

German historian Mario Kessler denounces persecution of Bogdan Syrotiuk

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The following statement in defense of imprisoned Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk was submitted to the World Socialist Web Site by Professor Mario Kessler. Kessler is an expert in Jewish history and the history of the workers movement. In 2011, he was one of 14 German historians who opposed the German publication of the slanderous hack biography of Leon Trotsky by Robert Service. Service's book had earlier been subject to a devastating critique by David North, the chairperson of the international editorial board of the World Socialist Web Site.

Kessler's most recent publications include "Leon Trotsky or Socialism against Antisemitism" (Leo Trotzki oder Sozialismus gegen Antisemitismus, Dietz Verlag Berlin, 2022), "Socialists against Antisemitism. On Antisemitism and the struggle against it" (Sozialisten gegen Antisemitismus. Zur Judenfeindschaft und ihrer Bekämpfung, VSA Verlag, 2023) and "Escape in chains, longing behind walls. Essays on history, politics and culture (2020-2024)" (Flucht in Ketten, Sehnsucht hinter Mauern. Essays zur Geschichte, Politik und Kultur (2020–2024), trafo Wissenschaftsverlag, 2024). Kessler, who is now retired, was visiting professor at Yeshiva University in New York City and senior researcher at the Leibniz Center for Contemporary Research in Potsdam, Germany.

To sign the petition to free Bogdan Syrotiuk and submit a statement, go to wsws.org/freebogdan.

According to all the information available to me, the court proceedings and the conviction against Bogdan Syrotiuk are based on purely political premises. Such an approach must be firmly rejected!

Bogdan Syrotiuk is an active Trotskyist. Even those who do not share his political stance should know that Leon Trotsky and his comrade-in-arms Christian Rakovsky, the first communist prime minister of

Ukraine and later a victim of Stalin, both advocated a policy that amounted to an independent socialist Ukraine. At that time, the term Union of Soviet Socialist Republics meant nothing else.

The persecution of Syrotiuk is harming Ukraine's struggle for freedom today in the same way that the persecution of the Trotskyists, anarchists and Communist Party-Oppositionists during the Spanish war harmed the cause of the Spanish people.

Therefore: Freedom for Bogdan Syrotiuk in Ukraine and freedom for Boris Kagarlitsky in Russia—two imprisoned Trotskyists of whom the ruling classes are still afraid!

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