

LEGACYMUN'26
CC: THE RUSSIAN BRATVA
STUDY GUIDE

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guide kapağı

Table of Contents

<i>1. Letter From Secretariat.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2. Letter From Under-Secretaries General.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>3. Letter from Academic Assistants.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>4. Committee Procedure.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>4.1 What is a Crisis Committee.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>4.1.1 Directive.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>4.1.2 Updates.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>4.1.3 Crisis.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>4.2 Directive Types and How to Write Them.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>4.2.1 Personal Directive.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>4.2.2 Joint Directive.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>4.2.3 Committee/Cabinet Directive.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>4.2.4 Intelligence Directive.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>4.2.5 Press Release (Declaration).....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>4.2.5 Top Secret.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>4.3 Gang and Cops Heat System.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>5. Prehistory of the Bratva.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>5.1 Russian Empire Era.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>5.2 The Origin of Vory v Zakone.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>5.2.1 Life in Prison.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>5.2.1.1 Daily Rituals.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>5.3 Suchna Voyna.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>5.4 The Golden Era.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>6. The Hierarchical Structure.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>7. Well-known Organizations.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>8. Bibliography.....</i>	<i>29</i>

1. Letter From Secretariat

2. Letter From Under-Secretaries General

Dear participants of LEGACY Model United Nations Conference, it is our honour and absolute pleasure to welcome you to our Crisis committee. First of all, our main goal in the idea of this committee and in the process of preparing the study guide was to make this committee a fun and memorable experience that will leave a mark on the lives of the delegates who choose this committee and will always remain in the back of their minds, so remember to have fun while writing your directives or discussing strategies with each other and be careful to be respectful to both your fellow academy members and each other. Regardless of your prior MUN experience, English Level, or current procedural knowledge, you will be able to succeed and develop due to the structure of Crisis Committees. For this reason, don't be scared to try new things, engage with others, or get in touch with us. We'll do everything we can to make this committee a memorable event, so relax and enjoy yourself when it starts!

Best regards,

Erdem DEMİRCİ & MELİKHAN DEMİRKIRAN

3. Letter from Academic Assistants

Uvajayemiye Bratok ,

We, as the Brigadiers of the Russian Bratva, are honored to have presented this committee for you. This committee holds a very special place for us, just like you, our valued participants. After all, we hope that within this committee, you will gain enjoyable and educational experiences. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our esteemed Co Under Secretaries General, Erdem Demirci and Melikhan Demirkıran. Furthermore, we would like to share our paramount regards to the valuable members of the Executive Team who made this committee a reality. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding the committee. Our goal is to shed light on any uncertainties you may have and to address your concerns. We have included our contact numbers below. We wish you all the best in your work and hope this guide has been helpful to you. See you at the conference.

Oh, and lastly;

Я не служу государству, я не признаю его закон. Я живу по закону воровскому — и умру по закону воровскому. Братва — моя семья, вор — моё имя, слово — моя честь.

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4. Committee Procedure

4.1 What is a Crisis Committee

4.1.1 Directive

Directives are the main materials of Crisis Committees; they are what distinguish a JCC or CC from the General Assembly. As the name implies, the term "directive" refers to an order or instruction. On the committee, any realistic and feasible action can be taken by writing directives. Consequently, it is guaranteed that the majority of the time spent on the committee will be devoted to writing directives. (Triumphs are attained through concrete actions, rather than mere speeches or campaigns.) Unlike the GA procedure, it is unnecessary to encourage, suggest, or demonstrate any ideas to make it happen; only a decent directive is required. There are several types of directives depending on what one wants to do, and they will be discussed in the latter section. To summarise, directives are written when one wishes to accomplish or do something. Writing a directive allows one to take any realistic action; therefore, instead of long discussions and talking sessions to execute your ideas and progress in the committee, directives will be written.

4.1.2 Updates

1- Updates are the outcomes of directives, which are either granted or rejected based on how precisely one wrote and phrased the directive. The crisis team evaluates whether they are adequate or not; every conference with crisis committees includes a crisis team that reads and inspects directives.

2- Updates can also come as a result of a new occurrence in your cabinet. For example, if the other cabinet launches a successful attack on one of your cities and captures it, an update will come. If the directive only concerns your cabinet, such as building a new military base in your country, then the update will only come to your cabinet, but if it is a conflict that both sides participate in, then the update will come to both cabinets.

3- The update doesn't necessarily have to be the result of a directive; for instance, if you are in the Hundred Years' Wars committee during the 14th century, then the crisis team may bring a plague update that will infect the majority of soldiers. Hereupon, it can be understood that the update may also be a crisis.

4.1.3 Crisis

Crises emerge when one submits an insufficient directive, the other cabinet successfully affects you in a negative way, or temporal crises occur depending on the crisis teams' wishes. To clarify:

1- In order for a sufficient directive to be written, there are a few rules and necessities that must be followed; failing this, an inevitable crisis will occur based on what was wanted to be done in the directive.

2- Finally, depending on how the committees' actions progress, a periodic crisis like a plague or a political disagreement may arise and affect a cabinet adversely.

4.2 Directive Types and How to Write Them

4.2.1 Personal Directive

Personal directives are written when an action is within your character's authority or is possible due to their abilities. Now take a look at how to write a personal directive: Firstly, there is a format for writing directives; thus, one has to write who is sending the directive and to whom (from, to). After that, the cabinet sending the directive, the real-world time and the current date of the committee. Lastly, the type of your directive and the headline of it. And that's it; this is all the format one needs to know to write a directive. The only thing left is the content of the directive, and the method by which one writes it is fairly straightforward; it is written by addressing the WH questions, which are what, why, when, who, where, and, most importantly, how. Write down the action you want to take by answering the WH questions, then detailing and explaining it as much as possible to ensure that your plan is as comprehensive as possible. Also, the use of the future tense is critical; try to use it whenever possible. Here is how a directive looks on paper:

From: Tormund

To: Related Authorities

Defeating Boltons

Personal Directive

Date: 303 AC, May

Time: 11.25 (Stark Cabinet)

What: I will defeat Bolton with my 5,000 wildling soldiers stationed on the Winterfell frontline.

My soldiers will kill and destroy any enemy forces they come across, as well as any enemy

military bases. Women and children in the castle will not be murdered unless they attack the

soldiers.

Why: To win the war against Boltons and take Winterfell back

When: Soldiers will charge at dawn to catch the enemy off guard.

Who: I will be

operating this attack, and if I fall during the war, my right-hand man, Mance Rayder will take over.

5,000 wildlings will assault the enemy under his command.

Where: 2,500 of my soldiers will charge from the southeast frontline, and the other 2,500 will charge from the west to defeat all Boltons.

***HOW*:** To reduce noise, the 5,000 wildlings will be divided into 50 groups, with 100 soldiers per group. We will use "Mothersmilk" doctrine to ambush and kill all of the boltons. Soldiers will check and control their weapons, and clothes before charging. If there is any problem, I will command them with my authority to fix it. Each group will have a commander, and the commanders will be the best warriors among their groups. They will be well-armed with their swords, throwing knives and their main weapon if they have any specialty with it (bow and arrow for an example). Each group will apply the doctrine properly to face the fewest casualties. If needed, 3 soldiers from each group will bring supplies to their own group from the frontlines, and these 3 soldiers will be picked randomly from the commanders. They will take the safest route and avoid the enemy. Our men will take the safe paths suggested by our spies. They will pray, remember how brave they are, and then honour their race and gods by demolishing the enemy. They will not disobey their commander's orders and apply the doctrine as they say. To avoid being affected by attrition, our soldiers will study their geographical situation as well as the enemy's to use it in their favour. They will not be wearing inappropriate armour and clothing, only those that will fit the current climate. Any careless mistakes shall not be forgiven and the commanders of the groups will eliminate the soldiers who made the mistake such as sleeping on a night's watch. If by any chance a soldier catches a disease that may spread he will be killed if there are no precautions that can be taken in order to heal him without letting it spread. If the siege and the road take unusually long to take and pass they will shave properly to prevent any lice growing, mating and distracting the soldiers. Soldiers will use an offensive "River's assault" doctrine formation.

when I order them to charge, and they will slaughter each enemy troop they face. They will use the offensive formation until they face a larger enemy force to quickly capture as many critical areas as possible. If they face a larger enemy force, to be exact, 1.5 times larger than them, they will quickly change to a defensive phalanx formation and wait for recruitment while defending themselves. Their priority will be killing the enemy rather than cutting supply lines. In mountain areas, they will use the highlands in their favour and quickly oppress the enemy to finish them. Once they reach the castle, their priority will be killing the cabinet members of Boltons. If possible, they will defenestrate them to entertain themselves. Meaning of mercy will disappear from their minds and any offers made by the enemy will be rejected for they have disrespected our House. After the military bases and the city are captured, soldiers will go to the possible conflict areas to recruit other soldiers. Even though We've sent spies before, our soldiers will be vigilant for any kind of trap. Their main objective is to capture the city, and for that purpose, they will sacrifice themselves without hesitation.

4.2.2 Joint Directive

Directives written by more than one individual are considered joint directives. Joint directives are written when one can only achieve the purpose of the directive by utilising the authority of other cabinet members. Consider the scenario where one is a commander responsible for capturing Warsaw. Recognising the insurmountable challenge of achieving this objective without air superiority, a collaborative effort can be initiated by writing a joint directive with the Air Force general. In this case, the "from" field of the directive would include the commander's name alongside the name of the air force general, and instead of a personal directive, you write "Joint Directive" at the top of the directive. Everything else is the same.

4.2.3 Committee/Cabinet Directive

A committee directive is written when one wishes to use everyone's authority or when one is about to deliver their final directive (in most cases). Delegates frequently ask, "How are we meant to write a committee directive with the other cabinet?" However, this concern stems from a widespread misunderstanding. The committee directive is essentially formulated collaboratively within the confines of your cabinet, with the members of your cabinet.

Although it is formally referred to as a "committee directive", its essence remains akin to that of a cabinet directive. So, simply writing "Committee Directive" in the "from:" part will do.

4.2.4 Intelligence Directive

Intelligence directives are written when one wants to acquire the necessary information about their country/cabinet/character. The format is exactly the same, except for the "WH Questions" part. For example:

From: Winston Churchill Intelligence Directive Date: 1942 May 3
To: Related Authorities Time: 16.21

Our Troop Counts How many troops does our country have? Do we possess any nuclear weapons? How many of our military factories are assigned to manufacture infantry weapons, and what kind of weapons are they producing?

4.2.5 Press Release (Declaration)

Press releases are written when one wants to make a declaration, a speech, or a notice. When one writes a press release, depending on the era of the committee, the other cabinet members may hear it or not. In our case, there are no printers, social media, or newspapers, so it is very unlikely to hear other cabinets' press releases. The format is once again exactly the same, except for the "WH Questions" part. For example:

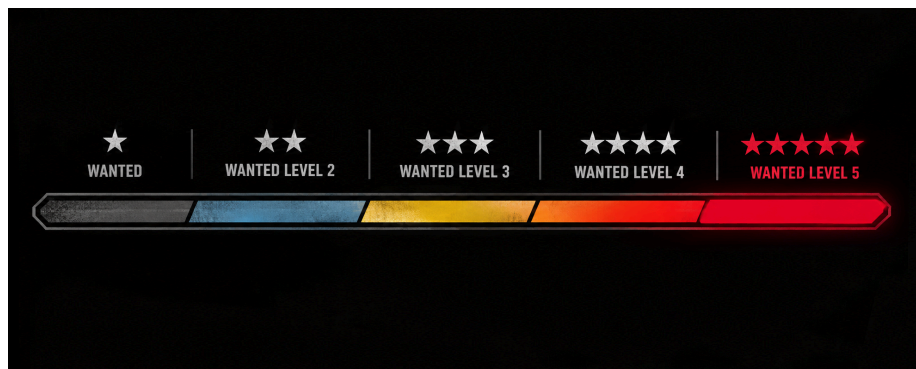
From: Erwin Smith July 23
To: Related Authorities Press Release Hyping Up the Soldiers Date: 845 Time: 18.17
Everything that you thought had meaning: every hope, dream, or moment of happiness. None of it matters as you lie bleeding out on the battlefield. None of it changes what a speeding rock does to a body; we all die. But does that mean our lives are meaningless? Does that mean that there was no point in our being born? Would you say that of our slain comrades? What about their lives? Were they meaningless? ... They were not! Their memory serves as an example to us all! The courageous have fallen! The anguished fallen! Their lives have meaning because we, the living, refuse to forget them! And as we ride to certain death, we trust our successors to do the same for us! Because my soldiers do not buckle or yield when faced with the cruelty of this world! My soldiers push forward! My soldiers scream out! My soldiers RAAAAAGE!

4.2.5 Top Secret

Top secret directives are those that your chair is not allowed to read. Top secret directives are directly handed to the admin. They are written precisely the same, but one must fold the paper and write "TOP SECRET" on the backside of it. The major reason for writing a Top Secret Directive is treason, a diabolical strategy to crash one's own cabinet or switch sides. For instance, if a person secretly kills his cabinet members and becomes dictator, the winning condition changes and only that person wins, whereas the cabinet loses. But I do not recommend writing top secret directives unless you're planning on writing a brilliant 10-page directive, because failing to do so will backfire much worse. If one fails to accomplish their nefarious plan and gets busted, one will earn their cabinet's distrust and may die and be given an insignificant character. Additionally, updates to the Top Secret Directives are only sent to the person who sent them unless they directly affect other cabinet members.

4.3 Gang and Cops Heat System

The heat system will be one of the main procedures in the committee. The system will represent the risk of getting caught, or being exposed. The actions you will have taken as the committee, shall determine your risk of getting caught. The more suspicious an act you take, the more the possibility of being exposed by the authorities will be increased. According to the quality of your actions, you may decrease the risk, however, If it exceeds the limit, you may be confronted with formidable hindrances while taking actions. For an instance, If you endeavor to take out someone on plain sight, or If you fail to cover-up the illegal action, the bar will increase, which will put you in the authorities' radar.



If you take an action against another bratva such as; trespassing their district, targeting their businesses, or even directly taking an offensive action against them, their opinion towards you will alter. Furthermore, they may take actions against you as well.



5. *Prehistory of the Bratva*

The term “Bratva” means brotherhood, refers to a gang or mafia who have internal code or morality, originating and mainly operating in Russia.

5.1 *Russian Empire Era*

The actions regarding the Russian criminal underworld goes much further than the Soviet era, **Tsarist penal system**. Its roots tracing back to the 17th century, the Russian Empire exiled sedate offenders to the location where it's called “Katorga” — forced-labor camps, mostly situated in Siberia. As Dostoevsky delineated in *The House of the Dead*, by the 19th century, the exile to Katorga gathered thousands of inmates under extremely frail government supervision which concluded with closed communities that developed their own internal order.

Within these camps and throughout the exile routes, an organization similar to a “thieves hierarchy” and unity network already existed. Veteran, “uncontemned” perpetrators whom they call “The Ivans” held higher status than newcomers. It could be derived that the crude core of the Soviet-era vor system, in fact, originated from Tsarist-era Katorga culture.

One of the biggest legacies of the Russian underworld culture is a secret argot called “Fenya”. It has its origins back in the 19th century. In the beginning, it was a jargon used by traveller hawkers as (“ofenya” or “ofeni”), commenced especially against outsiders. Eventually, Fenya was adopted and enhanced by both beggars and especially the criminal world, in order to not get caught by police forces or guards since it wasn't deciphered. Fenya still has its traces in Russian criminal culture and it's still in use, up to this day.

In the early 20th century, Odessa, a cosmopolitan port city situated at Black Sea, was the center of an idiosyncratic criminal custom. Moldavanka District, which had been home to Jewish, Russian, Ukrainian, Greek and many other communities, as well as a home to the gang culture that flourished there produced its own folklore.

One of the most legendary figures of this era was Mishka Yaponchik— his real name was Moisey Vinnitsky who was Odessa’s most famous gang leader known for his swagger, style, and “gentleman bandit” image. In 1907, Vinnitsky was sentenced to death by hanging after the assassination of the chief of Mikhailov police precinct in Odessa, V. Kozhukhar. However, this penalty was discounted to 12 years of hard labor in Katorga.

After the Russian Civil War, day by day, criminal rates climbed even higher. War, famine, and disease left millions of children orphaned or abandoned. These children lived in packs in cities, train stations, even in the sewers; organizing into gangs to survive through burglary, begging, and minor thievery. The generation that grew up formed a significant part of the first wave of the “professional criminals” from Stalin’s Gulag system in the 1930’s.

By the end of the 20’s and the early 30’s, Stalin’s massive industrialization and mass arrests such as; political purges, the dischargement of kulak escalated the Gulag system to enormous scale. The three legacies which are — the hierarchical camp culture in Katorga, the language of Fenya, and the generation of the street children who grew up in a vast chaos— rallied as one.

5.2 The Origin of Vory v Zakone

The term “Vory v Zakone” (Воры в законе) translates approximately as “Thieves-in-Law” or “Thieves Bound by the Code.” Originally, the actions which were taken back in the Tsarist Russia’s days paved the way for the Vory v Zakone. Its roots lie in the Soviet Gulag system, forced-labor camps, taking shape especially during Stalin’s rule in the 1930s.

In the criminal milieu of the same era, two main currents emerged. The first group consisted of criminals with longstanding criminal careers. The second, comprised political opponents of the Bolsheviks, who consciously chose a criminal path out of ideological motives. However, attempts to unite political and common criminals by drawing political prisoners into criminal ranks ultimately failed. Instead, political prisoners frequently became targets of younger criminal groups, earning the status - "zhigany" (Russian slang meaning daring or rebellious). Zhigany borrowed criminal traditions and customs but adapted them to new circumstances. They deliberately underscored differences from mainstream criminality rooted in the political subtext of their actions and adhered to a limited set of criminal laws and rules they created themselves.

The perpetrators who refused the authority of the state built a “shadow society” and established their own internal law and hierarchy.

Also known as the *Vorovskoy Zakon (Thieves’ Code)*, the core principles generally included:

- Never work a legitimate job for the state or the society
- Never serve in the military under any circumstances
- Never cooperate with police or any state authority, never testify
- Support fellow thieves materially and otherwise, contribute to the common fund (“obshchak”)
- Resolve arguments through councils (“skhodka”) rather than direct violence where possible (even though this matter, violence remained active in practice over the years)
- Traditionally, renounce family ties and marriage (This rule lost its importance over years)
- Use an elaborate tattoo system as a coded “biography” and marker of the one’s status
- Your real home is your cell, prison or the camps.

If any of the ground rules were ruptured, the punishments were tyrannous, such as:

Minor Infractions

- Failing to support a comrade adequately or breaking the minor behavioral rules would strip the member of their voting rights and voice in criminal assemblies. (“skhodka”)
- If a member gambles while using the communal funds (“obshchak”), or mismanages communal funds, they are forced to pay back the debt or forfeit meritorious assets in order to indemnify the brotherhood.
- Another type of punishment was giving a formal warning by a gathering of associates to make the one feel guilty, and to correct their behavior.

Severe Punishments

- Dethroning was being stripped of the elite vor v zakone status. In the system, elite members would signify their ranks or status with tattoos such as epaulettes or star marks. In order to degrade the one, the tattoo would be either scratched off the skin completely, or chemically removed by using acids onto the skin.
- Beating, slashing, or physically marking with a ritual as a consequence of dishonesty, disrespect toward another comrade, or failing a mission that was given.
- The most grim punishment was to execute the one directly. In cases of betraying a fellow thief, stealing from the communal fund, refusing to execute an order completely, or cooperating with the authorities would mean death instantly.

Being promoted wasn't straightforward. It required guarantees by at least two living Vory and a formal ceremony called “koronatsya” which means coronation. The system occurred as a counter-law against the Soviet since they considered their bond only by their own law.

5.2.1 Life in Prison

In Russian prison slang, a penal facility is called the “zona” (zone). From the moment you step inside, you feel the unofficial legal system but the one that operates far more powerful than the official rules. After the one is placed in his cell, the others size him up silently but with caution: “where do you come from, what's your charge, have you done time before, If yes, how many, who do you know outside?” This evaluation most likely decides and seals your fate, and which caste you will fall into— and that evaluation is usually irreversible.

In the classic post-Soviet Russian prison society, there are multiple, sharply distinct classes which determine the rest of your life in prison. The hierarchy is ferociously strict and must be obeyed.

Blatnye/Vory (The Elite Ones)

The respected higher minority who are bound by the “thieves code”. They occupy the best spot in the cell— in slang it is called “ The King’s Corner”, which refers to the furthest spot from the door and toilet, generally next to the window— Their orders and decisions are unquestionable and must be obeyed.

Muzhiki (Ordinary Ones)

The title belongs to the vast majority of the inmates. They have no special status or privileges, face no special sanctions or punishments if not needed; they try to stay out of trouble as much as they can, serve their time quietly and try to get out. They go to work such as a factory, or a workshop; they can interact minimally with the administration of the prison, as long as they do not do anything that would be counted as betrayal to the code.

Obizhennye/Opushchennye

The most dehumanizing, humiliating tier among the others. The inmates who have been labeled as an Obizhennye typically the ones who have been sexually assaulted or otherwise considered “contaminated”, and are permanently expelled as a result of it. They cannot eat the same dish the Muzhiki or Vory eat, they have to eat from separate dishes, cannot touch shared belongings, thus if anyone else even touches their personal cup, it is considered “contaminated”. Furthermore, escaping this rank is unfeasible— once you fall into it, there is no going back. The label follows you no matter which cell or the prison you are transferred to, since informal inmate communication network relay, or even the tattoos make it clear.

Kozly (Goats)

Inmates who cooperate with the authority, serving on camp committees. The vory world considered it as one of the gravest betrayals.

One of the other main aspects of the prison was tattoos. Russian prison tattoos weren't just a decoration, they are a legible language. An experienced “reader” — which some prison authorities have even employed trained and experienced criminologists in order to read the inmates’ tattoos chest, hands, and fingers to figure out their entire “career” and status:

Cathedral Domes

It would usually be done to the shoulder or to the chest. Each dome represented one prison term; the number of domes would represent how many times they have been imprisoned.

A Star on Each Knee

It meant “I kneel before no one”, a vow to indicate to never submit to an authority.

An Eagle or a Snake with Claws

It was usually done to the chest— signaling high level authority, an avtoritet or vor-level rank.

Text on the Eyelids (He бyду)

It would usually be used to threaten the guards. It meant “Wake me and I will kill you.”

A Padlock Tattoo

It was generally done by the inmates who would like to signal their loyalty. It meant “someone who keeps his word.”

Crosses and Stars on the Back of the Hand

It symbolizes the number of arrests or prison stints.

One of the most dangerous situations in which you could get involved is to get an unearned tattoo. If you have a symbol on your body that normally signifies a status you have not earned, the tattoo must be forcibly “removed” — with a razor or sandpaper, your skin would be demolished as it is as brutal as cutting away the skin.

5.2.1.1 Daily Rituals

Chifir (Tea Ritual)

Chifir is a brewed tea ritual where almost an entire box of tea is boiled for a long time in very little water. The special part of it is that it is never drunk alone — It is passed around and sipped in unison from the exact same receptacle, representing a kind of brotherhood and trust ritual. Being invited to drink chifir indicates acceptance and trust within that cell, whereas the rejection or not being invited is a quiet but unmistakable sign of exclusion.

Postukivaniye (Knocking Code)

In order to communicate between cells, messages were relayed by tapping on pipes or walls of the cells using a Morse-like alphabet. With that, the system was inaudible to the guards who are patrolling in the corridor but could be decipherable by the neighbor cell.

Doroga (The Line/Rope Route)

A rope would be lowered from the windows, carrying notes, cigarettes, tea, and even small packages of contraband between floors. The guards would try to stop it by cutting these lines but it was never a permanent solution.

Malyava (Secret Letter)

Messages were smuggled through toilet pipes, hidden in the food containers, or passed by trusted inmates (or even in some cases, bribed guards) between cells or entire prison areas. Major matters such as naming of a new vor, the resolution of a conflict, the declaration of a rivalry or announcement of a betrayal would spread through the whole prison this way.

Every cell, every prison most likely maintained its own “obshchak” which is the general term of an inventory. Obshchak usually contains a shared pool of tea, cigarettes, food, medicine and money. This inventory is used to:

1. Provide basic necessities for newcomers who have nothing at the moment
2. Support sick ones or those in punitive isolation
3. Bribe guards
4. Send money to families and even to lawyers on the outside

The “smotryashchiy”, which means overseer, was responsible for the distribution of the fund fairly. Stealing, misusing or malpractice of the status was one of the gravest offenses under the code and the punishments gravely violent.

There were two types of administration; first one was called “black zones” where the vory could effectively and conveniently overshadow the authority of the prison and run it by his code. On the contrary, one so called “red zones” were the facilities where the administration would maintain way tighter control than the black zones. The fate of the perpetrator would differ according to their sentences.

5.3 Suchna Voyna

By 1941, the thieves bound by the Vorovskoy Zakon in the Gulag system already formed an established, furthermore, respected hierarchy. However, the world started to turn into a scorched earth, Third German Reich started Operation Barbarossa to invade the Soviet which shattered the balance inside the criminal underworld authority.

While facing the Third German Reich's vast army, the Soviet front suffered catastrophic and immeasurable losses in 1941-1942. However, the gulag system had over a million inmates, which meant a million reserved manpower. The Soviet mobilized this reserve manpower under **SMERSH** ("Death to Spies"), special penal battalions were established and prisoners were offered reduced sentences or full pardons in exchange for being in the frontline in the Second World War.

From the point of view of the criminal underworld, this meant a deadly trap. As the thieves' code strictly pointed out; "No Service to The State." Thus, breaking the oath was generally punished by death. Nonetheless, according to thousands of perpetrators, this could be a chance at survival. Whatever their motivation, thousands of inmates accepted the offer and broke their oath against the code and enrolled to fight in the front.

After the Battle of Stalingrad, where Germans' 6th army was circled and surrendered, the superiority in the war shifted in the Soviet's favor, which meant the need to recruit soldiers from among the inmates has decreased. Despite the fact that the inmates weren't needed in the war, they couldn't be set free as well. So, a massive amount of prisoners were sent back to the camps right after the war had ended.

When they returned to their camps, they realized the "old guard" thieves who stayed loyal to the code were waiting for them. The pure Vory looked down on the ones who broke the code and went to the frontline; in their point of view, the real hardship was to stay in the camps through the ruinous years of 1941-1943, enduring starvation, extreme cold and exiguity instead of having warm clothes and food in the frontline. The former prisoners were branded as "suki" (bitches), or "ssuchennye" (the "bitched" or "contaminated ones"), they were also stripped of all of their status and ranks, and all of its privileges. The punishment of the oathbreakers was to die.

But they forgot one thing: the inmates they called "bitches" did not consist of a hundred, on the contrary, they were in the tens of thousands— which made them a roughly marginal minority. A battle was inevitable.

The confrontation intensified quickly, turning into extreme violence. Retaliations were executed in the most cruel possible ways imaginable such as stabbing with shivs non-stop, beating with blunt objects until breaking a few bones or hearing some cracking voices for fun, and turning killing into a public torture. A new ritual arose during this period which is “kissing the knife.” A person would be forced, either threatening or by force, to kiss a blade. This ritual would make them cross over to the “suchennye” (bitched) side.

In March 1947, a verdict came into effect which placed a procrastination on the death penalty across the entire country, making even the gravest crimes’ punishment limit down to 25 years — which in practice, amounted to a life sentence. For thieves who already embraced the camp as their “home”, this moratorium put every inmate in jeopardy. The deterrence of punishment for committing murder dropped to almost nothing, making the inmates consider that if they would kill someone, it would not change their time drastically.

The Suchennye side quickly realised an advantage which was to cooperate with the authorities. Many camp administration profited from this immediately— effectively arming the suki side and turning them loose against the Vory. In some cases, The Suchennye would be intentionally released into the Vory’s cells who were almost unarmed compared to Suchennye.

One of the execution methods in this era was completely inhumane: a dissenter thief would be taken as a hostage, seized by their arms and legs, thrown into the air, and slammed against the bricks or the floor — It was usually done multiple times until the victim had all of his bones broken or died, whichever came first.

Patroller Suchennye gangs were popular in this era. Even according to a couple legends; a former thief nicknamed “King,” together with his followers, would travel through the northern camps consistently, “breaking” Vory one by one. They would face Vory to publicly submit them to force the administration’s orders. Refusal meant a merciless beating or direct execution.

One of the “incidents” from this era was this so-called “ringing the rails”. During a railway construction project, the administration would assemble thieves in the yard and order to strike the rails with a hammer — according to Vorovskoy Zakon, (“Never work for authority.”) the thieves would step forward in order to demonstrate that they shall not break their code. For this, “King” and his gang would beat them to death publicly.

In the late 40s, amnesties were vogueish under Beria and then Khrushchev, reducing the number of “muzhiki”. However, both the Vory and Suchennye used their manpower to meet enough men on their side for the battles to come. As “muzhiki” shrank, the competition got out of control. Clashes were occurring by the dozens. In one of the documented clashes, roughly 100 Vory clashed against 150 Suchennye. The Suchennye were armed to their teeth whereas the Vory had only their bare hands— which in conclusion, nearly all of the Vory were found dead.

By the end of the 1950s, The Suchna Voyna (Bitch Wars) had come to an end. There wasn't an official winner, notwithstanding, the Vory had lost a lot more than The Suchennye, hence It could be derived that The Suchennye prevailed.

5.4 The Golden Era

The term “Bratva” (Братва— “Brotherhood”) is a wider and looser than Vory v Zakone itself, since it is specifically used to describe the criminal gangs who have taken the floor in the Russian criminal underworld, after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in 1991, and throughout the 1990s. This era is also known as “Likhiye Devyanostiye” which roughly translates as “Wild/Lawless Nights”

Bratva was its brightest era on account of:

- The dissolution of The USSR made its authority weaker than ever before which left the law enforcement ineffective in long-term,
- Chaotic privatization (voucher schemes, the infamous loans-for-shares” slanders) repartition vast wealth almost overnight,
- Private businesses did not have any reliable legal system that they could rely on which concluded with them organizing crime by offering “krysha” (roughly translates as “roof”, which is a slang to indicate protection),
- Killing contracts became even more popular, targeting businessmen, bankers, journalists and more.

After the dissolution of the USSR, what remained was a wreckage of a seventy-year state apparatus without a functional market law, and a reliable system of property protection. The newborn Yeltsin government, led by reformers such as Yegor Gaidar, and Anatoly Chubais, proposed and applied a “shock therapy” that had been implemented into the government system which resulted as: prices were freed overnight and the state withdrew all of its controls.

Nevertheless, uncontrolled inflation annihilated people’s savings that they had spent years to accomplish. Inflation was so devastating that the money that you could spend to buy a car would not even get you a winter coat after a few months later. Millions of people were impoverished, thus, the chaos set the floor perfectly for organized crimes to thrive.

Voucher Privatization (1992-94)

The state handed out “vouchers” to every citizen, which theoretically represents a share of the state property. The vast majority of the public couldn’t comprehend the importance of the vouchers and sold them far below their actual worth on account of a need for immediate cash. The ones who knew its real worth bought up these vouchers gregariously, effectively seized enormous state assets.

“Loans for Shares” Scandal (1995)

The darkest economic era of this period was, undoubtedly, the loans-for-shares scheme. Conjured by Vladimir Potanin and backed by Chubais, owing to this arrangement, top eight largest banks of Russia lent money to cash-strapped states, furthermore, in return the state handed over the control of the country’s most worthwhile industrial firms to these banks as a confirmatory. Since the loans were not repaid, they were sold off to a handful of people for virtually nothing.

The biggest names who emerged from that scandal — Roman Abramovich, Mikail Khodorkovsky, Boris Berezovsky, Vladimir Potanin.

The newborn private sector had no grounded legal system. This gap had created organized crime groups, offering what criminologists say “The Krysha” which means “private protection.” The system was plain: the customer would pay for “protection” from a gang in exchange of protection against both genuine threats such as rival gangs, theft, and also other gangs selling the krysha.

Refusing or not paying in time would come at a very heavy price which are torturing, kidnapping the one’s family members, or even murder. From the smallest street marketer to vast oil and gas firms, practically every business and firm in Russia paid organized crime for the krysha.

After Vladimir Putin’s arrival with the power in the early 2000s, Putin had used its power against both to bring the gangs under his control, while also regaining authority and centralizing the power in his own hands to end the “Wild Nights” in Russia for good. Some gang leaders were prosecuted and went into trial, whereas others were either imprisoned or executed directly. Those who hold significant economic power were absorbed into legitimate business, even formal politics, becoming legitimized. And others flew to other countries to operate their businesses on an international scale.

6. The Hierarchical Structure

Shestyorka (Шестёрка)

Shestyorka is considered as the lowest rank in the Bratva, acting as a junior associate, a look-out, or an errand boy who accomplishes drudgery.

The word “shest” is the Russian word “six”, which indicates the lowest value card in a standard Russian deck. Moreover, it culturally means to be a “butler” or a “yes-man”.

Their duties are generally to fetch items, to guard and watch during a crime (shukher), deliver messages, and gather basic intelligence.

Their usual status are that they are usually chosen from young people, uninitiated, on probation, forced to prove they can stay silent before promoting to a boyevik.

Byki(быки)

Byki—meaning bull in Russian— are the ones who accomplish the direct violences, collecting and guarding; to put it in a nutshell, the main muscle force in the operations. under the command of Boyeviks, they carry out the orders their Brigadiers give.

They also play a crucial role in Krysha operations. Hierarchically, they are the lowest rank in the Bratva after Shestyorka.

Torpedo

They are similar to Byki, however, their main mission is directly to execute the targets. They do the dirtiest and the most dangerous work in the organization as a lower-rank.

Krysha

As the role, Krysha mainly secures legitimate businesses such as firms and stores, and protects them from the outside threats mainly from the other gangs and burglars.

They collect from the corporations they consistently protect, if it's not paid, they secure justice their “own” way.

Criminal Krysha refers to the traditional Bratva type illegal protectors, whereas Red Kryshas are counted as the bribed and corrupted police, intelligence authorities who serve as Kryshas.

Boyevik (боевик)

A boyevik, which translates to “combatant”, “soldier” or a “soldier”. They represent the highest essential muscle and enforcement level in the organization. They execute the physical operations ordered by their Brigadier or even higher-rankings. They lead the Shestyorka, Byki, Torpedo, and Krysha in the operations.

Brigadier (Бригадир)

Brigadier is the crew leader who manages a specific operational cell and directly supervises street level members. The brigadier acts identical to a corporate manager, who takes orders from the boss (Pakhan) and assigns it to his subordinates.

Avtoritet (авторитет)

An avtoritet— usually as criminal avtoritet— is the respected and prominent leader figure in the Bratva. They dissolve the conflicts, using their power and authority they have gained over the years in the underworld criminal organizations.

They can play a peacemaker role between crime groups, solving the problem according to “ponyatiya” which is the illegal rules and traditions inside prisons. Not every avtoritet needs to have an official title. Every Vor V Zakone is an Avtoritet, but not every Avtoritet is officially a Vor.

Smotryaschy (смотрящий)

a Smotryaschy (meaning "the one who watches" or "overseer" in Russian) is a regional supervisor or overseer, responsible for maintaining order, managing finances, and enforcing criminal law within a specific territory or prison. A Smotryaschy is appointed directly by a Vor v Zakone (Thief-in-Law) or high-ranking criminal authorities (avtoritet) to act as their representative on the ground. They oversee the collection and distribution of the Obshchak, the mafia's centralized criminal slush fund or common treasury.

Derzhatel Obshchaka (Держатель общака)

The Derzhatel Obshchaka literally translates to the "keeper of the common fund, serving as the chief financial officer (CFO) or head accountant of a mafia family or prison camp network. The status requires absolute reliability and discipline, since the one holds the key to the entire organization's wealth.

Their main responsibilities are:

- Collecting incoming revenues sent by local overseers and different street crews.
- Overseeing money laundering schemes to transition dirty cash into legitimate assets or offshore accounts.

If the one mismanages the money, loses it against the law due to their carelessness, or even attempts to steal the money, the punishment is direct execution no matter what.

Sovietnik (Советник)

In the terminology of the Russian Bratva, Sovietnik means "councillor" or "advisor", which is the highest-level member, after Vor V Zakone and The Boss (Pakhan). They don't take part in the operations physically, but they advise the Pakhan on critical decisions, territorial expansions and investments. They evaluate legal risks, monitor law enforcement activities to shield the top leadership from prosecution.

Pakhan (Пакхан)

Pakhan is considered as the supreme boss, godfather, or the absolute leader in the Bratva. The Pakhan is equivalent of the Capo di tutti capi (Boss of all Bosses) or the Godfather in the Italians' Cosa Nostra. He controls all sub-factions, cells and operations within the criminal league. Their word is considered as the law, and disobeying shall be punished with death sentence. While the Pakhan is the functional boss of a specific organization, They are most likely expected to be crowned as a Vor v Zakone to obtain this status, and to be respected across the entire global Russian criminal network.

7. Well-known Organizations

Solntsevsкая Bratva

Solntsevo, a district located in the southwest of Moscow occupied by a working class population shares a name and terrain with an organised criminal group known as Solntsevsкая Bratva. With more than 4,000 members Solntsevsкая Bratva is believed to be the largest gang in Russia, well equipped with some military type weapons and a dozen companies including a Hungary based weapons firm called 'Army Co-op' which purchases and sells military weapons. Businessman Sergei Mikhailov is allegedly the founder of Solntsevsкая Bratva, after serving time in prison for insurance fraud in 1984 Sergei joined forces with Victor Averin a former prison inmate. The duo then joined forces with Sergei Timofeev a leader of a Chechen gang the Orekhovskaya group with members from a wrestling background by the mid- 1990s Solntsevsкая had grown in strength and the group's main business speciality was protection. The Solntsevsкая is believed to be an aggressive, flamboyant and politically savvy Russian criminal group this is because they are well – versed in business practices and modern technology. The FBI released a report that described Solntsevsкая as the most powerful 'Eurasian' crime organisation in terms of the group's influence, wealth as well as its financial control. The purpose of this report is to determine the constant transformation of one of Russia's biggest organised criminal groups, the Solntsevsкая Bratva. The report will firstly explore the groups' transnational and national modus operandi; this consists of the groups' hierarchal structure, criminal activities, ethical code of conduct, and accumulation of assets – together with the redistribution of proceeds and their harsh use of brutality and exploitation for their criminal enterprise. The report will also critically examine the current impact the group has had on the political, social and economic development in the country of its operation. Unlike Italian traditional family oriented organised criminal syndicates, Russian mafia syndicates are established and operate differently. The Solntsevsкая for example is divided into several semiautonomous brigades of which operate under the umbrella name of Solntsevsкая. The Solntsevsкая, like all other organised criminal groups in Russia believe in a criminal culture known as the culture of Vory v Zakone, this is simply a professional criminal, whose chosen occupation is crime. The head of the group is a Vor V Zakone his dues are to help others this is because he has contacts in industries, national and local governments. Under the head are the deputies of various sections: banking consultants, strategists, heads of racketeering, drug smuggling and security, team leaders are car traders, accountants, extortionists and bankers. The groups' soldiers are smugglers, pimps, hit men and bodyguards, all these groups within the gang have their own separate accounts; these accounts are also separate from the private accounts of members.

Tambovskaya Gang

The Tambovskaya Gang (Tambovskaya Bratva) emerged from the chaos of the Soviet collapse. Founded in 1987-1988 by Vladimir Kumarin, it initially specialized in protection rackets. Its activities quickly expanded to include contract killings, extortion, prostitution, and drug trafficking, all conducted with extreme violence, as evidenced by its bloody clashes with rival gangs, notably the Malyshevskaya gang.

In the mid-1990s, the gang underwent a critical evolution, moving from a purely criminal organization to a criminal, commercial, and political enterprise. It shifted to semi-legal and legal activities, particularly the highly lucrative fuel trade, and established private security companies that often served as a front for its coercive activities. The leadership of Vladimir Kumarin, also known as Barsukov, was central. His survival of an assassination attempt in 1994, his recovery in Germany, and his regaining control of the gang attest to his ruthlessness and influence. In 1989, the gang clashed with Malyshev's Gang, another leading criminal group of Leningrad, in a bloody armed conflict. In 1990, some of the gang members including Kumarin were imprisoned for racketeering, but Kumarin was released from prison in 1993. He later briefly allied with Alexander Malyshev, who had controlled the narcotics trade since 1993 after ousting the Azerbaijani mafia from the trade, to fight the Kazan gang from Tatarstan.

Kinichi Kamiyasu met Gennady Petrov and Kuzmin in December 1990 when Manvel Davidov through his father Temo Davidov, a member of the Chechen mafia which had caused Manvel to flee the Soviet Union for Stockholm where Kinichi Kamiyasu gave him a job and a Polish passport, introduced the Russian mafia, Petrov, Kuzmin, and Malyshev, to the son of a Japanese yakuza from Kobe-Osaka, Kinichi Kamiyasu. Temo Davidov had been acquainted with Petrov, Kuzmin, and Malyshev.

In 1993 – 1995, an internal war developed between groups within the Tambov Gang. On June 1, 1994, Kumarin survived a murder attempt in his car but was severely wounded and lost his arm. He believed that the Velikie Luki were responsible and, later, Viktor Gavrilencov and Nikolai Gavrilencov were shot with Viktor Gavrilencov being killed in the bedlam. He continued his recovery in Düsseldorf and Switzerland. By 1995, he allegedly had retaken full control over the gang.

Chechen Mafia

The Chechen mafia is one of the largest ethnic organized crime groups operating in the former Soviet Union next to established Russian mafia groups. While most Slavic and Caucasian gangsters in the Soviet era followed the thieves in law subculture, Chechens largely resisted this, instead preferring to use the tribal structure of the *teip* as well as the concept of an *abrek*, the outlaw-hero.

The Moscow branch of the Chechen mafia, also known as the *Obshina* or "community", was founded by gangster Nikolay Suleimanov during the 1980s. Suleimanov operated a second-hand car business and made the bulk of his profits through tax evasion. The group later moved into extortion as capitalism penetrated the Soviet economy, and at this point Khozh-Ahmed Noukhayev, at the time a university student and part of an underground student movement dedicated to Chechen independence, was brought in as an enforcer. The more ideological Noukhayev imposed an additional condition on businesses under his "protection", which was that they must invite a Chechen into their workforce. Facilitating Chechen migration into Moscow would mean his organisation became a formidable force in the underworld. Boris Berezovsky was one of the businessmen associated with the Chechens during this period.

The Chechen reputation for violence was formidable, and before long they became the dominant crime group in Moscow. This brought them into conflict with the Slavic gangs, including the Solntsevskaya bratva and the Orekhovskaya gang, who were concerned at the growing links between organised crime and the Chechen separatist movement.

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