

Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi raises campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk at Istanbul antiwar events

Our reporters
2 September 2026

On September 1, the date on which the Second World War began, various events were held in Türkiye to mark what was described as “World Peace Day.” Members of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi—Dördüncü Enternasyonal (Socialist Equality Party—Fourth International) intervened in two events in Istanbul and called for support for the international campaign for the freedom of Bogdan Syrotiuk, the 27-year-old socialist sentenced to 15 years in prison in Ukraine on August 10 for his writings on the *World Socialist Web Site*.

The event held by the Turkish edition of *Le Monde diplomatique* at the Kadıköy Municipality’s Caddebostan Cultural Center, under the main heading “Journalism is not a crime,” opened with an exhibition of the covers of the newspaper’s editions, which are published in 27 languages in 35 countries. The first panel of the event, on “Journalism in a time of war” and moderated by journalist Hazal Ocak, featured Halk TV foreign policy writer Mustafa Kemal Erdemol, Sözcü TV Foreign News Director Burak Tatari and *Le Monde diplomatique* Turkish edition writer Ras?h Re?at.

Speaking during the question-and-answer section of the panel, Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi National Committee member Emine Balkan explained that she was attending on behalf of the Turkish edition of the WSWs and brought Bogdan’s case before the hall. She stated:

As you noted in your remarks, many journalists have lost their lives in wars, and there are also those imprisoned for their writings. Last month the 27-year-old socialist

writer Bogdan Syrotiuk was sentenced to 15 years in prison over six articles he wrote on the NATO-backed Ukraine’s war with Russia. What is happening in Ukraine confronts not a single socialist writer but many opponents of the war.

Bogdan is suffering this oppression not because he sides with any particular party or with Russia, but because he has advocated for Russian and Ukrainian workers to join forces with workers around the world in the struggle [against the war]. He has 10 days left to appeal. If this campaign is not supported, he will be trying to survive 15 years under extremely harsh prison conditions. Practicing journalism and defending the truth is far more important in this era.

Balkan’s remarks were applauded by journalists and audience. Erdemol noted that similar repression is encountered in many parts of the world and declared his support for Bogdan, saying that no one should remain silent and that Bogdan should not be left alone. Ocak, who is herself on trial facing an 18-month prison sentence over a report she wrote, also expressed her support for Bogdan.

Following the panel, French journalist and author Serge Halimi delivered a lecture titled “Warmongers: Press institutions and journalists.” Halimi, who served as editor-in-chief of *Le Monde diplomatique* from 2008 to 2023, drew attention to the way the war in Ukraine and the genocidal war in Gaza have been covered in the Western press in a manner biased in favor of NATO

and Israel. This pro-imperialist “journalism” is also plainly evident in the fact that not one of the major media outlets in the United States and Europe has reported Bogdan’s trial and verdict.

Halimi said it was deceptive for the Western media to date the war in Ukraine from February 24, 2022 and events in Gaza from October 7, 2023. He recalled that following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO incorporated the former Warsaw Pact members and the Baltic republics into the alliance, and that the same project was kept on the agenda for Ukraine and Georgia. The Maidan coup of February 2014 in Kiev had been largely forgotten because it complicated the narrative too much, and much of the media characterizes such historical context as “Russian disinformation.” Those who question the narratives that legitimize wars are declared “advocates of a foreign government.”

This points to the international background of the frame-up organized against Bogdan Syrotyuk by the NATO-backed Ukrainian regime. Bogdan was sentenced to 15 years in prison because, while opposing Russia’s reactionary invasion, he also opposed NATO’s proxy war and the Ukrainian regime from the standpoint of the international working class. Here too lies the answer to the question of why Bogdan’s conviction found no place in the *New York Times*, on the BBC or in *Le Monde* itself: this case demolishes everything that remains of the Ukrainian “war for democracy” narrative.

Despite the silence in the mainstream media, the campaign has grown rapidly since August 10. More than 7,200 people have signed the petition demanding Bogdan’s release, with close to 1,500 new signatures from dozens of countries arriving in the days after the verdict alone. Historians, academics, artists, journalists and workers from around the world have protested the ruling. Many antiwar and left-wing parties, organizations and publications, including the Stop the War Coalition in Britain, have issued statements supporting the campaign.

At the close of the event, Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi members distributed Turkish, English and French copies of the party statement “Free Bogdan Syrotyuk!” to journalists and members of the audience.

Hundreds of copies of the statement were also distributed the same day at the march held in Kad?köy

by the “Istanbul Forces of Labor, Peace and Democracy.” The statement, which concludes with the demands “Free Bogdan Syrotyuk immediately and unconditionally!” and “For the international unity of the working class against imperialist war, dictatorship and capitalism!”, called for support for the campaign on the following basis:

- Sign and circulate the petition for Bogdan’s freedom: wsws.org/freebogdan
- Send letters demanding that the sentence be overturned and Bogdan released immediately to the Pervomaisk City District Court (inbox@pm.mk.court.gov.ua) and the Mykolaiv Court of Appeal (inbox@mka.court.gov.ua), copying freebogdan@wsws.org.
- Raise the case in your workplaces, unions, schools and universities; pass resolutions and organize meetings.
- Contact the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi to support the campaign.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact