

An Anarchist Dies on Ukraine's Battlefield

Norman Nawrocki

2025



We mourn the loss of David Chichkan, 39 years old, a renowned Ukrainian anarchist, artist and comrade who died on August 10 from wounds inflicted by fascist Russian forces the day before. He died defending the Zaporizhzhia front in southeast Ukraine on land which Nestor Makhno's anarchist army once controlled from 1918 to 1921. Always on the side of justice, David fought for solidarity without borders, for a world with no masters, where everyone could live free.

On August 17, hundreds of Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian anarchists gathered in the historic Maidan Square in Kyiv's centre to bury and honour him. It was the largest gathering of anarchists in Ukraine since the Russian invasion. The hearse carrying his coffin drove around the square blaring old anarchist songs in Ukrainian, while mourners set off flares, carried his artwork, and brandished black and red flags.

Widely known and respected in the Ukrainian anarchist movement, David was part of a collective of soldiers called the United Anti-Authoritarian Forces of Ukraine. In his words, "We show the world that all groups voluntarily

join our army to defend the country, not only the right wing or the far right, but also Jews, LGBTQI, Roma, Muslims, and the left wing.”

Born in Kyiv in 1986 to a family that spans generations of artists, David became an anti-fascist at nineteen, joined SHARP —Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice—and fought racists and neo-Nazis in the streets. As an anarchist, he challenged anyone intolerant of otherness, including authoritarian leftists, Stalinists, and supporters of the USSR.

An internationalist, he donated his wonderful art to causes from Belarus to Belgium to raise funds for anarchist prisoners. He generously contributed pieces for one of my plays, ‘Marusya Nikiforova, Ukraine’s legendary anarchist warrior,’ and for a YouTube music video for a fundraiser for the anti-authoritarian Solidarity Collectives in Ukraine.

His early work was inspired by street anti-fascists and other protesters. Some of his art exhibits provoked a reaction from ultra-rightist Ukrainians who vandalized two of them in 2017 and 2022, and forced the cancellation of a third last year.

After the 2022 Russian invasion, he tried to join the army, but was rejected because of poor health. During this period, he devoted himself to drawing and painting anti-authoritarian fighters on the front, saying in one interview that “these heroes are representatives of the anarchist and anti-authoritarian socialist movements who defend Ukraine in the ranks of the armed forces.”

He said that the collective portraits were “based on friends from social networks, but also comrades and friends. Volunteer internationalists with left wing anti-authoritarian political views... brave guys and girls who were involved in rallies, protests, direct action and trade unions ... now they are repelling the attacks of the fascist-imperial invaders of the Kremlin army.” Once his health improved, he enlisted voluntarily in February 2024. He wrote to me that, “if I am lucky, I’ll be a mortar operator.”

“I love Ukraine, I see some advantages of living here even during the war,” he said. He is survived by his wife and infant son. David’s artwork is at [instagram.com/davidchichkan/](https://www.instagram.com/davidchichkan/)

Support the Ukrainian resistance movement and people affected by the Russian invasion through the Solidarity Collectives: solidaritycollective.org/en

Norman Nawrocki is a Montreal cabaret artist, violinist, actor and educator. He has written 19 books, many theatre pieces, and recorded over 70 music albums.



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Fifth Estate #417, Winter 2025

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