

Appendix 2.2

Tatyana Fedyaeva

Radio "Narodnoe radio"

Moscow

September 04, 2005

"Narodnyj Interes" program transcript

Broadcasting date: September 4, 2005

Duration: 42 min 15 sec

Program Intro – 15 sec

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Good afternoon, dear listeners! You are listening to the Narodnyj Interes program. I, Tatyana Fedyaeva, am your host as usual.

Today we are broadcasting from Barnaul, the capital city of Altay Region.

Middle-aged and senior citizens could not miss the fact that our society had changed drastically in recent times. These changes are manifested not only in a huge number of bright shop windows that pop up everywhere, not only in some people now driving Mercedes and some searching for food in garbage bins. There are other changes as well. We are now surrounded by countless uniformed men. Uniformed men are posted at the entrances to schools, clinics, metro stations; we see security guards at the office buildings and everywhere else. On the one hand, this is probably good, they ensure our security. On the other hand, we are turning into a country where half of the population are guards, and the rest are in custody. And it is hard to tell sometimes who belongs to which half. It happens that yesterday's criminal today becomes a legislative assembly deputy, and yesterday's oligarch today is a regular inmate of Matrosskaya Tishina jail.

"There is no fence against beggary or jail" is a proverb always relevant for Russia, and today it becomes particularly close to our entire way of life. Some 400 thousand are currently employed in penal system, which simply means they work as guards and wardens in prisons, colonies, correctional facilities. Some 800 thousand are kept in confinement. We need to talk about this because all these people have family, have mothers and fathers, wives and children. What a huge portion of our society is involved in what is called incarceration! You are either there or here. But one way or the other you belong to what is designated by this term. We are living in a society characterized by one of the highest rates of imprisoned citizens in the world.

Today, however, we are going to discuss not just this fact but also a very serious problem – HIV-infected people, because there are very many of them kept in confinement. Officially over 300 thousand HIV cases are registered in our country, and unofficially this number should be multiplied by 3 or 4. Also we have to take into account that this disease affects mainly young people between 15 and 19 years of age, that is, the strongest and the most productive part of our population. We are talking about it today because we cannot any longer give this subject the silent treatment.

Why are we talking about Barnaul? Because Altay region and Barnaul city is where the Medical and Sanitary Institution #1 is located, which we went to visit.

Music.

This is not a sanatorium, not a Boy Scout camping ground, this is a penal colony. As I walk along a path, I see a huge number of young faces, I see thin, tight lads. There are 1600 of them kept here, 1600 people struck off from regular life. Here they pass by, clad in black overalls, black caps, each bearing a chest plate with their names and unit numbers. Nevertheless I remain under impression that this is in fact a sanatorium because of so many flowers blooming and a beautiful church. The church was opened here quite recently. It was built by inmates; they also made wood carvings and painted icons for it. A priest came here recently to consecrate the church. There are also workshops on the grounds where people are trained as welding operators, carpenters, sewers. It is odd that sewers are men. People work here, learn new skills.

But this is a topsy-turvy world; they are learning job skills in a wrong place. They should have learned these skills outside, as free men, they should have had an opportunity to set up their

life outside. But these 1600 young men failed to do that. This medical and correctional institution is known for running a program promoting tolerance towards HIV-positive people because when these HIV-positive people are released, they will have to live among healthy ones. How will the society welcome them? Does violence generate new violence? Or maybe tolerance can change people's mindset?

These are the questions asked by not only medical specialists, but also leaders of NGOs that came to this institution, first of all, such organizations as "Siberian Initiative" and the regional anti-AIDS center. They organize regular trainings for inmates within their programs' framework. This colony is different in being an actual medical and correctional facility. It is designated for treatment and correction of alcoholics and drug addicts, the majority of whom are HIV positive. Are they corrected? Do they really try to cure? What do they live with and what do they think about their lives?

Here is our conversation with one of the convicts.

Anatoly:

My name is Anatoly. I am serving my term at the maximum security colony in Barnaul city, Medical and Correctional Institution #1. I am here for the second time, for theft, Article 158, Section 3. I am HIV-positive since 2001. I have served about one year so far. When I was released from this colony the first time, I could not adjust in the society. To make it short, sometimes being among people who have the future, build homes, raise their children, I noticed that I have very little in common with them, because I might not have enough time left for all these things. And well, I got unhinged sometimes. Got a lot of different thoughts mixed in my head sometimes. Well, and I got back here as the result. My sentence is three years. I have good parents, I have a wife. Basically, I have it all, but having this disease really stresses me out.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: How have you got infected, Anatoly? What did you feel when you learned about your diagnosis?

Anatoly: I got infected through drugs, I was using for about two years. When I got infected, I felt emptiness, it was almost like I died, I even started going to the cemetery. My whole life has changed. I was 25 when I was told that I have HIV. All my friends turned their backs on me at once because they found this out. And people's attitude became much worse. Some were looking at me as if I am about to die at any moment; some were whispering; some were afraid of me, avoided me. That is, basically I was left alone even among my family; they were trying not to show it, but I could see it anyway. I could feel it myself. Well, and periodically I happened to engage in crime. So the result was this colony. I got released, and then again the result was this colony.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: What do you think about treatment and rehabilitation program here? Do you personally feel any better?

Anatoly: If patients understand (I think that each has the same misfortune as I do, this disease) that they might have a future, might have a chance to live like other people, that is, not to be sick, if they explain this, support you, then it is good. Here in town, in this colony where there are many people like me, they work with us, treat us, psychologists explain things to us. But in remote places, where there are just one or two people like me in a whole region or just a few people in a whole town, nothing like this is happening yet. There are no programs there, no support, and you feel like an outcast there.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Anatoly, you have completed this program by now. Can you say that you have a better chance to get along with other people, that you understand them, and your understanding will help them to understand you?

Anatoly: I don't know honestly, but I certainly hope so.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: How do you see your life from now on? Do you have children? What was your occupation?

Anatoly: No children, but my spouse wants to have a child, we were even in a treatment together, but did not finish it, because I got in here. We will try again now; she is coming here for conjugal visits. We will hope that it happens.

I am a driver by occupation, and my spouse is a dentist. She works in a dentist office for about six years. So far she has not got HIV, thanks God. She goes for examination on a regular basis. We take

precautions. Well, and our family life has not got ruined, thanks God too. But what it will be like in the future, I cannot tell. We will just hope.

There was no hope at all at first. Now, although you still think about it all the time, before you go to sleep and after you wake up, or when you are alone, but still now there is hope.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Anatoly, imagine that many different people are listening to us at this moment. We can always bear other people's troubles. But none of us is bullet-proof. What would you say to warn others? There are things that you understand better than many, even though we all have different truths, lives, or fates.

Anatoly: What can I tell people? A simple example. I used to live a rather comfy life, and I used to have everything I needed in that life, I had it all. And I treated it too lightly, although I don't think I am stupid. I did have information about this disease, and still I did not look at it seriously somehow anyway. But when I got HIV, it was like dying at that moment. And now I am simply scared, you can say that I lost my life. This is not just a turn of phrase, and this is not just any disease, this is a lost life. So be serious about such things.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Such is his life story. What lies ahead of our interlocutor, how are we going to meet him when he is out? This is something worth thinking about. And here is another human story.

Sasha: At first I felt nothing. Only after I got locked up in jail, then... I am here for killing my step-father. This was too a sort of stress because of HIV infection, you can say.

We did have family problems. I even wrote a story about him in a newspaper. He took this quietly at first, you can say. And then he started mocking and abusing me, and kicking me out of home...

Only when I found myself among other HIV infected people like me, then I calmed down.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Your step-father's reaction to your diagnosis was negative. When you are released, you will meet many more people like him. What can you do, kill them all?

Sasha: No, of course not. That was not my only reason for killing him.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: You are still not sorry that you did it?

Sasha: Why, sometimes I am sorry that this had to happen.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: What did he do, he mistreated you?

Sasha: Well, no, these were personal problems. Many different ones.

As for HIV, you can say that it does not affect my life presently. I got used to having it; I have it since June 2000. The disease does not manifest itself yet. The Siberian Initiative was trying to start a self-help group here. At first they were quite successful, but then it fell apart, because things like this do not work for convicts. Convicts do not open up to each other, you can say.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: And with whom could you talk openly?

Sasha: I am not sure.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: What are you by occupation? Where were you born? How did you get infected?

Sasha: I am a car mechanic, from a Bijsk suburb. I got infected through a needle, I had been injecting for about a year.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: And those who were using drugs with you, are they all infected too or not?

Sasha: All that I know of are infected.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Are there people among them who moved to the next stage, who have AIDS?

Sasha: I am not sure yet. Maybe there is someone like this out there.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: How many of your fellow drug-users are now in prison?

Sasha: The majority are all locked up.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: They are boys and girls?

Sasha: Boys.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: And what did you do in general, where did you study, what occupation did you want to learn? What made you start taking drugs, you wanted some new sensations? Which sensations were you missing?

Sasha: I am not sure, I never thought of that. It's just that I started injecting one sunny day, and when I tried to stop, it was too late already. I was already hooked, that's all. What made me? The crowd, the company I kept. They were my company, the users, so I started injecting like everybody else.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: And when you are out, you will be tempted again. How would you like to build your life?

Sasha: Now I want to build a drug-free life.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Do you think you will make it? Are you a strong person?

Sasha: I think I'll make it. I am strong enough in this respect; the last two months before I went to jail I was not using. I got off of drugs myself, and actually found a job already. That was it.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Have you found your love?

Sasha: Not yet.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: How old are you?

Sasha: Twenty three.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Were you seeing someone?

Sasha: Yes, of course.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Were not you afraid to transmit infection?

Sasha: I spent less than six months out there with HIV, before I went to jail. I was seeing a girl who knew that I have HIV. We were using condoms, that's all, and we were not even thinking twice about it. Just used condoms.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: And what does your mother say? What does she do? Do you have siblings?

Sasha: Mother is OK with that. She is a doctor, works in a hospital. My older sister is a doctor too, and she is OK with this as well. And my younger sister was very young back then. Perhaps she was not even thinking about it.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: You are here now, and you are saying that people here do not open up. Why is that? They each have an inner world of their own and don't want to let others in? Or they believe that it's easier to live with it when you are alone? Or they just believe that if nothing has manifested in four years, then it is not such a big deal?

Sasha: Many here are not even convinced that they are HIV-infected. Many are sort of in denial, and think that they are infection-free and just refuse to believe it. You begin talking about it, and they start yelling that doctors made a mistake, that's all. They think that they have no HIV, they disagree with this diagnosis.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: And what next? You'll have children. What will you do if you find out that they are using drugs?

Sasha: I will try to stop it. I will first try to take them away someplace else, to change their environment. I will try to get them into treatment. There is no other way to fight it, I believe.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: You believe that people cannot get cured on their own?

Sasha: They can only if they really want to. Others can hardly help them.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: But you can do it, you know this for sure, because you have tried it once already.

Sasha: Yes, I can. Now I believe that I can.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: What could you say about NGOs that work here with you?

Sasha: What work? Only Anti-AIDS center and Siberian Initiative are here. Siberian Initiative is working, psychologists come over here. I support them coming here. Psychological relief means a lot, and you learn something new too. Let them come.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: When you are released, there will be no NGOs by your side. You will come back home, where problems are inevitable, and perhaps your health will begin deteriorating too. How are you going to deal with this?

Sasha: I have not even given it a thought, how am I going to deal with this.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: There is this expression: hope for the best, and prepare for the worst.

Sasha: Yes, that's what it will be like, perhaps.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: I wish you that everything in your life is all right to the extent possible.

After talking to the inmates, I turn to the colony's Deputy Warden for medical supervision, Viktor Vladimirovich Afanasiev.

Viktor Afanasiev: Our institution is positioned as medical and correctional for treatment of patients suffering from alcoholism and drug addiction. We also have a unit for containing HIV-

positive convicts. Considering that convicts with different level of security can be serving their term at a medical and correctional institution, we have created a unit like this here. Have we succeeded in curing anyone? The best rates in the world in treating drug addiction are about 40 percent staying drug-free in the first year after treatment. In our institution some people spend 25 years. It is hard to say whether we cured them or not. They have no access to drugs here, but among those released, judging by feedback from the regional narcological dispensary, our results are rather good.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: What is your main objective?

Viktor Afanasiev: We work in two directions: treatment of alcoholics and drug addicts and working with HIV-positive inmates. Since our institution is specializing in this area, we have presently no problems in treating alcoholism and drug addiction, although recent changes in our laws made it more difficult: order #229 is reversed.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: What order is that?

Viktor Afanasiev: That was an order regulating treatment of drug addicts and alcoholics. Article 97 about compulsory treatment of patients with substance abuse problems was eliminated from the Criminal Code. Now it is replaced with mandatory treatment, but legislative framework has not been developed yet. There is a letter of guidance on which we base our actions. In fact nothing has changed, we give treatment as before.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Everyone that I saw here, are they all former drug addicts or alcoholics or something else?

Viktor Afanasiev: Yes, basically all of them.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: The majority are young men of 20 to 25. And they all were far-gone alcoholics and drug addicts already?

Viktor Afanasiev: Young men are mostly drug addicts, older ones are alcoholics in approximately equal ratio. There are also HIV-positive patients, and about 80 percent of them are actually former IDUs, that is, they got HIV through sharing needles as a rule. To a lesser extent through sex; there are very few of those here.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: You co-operate with a number of NGOs. What are the forms of your co-operation and what is its outcome?

Viktor Afanasiev: We are mainly co-operating with the Siberian Initiative. It is a regional nongovernmental organization. They work with us since 1992, and they have already provided us with substantial assistance in implementing our tolerance for HIV-positive patients' project. The colony has unique conditions. I do not know of any other place where HIV-positive inmates live, work, eat together with HIV-negative ones without any conflicts, they coexist and communicate normally.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Why do you give so much attention to this specific issue of tolerance? Tolerance means acceptance, am I right?

Viktor Afanasiev: Yes, it means acceptance. When I came to this colony and met HIV-positive inmates for the first time, they were outcasts. They were kept in cages; there were only two of them in the entire Altay region. They were kept in a disciplinary cell because everyone was afraid of them. Here too in 2000 they had just two people, and they too were locked up. Besides already being punished by the fact that they got infected, these people were made into some kind of aliens.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: And the staff's attitude, does it change as well?

Viktor Afanasiev: They all were afraid; they thought that HIV is something horrible, a plague of the 20th century. As a medical professional I was simply shocked by this slogan: "HIV is the plague of the 20th century." Even a layman knows the ways of plague transmission in general, so people subconsciously try to protect themselves from this transmission, they subconsciously fear a quick inevitable death, they fear the danger of HIV infection. While in fact contracting HIV requires quite an effort on your part. It requires that one person's blood penetrates another person's bloodstream. Getting infected during sex also requires a substantial amount of exchanged fluid. But it is practically impossible to get infected by HIV through usual everyday contacts.

Inside the colony we have not a single case of virus transmission. We interact with the Anti-AIDS Center. Their experts came here, sampled one hundred people, and performed special tests. Not a single case of transmission was discovered.

You can see HIV infection as the scourge of God. Or a trial sent to a man for his sins. In our current work Russian Orthodox Church has a lot of influence on inmates too. A church was consecrated here recently; a priest comes here on a regular basis. Many HIV-positive people turn to religion. They discover hope for salvation and for cure. Cases are known and reported when the infection would disappear.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Really, and they were confirmed by health professionals?

Viktor Afanasiev: These are still rumors, but the Russian Orthodox Church does report this information. When a person's mindset changes, when a certain mental dominant is formed, God's fear acquired, then this person moves away from anti-social behavior, becomes law-abiding, moves away from drug abuse. Incidentally, best results in treating drug addiction can be found at the religious patronage center in Moscow region led by Father Berestov. His results are 85 percent staying drug-free during the first year after treatment. Although the best results worldwide are 40 percent.

We had visitors from Moscow here, and from England, from the Imperial College. The UK spends a great deal on tolerance programs. They use gradual habit formation, that is, an evolutionary method. People are initially placed at a 10 meters distance from each other, then at 5 meters, and then in the same line. When people got used to standing at 10 meters from each other, they will stand at 3 meters as well.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: If I understand you correctly, you believe that HIV-positive people will be able to adjust to normal life after release? Our society is rather criminalized. To see it it's enough to switch on TV, and you will see a guard on one side, and a bandit every time on the other. It is enough to listen even to our politicians – their speeches too are full of jail slang. Don't you think that on the one hand freedom shapes confinement, and on the other hand confinement shapes the society that we call free?

Viktor Afanasiev: Prison is not some alien civilization; it is part of our society. These people come here from that society and are released back into it. There were times when half of our population was locked up, and another half was guarding them, and today naturally this is the source of our society's criminalization. Nothing surprising about it. Just as certain behavioral models are shaped by free people, here too the same thing happens. And these models are taken out after release.

Tatyana Fedyaeva: Thank you, Viktor Vladimirovich, for everything that you told us. I feel very sad now, because we live in a topsy-turvy world. Only in jail people receive what they were not receiving out in the society. The dominant value in the society is ability and willingness to understand others, willingness to give another chance to someone who had made a mistake, to give another chance even to someone who committed a crime. Without this willingness, without compassion it is impossible to make society better. But we can do this only if we make ourselves better first.

Music.

Dear listeners, this concludes our program. I, Tatyana Fedyaeva, wish you all the best.