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Bill Beech
I would prefer revolutionary internationalism
A response to Wayne Price's 'Should Anarchists Defend Ukraine?
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2024

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A response to Wayne Price's 'Should Anarchists Defend Ukraine? A Response to Bill Beech'

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chist revolution, like the ultimate threat of (Russian) fascism – are both used to justify whatever he wants: conscription, imperialism, nationalism.

TLDR

To conclude, let's summarise the position of the Tactical Natopolitans. It is premised on: denial of the origins of the war (NATO expansion), denial of the nature of the war (a proxy war), and therefore denial of US/NATO imperialism, which is supported by denial of the primacy of class struggle, under the banner of defending the nation as the ultimate vessel to defend peoples, communities, individuals.

Our position as class struggle anarchists is that this is an inter-imperial conflict, where the working class is being slaughtered, exploited and lied to. Nothing can be gained for the working class or the cause of libertarian revolution by allying ourselves with any of the states or imperial blocs. Such an alliance only weakens our cause and forces, and fatally compromises anarchism.

Lastly, we need to resolutely and completely abandon the idea that the nation is the ultimate vehicle for self-determination and liberation. There is a richness of traditions, experiences, institutions, communities, languages and cultures which exist apart from and despite the nation and the state. This is our libertarian legacy. This is where the wellsprings of anarchy stem from. We should be guided by them, and not by the siren voices of chickenhawkish imperialist ultras like Wayne Price.

for anarchist revolution. Wayne Price's strategy for anarchist revolution is to (temporarily!) give up your autonomy and enlist in a NATO proxy army. Chomsky, on the other hand, understands that adding fire to an inter-imperial conflict under the banner of *'fighting to the last Ukrainian'* is a disaster for any kind of libertarian movement or social revolution there. Chomsky is also aware of the pernicious effect of silencing antimilitarist and anti-imperial voices in our imperial NATO heartlands.[27] Of course, Chomsky is a threat to Price's world view, because for Price, the carrot of (Global) anar-

[27] The derangement associated with the 'Ukrainian Project' has recently reached fever pitch. While a large portion of the so-called anarchist movement is offering tactical PR support for NATO and the silencing of everyone else, bullets have also been used. This is a shocking development for 'democratic' countries in the West, so used to their superiority. Slovak President Fico was shot by a man who cited the reason for his actions as the outrage over the decision to halt military support for Ukraine. Ryan Routh, who tried to assassinate Trump on a golf course is a Ukraine ultra and seemingly recruited mercenaries for the CIA. He even wrote a NATO-on-steroids daydream in book form: 'Ukraine's Unwinnable War: The Fatal Flaw of Democracy, World Abandonment and the Global Citizen-Taiwan, Afghanistan, North Korea and the end of Humanity', where he 'clamors for the assassination of Russian President Vladimir Putin, fantasizes about Trump's assassination as well, and urges the US military to "instigate" a nuclear war with Russia.' (see the Grayzone report 'Alleged would-be Trump assassin recruited for Ukraine's International Legion'). The first round of the Romanian election was cancelled after the anti-NATO candidate Calin Georgescu won. The reason given for why we must protect the Romanian people from themselves was Russian interference via TikTok. Since the Atlanticists have lost grip on war-weary populations via their state and corporate media, they are now working to shut down any dissent elsewhere. In a speech from 2019, Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General already foreshadowed what was to come: *Sir Julian King, the EU Commissioner for the Security Union, outlined the tools that the European Union has at its disposal. NATO's cooperation with the EU is important because hybrid is not just a military threat. We have seen a pattern of cyber-attacks against our countries. Disinformation campaigns. And attempts to interfere in our democracies. Many of our countries have suffered from different types of hybrid attacks. In isolation, we may not always be able to see the connections, the trends and the patterns. But together, we can connect the dots, and see the bigger picture. And together, we have the full range of tools to address these challenges. NATO must remain prepared for both conventional and hybrid threats: From tanks to tweets.*

> *'The struggle for class and self-liberation is not to be compared with national conflicts. It is the function of the impersonal State to squander lives in war, or of a superior class to regard lesser humans as expendable; thus any war of the nation-state must in itself be in the nature of an atrocity. [...] [C]ompared with other conflicts, social liberation is the most difficult of all to achieve, beside which national liberation is a divertissement. For class struggle implies not merely collective action but the breaking down of that sequence of events ingrained in our society as command-and-obey. Any form of social protest may be useful as an attempt to destroy this sequence, which saps the lifeblood of mankind and makes it possible for the few to govern the many.'*
>
> *The Floodgates of Anarchy - Stuart Christie & Albert Meltzer*

To those who read the pages of Black Flag, it will be clear from Wayne Price's response to my essay 'War on Anarchism', that his arrogance can only be matched by his ignorance.[1] It is hard to debate someone who is fully committed to remaining ignorant and who persistently avoids any discussion of specifics, while retreating into abstract slogans and idealistic positions. In response to the many facts I present and the 48 footnotes, Wayne Price offers a stale reference to Bakunin, an oblique reference about Ukrainian anti-semitism (to quarrel with an argument I didn't make), and a reference TO HIMSELF, Wayne Price. He also gives a potted history of Ukrainian struggle for national self-determination, which is as vague, as it is emotive. And makes a baseless claim that Nestor Makhno was a nationalist. It's clear that Price and the Natopoli-

[1] 'Should Anarchists Defend Ukraine? A Response to Bill Beech' in Black Flag, Autumn 2024, Vol. 4, No. 3 https://www.anarchistfaq.org/blackflag/BlackFlag-vol4-no3.pdf

tans[2] are much more comfortable in the giddy heights of abstract, ahistorical, non-factual idealism, than the blood and piss and vomit of the Ukrainian trenches, or the realpolitik of inter-imperial conflict. Or the realities of class struggle.

Because he doesn't dare touch the facts, Price quarrels with points I haven't made, such as Ukraine being a hotbed of anti-semitism, that I subscribe to a Russian view that Ukraine has no right to exist, or that the lesser evil in this conflict would be to support Russian imperialism against NATO. None of them are positions I hold, so there is no need to defend them. What Price doesn't and cannot engage with are the points I do make: about the origins and causes of the war, about the nature and course of it, its ongoing realities.

I will comment on a few of Price's arguments before outlining as precisely as I can the ideological differences between the Natopolitan-defencist-nationalist position on one hand and the antimilitarist-defeatist-internationalist position on the other. For those who want to skip to the summary, see the last section below.

The Final Crusade

Let's start with the anti-semitism question, since it is a common refrain and since it is of some interest. Also, it is worth considering, since Wayne Price was at pains to introduce it into the debate. Considering that in the last year, we've heard the most monstrously grotesque imperialist and racist excuses for Zionism shielded by charges of anti-semitism, I am greatly tickled that Price chooses to whitewash Ukraine, which is to all intents and purposes the world champion of armed Hitlerian and Banderite folklore.

[2] "The now-obscure term 'Natopolitan' appears to have been coined by the British Marxist historian EP Thompson in the late 1970s. It referred not just to NATO proper, but also (in a later gloss by Edward Said) to 'a mentality whose web extended over a lot more activity and thought'." https://peacenews.info/node/10810/grey-anderson-ed-natopolitanism-atlantic-alliance-cold-war

from military registration and will remain in the register.[24] If you have a pulse, you are able to offer your life for the nation.

And because Price mentally lives deep in Natostan, he cannot understand that the war, as waged by Russia is an attritional one.[25] This is why he makes the claim that the war is *'stalemated at best'*. Apparent small movements of the front lines are interpreted as a stalemate. But the Russian army is following the dictums of Clausewitz who advocated for the destruction of armies and not the conquest of territories:

What do we mean by the defeat of the enemy? Simply the destruction of his forces, whether by death, injury, or any other means—either completely or enough to make him stop fighting. . . . The complete or partial destruction of the enemy must be regarded as the sole object of all engagements. . . . Direct annihilation of the enemy's forces must always be the dominant consideration.[26]

This is why the Russians have pursued the strategy of sucking Ukrainians into cauldrons and fire pockets to devastating effect. The killing field near Robotyno, also known as Bradley Square, and the completely impregnable Surovikin Line. Bakhmut. Vuhledar. Chasiv Yar. Avdeevka. Kursk. Over 1000 days the Russians have been destroying scores of Ukrainian men and NATO machines, because they know that Ukraine's imperial overlords, and cheerleaders like Wayne Price, are forcing them to advance despite the odds, to prove that they are a viable client and demonstrate the investment made in them by taking territory back.

Price quibbles with me quoting Noam Chomsky because he is *'a philosophical anarchist'*, who doesn't believe or propose a strategy

[24] https://itc.ua/en/news/unfit-for-health-reasons-will-no-longer-be-excluded-from-military-registration-and-will-remain-in-the-register-order-of-the-ministry-of-defense/

[25] There are many accounts of the attritional strategy of the Russian Army, I recommend John Mearsheimer's https://mearsheimer.substack.com/p/bound-to-lose

[26] Carl von Clausewitz, On War, Chapter 2, Princeton University Press, 1976

your body and life for it. And there is no greater hypocrisy than Wayne Price's which calls for someone else to die in your stead.

The conservative estimate by the capitalist press is 500,000 dead, maimed and missing-in-action Ukrainians.[20] The reality is surely much higher, for anyone who has followed the front lines. Since February 2022, three Ukrainian armies have been killed off by the Russian one. This is why young Ukrainian men are being pressganged by Zelensky's heavies in a desperate bid to send 160,000 more into death's jaw (this is a target figure they released in November 2024). Ukrainian soldiers are some of the oldest in the world, with an average age of 43 in November 2023, 10 years older than in March of 2022. A battallion commander of the 65th Brigade says:

'I'm being sent guys, 50 plus, with doctors' notes telling me they are too ill to serve. At times it feels like I'm managing a day-care centre rather than a combat unit.'[21]

60,000 cases of desertion have been launched in the courts in the first 10 months of 2024 – the total numbers are surely higher.[22] Poorly trained, the soldiers are abandoned in positions which are impossible to defend, such as Vuhledar. Here is what a soldier who deserted from the 123rd brigade said: *'No one fucking needed Vuhledar.'* It had been reduced to rubble, more than a year ago, he is convinced there was no need to leave those Ukrainian soldiers there. He puts the blame on the Ukrainian army: *'They're just killing them, instead of letting them rehabilitate and rest.'* But this is not enough, Ukraine's overlords (Wayne Price's spiritual leaders) are demanding from the client state that it lower the conscription age to 18.[23] Even those 'unfit' for health reasons will no longer be excluded

[20] https://kyivindependent.com/economist-casualties-estimates/

[21] https://newkontinent.org/ukraines-warriors-brace-for-a-kremlin-surge-in-the-south/

[22] https://www.ft.com/content/9b25288d-8258-4541-81b0-83b00ad8a03f

[23] https://www.reuters.com/world/us-urges-ukraine-lower-fighting-age-18-bolster-ranks-official-says-2024-11-27/

The ultimate gotcha by the Ukrainian nationalists and Natopolitans is that Zelensky himself is Jewish, so therefore anti-semitism cannot be a strong force in Ukraine. There is as much truth to this, as Obama ushering in an end to racism, as anyone with even the basic interest in the facts will acknowledge. However, how do we explain the fact that this Jewish president led a standing ovation to Yaroslav Hunka, a bona fide Ukrainian Nazi of WWII stature? The simple reason is that Ukrainian fascism's main enemy is Russianness. It can therefore shelve the Jewish Question until Ukraine has dealt with Russia and its Russian minorities – it is the same principled deferral that Wayne Price advocates: defend the nation, and the revolution comes afterwards.

But while Price is happy to remain a keyboard warrior, the blood-steeped Azov Battalion is touring Europe (its 2024 mini-tour got quite a bit of pushback along the way), spreading their boot-shiny ideas and making links with likeminded individuals and groups. Its founder Biletsky famously stated that Ukraine's national purpose is to *'lead the white races of the world in a final crusade... against Semite-led Untermenschen'*[3] This charming lad was a Maidan ultra, then a fascist paramilitary in the Donbas (trained by NATO on how to operate grenade launchers and other US weapons) who finally graduated to being a member of the Ukrainian parliament. He is but one in a gallery of ghouls that populate the Ukrainian state and para-state formations. For those who want to follow the deep currents of Ukrainian fascism, I would point them to the two blogs of Moss Robeson: Bandera Lobby Blog and Ukes, Kooks and Spooks. There, you can read how Neo-Nazis train Ukraine's Presidential Brigade, and its top instructor calls Ukrainians slaves that must be weaponized. About Ukraine's Nazi paganism. About Azov Nazis visiting NATO HQ. About Holocaust denial. About Ukrainian Nazi paramilitaries invading Russia. Etc. etc. etc.

[3] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/1/who-are-the-azov-regiment

At risk of repeating myself, I want to underline that the point I am making here is not that all Ukrainians are Nazis, or that Ukraine is a Nazi state. What I am saying is that the Ukrainian fascists are playing an oversized role in shaping the Ukrainian national project, that they were directly involved in some of the worst violence of the civil war and that they continue to be the spearhead against everything Russian. They are the sharpest tools of US imperialism because their hatred of Russia and everything Russian is maniacal. To deny the size of this problem (as Price does) is to deny that these people have been strengthened by the post-Maidan governments and by the NATO sponsors of the proxy war with Russia. It is also to deny one of the causes of the war: Russia's refusal to accept a fascist-friendly regime in Ukraine. Any regime which rehabilitates fascists from WWII[4] , which incorporated Nazis into its state and military structures, is unacceptable to the Russian state, this is a simple fact. Especially, if they are to be armed with NATO weapons and could become a station for nuclear missiles. But because we aren't allowed to understand the motivations of the Russian state, we can only accept the Natopolitan analysis of why Russia invaded (to erase Ukraine!). Therefore Putin is Hitler and this is a cosmic fight to the death, on which there can be no debate. We must abandon all principles in the struggle against Russian fascism and defend the Ukrainian state. The truth is much more dirty and unpleasant: Ukraine is a tool, and every tool must be kept sharp.

The conclusion we should draw is precisely the opposite of Wayne Price's. He believes that by minimising Ukraine's fascist problem, we are refusing to play into the Russians' hands, and we are supporting the 'democratic' Ukrainian state which must be defended against imperialist invasion. On the contrary, as anarchists, we must oppose fascism, because it is the enemy of all libertarian principles, because it is the sharpest manifestation of

[4] In the case of Russia, that struggle in WWII claimed circa 27m lives, so any government there is unlikely to treat this as a laughing matter.

Bitter Pills

Because Price is so thoroughly NATO-pilled, he cannot accept the responsibility of Zelensky's regime and the Ukrainian state for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian conscripts. To Price, it is all very simple: the invading Russians are killing them and they are to blame – any acknowledgement of the role of the Ukrainian state in the slaughter of the Ukrainian working class betrays what he calls *'an imperialist mindset'*.

But let's see how a local anarchist group describes this regime which Wayne Price is working for. In their circular from November 11th 2024, the Kharkov-based anarchist group Assembly calls it *'the agonizing dictatorship in Ukraine'*. They report graffiti from the city of Zaporozhye: *'Zelensky is an executioner'*.[18] Far from an imperialist mindset, this is the mindset of class struggle. And it is the support for inter-state and inter-imperial war, which is statist, militarist, nationalist, and imperialist.

To give him some due, Wayne Price acknowledges the positioning of the Ukrainian state: *'The Ukrainian state has leaned toward the Western imperialists against Russian imperialism.'*[19] But this was to be expected, Price writes, after centuries of Russian domination. Our Tactical Natopolitan is so blinkered that he can't see that something which is against Russia, isn't automatically pro-Ukrainian. And like with the question of government and state military collaboration, this is for Price a necessary evil: one ends up in a state army which is part of an imperialist bloc, such is life, we must soldier on 'for national self-determination'. Nothing stops us from Abracadabra! declaring that as anarchists we oppose imperialism and *'our statist ruling classes'*. It is just that these statements have been made meaningless through our actions. There is no greater support for your 'statist ruling class' and imperialism than to offer

[18] https://libcom.org/article/ukraine-wave-desertion-spontaneous-self-demobilization-amid-us-elections

[19] Black Flag, Autumn 2024, Vol. 4, No. 3

hidden behind the fig leaf of *'a small country's struggle for national self-determination'*. One final reason the war in Ukraine cannot be understood as a proxy conflict, is that, in that case, Wayne Price and his Tactical Natopolitans would look like US Empire's useful idiots. But sooner or later they will have to accept the reality, since even Jens Stoltenberg, NATO's (then) Secretary General has openly spoken of the inter-imperialist origin of the war. He also confirmed that it was the actions of NATO (which Ukraine isn't a member of), which provoked the Russian invasion. So much for 'Ukrainian agency':

'President Putin declared in the autumn of 2021, and actually sent a draft treaty that they wanted NATO to sign, to promise no more NATO enlargement,' Stoltenberg told a joint committee meeting of the European Parliament on September 7 [2023]. 'That was what he sent us. And [that] was a pre-condition for not invade [sic] Ukraine. Of course we didn't sign that. He went to war to prevent NATO, more NATO, close to his borders. He has got the exact opposite.'[16]

This is the casus belli, and therein lie the seeds for an end to this war, or a fatal escalation. Far from the question of a few weapons and provisions, the question of NATO is at the heart of the geopolitical and inter-imperialist nature of this conflict. As John Mearsheimer correctly analysed the post-Maidan moment in 2015, it was ever an inter-imperialist competition:

'The West is leading Ukraine down the primrose path and the end result is that Ukraine is going to get wrecked.'[17]

That was ten years ago – there is presently no basis or justification for Wayne Price and his Tactical Natopolitans holding the views that they do.

[16] https://responsiblestatecraft.org/russia-ukraine-nato-expansion/

[17] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrMiSQAGOS4

nationalism (and its crybully victimhood), because it is steeped in militarism and fantasies of racial purity.[5] It is also the triumph of capitalism and the interests of capital. Ukrainian oligarchs Ihor Kolomoyskyi and Serhiy Taruta are bankrolling the Azov Battalion (and other paramilitary organisations) with the aim of keeping out Russian oligarchs. Their patriotism doesn't extend to protection from US/EU capital, e.g. the Ukraine 'reconstruction bank', which has been set up by BlackRock and JPMorgan Chase to buy up the country cheaply and arrange for concessions to extract its wealth. We compromise ourselves as anarchists and we compromise all that is good in Ukraine, and we give the Russian state a legitimate line of attack, by giving Ukrainian fascism a free pass.[6]

The danger of Wayne Price's position which advocates the defence of the nation, is the notion that there is a good nationalism and a good state, which simply and naturally emerges out of opposition to the invader and occupier. Because self-determination can only be achieved and articulated through the nation, and because self-determination precedes anarchist revolution/liberation, anarchism must be deferred until a clear, untroubled national space is secured. The complete imbrication of state and nation is something that passes Price by. He's an anarchist committed to bolstering a state, only to tear it down. And he is prepared to go rogue, either by state collaboration or collaboration with Nazis, by joining NATO-controlled brigades, for years on end, until Russia is defeated (whatever that means, since Russia holds the world's greatest nuclear ar-

[5] Here, Robert Paxton's definition is quite useful: 'Fascism may be defined as a form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victim-hood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy, and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion.'

[6] This is not my opinion, it is simply a fact – Hitlerism and Banderite nationalism are historically defeated and proscribed ideologies, because of they are hard-wired for killing and genocidal racism.

senal). Then he will emerge as the anarchist that he is, and by Jove! he will show the Ukrainian ruling class what he's made of. Only he won't, because he's a keyboard warrior, and the Ukrainians and the anarchists will do the dying for him.

The fatherland of the rich

In discussing the 'national question' and the problems of self-determination, Rosa Luxemburg proved more of an anarchist than Wayne Price or his quote from Bakunin. Her pamphlet from 1909 boldly states:

In a word, the formula, 'the right of nations to self-determination,' is essentially not a political and problematic guideline in the nationality question, but only a means of avoiding that question.[7]

Luxemburg holds fast to the class struggle, and refuses to be blindsided by floating notions of freedom and self-detemination. The nation is an instrument of class rule, national rights are expressed by the ruling class, they are expressed through ruling class interests, which come at the expense of the working class. Put simply: *'In a class society, "the nation" as a homogeneous socio-political entity does not exist.'*[8]

And, in a spicy retort to anarchists, she defends the class struggle:

In this case, as in many others, anarchism, the supposed antagonist of bourgeois liberalism, proved to be its worthy child. Anarchism, with characteristic "revolutionary" seriousness, accepted at face value the phraseology of the liberal ideology and, like the latter, showed only contempt for the historical and social content of the nation-state,

[7] https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1909/national-question/ch01.htm

[8] https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1909/national-question/ch01.htm

use of their country and resources as a NATO proxy. Here, for once, Wayne Price and I agree:

'Ukrainians, not Americans, or Germans, or French people, are doing the fighting and dying. For them it is not a "proxy war".'

And therein is the tragedy of the thing: they are cheap meat which the American and European ruling class are using to fight Russia. For keyboard warrior Wayne Price, laying down your life is priceless. And because you are fighting in a real army, for a real nation, that means that your death can never be for the interests of your ruling class and state, which is a client state of US Empire. All is pure in this azure sky.

All is clear for Ukrainian Defense Minister Aleksey Reznikov also, who spoke openly about his country being a NATO proxy. He reflected on how Ukraine is defending *'the entire West'* and how Russia was seen as the greatest threat to NATO:

'Today, Ukraine is addressing that threat. We're carrying out NATO's mission today, without shedding their blood. We shed our blood, so we expect them to provide weapons.'[14]

That's the Ukrainian ruling class. Here's a sample from the British one, from the mouth of the Prime Minister who torpedoed the peace talks in the spring of 2022 and who hosts Ukrainian Nazis in the English Parliament - Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson:

'Mate, let's face it. We're waging a proxy war!'[15]

Another reason, according to Price, this cannot be a proxy war, is because this is not an inter-imperial conflict. Why then is the US deciding if Ukraine can use long-range weapons to strike into Russia? Why is the whole NATO alliance committed to this war? Hasn't every NATO war been an imperialist one? It would be an uncomfortable truth exposing interests so large that they cannot be

[14] https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/ukraine-shedding-blood-to-carry-out-nato-mission:-ukraine-de

[15] 29th November 2024, in a Daily Telegraph podcast

Dreams of Ukrainian Agency

The above quoted passage from Price about cooperation with the government and the army, is the clearest expression of the position of 'defencism' which says that the nation comes first, libertarian struggle second. And because the nation – i.e. the Ukrainian ruling class – has allied itself with NATO[12] , it is also a Natopolitan defencism. In his response, Price gets exercised about being called a Natopolitan, which surprises me. He openly advocates allying with NATO against Russia. Perhaps a 'Tactical Natopolitan' would suit him better and his taste for paradox? Strategically anti-imperialist and libertarian, but tactically a NATO shill.

In the Black Flag issue from Spring of 2023, Price wrote: *'That they take arms from the Western governments means little – they need arms and where else can they get them?'* In the Black Flag issue from the Autumn of 2024: *'Is the NATO involvement so great that the Ukrainians cannot be regarded as fighting for their country?'* In typically deceptive language, Price speaks of 'Ukrainians', never the Ukrainian state, and of 'weapons' instead of complete NATO training-logistics-targetting-command. In this kindergarten world, 'Ukrainian agency' is a notion with some currency. Which agency is that? The one that was denied when Boris Johnson was sent to tear up the Istanbul Accords in Spring of 2022? The one that sees NATO deciding on when and where Ukraine should launch its catastrophic offensives, such as Summer of 2023? The one which drives Ukrainian women to fill German brothels?[13] What I see is brutal exploitation of a people in the service of NATO interests and with the aim of bleeding Russia, and ideally regime change and Russia's Balkanisation. And their ultimate exploitation is the cynical

[12] NATO membership is etched into Ukrainian constitution since 2019 – see the Ukraine page on the NATO website: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37750.htm

[13] https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/plus253481548/Prostitution-In-den-Bordellen-sind-es-mittlerweile-etwa-50-Ukrainerinnen.html

which it set down as nothing else than an embodiment of "freedom," of the "will of the people," and of similar empty words.[9]

If you prefer this stated in an anarchist voice, we can turn to Rudolf Rocker in his big book 'Nationalism and Culture' (1933) - the content is broadly the same:

It is, therefore, quite meaningless to speak of a community of national interests; for that which the ruling class of every country has up to now defended as national interest has never been anything but the special interest of privileged minorities in society secured by the exploitation and political suppression of the great masses. Likewise, the soil of the so-called "fatherland" and its natural riches have always been in the possession of these classes, so that one can with full right speak of a "fatherland of the rich." If the nation were in fact the community of interests which it has been called, then there would not be in modern history revolutions and civil wars, because the people do not resort to the arms of revolt purely from pleasure — just as little do the endless wage fights occur because the working sections of the population are too well off![10]

Class struggle traverses every aspect of the nation state, it cannot be shelved in deference to the interests of the ruling class, or some fatherland of the rich. But this is exactly what Price is advocating. He starts by boilerplate libertarian statements, only to throw them all away:

Anarchists oppose their statist ruling classes. In Ukraine, anarchists do not support Zelensky's party, nor run in elections, nor give any political support to his government. They oppose the government's austerity policies and its anti-union laws. They do not endorse the conscription laws and the bureaucratic army. But they do not condemn the government and army for fighting against invasion

[9] https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1909/national-question/ch02.htm

[10] https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/rudolf-rocker-nationalism-and-culture

and occupation! With this they can cooperate (so long as they are too weak to overturn the capitalist state).

Who are these anarchists Price speaks of? No example is given. To him 'anarchists', like 'Ukrainians' are a monolithic, united mass. These anarchists do not endorse conscription (because presumably conscription is slavery), but they also don't condemn the government and the way it fights (through conscription!). Because they are too weak, these anarchists will and do and should abandon their anarchism, to submit to the *'capitalist state'* which will lay claim to their bodies and send them to fight in their *'bureaucratic army'* which they don't endorse. Because they are too weak to fight the state, they should abandon all class war and submit to the state's war for its own survival. As if this will increase their capacities for class struggle! Instead it's much more likely to land them dead in a ditch. But even dead in a ditch, they will have retained their principles of cooperating with a state, as long as they denounce it. In the words of Wayne Price: *'I would prefer revolutionary internationalism.'* But… the nation comes first.

Near the end of his text, Price upbraids me for not raising the standard of anarchist revolution. He even accuses me of pacifism. The indignity! To be honest, I'd rather be a pacifist committed to creative libertarian forces, than someone who advocates for the pressganging of working class men abroad, in the defence of soil and nation, all the while hiding behind a computer screen. As things stand, we class struggle anarchists aren't pacifists, we are antimilitarists and internationalists. We understand the state as the mechanism of nationalist command-and-obey which claims the monopoly on violence, enshrines the justness of its wars, and the monopoly on killing machines (from tanks all the way to nuclear weapons). We don't issue plucky and manly calls for the slaughter of our working class brothers and sisters. In fact, we see this as hopelessly compromised. We see all the politicians, all the nation states and the media and their little Natopolitans baying for hate and industrial murder. We see the racket which

is the arms manufacturing and trade and the revolving doors of the military-industrial-political-media complex. We see the global system of imperial domination and economic exploitation by Western states, i.e. the NATO bloc. We see how our states are hard-wired for armed domination, war and genocide. We know the history of NATO wars and US crimes and we work against them. We understand very well that a strengthened state, engaging in war abroad will turn its sights on us domestically, at the first given opportunity.

To rhapsodise about armed revolution when our numbers are small, when our movement is divided by identity politics, separated from the mass of working class people and split by support for statist, nationalist projects like the Ukrainian one, would be unseemly. Moreover, it seems that Price can only think of revolution as an armed uprising, a Maidan-like putsch, which is why he cannot understand that antimilitarism is one of the pillars of social revolution, that undermining the control of the state and disarming it is what anarchists are working for. Until militarism is weakened, discredited and dismantled, the state's and the nation's stranglehold on the working class and its free liberatory forces will continue. For Price, antimilitarism is an interesting pastime, perhaps a page from history, perhaps even outside of the domain of revolutionary activity. For us, it is one of the main pillars of working class liberation, because, as Rudolf Rocker says:

War not only affects human nature calamitously in general by constant appeal to its most brutal and cruel motives, but the military discipline which it demands at last stifles every libertarian movement among the people and then systematically breeds the degrading brutality of blind obedience, which has always been the father of all reaction.[11]

[11] https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/rudolf-rocker-nationalism-and-culture