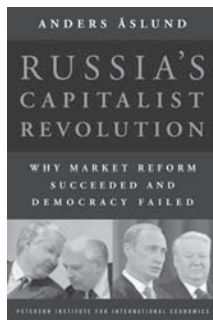


# Russia's Capitalist Revolution: Why Market Reform Succeeded and Democracy Failed

Anders Åslund



The Russian revolution, collapse of the Soviet Union, and Russia's ensuing transformation belong to the greatest dramas of our time. Revolutions are usually messy and emotional affairs, challenging much of the conventional wisdom, and Russia's experience is no exception. This book focuses on the transformation from Soviet Russia to Russia as a

market economy and explores why the country has failed to transform into a democracy. It examines the period from 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev became the Soviet Union's Secretary General of the Communist Party, to the present Russia of Vladimir Putin. Åslund provides a broad overview of Russia's economic change, highlighting the most important issues and their subsequent resolutions, including Russia's inability to sort out the ruble zone during its revolution, several failed coups, and the financial crash of August 1998.

## About the Author:

**Anders Åslund**, known to repeatedly challenge conventional wisdom on "transition economies," is a leading specialist on postcommunist economic transformation with more than 30 years of experience in the field. He boldly predicted the fall of the Soviet Union in his *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform* (1989). In *Building Capitalism: The Transformation of the Former Soviet Bloc* (2002) he firmly stated that the only choice Russia had was market reform. In this new book, he explains why Russia's market reform succeeded and democracy building failed. Dr. Åslund joined the Peterson Institute for International Economics as senior fellow in January 2006. He has worked as an economic adviser to the Russian government (1991–94), to the Ukrainian government, and to the president of the Kyrgyz Republic. Before joining the Peterson Institute he was the director of the Russian and Eurasian Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and he codirected the Carnegie Moscow Center's project on Post-Soviet Economies. He was founding director of the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics and professor at the Stockholm School of Economics (1989–94).

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The central paradox about contemporary Russia is why capitalism has taken root, but democracy has not. Anders Åslund provides a crisp, comprehensive, and compelling answer. *Russia's Capitalist Revolution* will become a classic overnight, the standard by which all future books on the last two decades of Soviet and Russian history will be judged.

—**Michael McFaul**, Director,  
Center on Democracy, Development, and Rule of Law,  
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies,  
Stanford University

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