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Ukrainian Anarchist Organizations' Statement On the Attack Against the Equality March

Various authors

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Note: on Saturday, June 6 the Right Sector and other homophobic militants came to attack the Equality march, which was a part of LGBT Pride week in Kyiv. The police did provide protection for the event itself (possibly due to the presence of some high-ranking diplomats on the site), but after the march was over, they ordered the crowd of LGBTQIA activists to disperse. The transport infrastructure of the area did not allow for speedy departure, and nazis hunted their victims one by one on the streets. Up to 20 people were injured as a result. This text is a joint statement of anarchist groups following the incident.*

We, the anarchists, took part in the Equality March in order to support every person's right to live in the world without discrimination. The attack on the march committed by the organized far right shows the depth of hatred and prejudices popular amongst the large part of Ukrainian society.

We are more than sceptic about the illusory “European values” — we only acknowledge the universal values of social progress, freedom, equality, and struggle for them — but still we want to address the pro-European philistines who are convinced that the LGBTQIA* are not having any problems in our country: here they are, those very problems! You just refuse to take off your rose-tinted glasses through which you are looking at “Europe”, while the mood that dominates in our society is much closer to the “spiritual braces” imposed today by the Russian leadership. Some of you insist that it is no time for the minority rights in the circumstance of war — but we strongly believe that this march (even though its plan might not have been brought to completion to the fullest extent) was more than appropriate, along with all the other events of KyivPride2015.

We hope that for people from the liberal milieu this event has finally showed the political face of the nationalist and conservative forces. First they attack the “marginal” radical left, then they turn against the “perverts and degenerate artists” — and their political documents also contain the notions of “liberal extremism” which is one of the far-right’s targets as well. Eventually they are going to declare everybody except for themselves as their enemies, and nobody will be able to hole up at home. The events at the Equality March are perfect indicators of the danger of idealizing and glorifying the rightists, and of the importance of critical evaluation of reality.

The affinity group of our activists who attended the march was able to escape the area virtually unharmed thanks to our skills of discipline and mutual help. Meanwhile, there were victims among others: LGBTQIA* activists and “common” people who supported the event. They fell victims to the nazi, because they had entrusted their safety to the organizers of the march, not knowing what to do when opposed by the far right violence. While the probability of a homophobic attack had been close to 100%, those who organized the march did little to ensure the safety of the participants.

As we have some experience of our own in conducting successful events despite the far right aggression, we can name a few critical oversights: lack of attention to certain basic rules of safety, too heavy (albeit willy-nilly) reliance on the police, and absurd safety instructions which dissuaded activists from bringing their means of self-defence. But there is one problem from which all other stem: the lack of transparent and horizontal decision-making. Directives coming from above will never be able to protect as well as discussion on equal terms.

Our activists came to support the march unconditionally, despite the flirting with patriotic and nationalist public (futile, just as expected) in the various statements by the organizers and in spite of the invitation of ambassadors and other VIPs who turned out to be “more equal” than other participants of the march. For us, the struggle of LGBTQIA* for equality is the integral part of anti-capitalist and anti-fascist struggle. Real freedom is only possible in a world with no discrimination. Therefore we cannot tolerate the pseudo-revolutionaries who are ignorant or condescending to gender issues— sexism, machismo and homophobia do not belong to the radical left. On the other hand, a local struggle exclusively for LGBTQIA* rights without taking into account the wider context is doomed to failure: as long as capitalism and hierarchical society exist, there will always be groups structurally discriminated against.

We think that the measures aimed at establishing and protecting LGBTQIA* rights can only be efficient and perspective if organized horizontally, when everybody who are ready to support those measures has equal opportunities for expressing their views. A necessary condition for this struggle to be successful is the deep discussion on the systemic violence, discrimination, and exploitation and on the radical struggle against those problems. The agenda and the format of any event should be discussed and formed by all subjects who support its declared values. From now on, we will join the next years’ Equality marches on the condition of our direct involvement in ev-

ery aspect of the organizing process: from conceptual planning to safety issues. On these marches we'll form separate anarchist columns which will assert our views on the struggle for rights and freedoms. We hope this will allow to make all further Equality marches much better organized and efficient, will help LGBTQIA* to consolidate and raise their political activity, and will strengthen the cooperation between the activist circles.

In our conservative and homophobic society even a hundred meter walk behind a tight police cordon is a local victory. We will tirelessly work on furthering and developing this success. Only in solidarity between all the downtrodden and discriminated groups can we reach social liberation.

We express full solidarity with LGBTQIA* community and support their struggle, stating unambiguously that the rights of LGBTQIA* are human rights. We wish the victims of the nationalist aggression to get well as soon as possible.

Rebel, love, don't give up your rights!

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