

Russian professor arrives in Eugene after protesting coup

By Colleen Pohlig
Emerald Reporter

Have you ever walked into your local Safeway and marveled at the fact that the shelves are stocked full of food?

Or more importantly, gazed out your window and breathed a sigh of relief to see cars and bicyclists rather than tanks and armed soldiers?

For the next nine months that Marina Lukanova is teaching and living in the United States, she will value and appreciate these things that Americans often take for granted.

"People are really lucky to live in Eugene because for one, you have clean air, whereas in

Moscow there is a lot of pollution," Lukanova said. "Of course, we (in the Soviet Union) don't have Safeways."

Lukanova, who has been in the U.S. only 10 days, is on a one-year exchange program to teach Russian at the University. She was born and grew up in Moscow.

She and her family were relaxing at their country home near Moscow when the coup attempt occurred Aug. 19.

"For me, it happened all of a sudden," Lukanova said. "My husband woke me up early on Monday to tell me something terrible had happened. I did not believe him until our friends called to tell us to turn on the television."

There was only one television station because the coup leaders canceled the other programming, so there was limited information about what was happening.

"It was so scary because I was hearing the same words that I heard in my childhood about perestroika and collective farming and so on.

"I heard noise from the street, so I ran to the window and saw tanks and soldiers with guns and I couldn't stop crying," Lukanova said.

The first day of the coup attempt was the most difficult due to the lack of information, Lukanova said.

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days, Philippe Kouzmine waited and watched from New York along with the rest of the world. But he had more than a passing interest in the unfolding events.

Kouzmine had left his hometown of Moscow a week earlier to come to the United States. He traveled briefly through the East and Midwest before arriving at the University to work on his master's degree in Russian history.

As protesters filled the streets of Moscow, Kouzmine worried about their fate, as the memory of Tiananmen came to mind. But he wasn't surprised that the Soviet people stood up and refused to follow the new leaders.

"Freedom is like a genie that escapes from the bottle," he said. "Once it's out, you can't put it back in."

In New York, Kouzmine met with two Soviet diplomats who were shocked at the developments. The diplomats were reluctant to cooperate with the new government, he said, and that gave him confidence that the people would also resist.

Kouzmine said those three days moved the country forward 10 years, although food shortages and ethnic conflicts persist as problems with no easy answers.

Shatalina said the Soviet people are impatient for more changes.

Since Gorbachev became president and perestroika began, people were inspired — it was the right time for changes, she said. But change gave way to stagnation.

"Well, there was an opening, that's for sure, this is what I pay my respects to Gorbachev for," she said. "Now it's 1991, six years after perestroika started, and what we have is just openings in the newspapers, everybody says what they really want, and that's basically it."

Shatalina and Kouzmine said they believe Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin can cooperate and help move the country forward, although the leaders are in an awkward position.

"People think they can work together," Shatalina said, "but since the Union is not going to be the Union anymore, then Gorbachev is going to be almost nobody since he is the president of the Union."

"I think this is kind of scary for (Gorbachev) and that's why

he didn't want to let the republics be independent."

Kouzmine, who voted for Yeltsin, said Gorbachev is not down and out yet. Most people are predicting the end of Gorbachev's career, Kouzmine said, but they have to keep in mind that he is a very flexible politician.

The young generations are ready for change, but the openness and new view of history are hard for some to take, Shatalina said.

"For people of my grandmother's age and my mother and father's age, Stalin was for them some kind of ideal man and then it turned out to be that he was a criminal, so I think for their generation it's still hard to believe," she said.

That different view of history is something that hit Kouzmine when he was 16 and traveling in Switzerland.

He found that people in the Soviet Union were unaware of what was really going on beyond the borders, and were being given propaganda and distorted information. When he returned to Moscow, everything seemed unpleasant, Kouzmine said. But it was a turning point.

"Before this trip, I was sort of a model Soviet communist child attending all these communist organizations. They had three stages of communist organizations in school and I was always one of them, so at that time something broke in my heart and I couldn't believe anymore the things they were telling me."

His college years in Moscow were interrupted in 1985, when

he was required to serve the mandatory two years in the Russian Army.

"It was like the school of life, because almost all my life I was living with my parents at home. Everybody loved me and it was OK," he said. "In the army, they make you feel like nothing. One guy from my unit committed suicide. It was really tough, but on the other hand I felt lucky because I wasn't sent to Afghanistan and wasn't sent to fight Chernobyl."

Kouzmine and Shatalina are optimistic about their futures in Moscow, where they plan to return within two or three years, to pursue careers in business. Shatalina would like to work for a Soviet-American firm. Kouzmine plans to work as a marketing director and research expert for a Swedish firm in Moscow that is financing his education in the United States.

Both said the future of the USSR is hard to predict, but they believe the country is moving in the right direction.

"I think maybe the Union wouldn't exist as it used to be, with 15 republics all together, because the Baltics are already independent," Shatalina said. "Maybe in the future some states will be independent. But most of the states who get independence will still be part of the union. They are tied so close to Russia."

"If some republics want to be independent, it can be made gradually, so they can develop their economy. I'm just hoping that it's going to be a more open economy country. It's a big land of opportunity now."

U.S. communist: Party not dead

By Rene DeCair
Emerald Associate Editor

in front of the legendary Committee on Un-American Activities.

If beliefs were punches, he would make a good fighter. A man with his convictions does not give in easily.

Ed Hemmingson is the State Chairman of the Communist Party U.S.A. and has been an official Party member since 1975.

At 64, he's lived through World War II and the Red Scare of the 1950's. His brother, as a Communist, was brought forth to testify

So it is not all that surprising that this kind of political underdog does not concede easily, if at all, to the idea that communism will soon be extinct in the Soviet Union.

Hemmingson said in an interview Tuesday that he does not like to label the failed coup last month in the Soviet Union as a failure of communism, but rather a failure of the system of so-

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THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



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