

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH • TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

The U.S. Revolution's legacy incompatible with socialism

A friend recently observed that it is difficult to decide whether the current fashionable attachment to socialism espoused by so many of America's self-anointed intelligentsia arises from arrogance or ignorance. Actually, it seems to be a manifestation of both.

Arrogance – because even the most out of touch intellectual must be aware that socialism, with both the large “S” and the small one, has signally failed in which ever form it has been tried.

In its the Soviet form, socialism collapsed spectacularly some 30 years ago. About the same time, the Maoist model in China mutated under Deng Xiaoping into an authoritarian hybrid in which in which the Communist Party elite presides uneasily over virtually unbridled capitalism.

Elsewhere small “s” socialism has been on the retreat the world over. Venezuela is the latest graphic example of socialism's failure.

After 40 years of increasing impoverishment, Britain renounced it in the 1980s with the election Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Over the past three decades, the Scandinavians have quietly abandoned many of the socialist programs so widely hailed by American intellectuals.

In the rest of Europe socialism is increasingly regarded as intellectually bankrupt, demonstrably in France where it has inspired the Yellow Jacket rebellion.

The supreme irony is that the American theoreticians' arrogant notion that they can succeed where so many others have failed is plainly a manifestation of an instinctual belief in the nation's traditional “can do” spirit, the source of American capitalist endeavor.

This, in turn, leads us to the issue of ignorance. From what today's proponents of socialism in politics and academia have said on the subject, it is clear they are woefully ignorant about what the administration of a socialist system involves and the U.S. constitutional form of government.

What is currently being put forward here is not socialism but, rather, a chaotic distribution of free stuff selected on an elastic and entirely arbitrary premise of “it seems a good idea at the time.” Socialism, in fact, requires the disciplined and meticulously organized coordination of every aspect of a nation's economy – in other words rigid central planning.

For example, food production requires the coordination of consumer demand, skilled labor availability, the chemical industry, the machinery manufacturing industry, large scale agricultural production, transportation, food storage, food processing and distribution both wholesale and retail. Food production is one of the less complex economic planning challenges yet the Soviets routinely lost best part of a third of their harvests due to coordination failures.

There is no mechanism in the United States currently capable of coordinating the economy on such a vast scale, yet none of the socialism's proponent has shown

the slightest awareness of the need for such a central planning organization – let alone offered a plan to bring such a body into being.

Ignorance of the complications of socialism is compounded by an obvious ignorance of the virtues of U.S. constitutional government.

Not least, the American Revolution is unique in that it is the one revolution that did not consume either its authors or its children. This is because it is the only revolution that was animated by a genuine spirit of Christianity.

Far from seeking to impose any particular political or religious vision on people, the men who drafted and signed the Declaration of Independence, affirmed that our Creator has endowed each and every one of us with the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Parish Prayer List

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

FOR RECOVERY: Daniel, Leona, Charlotte, Bryan, Rachel, Elizabeth, Dorothy, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Alan, Terry, Helen, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Robert✕, Jan, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Marie, Jim, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, Adrian, Tom, Michell, Al, Kathy, Jack, Lewey, Stephen, Pamela, Judy, Elizabeth, Wade, Sifa, Theresa, Lisa, Larry, Dan & Scott

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Bethany, Caroline, Ardis, Mavis, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey, Beth & Kath

IN MEMORIAM:

THOSE WHO MOURN:

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

Certainly, the founding fathers expected that our individual pursuit of happiness would, somehow or other, involve the practice of some form of the Christian faith – that's what they meant by the word “religion.”

But they did not seek to dictate what brand of Christianity people should profess or, indeed, that they should espouse any religion at all. Indeed, they left the question of religious belief entirely up to the individual.

In short, they were careful not to tamper with one of the most fundamental human yearnings: Freedom to make our own decisions about everything, including politics and religion: right or wrong, wise or foolish. At the time it was an entirely novel concept.

It is the critical difference between the American Revolution and French revolution – the revolution that is inspiration for all of the socialist ones: the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, Chairman Mao's revolution in China, the Fascist revolution in Italy, the National Socialist revolution in Germany, *et al.*

The French revolutionaries claimed to have been inspired by the American example. But this is true only to a superficial degree. The French revolutionaries were not seeking to uphold the God-given rights of the individual to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Theirs was a collectivist vision. The motto by which they defined their enterprise was "liberty, equality and fraternity." Their aim was to subordinate the individual to the common good – an entirely theoretical concept defined by a political elite.

But the fundamental difference between the American and French revolutions lies not so much in the visions of the protagonists as in their respective religions. The Americans were inspired by the teachings of Jesus and the belief that each one of us is equally beloved of his Creator and endowed with certain inalienable rights.

The French revolutionaries and their socialist counterparts, by contrast, worshipped an entirely different God: the mind of man. They acknowledge no higher authority than that of human reason. In fact, the French revolutionaries instituted worship of the "Goddess of Reason" as France's state religion – abandoning the public worship of the human mind only when the appalling consequences of it brought human reason into disrepute. It is not accidental that the fruits of the American Revolution have been a

degree of human intellectual achievement and material prosperity hitherto unrealized by the human race.

History teaches us we'll continue to prosper so long as we uphold the rights endowed upon the individual by our creator.

Nor, I would further contend, is it accidental that the fruits of French Revolution and its socialist counterparts has been a tidal wave of misery and death unprecedented in human history. While God is a benevolent creator, human reason turns out to be an insatiably blood-thirsty tyrant.

If you've ever puzzled over the increasingly brutal history of the two centuries that have passed since our founding fathers first issued the Declaration of Independence, it is vital to understand that the two revolutionary visions are utterly incompatible.

It is impossible to reconcile governance founded on the principle of the divinely endowed rights of the individual with a collectivist vision directed by the political and sociological fads and fancies derived from human reason.

After the Constitutional Convention, a woman asked Benjamin Franklin what sort of government America would have. "A republic, ma'am," Franklin replied, ". . . if you can keep it." Let us pray we have the courage, the wisdom, the vision and, last but not far from least, the charity to keep it – and not merely for our sakes, but for the sake of the entire world. GPH✘

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Rev. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*

The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar* ·

Associate Rectors:

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki,

The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, The Rev. Robert Ludwig. &

The Rev. Dr. Norman Flowers

Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist

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

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

Choral Services (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

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Noon: Bible Study

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

“Our Odd Anglican Ways”

(The Lenten Series)

Wednesdays, March 13th to April 10th, 6.45 pm

Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, Noon, March 20th

venue to be announced!

Reservations: Call Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026

Monthly Choral Evensong

Sunday, March 3rd at 6 pm

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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