

Soviet student reflects on homeland

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Staff Writer

Lesya Kovalenko will not return home to the Soviet Union until this summer, but she does not forget about events and issues in her homeland.

Kovalenko comes from Donetsk, a large city in the Ukrainian Republic seen as the center of coal mining in the Soviet Union. The Ukraine also includes Chernobyl. Though it is not very close to Donetsk, Kovalenko says effects of the nuclear plant explosion in 1986 can still be seen in her city.

"From that summer, my mother had headaches and allergies. Sometimes you have a disease and you know it's from Chernobyl, but it is difficult to prove." She explains that the Ukraine, like many other Soviet republics, seeks independence from the Soviet Union and that because of its resources of coal and food, as "breadbasket" of the Soviet Union, the Ukraine seems more likely to gain independence than other republics. She claims, "The Ukraine could survive without the Soviet Union because it feeds them."

Despite the possibility of independence for the Ukraine in the future, Kovalenko says she was worried when she first heard news of the coup last August while on the train to catch her flight to the United States. "What scared me was when the press was closed down. Most people in the Ukraine were not as scared as those in other places, because we were driving for independence. Not much happened in the Ukraine because of the coup. Only in Moscow were lots of people in power dismissed." She says the republics didn't have time to respond to the coup. "For all the republics seeking independence, a change in power would be for the worse, so no one really supported the new government."

With political and economic change in the Soviet Union, Kovalenko is considering economics as a major. She feels the move toward an open market will eventually succeed though she realizes those who oppose it fear rapid change. "People are afraid of change. Even though the old economy was not productive, it was still stable. People want a better economy, but they are afraid it will be worse than today's." However, Kovalenko is hopeful for the establishment of the new system. "It will get better," she says.

Though she looks toward a bright future for her country, Kovalenko is not sure what exactly it will bring for her. She plans to major in economics or biology and attend graduate school in America, as she says there is a demand for specialists in the Soviet Union, where she will return.

Her parents encouraged her to study in America after she spent a year in high school in Asheville, North Carolina, as a senior. "People in the Soviet Union think of America as a perfect place," she says. Kovalenko heard about Guilford College during her stay in Asheville. It appealed to her because of its size and focus on the individual student. "Guilford seemed like a place where the student doesn't get lost. I also liked its emphasis on writing skills. I'm always looking to improve and challenge my writing skills."

When she speaks of returning home, Kovalenko makes no concrete predictions except that she plans to reside in Donetsk. "You never know what's going to happen, but I love the place I am from. It is paradise for me." She enjoys the bustle of the "big city" she calls home. Named "the city of roses," Donetsk is a city full of greenery and trees.

Kovalenko looks forward to seeing changes for her country in the future. "It will change for the better, because free market is being allowed more. Eight years ago, most people wouldn't have even thought of Russia going from a socialist to a free market system." She feels that changes which have occurred are because of a more democratic way of thinking for people in the Soviet Union. "People travel more and see that life in the Soviet Union is not what they want it to be. That is what encourages change."

On going home, Kovalenko will serve as one traveler who encourages changes in her country but is grateful for her home.

This Week at a Glance

November 15-24, 1991

DAY/DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE
Friday, 15	7:30-9:30 pm	Latin American Film Festival	Leak Room
	8-10:30 pm	Drama, <i>Nightmare Awakening</i>	Sternberger
	9:30-11 pm	Reception following play	Boren Lounge
Saturday, 16	8:30-12 pm	TOEFL Test	King 122, 126
	6-7:30 pm	IRC Meeting	Dana Lounge
	8-10:30 pm	<i>Nightmare Awakening</i>	Sternberger
Sunday, 17	9 am-12 pm	Christ The King Church Service	Moon Room
	5:30-10 pm	Philosophy Club Meeting	The Underground
	7-8 pm	Catholic Mass	Boren Lounge
Monday, 18	7:30-9:30 pm	Women's Awareness and Women's Studies Lecture	Gallery
Tuesday, 19	9-10 pm	Union Meeting	Dana Lounge
	12:45-1:45 pm	Career Development Institute of Government Summer Internships Program	Gallery
	1:30-3 pm	IDS Lecture	Dana Auditorium
Wednesday, 20	4-5 pm	SRC Meeting	Boren Lounge
	5:15-6 pm	Episcopal Holy Eucharist	Moon Room
	7:30-9:30 pm	Latin American Film Festival	Leak Room
	7:30-8:30 pm	Explorative Bible Study	Founders 203A
	9-10 pm	Women's Awareness Group Meeting	Poetry Center
	8:45-10 pm	FCA Meeting	Boren Lounge
	2:30-4 pm	Clerk's Committee Forum	Gallery
	2:30-4 pm	Senate Meeting	Boren Lounge
	7-8:30 pm	Career Development Workshop: <i>Job Search Strategies</i>	Dana Lounge
	9-10 pm	Amnesty International Meeting	Dana Lounge
Thursday, 21	8:30-10:30 pm	IVCF Meeting	Boren Lounge
	3-5 pm	Career Development Workshop: <i>Interviewing Skills</i>	Dana Lounge
	8-9 pm	The Guilfordian Staff Meeting	Commons
Friday, 22	8-9 pm	Campus Alanon, Elliott Center (Need a ride? Call x.2174 or 292-4905)	UNCG Campus
	8-10:30 pm	<i>Nightmare Awakening</i>	Sternberger
Saturday, 23	8-10:30 pm	<i>Nightmare Awakening</i>	Sternberger
	8 am-12 pm	Admissions Preview Day	Dana Auditorium
Sunday, 24	8-10:30 pm	<i>Nightmare Awakening</i>	Sternberger
	9 am-12 pm	Christ The King Church Service	Moon Room
	5:30-10 pm	Philosophy Club Meeting	Dana Lounge
	7-8 pm	Catholic Mass	Boren Lounge
	7-9:30 pm	Union Film	The Underground

NIGHTMARE AWAKENING: On Nov. 15-17 and 21-23 at 8p.m. in Sternberger Auditorium, the Guilford College Department of Theatre Studies opens its 1991-92 season with *Nightmare Awakening*. Harold Pinter's "A Kind Of Alaska," "Applicant," and "One For The Road" are brought together in one evening. This triple-bill reflects the recent awakening of political consciousness in the plays of Harold Pinter. Each examines the use of language as a weapon for the destruction of personal identity. Director Jack Zerbe suggests that the birth of political awareness is an awakening to—rather than from—a nightmare. Free to Guilford students, faculty and staff, \$5.00 for others. For additional information, call 316-2301.

LECTURE: On Nov. 19 at 1:30 pm in Dana Auditorium, Hal Crowther, journalist and social critic, will speak on "Restrictions on the Media." Mr. Crowther has been a sports journalist and TV critic. He now has a weekly column in *The Independent* newspaper and *Style* magazine.

THE FRANCIS HOOK SCHOLARSHIP FUND provides College Scholarships to students who have shown a career interest in the plastics industry. Applicants must be full-time students, with preference given to students living in the geographical area served by the Carolinas Section of the Society of Plastics Engineers. February 1 is the deadline for applications. For more details, contact the Financial Aid Office.

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