

SEP (Sri Lanka) public meeting demands immediate release of Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our reporters
30 May 2024

A well-attended online public meeting, titled “Oppose imperialist war,” organised by the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka last week denounced the imprisonment of Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk and unanimously passed a resolution demanding his immediate release.

Held on May 23, the event was attended by workers, students and youth from across the island, along with supporters from India.

Statements by an academic, a senior journalist and several prominent artists in Sri Lanka condemning the frame-up of Syrotiuk have been published this week.

The online meeting’s resolution published below was in response to the global “Free Bogdan” campaign initiated by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the World Socialist Web Site (WSWS):

Twenty-five-year-old Bogdan Syrotiuk, a leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), which is active in Russia, Ukraine and other countries in the former Soviet Union, has been imprisoned in a maximum-security prison in Nikolaev in southern Ukraine, after being arrested by the SBU, the state security service of the fascistic Ukrainian regime of President Zelensky. He is accused of “treason” and faces the prospect of a lifetime prison term, which is akin to capital punishment.

The SBU charges are directed not only against Bogdan but all left-wing and socialist opponents of the Zelensky regime, and the International Committee of the Fourth International and the WSWS in particular.

The SBU, which denounces the WSWS as an organ of an “anti-Ukraine information war” operated by

Russia, accuses Bogdan of engaging in “preparation of statements authorised by WSWS representatives, which is a propaganda and information agency of Russia.”

Countering the SBU’s bogus accusations, David North, Chairperson of the International Editorial Board of the WSWS, summarises the principled history of the International Committee in a perspective published on May 17, 2024:

“The ICFI’s opposition to the US-NATO war in Ukraine is an essential element of its political program, deeply rooted in the socialist and internationalist principles of the Trotskyist movement. The attempt of the Ukrainian regime to portray this opposition as an instrument of Putin’s propaganda network is as viciously mendacious as it is politically absurd. The intransigent opposition of the International Committee of the Fourth International to the Putin regime—which emerged as a consequence of the Stalinist bureaucracy’s final betrayal of socialism and the restoration of capitalism in the former USSR—is a fundamental political fact that is substantiated not only in written texts numbering in the hundreds, but also in the exhaustively documented activity of the Trotskyist movement spanning decades.”

We, the participants of today’s meeting titled “Oppose imperialist war,” organised by the Socialist Equality Party and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality, fully endorse these facts.

We also completely reject the SBU’s claim that the YGBL is an agent of the Putin regime. Countless articles published by the YGBL make clear that it has taken a consistent proletarian internationalist standpoint against the Putin government.

The YGBL statement entitled “For the organization of an international movement of workers and young people against war!” published on the WSWS on October 12, 2022, has powerfully explained its position:

“The reactionary regime of Vladimir Putin emerged from the treacherous dissolution of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy and the restoration of capitalism. The policies of Putin, in the final analysis, are aimed at safeguarding the wealth of the post-Soviet oligarchy against the pressure of Western imperialism from above and, even more critically, against the movement of the Russian working class from below.”

Contrary to the SBU charges, Bogdan and the YGBL fight for the mobilisation of the international working class on an international socialist program. They fight in particular to build a Ukraine-Russia Socialist Republic as part of a World Socialist Federation, by uniting the working class in Ukraine and Russia against the Zelensky and the Putin regimes.

The real dynamic of the show trial against Bogdan is the fear of the Zelensky regime that the perspective of the Trotskyist YGBL and the ICFI will find an expression in the enormous popular opposition developing against its policies that have led to the deaths of 500,000 Ukrainians and untold suffering for the Ukrainian people.

From the imperialist centres to the countries in South Asia, where we live, capitalist governments subject those who oppose and reveal their crimes to state terror. These governments have accelerated the attacks on basic democratic rights, mainly freedom of thought and expression, to levels not seen since World War II.

Only the international working class, armed with the program of world socialist revolution, can end the war and the attacks on social and democratic rights.

In the perspective cited above, David North states, “The fight for Bogdan’s freedom must be taken up by workers, students and all those who are committed to the defense of democratic rights and opposed to the escalation of imperialist wars that, unless stopped, threaten humanity with a nuclear catastrophe.”

We pledge to take up this responsibility. Thus, we express our complete support for the global campaign initiated by the ICFI to demand the immediate release of Bogdan Syrotyuk from prison and the withdrawal of the political frame-up against him!



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