

CLASS THEORY AND HISTORY

STEPHEN RESNICK & RICHARD WOLFF

"A very ambitious and interesting book on a very important topic."

—Howard Sherman, author of *Reinventing Marxism*

"Using a version of Marx's theory of class to explain the rise and fall of the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union as evidence for the validity of this theory, Resnick and Wolff succeed in providing us with an original and fascinating account of both. Whether one agrees or disagrees with their results, no future work on either of these important subjects will be able to ignore the sheer creative verve and intellectual rigor with which they lay out their arguments. Very highly recommended."

—Bertell Ollman, editor of *Market Socialism: The Debate Among Socialists*

"A stunning achievement! Resnick and Wolff have extended their path breaking work in *Knowledge and Class* to a full-fledged class analysis of the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. Building on the clearest analysis of class in the Marxian tradition, Resnick and Wolff provide a comprehensive analysis of the core contradictions in pre-Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union. This is a work that all those concerned with the Soviet experience, the nature of class, and the possibilities of fundamental social change will have to contend with."

—Victor D. Lippit, editor of *Radical Political Economy: Explorations in Alternative Economic Analysis*

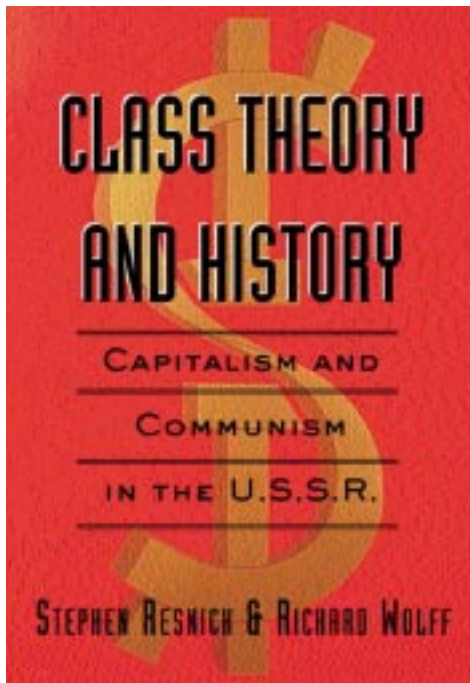
"*Class Theory and History* both follows in the best Marxian tradition's footsteps and develops new important insights. Building upon a notion of class whose pivot is the production and distribution of surplus, the authors offer a stimulating and original interpretation of the USSR's birth, development, and fall. This is class analysis at its best, a work which, deserves the widest circulation."

—Guglielmo Carchedi author of *For Another Europe: A Class Analysis of European Economic Integration*

Class Theory and History takes an ambitious and ground-breaking look at the entire history of the Soviet Union and presents a new kind of analysis of the history of the USSR: examining its birth, evolution, and death in class terms. Utilizing the class analytics they have developed over the last three decades, Resnick and Wolff formulate the most fully developed economic theory of communism now available, and use that theory to answer the question: did communism ever exist in the USSR and if so, where, why and for how long? Their initial, and controversial, conclusion: Soviet industry never established a communist class structure. This conclusion then leads to the hypothesis that the twentieth century's defining struggle was not between communism in the USSR and capitalism in the United States, but rather between their respective state and private capitalism's. Combining class theory and Soviet history, the book yields key lessons for the future of private capitalism, state capitalism, and communism.



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Introduction

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1. A General Class Theory
2. The Many Forms of Communism

PART II. STATE CAPITALISM

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PART III. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE USSR

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Stephen A. Resnick and **Richard D. Wolff** are both Professors of Economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In addition, Richard Wolff serves on the editorial board and Stephen Resnick on the advisory board of the journal *Rethinking Marxism*.

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