wrote in 1936, "the fight against fascism cannot be separated from the right of all colonial peoples and subject races to Self-Determination."

And as the Spanish anarchist labour federation newspaper Solidaridad Obrera put it that same year, "the struggle against fascism, which at this time has a clear international character, must advise us to try with all our means to foment a healthy atmosphere of rebellion in the communities of the Riff [in Morocco]."

Zelensky's current day glad-handing with colonizers and genocidaires is not

As he further explained, “it is loathing for the role of soldier — the role of slave and cop combined — that we must inspire in the spirit of the people and especially of the youth.”

Yet, today’s warmonger anarchists promote just the opposite, subservience to the military hierarchy and tolerance of fascism. Everything is to be sacrificed in the fight against Russia, because everything else can only be considered a lesser evil, even if one lives in a country where NATO or Israel is the more direct oppressor. The unity of means and ends that distinguishes anarchists from marxists and liberals is to be tossed in the trash bin of history, perhaps to be dumpster-dived and dusted-off later, according to these turncoats. Russian authoritarianism can supposedly be fought with authoritarian means.

The anarchists of today have forgotten Malatesta’s insight from 1901 that “for a people that goes to oppress another, for anyone who performs work of violence and injustice, it is truer to say, ‘woe to the victors,’” than “woe to the defeated.”

“An English victory would be the victory of militarism and would prepare the ground for the suppression of English freedoms,” Malatesta reminded us long ago, and this still applies to all imperialist countries today.

Elsewhere, I’ve already discussed some the disturbing details of the militarism and junior partner imperialism of the Ukrainian state (see my 2025 article *The Downward Spiral of Militarism*.)

Since then, Ukraine has only gotten worse in that regard, just like it’s gotten worse on official commemoration of Nazi collaborators and pogromists. Recently Ukraine, for the first time, voted at the United Nations to support the cruel US blockade of Cuba. Zelensky has in the past months been meeting with the Gulf monarchies to seal weapons deals in support of Israeli, American and Gulf monarchy aggression against Iran and Lebanon.

Never mind that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is also backing the genocide carried out by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan. Ukraine, at least at first, didn’t have enough scruples to stop arming the state of Myanmar as it committed the Rohingya genocide; and it didn’t have a problem arming one of the richest countries in the world, Saudi Arabia, to attack one of the poorest, Yemen; why would it scrounge up principles about a genocide in Sudan with an UAE intermediary in between them?

Zelensky has even been meeting recently with the son of the former Iranian Shah. In 2022, Zelensky met with former Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo, who presided over the 1997 Acteal Massacre in Chiapas. Resistance to invasion or not, there’s no accounting for taste. Russian aggression may be problematic, but genocidal aggression by other regimes is not a barrier to collaboration for those in the Ukrainian government.

modern-day Ukraine. Even more recently, in May of 2026, Zelensky heaped praise upon the Nazi collaborator and Ukrainian fascist, Andriy Melnyk, as his corpse was taken from Luxembourg to be official reburied and honoured in Ukraine at the National Military Memorial Cemetery. Zelensky also that month bestowed upon a special forces unit of the army the honorary title of “Heroes of the UPA” (Ukrainska Povstanska Armiia), which was the armed formation of the OUN, the pogromists and Nazi collaborators mentioned previously.

In 2023, when a Ukrainian-Canadian veteran of the Nazi SS Division Galicia, Yaroslav Hunka was given a standing ovation in Canada’s parliament, Canadian society was still sensitive enough to fascism and World War II for it to be a scandal. But back in Ukraine, in the Ternopil region, the response was just the opposite. Hunka was honoured with an official medal, received on Hunka’s behalf by one of his relatives, this particular medal being named after the Nazi collaborator and OUN official Stetsko.

Justifying Fascism and Colonialism With Militarism

The Coward makes much of the fact that Schwarzbard enlisted in the French Foreign Legion during World War I, as if mere individual service, whether “freely” enlisted or conscripted, was the question, instead of militarism and fascism as systems and ideologies (which in turn form part of a global system of imperialism and capitalism). What the Coward deflects from is the crucial fact that Schwarzbard assassinated a pogromist, autonomously (as best we know), instead of officially honouring pogromists, as the Ukrainian state does, or fighting alongside and commemorating open fascists, as some self-proclaimed anarchists do from within Ukraine’s military today.

The Coward even bemoans the possibility that Schwarzbard, during WWI, could have fled France instead of joining its army, because that would have been “leaving the entire battlefield (and their hapless neighbors) to other forces.” Instead, we’re supposed to believe that defending the French colonial empire was actually the proper thing to do! The Coward does not prioritize the defense of those colonized by France from the occupying French Empire, but rather the protection of the loot of the French colonizer from his fellow colonizers, as the prominent anarchist Peter Kropotkin and his flunkies also advocated at the time, much to the rejection of the majority of the global anarchist movement.

The Anarchist Black Cross of Galicia, Poland, and the Seditious Distro of the United Kingdom also recently invoked Kropotkin’s pro-imperialist stance on WWI, starting out a book on the war in Ukraine by quoting Kropotkin’s incoherent statement that anti-militarists should join the French army to defend the empire from invasion. Not even the current day genocides in Palestine, Lebanon and Iran, or the ongoing struggle in Kanaky are enough

to shame European anarchists away from supporting European colonialism. Instead, they brazenly uphold it as the only way forward.

The Coward also seems to forget that imperial Russia was on the same side as France in WWI, so if the ultimate anarchist principle is that you should always fight against Russia, even if you have to join the state army, Schwarzbard actually made a big mistake by joining the French military that was allied with Russia at the time, allied with the very government that had just repressed him in Ukraine, causing him to flee to France the first time around.

One of the reasons that the Jewish Lithuanian-American anarchists Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman opposed Kropotkin's stance on WWI was that Russia was one of the Allies, and Russia was repressing various peoples within its vast empire. In the end, it was not the Allies' ultimate victory but Russia's battlefield defeats that in part led to the 1917 revolution in Russia and Ukraine.

And what did the other Allies end up having to show for their win in the War to End All Wars but the continuation of murderous colonialism, the rise of fascism, a Second World War and the creation of a new colony, Israel, that still scorches the earth today? Schwarzbard, though he claimed not to be Zionist, expressed his desire to leave France and settle in Palestine, which, at the time had come under the mandate of British imperialism, a factor of no importance to someone like the Coward (as it turned out, the British rejected Schwarzbard's request). Schwarzbard did not want to stay in France (and help prevent another potential German invasion), he wanted to escape antisemitism by going elsewhere, exactly what the Coward and CrimethInc tell us is the wrong thing to do.

According to the Coward, who brings up Rojava and the fight against the Islamic State to prove their point, "sometimes you do not have the choice to opt out of war," as if Black and Native peoples in America, Palestine or Kanaky are incapable of being aware of this fact, as if fleeing or being forced to move to adjacent territories can be reduced to simply "opting out of war."

If such was the case, then war is precisely what Schwarzbard eventually opted out of, at least the second time he fled Ukraine to France. War between Russia and Japan, and Russia's defeat, is also part of what had led to the Revolution of 1905 in Russia and Ukraine, and the repression of that revolution was what Schwarzbard had fled the first time around. Another invasion of France, whether he knew it was coming or not, is exactly what Schwarzbard didn't stick around to help build up France's military defenses against. Instead he left for the US.

If the Coward's message is that defeating Russia and defending the French Empire are the most important things in the world, WWI seems like an extremely bad example, both because Schwarzbard fought on the same side as Russia (and its regime was replaced by another one that also invaded Ukraine) and because the Allies' victory didn't prevent France from being

grandfathers fought for Canada and the Allies against the side that Freeland's grandpa was on in WWII. I'm no more free of bias than anyone else.

In October of 2025, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) interviewed a trainer with the 3rd Separate Assault Brigade in Ukraine but blurred out the prominent swastika tattoo on one of his arms in order to liberal-wash his part of the army.

Ironically, during the recent Minneapolis immigration raids, the Ukraine/NATO side of the war that American anarchists like CrimethInc and Gelderloos have been supporting really did come home to them, in this case in the form of the armoured vehicles made by Roshel, a Canadian company with both Ukrainian and Israeli connections. Run by a former member of the Israel Defense Forces, Roman Shimonov, the company has been profiting off sales to the Canadian government for aid to Ukraine and re-investing in expanded production for American law enforcement, including immigration enforcement. Even more recently a Roshel armoured vehicle was spotted before an anti-ICE protest in Portland, Oregon.

The future that a few brave anarchist anti-militarists warned us about in 2022 (and prior) is already here, and the CrimethInc collective and their sycophants are still none the wiser. They have never once acknowledged that America-based arms companies are producing for Ukraine and Israel at the same time (and one after another), using the increased capacity developed to support Ukraine to up the support for Israel, and vice versa.

Militarism Manifested and Contested

One might be tempted by all the above to say that militarism and fascism seem to go hand in hand. Instead, one could say that fascism is derivative of militarism, imperialism, colonialism and nationalism, even of liberalism, and that the latter easily develop into the former.

Some of the Spanish anarchists who fought in their country's Civil War in the 1930s proclaimed that "for us, the military is an integral part of fascism."

"The army is the characteristic instrument of authoritarianism," they further clarified, showing up Petrov's much later Anti-Authoritarian Platoon of the Ukrainian army as a basic contradiction in terms.

As the infamous Spanish anarchist Buenaventura Durruti put it, "the military-fascist provocation of July 19 [1936] gave rise to an authentic and indisputably popular movement which definitively condemned, among other things, hierarchical military organization and the Code of [Military] Justice..." Like other anarchists before him, Durruti wasn't just opposed to this or that army, but the inherently hierarchical form of every military, because anarchists are against hierarchy.

This was a point that Malatesta had also made back in 1902, when he wrote that "for us, it is truly the very existence of the army that we want to destroy, however it is organized."

Fascism and Free Land

With regard to Canada, the militarist and fascist connections with Ukraine go far beyond both the Active Clubs movement and the Hunka scandal.

Canada has long had one of the world's largest Ukrainian diasporas, in part because settlement by Ukrainians was encouraged by both the Canadian government and the Ukrainian professor Joseph Oleskiw, who wrote the pamphlets, *On Free Lands* and *On Emigration* in the 1890s. Land on the prairies was newly "free" for the Canadian government to advertise and give away because they'd just stolen it from Indigenous peoples with overwhelming military force during the Northwest Resistance of the 1880s.

After WWII, numerous Ukrainian fascists were given refuge (and commemoration) in Canada, which is when Hunka came in.

Ukrainian immigration, however, has not had entirely reactionary results, given that, for example, Ukrainian-Canadian senator Paul Yuzyk is known as the "father of multiculturalism" for his work in getting Canada to adopt the Multiculturalism Act of 1988 and saving the country from even further descent into official dual Anglo-Franco ethno-nationalism.

Since 2015, both Canada's colonial police and army have been training their counterparts in Ukraine. One of the Canadian army regiments involved has been the Royal 22e, which is the regiment that laid siege to two Mohawk communities within Canada in 1990, sparking a cross-country Indigenous uprising and a growth in Indigenous sovereigntist consciousness. The Canadian army is no liberator of nations from invasion but is itself an occupying force teaching imperialist methods to its allies.

Beyond the colonialism, Canada's army also has its own history of unofficial fascist and white-supremacist activity (see the Somalia affair of 1993). The Canadian army's initial training of fascists in Ukraine's Azov units seemed like it might end up a scandal, but this ultimately fizzled out. Since then, the Canadian army has continued its contacts with members of the Azov Brigade right up to the present.

Canada's former Deputy Prime Minister (and Minister of Finance), ironically named Chrystia Freeland, is the granddaughter of a Ukrainian propagandist for Nazi Germany, Michael Chomiak, a fact which she at first dismissed as Russian propaganda, despite knowing it to be the truth. Freeland was at one point seen holding a red-and-black blood-and-soil Ukrainian scarf at a solidarity demonstration, and was a big proponent of the business opportunities opened up by war with Russia (Canada, for example, now supplies all of the uranium used in Ukraine's remaining nuclear reactors). In 2025, she was appointed as a special representative for the reconstruction of Ukraine, and in January of 2026, Zelensky appointed her as an economic development advisor for his government (she resigned from the Canadian government a few days later.)

For the sake of full disclosure, I should admit here that two of my

invaded again just over two decades later.

Imperialist war doesn't appear to be a means of ending imperialist war but only of perpetuating it. The Coward wants you to be confused about all this, but it's not really that hard to follow along.

Conscription and Insubordination

The Coward ridiculously complains that the No War But Class War writers "conscripted" the names and histories of Schwarzbard and Rosa Luxemburg in order to "legitimize" an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist polemic regarding the war. It's not the actual conscription, as violent as it is, carried out by the Ukrainian state that concerns the Coward (who never mentions it), it's the mere fact that some anarchists were inspired enough by Schwarzbard's action against racist Ukrainian nationalism and Luxemburg's anti-imperialist analysis to commemorate their names. We see that the Coward is not only a con artist but also a clown.

Unsurprisingly, the fact that Petrov went on to tell German media that Ukrainian conscription is an unfortunate necessity in the fight against Russia didn't prompt any new articles from the Coward either. Their mission was adding disinformation to the mix and providing cover for the normalization of fascism in the Ukrainian anarchist scene, and that mission has been completed. They just have to hope that anarchists abroad continue to not pay attention to what's actually happening in Ukraine, how their "own" governments and corporations are involved in it, and how that reverberates back here.

The Coward concedes that it's not "anarchist" to participate in a "state military mobilization," but justifies it by pointing out that "under duress, anarchists do all sorts of things that are not anarchistic, that do nothing to advance any anarchist project—laboring to enrich capitalist bosses, for example, or paying rent to landlords."

"If we can understand why workers alienate their labor in return for a wage in order to survive, we can understand why they might join a state military in hopes of resisting an invasion, as well," the Coward explains.

However, the difference is precisely that anarchists typically don't do propaganda for their bosses and landlords portraying work done for a boss or rent paid to a landlord as a righteous component of the overall anarchist struggle. The army anarchists in Ukraine today didn't just enlist and then keep their mouths shut, focusing on the task at hand, fighting Russia. They created, with the help of anarchists abroad, a whole propaganda campaign of support for the war effort, demanding donations both from other anarchists and from NATO's weapons stockpiles, denouncing anti-militarist anarchists, normalizing fascism, and portraying militarism as a glorious component of anarchism.

The Coward portrays themselves as the truly knowledgeable one regarding

Schwarzbard's life, in contrast to the No War But Class War authors. But here we see that their knowledge is used in the service of lies, not in clarifying details. The issue was never whether one person should or did join an army at some point. The issue is that Schwarzbard was one person who didn't tolerate his family and his people being genocided and took action against it, in contrast to today's anarchists in Ukraine who serve in an army that has a unit named in honour of the exact pogromist Schwarzbard took his revenge against.

Fascism, though largely derivative of militarism, imperialism and colonialism, is not exactly the same thing as them. It's quite possible to have enlisted in the army at some point but also be so opposed to fascism, or a particular racist nationalist, that one puts their own life on the line to make that opposition as strong as possible, like Schwarzbard did.

It's also possible to have joined the army, but then later recognize how much of a mistake that was, and take action against it, as the principled American anarchist and air force member Aaron Bushnell did, only to be mocked as a coward and lied about by the actual cowards within CrimethInc.

It's equally possible to appreciate one or more things that a historical figure did but disagree with other things they did. We can appreciate Kropotkin's writings on communism and mutual aid while firmly rejecting his militarist turn. We can appreciate Ricardo Flores Magón's steadfast anti-militarism (which he died for in a US prison), while firmly rejecting his sexist and transphobic tendencies. There's no reason we can't do the same for Schwarzbard, rejecting his participation in WWI but appreciating his action against antisemitic Ukrainian nationalism. The Coward, however, is not interested in reality, or in principles or analysis, only gotcha journalism and the kind of whataboutism popularized, ironically, by the USSR.

The Coward also complains that the No War But Class War authors invoked Luxemburg given that she was a Marxist and a determinist, and considering that, supposedly, "as an anarchist, Schwarzbard had no recourse to determinist frameworks like Luxemburg's." Part of the Coward's implicit tactic here is to deflect from the fact that Luxemburg was Jewish like Schwarzbard, and therefore was less likely to side with the Ukrainian pogromists and their commemoration than today's gentile anarchists in the Ukrainian army have shown themselves to be.

But the other point is to deflect from the fact that the most notorious of all anarchist turncoats, with regard to militarism and imperialism, was Kropotkin, and he also happened to be a determinist like Luxemburg, but unlike, say, the anarchist Errico Malatesta, who stood by his principles when WWI broke out. The Coward is either very unfamiliar with anarchist history or a bald-faced liar.

To the Coward and CrimethInc, militarism against Russia is of such a top priority that it eclipses all other concerns, such as those that Bushnell and Schwarzbard held. It even overrides the need for honesty. But this is not a

people to lay down their weapons," despite it being the opposite of the truth. State soldiers don't have their own arms to lay down in the first place, and anarchist anti-militarism is not pacifism, it's not a rejection of all use of weapons. However, Gillis has a well-known penchant for confusing fantasy for reality, as well as not doing the research, so this is not particularly surprising, just exceedingly gullible, if not outrightly deceptive.

A few months after Gillis' article was published, the Resistance Committee announced and mourned the death of Roman Legar, who they admitted had died while fighting as a soldier in the fascist Azov Brigade. The Resistance Committee no longer felt the need to hide their fascist connections, given the fluffing they'd received from some American and European anarchists. It's been crickets instead of correction from Gillis ever since.

In a 2023 article, the Belarusian-Polish anarchist historian Aleksander Łaniewski openly praised the fascist Azov Brigade, saying that they "showed incredible heroism during the defense of Azovstal," and that they had undergone "an ideological transformation unlike the couch-potato anarchists."

We see in these examples, with striking clarity, that the anarcho-warmongers in Ukraine and their boosters abroad do not take Ukrainian fascism seriously, let alone oppose it. And why should they? They are not the Poles or Ukrainian Jews who suffered pogroms at the hands of the OUN/UPA or Petliura. They are not non-white persons in North America who have to be concerned about fascists attacking them or their family based merely on the colour of their skin.

Furthermore, it's not only NATO training and weapons or the Hunka scandal that connects fascism in Ukraine to fascism in North America. The growing fascist Active Clubs movement in North America is largely inspired by Kapustin's White Rex brand and the Ukrainian fascist movement.

American Active Clubs co-founder Robert Rundo, who has been imprisoned and released after violent attacks in the US, explained to a right-wing podcast back in 2017 that with regard to Ukraine's Azov movement, "this is always my whole inspiration for everything."

Rundo furthermore referred to Azov as "the future."

"They really have the culture out there," he detailed, "they have their own clubs, they have their own bars, they have their own dress style."

Rundo, however, didn't just talk about Ukraine but actually went there to spend time with and learn from his fellow fascists. The many fascist units in the Ukrainian army provide a training ground for fascists from other parts of the world.

Rundo at one point even co-hosted a podcast with White Rex Kapustin, who's now a star in the Ukrainian army, as previously mentioned (and as Gelderloos told you not to worry about).

the OUN. This was not as out-of-character as one might hope, since the Collectives, and the supposedly anti-authoritarian Resistance Committee, have previously accepted Russian fascists and Ukrainian apologists for fascism into their ranks, persons quite open about either their involvement in or their support for fascist organizations.

In particular, I refer to the Ukrainian former prisoner Oleksandr Kolchenko, who repeatedly posts praise for the fascist UPA on his own facebook account (as for example he's done on International Women's Day), and who regurgitated the propaganda of the fascist Azov Regiment in a 2022 interview with the media outlet The Insider. In the CrimethInc-published War and Anarchists article, Kolchenko was lauded as an "anarchist." Again, if CrimethInc really believed in their own straightedge-inspired position of "if you're not now, you never were," they would have disavowed Kolchenko. Instead, we hear only crickets.

Next, there is the Russian neo-nazi Sergey Petrovichev, who was a member of fascist organizations in Russia, fought for the fascist Right Sector once in Ukraine, and posted pictures on his own facebook account of himself wearing a fascist UPA t-shirt and hanging out with fellow fascists under a banner for White Rex, the well-known Russian fascist brand, whose mastermind, Denis Kapustin, is also fighting for the Ukrainian army, where he founded its Russian Volunteer Corps. The Solidarity Collectives, among others, even commemorate Petrovichev as a fallen "anarchist," banking on the ignorance of their audience.

Finally, there is the Russian fascist Alexey Makarov, who in a media interview admitted to being a member of the fascist National Bolsheviks in Russia and the far-right Christian nationalist Brotherhood (Bratstvo) party in Ukraine before he joined the real Ukrainian army and the primarily aesthetic Resistance Committee. Makarov, in his interview, does not have a single negative word for these far-right groups he had belonged to, let alone renounce or denounce them, which you'd think would be the bare minimum for peer acceptance into the anarchist scene.

In 2024, American anarchist space cadet William Gillis wrote an article in which they downplayed the creep of fascism into the anarchist scene in Ukraine, seemingly referring indirectly to CrimethInc's War and Anarchists article when they wrote that "no one in the west can speak to the details or extent, rumors are rumors, perhaps it is only a handful of the usual suspects who have embraced full nationalism," when the reality was much worse (as the ABC Dresden article had already partly confirmed), and when an open fascist like Petrovichev was being (and still is being) hailed as an "anarchist" hero by the scene in Ukraine.

Gillis also describes as "quite decent" an anarchist panel in Switzerland in 2023 that had a moment of silence for the fascist Petrovichev and other state soldiers. Gillis further regards as "true" the misleading statement made during the panel that "it's a strange world where anarchists tell fighting

stance all anarchists need to follow, as a further look at anarchist history confirms.

Perseverance Against Repressive Power

Radowitzky was another Jewish anarchist, and as a teenager in Ukraine he had taken part in strikes, riots, and the Revolution of 1905. In fleeing the imperialist repression of Russia, he went to Argentina, where he continued to take part in the class war. He did not stay and fight Russian power until the last Ukrainian fell, he moved forward, so as to carry on the struggle elsewhere.

In 1909, Radowitzky assassinated the federal police chief Ramón Falcón in Buenos Aires, in retaliation for his murderous repression of striking workers. Radowitzky was subsequently sentenced to between 20 and 25 years in prison. In 1918, Chilean and Argentinian anarchists helped him escape by boat from the remote southern prison of Ushuaia, but he was quickly recaptured.

Radowitzky eventually served a 21 year sentence, but despite this unimaginable hardship, he didn't give up the fight, traveling to Spain to join the International Brigades and the revolutionary struggle of the anarchists during the Spanish Civil War. He didn't stay and fight until the last man in Spain either, but instead fled to France. There he was interned, and again, he did not stay and fight in WWII, but rather fled to Mexico.

Does all this fleeing mean Radowitzky was a coward? The question is beyond insulting in its stupidity. Radowitzky represents a level of anarchist commitment and bravery that would be basically impossible to find among today's anarchists, and most certainly could never be found among the CrimethInc collective or the anonymous Coward, who don't even have a minute's worth of the strength of their own self-proclaimed convictions, let alone the strength to persevere for two decades through real material hardship as a convict in a remote prison.

Batko and his Disobedient Stepson

Makhno was the most infamous of all the anarchists from Ukraine, even if others like Maria Nikiforova, Olga Taratuta, or Sophie Kropotkin deserve as much recognition but have yet to receive it. A gentile who spoke Russian but not Ukrainian, Makhno led the autonomous and anti-statist Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine, which, at various points fought against the Russian White movement, the invading Austro-Hungarian and German forces, and the Bolsheviks.

At other points, Makhno's forces allied with or temporarily subordinated themselves to the Bolsheviks, but this ultimately led to betrayal and repression. If the lesson the anarcho-warmongers want us to learn is that

joining state forces is legitimate and indeed the only way to advance our cause, Makhno seems like a poor example. Furthermore, what the war boosters also want you to forget is that Makhno, like Schwarzbard and Radowitzky before him, didn't stay and fight until the last Ukrainian, but instead fled west, ending up in France, like Schwarzbard. There, Makhno even wrote an article claiming that the British Empire was the worst in the world (rather than, say, the new empire of the USSR, which had just forced him into exile).

Some say Makhno advised Schwarzbard not to kill Petliura, doubting the latter's responsibility for pogroms and the usefulness of assassination. Aside from that, was Makhno a coward or fool for not remaining in Ukraine and fighting to the death? The question is almost as ridiculous as the one regarding Radowitzky. Yet, CrimethInc, the Coward and their fellow anarcho-war mongers pose sticking it out in the current war as the only option, as precisely the justification for anarchists enlisting in the army and doing propaganda for it, even as more than five million refugees have already fled Ukraine since 2022.

Alternatively, if one wanted to blame conscription as the reason that enlisting is the only alternative to fleeing, it's strange to then tolerate a person like Petrov actually doing propaganda on behalf of violent state conscription and throwing under the bus all the people who are resisting themselves or their relatives being thrown into busses by agents of conscription.

CrimethInc and the Coward don't want you to recognize that the real coward is not the one who flees, refuses to become a murderer for the State, and lives to fight another day. The real coward is the one who, from the sidelines, at no threat to themselves, advises others to go to war on behalf of the liberal Ukrainian state.

The Coward and CrimethInc don't want you to fully remember Schwarzbard, Radowitzky and Makhno's lives, much less properly honour them. They want you stuffed in a cannon and shot toward the enemy lines, or at least cheering in the stands when it happens to others, and begging your government for more NATO weaponry for Ukraine (they never address that Ukraine has been buying Israeli weaponry for years.)

Schwarzbard, Radowitzky and Makhno's lives show us that it takes courage, effort and perseverance to carve out one's own path, that staying put and following orders can be the easy way out, but it's not the only way. The strength of these comrades will forever stand in stark contrast to the sniveling propagandist without so much as a pseudonym, or the CrimethInc collective, who'd rather try to revise history than own-up to any of their own mistakes. To lie to the people is the work of the politician, not the anarchist.

The Further Adventures of Fascism

The war in Ukraine has also seen anarchists other than CrimethInc and the Coward publicly promote militarism or downplay the threat of the Ukrainian fascists.

American anarchist pundit Peter Gelderloos recently downplayed fascism in Ukraine by saying that "there are far more neo-Nazis on the Russian side," and that "Russian society on the whole, since the days of the Soviet Union, has been extremely rightwing."

What he fails to mention is that some of those Russian fascists are fighting for the Ukrainian side! Gelderloos also neglects to consider that the Ukrainian neo-Nazis are, in a significant sense, "our" Nazis more so than the Russian ones, given that "our" governments in the US and Canada are more directly and extensively supporting the Ukrainian side, including the fascist branches of its military (Canada also indirectly and to a lesser extent supports the Russian side through various business ventures already mentioned in my 2025 article *The Downward Spiral of Militarism*). Gelderloos admits that there are right-wing nationalists in Ukraine but says that "Russian influence on media and social media exaggerated their importance," failing to consider that US and Canadian media have also downplayed their importance.

Furthermore, the fact that one side in a war may exploit a point for propaganda doesn't mean that point is entirely untrue. For example, during WWII, Nazi Germany cynically produced several movies about British oppression of the Irish. The conclusion to draw from this is not that the British never oppressed the Irish but that the Nazis were insincere and opportunist! The same goes for today's war in Ukraine, as some supposed anarchists are using Russian propaganda as an excuse to liberal-wash the Ukrainian state and its fascist military units.

In March of 2022, Gelderloos had either mistakenly or intentionally portrayed anarchists in Ukraine as being in autonomous formations that only formed an alliance with the state military (as for example Makhno's forces had, to their detriment), rather than being subsumed within and subordinated to the state, which is the reality. By the time he'd written his article, Saša Kaluža had already published one of their own explaining that "initiatives such as the Resistance Committee are formed within the military structure of the Ukrainian state", and further clarifying that "they are not anarchist initiatives, even though most of the participants are anarchists".

ABC Dresden soon confirmed this in their November of 2022 article where they stated that "there are no independent units." Gelderloos never bothered to correct his mistake, to my knowledge.

The self-proclaimed anti-authoritarian Solidarity Collectives in Ukraine, in their 2025 year in review, included, without commentary, a photo that features the red-and-black (horizontal bars) blood-and-soil flag of the fascist Right Sector, a design that pays homage to the flag of their fascist forefathers,