

96-year-old veteran British Trotskyist Barbara Slaughter calls for the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk

Barbara Slaughter
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This statement was delivered by Barbara Slaughter, a leading member of the Socialist Equality Party in the UK and a fighter for socialism for nearly 80 years. Slaughter calls for the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk, the Ukrainian socialist who was arrested by the Zelensky government last month.

Sign the petition to demand freedom for Bogdan at wsws.org/freebogdan.

My name is Barbara Slaughter. I want to protest in the strongest possible terms against the arrest of Comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk and to demand his immediate release from the high security prison in Ukraine. He is the victim of the trumped up charge of being an agent of Vladimir Putin.

The truth is that he's been accused of high treason and threatened with life imprisonment because he dared to oppose the war in Ukraine, which has already cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people on both sides.

He has demonstrated exemplary courage in a time of war by opposing the capitalist governments of both Zelensky and Putin and calling for the unity of the Ukrainian and Russian working class.

In doing so, he has given living expression to one of the fundamental principles of the socialist movement, revolutionary internationalism. This is clearly set out in the program of his own organization, the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), which calls for the organization of an international movement of workers and young people against war.

Bogdan is the victim of the Big Lie, not unlike the lies perpetrated by Joseph Goebbels in the Second World War.

I'm 96 years of age and lived through that terrible

period. The sufferings of the Soviet people in that conflict were incalculable. Well over 20 million died, including Russians and Ukrainians fighting side by side to defend what remained of the gains of the Russian Revolution. And now, these young people are pitted against each other in a deadly conflict to defend the oligarchs of both Russia and Ukraine, and the spoils they shared when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

The arrest of Bogdan is part of a brutal crackdown on all opposition to war, which has caused thousands of Ukrainian youth to flee the country in order to avoid the draft.

This conflict has been correctly characterized as a NATO proxy war. Today, with a decision made by President Biden that Ukraine can use American weapons directly on Russian territory, the danger of escalation to a nuclear conflict grows ever greater.

That is why the Zelensky regime must silence the ideas and principles which Comrade Bogdan represents. That is why the *World Socialist Web Site* and the ICFI have also been accused of being puppets of Putin.

We must take inspiration from Bogdan's example. We must mobilize wide support in the international working class for the campaign to achieve his release and, in doing so, deliver a blow against all the forces of reaction, not only in Ukraine and Russia but internationally.

Sign the petition to demand freedom for Bogdan!

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Socialist Equality Party visit:



wsws.org/contact