



## Rossiya: Voices from the Brezhnev Era

*Alex Shishin*

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Rossiya: Voices from the Brezhnev Era is a poignant sketch of the Soviet Union prior to its disastrous invasion of Afghanistan. It is also a bittersweet tale of an American coming to terms with his Russian roots. One summer in the late 1970s, author Alex Shishin travels through the USSR on the Rossiya, the Trans-Siberian train that runs between Vladivostok and Moscow and that twice carries him across the vastness of Siberia. Fluent in Russian, the young Russian American converses with countless citizens from every strata of Soviet society. An extended side trip to Poland brings him in contact with a simmering revolution. Everywhere he goes, Shishin meets ordinary people imbued with a generosity that transcends all political systems and times. "Alex's readiness to accept people without judging them enables his fellow travelers to open up to him and talk about things that affect their lives: politics, economics, their harsh memories of war, and their deep desires for peace. His vivid portraits of the people he meets make you feel as if you are sitting together with him, hearing the voices, enjoying the food and drinks, and feeling the motion of the train traveling over the tracks. This is a moving account of the writer's pilgrimage to know himself through human encounters." -Peter Sano, author of 1,000 Days in Siberia: The Odyssey of a Japanese-American POW

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