

Ukrainian refugee in Italy demands the immediate release of Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our reporters
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The *World Socialist Web Site* continues to receive comments and statements calling for the immediate release of socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk, who has been imprisoned by the Security Service of Ukraine since April 25 on bogus charges of treason and accused of being an agent of the Russian government.

The following statement is from a Ukrainian refugee in Italy, who we will call Misha. He left Ukraine's Donbass region with his family after the Russian military invasion in February 2022.

Misha, who is in his early 50s and lives in a northern Italian city, is one of the more than 180,000 Ukrainian refugees, the majority women and children, given temporary visa status in Italy since 2022. Opposed to any involvement in the reactionary US-NATO war against Russia, these refugees, and the men in particular, were forced to take complicated routes over difficult terrain to avoid Ukrainian government and military authorities and leave the country.

According to the European Travel Information and Authorisation System, 4.3 million Ukrainians have been officially granted refugee status in Europe, including 1.2 million in Germany, since 2022. Italy has received the fourth largest number of Ukrainians since the war began. Ukrainian refugees in Italy lead a hand-to-mouth existence doing low paid menial work, with many women employed in domestic duties.

The allegations against Bogdan are bogus. As founder and leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists in Ukraine, he fights for an anti-war socialist program based on the unity of the working class in Ukraine, Russia and throughout the former Soviet Union against the US-NATO proxy war and the capitalist Putin regime. His arrest is the latest example of the

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

Misha's statement was sent before the Zelensky government banned access to the *World Socialist Web Site* in Ukraine.

Misha:

I strongly oppose the arrest of Bogdan Syrotiuk. It is not surprising that a socialist who opposed the war in Ukraine was arrested. Opponents of the war have been brutally repressed by the Zelensky government. The aim of this repression is to break the strong opposition to the war [in Ukraine]. We, the workers, are against this war, which is why I signed the petition demanding Bogdan's immediate release.

Ukraine was generally peaceful before 2014. If America and Italy, along with other major powers, had not provided weapons to Ukraine this war would not have been able to go forward.

The Ukraine government has now imposed the Compulsory Martial Law. Under this law everyone between the ages of 18 and 50 must join the army. Although I'm above that age range, my friends are in this age group and so they had to return to Ukraine after a year on a work visa.

The Italian government does not extend the work visas of men from this age group which means that after a year they have to leave their families in Italy and return to Ukraine. When they went to the Ukrainian embassy to renew their visas, their requests were refused and they were ordered to return to Ukraine. If they did not go, they would lose their citizenship and job.

There is no information about my friends because the communication system in Ukraine has broken down, and so we don't know what has happened to them for

over a month. I think that they must have been drafted into the Ukrainian army.

I am pleased to read the articles posted on the *World Socialist Web Site* if you send them in Ukrainian or Russian language.

To support and get involved in the campaign to Free Bogdan Syrotiuk, visit wsws.org/freebogdan to submit a statement, sign the petition and make a financial contribution.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact