

"I am really inspired by the principled and courageous stand taken by comrade Bogdan"

Campaign to free anti-war Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk is gaining international support

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The campaign to free Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk, an opponent of NATO's proxy war, from imprisonment by the fascistic Ukrainian regime is gaining international support.

Syrotiuk was jailed over a month ago on bogus charges of "high treason" based on the "thought crime" of expressing his opposition to the Ukraine-Russia war and contributing articles to the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Syrotiuk is threatened with life in prison. As a socialist internationalist and Trotskyist, Syrotiuk, who founded and leads the Young Guard of Bolshevik Leninists (YGBL) in Ukraine and Russia, has fought for the unification of the Russian and Ukrainian working class in opposition to the war and the capitalist governments of Zelensky in Kiev and Putin in Moscow.

In the US, journalist Katie Halper, who co-hosts the popular podcast "Useful Idiots," posted the statement by the WSWs demanding freedom for Bogdan Syrotiuk. Her tweet was shared by journalist Rania Khalek from BT Newsroom.

Journalists Kit Klarenberg and Alex Rubinstein discussed the case of Bogdan Syrotiuk on their podcast.

US high school student and member of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), Landon Gourov, issued a video statement, appealing to high school youth throughout the world to join the fight to free Bogdan. He said,

Bogdan is just 25 years old, only a few years older than myself. The trampling of democratic rights knows no ages, it seeks to purge opposition from the working class and the youth. Bogdan's case is about the defense of democratic rights and opposition to

war. Not taking up the defense of Bogdan would effectively mean to not wage a struggle against war and for democratic rights. What would this mean for the youth?

One thing must be absolutely clear, the same imperialist governments that arm and fund Israel in its genocide are the same governments which are also arming and funding Ukraine in its conflict with Russia. ...President Biden has made clear that the potential use of nuclear weapons will not deter him or the US government from attaining its goals with Russia. ...Moreover, a war with Russia would require an even more massive military armament from the United States than which already exists. The United States would seek to forcibly recruit soldiers from the youth through a military draft. Just as is now the case in Ukraine, students and youth would be forcibly removed from their homes in order to fight a war that is not in their interests, but in the interests of the imperialist powers, who are eager and bloodthirsty to offset their economic decline through the redivision of the world and its resources amongst themselves. ...If the defense of Bogdan is not taken up, it would have far-reaching implications. Not only would an innocent youth be condemned to life in prison, effectively on a death sentence. It would also set a precedent for the violent crackdown on anti-war and left-wing youth in the US and internationally. I therefore call upon high school youth in the US and internationally to take up the defense of Bogdan! Join the IYSSE in fighting for his release from prison!

Over the past week, the campaign to free Bogdan has also been finding a growing response in Ukraine, Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. The Marxist Tendency in Ukraine has called for the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk. However, for politically factional reasons, the organization chose not to properly identify Syrotiuk's affiliation with the International Committee of the Fourth International.

In Russia, a group called "Working Class" posted a statement from the WWSWS calling for the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk on its social media page. The WWSWS has also received submissions from individuals in Russia and Ukraine in support of the campaign, with one stating, "Free the political prisoners." Latif from Uzbekistan wrote, "Freedom of speech, release him!" Ksenia from Serbia wrote, "Freedom for Bogdan! Support from Serbia!"

Adrian from the UK said, "Socialism is freedom from the shackles of imperialism for the working class. We must speak out and support all peace activists." Terry, also from the UK, commented, "The false imprisonment of Bogdan is a total indictment of the lack of freedom of speech and basic democratic rights in Ukraine."

Michael in Australia wrote: "The persecution of Bogdan, along with Julian Assange, David McBride, Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, lay bare the plans of Capitalist classes, and their political representatives for war. Going hand in hand with preparations for war are the crackdowns on democratic rights; and suppression of any anti-war sentiment. Bogdan, and any persecuted whistleblowers must be immediately released and allowed to live freely, wherever they wish in the world."

In Sri Lanka, several prominent artists, academics and journalists have issued statements of support.

Kuruupu from Sri Lanka wrote to the WWSWS, "Arresting Bogdan Syrotiuk and charging him with high treason shows the hatred of the Ukrainian government towards the democratic rights, and the socialist perspective. It also shows the hypocrisy of imperialist states who claim they are fighting to safeguard the democracy. The contradictions of world capitalist order are tensed to such a degree, that they are ready to risk and stepping towards a devastating nuclear war. They can no longer allow socialists and internationalists to express their opinion to a broader public and [are] determined to hunt them. This arrest is a direct challenge and a threat to international working class and the working class should take immediate steps to take class actions against it."

An Indian supporter of the WWSWS and victimized auto parts worker, Balakrishnan, has also denounced the arrest of Syrotiuk. He told the WWSWS, "I strongly condemn the arrest of comrade Bogdan by the pro-imperialist and fascistic Zelensky regime and demand his immediate release."

Balakrishnan was formerly employed at a Motherson Automotive Technologies and Engineering (MATE) plant in the Sriperumbudur and Oragadam industrial belt, which is located on the outskirts of Chennai, the capital of the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Balakrishnan and 38 other Motherson workers who had been in the forefront of organizing a 140-day strike for wage hikes and better working conditions were arbitrarily dismissed from their jobs in 2020. He is now working hard at a building site for a living, earning just 850 rupees (\$10.2) per day, on which he has to feed four children. He said,

"Workers and youth in India are increasingly aware that the US-NATO imperialist powers are carrying out a proxy war against Russia in Ukraine."

He continued, "I am really inspired by the principled and courageous stand taken by comrade Bogdan. In calling for class solidarity of Russian and Ukrainian workers he and his comrades oppose reactionary national chauvinistic wars being waged by the ruling elites in both Russia and Ukraine."

Pointing to the connection between the US backed Israeli genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza and the increasing attacks on anti war protesters specifically targeting US students, Balakrishnan said, "The only progressive solution to the growing threat of a catastrophic nuclear World War III is the fight for world socialist revolution. The Hindu chauvinistic Modi government has rallied behind the US imperialism in its war drive against China and in Israeli genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza."

"The fate of workers in India", he concluded, "is closely linked with the workers in imperialist countries as well as in other countries in the struggle for world socialism."

To get involved in the fight to free Bogdan Syrotiuk, sign and spread the petition, post a statement and make a financial contribution here.



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