

SEP member calls for release of Bogdan Syrotiuk on Tamil Nadu YouTube channel

Our correspondent
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On June 23, R. Shreeharan, a Political Committee member of the Socialist Equality Party in Sri Lanka, was interviewed by the “Let’s Talk Everything” YouTube channel about the US-NATO-orchestrated war against Russia in Ukraine and the International Committee of the Fourth International’s campaign for the release Bogdan Syrotiuk.

The channel, which has over 23,000 subscribers and 250,000 viewers, is based in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is connected to “Let’s Talk History,” another YouTube channel that has over 61,000 subscribers and 3.5 million viewers. Both channels are broadcast in Tamil by Gabriel Devadoss.

The English-language title of Shreeharan’s interview read, “Is the Russia-Ukraine war spreading to other parts of the world?” Its Tamil title page said, “Will the Russia-Ukraine war change into a nuclear war? The ultimate target of the US is to collide with China.” The 30-minute interview has been watched by 4,000 people so far with most viewers commenting positively.

Shreeharan discussed the ongoing proxy war in Ukraine against Russia, the danger of a nuclear third world war, and the detention of socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk by Ukraine’s Zelensky government. Syrotiuk is the secretary of Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), which is affiliated to the International Committee of Fourth International (ICFI), and a writer for the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Gabriel Devadoss began the interview by noting the alignment of the US-led imperialist powers one side and Russia, North Korea and China on the other.

Shreeharan responded by explaining that the US had initially promised not to cross various “red lines” in Ukraine but that the Biden administration, with the help of the Republicans, had crossed all these lines, providing battle tanks, missiles, billions of dollars and allowing Ukraine to attack inside Russia with US-provided long-

range missiles.

“NATO forces have already entered Ukraine in the name of training soldiers in the new technology provided by US. Now the US is planning to send NATO troops to Ukraine because it has suffered military debacles and the loss of half a million soldiers so far,” he said.

“Putin, however, cannot tolerate bombs and missiles exploding in Russian cities and will be compelled to retaliate and NATO can retaliate if any its member states is attacked. Such a scenario would trigger a world war that would be a massive human catastrophe.”

“There are now discussions within the US political establishment that the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ‘ended the war’ and so justify the use of nuclear weapons to end [current] wars,” he added.

A question was asked about the situation facing Putin and whether he would choose to use nuclear weapons. Shreeharan explained how Putin had been provoked by the eastward expansion of NATO over decades and the encirclement of Russia by NATO forces.

“Putin expected a compromise with the imperialist powers by making nuclear threats and launching a war on Ukraine. He miscalculated that the imperialist powers, fearing an all-out war, would roll back. The major powers, however, want to occupy and plunder resource-rich Russia in preparation for war against China as the next step, and ultimately domination of the world,” he said.

Emphasising this point, the SEP Political Committee member quoted NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg who has stated, “What happens in Europe matters for Asia. What happens in Asia matters for us. And this is clearly demonstrated in Ukraine, where Iran, North Korea and China are propping up and fuelling Russia’s war aggression against Ukraine.”

Confronted with this sort of war situation, Shreeharan

continued, “Putin would be forced to launch a counter-offensive and may use nuclear weapons... However, the imperialist powers themselves could use nuclear weapons which would create a catastrophe. The US needs a war to challenge the growth of China.” The speaker later pointed out that some US politicians had suggested the Gaza war could be ended by using nuclear weapons.

Responding to a question about European opposition to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Shreeharan elaborated on the role played by Germany in the 2014 coup and Washington’s efforts to topple the then-elected pro-Moscow Ukraine government and replace it with a pro-US regime.

Shreeharan explained the Trotskyist movement’s opposition to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, referring to an ICFI statement issued at the outset of the war which said, “Putin does not stand for the Russian working class but represents the oligarchs in the country and stands for their profit interests.”

Turning to the suppression of democratic rights in Ukraine and Russia, Shreeharan explained the two-month detention of YGBL leader Bogdan Syrotiuk:

“As previously noted, the US in 2014 funded the overthrow of the elected Ukrainian government in a coup and now extreme-right organisations that follow the principles of Stephen Bandera, a Nazi, are very active.

“The entire Zelensky regime operates as a fascist regime with no one allowed to speak out against the war and opposition parties and communists are banned. But now, under conditions where 500,000 soldiers have been killed, there is popular opposition to war. People are now being forcibly drafted into the military and put on the frontline. This is why the socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk was arrested. This is a matter of freedom of expression,” Shreeharan said

“Anti-war sentiment prevails in Ukraine” he continued, and said the Zelensky regime was concerned that this mass opposition will be given expression through organisations such as the YGBL. “There is a fear that it could become a pole of attraction for the mass opposition. That’s why they arrested Bogdan.

“Bogdan is fighting to unite the Ukrainian and Russian working class, as well as the international working class, to end the war and for an international socialist program to overthrow the capitalist system. He was arrested because of this fight,” he said.

Shreeharan explained that the Zelensky regime had falsely accused Bogdan of treason and subsequently banned *World Socialist Web Site* in Ukraine, claiming that

it functioned as “a Russian propaganda and information agency.”

“This is how the democratic rights are being brutally suppressed in Ukraine,” he said and called on viewers to sign the petition and support the ICFI’s campaign to release Bogdan.

Shreeharan said Putin, as a representative of the Russian oligarchy, promoted anti-migrant and right-wing movements while suppressing opposition protests.

“Neither Putin nor Biden, however, can wage a war allowing democratic rights. Inevitably they are compelled to use dictatorial rule to suppress working people who are rising up against the slashing of social conditions and the imposition of the massive costs of war,” he said.

The speaker noted Putin’s alliances with North Korea and China and warned that US-NATO war operations against Russia would escalate and expand into military conflict with China. To stop this worsening catastrophe, he said, “The working class must unite and fight against their imperialist governments and fight to bring workers’ governments to power. This is possible.”

“The First World War was ended by the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917 under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. That is why the ICFI, its sections, and the WSWS are fighting to build an anti-war movement of the international working class,” Shreeharan said.

The speaker pointed to the eruption of massive protests across the US universities against the Gaza genocide, strike action by academics against police attacks on student protesters at the University of California, and ongoing demonstrations internationally against Israel’s war on Gaza.

Shreeharan explained that the trade unions in the US, and internationally, were sabotaging and suppressing these struggles. He called for workers to break from these organisations and pseudo-left formations that justify imperialism and war.

“Workers must mobilise their political strength independently. In this way workers can take matters into their own hands by building action committees in their workplaces and creating unity among workers, that could pave the way for an international working-class solidarity.”



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