

# New linguistic expertise deepens debacle for prosecution of Bogdan Syrotiuk

Clara Weiss  
10 May 2026

In the case against 26-year old Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk, a third linguistic expertise requested by the court further undermines the case of the prosecution based on charges of “state treason under martial law.” If convicted under those charges, Bogdan faces between 15 years to life in prison. Even though clearly aimed at finding as many potentially damaging statements as possible, this latest linguistic analysis found not a single formulation to support the charges of “state treason under martial law” under Article 111 of the Ukrainian penal code.

The expertise was requested after a report commissioned by Bogdan’s lawyers and authored by one of Ukraine’s leading criminologists completely refuted the accusations of the state prosecution. It put the prosecution in such a difficult position that the court took the unusual step of requesting a third expertise.

In cases of alleged state treason under martial law—an article that has been invoked to prosecute thousands of workers and youth in recent years—such linguistic reports are of great legal significance. The prosecution often relies primarily on such reports which analyze statements made by the accused. More often than not, the accused’s statements are interpreted in a way that justifies their conviction as “traitors to the state”.

Like the previous two reports this new 84-page long report examines 14 articles and statements published on the *World Socialist Web Site* and authored or translated by Bogdan Syrotiuk. Among them are multiple statements by the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, a Trotskyist youth organization in the former Soviet Union that Bogdan founded in 2018, articles by Bogdan on the history of fascism in Ukraine, WSWS articles on the war, and statements by the chairperson of the *World Socialist Web Site* and the Socialist Equality Party (US), David North.

Authored by Natalia Kondratienko and Daria Krivenchenko, the linguistic analysis of these statements repudiates the principal basis for Bogdan’s persecution. They found that

“There are no direct calls for the undermining of the national security of Ukraine, its interests, the liquidation of its statehood or the destruction of Ukrainian identity and the conduct of disintegrating activities in the informational sphere; [there are no calls] for the overthrow of the constitutional order or the seizure of state power, the change of territorial borders of Ukraine, aggressive war,

the development of a military conflict or propaganda for war.

Later on, their report states, that none of the articles examined contained statements suggesting

“the approval of the military aggression of the RF [Russian Federation] against Ukraine, ...[there is no] justification or legal recognition or denial of the temporary occupation of a part of Ukrainian territory, [there is no] glorification of individuals who have realized the armed aggression of the RF, of representatives of the Russian armed forces, illegal military formations, mercenaries and the occupation administrations of the RF. [There is no] propaganda, directed toward supporting the armed forces of the RF against Ukraine.

This conclusion completely undermines the prosecution of Bogdan for “state treason under martial law.” The relevant article in the Ukrainian penal code defines high treason as an “act intentionally committed by a citizen of Ukraine to the detriment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability, defense capability, state, economic or information security of Ukraine: joining the enemy during martial law or in the period of armed conflict, espionage, providing assistance to a foreign state, foreign organization or their representatives in conducting subversive activities against Ukraine.”

The conclusion also repudiates the indictment of the prosecution, which specifically alleged that Bogdan had been working on behalf of the Russian government, describing the *World Socialist Web Site* as an “information agency” of the Kremlin.

That the report found no evidence to support any of these claims is all the more remarkable since it was clearly written in an attempt to find as many potentially damaging formulations as possible and interpret statements in a way that can make them the subject of criminal prosecution.

In their general conclusion, the authors write “that even though there are no direct calls for actions, directed at undermining Ukrainian statehood, in some publications there are statements which can be evaluated as justification or denial of the armed

aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, as well as like disregard of the Ukrainian leadership and democratic processes.”

These statements, according to the report, concern the characterization of the events in Kiev in February 2014 as a “coup”. But this characterization is accurate: an elected government was overthrown—with ample financial support from the US and the EU—and replaced by an regime under the direction of “chocolate oligarch” Petro Poroshenko who fundamentally reversed Ukraine’s foreign policy and brought the openly neo-Nazi Svoboda party into government—the first time a neo-Nazi party entered a European government after 1945. The coup triggered the annexation of Crimea by the Putin regime and an eight-year-long civil war in the East between the Ukrainian armed forces and Russian-backed separatists. It is no accident that the report makes no attempt to refute, on a factual basis, any of the statements made by Bogdan or the WWSWS on the events of 2014.

The report pays particular attention to an article in which Bogdan documented the crimes of the Ukrainian followers of the Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera. In the report, almost every line of that article is highlighted. The authors note that this and another article on the crimes of the Ukrainian Waffen-SS contain “comparisons of citizens of Ukraine with Nazis during the Second World War.” As with the statements on 2014, the report does not even attempt to refute the statements in question, for the simple reason that they are true. But it does suggest that these statements could form the basis for criminal prosecution.

The authors also highlighted a passage in the YGBL in a 2022 anti-war statement, which described the NATO encirclement of Russia in the lead up to 2022 as a provocation to which the Putin regime responded. Even though the full text of the statement is reproduced in the report, the authors simply ignore the later characterization of the Putin regime as “reactionary” which frames the entire discussion of its response to the pressure of imperialism. Nor do the authors try to repudiate the obvious facts of the NATO encirclement or NATO support for Ukraine. Along similar lines, the report finds that some articles contained statements, “denying the independence of Ukraine” and a “negative assessment of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.”

As for the “disregard of the Ukrainian leadership and democratic processes”, a series of major corruption scandals have revealed that several of Zelensky’s closest allies and ministers have shamelessly enriched themselves throughout a war that has claimed hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian lives. The revelations have shaken the government and prompted a major public outcry, revealing that “disregard of the Ukrainian leadership” is rampant across Ukrainian society—and for good reason.

That such formulations can be used in a legally commissioned linguistic expertise, suggesting that Bogdan’s statements are grounds for criminal prosecution, speaks volumes about the “democratic processes” in Ukraine. Based on the arguments advanced in this report, one can imagine how countless youth and workers have been imprisoned in Ukraine because of their “disregard” for “the Ukrainian leadership” and its “democratic processes,” and for critically raising NATO’s role in the war. The majority of them have no means to pay for a proper

legal defense and have been convicted without anything approximating a fair trial.

This latest linguistic expertise further undermines and discredits the Ukrainian state’s prosecution of Bogdan in a dual sense. It proves, once more, that the charges of “high treason under martial law” and collaboration with the Russian government are groundless. What the linguistic experts “found” are “thought crimes”: Bogdan’s courage to tell the truth about the war and the role of the imperialist powers, the history of Ukrainian fascism and the state of Ukrainian society, and his Marxist perspective for socialist unification of the working class in Ukraine and Russia. His prosecution is an indictment of the war propaganda that Ukraine is a democracy. He has been subjected to a deliberate, politically motivated persecution by the Kiev regime because he is a Trotskyist.

This fact is also underscored by the court’s response to the report: In its last session on April 18, which reviewed this latest expertise, the court prolonged Bogdan’s detention by another two months. Meanwhile, he is still being denied dental care even after a prison commission in March found that he urgently needs treatment that cannot be provided within prison. A dentist outside of the prison facility is prepared to take him on as a patient at any moment—the only obstacle is the prison administration’s obstinate refusal to allow him to access the appropriate medical care. As his entire imprisonment, this denial of medical treatment is an egregious violation of Bogdan’s human rights.

The fight for Bogdan’s freedom is, above all, a political struggle. The demand to immediately grant him the urgently needed dental treatment and to free him from his unlawful imprisonment must be raised by workers and youth all over the world. The campaign to free Bogdan is a central component of the struggle to free political prisoners in Ukraine and beyond and put an end to an emerging new world war. To join this struggle and support it with a donation, click here.



To contact the WWSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**