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# The Soviet Far East

Geographical perspectives on  
development

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Edited by Allan Rodgers



Routledge  
London and New York

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# The Soviet Far East

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The Far East is the largest economic region in the Soviet Union. Enormous, isolated and sparsely populated, it possesses mineral and other resources consistent with its size. Exploiting these resources is one of the key challenges facing the Soviet Union, and Gorbachev has announced a major programme of investment in the region which is to run until the year 2000.

This book looks at the likelihood of this programme succeeding and concludes that it will have to improve significantly on earlier development projects if substantial progress is to be made. Seemingly intractable problems are posed by the combination of geographical remoteness, the inhospitability of the climate and the inefficiency of the administration. Attracting an adequate labour force to the region remains a problem despite the inducements that are offered. Major projects to improve the transport infrastructure, including the construction of the Baykal-Amur mainline railway, have been dogged by delays and poor standards of performance. Even joint ventures involving the Japanese have not been successful.

Yet the region remains central to Soviet regional development. This book explores it in all its geographical and economic complexity. Chapters on the current state of its development are supplemented by examinations of the history of its settlement; analysis of its unique environment and the threats which economic growth might pose for it; and of the region's vital strategic significance. The result will be of interest to all Soviet specialists.

## **The editor**

Allan Rodgers is Professor of Geography at Pennsylvania State University. He has researched and published extensively on questions of economic development with a particular focus on the Soviet Union, Italy and China.



First published 1990  
by Routledge  
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada by Routledge  
a division of Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.  
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

© 1990 Allan Rodgers

Phototypeset by Input Typesetting Ltd, London  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Mackays of Chatham PLC, Kent

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

The Soviet Far East : geographical perspectives on development  
1. Soviet Union. Regional Economic Development  
I. Rodgers, Allan  
330. 947

ISBN 0-415-02406-4

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

The Soviet Far East : geographical perspectives on development / edited by  
Allan Rodgers

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-415-02406-4

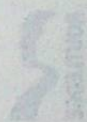
1. Soviet Far East (R.S.F.S.R.)—Economic conditions. I. Rodgers,  
Allan, 1922—

HC337.R852F3764 1990

330.957'0854—dc20

89-70214

CIP

  
Routledge  
London and New York

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# **THE SOVIET FAR EAST**

## **Geographical Perspectives on Development**

The Far East constitutes the largest economic region in the Soviet Union. Enormous, isolated and sparsely populated it possesses mineral and other resources consistent with its size. Exploiting these resources is one of the key challenges facing the Soviet Union, and Gorbachev has announced a major programme of investment in the region which is to run until the year 2000.

This book looks at the likelihood of this programme succeeding and concludes that it will have to improve significantly on earlier development projects if substantial progress is to be made. Seemingly intractable problems are posed by the combination of geographical remoteness, the inhospitability of the climate and the ingrained inefficiency of the administration. Attracting an adequate labour force to the region remains a problem despite the inducements that are offered. Major projects to improve the transport infrastructure, including the construction of the Baykal-Amur mainline railway, have been dogged by delays and poor standards of performance. Even joint ventures involving the Japanese have not been successful.

Yet the region remains central to Soviet regional development. This book explores it in all its geographical and economic complexity. Chapters on the current state of its development are supplemented by examinations of the history of its settlement; analysis of its unique environment and the threats which economic growth might pose for it; and of the region's vital strategic significance. The result will be of interest to all Soviet specialists.



# **WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOVIET FAR EAST?**

## **CAN THE SOVIET UNION UNLOCK THE ENORMOUS NATURAL RESOURCES OF ITS LARGEST ECONOMIC REGION?**

Enormous, isolated and sparsely populated, the Far East is the largest economic region in the Soviet Union. It possesses resources which are consistent with its size but so far attempts to exploit these resources have met with limited success.

However, Gorbachev has announced a programme for investment in the region that is to run until the year 2000 and the prospects for development in the Soviet Far East are in need of re-assessment.

Allan Rodgers is Professor of Geography at Penn State University. He has researched and published extensively on questions of economic development with a particular focus on the Soviet Union, Italy and China.

**Soviet Studies; Geography; Development Studies**

**ROUTLEDGE**

11 New Fetter Lane  
London EC4P 4EE

29 West 35th Street  
New York NY 10001

**ISBN 0-415-02406-4**



**9 780415 024068**