

Journalist, novelist, workers and youth in Sri Lanka demand freedom for Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our reporters
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Three months have elapsed since Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's fascistic regime arrested and imprisoned Bogdan Syrotiuk, the founding leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), on bogus charges of "high treason" and abetting the Russian government.

The YGBL is aligned with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and active in the former Soviet Union, including Russia and Ukraine. Twenty-five-year-old Syrotiuk has courageously fought amongst Ukrainian workers and youth for the anti-war policies of the ICFI.

The frame-up charges and ongoing incarceration of Comrade Bogdan are because he opposes the US-NATO war in Ukraine against Russia and fights for the unification of the Russian and Ukrainian workers against the capitalist oligarchs in both countries.

We publish below recent statements from Sri Lankan journalists, an author, professionals, as well as workers and youth calling for the dropping of all charges against Bogdan and his immediate release from jail.

Bimal Ruhunage, a freelance investigative journalist who has opposed repressive attacks on journalists in Sri Lanka made the following statement. Ruhunage and another journalist were harassed and arrested by Sri Lankan police in March this year.

We demand the Ukrainian president and his government immediately release Bogdan Syrotiuk.

WSWS statements show that Bogdan Syrotiuk is a true fighter based on a socialist program against the fire of war that is assuming horrendous proportions against Russia with the backing of the US and NATO powers.

Bogdan, now in state custody, advocated for his ideas and fought for them. Everybody should have the right to fight for their ideas and rights.

We demand the Ukrainian government not block the freedom of journalists and not keep this young socialist leader in custody on the fraudulent charges of aiding of the Russian government.

We advocate freedom of expression and denounce with contempt the imprisonment of this revolutionary fighter who has publicly expressed his anti-war ideas in articles on the *World Socialist Web Site*.

At the same time, we have also come to know that access to the WSWS has been banned in Ukraine. This website is a publication of the international working class fighting for socialism. We demand that the Ukrainian government immediately remove this ban.

Sarath Munasinghearachchi, an SEP supporter and award-winning author and novelist

As artists, we vehemently oppose the despicable act of imprisoning this young anti-war activist.

The brutal war in Ukraine, which has been carried out for more than two years with the full backing of the US-NATO alliance, is evolving and poses the danger of developing into a third world war and destroying the whole planet.

I believe this is the epoch of world socialist revolution, but this revolution can only be achieved by uniting the international working class—workers in Russia, Ukraine and the entire former Soviet Union—under a common flag, which is what Comrade Bogdan has been doing.

Hands off the political activities of the YGBL including Comrade Bogdan!

Saman, a non-academic school worker from Puttalam district

I understand the crisis and decline of Ukraine as a society after hearing that there are no elections and males below the age of 50 are forcefully recruited to the

military under martial law.

I reject in the strongest terms the accusation made by the Ukrainian regime that the WSWS has adopted a pro-Russian policy in the war. Banning access to the WSWS in Ukraine on June 3 makes clear that the Ukrainian government and its security force are fearful that their false charges against Bogdan will further be exposed.

The economic impact of wars in Ukraine and the Middle East has been felt in every country in the world. During the last two years, the cost of living in Sri Lanka has gone up by unprecedented dimensions but our wages have stagnated.

Nandana, a lab assistant from Puttalam district

The wars in Ukraine and the Middle East and the war preparations against China have already had a grave impact on the world economy. In Sri Lanka, the austerity measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund have vastly cut the living conditions of workers and the oppressed masses, but the war is being accelerated.

The workers and youth all over the world should come forward to demand the Ukrainian government immediately release Bogdan and take its hands off the right to hold socialist ideas.

Dayantha Jayatileka, a retired teacher

When we consider the Russia-Ukraine war, on the one hand, and the Israel genocide in Gaza on the other, we can see that these situations could develop towards a destruction of world civilisation.

America and Europe are helping Ukraine by providing billions of dollars in aid, large numbers of weapons and whipping up public opinion against Russia. I also agree with the position of the WSWS that the Putin government represents the interests of a corrupt capitalist class and is hostile to the Russian workers.

This war has already claimed the lives of more than 500,000 Ukrainian youth but also Sri Lankans who have joined the militaries of the two warring countries as mercenaries and perished.

In the Gaza Strip, the Israel army has brutally killed thousands of Palestinians including women and children. Israel has destroyed school and hospital buildings built with the labour of Palestinians, dropping thousands of bombs on these targets. These are reactionary wars that destroy human and physical

resources. We oppose these wars.

Bogdan Syrotiuk has been carrying out important work but because his ideas go directly against President Zelensky's reactionary policies and the war he has been jailed.

If people embrace Bogdan's ideas, they will change, and this is why the government is fearful of these ideas. His human rights have been violated. The Ukrainian government has blocked his ideas and his pen, and this is why we have to take Bogdan's side.

R. D. Ajith, an engineer from the central hills

Syrotiuk must be released and allowed to go back to his family and carry out his work without fear of pressure. All censorship of the WSWS and similar media that provides valuable information to people must stop.

The rights of all citizens must be guaranteed, and everyone allowed to express their ideas freely, to meet and participate in politics without fear of being pressured. The international norms of human rights must be respected and defended.

Sampath Wijesinghe, a lawyer

Bogdan's struggle is for the unity of the workers in the former Soviet Union. He is a believer in Trotskyism, therefore I firmly believe that he would never work in unison with the Russian capitalist government precisely because he is a Trotskyist. He has chosen the way of working in solidarity with the Russian working class as a step to ending the disastrous war. So, I condemn with contempt his arbitrary arrest.



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