

Oppose the Steiner-Tissot smear campaign! Defend Comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk!

Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists
17 February 2025

To support the fight to free Bogdan Syrotiuk and to learn more about the case and the work of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, go to wsws.org/freebogdan.

The Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists condemns with contempt the smear campaign alleging that the International Committee’s “negligence” in security matters led to the arrest of our comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk (known by the pseudonym Ostap Roerich), who has been in the hands of the Ukrainian regime for nearly 10 months. This provocation is a deliberate attempt to undermine the defense of Comrade Syrotiuk, the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, and the International Committee as a whole.

Almost as soon as the blog post by Alex Steiner had launched the provocation by publishing an anonymous letter, Steiner was forced to delete it and acknowledge that the “revelations” had been false.

Lacking a shred of evidence or a coherent argument, this smear campaign rested on the false claim that the International Committee permitted Comrade Bogdan to publish under his supposed real name, “Ostap Roerich.” This accusation, which turned reality upside down, served as the basis for the allegation that he was a victim of “political fraud” by the International Committee. As the *World Socialist Web Site* editorial board has thoroughly documented, this accusation is a complete fabrication from beginning to end.

Steiner’s publication was not an act of negligence but a deliberate use of non-credible material designed to discredit the ICFI and undermine the campaign to free Bogdan. In its initial publication, Sam Tissot claimed that they decided to “hide” the real name of the source. But why conceal the author of a fabricated letter? The only logical explanation is that the publisher knew the author well and understood his political physiognomy.

If the audience were aware of the author’s identity, they could examine his past statements, exposing his broader political agenda.

As the ICFI discovered, the so-called “anonymous author” was in fact an individual using the pseudonym Alexander Goldman—an anarchist and self-proclaimed “independent journalist” on the Eastern question. Furthermore, Goldman’s statements attacking the ICFI and Comrade Bogdan were published between December 30, 2024, and January 3, 2025.

In fact, this individual also contacted a comrade of the YGBL in a clear attempt to sow confusion and discord among Bogdan’s comrades. At the time, we recognized it as a transparent provocation and assumed that this person was acting in coordination with the Ukrainian secret service (SBU). This was the only rational conclusion for anyone committed to Bogdan’s defense and even remotely familiar with the politics and history of the ICFI. Yet Alex Steiner chose to publish this letter. Why?

Even if the accusations against the International Committee had been true—which they were not—publishing such a letter could only serve to undermine Bogdan’s defense. He is being persecuted by the Ukrainian state and faces a potential life sentence. Such actions violate not only the most fundamental principles of defending the democratic rights of those persecuted by the state but also basic political decency.

Goldman’s abrupt disappearance from X on February 3 made clear that he was attempting to cover his tracks as the source of the smear campaign. Fortunately, international comrades preserved screenshots of his posts, allowing them to reconstruct a profile of the author and his role in orchestrating this provocation. His posts made it evident that the primary objective

was to discredit the ICFI, particularly in relation to the struggle for Comrade Bogdan's liberation. Yet, even after the International Committee exposed this fabrication, Steiner continued to defend his reckless provocation.

There is no doubt: The smear campaign was designed to sow discord and sabotage the fight to free Bogdan. Only the ICFI has consistently and openly defended Bogdan, actively promoting and organizing the campaign for his release. It was precisely because of his steadfast defense of Trotskyist principles that Bogdan was arrested. The documents authored by Bogdan, the YGBL and the International Committee formed the central basis for the arrest and charges brought against him by the prosecution.

In this context, it must be emphasized that Goldman's provocations closely mirrored the arguments of the SBU against Bogdan. His aim was to portray the ICFI as agents of the Kremlin who disregarded the safety of their supporters in Ukraine. This was a deliberate effort to undermine the ICFI's political credibility among workers who are hostile to the Russian oligarchy and are concerned about Comrade Bogdan's fate.

In court, the SBU has accused Bogdan of "state treason" due to his collaboration with the International Committee and the *World Socialist Web Site*, which it falsely labels as a "propaganda outlet" for the Kremlin. Ultimately, this entire campaign serves to protect the interests of Western imperialism in Ukraine and uphold Zelensky's oligarchic regime.

To prevent the development of class consciousness among Ukrainian workers, Zelensky is escalating repression against political opponents of his regime. This crackdown is directly tied to the growing disillusionment of the Ukrainian masses, who have borne the immense human cost of the war—sacrificing hundreds of thousands of lives—while the Ukrainian oligarchy, in collaboration with its Western partners, has managed to protect and even expand its wealth.

The ruling class, fearing the emergence of revolutionary consciousness rooted in an understanding of the reactionary role of the capitalist system—including both the Russian and Ukrainian oligarchies—is driven to suppress even the most basic democratic freedoms of the working class and its defenders. This repression only underscores the urgent

necessity of linking the fight for democratic rights with the broader struggle for socialist revolution.

The fight to free Comrade Bogdan is not merely an isolated democratic protest against Zelensky's dictatorship; it is a crucial step in uniting the international working class, raising its revolutionary consciousness, and mobilizing it against imperialist war and capitalist exploitation.

Only the International Committee and the YGBL have waged this struggle, which is why they now face the full force of state repression. Through their reckless and despicable provocation, Alex Steiner and his allies have exposed their political alignment—with the enemies of the Trotskyist movement and the democratic rights of the international working class.

Support the ICFI's campaign in defense of Comrade Bogdan!

Reject the slanderous statements of the provocateurs!

Fight for the unification of the working class around the Trotskyist banner!



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact