

Release comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk unconditionally and immediately!

Pani Wijesiriwardane, SEP Presidential candidate in Sri Lanka
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I, Pani Wijesiriwardane, presidential candidate of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) for the forthcoming election in Sri Lanka, demand the unconditional and immediate release of Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk, jailed by the secret service (SBU) of the fascist Zelensky regime for opposing NATO's war on Russia.

I am aware that he has been in jail in Nikolaev from April 25, on fraudulent charges of "high treason under martial law" and serving the interests of the Russian state. He is threatened with a prison sentence of 15 years to life and his life is in danger under harsh and life-threatening prison conditions.

The persecution of Syrotiuk, 25, a socialist opponent of the NATO-instigated Ukraine-Russia war, has been a blow to the most basic democratic and human rights and further exposes the utter lie that the war against Russia is based on the "defense of democracy."

Bogdan, founder and leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), is an intransigent opponent of the capitalist Putin regime and its invasion of Ukraine. He has fought for the unity of the working class in Ukraine, Russia and throughout the former Soviet Union, against the US-NATO proxy war.

The arrest of our comrade was based on the fear of the Zelensky regime and its NATO backers over the prospect that the anti-war and socialist principles represented by Syrotiuk would win a broad hearing among workers and youth in Ukraine and globally.

This fact has been further confirmed as the arrest of Bogdan was followed by the Ukrainian regime's ban on the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS), based on the slander that it is a "Russian propaganda and information agency." Anyone who reads the WSWS is aware of our consistent fight against oligarchic capitalist governments of both Ukraine and Russia that

emerged out of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and restoration of capitalism, and our fight to unify Ukrainian and Russian workers with their global class brothers and sisters against war and capitalism.

I take this opportunity to emphasise that the persecution of Bogdan demonstrates that the defence of democratic rights is inseparable from the mobilisation of the working class throughout the world against imperialist war and the capitalist system. I call upon workers and youth in Sri Lanka, South Asia and internationally to oppose imperialist-backed war against Russia and Israeli genocidal war in Gaza. This is an essential part of my political campaign in the presidential election taking place in Sri Lanka.

It is no surprise that neither the present president Ranil Wickremesinghe nor any of his bourgeois opponents in the election has opposed the criminal wars of US imperialism and its allies. On the contrary, Wickremesinghe has been a longstanding US stooge, and others have pledged their subordination to the imperialist order. Successive Sri Lankan governments have increasingly integrated Sri Lanka into the US-led war drive against China by opening up the strategically-placed island to American military forces.

In opposition to this capitulation to imperialism, the SEP is campaigning in the presidential election for the building of an anti-war movement in Sri Lanka and South Asia as part of the fight by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) to build a unified international movement of the working class against war to put an end to capitalism—the root cause of war.

I demand the unconditional and immediate release of comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk from prison! I call on workers and youth in Sri Lanka, South Asia and internationally to do likewise and to send statements

demanding his freedom to the WSWS and the SEP in Sri Lanka.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact