Open letter to D?P and EEK: Defend Ukrainian socialist prisoner Bogdan Syrotiuk!

Ula? Sevinç
12 November 2026

Dear Mr. Sungur Savran, Chairman of the Revolutionary Workers Party (D?P),

Dear Mr. Savas Michael-Matsas, General Secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK),

We wrote to you directly to inform you that our Ukrainian comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk, leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), was sentenced to 15 years in prison by a fascist court of the NATO-backed Ukrainian regime on August 10, 2026, and to ask for your support for the global campaign to overturn the sentence and secure his immediate release. To date, we have received no reply. Nor have we seen any statement in your parties' online publications, *Gerçek* and *Nea Prooptiki*, defending Bogdan against NATO imperialism and its proxy regime in Ukraine.

With this open letter, we call on you once again, this time publicly, to take a stand for the release of the socialist political prisoner Bogdan.

The case of Bogdan Syrotiuk

Comrade Bogdan, 27, who has been imprisoned since April 25, 2024, was sentenced by the Pervomaisk City District Court in the Mykolaiv region to 15 years in prison and the confiscation of his property on the charge of "high treason under martial law." The court ordered the destruction of his printed political materials. His lawyers appealed the verdict in September.

The case file contains no evidence of espionage, sabotage or collaboration with the Russian armed forces. The case rests on Bogdan's political views and on the articles he wrote for the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS). In these articles, Bogdan opposed both the Zelensky regime and Ukrainian nationalism, and the Putin regime and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As an internationalist socialist—that is, as a Trotskyist—he fought for the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers against the war.

Even media outlets close to the Kremlin have acknowledged this. On August 22, 2026, the Russian state-affiliated Ukraina.ru wrote that Bogdan had also sharply criticized Russia and did not view Russia's invasion favorably "even as an idea."

The campaign of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) for Bogdan's freedom has met with a powerful international response. Numerous political tendencies with which we have irreconcilable political differences, which we do not conceal, have issued statements opposing the persecution of a socialist for his political views. In France, La France insoumise (LFI) condemned the verdict. In Britain, the Stop the War Coalition demanded his release. Tendencies in Russia declared their solidarity with Bogdan. Numerous statements of support were also issued from Greece and Türkiye; most recently, Kurdish DEM Party deputy Ömer Faruk Gergerlio?lu raised the issue in the Turkish parliament. The online petition demanding Bogdan's release has gathered more than 8,400 signatures.

D?P and EEK, as sister parties active in Türkiye and Greece, who call themselves "revolutionary Marxist" or "Trotskyist," claim to place the struggle against NATO at the center of their politics. At the Anti-NATO Conference you held on July 4, 2026, on the occasion of the NATO summit in Ankara, speeches were given on NATO's ties to fascism and its role in Ukraine. Bogdan is being held in the prison of this NATO-backed fascistic regime. His conviction is a clear demonstration of the determination of Kiev, and of the imperialist powers arming it, to silence every voice opposed to the war.

Your parties also claim to defend democratic rights and the victims of political persecution. The sentencing of an anti-war socialist to 15 years in prison for his articles is a direct negation of these rights. Does remaining silent about this, as a political party, not amount to remaining silent about the aggression of the fascistic regime in Ukraine and the NATO imperialism standing behind it?

What is the source of this silence?

Since you have issued no statement explaining your silence, we can only infer its reasons from your parties' public positions. We therefore pose the following questions.

For many years, D?P and EEK have maintained close relations with two neo-Stalinist parties in Russia: Darya Mitina's United Communist Party (OKP) and the Russian Communist Workers Party (RKRP). Mitina spoke at the "Future of Eurasia" session of the July 4 Anti-NATO Conference. The RKRP sent a written message to the conference, which EEK published in *Nea Prooptiki* on July 9 under the headline "Warm greetings."

Is it a coincidence that these two parties, which "critically" defend Russia's invasion of Ukraine, do not defend Bogdan, who is being persecuted by the very Kiev regime they claim to oppose? Moreover, when the YGBL called on left-wing organizations in Russia to defend Bogdan after his arrest in 2024, your comrades in the RKRP replied:

… Well be consistent! Since your comrade was against the SMO [Special Military Operation] from the beginning, don't complain now! Alas, but it is quite logical that he got a full spoonful of it! Now he has a chance to find out **on his own skin** whose regime is more reactionary. Only the "reactionary" troops of the dreadful, terrible Putin will free him. We are, to put it mildly, not fans of Vladimir Vladimirovich [Putin], but your comrade's position is frankly stupid. Do not mechanically copy the tactics of the Bolsheviks of the early twentieth century! Think with your head! The Bolsheviks tied their tactics to specific conditions, which are absolutely not equal to today's conditions.

The RKRP disparages Bogdan's position as a "mechanical copying of the tactics of the Bolsheviks of the early twentieth century." This is an open admission that they reject permanent revolution and socialist internationalism. The message the RKRP sent to your conference in July 2026 contained the following appeal: "theoretical debates must not divert

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from the main issue, namely the joint repulsion of the aggressive forces of imperialism—the US, NATO and their allies."

We ask you: Do you agree with the RKRP that it is "quite logical" for a socialist imprisoned for opposing the war to have "got a full spoonful of it"? If not, why do you not say so openly? Are you refraining from defending Bogdan because it would damage your relations with these parties, which attribute a progressive role to the Putin regime, the political representative of the oligarchy that emerged from the Stalinist bureaucracy's restoration of capitalism in the USSR?

Whatever their verbal criticisms of the Putin regime, the OKP and the RKRP support Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The statement of the Seventh Plenum of the OKP Central Committee, dated March 26, 2022, declares that "communists… support the idea of the denazification of Ukraine," and rejects opposition to the war as "pseudo-pacifist defeatism that in essence plays into the hands of the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev." Do you think Bogdan is in prison because he played into the hands of the Kiev regime?

In the resolution of its October 2022 Plenum, the RKRP likewise declared the struggle of the Russian armed forces in Ukraine "just" and set itself the task of contributing to the part of the "special military operation" aimed at the defeat of the "Ukrainian Nazis."

D?P's position proceeds from a similar standpoint. On May 22, 2022, Mitina wrote on her blog:

Today, an international meeting was held with the participation of the member parties of the Christian Rakovsky Socialist Center (our United Communist Party is also a member of this Center). Sungur Savran, leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (D?P) of Turkey, made the following statement: "We give no political support to Putin, but in the present situation we give him full and unconditional military support within our means."

At the root of this perspective lies the rejection of the theory of permanent revolution and of the independent role of the working class. The notion that the struggle against imperialism can be tied to the military success of a bourgeois state—Russia—is an open repudiation of the program of Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International.

In its statement of February 24, 2022, on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the ICFI explained this as follows:

Despite the provocations and threats by the US and NATO powers, Russia's invasion of Ukraine must be opposed by socialists and class-conscious workers. The catastrophe that was set in motion by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 cannot be averted on the basis of Russian nationalism, a thoroughly reactionary ideology that serves the interests of the capitalist ruling class represented by Vladimir Putin.

What is required is not a return to the pre-1917 foreign policy of tsarism, but, rather, a revival, in Russia and throughout the world, of the socialist internationalism that inspired the October Revolution of 1917 and led to the creation of the Soviet Union as a workers state. The invasion of Ukraine, whatever the justifications given by the Putin regime, will serve only to divide the Russian and Ukrainian working class and, moreover, serve the interests of US and European imperialism.

Everything that has happened since then has confirmed this perspective. While Ukrainian and Russian workers and youth, driven to the front in the interests of NATO imperialism and the Ukrainian and Russian oligarchies, are slaughtered by the hundreds of thousands, the Putin regime is utterly incapable of appealing to the Russian, Ukrainian and international working class against imperialism. Even as it resorts to extremely dangerous nuclear threats, it is seeking a deal with the US and NATO. The task of fighting imperialism falls to the international working class, the only social force capable of abolishing it—not to any bourgeois nation-state.

In the same statement, the ICFI cited the following lines from Trotsky's 1934 statement *War and the Fourth International*:

The defence of the national state, first of all in Balkanised Europe—the cradle of the national state—is in the full sense of the word *a reactionary task*. The national state with its borders, passports, monetary system, customs and the army for the protection of customs has become a frightful impediment to the economic and cultural development of humanity. The task of the proletariat is not the defence of the national state but its complete and final liquidation.

Trotsky declared, "A 'socialist' who preaches national defense is a petty-bourgeois reactionary at the service of decaying capitalism," and added: "Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to follow not the war map but the map of the class struggle, is possible only for that party that has already declared irreconcilable war on the national state in time of peace."

This is exactly what Bogdan has done: rejecting the calls for "national defense" of both Zelensky and Putin and defending the international unity of the working class. You, on the other hand, have abandoned this principle and embraced "national defense" in the form of a Russian military victory. A perspective that claims to oppose imperialism but ties that struggle to the military success of a bourgeois state inevitably ends up in the camp of imperialism.

We ask you: Is the reason you do not defend Bogdan that he opposed the Putin regime and the invasion from the standpoint of the international working class? Does the imprisonment for 15 years of a socialist opponent of the Ukrainian regime and US-NATO imperialism, by these very forces, contribute to Russia's "military victory"?

Factional hostility as the cause of the silence

In 1985, Savas Michael-Matsas was national secretary of the Workers Internationalist League (WIL), the Greek section of the ICFI. During the split between the ICFI and the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain, led by Gerry Healy, Michael-Matsas broke with the ICFI on an entirely unprincipled basis, refusing to discuss with the other sections and asserting that they did not even have the authority to meet without Healy's permission. The ICFI's letter of November 9, 1985, to the WIL Central Committee warned that "Such a split by you would constitute an enormous betrayal of the International and the Greek working class." Underlying this break was his agreement with Healy's national-opportunist orientation, which rejected the theory of permanent revolution and the fight for Trotskyism.

In the same letter, the International Committee correctly predicted the sharp shift to the right by the Michael-Matsas leadership as follows:

The anti-internationalism which led to the refusal to attend the October 25 IC meeting must be rejected. If not, the WIL faces destruction as a Trotskyist party. The WIL is on the brink of announcing the "transformation of the League into the revolutionary party." Comrade Savas and the CC know that there are gigantic destructive dangers in founding a party on the unprincipled foundation of a break with internationalism. The very best interpretation which can be placed on Comrade Savas and the Greek CC's break from the IC is that they fear disruption of their work for the transformation into a party. Such a position, politically, means that internationalism, the foundation of our movement in every country, is rejected in favour of immediate national concerns as perceived by the WIL leadership.

A party formed on this basis could never be a section of the World Party of Socialist Revolution, the Fourth International. It would attract all those petty bourgeois elements who reject our internationalist foundations. We urge you with all the force at our command to turn back from the path upon which you have embarked, to return immediately to the IC, and to conduct the work of founding the revolutionary party in Greece on this,

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the only principled basis.

Mr. Michael-Matsas: the historical record spanning exactly 41 years since this letter was written has delivered an irrefutable verdict on your leadership—which has now reached the point of refusing to defend a Trotskyist political prisoner against NATO and the fascist regime in Ukraine. The International Committee's foresight has been fully vindicated. After breaking with the ICFI, Michael-Matsas turned to political alliances in Greece with the Stalinist Communist Party (KKE), the bourgeois party PASOK and the trade union bureaucracy and, just like Healy, hailed Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* as the beginning of the "political revolution" in the Soviet Union.

This historical record and your alliance with the Russian neo-Stalinists clearly demonstrate that your refusal to defend Comrade Bogdan stems from his political solidarity with the ICFI. Yet the deep-rooted and well-documented political differences between our tendencies have never prevented us from defending you on principle against the attacks of bourgeois states and fascists.

If you are serious in your claim, as socialist tendencies, to defend basic democratic rights, we call on you to take the following steps:

• Publicly condemn the 15-year prison sentence imposed on Bogdan Syrotiuk and demand that the verdict be overturned and Bogdan released immediately and unconditionally.

• Publicize the case in *Gerçek* and *Nea Prooptiki* and call on your members and supporters to join the petition campaign.

• State clearly that political opposition to the war and journalistic activity cannot be criminalized as "high treason."

Comrade Bogdan has been in prison for close to two and a half years. What is at stake is the defense of a revolutionary who is leading the revival of the tradition led by Lenin and Trotsky on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Today, the fight for Bogdan Syrotiuk's freedom is an inseparable part of the struggle to mobilize the Ukrainian, Russian and international working class against imperialist war.

Sincerely,
Ula? Sevinç
Chairman,
Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal
(Socialist Equality Party – Fourth International)



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