



The Suppression of Philosophy in the USSR (The 1920s & 1930s)

Yehoshua Yakhot

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Originally published in Russian in 1981, this unique history of early Soviet philosophy is now available for the first time in English, translated by Frederick Choate. Yehoshua Yakhot (1919-2003) was a professor of philosophy in the Soviet Union until forced to emigrate to Israel in 1975. While in emigration, he finished writing the book begun in Moscow years before. Yakhot's book is essential reading for an understanding of the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism and its devastating impact on every aspect of Soviet thought. Rare among works dealing with this period, Yakhot presents an objective account of the theoretical role of the major figures in the early Soviet Union including, most significantly, that of Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. The book describes the flourishing of philosophical discussion after the revolution and ensuing Civil War. By 1922, the major theoretical journal *Under the Banner of Marxism* had been founded at Trotsky's urging. The first two issues contained letters from Trotsky and Lenin that constituted the program of the journal. By the mid-1920s, two contending camps had formed in philosophy: the mechanists and dialecticians. The relatively free debate between them on many complex issues was followed by Stalin's intervention in December 1930. In a ferocious reaction against the theoretical foundations of the October Revolution, Stalin sent countless genuine Marxists to their deaths during the Great Terror of 1936-1938. Prior to the opening of the archives in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Yakhot presents the largely unknown history of many of the Marxist philosophers victimized by Stalinism. The subjects covered in the book include: the subject matter of Marxist philosophy; the problem of contingency; the principle of partisanship in philosophy; Hegel and Marxist dialectics; Spinoza's place in the discussions of the 1920s and 1930s; the rejection of ideology by Marx and Engels; the influence of Bogdanov's ideas; the inevitable crisis of Soviet ideology; and continued attempts to conceal the crimes of Stalinism in the USSR.

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