

Marxism and the Philosophy of Science

A Critical History

Helena Sheehan

Marxism and the Philosophy of Science A Critical History

Skillfully deploying a large cast of characters, Sheehan retraces the development of Marxist philosophy of science through detailed and highly readable accounts of the debates that have characterized it. The opening chapter discusses the ideas of Marx and Engels, and the second, the Marxist theoreticians of the Second International. In the third chapter Sheehan covers Russian Marxism of the prerevolutionary period, and in the fourth, Soviet Marxism up to World War II. Sheehan concludes with a close analysis of the development of the debate among non-Soviet Marxists, placing particular emphasis on the contributions of leading British Marxists in the 1930s.

"Sheehan's history is a remarkably effective combination of solid scholarship and engaging writing.... Any reader who is led by the title of this book to expect a ponderous study of a technical branch of Marxist philosophy is in for a pleasant surprise. For Sheehan's prose is lively and full of feeling, and she approaches the 'branch' in question—the philosophy of science—not as a narrow specialty but as the key to understanding and appraising the many different turns taken by Marxist thinkers in the doctrine's first hundred years."

Slavic Review

"A singular achievement... Sheehan is masterful in her presentation of the dialectics of nature debates, which begin with Engels and recur throughout the periods covered by this book."

Science and Society

Helena Sheehan, philosopher and political activist, currently teaches at Dublin City University and chairs the Irish Writers Union. Her other publications include *Irish Television Drama: A Society and Its Stories* (1987), *Has the Red Flag Fallen?* (1989), and *European Socialism: A Blind Alley or a Long and Winding Road?* (1992). Sheehan is now working on a philosophical-autobiographical narrative called *Navigating the Zeitgeist*.

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