



Russia and the Long Transition from Capitalism to Socialism

Samir Amin

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Out of early twentieth-century Russia came the world's first significant effort to build a modern revolutionary society. According to Marxist economist Samir Amin, the great upheaval that once produced the Soviet Union has also produced a movement away from capitalism – a long transition that continues even today. In seven concise, provocative chapters, Amin deftly examines the trajectory of Russian capitalism, the Bolshevik Revolution, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the possible future of Russia – and, by extension, the future of socialism itself.

Amin manages to combine an analysis of class struggle with geopolitics – each crucial to understanding Russia's singular and complex political history. He first looks at the development (or lack thereof) of Russian capitalism. He sees Russia's geopolitical isolation as the reason its capitalist empire developed so differently from Western Europe, and the reason for Russia's perceived "backwardness." Yet Russia's unique capitalism proved to be the rich soil in which the Bolsheviks were able to take power, and Amin covers the rise and fall of the revolutionary Soviet system. Finally, in a powerful chapter on Ukraine and the rise of global fascism, Amin lays out the conditions necessary for Russia to recreate itself, and perhaps again move down the long road to socialism. Samir Amin's great achievement in this book is not only to explain Russia's historical tragedies and triumphs, but also to temper our hopes for a quick end to an increasingly insufferable capitalism.

This book offers a cornucopia of food for thought, as well as an enlightening means to transcend reductionist arguments about "revolution" so common on the left. Samir Amin's book – and the actions that could spring from it – are more necessary than ever, if the world is to avoid the barbarism toward which capitalism is hurling humanity.

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