



Comrade Criminal: Russia's New Mafiya

By Stephen Handelman

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This riveting book is the first comprehensive investigation into the organized crime and corruption that plague Russia today. Describing a society under the sway of gangster bosses, corrupt army generals, bank swindlers, drug dealers, and uranium thieves, the book shows how "mafiya" crime lords and still-powerful former Soviet bureaucrats?so-called "comrade criminals"?have sabotaged their country's attempt at revolution and reform.

Stephen Handelman, Moscow bureau chief for *The Toronto Star* from 1987 to 1992, has based his book on interviews with more than 150 Russians?mobsters, police, political crusaders, former KGB agents, new millionaires, and ordinary citizens. Handelman traces the roots of the criminal underworld to elements of society that have existed on the margins of Russian life for centuries and that during the last twenty years of Soviet power became an essential arm of the black-market economy. He reveals how organized crime has flourished since the demise of totalitarianism, and how the Russian mafiya has begun to export to American cities not only guns and drugs but also its particular brand of mob violence. And he shows the detrimental effects crime has had?and will continue to have?on political and economic reform in the new states of the former Soviet Union.

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Gripping and lively, this is an account of Mafia machinations and the generally fruitless efforts of honest cops and outnumbered democratic politicians to thwart them.... One of the most comprehensive and convincing representations of what has happened in Russia since 1991.

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