

Voices from the UK in support of international campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our correspondents
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Over the past week, the global campaign for the release of Ukrainian socialist and anti-war activist Bogdan Syrotiuk, who faces 15 years' imprisonment for opposing the NATO-backed war in Ukraine, has won backing from growing numbers of workers, professionals, artists and activists in Britain.

More than 1,000 additional signatures from dozens of countries have been gathered since the draconian verdict was handed down, bringing the total to more than 6,300 currently.

Bogdan was sentenced on August 10 for "high treason... under martial law". The 27-year-old Trotskyist and leading member of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL) was convicted over six articles he wrote for the World Socialist Web Site (WSWS), which called for the unity of the Ukrainian and Russian working class to end the war.

Bogdan is a political prisoner, and the 15-year sentence handed down by Ukraine's kangaroo court is equivalent to a death sentence. Torture, killings and slave labour are widespread in Ukraine's prisons.

Letters of protest from the UK to the Mykolaiv Court of Appeal and Pervomaisk City District Court have demanded the verdict against Bogdan be overturned. A persistent theme has been the need to mobilise the working class throughout the world against the criminalisation of anti-war speech and activity, targeting socialist and left-wing views.

The statements below were sent to the Socialist Equality Party (UK).

Edgar Fonseca is a postal worker at Royal Mail and a supporter of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee.

"I don't know Bogdan Syrotiuk personally—but I know injustice when I see it.

"A young man writes what he believes. He says war is wrong. He says working people on both sides should stand together. For that—15 years in prison. No proof of treason, no act of harm—just words he was entitled to speak.

"This isn't about protecting national security. It's about silencing a voice that wouldn't be quiet. It's about making an example of someone who dared to think differently. And when we stay silent, we say it's okay—and it's not okay.

"Bogdan should be free. His voice matters. His life matters. Free him now."

Ricky Swift is a former refuse worker and Unite safety rep who fought to organise bin loaders alongside drivers during their seven-month dispute in Coventry against the Labour authority's strike-breaking in 2022. He was victimised for opposing the sell-out deal agreed by Unite officials, which accepted mass job losses and surrendered hard-won rights including critical safety protections.

"The 15-year sentence against Bogdan is a frame-up. The charge of treason is simply an excuse to silence free speech and anti-war positions.

"He is not pro-Putin. He is opposing the war from both sides to unite the working class in Ukraine and Russia. He has shown how the Zelensky regime is glorifying the Ukrainian fascists from the past who collaborated with the Nazis and took part in the Holocaust against the Jews. This is embedded in the political establishment and military.

"I was never a supporter of the NATO proxy war, but I did not realise to what extent Zelensky had armed himself with dictatorial powers, ruling through martial law, until the campaign to release Bogdan brought this to light.

"Nationalism is used to drive a wedge between the working class by the oligarchs on both sides to deflect

from who is the real enemy, the threat to democratic rights and peace, depriving people of any kind of decent living.

“I don’t want to see our taxes used for funding a genocide in Gaza or the war in Ukraine. We know the only ones benefiting from this slaughter are the arms companies like Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems raking in billions and the big oil companies.

“The fight for the release of Bogdan must become a wake-up call for uniting the working class internationally. We cannot be dragged into WWII. We must build a movement they cannot intimidate or shut up.

“It is the sons and daughters of the working class who will be killed on the front line, not those of the billionaires. That is what makes me angry and determined to fight. We cannot allow this to happen just to make them even richer. We have to stand up together.

“That is the message from the fight to free Bogdan which we need to spread in the workplaces and communities and across social media.”

Eddie Arnavoudian is a leading expert on Armenian literature, history and politics based in London. Born in Kenya in 1949 to Armenian parents who emigrated from Egypt, his published literary criticism includes essays and historical sketches on the Early Armenian Renaissance; epic poetry; and critical evaluations of Armenian novelists and poets from the mid-nineteenth to early 20th centuries. His latest comment is on “The Early Armenian Bolsheviks”, which is “Part VII of a history of Armenian critical thought”.

“I, Eddie Arnavoudian, join the hundreds and thousands of others demanding the immediate release from prison of Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotyuk.

“Bogdan has been thrown into a fascistic Ukrainian dungeon for 15 years, accused of high treason for nothing more than writing six articles for the World Socialist Web Site. It was courageous writing. Bogdan urged the unity and international solidarity of the common people and the working class of Ukraine and Russia against the capitalist ruling classes waging imperialist and capitalist war.

“Bogdan is imprisoned by an anti-democratic, fascistic Zelensky regime that has banned all opposition parties and in effect all socialists too whilst rehabilitating, lionising and celebrating Ukrainian fascists who collaborated with the Nazi regime as it invaded and destroyed Ukraine during WWII.

“It is only because the fascistic Ukrainian regime is a willing and enthusiastic partner of the imperialist US, European and British NATO assault on Russia that a

courageous socialist faces 15 years in prison for propounding noble principles of universal human solidarity against imperialism and capitalism.

“Bogdan must be freed immediately, with Zelensky, his entire cohort and his imperialist backers thrown in prison for their part in all the death and destruction caused by an imperialist-instigated war.”

Chris Porter is a lecturer in sociology at Manchester Metropolitan University. His research areas include globalisation, class, culture, politics and sport.

“Bogdan is in a Ukrainian prison for holding a political position that the Ukrainian state deems dangerous.

“His plight is ignored by the Western political and media establishment because they’d prefer his principled position didn’t exist, as it encourages a class perspective that recognises the shared interests of the working class everywhere, even in nations at war with each other.

“They prefer to frame opposition to their warmongering as an expression of support for the other side, but Bogdan’s position of socialist internationalism is as much a threat to Putin as it is to the ruling classes of Ukraine and its Western backers.

“If Ukraine was the bastion of freedom and democracy its imperialist supporters claim, and they genuinely believed in those values, they would demand Bogdan’s release.”

Bogdan’s legal defence team has until September 9 to lodge an appeal, while a challenge to his detention, filed with the European Court of Human Rights in the spring of 2025, remains pending.

We call on workers and young people, trade unions, student organisations, civil liberties groups, intellectuals and journalists in the UK and internationally to take up the demand for Bogdan’s unconditional release and the ending of this political frame-up. Add your voice to the campaign!

Sign and circulate the petition.

Write to the Pervomaisk City District Court at inbox@pm.mk.court.gov.ua and the Mykolaiv Court of Appeal at inbox@mka.court.gov.ua with a copy to freebogdan@wsws.org demanding that Bogdan’s conviction be overturned and that he be released immediately.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact