

tors: the 1970 Jonathan Miller production was updated to Edwardian times, with Laurence Olivier playing Shylock as a sort of imperfectly assimilated banker. Gross distinguishes between such perverse and useless distortions and the old Irving mode of humanistic rethinking—a mode he finds alive in a 1980 staging by John Barton that carefully sought to present Shylock as an “outsider *because* he was a Jew.” The Shylock was David Suchet, identified by Gross as “Jewish-born” and best known to American audiences as Hercule Poirot on PBS.

Men of letters have not abandoned interest in Shylock. John Gross is justly hard on C. S. Lewis for using, in 1942, a phrase like “a wicked ogre of a Jew” but is perhaps too dismissive of C. L. Barber’s reading of Shylock as a Lear in waiting. At least these old humanist critics were intelligible, which much recent criticism is not—save in its general bent to debunk the play’s Christians and to virtually ignore Shylock. But Gross resists this modish demonizing of the play’s Christians just as he had resisted one-sided Shylocks.

But a one-sided Shylock pops up in Philip Roth’s provocatively titled *Operation Shylock* (which appeared too late for Gross to take account of). The novel contains a memorable diatribe against Shylock—put into the mouth of one David Supposnik, an antiquarian bookseller in Tel Aviv and possible member of the Israeli secret police. In it, Supposnik rails against that softening sentimentalization of Shylock, both on- and offstage, which Gross is so partial to.

Gross’s final verdict on *The Merchant of Venice* and on the haunting, nagging figure of Shylock is not simple. Although Shakespeare did enlarge the stereotype into a suffering human being, Shylock’s negative characteristics predominate and are *never* distinguished by anyone in the play from his Jewishness as such. As Gross puts it with electric precision: “At no point does anyone suggest that there might be a distinction between his [Shylock’s] being a Jew and his being an obnoxious individual.” Of the play as a whole, he concludes that “it is still a masterpiece, but there is a permanent chill in the air.” □

HUNTING THE DEVIL

Richard Lourie

HarperCollins / 263 pages / \$22

THE KILLER DEPARTMENT: DETECTIVE VIKTOR BURAKOV’S EIGHT-YEAR HUNT FOR THE MOST SAVAGE SERIAL KILLER IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

Robert Cullen

Pantheon / 258 pages / \$22

reviewed by M. D. CARNEGIE

The wisdom of your parents no longer obtains: Crime pays. Commit a crime, survive a crime, observe a crime with your handycam—and the riches of the kingdom shall be yours. There are lurid books to be written, serial rights to be ironed out, melodramas to be shot and scored; they all pay very well. When David Letterman was asked what he would call his television show on a new network, he claimed he’d not yet decided, but was hoping to work “Buttafuoco” into the title. Everybody got the joke.

Now, thanks to glasnost, the darkness of the human soul yields more than top dollar. It grabs top ruble, too. The society that once proclaimed crime a product of bourgeois capitalism has discovered itself more correct in that judgment than it ever could have imagined; there are eight million stories in the naked oblast, and everyone has one to sell. These two tell the tale of a man who is perhaps the most savage and perverted serial killer in history, and how he was finally captured after a twelve-year spree of deeds unthinkable. That he is widely known throughout the former Soviet Union speaks the progress of freedom. That he appears here in mutually “exclusive” sto-

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ries (the first of the chief inspector of the case, the second of its head detective) tells us less about our perennial fascination with the grotesque, and more about the *Rashomon*-like discrepancies that creep in when men are offered large sums of money to share—and, thus, along the way, embroider—the details of their exploits.

Andrei Chikatilo was born practically blind. The Ukraine of the 1940s offered no chance for a poor young lad to acquire himself some spectacles, and in the classroom his eyes filled with tears at his inability to read the blackboard. His father discovered that—in Stalin’s mind at least—to have survived the Nazi prison camps was a form of treachery, and he was sentenced to ten years of sawing Siberian timber. And Chikatilo’s sister remembered that when he was a young boy, his mother cradled him in her arms as she weepily recounted how his brother had been abducted and cannibalized during the horrible famine of the 1930s, brought about by the brutal collectivization of the farms. No birth record of this brother has ever been found, but such savagery was common enough, and it may have been just a cautionary tale with a gruesomely ironic moral—that young children should beware of strangers.

Puberty brought Chikatilo the straw that doubtless broke his psychic camel's back; he discovered he was impotent. Though capable of achieving orgasm—and, later, on two occasions, of sufficient conjugal performance to impregnate his wife—he must surely have felt burdened with shame and rage. Gawky, slope-shouldered, near-blind and not handsome, stripped of his father and maybe a brother, destined to sexual inaptitude, Andrei Chikatilo was a man whose center could not have held for very long.

Even so, he tried. He strung line and cable for a KGB communications unit during military service, then went on to earn three degrees at university. He joined the party, got himself installed as a "police assistant," which meant a flip-top red ID case that carried a measure of respect. He wrote and published articles, and took a teacher's job at a mining school. He married, fathered two children, and lived the gray existence of model Soviet citizen on Rostov's Fifty Years of the All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League Street.

But the demons of Chikatilo's psyche, the burning sense that he'd been deprived of eyes and genitals, would not let him be. He lost his teaching position after some unwarranted incursions into the boys' dormitory. He finally got work as a procurer for a factory, but within himself felt a drive to acquire the only things that in the end would bring him true sexual satisfaction. On December 22, 1978, Chikatilo lured a young girl to a house that nobody, not even his wife, knew that he owned. After blindfolding, molesting, choking, manually inseminating, stabbing, and sexually mutilating her, he tossed her still alive into a nearby river.

And so began his grisly career as a sadist and pedophile, rapist, sexual cannibal, onanist, and necrophile. At the time of his arrest in November 1990, Chikatilo was wanted in connection with the murders of at least fifty-three, often carving off, in one piece, the nose and upper lip of the victim, or—surprise—gouging out the eyes with Oedipal fury. He claimed to have experienced orgasm after slashing open a woman's abdomen. Sometimes, after the most horrible and unspeakable acts, he would find his rage yet unsated, and would fall upon a nearby tree, hacking away at its trunk with

his freshly bloodied knife. Inspectors sometimes found remains of a campfire by the murder sites, which dovetailed with his wife's testimony that he often took a frying pan with him to his job.

Richard Lourie, well known for previous books on the Soviet Union, offers the better-written and less believable account of Chikatilo's capture. His hero is Issa Kostoev, the chief inspector who triumphs over his Ingush heritage (the Ingush were victims under Stalin of what was not yet known as ethnic cleansing) to become a respected lawman known for his refusal to accept the obvious

explanation. One gleans readily enough, however, that Kostoev is a friend of the author, and so is herein painted in the pure light of goodness one associates with bad fiction and fudged political memoirs.

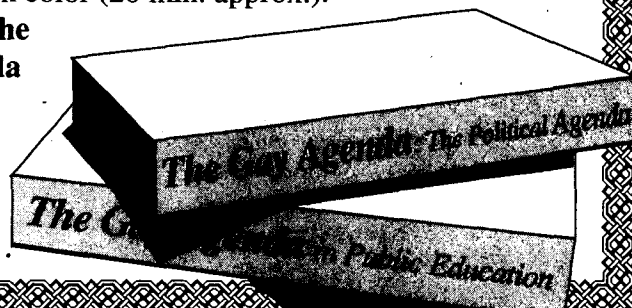
Robert Cullen's account is by a long chalk more detailed, and ultimately more convincing. He tells the story of Viktor Burakov, a tough detective so obsessed with the case that he sometimes dreamt that he himself was the villain. Burakov risked his career by consulting a psychiatric expert on transsexualism, who turned out to predict with great accuracy

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the killer's age, psychic makeup, and profession—information, Cullen claims, to which Kostoev paid scant heed. Instead, Kostoev instigated a witch-hunt for area homosexuals, several of whom committed suicide as the investigation intensified.

But the investigation, like all else in the old USSR, was a fiasco of mismanagement and ineptitude. Tests misidentified the killer's blood type; evidence was routinely lost or destroyed; a 300-person manhunt surrounding a tiny area still allowed Chikatilo to slip through and murder again when the detail at an out-of-the-way train station deserted its post on a meal break. It was virtually impossible to cross-reference information from department to department because there were no computers; in the 1980s, Rostov's finest were still using color-coded index cards—a red strip for homosexuals, etc.

Cullen does a remarkable job of elucidating the obsolescence of Soviet police techniques, and in so doing reminds us how miraculously efficient are our own men in blue. Everyone makes mistakes—Jeffrey Dahmer was interrupted mid-murder by police who wrongly concluded all was well; and Chikatilo was let go after being apprehended with a briefcase containing a knife, some rope, and petroleum jelly—but the acuity of our police psychiatric research, particularly as regards sex crimes, is inferior to none in the world.

But Lourie's book aspires to and achieves an immediate, often breathless quality. We are shown a remarkable posed photograph of Kostoev peering into a microscope that appears to antedate Enrico Fermi. To a nation raised on "SWAT" and "Hill Street Blues," no text could so effectively delineate the antiquated behemoth that was the Soviet Union. With a wry dolor not unworthy of Updike, he calls the onanists "that loneliest tribe." And this is his steamy rendering of the moments before Chikatilo murders for the first time:

Just the other day some of the boys had come running up behind him in the park and knocked him to the ground, yelling vicious insults at him, a teacher, a grown man. This had so frightened him that he even had bought a knife and begun carrying it with him at all times.

He had taken it with him on the

morning of that day, December 22. The day before had been the anniversary of Joseph Stalin's birth, who would have been ninety-nine. And the night before had been the longest of the year, the earth tipping its farthest from the sun. Perhaps it was that one extra minute of darkness that brought Chikatilo to equinox as well.

Ultimately, of course, these two accounts are incompatible as fact. Cullen sees Kostoev as something of a fool, and

Lourie hardly mentions Burakov at all. They worked together on the Chikatilo investigation for over eight years. But their appearance in these rather different stories means the free market has penetrated the silence of the old police state, and no more heartwarming news could come to totalitarianism's opponents. Is the free-market scramble for unauthorized biography and dirt-mongering far behind? I doubt it. Is it anyway better than state socialism? Well, you might ask Kostoev. Or Burakov. □

INSIDE GORBACHEV'S KREMLIN: THE MEMOIRS OF YEGOR LIGACHEV

Yegor Ligachev

Pantheon / 369 pages / \$27.50

reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

Most Americans recall Yegor Ligachev as the sinister leader of the anti-reform camp during the rule of Mikhail Gorbachev. He was usually depicted as the High Priest of conservatism and party orthodoxy, a backroom manipulator conniving to displace Gorbachev as party chief and erase the changes ushered in under the banner of perestroika.

The danger supposedly posed by Ligachev was compounded by his not being cut from the Brezhnevite mold of venality and sloth. He neither smoked nor drank, he was incorruptible and intolerant of corruption in others, he worked hard and lived modestly. Like Yuri Andropov, who elevated him to the central party leadership, Ligachev wanted to reform the system, not destroy it.

Now retired at age 72, Ligachev has released a memoir clearly intended to correct his image as enemy of democracy and economic progress. In some respects, *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin* is a typical Communist autobiography, full of generalization and evasion and short

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on intimate detail. Nevertheless, Ligachev is a rare bird: a defeated Communist who enjoys the freedom to openly attack his opponents—in a book published aboveground and not smuggled out like Khrushchev's memoirs.

Ligachev was born to a Siberian peasant family in 1920. His parents were loyal Communists, and, after service in World War II, Ligachev began his career as a party official in Siberia. Stalin's terror saw his father-in-law, a Red Army general, executed as a foreign spy. As a result, Ligachev writes, he and his family were for a time regarded as politically suspect. In the late forties, his political fortunes suffered another setback after his dismissal from a Komsomol position on spurious charges of Trotskyism.

Ligachev survived these difficulties to become an ideal party functionary. He believed strongly in the socialist system, and threw all his energies into bringing Siberia a modern industrial economy through massive, typically Soviet projects: factories, collective farms, scientific research centers. His accomplishments in Tomsk caught the eye of An-