

# Students and workers in Germany demand the release of Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our reporters  
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The campaign for the release of 26-year-old Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk has met with an important response in Germany. In recent days and weeks, members of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) and the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) have publicised his case at universities and in working class neighbourhoods and campaigned for the upcoming event at Humboldt University in Berlin:

*Thursday, May 28, 6:30 p.m.: “Freedom for the socialist war opponent Bogdan Syrotiuk! Stop the Ukraine war!”, Humboldt University main building (Unter den Linden 6, Room 2091, 1st floor)*

Bogdan has been held under inhumane conditions in a Ukrainian prison for over two years because he advocates the unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers against the war. He is accused of “high treason under martial law” and faces life imprisonment, despite the prosecution being unable to present any evidence. Most recently, another expert report commissioned by the court refuted the core points of the indictment. Nevertheless, Bogdan’s detention was extended.

Students, workers and youth from cities across Germany are expressing their solidarity with Bogdan and support his immediate release—an expression of the growing resistance to war, militarisation and the suppression of democratic rights.

The great interest in Bogdan’s case is also evident in the reaction to an IYSSE video on Instagram, which received 10,000 views and over 600 likes within a short time. In her comment, one person made clear that the persecution of Bogdan extends far beyond Ukraine: “Anyone who advocates for peace is so dangerous that they are put in prison ... ??? Then I suppose I am dangerous now too.”

While the major bourgeois media have remained silent for over two years about Bogdan Syrotiuk and the persecution of war opponents in Ukraine, the newspaper *Neues Deutschland* (nd) has now reported on his case. In the article “Bogdan Syrotiuk: Not a friend of the enemy. An enemy of the war,” journalist Peter Nowak points out that Bogdan is unjustly imprisoned. “Despite the new expert opinion, the prosecution is sticking to its claim for the time being that Syrotiuk supports

Russia. Yet he is by no means a supporter of the Putin regime. On the contrary.”

Nowak describes Syrotiuk’s background, who, in response to the nationalist shift to the right in Ukraine after 2014, built up the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, a Trotskyist youth organisation in the countries of the former Soviet Union. His articles, as well as the *World Socialist Web Site*, on which they were published, clearly oppose Russian and Ukrainian nationalism and advocate for the unity of workers on both sides, according to Nowak. He also addresses the far-reaching repression in Ukraine, which led to the banning of the WSW in June 2025 and the arrest of other war opponents.

At the IYSSE information stall in front of the canteen at Humboldt University, many students expressed their spontaneous support for Bogdan and reacted with horror to the development of the war. “If conscription is reintroduced here, we will also have conditions like this where opponents of the war are arrested. They are bringing the slaughter in Ukraine over here too,” said a student in conversation with Tamino, who represents the IYSSE in the student parliament at the HU.

When IYSSE member Tamino mentioned that Defence Minister Boris Pistorius had recently been in Kiev and declared that he wanted to learn from the experiences in Ukraine, the student replied: “Yes, I also heard that Ukraine is being described as the technology leader of Europe. But what kind of technology is that? Drones and war technology.” He added that in Germany too, anyone who opposes the war is accused of “Russian propaganda”—just like Bogdan.

Members of the SGP, who are currently collecting signatures to stand in the Berlin state election, also supported the campaign and discussed with Berliners over the weekend the significance of Bogdan’s release and the necessity of building a socialist anti-war movement.

The WSW has received several statements of solidarity from students and workers emphasising the international significance of his release, condemning Bogdan’s arbitrary arrest and the hypocritical propaganda supporting the Ukraine war.

Paul, a 22-year-old student from Nuremberg, wrote: “I support the campaign for the immediate release of Bogdan

Syrotjuk. His persecution directly contradicts the image of Ukraine as a supposed defender of democracy and freedom.”

The Zelensky regime is completely anti-democratic, he said: “Elections are suspended, left-wing opposition is suppressed, opponents of the war are treated as traitors, and Bogdan is denied necessary medical care despite health problems. Such an approach violates fundamental human rights.”

Katharina, who works in a Berlin nursery, sees it the same way. She warned: “A political example is currently being made of Bogdan—delaying his trial as well as denying basic (dental) medical care—in order to suppress any political opposition to imperialist rule. We must fight together for his release and the safeguarding of fundamental democratic rights.”

For Stephan, an event manager from the Ruhr area, the treatment of war opponents shows the authoritarian character of the Zelensky regime: “While fighting takes place at the front with the fascist Azov Battalion and monuments are erected for the Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera, any opposition to the proxy war of the European and Russian oligarchy is most fiercely fought and the legacy of the Soviet Union is destroyed. These points underline the right-wing extremist character of the Zelensky regime, of which Bogdan is a political prisoner.”

Ukrainian student Semyon saw the persecution of opposition as an international phenomenon. “In the US, the entire population is kept in fear by the Trump dictatorship and the ICE Gestapo; in Germany opponents of the Gaza genocide are persecuted, and in Ukraine opponents of the war and the Zelensky regime are arrested and held under life-threatening conditions.”

Semyon, who himself fled to Germany from Ukraine before the war, emphasised: “Bogdan’s arrest, as well as the arrest of dozens of other political opponents, testify to the fact that the Ukraine war is not about the hypocritical ‘defence of democracy’ but about the imperialist interests of the NATO powers, who deliberately provoked this war.”

Lennard, a 24-year-old worker in Bavaria, criticised the silence of Western governments in the face of the persecution of Ukrainian workers and youth under the deliberately vague legal article of “high treason” and not only there: “The same inaction was evident in the Israeli interception of the Freedom Flotilla in international waters: unlawful arrest, deportation, reports of mistreatment of activists—without consequence. No consequences, no outcry from the institutions.”

From the perspective of Tilo, who is studying at the University in Göttingen and supports the IYSSE, Germany is using the war to rearm and dismantle the welfare state. “At the same time, critical opinions on Ukraine or Israel are denigrated as ‘supporting terror.’ Bogdan’s freedom is a sign of freedom for all of us who are against the rulers’ war.”

He pointed to the historical dimension: “The Russian Revolution of 1917 showed that the conscious international working class has the power to end world wars. For this, the capitalist nation-state system must be recognised as the cause of

Wars and abolished by a worldwide Trotskyist movement.”

For Bonn student Jonas, the case has immediate significance for Germany: “Bogdan’s struggle for the unity of the Russian and Ukrainian working class poses a threat not only from the perspective of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie but also for German imperialism, as it shows workers in this country a real way to stop the current development of war. Therefore, all workers who oppose the war against Russia should campaign for his liberation.”

Martin, who works in the public sector in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), explained: “Contrary to the statements of our politicians, democracy and human rights are being attacked and not defended by the war in Ukraine! On the contrary, these values are defended by standing up for war opponents like Bogdan and his right to be able to freely express his opinion.”

The case of Bogdan Syrotiuk goes far beyond the fate of a single political prisoner. It is a touchstone for the entire anti-war movement. Ukrainian student Semyon from the IYSSE concluded: “The war madness and the worldwide destruction of democratic rights can and must be stopped! But for this to happen, the youth and the international working class need an effective political perspective. The campaign for Bogdan’s release represents the perspective against dictatorship and war—the socialist perspective against their root, capitalism.”

*Come to the event “Freedom for the socialist war opponent Bogdan Syrotiuk! Stop the Ukraine war!” on Thursday, May 28, 2026, 6:30 p.m., Humboldt University Berlin (Room 2091, 1st floor, Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin). Sign the petition at [wsws.org/freebogdan](https://www.wsws.org/freebogdan) and actively support the campaign for Bogdan’s release.*



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