



A Nonprofit Education Corporation
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STALIN:
THE COURT OF THE RED TSAR
 Presenter: Ted Anagnoson
 Five Mondays
 January 17, 24, 31, February 7 & 14
 1:30 to 4:30PM
 Valle Verde Theater
 900 Calle de los Amigos

This course is a VISTAS small seminar, where we will read Simon Sebag Montefiore's *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (New York: Vintage, 2003). \$13.57 on Amazon.com.

This is an exploration into the side of Stalin you don't hear about—what the person was actually like. Those of you who read *Young Stalin* by the same author, which covers Stalin's youth until the revolution, know that he was an incredibly intelligent man, self-educated and well-read, and someone who was capable of great personal kindness at the same time as he would sign off on actions that resulted in the deaths of millions. He was, in short, a unique human being. Stalin acted in such an arbitrary way, and with such personal power, that he was almost like one of the tsars of the last century, someone who received his power from God and knew it and could do anything he wanted, thus the subtitle of the book, *The Court of the Red Tsar*.

Montefiore draws upon Russian archives, unpublished memoirs, and interviews with the children of many important figures of the Stalin era. He got access to some of the archives he used by accident: After his *Prince of Princes: The Life of Potemkin* (2001) appeared, Montefiore said a Putin adviser invited him for a drink in a London hotel to discuss whether Potemkin, as "an authoritarian but enlightened ruler," might make a good model for Putin." After that I got the green

light to have access to Stalin's papers," Montefiore said. "The whole of Russian life is as patronage-and personality-based as it was in Catherine the Great's time."

So the book is brilliant on Stalin as a person, but—and this is deliberate—Montefiore doesn't do much with the larger events of the era, forced collectivization, great famine, massacres of kulaks and Jews, USSR's role in WWII, etc. So I've suggested to those interested that we can all contribute reports that could cover some of these wider issues, or short biographies of those involved, such as Beria, Malenkov, Khrushchev, Zhukov, Stalin's children, etc. These can come from the Wikipedia or other sources of that nature—no great depth of research is needed. Each student will give one or two 10 to 15 minute reports on these topics, to be coordinated with the Seminar Leader.

So I welcome you to a great adventure and some real insights into someone who invoked such terror that his very intimates kept packed suitcases in the closets in case the secret police visited them to take them off after they had stayed up half the night with Stalin in one of his drunken all night meetings,



ENROLLMENT FORM: STALIN

ENROLLMENT FORM: VISTAS Members \$40 per person — Non-members \$60 per person

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

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Deadline for registration: January 2, 2010

which happened most nights of the week. In her review for the New York Times, Michiko Kakutani said that Montefiore “creates a harrowing portrait of life in the dictator’s inner circle.”

They are still arguing about him in Russia; an article from *Der Spiegel* last Spring discussed several current controversies. Some want more pictures and statues of Stalin to be erected; others want to remember his role in World War II more positively. In short, the controversies we will explore in this course are still being debated.

BIOGRAPHY

Who is Ted Anagnoson? Ted has lived in Goleta since 1975. He came to Santa Barbara from the east coast for a job at UCSB, but after several years, the job ended, and he took a job at California State University, Los Angeles, where he stayed over part of the week for 23 years. He has two degrees in international relations and took several courses on Soviet politics and Russian history while at American University in Washington working on a masters degree. He is semi-retired and still teaches one quarter per year at Cal State LA. In between, he edits the quarterly newsletter of the CSU emeriti and retired faculty association, periodically teaches for VISTAS and the now defunct OLLI, and does some writing – the next project being a book tentatively titled *Can We Afford to Grow Old? America’s Entitlements in an Age of Austerity*.

VISTAS Winter 2011 Calendar

Seminar/Event	Date	Time	Venue
Documentary Film Club	Thurs, Dec 16	2:00PM	Maravilla Theater
Theater in the Making: <i>Biederman's Match</i> (3)	Tues: Jan 4,	5:45PM	UCSB
World Economy in Crisis (3)	Tues, Jan 11	9:30-12:30	Goleta Library
Human Migration Redux (2)	Wed, Jan 12	1:30PM	Valle Verde Theater
Documentary Club	Thurs, Jan 27	2:00PM	Maravilla Theater
Mao to Now (4)	Mon, Feb 28	1:30PM	Valle Verde Theater
Models of Democracy (2))	Wed, Feb 9	9:30AM	Valle Verde Social Rm
Documentary Club	Thurs, Feb 24	2:00PM	Maravilla Theater



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