

# The Building of BAM: A Symbol of Late Soviet Socialism



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

by Olivier Adam

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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The Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) was a major railway line constructed in the eastern Soviet Union during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The line stretched over 4,000 kilometers (2,500 miles) from Ust-Kut on the Lena River to Sovetskaya Gavan on the Pacific coast. The BAM was a major engineering feat, and its construction required the mobilization of tens of thousands of workers and the use of cutting-edge technology.

## History of the BAM

The idea of building a railway line along the BAM route was first proposed in the late 19th century. However, it was not until the 1970s that the Soviet government made a commitment to build the line. The decision to build the BAM was motivated by a number of factors, including the need to develop

the eastern regions of the Soviet Union, to improve transportation links between the Soviet Union and East Asia, and to provide a strategic alternative to the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The construction of the BAM began in 1974. The line was built in stages, with the first section opening in 1979. The entire line was completed in 1984.

### **Purpose of the BAM**

The BAM was intended to serve a number of purposes. The line was designed to open up the eastern regions of the Soviet Union to development. The BAM was also intended to improve transportation links between the Soviet Union and East Asia. The line was also seen as a strategic alternative to the Trans-Siberian Railway, which was vulnerable to attack from China.

### **Impact of the BAM**

The construction of the BAM had a significant impact on the Soviet Union. The line opened up the eastern regions of the country to development, and it led to the growth of new industries and the creation of new jobs. The BAM also improved transportation links between the Soviet Union and East Asia, and it provided a strategic alternative to the Trans-Siberian Railway.

However, the construction of the BAM also had a number of negative consequences. The line was built through some of the most environmentally sensitive areas of the Soviet Union, and its construction caused significant damage to the environment. The BAM also cost the Soviet government a great deal of money to build, and its construction diverted resources away from other important projects.

## **Symbolism of the BAM**

The BAM was more than just a railway line. It was also a symbol of late Soviet socialism. The BAM was a testament to the Soviet Union's ability to undertake major construction projects, and it was a symbol of the Soviet Union's commitment to developing its eastern regions.

The BAM also became a symbol of the Soviet Union's economic and political problems. The line was built at a time when the Soviet Union was facing a number of economic challenges, and its construction diverted resources away from other important projects. The BAM also became a symbol of the Soviet Union's political problems. The line was built by forced labor, and its construction involved the suppression of dissent.

The BAM was a major undertaking of the late Soviet Union. The line was intended to serve a number of purposes, and it had a significant impact on the Soviet Union. However, the construction of the BAM also had a number of negative consequences. The BAM was more than just a railway line. It was also a symbol of late Soviet socialism.



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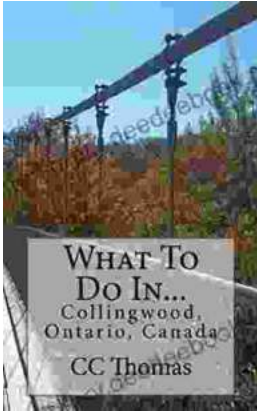
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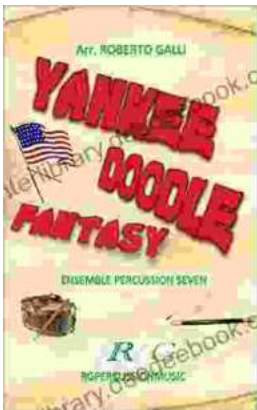
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