

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

VOL. XXX, No. 39 A PARISH IN THE CLASSICAL ANGLICAN TRADITION OCTOBER 15TH, 2019

FROM THE RECTOR

A Kremlinologist's lot is not a happy one

The recently released movie *The Death of Stalin* is both shriekingly funny and utterly terrifying. I can attest to its accuracy because I've both read widely on the subject and also interviewed at length a number of people directly and indirectly involved – admittedly in minor ways – in the event itself and its blood-stained aftermath.

But it is one thing to have heard eye witness accounts of what followed the death of one of the 20th Century's three most evil tyrants – Hitler, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung – but it quite another to see events re-enacted in “glorious Technicolor” and with grisly exactitude on the silver screen.

To be deeply aware of the murderous nature of the regime that for 70 years devised the policies and directed the affairs of one of the world's two superpowers is one thing. But it is quite another to sit riveted to a graphic portrayal of the conduct of the brutish, weak, indecisive and incompetent men who headed it for so long.

It is chilling to think that for the best part of four decades this ruthless but inept “ship of fools” had its paranoiac finger on the trigger of sufficient nuclear fire power to destroy the world several times over.

My fascination with the men who mastered the Soviet empire dates back to the mid-1960s and early 1970s when I made my living as a “Kremlinologist” – one of the folks employed by newspapers and broadcasting outfits to figure out what sort of mischief the Soviets and their allies were up to.

“Kremlinology” might seem a romantic way to earn a living. The word conjures up visions of sinister spies, the rattle of machine guns at remote border-crossings, beautiful blonds and exotic restaurants in equally exotic cities.

Not so, lamentably. Kremlinology was far from romantic. To be sure, there were interesting opportunities for travel. But, generally, Kremlinologists devoted their most of their working lives to poring over the Soviet media, including academic journals and technical publications.

If we were painfully ignorant of the inept, indecisive and often cowardly character of the politicians who ruled the country, it was because they operated wrapped in a cocoon of paranoid secrecy.

Maps of the country – including Moscow's official street guide – were deliberately falsified. It took years, for instance, for Western intelligence agencies to pinpoint the precise location in Kazakhstan from which the Soviets launched their space shots.

So much of what passed for news in the Soviet media was propaganda and disinformation that the only information deemed reasonably trustworthy had to be sifted from obscure academic and technical journals – particularly the statistical sections.

Changes in the pecking order in the upper echelons of the Soviet hierarchy had to be divined from such shaky forecasting tools as the places assigned to members of the Politburo on Lenin's Tomb in Moscow's Red Square to view the May Day military parade.

Given the ephemeral nature of the material available for analysts, Kremlinologists were by no means always right.. Back in my day, they were way off track about Soviet technology. The consensus was that it was marvelous. In fact, it was primitive – almost beyond belief.

But, we had a good excuse for being so far off the mark. The USSR and its allies were extraordinarily secretive societies. And considering the vast effort they put into misleading and deceiving us, it is remarkable how often we were right. Today Russia has changed – not as much as we would have liked perhaps – but, even so, it is a rather more open society than it was in the days of Brezhnev & Co.

This means Kremlinologists are no longer in quite such demand, and aspiring political analysts have turned to more promising fields of endeavor – North Korea, Iran, the Arab countries of the Middle East, and, of course, the goings on in Washington and other world capitals, allied and unfriendly .

Even so, the tools of Kremlinology are still in use. Indeed, in church circles they are deployed in a discipline I have dubbed “parsonology.”

It is the science of determining what's going on in a clergyman's mind without actually communicating with him. It works on the same lines as Kremlinology, albeit on a more modest scale.

While Kremlinologists dealt with such issues as he battlefield performance of the Red Army or the production goals of the Soviet steel industry, Parsonologists deal with the clergy's plans for such things as the Vestry, the Parish Life Committee and the Sunday School.

Like Kremlinology, the success rate of the analysts generally reflects the methodology. Many Kremlinologists, for example, forecast that the Soviet Union would utterly

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: Catherine, Richard✘, Janis, Parisa, Daniel, Judy, Leona, Charlotte, Rachel, Elizabeth, Kim, Dorothy, Donna, Skip, Dan, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Heidi, Alan, Terry, Helen, Linda, John, Neal, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Jan, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Marie, Jim, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John Tom, Michell, Jack, Lewey, Stephen, Pamela, David, Wade, Sifa, Eileen, Ravi, Theresa, Lisa, Larry Ricard, George & Scott

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Caroline, Karen, Ardis, Mavis, Michael, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Chip, Elizabeth, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Jacob, Casey, Beth, Kath, Rebecca, Colin, Christian, Catherine & Elizabeth

IN MEMORIAM:

THOSE WHO MOURN:

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

out-perform America economically and ultimately become the world's sole superpower.

This curious notion was hardly warranted by the USSR's anaemic economic performance. But as there were few trustworthy figures available, the theory was very hard to gainsay.

Parsonologists, using the same counter intuitive notions as the “Soviets Triumphant” school, might similarly conclude, for example, that a rector plans declare himself an imam and change the church to a mosque.

Back in the old days, I often used to wonder what Brezhnev & Co. felt about folks like me reading his strategic and economic tea leaves. Now I realize just how bemused, be- fuddled and bewildered they must have been.

Mark you, Brezhnev and his cronies had only themselves to blame. If they had given us the straight skinny about what was going on in their minds and we would have published it. But, of course, if they had done that we would have discovered what a prosaic bunch of pitiless incompetents they really were.

Does anybody truly think the ruthless, but utterly unimaginative Yuri Andropov, once head of the KGB and for a short time General Secretary of the Soviet

Communist Party, really collected modern art and spent his evenings sipping Scotch, reading Scott Fitzgerald while listening to American jazz greats? Some Kremlinologists did.

Parsonologists might buy that sort of unlikely idea about me and my colleagues. But if they would really like the straight skinny about what's going on in our minds they have only to drop by the office or lift up the phone.

Indeed, if you invite us to tea, there will be absolutely no need to read our tea leaves, afterwards. GPH*

COOKIE WALK 2019. Saturday, December 14th

More scrumptious recipes

Here are recipes for cookies you can make in advance and freeze (in dough form), baking them in the week before the Cookie Walk. We have also printed some variations. These recipes are taken from James Beard's American Cookery Book.

Refrigerator or Icebox Cookies

INGREDIENTS

1 cup butter; 1 to 1 1/2 cups sugar; 1 teaspoon vanilla; 2 eggs; 3 cups sifted all-purpose flour; 1/2 teaspoon salt.

Cream the butter with the sugar until fluffy. Beat in the vanilla and eggs. Add flour and salt, sifted together, and stir until well blended. Divide the dough into three or four parts and form rolls. Roll them up in wax paper or aluminum foil and store in the refrigerator or freezer until firm. With a sharp knife, slice 1/8 to 3/8 inch thick. Place on greased or ungreased cookie sheets. Bake in a preheated 375-degree oven until a delicate beige -- the time will depend upon the thickness of the cookies. Remove from pan while warm and cool on a rack. Store in airtight containers. Yields 4 1/2 to 6 1/2 dozen cookies.

FROM THE TREASURER

Please help repair the roof

The time has come to replace the flat roof over the Cadwalader Room. The cost of replacing it will besome \$29,000. The Vestry has appealed for donations to cover the cost. To date we have received checks and pledges totaling slightly more than \$14,000. So we still have a long way to go. Please prayerfully consider helping us keep the roof over our heads by sending your contribution to The Treasurer, St Stephen's Anglican Church, 11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21057.

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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Vicar: 410 878-5275 · Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

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The Very Rev. Guy P Hawtin, Dean & Rector

The Rev. John Novicki, Vicar ·

Associate Rectors:

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. C. Daniel Bursi,

The Rev. Dr. Norman Flowers,

The Rev. M. Wiley Hawks & The Rev. Mark Newsome,

Mrs Happy Riley, Director of Pastoral Care

& Wedding Coordinator

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist

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

11 am: 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

The Cookie Walk

Cookie Walk will take place in the Parish Hall at 9.00 AM, December 14th

The Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, 7.00 PM, October 16th

Ladies Who Lunch

Noon, Wednesday, October 16th

Venue: The Peppermill, Towson

Information: Call Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026

Choral Events

As announced

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