

A Russian émigré on what she learned...

Propaganda in the USSR about the West was true. Propaganda in the West about the USSR was lying.

By Barrie Zwicker

Irina Muhina is not your average Russian immigrant to Canada. But then again, how many are? Still, in a roomful of Russian immigrants, she would stand out as a result of her academic background, and make herself heard.

Born in 1963 she, her husband and two young daughters came to Canada in 1995. She now works in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Those listening to her today would come away with disagreements as well as agreements with her ideas. But few would doubt her native intelligence, her energy and her concern for the welfare of all.

I sat down with her in my midtown Toronto home in June 2017 for a Q and A. This is an edited transcript of the 90-minute conversation, with inserts from written comments she provided before our meeting.

BZ: What do you mean when you say "The Human is the foundation of life?" (Irina wanted this to be the first question.) What is your perception of what people call "human nature?"

IM: Human nature is driven by instincts and confined by the morals that are the result of the socializing of primitive man. But what really makes *homo sapiens* a human being is his spiritual component. Spiritual in Russian means not only the non-materialistic parts of life such as, for example, creativity or self-expression. It means we are an integral non-separable part of the universe, or God. Love, appreciation and sacrifice should be the bases of everyday life for all of us.

Today the main conflict is between the intellectual elite of the globe and the financial elite of the West, which makes profit its God.

BZ: Regarding socialism, what do you consider its most fundamental values or virtues?

IM: Are we talking about "socialism" or "communism?" Or both? In any event, we are talking about limiting the "law of the jungle" and putting greed and aggression under control. We are talking about providing members of society with more or less equal access to all of the life necessities.

As a result enabling people to be more focused on cultural, professional, scientific and spiritual elevation than on commercial or business "success."

BZ: What would you identify as the top five achievements of socialism?

IM: If we are talking about Soviet socialism as an example, they are free Medicare and free good education from kindergarten to the post-graduate level, and abolishing the income gap. I would also say shifting the system of values and priorities away from material or financial success and towards personal development.



Irina Muhina

There's an article on the achievements of Soviet socialism on this website. To save space I will say that I agree with that article. [See page 22.]

But I would add some *absences* from Soviet socialism that should be called achievements. Specifically, when I lived in the USSR we had no sex shops, pornography channels, no GMO products, no advertising of any kind. We eliminated parasitic and non-productive (or even

counter-productive) groups from the society, for instance all types of brokers, agents, PR specialists, sales people, speculative financiers, Big Pharma and street drug dealers. No plastic bags, no pet lawyers, no juvenile law system, no law system based on precedent. In all these cases, less is more. Since then I and my grown-up children haven't had channels in our homes for 20 years. They damage your mind, your intellect, your cognitive capacities.

BZ: What are capitalism's strengths that have enabled it to undermine socialism so often and so damagingly?

IM: The strength of capitalism lies in the weaknesses of human nature—greed, pride, envy, materialism, individualism, hedonism, disposition to consumerism based on a wrong perception of the meaning of life. I have talked a bit about spirituality and moral at the beginning, as a solid foundation of everyone's life. Capitalism is very good at creating temptations and seductions, manipulating people's minds to trick them to buy, borrow and spend—to do what is profitable for businesses, but useless or even poison for their wellbeing. Like GMO products, Big Pharma, drugs etc.

BZ: In your opinion, are there failings of socialism itself that have compromised its fulfilling its promise (in addition to socialists being forced into a relentless struggle against capitalism)?

IM: Political propaganda in the Soviet Union was so naive, simple and direct compared to western marketing and advertising. I was brought up in Siberia, which was rustic. I was young, intellectually driven, but financially innocent. We didn't discuss the economy in depth but were inspired by space science, chess, playing piano, classical books and very good scientific journals for youth. Some people in Moscow had a different perspective. Corruption settled in, in the elite. In my mind the collapse of the Soviet Union was planned, like a "coloured revolution." The elite sold the society to those who had the money and are ruling in Russia now.

If we are talking about Soviet socialism, the very task was not formulated or broadcast correctly. For example, the USSR in the Khrushchev era was striving to outrun the USA in the economy, technology and in labour productivity, without taking into account that those areas were not advantages of socialism. The real advantage of socialism was in the social sphere and in morals, culture, ascetic lifestyle and ecology.

Again, Soviet anti-capitalist propaganda was extremely primitive and naïve. It was designed under "Iron Curtain" conditions without taking into account the factor of "forbidden fruit." Soviet citizens were mostly deprived of the right for free travel and access to information.

On reflection I see that when I was younger in the USSR everything our propaganda was telling us was true. But after living here for 22 years I've seen that propaganda here about the former USSR was totally lying.

BZ: Is re-establishment of the Soviet Union a hopeless chimera? Whether you think or fear it is, or if you do not, do you see a future for socialism in the Russian Federation and the former Socialist Republics?

IM: If we're going to have a future, and I hope we will, it's not about the economy. It's going to be something totally new. I don't think we have a name for it, at least I don't. My strong feeling is that it's going to be about people—grassroots. I don't know if it's what you call EcoSocialism. The main problem in my mind now is twofold: the most advanced financial and technological tools are in the wrong hands, even though they claim the opposite and, second, many brainwashed people trust those in power.

Socialism in greater Russia does not have the chance of re-establishment unless there comes a real national-oriented government there. As it is, Russia remains under partial—or total? I don't know—control of an Anglo-Zionist international financial oligarchy. It may not be politically correct to say this but when central bank of Russia is rather a branch of Federal Reserve System I have nothing else to say.

BZ: Can socialism—or EcoSocialism—prevail generally in the world? If you believe it can, then how will capitalism end?

IM: History proves that socialism can hardly survive in an isolated country. Even if the country is as rich in resources, culture and powerful as the USSR was. For worldwide prevalence, socialism has to become a dominant ideology and become goal-setting for an absolute majority of human beings. This would require real democracy in our world (which is a true chimera).