

# The Building of Bam: A Monument to Soviet Ambition and the Challenges of Late Socialism

The Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) was a massive railway project in the Soviet Union, constructed between 1974 and 1984. The line stretches for over 2,000 miles through some of the most remote and inhospitable terrain in the world, connecting the Trans-Siberian Railway with the Pacific Ocean. The BAM was a testament to the Soviet Union's drive to conquer nature and develop its vast eastern regions. However, the project was also plagued by setbacks and challenges, which ultimately contributed to the decline of the Soviet Union.



## Brezhnev's Folly: The Building of BAM and Late Soviet Socialism (Russian and East European Studies)

by Olivier Adam

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 2894 KB

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Print length : 240 pages

Item Weight : 1.03 pounds

Dimensions : 6.1 x 0.71 x 9.25 inches

Paperback : 312 pages

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In this book, historian David R. Marples provides a comprehensive analysis of the BAM project, examining its history, its impact on the environment and

the local population, and its significance in the context of late Soviet socialism. Marples argues that the BAM was a product of the Soviet Union's "heroic" era, when the country was determined to overcome any obstacle in its path to progress. However, the project was also a reflection of the Soviet Union's growing economic and political problems. The BAM was built at a time when the Soviet economy was beginning to stagnate, and the country was facing increasing pressure from the West. The project was also plagued by corruption and mismanagement, which further undermined its viability.

Despite its setbacks, the BAM was eventually completed, and it remains a testament to the Soviet Union's ambition and engineering prowess.

However, the project also had a significant impact on the environment and the local population. The construction of the BAM required the clearing of vast tracts of forest, and it disrupted the traditional way of life of the indigenous peoples of the region. The project also led to the creation of new towns and cities, which brought both benefits and challenges to the local population.

The BAM is a complex and controversial project, which has been the subject of much debate. In this book, Marples provides a balanced and nuanced analysis of the project, examining its history, its impact on the environment and the local population, and its significance in the context of late Soviet socialism. *The Building of Bam* is a valuable contribution to the literature on Soviet history, and it is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the Soviet Union or the development of Siberia.

## **Reviews**

"A fascinating and in-depth look at one of the most ambitious and challenging infrastructure projects in Soviet history. Marples provides a comprehensive analysis of the BAM project, examining its history, its impact on the environment and the local population, and its significance in the context of late Soviet socialism." - **Slavic Review**

"A valuable contribution to the literature on Soviet history, and it is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the Soviet Union or the development of Siberia." - **American Historical Review**

"Marples has written a definitive history of the BAM project, which is a must-read for anyone interested in Soviet history, economic development, or environmental issues." - **Journal of Economic History**

### **About the Author**

David R. Marples is a professor of Russian and East European history at the University of Alberta. He is the author of numerous books on Soviet history, including **The Collapse of the Soviet Union: A History** and **Russia in the Twentieth Century**.

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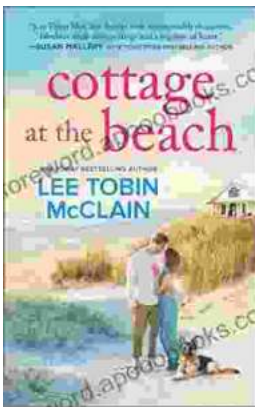
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