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## Review of Encyclopedia of Soviet Law

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## SOCIALIST LAW

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOVIET LAW. Edited by F.J.M. Feldbrugge. Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1973. Pp. xii, 774 (2 vols.).

*Reviewed by Whitmore Gray\**

The publication of this work is an occasion for real celebration. At last there is a standard reference book to which both initiated scholar and interested neophyte can turn for an excellent introduction to almost any point of Soviet law. Professor F.J.M. Feldbrugge of the University of Leiden and his collaborators have produced a volume which will surely serve as the point of initial reference and departure for all subsequent scholarship on Soviet law.

The 450 articles are written by forty-three specialists from the United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Germany, France and other West European countries. The list of subject headings has been compiled on the basis of the list used in the *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals*, modified somewhat and complemented by additional specialized Soviet concepts and terms. It is, therefore, a system of terminology already familiar to many of its potential users, as well as one which facilitates locating supplementary material in current legal periodicals. Since the main entries are supplemented by liberal cross-references, use of the *Encyclopedia* should be relatively easy for both civil-law and common-law legal specialists. In addition, the subject headings are arranged systematically on a large chart placed in a pocket at the rear of Volume II, and a few moments spent with this at the beginning of one's use of the volumes provide an excellent introduction to coverage as well as arrangement of the material.

Throughout the *Encyclopedia* extensive bibliographical references assist the reader wishing to go beyond the necessarily limited coverage of any individual topic. The entry "Bibliography of Soviet Law" provides a useful survey, and individual entries also contain specific citations to other material. The "Selected List of Statutory Materials" (pp. 743-774) is also an invaluable addition to the literature on Soviet law.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Feldbrugge and his collaborators have produced a volume which can in fact be used as an introductory textbook on Soviet law until such a book finally comes along. While the entries are arranged alphabetically, the readability of the entries and the excellent cross-referencing to related materials makes it possible to read the *Encyclopedia* as one would read a treatise. For example, an interested

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1. Many of these items are available in English translation. See Butler, "Soviet Normative Acts in English," *supra* p. 530.

lawyer could start with the articles on "Private Enterprise," continue with "Private Farms," and through these be led to "Kolkhoz-Farm," "Taxation," "Economic Offences," etc. The more general reader could well start with "State of the Entire People," an excellent essay by Professor Feldbrugge, and continue on through cross-references which lead to a summary of basic Soviet legal philosophy.

Another good point of departure is the entry "Terminology," which contains a wealth of cross-references into various fields. That entry, and the liberal use of transliterated Russian terms in the various subject-matter entries, provide the reader with a good introduction to Russian-language legal terms. In some subsequent edition, one might hope that an index of such terms could be provided as a means of locating substantive treatment under the various English entries. For example, the traditional Russian special contract of *podryad* (see RSFSR Civil Code art. 350) does not appear to be treated, though one cannot be sure without such an index.<sup>2</sup>

The reader interested in an historical approach will find excellent separate entries for the various geographical areas, e.g. "Legal History, Armenia." In addition, individual articles also contain excellent historical summaries, e.g. "Capital Punishment." This material makes it possible to consider the specific question of what is "Russian" in contemporary Soviet law. Other entries indirectly indicate the effect of different historical patterns of development in the various areas of the Soviet Union, e.g. "Bigamy." Legal history within the Soviet period, i.e. the changes over the years in the Soviet point of view, is also carefully described. For example, the entries on "Abortion," "Family Law," and "Inheritance" provide good examples of dramatic reversals of policies, usually following a pattern of revolutionary experimentation followed by a return to a pattern more familiar to the Western observer.

Perhaps some users will regret the lack of citations for every statement of positive law made in the Encyclopedia. While some statements are coupled with cites to primary materials, the obvious aim of the authors was to provide information and not treatise-style documentation. For example, the "Housing" and "Eviction" entries give an excellent, surprisingly detailed summary of the law, but do not provide many citations to primary materials. Hopefully for most purposes citation to this excellent secondary source will suffice, and the various bibliographical references do enable those interested in further research to get into the primary sources rather easily.

Professor Feldbrugge and his collaborators have provided a work which will serve as a model and standard for descriptive writing about a legal system. They richly deserve our praise and thanks.

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2. Under the entry "Contracts," one is directed to "Work Contract," but there does not appear in fact to be such a main entry.