A poem from a worker for Bogdan Syrotiuk: “When Truth Becomes Inconvenient”

Nargis from Kubrat
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Two weeks ago, during a campaign by the Socialist Equality Party (UK) in Wood Green, North London, a worker from Bulgaria, Nargis, stopped to speak with party members about the case of Bogdan Syrotiuk.

Bogdan has been sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment for articles he wrote for the World Socialist Web Site *calling for the unity of the Russian and Ukrainian working class against nationalism and war.*

Nargis bought pamphlets and took leaflets to read more about Bogdan’s imprisonment by the Zelensky regime. She responded warmly to Bogdan’s courageous fight to unite the working class internationally.

She bought a copy of The Logic of Zionism *by David North and* A call to youth throughout the world: Build a mass movement to stop the Ukraine war! *She listened with great interest to comrades’ explanation of the struggle by the Trotskyist movement against Stalinism.*

Less than a week later, Nargis sent the following poem for Bogdan Syrotiuk. When she was younger, Nargis posted her writings online. In London, she works zero-hours contract jobs to survive.

When Truth Becomes Inconvenient

Politicians speak about the people when they want their votes.
The media speak in the name of the public interest when they want the public's trust.
But when ordinary people begin asking uncomfortable questions, they are too often labelled “naive,” “dangerous,” “pro-Russian,” “extremist,” or simply people who “do not understand the complexity of politics.”
Perhaps sometimes ordinary people understand more than they are given credit for.
Perhaps they understand that when war begins, the rich do not send their own children to die on the battlefield.
Perhaps they understand that when states increase military spending, somebody has to pay the bill.
Perhaps they understand that replacing one form of propaganda with another does not mean that we have found the truth.
And above all, perhaps they understand that a worker in one country has no natural interest in hating a worker in another country.
This Is Why I Stand With Bogdan Syrotiuk
…
To defend Ukrainian workers does not mean hating Russian workers.
To defend Russian workers does not mean supporting Putin.
To oppose NATO does not automatically mean supporting the Russian state.
And to criticise the Ukrainian government does not mean wishing harm upon the Ukrainian people.
We must be able to make this distinction.
Because if a person can be deprived of the right to express a political opinion simply because it is inconvenient to those in power, then the problem is no longer only about one person.
The problem concerns the right of all of us to think, to ask questions and to refuse to accept the official version of events without criticism.
Workers Are Not Enemies
I believe that Ukrainian and Russian workers have far more in common with one another than they have with the billionaires, oligarchs and political elites who

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govern them.
One worker worries about their wages.
Another worries about whether they can pay the rent.
Another fears losing their job.
Another sends their child to school and prays that they will return alive from the war.
These are the real problems of ordinary people.
Not the national slogans of those in power.
Not the profits of arms companies.
Not the geopolitical games of the great powers.
Human life must not be treated as a bargaining chip.

And when a young man like Bogdan Syrotiuk tries to say that workers on both sides of the front should not be killing one another for the interests of ruling elites, I cannot remain indifferent.
Quite the opposite.
I stand with him.
Truth Must Be Stronger Than Fear
We may not agree with one another on everything.
We may have different political beliefs.
We may believe in different economic systems, religions and philosophies.
But we should have at least one principle in common:
No person should be punished simply for expressing a political opinion that those in power dislike.
Freedom of speech is not genuine freedom if you are allowed to speak only when those in power agree with you.

Truth does not need questions to be forbidden.
Truth does not fear criticism.
Truth does not need censorship.
That is why the case of Bogdan Syrotiuk matters—not only to him.
It matters to every person who believes that human life has value.
To every worker who does not want to be sent to die for the interests of the elites.
To every journalist who wants to ask uncomfortable questions.
To every person who believes that politics should serve society, rather than society being sacrificed for politics.
There Is No Time for Silence

I do not know whether one person can change the world.
But I know that every person can make a choice.
To remain silent.
Or to speak.
To be afraid.
Or to defend someone who has been left without a voice.
To accept the convenient version of events.
Or to search for the truth.
I choose the latter.

That is why I support Bogdan Syrotiuk.
That is why I believe that Ukrainian and Russian workers should not be enemies.
That is why I believe that people must have the right to oppose war, regardless of who is justifying it.
That is why I believe that the truth must be spoken—even when it is inconvenient.

There is no time for more lies.
There is no time for more silence.
Every person matters. Every life is precious.
And when truth is put to the test, each of us must decide which side we will stand on.

Nargis from Kubrat, Bulgaria

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