

St Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church · Timonium, Maryland

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FROM THE RECTOR

Life at the other end of the guessing game

Before I took Holy Orders I worked as a foreign correspondent covering, among other places, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It was not an entirely comfortable life: The Communists treated all Western journalists as spies while the Western Security Services suspected – with good reason in a few cases – that we were Soviet agents or fellow travellers.

To say the East Bloc was a paranoid society seriously understates the case. A favorite Russian saying was that the word “paranoiac” means: “Somebody who really knows what is going on.” They were, however, only half joking.

Viewed from a Soviet perspective, it was not wholly unreasonable for them to be suspicious of Western journalists. Our job was to ferret out things they didn't want us to know. Besides virtually all East European journalists worked for their intelligence services either as agents or informants

For years the head of the KGB's economic espionage operation in Britain was the bureau chief of TASS, the official Soviet news agency.

Reporting on Soviet and East Bloc affairs was, for Western correspondents, something of a guessing game. Having obtained four or five nuggets of information, we relied on a mixture of experience, economic and industrial knowledge and a command of Marxist theory to fill in the blanks.

A command of Marxist theory sounds deadly dull. And so it was, but it was as vital to the coverage of the East Bloc as a grasp of Roman dogma is to coverage of the Vatican.

Marx was a social, political and economic evolutionist. Claiming his evolutionary theory to be settled science, he dubbed it “scientific socialism.” It was thus an article of Communist faith that the ultimate worldwide triumph of Marxism was scientifically inevitable.

Nikita Khrushchev, then General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, was echoing this conviction when he undiplomatically blurted out to then U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon “We will bury you!”

The Soviets' faith in the Marx's system was based on settled science, and thus beyond question, was responsible for the myriad failures that afflicted Soviet social and economic life. It meant that fiascos could not be blamed on the flaws in system itself but only on human error.

A religious-like faith in the “scientific” nature of Marxist and the paranoid secrecy that arose from it made reporting on East Bloc affairs decidedly difficult. It was a bit like dealing with a jigsaw puzzle with many of the pieces missing.

We scoured not only the mainstream media – television, radio, newspapers and periodicals -- but also obscure academic journals and technical publications, painstakingly analyzing abstruse industrial statistics, culled from

mind-bendingly yawn-worthy magazines.

Analysis of photographs of the various members of the Politburo viewing the annual May Day parades from the roof of Lenin's Mausoleum in Red Square gave some insight into changing political fortunes. Folks closest to Leonid Brezhnev, the Party General Secretary, were considered to be the most influential.

It was a hit and miss way of doing things and it could lead to some very red faces. One correspondent managed to persuade himself that by end of the 20th Century the USSR would be out-performing the U.S. industrially, economically and militarily and takeover as the world's leading superpower.

Soviet military technology was often claimed to be far more advanced than that deployed by NATO forces. In fact, by Western standards, Soviet weaponry was quite primitive.

In 1973, during the Yom Kippur War, for example, I was asked assess the fighter planes involved – the Soviet MIG 25A high-level interceptors flown by the Egyptian air force and the Israelis' McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantoms. A general consensus was that the MIG greatly outclassed the aging F-4.

The MIG was claimed to be faster and more effective at

Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776. -----

FOR RECOVERY: Timothy, Jeannie, Peter, June, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Alan, Terry, Helen, Jim, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Robert✕, David, Jan, Susie, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Cour Marie, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, David, Adrian, Tom, Michell, Aida, Mai, Al, Kathy, Jack, Lewey, Stephen & Ellen -----

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey , Beth, Erin and Aubery -----

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; MSGT Michael Holter, USAF; Cpt Fiodor Strikovski, US Army.

higher altitudes than the F-4, but I pointed out that Soviet avionics were dependent on vacuum tube technology and, thus, far less sophisticated than those of the F-4.

Furthermore, the MIG was likely to be far heavier than the F-4 because the Soviet aircraft industry lacked titanium technology. As a consequence, the MIG's operating range and maneuverability was likely to be far inferior to that of the F-4.

The article was never published. It ended up on the “spike” because it defied prevailing orthodoxy.

A decade or so later, however, a Soviet air force pilot based in the Russian Aleutians defected in a MIG 25A. On arrival in Okinawa, it was discovered that the aircraft was, indeed, equipped with vacuum tube avionics and heavy steel engines. Moreover the fuselage displayed patches of rust.

By contrast, a friend -- the *doyen* of Western Soviet analysts -- once spent months studying the weather forecasts in all the regional editions of *Pravda*, the newspaper of the Soviet

Communist Party. He concluded USSR was destined for a catastrophically bad harvest.

His prediction came to pass and the Soviets were forced to buy enormous quantities of American grain and charter a vast number of merchant ships to transport it. Folks who subscribed to my friend’s newsletter and took his advice made a huge financial killing.

Ironically, the same techniques we used to analyze events in the Soviet Union are often employed here in America today especially in the murky world of Washington politics. And they are often just as inaccurate.

Occasionally, we encounter East European-style analysts in our parish churches – trying to figure out what the vestry is up to, or what changes the Rector is planning.

Shortly after my arrival at St. Stephen’s, for example, a number of folks were absolutely certain that I planned to scrap the Morning Prayer service. Nothing I could say could change their minds and they held fast to notion for more than 20 years.

The fact of the matter is that at St Stephen’s at least, such speculations are a waste of effort. Parishioners are always welcome at meetings of the vestry and the parish life committee. But if you can’t spare the time to attend take up your concerns with one of the clergy or a vestry member. They’ll get you an answer. There are no secrets here at St Stephen’s. I had enough secrets and obsessive secrecy to last a lifetime when I was covering the Kremlin. GPH✂

FROM THE KNITTING CIRCLE

Come and have a ball (of wool) on Thursday morning

Are the cares of the world weighing on your shoulders? Here's a way to relax in friendly and interesting company and acquire, or simply improve, a useful skill that not only calms the fevered brow, but immeasurably adds to your popularity with your friends and neighbors.

Join us in the parish library on Thursday mornings at 10.00 AM. You can't knit? Cindie Baker, one of our most experienced knitters will teach you. Just set the time and place with her and she will get you started. You'll have a ball.

FROM THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Your yard has plants that can help beautify the churchyard

The strip of grass along the entrance driveway has been cleared by Scott Taylor and his crew of volunteers. Now we are seeking perennial plants from home gardens to put in that space.

Our suggestions for plant donations include Stella D'Oro lily or other day lily, dusty miller, corabells, columbine and any other deer resistant plants.

St Stephen’s Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093

Office: 410 560 6776 · **Rectory:** 410 665 1278

Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Rev. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*
The Venerable Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*
The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki and
The Rev. Robert Ludwig, *Associate Rectors*
The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, *Pastoral Care Chaplain*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist

9.15am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

6pm: Choral Evensong (as announced) –

evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club

Tuesday, 7am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Parish Youth Play Group

Every Sunday After the 9.15 Eucharist

Silly Summer Suppers

The season starts on at 6.30 PM on Wednesday, July 12th

The Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, July 19th, 12.00 pm - 2.00 pm

McFaul's Iron Horse Tavern

call Sara Douglas to reserve a place 410-560-9026

Afternoon Tea

Thursday July 20th 2.00 - 4.00 pm

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Timonium, MD 21093

11856 Mays Chapel Road

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