

Britain's Stop the War Coalition calls for release of Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our reporters
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Stop the War Coalition (STWC), the official leadership of the anti-war movement in Britain, issued a statement Tuesday calling for the immediate release of Bogdan Syrotiuk, imprisoned by the Zelensky regime for his opposition to the Ukraine war. STWC demanded that British Prime Minister Andy Burnham intervene to call for Bogdan's release.

They write, "Stop the War Coalition calls for the immediate release of 27-year-old Bogdan Syrotiuk, the Ukrainian anti-war activist sentenced to 15 years imprisonment... on charges of 'high treason' under martial law for opposing NATO and for calling for solidarity with Ukrainian and Russian workers."

Bogdan is the founder of the Young Guard of Bolshevik Leninists. His "treason" consisted of six articles written in collaboration with the International Committee of the Fourth International and published on the *World Socialist Web Site*.

STWC's statement, published on their website, continued, "The Ukrainian courts accuse Syrotiuk of collaborating with a 'foreign organization' to spread 'pro-Russian disinformation,'" noting that "The same charge of support for the Russian government has been levelled against all opponents of NATO's proxy war in Ukraine, including Stop the War."

Beneath a large photo of British Prime Minister Andy Burnham shaking hands with the Ukrainian president, STWC wrote, "We demand the British government and PM Andy Burnham, who now enjoys a close relationship with the Ukrainian regime and its president Volodymyr Zelensky, calls for Bogdan's release."

STWC further noted that "Bogdan's persecution is part of a European-wide crackdown on protest against genocide and imperialist violence and the prime minister must use his influence to call for it to end."

The statement is a blow against efforts to silence

Bogdan's defence campaign, including a mass media blackout. It followed a letter from the Socialist Equality Party (UK) to STWC Convenor Lindsey German on August 14, as reported on the *World Socialist Web Site* on August 17. Representations from the party's national secretary Chris Marsden then led to STWC's Steering Group agreeing to act.

STWC also posted a statement on their X account, which has 73,000 followers.

Stop the War Coalition was founded in 2001 following the terrorist attacks of September 11 that were seized on to implement plans for the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.

On February 15, 2003, STWC led the largest antiwar protest in British history, when two million marched in London to oppose the invasion of Iraq, part of a global antiwar protest that weekend embracing more than 36 million people. The founding president of STWC was Labour "left" Tony Benn. Jeremy Corbyn was president of STWC, but resigned on becoming leader of the Labour Party in 2015.

Since October 2023, in opposition to the Gaza genocide, STWC has led demonstrations of millions of people, protests which have continued in opposition to the US-led war against Iran. The current president of STWC is composer Brian Eno, and Jeremy Corbyn is vice-president.

Marsden told the *World Socialist Web Site*, "The stand taken in defence of our comrade Bogdan by the Stop the War Coalition and the anti-war movement in Britain is of immense significance.

"On Monday August 24, Labour Prime Minister Andy Burnham was in Kyiv, standing alongside President Zelensky and pledging to work with France to provide Ukraine with the ability to produce long-range cruise missiles.

“The UK has already seized Russian ships and allowed Ukraine to launch attacks with British-made drones. Moscow has now warned that it regards the ‘direct involvement of British missile forces’ as ‘participation in the war, with all the ensuing consequences’.

“Burnham, following Keir Starmer’s lead, replied by pledging to back war with Russia ‘for as long as it takes’. His government will indeed do everything possible to make sure the war continues, that tens of thousands more Ukrainians and Russians are maimed and killed, even at the risk of provoking a conflict between nuclear-armed powers.

“Bringing the Ukraine war to an end, just as halting the genocidal assault on the Palestinians, therefore demands an implacable struggle against Britain’s own government of war criminals. Securing the freedom of anti-war socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk will register a powerful blow in this life-and-death conflict.”

Tom Scripps, SEP assistant national secretary, told the WSWs, “There is massive anti-war, anti-imperialist sentiment in Britain. Since October 2023, it has been focussed on the horrific Israeli genocide in Gaza. But the conflicts in Ukraine and Iran make clear that not one of them can be treated as an isolated issue. They are fronts of a global eruption of imperialist war, threatening conflicts between nuclear-armed powers.

“The war in Ukraine has been raging for four-and-a-half years, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of working-class lives and dragging all of Europe and beyond into the maelstrom. Workers in Britain and internationally have not been alerted to the scale of the danger or given a perspective to fight NATO’s propaganda.

“Bogdan is in prison in Ukraine because he fought for that perspective. His call for the unified socialist struggle of workers in Ukraine, Russia, Europe and internationally is the only means of combatting the wars and genocides erupting all over the globe. The fight against world war is the fight for world socialist revolution.”

The World Socialist Web Site urges its readers to add their names to the petition for Bogdan’s freedom. Write to the Pervomaisk City District Court at inbox@pm.mk.court.gov.ua and the Nikolaev Court of Appeal at inbox@mka.court.gov.ua, with a copy to freebogdan@wsws.org, demanding that the

sentence be thrown out and Bogdan be freed at once.



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