

Ukrainian and Russian Socialists in Prison for Opposing War— Free Bogdan Syrotiuk, Boris Kagarlitsky and Alleged RFU Members!

It has been over three years since Russia invaded Ukraine in response to NATO provocation. Socialists in Russia and Ukraine who have spoken out in opposition to this war have been met with brutal repression by both governments.

On January 28, the Ukrainian secret service (SBU) arrested five antiwar activists in four cities. They are charged with involvement with the **Workers' Front of Ukraine** (RFU) and violating Article 114-1 of the criminal code, "obstruction of the lawful activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine." Three of them are in jail, the others confined to home arrest. The SBU announced they are searching for all members of the organization. **Hands off the Workers' Front of Ukraine! Drop the charges against alleged members!** The RFU, which describes itself as Marxist-Leninist, has been outlawed by the government since 2014. **Bogdan Syrotiuk**, a supporter of the International Committee of the Fourth International, was swept up last April by the SBU and has been languishing in prison awaiting trial on blatantly false charges of treason and servicing Russian interests. Syrotiuk faces 15 years to life imprisonment.

In July 2023, Russian authorities arrested prominent left-wing intellectual **Boris Kagarlitsky** for his staunch opposition to the invasion of Ukraine. Kagarlitsky, tried and convicted at the end of 2023 on bogus charges of "justifying terrorism," was fined and released. The prosecution appealed, ranting against the "excessive leniency." In February 2024, a military court resentenced Kagarlitsky to five years in prison.

Socialists and workers have a clear interest in fighting for the release of all these Russian and Ukrainian antiwar protesters as an expression of class solidarity with their principled opposition to the war. Both sides in this war are pursuing reactionary objectives. The working classes of both Russia and Ukraine should struggle for the defeat of their "own" capitalist ruling classes. In the imperialist centers, to help beat back the attacks on the living conditions at home, the trade-union movement and the left must take a side with the workers in Ukraine and Russia *against* the NATO imperialists who are arming Zelensky and must oppose Putin's oligarchy as well.

Others on the left, including the Socialist Equality Party in the U.S., and the Revolutionary Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party in Britain, have publicized these cases, which is an important step. What is needed is to mobilize the broadest possible forces, not only of socialist organizations, but importantly in the trade unions, in defense of these and other antiwar activists imprisoned in Russia and Ukraine.

**Free Boris Kagarlitsky, Bogdan Syrotiuk and alleged RFU members!
Drop all charges now!**

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