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Editors' Note

Compared to other "classical" texts published in this journal, the essay by Aleksandr Yakovlevich Khinchin is not very old; but it has a long history. It had originated in the late 1930s and appeared in 1961 in *Voprosy filosofii* (Problems [or Questions] of Philosophy) (vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 91–102 [§§ 1 to 3], and no. 2, pp. 77–89 [§ 4 to end]) in a version prepared by Boris Vladimirovich Gnedenko. Although this essay dealt with an episode in the history of probability theory, it was not published in a journal for mathematicians or for historians of science but rather in a journal mostly devoted to philosophical issues. The editorial policy of the journal chosen — the symbolic space of its public presentation, if one may say so — has since become a topic relevant to the history of science in the former Soviet Union. Thus the essay held a tactical position in the ideological debate ongoing within the USSR and also between the USSR and the so-called "bourgeois" West.

The translation of Khinchin's essay, accompanied by notes that contextualize it and illuminate the role it played in the philosophical controversies of the time, is part of *Science in Context*'s continuing interest in the historiography of Soviet and Russian science. The summer 2002 topical issue was entirely devoted to Russian science; the December 2003 issue included an article on Ivan E. Orlov by Valentin A. Bazhanov and an article on Aleksandr R. Luria by Gabriela Eilam; the spring-summer 2004 issue on modern mathematics included an article by Amy Dahan Dalmedico on the Andronov School at Gor'kiy. The English translation of Khinchin's essay continues the editors' recent and consistent effort to publish significant works in this field.

The essay, including Gnedenko's introduction and footnotes, is adapted from Oscar Sheynin, *From Markov to Kolmogorov, Russian Papers on Probability and Statistics* (Deutsche Hochschulschriften 2514. Egelsbach: Verlag Dr. Hänsel-Hohenhausen, 1998, pp. 99–137), microfiche. His "translator's note" reflects his own opinion.

Gnedenko's footnotes, signed "B. G.," and his editorial amendments are in square brackets, just as they were in the original Russian version published in *Voprosy filosofii*.

Reinhard Siegmund-Schultze has written an expert introduction upon request and added informative, complementary footnotes. Some obvious, trivial errors in the original have been corrected without comment. Russian names are transliterated according to the rules adopted by *Science in Context* (see the editors' note in vol. 15, no. 2, June 2002). In certain cases, English spelling is added in square brackets on the first occurrence where it differs from the transliteration.

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