

## Thievery is 'just a phase,' Russians are told

*In his 1993 film and book The Great Criminal Revolution, Russian parliamentarian Stanislav Govorukhin surveyed the criminality rampant in Russia after just two years of so-called reforms. These excerpts from the book were translated by Rachel Douglas.*

The whole country is stealing. We've heard that phrase before somewhere. Oh yes, of course! There is not a single newspaper or government official, who has not at least twice quoted Karamzin's famous answer to the question, "What is Russia doing?"

"Stealing," was the writer's succinct reply.

Confronted with the need to justify the looting of the country on a huge scale and the impossibility of concealing it, they turn to this Russian classic for help. What are you panicking for? We've always stolen.

If Karamzin is watching us from another world, he must be cursing himself for that witticism. He armed the very people he detested when he was alive, providing them with a weighty argument. These miserable good-for-nothings have made the word he spoke in a moment of pique, into a testimonial for our time.

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During the fascist invasion, when half the European part of the country was under occupation, trainloads of looted goods went to the West every day. But only that section of the country was being robbed. Today the whole place is being swept clean.

But the scribblers from the "progressive press" assure us: "So what? We've always stolen. . . ."

They also hammer into people's heads a really base thought, but one that sticks: that throughout history, start-up capital was always ill-gotten. Here they weave in Marx (his theory of primitive accumulation) and recall the American robber barons of old. Sure, there is a criminal element now. But later on. . . . When they've stolen their fill. . . .

And people believe it, though you couldn't dream up a baser idea. It's absolutely untrue! Just look at the history of enterprise in Russia. The popularizers of this idea don't even believe it. They may be scoundrels, but they're not fools.

Look around. How many high-flying rogues do you know, who don't have money in a Western bank? Who among them doesn't have real estate abroad? Which of them has not evacuated his family, his wife and children, to the West? No, their money will never return to this country and will play no part in the rebirth of Russia.

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And then I hear the following: "What are you trying to scare us with the mafia for?! So there's a little shooting. . . . Chicago had it in the '20s and '30s. And look at Chicago today!"

Oh, those three-card monte dealers! You won't ever keep track of their moves.

Shall we explain to them that Moscow, Yekaterinburg, and Khabarovsk are not Chicago? Furthermore, things in Chicago were not exactly as the American movies portray them; they were a little less heavy-duty. And those mafia turf wars took place against the backdrop of normal life in society. America was suffering an economic crisis, that's all; it was not being shaken by a criminal revolution.

to advance an even more radical break in policy, jumping far ahead of the "Yugoslav model," into the "free market." Its first ideological substantiation was the notorious 500 Days Plan, originally drafted under the direction of Academician Stanislav Shatalin, a dabbler in astrology, by young economists like Grigori Yavlinsky and the intense student of Thatcherism, Boris Fyodorov. George Soros assisted this plan, paying the way of Yavlinsky, Fyodorov, and four other members of the Shatalin group, to attend the September 1990 IMF conference in Washington. Yavlinsky and Fyodorov did not make a secret of their British and U.S. connections (Yavlinsky hob-nobbed with Jeffrey Sachs, in the period when the 500 Days Plan was drafted), since at that time the Russian public was enthusiastic and trusting toward the West.

The 500 Days Plan document, enticing citizens with a swift and easy transition to prosperity, proposed the total privatization of national industry in four phases: preparation,

privatization, introduction of a market, and stabilization. The first would be a 100-day period of publicizing the plan, taking inventory, and warning economic enterprises that their subsidies were about to be terminated. During the five-month second phase, state-owned industry would be sold off through share issues and other means. In the next period, to create a "market," prices would be decontrolled. Heavy industry production would be expected to plummet. The last 100 days would bring a solution to remaining "structural problems," and the reduction of prices on consumer goods.<sup>12</sup> The word "freedom" was applied to everything, reducing the role of the state in economic development to zero. The authors of the 500 Days Plan exploited people's real concerns, which were significantly influenced by the excessive propaganda of con-

12. Rachel Douglas, "In Need of Economic Cure, Soviets Choke on 'Free Market' Poison," *EIR*, Nov. 2, 1990, details the 500 Days Plan.