

Campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk spreads amid official media blackout

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Amidst an almost complete blackout by the mainstream media, the campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk, a 25-year-old socialist opponent of the war in Ukraine who has been imprisoned by the fascistic Ukrainian secret service SBU on trumped-up charges, is spreading throughout the world.

On June 13, American journalist Matt Taibbi reported on the arrest of Bogdan Syrotiuk and the ban on the *World Socialist Web Site* by the Ukrainian government on his blog “Racket News.” Taibbi noted:

Socialist or communist figures in both Ukraine and Russia have attracted particular official attention since Russia’s invasion in February 2022, perhaps because of the history of successful agitation in the region. Syrotiuk’s Young Guard, a Trotskyist group operating throughout the former Soviet Union, advocates for an end to the war and cooperation between the Russian and Ukrainian working classes, while opposing the governments of *both* Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky. A month before war broke out, in January of 2022, they made contact with the *World Socialist Web Site*, another Trotskyite organization that opposes “all governments” and “the defense of the national state,” not just in Ukraine but everywhere.

Taibbi quoted David North, the chairperson of the editorial board of the WSWS and national chairperson of the Socialist Equality Party (US), as saying, “The irony of this is, is that we could see our members who are active in Russia arrested by the Putin government.” North stressed to Taibbi that, while the “provocative and aggressive” policies of the US and NATO were responsible for the outbreak of the conflict, “[n]evertheless, we opposed Putin’s invasion of Ukraine” and are “very opposed to this view of Putin as some sort of great leader of a new multipolar movement.”

Taibbi highlighted the silence of the Western media on the persecution of left-wing opponents of the war in Ukraine:

Writer Bogdan Syrotiuk has been detained and a prominent socialist site blocked, while a new list of Ukrainian media enemies is released. The Western press response? Silence. ... Syrotiuk is the kind of figure who’s rarely defended by American authorities, making his prospects for release poor, absent attention from international organizations. Will left-leaning outlets apart from the WSWS demand answers about

our government’s role in this episode?

As if to confirm Taibbi’s diagnosis of the deliberate silence by the Western press, the *New York Times* on June 18 published a piece that was co-authored by three of its war-propagandists-in-chief, Andrew Kramer, Constant Meheut, and Maria Varenikova, under the headline “In Ukraine, Concerns Mount Over Narrowing Press Freedoms.” There can be no question that this article, as all of the *New York Times*’s coverage on the war, was closely coordinated with the military and intelligence agencies.

The *Times* reported on a small subsection of the blatant attack on democratic rights in Ukraine, focusing largely on recent incidents that centered on open censorship of pro-war opponents of Volodymyr Zelensky and outlets that publish exposures on corruption. The article was no doubt motivated in part by concerns within sections of the ruling class that the ever more blatant attacks on democratic rights in Ukraine are undermining NATO’s war propaganda, according to which Ukraine is waging a war in defense of “democracy” against Russia.

At the same time, it was aimed at deliberately covering up the scale of the attacks on democratic rights and the fact that their main targets are left-wing opponents of the war. The report was published days after the publication of an Open Letter by David North to the Ukrainian government, and the organization of pickets at Ukrainian embassies in half a dozen countries demanding the freedom of Syrotiuk.

Yet the *Times* deliberately failed to reference the persecution of the young socialist and the Ukrainian government’s recent ban on the WSWS. Nor did it make mention of any other of the systematic state attacks on left-wing opponents of the war, and the brutal rounding up of men from the streets to force them into a military meat grinder that has already cost the lives of half a million or more Ukrainians.

Despite the blackout in the mainstream media, the campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk is spreading across the world. Following a report by the WSWS on its ban by the Ukrainian government and international pickets at Ukrainian embassies last week, hundreds have signed the petition to free Bogdan. Information about the case is being shared on social media by prominent figures such as the Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei.

The WSWS also continues to receive submissions in support of Bogdan’s freedom from throughout the world. We are publishing a selection of the most recent comments below and urge all our readers to sign the petition and submit comments, and redouble your efforts to make the persecution of Bogdan Syrotiuk as widely known as possible

by getting involved directly in the campaign to fight for his freedom today.

Rodney, Australia

Bogdan's struggle embodies all of the principles of uniting the international working class.

James, UK

I wholeheartedly support the campaign to free this innocent young Trotskyist, a victim of the US/NATO Fascist Alliance supporting the Fascist regime in Ukraine.

Chrisantha, Sri Lanka

Immediately release the socialist leader Bogdan Syrotiuk the war opponent of Ukraine.

Nathan, US

I stand in solidarity with Bogdan Syrotiuk. He is a true internationalist who opposes both the fascistic policies of the Zelensky government and the reactionary agenda of the Putin regime. Bogdan's unwavering commitment to uniting the working class against war and exploitation is an inspiration. Let us unite in demanding his freedom and defending democratic rights globally.

Liam, Australia

We can't let lies go unchallenged. Bogdan did nothing wrong and is only being held prisoner since he was actively against the slaughter of innocent people by imperialist governments and their proxy states.

Gene, US

My family and I demand the immediate release of Bogdan Syrotiuk the honest and principled fighter for the working class of the world. It is not a crime to fight for peace and social justice!

Efraín, Cusco, Peru

Liberty for Trotskyist leader Bogdan!

Nazer, UK

Immediately and unconditionally release Bogdan Syrotiuk and stop the brutal war of Putin, Biden, and Zelensky, the godfather of Western capitalist neoliberalism, which claimed the lives of thousands of innocent civilians. The imperialist war in Ukraine, which our comrade Bogdan is fighting to stop, is the only correct position that ends the suffering of innocents and the destruction being inflicted on Ukraine. The war of the Ukrainian imperialists and war merchants led by Zelensky's agent executioner has nothing to do with the interests, rights, and future of freedom and equality in Ukraine. Rather, it serves the interests of the capitalist scum in Ukraine and the goals of imperialist hegemony in maintaining the slavery of the proletariat and all marginalized people in Ukraine and the world. Death to fascism, death to imperialism and its destructive wars, let the war in Ukraine and Gaza stop immediately, freedom for Comrade Bogdan.

Frank, Germany

Long live the international unity of workers and their political independence from all parties that cling to the coat tail of capital!

Geraldine, UK

People acting in good conscience are being targeted unfairly by the powerful who don't want truths told or lies challenged or injustice stopped. Free this man NOW. All good people who are principled want the government to release this man and stop persecuting him.

Sandeep, India

I strongly condemn the imprisonment of Bogdan Syrotiuk. The authorities should release him immediately. The working class of Russia and Ukraine must unite to stop the imperialist war. I stand with Bogdan in that struggle.



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[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)