

Eleven days after his sentencing

Global outpouring of support for imprisoned Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk

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More than 1,000 people in 58 countries and territories have signed the petition for Bogdan Syrotiuk's release since August 10, when a Ukrainian court imposed a 15-year prison term on the 27-year-old for seeking to unite the workers of Russia and Ukraine against the war.

The growing number of signatures is accompanied by tens of thousands of people viewing, liking and sharing content published by social media accounts reporting on and opposing the case.

The widespread public support contrasts sharply with major media outlets in the United States and Europe, which have maintained a deliberate blackout of coverage of his case as a wartime propaganda measure.

Bogdan was convicted of a thought crime. He urged Russian and Ukrainian workers to make common cause against the war, opposed Putin's invasion and Washington's proxy war in the same articles, and denounced the official glorification of Nazi collaborators. The state declared these positions high treason and entered his *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) articles as evidence. The sentence stripped him of his property and condemned the books and pamphlets of his organization, the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), to destruction.

The petition, launched after Bogdan's arrest on April 25, 2024, now carries more than 6,300 names.

Federico Picerni, who teaches Chinese literature at the University of Bologna, signed on Thursday: "Solidarity forever! Freedom for revolutionary internationalists!" He was one of 42 Italians who signed on Wednesday and Thursday, a two-day total behind only Britain and the United States.

Picerni joins the academics who signed the petition or

wrote to the court in the days after the verdict: the historians Victoria Bynum, Mark Tauger and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, the biographer of Stepan Bandera; the anthropologist Miha Kozorog; and the sociologist Volodymyr Ishchenko.

The response online has grown throughout the week. MintPress News, the US alternative outlet, told its Instagram readers Thursday that "more than 6,000 people from around 60 countries have signed an open letter demanding Syrotiuk's freedom." It has 5,500 likes.

On Wednesday, the *Fight For A Future* account reproduced the WSWS's statement on the sentencing at length. The post has drawn more than 32,000 likes, 1,100 comments and 3,600 shares. "There is nothing the bourgeois state hates more than an individual who dares to preach peace and not war," the account wrote. "Who dares to speak in favour of class solidarity instead of nationalist hate."

The same day, a Ukrainian Telegram channel called Budni Ukhilyanta—"A Draft Dodger's Daily Life"—posted a screenshot of the WSWS's Russian-language statement to its 30,500 subscribers. Its post read: "Not a concentration camp. 15 years for criticizing the regime."

Opposition to conscription in Ukraine is massive. In January, Ukraine's then-Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said that 200,000 soldiers had left their units and that 2 million Ukrainians were wanted for evading the draft, the *Kyiv Post* reported. Bogdan himself had written an article about the recruitment squads seizing men on the street.

Marta Havryshko, a Ukrainian Holocaust historian at Clark University, wrote about the verdict on X on

Monday in a post seen more than 50,000 times. Among the acts of treason the judgment lists are his objections to the state's honoring of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division and to Nazi insignia in Ukrainian military units.

"So here is the wonderfully contorted logic," she wrote, "it is apparently not the glorification of Nazi collaborators, or the tolerance of symbols such as the Wolfsangel, SS bolts and the Black Sun, that provides ammunition for Russian propaganda. No—openly criticizing any of this is what becomes treason."

She added: "So, if I ever cross the Ukrainian border, feel free to look for me in an SBU basement. I, too, suffer from the unfortunate tendency to criticize the apologetics of Nazism in Ukraine. An occupational hazard among Jewish Holocaust researchers, apparently."

Ivan Katchanovski, a political scientist at the University of Ottawa, reposted her post to his 47,000 followers, calling the sentence "Orwellian." The Italian outlet InsideOver's Instagram post on the verdict, published Tuesday, drew more than 5,500 likes, and on Friday AzerNews, an English-language newspaper in Baku, reported it under the headline "Ukrainian activist sentenced to 15 years for high treason over articles critical of both Russia and Zelensky."

Inside Ukraine, the press has handled the case on the state's terms. At least seven Ukrainian outlets ran a press release from the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) on August 14. Every version that can be read in full withholds Bogdan's name, describing him as "the pro-Kremlin agitator" or the organizer of a "neo-Bolshevik underground."

Organized political tendencies have also begun to act. This week socialist groups in Ukraine, Russia, France, Britain and Canada took up Bogdan's case, among them longtime political opponents of the WSWs.

Members of the Revolutionary Communist International, the organization founded in June 2024 when the International Marxist Tendency relaunched under that name, signed in Ireland, Italy and Canada on Wednesday and in Spain on Thursday. On Wednesday the organization's Ukrainian supporters published a call for solidarity on its website, marxist.com.

The Partisan Defense Committee in Canada signed on Wednesday, two days after its British counterpart. Both are legal defense organizations affiliated with the

International Communist League, the Spartacist tendency.

Lutte Ouvrière, the French organization, published an article on the case Wednesday headlined "Ukraine: fifteen years in prison for Trotskyism." The Socialist Workers Party, a small Russian group, published a statement on its Telegram channel Thursday: "Despite our attitude toward both the YGBL and the WSWs itself, we remain in solidarity with Bogdan Syrotyuk as a political prisoner. Marxist political views are not a crime, and if some state thinks otherwise, that says a great deal about it."

All of these organizations have backed the campaign despite significant political differences with the WSWs.

The verdict cites a speech Bogdan gave to the ICFI's online May Day rally on April 30, 2023 as proof that he justified the Russian invasion. He said: "This imperialist war was unleashed not in the interests of the proletariat of Russia, the proletariat of Ukraine and the proletariat of America, but in the interests of the capital of these countries."

SBU officers arrested Bogdan on April 25, 2024, when he was 25, and branded him a Russian agent. More than two years later, it has produced no document, no witness and no act of espionage. For treason under martial law, Ukraine's criminal code allowed the court only two sentences: 15 years or life, with confiscation of property mandatory in either case. Rape without aggravating circumstances carries a maximum of five years in Ukraine.

Bogdan's lawyers have until September 9 to file an appeal. A complaint filed for him in spring 2025 is still awaiting a ruling at the European Court of Human Rights.

The petition is at [wsws.org/freebogdan](https://www.wsws.org/freebogdan). Send letters to the Pervomaisk City District Court (inbox@pm.mk.court.gov.ua) and the Mykolaiv Court of Appeal (inbox@mka.court.gov.ua), copied to freebogdan@wsws.org, calling on them to vacate the 15-year sentence and free Bogdan.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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