



“I am not being paid by the Russians”

George Woodham | Date: February 5, 2026



Gabor Landman | [mkfotografie](#)

Ukraine critic files complaint against De Balie director after unfounded accusation

Gabor Landman, founder of the European Language Rights foundation, through which he campaigns for equal language rights, has been accused by Yoeri Albrecht, director of the De Balie debate center, of being paid by the Russian secret service FSB. This happened after he criticized Ukraine during a public debate, where the Russian language is being harshly suppressed .

Albrecht says he bases his claims on information from the investigative collective Bellingcat, but neither he nor Bellingcat has provided any evidence to support this. Landman himself strongly denies the allegation and has filed a complaint against director Albrecht for defamation and slander. "I think he just made this up to damage me."

"Ukraine is not fighting for the freedom of Europe!" says Gabor Landman. He is still sitting in the audience at the De Balie debate center in Amsterdam, but will soon be removed. It is December 11, 2025, and under the leadership of director Yoeri Albrecht, the topic of discussion is Ukraine. Landman is present because, as founder of the European Language Rights foundation, he is concerned about the way Ukraine deals with the rights of linguistic minorities.

That evening, however, there is only praise and support for the country at De Balie. The theme night is co-organized by the Protect Ukraine foundation and live-streamed on the internet to a packed audience (see link at the bottom of this article). Authors Tommy Wieringa and Jaap Scholten are at the desk. Together with documentary maker Hans Pool, they traveled to Ukraine to make the two-part documentary *Konvooi* (2025). In it, they travel with a convoy full of relief supplies and military equipment that reaches almost to the front line of the war in Ukraine. Also at the table: Juliet Broersen, party leader of Volt Amsterdam. During the evening, clips from *Konvooi* will be shown to stimulate discussion at the table. After one of the clips, an interview with a Ukrainian woman, Gabor Landman reacts: "There are Nazi symbols in that video. Aren't you ashamed?" he exclaims from the audience.

Landman claims that he could no longer remain silent. "I saw very clearly that a woman had an SS symbol on her T-shirt," he explains to De Andere Krant. "An SS Odal rune: a Nazi symbol. I raised my hand, but they didn't respond. Then

that lady from Volt launched into a four or five-minute eulogy about how wonderful Ukraine was, after which the audience began to applaud. And then I expressed a different opinion. So instead of applauding, I said, out of an inner moral conviction: **'Ukraine is not fighting for European values. And there are Nazi symbols on that T-shirt. And you should be ashamed of yourselves for displaying Nazi symbols like that.'**"

Landman points out that openly fascist groups are active in Ukraine, but during the debate evening he does not get the opportunity to bring this up. "I was warned to be quiet. So I remained silent. But there was a man sitting in front of me who started talking to me. I showed him on my phone that it really was a Nazi symbol. Then Tommy Wieringa and Jaap Scholten stood up and escorted me outside. As I stood up, the man sitting next to me kicked me repeatedly. You can hear that on the audio recording. I was then escorted outside by a lady from De Balie. I cooperated fully and was polite throughout."

After Landman has left the room, director Albrecht announces to the audience and viewers of the livestream: "... I checked with my friends at Bellingcat, and this gentleman is being paid by the FSB (the Russian secret service — ed.) to be here. To raise objections. He is always here on evenings when Ukraine is discussed. And he always claims that Ukrainians are Nazis. We are all for open debate, but I am not particularly in favor of giving a platform to people who are paid by the FSB to plant and propagate a different narrative here."

"Albrecht could have just said, 'Hey, that guy's a stupid idiot. Let's send him away,'" says Landman. "But the fact that I was kicked out like that and that he then said on the spot that I was working for the Russian secret service, I don't think that's normal."

Landman rejects the accusation and insists that he does not work for the Russian government in any way. When asked how he thinks Albrecht came up with his allegation, he says: "I think he just made it up to damage me. And to associate me with something at that moment and make my position look suspicious."

Gabor Landman, who himself has Hungarian and Frisian roots and works as a translator and interpreter, advocates for minority languages in European countries through his foundation European Language Rights. According to him, Ukraine is deliberately suppressing minority languages such as Russian, Hungarian, and Romanian. "Because of the war with Ukraine, the language rights of minorities have now become somewhat taboo. I think that's terrible. They once banned education in other languages in Ukraine. Then they had laws that you couldn't sing in another language on the radio. Many of those laws have since been revoked, but it's just crazy. And this country is a candidate for membership of the European Union, no less. Ukraine still has a law that requires shopkeepers to address customers in Ukrainian first when they enter their store. For speakers of small, vulnerable minority languages, such as Hungarian, this is a disaster, because it forces them to engage in self-censorship."

The accusation against Landman by De Balie director Albrecht also had an impact outside the debate hall. One of the viewers of the livestream posted on LinkedIn, a social media platform for professionals: "Fantastic to see how Kremlin troll Gabor Landman ... was kicked out of De Balie. Well done, everyone." The post received thirty likes. Albrecht's accusation against Landman is also echoed in the mainstream media. On December 12, the AD newspaper ran the headline: "Man 'paid by the Russians' disrupts meeting of Twente writers." The same

headline appeared that same day in AD subsidiaries Tubantia and De Gelderlander.

Albrecht did not provide evidence for the allegation against Landman that evening at De Balie. Albrecht was "unavailable" to speak to De Andere Krant, a spokeswoman for the debate center said by telephone. We also contacted the journalism platform Bellingcat by email for comment, but they did not respond.

The accusations have not left Landman unscathed. He believes they could hinder him in his efforts to defend the linguistic rights of minorities. "Look, a court is never 100 percent independent, of course. When you are portrayed as some kind of Russian troll or someone who is paid by Russia... What judge would stick their neck out? It's just bad for your reputation. When someone makes an accusation like that, it can stick. It can resonate. I just have to refute this lie."

On January 21, Landman filed criminal charges against Youri Albrecht for defamation and slander.

dakl.nl/landmanverwijderd

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Place of free debate now mouthpiece for NATO? Gabor Landman clearly states that De Balie is no longer an impartial platform for debate. In mid-2023, De Balie exhibited a Russian tank captured by Ukrainian soldiers on Leidseplein in Amsterdam "to raise awareness" about the conflict in Ukraine. The NATO logo is prominently displayed on the debate center's website. "I knew De Balie as a place where you could simply express your opinion, but now it seems like a communist party congress where everyone has to applaud." De Balie's openly pro-Ukraine stance is remarkable. The debate center is regarded by the national government as an institution of national importance. De Balie is included in the

so-called Cultural Basic Infrastructure (bis) and therefore receives 250,000 euros annually from the treasury. In addition, De Balie receives more than 800,000 euros each year from the municipality of Amsterdam. The institution also receives money from NATO on a project basis.