

The Barrys display a sensitivity for the departures of political practice from the "formalism" of official thought and goals, but they never really present an overarching conception of praxis (or the lack of it) in the Soviet Union.

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CRIMINAL RUSSIA: ESSAYS ON CRIME IN THE SOVIET UNION. By *Valery Chalidze*. Translated from the Russian by *P. S. Falla*. New York: Random House, 1977. xiv, 241 pp. \$10.00.

Valery Chalidze's book is intermittently angry, in parts dispassionately provocative, and here and there a bit plodding, but, overall, it is well put together and thoroughly informative. In the opinion of this reviewer, it is a valuable book for the nonspecialist in Soviet law, be the reader someone versed in law or Soviet affairs or a lay person seeking to expand his or her knowledge and understanding of Soviet ways.

Valery Chalidze is a prominent human rights activist. Deprived of his Soviet citizenship and refused reentry into his country, he now lives in New York City where he edits a bimonthly journal on matters concerning the Soviet human rights movement he helped to found. He has also written *To Defend These Rights*, a study of the realities of the civil rights aspects of Soviet constitutional law.

The book opens with a brief essay on the Russian criminal tradition, an inquiry into the prevailing popular attitudes toward what might be called *mala in se*. Toleration of crime, glorification of brigands, disrespect for property, and widespread violence and cruelty in the pre-Soviet era are noted. According to the author, the Soviet criminal tradition absorbed many features of this earlier period. The Bolsheviks robbed for the party's treasury, elevated plunder to a principle of revolutionary policy, and harnessed the hitherto diffuse violence and cruelty in the service of the state. It is ironic, the author observes, that keeping violence off Soviet screens in order to lessen incentives to criminal behavior "would not be acceptable ideologically, since it would preclude educational references to the heroic revolutionary past" (p. 211). For the most part, he agrees with the official Soviet line that the criminal underworld has ceased to exist in the Soviet Union but attributes the beginnings of its demise to "[t]he seizure of power by amateur criminals and the underworld's collaboration with the new regime" (p. 71). The chapter on hooliganism is analytic and reflective, particularly with regard to the relationship between the broad definitions of hooliganism and the ostensibly discarded principle of "crimes by analogy." By contrast, the chapters on murder and sexual crimes contain perhaps an excessive number of case synopses. It is also my feeling that the chapter on bribery is not as clearly and crisply written as some other parts of the book; for example, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether bribe-giving or bribe-taking is being discussed. The author's attempt to gauge the extent of criminality in the Soviet Union reveals both the constraints that Soviet crime reporting imposes and the possibilities that a close study of the scattered published data holds out for an interested scholar. Moreover, the citation of the available figures juxtaposed to a chapter on combating private enterprise once again reminds us of the amorphousness of "crime" and, therefore, its virtual uselessness as a measurement unit for purposes of global comparisons.

The bibliographic notes indicate that the book is based entirely on indigenous sources. The book also concludes with a good index. Had this reviewer been in a nastier mood he might have quibbled with a few of the English renderings of the original; despite his mellowness, however, he cannot accept P. Stuchek for P. Stuchka (p. 223).

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