

French workers and youth call to free imprisoned Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our reporters
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As they joined in the International Committee of the Fourth International's (ICFI) global picketing of Ukrainian embassies demanding the liberation of Bogdan Syrotiuk, members of the *Parti de l'égalité socialiste* (PES) interviewed workers and youth in Paris. They called to free Bogdan Syrotiuk, a socialist fighting to unify Russian and Ukrainian workers against the war but who has been jailed on fraudulent charges of being a Russian agent and is now threatened with life in prison.

Nadia and Fatima called for the liberation of Syrotiuk, supporting his call to unify Russian and Ukrainian workers against the war. Nadia said, "He should not be in prison in any way. He has the right to speak out, he has freedom of expression, as we do also. He has said nothing bad, why has he been taken away and locked up this way?"

They rejected the political lie that opposition to the war in Ukraine is supposedly the same as support for Russian President Vladimir Putin. Fatima explained: "We're against the war, too. My father fought in the war, he served in the armed forces for 17 years including during the war against the Germans [World War II] and then the Algerian war. He had three ribs taken out of him by the German air force."

Asked about the sympathies of leaders of the Ukrainian regime for Ukrainian Nazi-collaborationists like Stepan Bandera, Fatima said: "We are not satisfied with this. People are dying, youth are dying, it is horrible. There is a truly infernal danger."

Nadia connected the struggle to free Syrotiuk to the struggle against war with Russia: "We do not want this war, and we cannot allow people [like Syrotiuk] to be condemned this way. He has done nothing wrong. We

should be looking at the good he has been doing, not passing judgment on his political activity without any solid basis."

Fatima added, "We want everyone to live together, as brothers and sisters, to live in honesty with each other. Why make children to then send them to be killed? It's sick. We worked to raise children, and as soon as they have grown up just a little bit, they are sent off to be massacred. Why should they die? What good does it do? It is unfair, it's horrible, and if we do not stop it, afterwards everyone will disappear."

PES members also spoke to Zach, a high school student, who called to free Bogdan Syrotiuk: "He must be freed. He is someone who is for peace and for building the unity of the workers. This is something that is very important for fighting the regime of Putin."

Zach compared Syrotiuk to Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jewish officer who was falsely convicted of treason by an antisemitic cabal in the army. Asked what he thought of the argument that opposing the US-NATO war with Russia in Ukraine is the same as support for Putin, he said: "That is a lie, as far as I am concerned, like the Dreyfus Affair. No one should be imprisoned on the basis of lies and unverified allegations."

PES members also interviewed Clémence, a reader of the WSWS. She said, "We must demand the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk! His arrest by the Ukrainian authorities is an attack on freedom of expression, like that of Julian Assange. It is part of a campaign of repression against not only left-wing but also anti-war and anti-capitalist views of all kinds that is becoming increasingly widespread across Europe and the world."

Clémence refuted the political lie that NATO's war against Russia is a war for democracy: "Ukraine is not

a democracy! Elections have been suspended, and the country is under martial law. Parties claiming to be left-wing have been banned by government order, on the pretext that they are pro-Russian. On the other hand, parties like Svoboda, which directly descend from the [Ukrainian] collaboration with the Nazi occupying forces, have almost total freedom.”

She added, “For their part, the capitalist great powers in Europe and the United States are promoting the far right to maintain their economic and geopolitical interests by criminalizing the left and openly supporting and arming the genocide in Gaza.”

On the ICFI’s call to build an international movement in the working class to free Bogdan Syrotiuk and stop the war, Clémence said she supports “demonstrating for Bogdan Syrotiuk and all those oppressed by authoritarian regimes. Let’s create an anti-war movement in the working class, the only class with the power to stop the production and transport of military material for the belligerent governments and to bring down the capitalist regimes of Putin and Zelensky and their allies.”



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