

State prosecution fails to present evidence in trial against Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk

Clara Weiss
18 April 2025

To sign the petition demanding freedom for Bogdan Syrotiuk and learn more about the campaign, click here.

In the ongoing trial against Bogdan Syrotiuk, a 26-year-old socialist opponent of the US-NATO war in Ukraine against Russia, the prosecution continues to fail to provide evidence for its severe charges of “high treason committed under martial law.” The charges, which served as the basis for Syrotiuk’s arrest almost exactly one year ago, on April 25, carry a sentence of 15 years to life in prison. As a leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), which is in political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International, Syrotiuk fought for the unity of the Russian and Ukrainian working class.

The Ukrainian state prosecution constructed the entire case to identify Syrotiuk’s Trotskyist principles as evidence for “state treason” and thus criminalize Trotskyism. Central to the accusation of “state treason” is that Syrotiuk “engaged in the preparation of publications commissioned by representatives of a Russian propaganda and information agency, the *World Socialist Web Site*.” The principal “evidence” cited by the prosecution are articles authored by Syrotiuk and other writers for the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS), the publication of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Shortly after Syrotiuk’s arrest, the WSWS was officially banned in Ukraine.

Since January, every court session has been devoted to reviewing the prosecution’s case point by point, but the prosecution has been unable to muster evidence. In the last court hearing on Monday, April 14, the prosecution called upon a technician who had installed the internet at Syrotiuk’s place as its witness. Yet the

man, nominally a witness for the prosecution, could not recall anything that would have supported the charges of “state treason.” The court session lasted one hour.

The outcome of the proceedings so far is all the more remarkable since the Ukrainian Secret Service (SBU) has been working on this case since at least May 2023, when it began its investigation against Syrotiuk. The court sessions, which were initially set to begin in October, were postponed several times. Throughout the entirety of Syrotiuk’s persecution, the court has clearly been on the side of the prosecution. It has ruled routinely in favor of the SBU, copying the SBU’s argumentation verbatim in its rulings, to prolong Syrotiuk’s detention. There is little question that behind the prosecution of Bogdan Syrotiuk stand not only the Ukrainian government, but also its backers in the NATO alliance.

Immediately upon Syrotiuk’s arrest on April 25, 2024, the ICFI organized a major international defense campaign to free him. A letter to the Ukrainian government calling for his freedom, authored by David North, the chairperson of the WSWS, was delivered to several Ukrainian embassies throughout the world. The Ukrainian government never answered it.

Internationally, major artistic figures such as Roger Waters and Ai Wei Wei as well as historians such as Mario Kessler and Christian Gerlach have supported the campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk. Many political tendencies have also condemned his imprisonment and called for his release, despite their political differences with the Trotskyist movement. These include Jill Stein from the Greens in the United States, and several groups and websites in Russia and Turkey. Most recently, the website of the Socialist Laborer Party in

Turkey, and that of the Partisan Defense Committee, which is affiliated with the Spartacist tendency, have issued statements in support of Bogdan.

Even within Ukraine, despite the immense state repression, Bogdan Syrotiuk has found support. The anarchist-oriented website assembly.ua.org, the Ukrainian socialist Maxim Goldarb and the Ukrainian Militant group, among others, have supported the campaign to free him. It is also important to note that the trial is being held in Syrotiuk's hometown in Pervomaisk, a city in southern Ukraine. The court sessions are open and have been mainly attended by supporters of Syrotiuk who, despite his youth, has long been a fixture of political life in this area and is widely respected for his commitment to political principle.

As the one-year anniversary of his arrest approaches, the WSWs reiterates its call for the immediate release of Bogdan Syrotiuk and all political prisoners in Ukraine. We urge all our readers to sign and circulate the petition demanding the freedom for Bogdan Syrotiuk.

This struggle must become the spearhead of the fight to mobilize the working class in Ukraine, Russia, the US, across Europe and internationally against war, the threat of dictatorship and fascism, and against capitalism.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact