

# Former Commander-in-Chief of Ukrainian Armed Forces Zaluzhny is now the ambassador to the UK

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When Socialist Equality Party members and supporters lobbied the Ukrainian Embassy in London last Thursday, the intention was to deliver a letter demanding the release of our comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk to the ambassador.

The SBU secret service are attempting to frame Bogdan, a Trotskyist opponent of NATO's proxy war, the Zelensky regime and of Russia's invasion, as a supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Before reading out an Open Letter to the Ukrainian government, SEP National Secretary Chris Marsden explained that the new Ukrainian ambassador to the UK is Valery Zaluzhny, "who is the former head of the Ukrainian armed forces and is well aware of the crimes of the Ukrainian regime of which we speak."

As with other embassies on this international day of protest, staff refused to take receipt of the letter, hiding inside locked gates in a clear demonstration of the nakedly criminal character of the Ukrainian regime and its frame-up of Bogdan.

Zaluzhny is a fitting representative, with blood on his hands. That he was appointed ambassador to the UK in March confirms the SEP's insistence that a major escalation of NATO's proxy war against Russia is being prepared.

Zaluzhny served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine from July 27, 2021 until February 8, 2024. He led Ukraine's disastrous "counter-offensive" last year, which led to the deaths of at least 125,000 soldiers. Overall, the war has claimed the lives of at least 400,000 Ukrainian soldiers.

Zelensky removed Zaluzhny not as a result of the failure of the offensive, but because he was seen as a serious threat and was set to be his main rival in presidential elections originally scheduled for 2024. Zelensky cancelled the elections as tensions with the frontrunner

Zaluzhny escalated last Autumn.

The WSWS noted of Zaluzhny, "Above all, he has established a close relationship with the country's far-right. He has publicly expressed admiration for the Ukrainian fascist leader Stepan Bandera and has been photographed repeatedly with far-right paraphernalia."

During his time as commander of the armed forces, he appointed the leader of the fascist Right Sector organisation Dmytro Yarosh as his advisor. He has posed for photos standing proudly alongside other leading Right Sector members and in front of busts and portraits of the Ukrainian nationalist Nazi collaborators Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych.

Zaluzhny was removed from his post on February 8, 2024 before taking up the position as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the United Kingdom on March 7. He now serves as a point man between the Ukrainian regime and its military and British imperialism, with the full support of his arch rival. Zelensky said of the appointment of Zaluzhny, "Our alliance with Britain must only grow stronger."

That the UK was chosen as Zaluzhny's destination after being deposed speaks to British imperialism's leading role in the NATO-run war, as an anti-Russian provocateur, supplier of advanced weaponry and trainer of Ukrainian troops. His placement in the leafy splendour of Holland Park was seen as crucial to the effective prosecution of the war against Russia.

This has taken on additional significance as a result of the snap general election scheduled for July 4, with Sir Keir Starmer's Labour Party most likely replacing the crisis-ridden Conservative government of Rishi Sunak. With Labour preparing to implement a major escalation of the war following a scheduled NATO conference on July 9-12, Zaluzhny can and must play a key role.

He not only has intimate knowledge of Ukraine's military, but enjoys a close relationship with the UK's chief of the armed forces Admiral Sir Tony Radakin.

Radakin, along with other senior UK military figures, was intimately involved in every move made by Ukraine's forces under Zaluzhny's command.

The Guardian's Defence and Security editor in Kyiv, Dan Sabbagh, reported on August 26, 2023: "Eleven days ago, some of the most senior members of the armed forces in the Nato alliance travelled to a secret location on the Polish-Ukrainian border to meet Ukraine's chief military commander, Gen Valerii Zaluzhnyi [Zaluzhny], for what was privately billed as 'a council of war'.

"It was no ordinary discussion: Zaluzhnyi brought his entire command team with him on the roughly 300-mile journey from Kyiv. The aim of the five-hour meeting was to help reset Ukraine's military strategy – top of the agenda was what to do about the halting progress of Ukraine's counteroffensive, along with battle plans for the gruelling winter ahead plus longer-term strategy as the war inevitably grinds into 2024."

Sabbagh reported, "Particularly notable was the presence not just of NATO's military chief, the American Gen Christopher Cavoli, but also Adm Sir Tony Radakin, Britain's most senior military officer, who is now acknowledged in Washington and Kyiv as an increasingly important actor in helping Ukraine overcome the Russian invaders."

Amid the crisis produced by the collapse of the counter-offensive, Radakin was chosen as the key figure to represent the imperialist powers under conditions in which it was considered politically unadvisable for the US to be openly involved. Sabbagh reports, "That the Poland-Ukraine border meeting was not the first such conversation. The summit at the border had partly come about after Radakin travelled without any British ministers to Kyiv, where he held an unpublicised 45-minute meeting with the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, aimed, defence sources said, at better understanding Ukraine's strategy and how the west could help.

"White House anxiety about the US appearing to be closely involved in the Ukraine war has meant that Radakin's opposite number in the Pentagon, Gen Mark Milley, has been barred from travelling to Ukraine. But Britain, whose military is far smaller than the US, has no such concerns."

He added, "A few days earlier, Zaluzhnyi had been urged by Milley, in a teleconference on 10 August where

Radakin was also dialled in, to focus the counteroffensive on 'one main front', the New York Times reported."

Sabbagh's briefing made clear the high esteem in which Radakin was held. "Oleksiy Danilov, secretary to the country's national security council, said that Zaluzhnyi had told him after the meeting at the border 'that's our guy'."

The appointment of Zaluzhny to London ensures that Britain remains a centre of intrigue to implement the most brutal and dangerous war policy since 1945 with no public discussion and no democratic mandate whatsoever.

The Socialist Equality Party is standing two candidates in the election, Tom Scripps in Holborn and St Pancras, and Darren Paxton in Inverness. The SEP election manifesto explains:

The SEP is using this election to break the conspiracy of silence maintained by the capitalist media, the major parties, the trade unions and what passes for the 'left' over the acute dangers facing the working class...

Building a new anti-war movement demands an irrevocable break with the Labour Party.

Sir Keir Starmer wants to form a government that continues the Conservative Party's support for the Gaza genocide and the UK's leading role in the US-led war with Russia. Labour backs sending NATO troops to Ukraine and missile strikes on Russian soil with NATO-supplied weapons that could drag the UK, Europe and the world into war. It is committed to strengthening Britain's nuclear weapons programme, backed by Starmer's pledge that he will use them.... A vote for Starmer and Labour is a vote for austerity, repression, genocide and war! A vote for Scripps and the SEP is a vote for equality, peace and socialism!



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