

Socialist Equality Party (UK) calls on Britain's Stop the War Coalition to defend Bogdan Syrotiuk

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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) has issued an urgent appeal to the Stop the War Coalition (STWC), the leadership of the anti-war movement in Britain, to take action and publicise the plight of Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk, sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment by the Zelensky regime last Monday for opposing the NATO-instigated war in Ukraine.

In a letter to STWC Convenor Lyndsey German, the SEP's Chris Marsden and Tom Scripps explained that 27-year-old Syrotiuk has been convicted of "high treason" for calling for the unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers against the war.

He has been sentenced on the basis of six articles he wrote for the *World Socialist Web Site*.

The court indicted Syrotiuk for his articles' "non-recognition of Ukraine's legitimately elected political leadership and democratic processes", their "negative assessments of Ukraine's Armed Forces," and "reinterpretation of national heroes and historical figures."

Everything Syrotiuk wrote is true. There is no "democratic process" in Ukraine. Zelensky's term of office expired in May 2024, and he rules by decree. The regime has illegalised political opposition and banned trade unions. It promotes far-right forces, including Stepan Bandera's Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists, which participated in the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union and the Holocaust.

Referencing horrific conditions inside Ukraine's penitentiary system where torture and killings are widespread, Marsden and Scripps wrote, "Every day behind bars is a threat to [Bogdan's] life."

Syrotiuk's case strikes at the heart of a ferocious campaign by Britain's ruling class, corporate media

and all parties in Westminster to mobilise support for NATO's war against Russia.

Seizing on Putin's invasion of Ukraine in 2022—a reactionary nationalist response to NATO encirclement and provocation—Britain has poured billions of pounds of military equipment into Ukraine, including long-range missiles, to stoke the conflict in pursuit of its predatory, geostrategic ambitions.

The SEP's letter connects Syrotiuk's sentencing to the Zelensky regime's fear of growing anti-war sentiment in Ukraine. It notes that desertion is rife, with 300,000 criminal cases against soldiers for deserting or going AWOL. Last month, 66 percent of Ukrainians told Gallup pollsters the country should seek a negotiated peace.

Military strategists describe the war—little more than a three-hour flight from Heathrow—as a high-tech fusion of World War I trench warfare and 21st-century stalking by predator drones and missiles, creating a lethal 30-kilometre "death zone" along the front lines where body heat or any visible movement is relentlessly targeted.

According to Washington's Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Ukraine has suffered 500,000-600,000 war casualties, including 140,000 deaths, while Russia has sustained 1.2 million casualties, including 325,000 deaths. Casualty figures are hotly contested, but death, permanent injury, trauma and immense suffering are a daily reality for the working population of both countries.

Marsden and Scripps emphasised in their letter, "Whether you or your organisation agrees with Bogdan and the ICFI's position on the war is irrelevant to the clear-cut questions of democratic rights raised by his

conviction.”

They conclude: “We call on STWC’s Steering Committee to do the following:

- Adopt a resolution calling for the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk, rejecting the frame-up charges against him.*

- Publicise STWC’s resolution on your website, email and social media channels.*

- Invite a representative from the World Socialist Web Site to address STWC’s October 10 mass rally to speak on Bogdan’s case.*

STWC’s Steering Committee must act. The campaign to free Bogdan is the fight to alert and mobilise the British and international working class against NATO’s criminal escalation against Russia, part of a new imperialist redivision of the globe extending from the South China Sea to Venezuela and the Persian Gulf.



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