

## **Pagors, Andrey (2025): Tanja – a courageous young woman.**

[Letter to K. Schittich, 6 November 2025, translated from Russian using ChatGPT and DeepL.]

Hello, Klaus!

On the subject of Tatjana Andrijeca.

I would like to begin by telling you how I met her. This encounter, in a sense, forms the basis of the whole story – a story that shows who Tanja is and why she inspires so much sympathy.

I will describe how Tanja ended up in this situation and why criminal proceedings have been brought against her – particularly serious proceedings in which she faces a sentence ranging from ten years' imprisonment to life imprisonment. I believe the reasons for this lie in her life story and her actions. In peaceful times, without wars or political pressure, something like this would probably never have happened. But we live in different times, and Tanja has become the heroine of this drama – though I hope that in the end it will be a story of victory: the victory of a young woman over an entire system.

We met in 2017, when the 'Committee for the Defence of Russian Schools' movement was launched. Its roots go back to 2004, when tens of thousands of people protested in Riga against the education reform that deprived Russian children of the opportunity to learn in their mother tongue. Although Latvia had ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, these obligations were not actually upheld – even though around 40% of the population are Russian-speaking.

Tanja was still very young at the time, but she already had life experience: she initially attended a Russian school and later switched to a Latvian one. One day, she was asked to appear in the Saeima (Parliament) and say that the transition to lessons in Latvian was going smoothly. But Tanja did not meet this expectation – she remained true to her conscience and spoke the truth openly, despite pressure from the school administration. That was, in my opinion, her first act of courage. After that, people took notice of her and she was invited

to get involved – they realised: this is a person of conviction, who is ideologically ‘one of us’.

Since then, our paths have crossed. We became socially active together: we tended Soviet soldiers’ graves, organised voluntary work shifts at the Monument to the Liberators of Riga (which was demolished in 2022) and spoke out against the glorification of the Latvian Waffen-SS legionnaires. We organised rallies, educational campaigns and explained historical contexts to people. It is precisely through this work that one can understand who Tanja is – and why the state and the secret services regarded her as a “hostile element”.

When the war began in 2022 [the Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine, K.Sch.], Russophobia intensified in Latvia. The Russian language was effectively banished from public life, and teaching in Russian was completely banned, even in private schools and universities. Under the same pretext, people began to destroy Soviet monuments.

That year, Tanja was working as an advisor at Riga City Council. She wrote on her Facebook page that she was against the demolition of the monuments – and was unlawfully dismissed for it. We went to court, won the case, and she received compensation. But she no longer wanted to return to that job.

Tanja then decided to realise her dream – to study in Russia, where, in her opinion, the education is better than here and, above all, is conducted in her mother tongue.

Now to the criminal proceedings themselves.

In autumn 2022, Tanja moved to St Petersburg, but we stayed in touch. In November 2022, criminal proceedings were initiated in Latvia against the so-called ‘Baltic Anti-Fascist Group’ – a Telegram channel founded in Russia. At the time, it was not known who specifically was associated with this group. At that time, Tanja travelled to Riga without incident, met friends, and nobody arrested her. It was only two weeks after her return that articles appeared in the media describing her as a “Kremlin-linked activist” and “enemy of the state” – public opinion was being prepared for her arrest. Shortly afterwards, she was indeed arrested.

Initially, Tanja was charged with a number of offences, but the charges were later amended. She was 'linked' to the case, even though she originally had nothing to do with it. It appeared as though the security services were simply 'picking out' the missing individuals to formally form a 'criminal organisation' of five people.

Tanja is accused of the fact that in a chat group concerned with helping emigrants from Latvia and Estonia, a participant suggested setting up the channel "Antifascists of the Baltics". Tanja is said to have reacted neither positively nor negatively – this silence is now being interpreted as "passive support".

Yet the actual founder of the channel, Sergei Vasilyev, admitted in court that he was the sole initiator and operator. No one else had anything to do with it.

The security services, however, declared the channel "subversive" and used this as the basis for the charges. Tanja was described as an "organiser", even though she was involved in neither the moderation nor the administration – she was merely a subscriber, like thousands of others, including myself.

Furthermore, Tanja only met the other defendants during the trial – clear proof that there was no genuine "organised group". To reach the required number of five people nonetheless, the prosecution relied on statements by the politician Alexei Roslikov, who, according to numerous indications, collaborates with the security services. His statements enabled the prosecution to claim that this was a "group".

During her stay in Russia, Tanja did not participate in any political movements. She knew that any careless remark could deprive her of the possibility of returning to Latvia, where her mother and grandmother live. She continued her studies and helped other people.

The security services could hardly have found a more suitable 'candidate' for such a show trial than Tatjana Andriječa: she is well-known, sincere and actively involved in society – which is precisely why they decided to get her out of the way.

In prison, attempts were made to persuade her to make false statements against others, but she refused. When they realised she would not slander anyone, they began to exert psychological and physical

pressure on her. After eight months in detention, she was in a very poor state, but she held firm.

Tatjana Andrijeca is feared because she is strong, honest and inspiring. She speaks five languages, is highly educated, plays the violin and guitar, and plays sport – a well-rounded individual with enormous potential. She is supported not only in Latvia, but far beyond its borders.

I firmly believe that Tanja will win this case and be able to return to her social, and perhaps political, activities. Her story is important – because any one of us could be in her place. If this repressive machinery is not stopped, it will continue to destroy people's lives.

Perhaps it will continue to do so. If we do not stop this machinery – this machinery of the secret services that fabricates cases out of thin air and simply imprisons people, ruining their lives, just to deter everyone else from fighting, taking to the streets and standing up against this system.

They are using Tanja Andrijeca to intimidate others, so that no one protests or speaks out publicly anymore. Therein lies the true reason for this persecution. The security services do not shy away from acting against their conscience by bringing proceedings against a young woman who has done nothing wrong. In doing so, they make use of various politicians who make false statements against people who have fought all their lives for the truth, for their values, for their language, for their culture, for their monuments, for their history.