

Demand the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk, socialist opponent of NATO's proxy war, from a Ukrainian prison

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On Thursday, April 25, Bogdan Syrotiuk—a socialist opponent of the fascistic Zelensky regime and the NATO-instigated Ukraine-Russia war—was arrested by the Security Service of Ukraine, the SBU, in his hometown of Pervomaisk in southern Ukraine.

Bogdan, who is 25 years old and in poor health, is being held in a prison in Nikolaev under atrocious conditions on fraudulent charges of undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine and serving the interests of Russia. If found guilty by a kangaroo court of these charges, Bogdan is threatened with a prison sentence of 15 years to life, which is the equivalent of a death sentence.

The arrest of Bogdan is the latest example of the Zelensky regime's brutal repression of left-wing movements, whose opposition to the war is finding a growing response within the Ukrainian working class.

SBU agents ransacked Bogdan's apartment and the office that he has used to conduct political and educational activities. The *World Socialist Web Site* has been informed that the SBU is claiming that it found a Russian military coat, a backpack with the letter "Z"—a symbol associated with Russian military chauvinism—and a gas mask in the office. Only dull-witted fascist police will expect people to believe that such items will be found in an office that prominently displays a photo of Leon Trotsky and offers a wide selection of Marxist-Trotskyist literature.

If such items were "found" in Bogdan's office, it is because they were planted there by the SBU, whose unscrupulous and Gestapo-like methods are common knowledge in Ukraine.

Attempts to portray Bogdan as a supporter of the Putin regime and its invasion of Ukraine are politically preposterous. Comrade Syrotiuk is a leading member of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), a Trotskyist youth organization active in Ukraine and throughout the former Soviet Union.

In political solidarity with the International Committee of

the Fourth International (ICFI), the YGBL opposes the oligarchic capitalist governments in both Ukraine and Russia. In numerous articles posted on the *World Socialist Web Site* and in speeches delivered at events sponsored by the ICFI, Bogdan has unequivocally condemned the war and called for the unity of the Ukrainian and Russian working class against the reactionary national-chauvinist regimes headquartered in Kiev and Moscow. His comrades in Russia unequivocally oppose the capitalist restorationist regime of Putin and its delusional glorification of neo-tsarist Russian nationalism.

In a speech written three days before his arrest, which he planned to deliver at the International Committee's upcoming celebration of May Day, Comrade Bogdan states:

On the day of international solidarity of the working class, we, members of the Ukrainian branch of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, and the entire YGBL call for the unification of the Ukrainian and Russian proletariat with the proletariat in the imperialist countries to end this war!

The arrest of Comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk, part of a pattern of brutal repressive measures by the Zelensky regime against opponents of the war and the entire working class, exposes the lying claim that the US-NATO war against Russia is being waged in defense of democracy. Ukraine is a police state. Its population is subjected to martial law. Elections have been cancelled and Zelensky rules as a dictator, subject only to the dictates of his NATO sponsors, the financial interests of the billionaire oligarchs, and the neo-Nazi gangs upon whom he relies to intimidate the Ukrainian people.

In fact, the US State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor acknowledges in its latest report, issued earlier this month, the Ukrainian regime's brutally

repressive character. Among the grave “human rights issues” cited by the report are:

enforced disappearance; torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; restrictions on freedom of expression, including for members of the media, including violence or threats of violence against journalists, unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists, and censorship; serious restrictions on internet freedom; substantial interference with the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association; restrictions on freedom of movement; serious government corruption; extensive gender-based violence; systematic restrictions on workers’ freedom of association; and the existence of the worst forms of child labor. Some of these human rights issues stemmed from martial law, which continued to curtail democratic freedoms, including freedom of movement, freedom of the press, freedom of peaceful assembly, and legal protections.

Under these conditions of vicious repression, the life of Bogdan Syrotiuk is in immediate danger. Within the prisons, the inmates are subject to the violent regime instituted by an administration saturated with Ukrainian fascists. The State Department report further states:

Although the constitution and law prohibited torture and other cruel and unusual punishment, there were reports law enforcement authorities engaged in such abuse. Under normal circumstances, courts could not legally use confessions and statements made under duress to police by persons in custody as evidence in court proceedings, but the institution of martial law since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion permitted this.

Particularly ominous, given the attempt of the SBU to frame up Bogdan as an agent of the Russian military, is the State Department’s finding that:

There were reports law enforcement and military officials abused and, at times, tortured persons in

custody to obtain confessions, usually related to alleged collaboration with Russia.

The Kiev regime, which is responsible for these atrocities is being showered with billions of dollars and armed with the most advanced weaponry by the United States and its NATO allies. The arrest of Bogdan occurred just as the US Congress voted to allocate another \$60 billion to a war that has already cost the lives of approximately 500,000 Ukrainian soldiers. The Biden administration and its counterparts in London, Paris, Berlin, Rome and the other capitals involved in the direction of the proxy war are no less responsible for the fate of Bogdan Syrotiuk than their agents in Kiev.

The working class and youth throughout the world are justly outraged by the criminal war being waged by Israel, with the support of the Biden administration and NATO, against the people of Gaza. But it must be understood that the same governments that are collaborating in the Gaza genocide are sponsoring the proxy war in Ukraine. The violence in Gaza and Ukraine are interconnected fronts in a global escalation of military conflicts that threaten humanity with a nuclear catastrophe.

The fight for Bogdan’s freedom and for an end to the proxy war must be seen as an essential component of the struggle against imperialism, genocide, and fascism.

The International Committee of the Fourth International and the *World Socialist Web Site* call for a global campaign to demand the immediate release of Bogdan Syrotiuk.

The international working class and student youth throughout the world must be informed of the seizure of Bogdan and mobilized in his defense.

We call for the widest circulation of this statement on all available social media. An online petition calling for the freedom of Bogdan has been established at Change.org. We urge you to sign the petition and post a statement on the site amplifying your call for his freedom. Bring this campaign to the attention of your co-workers and fellow students. For more information on how you can become involved in the fight for Bogdan’s release from prison, contact the *World Socialist Web Site* at this address.

Bogdan Syrotiuk must be freed!



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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