

Prof. Yaacov Ro'i

*The Voice of Silence* tells us the story of one former Prisoner of Zion and Jewish movement activist in the Soviet Union of the 1970s and 1980s. But Ephraim Kholmyansky was more than that. He was the organizer of the clandestine "Cities Project" that brought the movement - via the study and teaching of Hebrew that were its backbone - to no less than thirty cities throughout the length and breadth of the world's largest country. After a vivid and insightful look at his own personal journey to Judaism and Hebrew, Kholmyansky shows us how he in turn recruited and trained young Hebrew teachers and turned them into a team of dedicated men and women, who worked with incredible ingenuity and enthusiasm - among them a few who were able to take over the project and keep it alive when he was finally arrested after four years of intense activity and a nerve-racking hide-and-seek saga with the KGB.

The book is written with the verve and fervor that drove Kholmyansky at the time. It brings alive the atmospherics not only of the Jewish movement, but also of the last two decades of the Soviet Union's existence and the exigencies of Jewish life under a hostile and powerful regime. Kholmyansky takes us into interrogations, prison and camp, where he continued to display creativity – this is a rare combination of authentic history and a thriller that one can't put down.

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