

Russian Militant group supports campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk

Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists
19 November 2024

On April 25 of this year, our Comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk was arrested by the Ukrainian secret service (SBU). He is accused of treason and serving Russian interests, which threatens him with 15 years to life imprisonment, which actually equates to a death sentence under Ukrainian imprisonment.

Bogdan is a political leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), a Trotskyist organization operating in the former USSR and an opponent of the capitalist governments involved in this war on both sides. He opposes the Zelensky and the Putin regimes, promoting the line of the International Committee of the Fourth International for the unification of the working class of the warring countries against their governments. All of this is well documented in his articles and speeches on the *World Socialist Web Site*.

The significance of this arrest for the Ukrainian government is to isolate a socialist opponent to the war and the regime at a time when the growing social anger of the masses of Ukrainian workers threatens to have dire consequences for the regime. This attack on Bogdan's democratic rights is at the same time an attack on the entire Ukrainian working class and the international working class in general.

More than six months have passed since Bogdan's arrest. During this time many organizations, parties, intellectuals and scholars have expressed their support for him. In Russia, many groups and organizations have openly come out in support of Bogdan. These include: the Rabkor website, the Revolutionary Workers Party (RWP), the Russian section of the International Marxist Tendency (now the Revolutionary Communist International), popular anti-war blogger Konstantin Syomin, and many groups on the Russian social network VKontakte (VK). More recently, the American Green Party's presidential candidate Jill Stein also

voiced support for Bogdan.

Now, the Russian group Militant, which publishes a small circulation newspaper of the same name, has joined the campaign for Bogdan's release by advocating for his democratic rights in a 20-minute YouTube video, that is largely based on the extensive WSWWS coverage of Bogdan's case. It quotes at length from the accusations against Bogdan and the WSWWS.

They state:

"... we have different views [than Bogdan and the WSWWS], but we consider it our duty to publicize Syrotiuk's case, not because we like or dislike him, but because his cause is to expose all political repression against opponents of the war, both in Russia and Ukraine..."

At the beginning, the video emphasizes both the small amount of information about political prisoners in Ukraine and the anti-democratic nature of Zelensky's regime itself. Indeed, very few media outlets cover this topic, due to the fact that they are mostly pro-imperialist in nature. They call Ukraine's war against Russia a war of democracy against dictatorship. The situation with Bogdan and others persecuted for political reasons in Ukraine (such as Maxim Goldarb) debunks this myth. Both regimes of capitalist restoration are deeply anti-democratic.

The video also condemns the position of many political tendencies in Russia who ignored our requests to cover Bogdan's arrest or refused to support him outright. The latter justified their position mainly with reactionary statements that by doing so they would only provide evidence of Bogdan's connection to Russia and/or that we should not interfere in the affairs of the working class of another state (Ukraine) at all. These include: the Lenin Crew group, the Stalinist Russian Communist Workers' Party (RCWP), the Russian

Maoist Party (RMP) and the Ural Maoist Union (SMU).

In this context, the Militant group provides an appropriate historical reference to the reactionary policies of Stalinism during World War II, when the Communist Party of the United States supported the waging of imperialist war and supported charges against the American Trotskyists for their internationalist and anti-war views. By contrast, later, when the Stalinist Communist Party itself fell into disgrace during the McCarthy era, the Socialist Workers Party (the American section of the Fourth International) came out in support of the CP USA.

Dozens commented under the video, expressing support for Bogdan. “Freedom to Syrotyuk! Freedom to political prisoners!”, ”Freedom to Bogdan! Shame on the Stalinists!”, “He will survive. He will be a real hero of Ukraine, of course, a socialist Ukraine.”

The YGBL has fundamental differences with the Militant group, which is a nationally oriented tendency and claims, also in this video, that the modern Russian state is imperialist. As the ICFI has emphasized, this is incorrect both from a historical perspective and from the point of view of analyzing Russian capitalism, and plays into the hands of the imperialist war propaganda. Moreover, for Marxists, it is not necessary to declare Russia “imperialist” to oppose the Putin regime from a principled, socialist standpoint.

Nevertheless, we appreciate the group’s principled stance in defense of Bogdan Syrotyuk and democratic rights. We call yet again upon all other workers, youth and organizations in Russia calling themselves left-wing or socialist and democratic to support the campaign to free Comrade Bogdan. Spread the word about Bogdan on social media and among your acquaintances. Sign the petition demanding Bogdan’s freedom and get involved in the campaign!

Freedom for Bogdan Syrotyuk!



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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