

THE ALMATY SCHOOL OF DIALECTICAL LOGIC AND INTELLECTUAL SOVEREIGNTY IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract. Kazakhstan inherited a strong philosophical school from the Soviet period. It was the Almaty school of dialectical logic, led for many years by the academician Zhabaikhan Abdildin. The school studied logic, the theory of cognition, and the method of the ascent from the abstract to the concrete. Its work was serious and original. Yet the school was Marxist and grew inside the Soviet system. After independence this legacy became hard to place. The global decolonial turn now asks post-Soviet nations to sort colonial imports from native thought. This article asks one direct question. Should Kazakhstan keep the Almaty school, or treat it as a colonial layer to remove? The authors argue for keeping it, but with open eyes. The school was both a Soviet product and a real local achievement. Its members built national institutions, and some later turned to a philosophy of sovereign Kazakhstan on their own. The school also shared its central problems with Evald Ilyenkov, whose work now draws fresh attention around the world. The method at its core is not a mere technique but a philosophy of thought with real depth, and it can be joined with the Kazakh tradition rather than set against it. It concludes that intellectual sovereignty is served not by separating dialectical logic from Kazakh thought but by synthesizing the two, as Kazakh philosophers such as Mukan Orynbekov already began to do.

Key words: dialectical logic, Almaty school, Zhabaikhan Abdildin, intellectual sovereignty, decolonial theory, Kazakh philosophy.

Introduction

Kazakhstan has a philosophy school that most people outside the country never hear about. It is the Almaty school of dialectical logic. It formed in the late 1950s. It

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grew strong in the 1970s. Its leader was the academician Zhabaikhon Abdildin. Around him worked Abdumalik Nysanbayev, Agyn Kasymzhanov, Lev Naumenko, and others. They asked hard questions about thinking. How does a theory begin? How does the mind move from a simple idea to a full picture of a whole? What links logic, history, and knowledge? These are old questions. The school gave them careful answers.

There is a problem, though. The school was Marxist. It worked inside the Soviet system. It spoke the language of Soviet philosophy. After 1991 this became awkward. A new country needs its own past. Many people in Kazakhstan now look back and ask what was truly theirs and what was handed down from outside.

This question is not only local. Around the world, scholars talk about the coloniality of knowledge. They argue that colonial powers did not only take land. They also set the rules for what counts as real thought. Walter Dignolo calls for epistemic disobedience [1]. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni calls for epistemic freedom [2]. The idea is simple. A nation should be free to think from where it stands. It should not have to borrow every category from the former center.

The debate is not confined to specialists either. Newspaper columns, conference panels, and social media threads in Kazakhstan regularly return to a version of this question, usually phrased less carefully than we phrase it here. Should a Kazakh school abandon a Russian-language textbook written by a Soviet-era author? Should a museum relabel an exhibit that once celebrated Soviet scientific achievement? Should a street keep the name of a philosopher who never once wrote in Kazakh? These are smaller versions of the same underlying choice this paper examines, applied to buildings, names, and syllabi rather than to a body of philosophical method. We think the philosophical case, argued carefully once, can inform many of these smaller and more public decisions at the same time.

So here is the puzzle for Kazakhstan. The Almaty school arrived through Moscow. Its Marxism came from the Soviet state. Was it a colonial import? Should a sovereign Kazakhstan quietly drop it? Or is it, despite everything, a real asset worth keeping?

This article defends keeping it. But not out of nostalgia, and not without care. It makes three claims. First, the school did genuine philosophy, not propaganda. Second, the school was both Soviet and Kazakh at once, and it began to turn toward national themes on its own. Third, and most important, dialectical logic is not a foreign body to be tolerated at arm's length. It is a philosophy with real depth, and it can be joined with Kazakh thought rather than held apart from it. On this reading, keeping the school is not nostalgia and not a borrowed habit. It is an act of intellectual sovereignty, the free choice to hold on to something of value and to make it fully our own.

Let me be clear about the key term. By intellectual sovereignty we do not mean a closed mind. We mean the power to set your own agenda. It is the power to decide what to read, what to keep, and what to build on. Kazakhstan already talks in these terms. State programs such as Rukhani Zhangyru call for a renewal of the national spirit and a fresh look at the country's heritage. The Almaty school is part of that heritage, whether we like it or not. So the honest thing is to judge it, not to hide it. A sovereign mind can face its own past without fear.

This is not an abstract dispute. It touches real institutions. Departments of philosophy and religious studies across Kazakhstan, including at the two universities behind this article, teach the Almaty school as part of the national curriculum. Students meet Abdildin's name in their first year and rarely hear who he was in conversation with, or why his questions still travel. A vague sense of embarrassment can creep into that teaching, a hurried «this was the Soviet period» before the syllabus moves on. That is a loss. If the school is worth keeping, it is worth teaching with confidence, not apology. The question we ask here therefore has a practical twin. Once the philosophical case is made, what should change in how the school is presented to the next generation? We return to that question in the final part of the discussion.

The stakes are current. The decolonial debate is loud in Kazakhstan today. At the same time, the wider tradition the school belonged to is having a revival. Western scholars have rediscovered Evald Ilyenkov, the Moscow philosopher who shared the school's main problems [3, 4]. A 2024 special issue of *Studies in East European Thought* even asks whether Soviet philosophy carried an imperial charge [5]. The timing is right to ask the old question again, and to ask it well

Methodology

This paper is a study in the history of philosophy. It also makes an argument. So it works on two levels.

The first level is historical and comparative. The study reads the main works of the Almaty school and sets them against the debates of their day. It follows the school through its stages, from the first group of the late 1950s to the strong years of the 1970s. It then places the school beside the work of Evald Ilyenkov in Moscow [6, 7]. The two shared problems, and at times shared authors. Read side by side, they show what was common and what was local.

The second level is conceptual. Here the paper uses the decolonial framework as a lens, drawing on two key sources [1, 2]. These ideas are not applied as a rule that settles the case in advance. They serve as questions to test the school against. A lens can clarify. It can also distort. The study tries to watch for both.

A word on order. The paper reads the school on its own terms first. It asks what problem each work tried to solve, and whether it solved it. Only then does it raise the political question. This order matters. Start with politics, and you find only politics. Start with the arguments, and you can weigh them as arguments.

One more methodological choice needs stating plainly. Judging whether a body of work is genuine philosophy or merely propaganda is not a neutral operation. This paper uses a simple, defensible test. A text counts as philosophy here if it poses a problem clearly, gives reasons for a proposed solution, and remains open to internal criticism on its own terms. Propaganda, by contrast, treats its conclusions as settled in advance and uses argument only to decorate them. Applying this test to the Almaty school's central texts, rather than to their Soviet packaging, is what allows the historical and the political questions to be kept separate in the way described above.

A word on scope. This paper does not attempt a full institutional history of the Almaty school, with dates of appointment, student rosters, and internal disputes. Other work can and should do that. Nor does it attempt a technical reconstruction of every argument in the school's major books, since that would need a study of its own for each title. The aim here is narrower and, we think, more useful at this stage. It is to establish, at the level of a single connected argument, whether the school's core method survives the decolonial challenge, and if so, what follows for how Kazakhstan treats the school today. A narrower aim, argued carefully, is more useful than a broad survey argued thinly.

The materials fall into two groups. The primary sources are the works of the school and of Ilyenkov. On the Almaty side they include Abdildin on the problem of the beginning [8], his study of Kant's dialectics [9], and his book with Nysanbayev on the principles of building a theory [10]. On the Ilyenkov side they include his book on the abstract and the concrete [6] and his essays on dialectical logic [7]. The secondary sources are recent studies of this tradition and of decolonial theory, listed in the review below. The plan is simple. The paper first describes what the school did. Then it reviews how the wider tradition is read today. Then it raises the decolonial challenge and weighs it.

Literature Review

The Almaty school has not received much attention in English. But the wider tradition it belonged to has. That tradition is now often called creative Soviet Marxism. Its central figure was Evald Ilyenkov. So a review of the current literature has to start with him.

The first full study of this tradition in English was Bakhurst's book on Soviet philosophy [3]. It set Ilyenkov against the bitter debates of the 1920s and after. Two decades later, interest grew fast. Levant and Oittinen edited a major volume that put Ilyenkov's key text on the ideal into English and framed it for new readers [4]. Bakhurst returned to the theme with a collection of essays on Ilyenkov and Vygotsky [11].

The centenary of Ilyenkov's birth brought a wave of new work. A 2024 special issue of *Studies in East European Thought* gathered scholars from many countries [12]. Some of this work reaches into the current science of mind. Di Paolo and Potapov [13] read Ilyenkov next to the enactive approach to cognition, where the mind is seen as activity in a world, not as something locked in the brain. Brown [14] defends Ilyenkov's use of Spinoza against his critics. Chukhrov [15] works through the materialist reading of the ideal. Others push the ideas toward the digital economy and the value of knowledge today [16]. The lesson is clear. These are live ideas, not museum pieces.

A second body of work sets the political frame. Decolonial theory argues that knowledge carries the mark of power [1, 2]. Recent writing turns this lens on Soviet philosophy itself. Kobakhidze [5] speaks of an imperialist unconscious in Soviet thought. Alushkin and Pikhovich [17] trace Ilyenkov's mixed legacy in one post-Soviet country. So the tradition is now read in two ways at once, as a source of living ideas and as a possible carrier of empire.

Kazakh scholarship sits at the meeting point of these debates. After 1991, Nysanbayev wrote in English on the origins of Kazakh philosophy and on a philosophy of sovereign Kazakhstan [18]. More recent work at the Eurasian National University reads classical figures such as Al-Farabi with dialectical tools [19]. What is still missing is a study that brings these strands together and asks a direct question about the Almaty school itself. This paper aims to fill that gap.

A caution belongs here too. Decolonial theory did not grow out of the Soviet or post-Soviet experience. Its main vocabulary, coloniality, the colonial matrix of power, epistemic disobedience, was built from the history of the Atlantic world and, later, of Africa and South Asia [1, 2]. The post-Soviet case does not map onto that history without remainder. The Russian and Soviet empires ruled by different means than the Atlantic empires did, and they left a different kind of aftermath. Applying the same lens without adjustment risks flattening real differences. We take this caution seriously and return to a more region-specific framework later in the discussion, once the Almaty school's own record is on the table.

The pattern is not confined to Kazakhstan. Scholars across the former Soviet space are asking similar questions about their own national schools of thought. Ukrainian philosophy, Georgian philosophy, and the various national traditions of the Caucasus each face a version of the same choice, between disowning a Soviet-era inheritance and reworking it [17]. Kazakhstan is not unique in facing this problem, but it is unusually well placed to answer it, given how organized and well documented the Almaty school's own output already is.

One final point belongs in this review. The literature just surveyed divides, roughly, into two camps that rarely cite each other. The philosophers who study Ilyenkov and the Almaty tradition on its technical merits, its logic, its theory of the ideal, its reading of Marx, tend not to engage the decolonial literature at all. The decolonial theorists, in turn, rarely engage the technical content of the philosophy they are describing as colonial or postcolonial. Each side has good reasons for staying in its lane. But the result is that no single study has weighed the Almaty school's philosophical strength against its colonial entanglement in the same breath. That gap is what this paper tries to close.

Main part

Start with the work itself. The Almaty school was not a propaganda office. It was a research program. Its members treated dialectics as a logic of real thinking. Their model was Marx's Capital, read as a method, not as economics. This point is easy to miss. The Soviet label hides the content. But the content was philosophy of science.

The school grew in stages. Abdildin's own account marks the first steps around 1958 to 1963. A young group at the academy in Alma-Ata began to study dialectical logic. Then came single-author works. Abdildin wrote on the problem of the beginning in theoretical cognition [8]. The 1970s were the strong years. Under Abdildin the group produced many books, among them a study of Kant's dialectics [9] and, with Nysanbayev, a book on the dialectical and logical principles of building a theory [10]. People still call this period the golden age of philosophy in Kazakhstan.

It is worth pausing on why a Soviet-era republic could produce work of this depth at all. The Soviet system was, in its own way, generous to philosophy, at least to philosophy that stayed within Marxist bounds. Institutes were funded, journals were subsidized, and a stable academic career was available to anyone who mastered the accepted method. This is part of what made the Almaty school possible. It is also part of what makes the decolonial worry serious. A system that funds only one kind of philosophy is, by definition, not neutral about what counts as philosophy at all. Both things are true at once, and a fair account of the school has to hold them together rather than picking one and dropping the other.

The output was not small. In these years the school helped produce a multi-volume work on dialectical logic, a rare thing for any Soviet republic outside Moscow. It also trained a long line of students who went on to teach across Kazakhstan. This is worth stressing. A school is not only a set of books. It is a chain of teachers and pupils. The Almaty school built such a chain. When we ask what to do with the school, we are really asking about that chain. It runs into the present.

What were they after? Three ideas stand out.

The first is the ascent from the abstract to the concrete. This is a method for building a theory. You start from a simple, one-sided idea. You do not stay there. You move step by step to a full picture, where the whole and its parts hang together [6]. Marx did this in *Capital*. He began with the single commodity. He ended with a whole system. The school studied how this move works and why it is rational.

It helps to see the contrast the school drew. Formal logic checks whether an argument is valid. It does not ask how a concept grows. Dialectical logic, as the school used it, does ask that. It follows a concept as it changes and takes on new content. The two are not enemies. Formal logic keeps thought honest. Dialectical logic keeps thought moving. The school wanted a logic that could follow real development, not just fixed forms. That is why they read *Capital* so closely. *Capital* shows a single concept unfolding into a whole system.

The second is the unity of the logical and the historical. A concept has a history. It also has an order in thought. The school held that the two match, when the theory is right. The path of thought retraces, in a cleaned-up form, the path of the thing's own growth. History gives the content. Logic gives the form.

A brief illustration helps. Consider the concept of value in Marx's *Capital*. Historically, exchange existed long before anyone had a developed theory of value. Logically, though, a theory of value need not retrace every historical detail of barter and coinage. It needs only to retrace the necessary steps, the ones without which the next stage could not appear. The school's contribution was to show that this kind of retracing is not arbitrary. It follows the same order a fully rational reconstruction of the object would take, once confusion and accident are stripped away. This is a strong claim about the relationship between how we think and how things develop, and it is why the school treated logic and history as one problem rather than two.

The third is the problem of the beginning. Where should a theory start? Not with just anything. The school argued that a theory needs a real starting cell. This is a simple

unit that already holds the seed of the whole. For Capital, that cell was the commodity. Finding the right beginning is half the work. Abdildin made this problem his own [8].

Behind all three sits one bold claim. Dialectics, logic, and the theory of knowledge are, at bottom, one and the same thing. This was not a Kazakh invention alone. It echoed a note by Lenin on the logic of Capital. But the school worked the claim out in detail [7]. That is real philosophy of science. It stands on its own feet.

The link to Moscow was not loose. It was direct. Lev Naumenko, one of the school's founders, co-wrote a well-known article with Ilyenkov. They hid Ilyenkov's name behind a pseudonym to get it past the censors [4]. The same problems ran through both places. The ascent from the abstract to the concrete. The nature of the ideal. The logic of Capital. Almaty and Moscow were two points on one map. This is why the recent revival of Ilyenkov matters for us. If the Almaty school shared in that current, then it shared in a living tradition, not a dead one [11, 12].

Now for the hard part. The decolonial view puts pressure on all of this. Its claim is strong. Colonial power did not stop at borders and armies. It shaped minds. It decided which knowledge was serious and which was mere folklore. Mignolo speaks of a colonial matrix of power [1]. Ndlovu-Gatsheni speaks of a cognitive empire [2]. On this view, the former center keeps ruling through categories, long after the flags change. We put this challenge in its strongest form on purpose. Our aim is to answer it, not to sign it.

Apply this to Kazakhstan. Soviet Marxism was the official worldview. It came from Moscow. It set the terms. Meanwhile the older Kazakh tradition sat in the shadows. The thought of Abai, the wisdom of the zhyrau poets, the legacy of Al-Farabi, the Tengri worldview: all of this was treated as culture, not as philosophy. So a decolonial reader might say the Almaty school, for all its skill, was part of the problem. It spoke Moscow's language. It raised local people, but into a foreign frame.

The institutional facts reinforce the point. Positions, funding, and publication outlets in Soviet Kazakhstan all ran through structures set in Moscow. A young scholar could not simply declare an interest in Abai's metaphysics and expect a career. Career paths ran through dialectical materialism, and success within that system required real skill in its methods. This is exactly the kind of soft, structural power the decolonial literature is best at describing. It does not need a conspiracy. It only needs a single set of gatekeepers and a single accepted vocabulary for what counts as rigorous work.

The examples are easy to find. For a long time Abai was taught as a poet and a moralist, not as a philosopher. Al-Farabi was often placed inside Arabic or Islamic philosophy, far from the Kazakh steppe where he was born. The oral wisdom of the zhyrau was filed under literature or ethnography. Under the Soviet frame, philosophy proper meant Marxism. Everything else became background. A decolonial reader will say this ranking was not neutral. It matched the interests of the center. There is real force in this point. It is not just a complaint. None of this was unique to Kazakhstan. Across the Soviet republics, national philosophical traditions were routinely absorbed into a single Marxist-Leninist canon, their distinct vocabularies preserved, at best, as folklore appendices.

A recent turn makes the charge sharper. In 2024 a special issue asked whether Soviet philosophy itself carried an imperial charge. Kobakhidze wrote of an imperialist unconscious in Soviet thought, Ilyenkov included [5]. Others traced Ilyenkov's mixed legacy in Ukraine [17]. So even the current the Almaty school belonged to is now under review. The easy move would be to file the whole thing under colonial and walk away.

We want to take this challenge seriously, not brush it aside. The decolonial writers are right about many things. Knowledge does carry power. Categories can silence as well as reveal. A young country has every reason to guard its mind. If keeping the Almaty school meant keeping Kazakh thought in a Moscow-shaped box, we would say drop it. So the question is real. Does the school lock us into a foreign frame, or can it be freed from that frame?

We think the easy move is a mistake. There are two reasons.

The first is historical. The school was not run by outsiders. Its members were Kazakh scholars. They built the philosophy faculty in Alma-Ata. They trained generation after generation. And when independence came, several of them turned, on their own, to national themes. Abdumalik Nysanbayev is the clear case. He led the Institute of Philosophy after 1991. He wrote in English about the origins of Kazakh philosophy and about a philosophy of sovereign Kazakhstan [18]. Abdildin himself wrote on Abai as a philosopher. The tradition started to decolonize itself from the inside. It did not need to be abolished to do so. It grew.

The second reason is deeper. The school's core ideas are not Soviet property, and they are not merely technical either. The ascent from the abstract to the concrete is more than a recipe for building a theory. It rests on a substantial claim about how thought and reality develop together. The unity of the logical and the historical is a thesis about the world, not only a rule for writing. These are ideas with real philosophical depth, and that depth is what lets them travel. Ilyenkov's work spread to Italy, to Spain, to Latin America, and now to the English-speaking world [20, 11]. Thinkers with no love for the Soviet state still wrestle with his account of the ideal. Ideas that reach this far are not the private property of one empire. To refuse them because of the road they arrived by would be to mistake the depth of the thought for the politics of its carrier.

Consider an analogy from outside philosophy. Mathematics reached the Kazakh steppe, in its modern form, through Russian and Soviet schools. No one today argues that a Kazakh mathematician should refuse calculus because it arrived by a colonial route. The tool is judged by what it lets you build, not only by who first handed it over. Dialectical logic is a philosophical tool in the same sense. It has a history, and that history includes empire. But its use is not restricted to the empire that transmitted it, any more than calculus remains Russian property in Almaty classrooms today.

It is worth asking what the alternative positions would actually cost. Full rejection would mean removing Abdildin and his colleagues from the required reading in every philosophy program in the country, treating their work as a historical curiosity at best. That would sever several generations of trained philosophers from the school that trained them, including many now teaching the next generation. Uncritical celebration would carry a different cost. It would ask students to admire a Soviet-era achievement

without ever asking whose interests the Soviet system itself served, which teaches a bad intellectual habit regardless of the subject. Both alternatives are cheaper than the path we propose, and both are worse for exactly that reason. Reclaiming takes more work than either rejecting or celebrating, because it asks a department to hold two judgments, historical and philosophical, at once instead of collapsing them into one.

So what should Kazakhstan do? We suggest a third path. Do not worship the school. Do not disown it. Reclaim its method and join it with the Kazakh tradition.

Here Ndlovu-Gatsheni's own words help. He does not ask nations to burn every foreign book. He asks for epistemic freedom [2]. That means the freedom to think from where you are, and to choose what to keep. It is the freedom to build ecologies of knowledge, where local and global sources sit together. Intellectual sovereignty is not a wall. It is a free hand.

A free hand can keep a good method that arrived through a hard history. It can also put that method to new use. This is the practical payoff. Turn the ascent method on the Kazakh tradition itself. Read Al-Farabi, Abai, and the zhyrau not as a box of quotes, but as a developing whole. Look for the simple cell that holds the seed. Trace how the thought grows. Use the unity of the logical and the historical to write the story of Kazakh thought as one living line, not a scatter of names.

This is not a fantasy. It has already begun. Recent work at the Eurasian National University reads Al-Farabi's dialectics with these very tools [19]. That is the school's method, aimed at the national past. It is reclaiming in action. This synthesis is not new either. Mukan Orynbekov, himself trained inside the dialectical school, already showed the way. He used the tools of that school to study the philosophical views of Abai and the worldview of the proto-Kazakhs, treating the Kazakh tradition as a subject for serious philosophy and not as ethnography [21]. In his hands, dialectical logic and Kazakh thought did not stand apart. They worked on each other. Abai gained a rigorous philosophical reading, and dialectical method gained a new field to prove itself on. That is the model. The task now is to widen it, from single figures to the whole line of Kazakh thought.

Consider what this would look like for a single figure. Abai Qunanbaiuly is usually read as a moral poet, and his prose Qara Sozder is read for its aphorisms one at a time, disconnected from each other. Applied with the ascent method, the same texts invite a different question. What is the simple cell in Abai's thought, the one idea that already contains the seed of his whole ethical vision? A strong candidate is his ideal of Tolyq Adam, the complete human being, which starts from a single demand for self-knowledge and unfolds, passage by passage across the Qara Sozder, into a full picture of reason, labor, and community. Read this way, Abai stops being a source of separate quotations and becomes a thinker with a developing system, exactly the kind of reading the Almaty school's method was built to produce.

There is a sharper reason this matters now. The school's questions have returned in a new dress. Today we argue about machine intelligence and about what thinking really is. Ilyenkov himself warned against treating thought as a thing inside the skull. Recent work reads him next to the enactive view, where the mind is activity in a world

[13]. Others ask what happens to knowledge when it is turned into data and sold [16]. The school's core idea speaks to all of this. Thought is not a stock of fixed items. It is a movement from the abstract to the concrete. A country that owns this idea owns a way into some of the hardest debates of the day.

The timing, then, is not an accident. Three things line up. The decolonial debate is at full volume in Kazakhstan and across the region. The global revival of creative Soviet Marxism gives the school new company and new readers [12, 15]. And the 2024 debate on empire in Soviet philosophy forces the question into the open [5, 17]. We can meet that question with a slogan, or with an argument. This paper offers an argument.

We can now make good on the caution raised earlier. Madina Tlostanova has argued that the post-Soviet space needs its own decolonial vocabulary, not a borrowed one [22]. She proposes two ideas that fit our case well. The first is external imperial difference, the gap between a colonizing power and the still more distant centers of global capital that looked down on Russia and the Soviet Union in turn. The second is double colonial difference, the fact that post-Soviet subjects were placed both outside the Western canon and outside the Cold War's rival socialist canon at once, belonging fully to neither. On this reading, Soviet philosophy itself, and the Almaty school within it, occupied a doubly marginal position. It was provincial next to Paris and Oxford, and it was, after 1991, treated as compromised next to a newly dominant Western liberal order. This double marginality is not a reason to discard the school. It is the precise shape of the problem intellectual sovereignty has to solve. A framework built for Latin America or Africa alone would miss this shape. A framework built for the post-Soviet condition names it directly.

This has concrete implications for how philosophy is taught in Kazakhstan today. The state's own modernization program, set out in the president's 2017 article on renewing public consciousness, calls for a confident, critical return to national heritage rather than a wholesale rejection of the recent past [23]. Universities are well placed to carry this out in the philosophy classroom specifically. A first step is straightforward. Departments can teach the Almaty school alongside its Moscow counterpart and its current international readers, so students see a living debate rather than a closed chapter. A second step is more ambitious. Seminars that once applied dialectical logic only to Marx's *Capital* can be redesigned to apply the same method to Al-Farabi, to Abai, or to the oral tradition of the *zhyrau*, following the model of the recent work already cited here [19]. A third step concerns translation. Much of the Almaty school's output still exists only in Russian. Selective translation into Kazakh and English, prioritized around the three core ideas discussed above, would let the school take part in the international revival of interest in this tradition on equal terms, rather than as a historical footnote to Moscow. None of this requires new resources on the scale of a national project. It requires a change of attitude inside departments that already teach this material every year, including our own.

There is a lesson here for teaching more broadly, beyond any single course. A legacy can be handed down in only two ways. It can be handed down as a monument,

something to admire from a respectful distance and never touch. Or it can be handed down as a toolkit, something the next generation is expected to open, use, and eventually improve on. The Almaty school has mostly been treated as the first kind of legacy since independence, when it was treated at all. We have argued for the second. Students should leave a course on Kazakh philosophy able to perform the ascent from the abstract to the concrete themselves, on material of their own choosing, not merely able to recite that Abdildin once did so.

These three steps also answer a worry that specialists in the field will already have. Reclaiming a method is easy to say and hard to institutionalize, because institutions reward what is already familiar. A philosophy department under pressure to publish quickly will default to topics with an established international literature, which for now still means European and Anglophone topics more often than Kazakh ones. Naming this pressure honestly is the first step to resisting it. A department that decides, deliberately, to reward a well-argued paper on Abai's dialectics as highly as a paper on Kant or Hegel is making an institutional choice, not just an intellectual one, and it is exactly the kind of choice intellectual sovereignty asks for.

A natural objection is that none of this can be measured, and so it will not survive the next round of curriculum review. We think it can be measured, modestly. A department could track how many thesis topics, in a given year, apply dialectical method to a Kazakh or Central Asian source rather than only to a European one. It could track how many of the Almaty school's own texts appear on reading lists in translation rather than only in summary. Neither indicator is perfect, but both are concrete, and both would move in the direction this paper recommends. Intellectual sovereignty, in the end, is not proven by a declaration. It is shown, slowly, in what a department actually assigns, translates, and asks its students to attempt on their own.

This paper has limits worth naming. It works mainly from secondary literature on the Almaty school's later reception, alongside a close reading of a small set of the school's own core texts. A fuller study would work through the complete published record of the school across the 1960s to the 1980s, including materials that remain untranslated and, in some cases, hard to access outside Kazakhstan's own archives and libraries. It would also interview surviving students and colleagues of the school's founders, several of whom are still active in Kazakhstani academic life, to capture an oral history that is at risk of being lost. Neither task was possible within the scope of a single article. We see this paper as a philosophical argument that opens the ground for that fuller empirical study, not as a substitute for it.

A second limit concerns comparison. We have set the Almaty school beside Ilyenkov's Moscow circle because the historical link between them is direct and well documented. A fuller comparative study could widen the lens further, to other national schools of philosophy that formed inside the Soviet system, in Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and the Baltic republics, to test whether the argument made here for Kazakhstan holds more generally or depends on features specific to the Almaty case. Tlostanova's own framework was built with exactly this wider region in mind [22], and a comparative application of it across several post-Soviet philosophical traditions

at once would be a natural next step, one that a single article on a single national school cannot undertake responsibly.

A further limitation concerns language. This article is written in English, for a journal audience that reads English, and it therefore cites mainly English-language secondary literature. Much of the most detailed engagement with the Almaty school's specific arguments exists only in Russian and Kazakh, in journals and dissertations that circulate mainly inside Kazakhstan. A companion study written for a domestic audience, citing that literature in full, would necessarily look different from this one, and would likely surface disagreements among Kazakhstani specialists that an English-language overview cannot easily capture from the outside.

Finally, the institutional recommendations offered above are deliberately modest and would benefit from testing. A pilot seminar that applies the ascent method to a non-European source, run for a single semester and evaluated against the simple indicators proposed earlier, would tell us more about the practicality of this proposal than any amount of further argument. We would welcome that test, and we suspect the department best placed to run it is one of the two represented by the authors of this paper.

Conclusion

The Almaty school of dialectical logic is a real inheritance. It is not a burden to hide. It studied thinking with care. It built local institutions and trained local minds. It sat inside a wider current that the world is now reading again.

The decolonial critique still has value. It reminds us that categories carry histories. It warns against borrowing the former center's frame without a second thought. We should keep that warning. But we should not let it harden into a new rule that throws out every Soviet-era gain. That would trade one imposed dogma for another.

The better path is synthesis. Intellectual sovereignty is the freedom to keep, to adapt, and to build. It lets a nation hold on to a deep body of thought, even one that arrived through a hard history, and make it fully its own. For Kazakhstan the next task is clear. Bring the ascent from the abstract to the concrete and the unity of the logical and the historical to bear on the Kazakh tradition itself, and let that tradition speak back to them in turn. Mukan Orynbekov showed that this can be done. The task now is to carry it further, and to write the history of Kazakh thought as a living, growing whole.

None of this is only a matter for historians of philosophy. It bears directly on what happens in Kazakhstani classrooms this year and next. A curriculum can keep treating the Almaty school as a closed chapter, safely filed under Soviet history. Or it can treat it as unfinished business, a method still waiting to be turned on the country's own tradition. We have tried to show why the second choice is both intellectually honest and institutionally realistic.

A final word on tone. Nothing in this paper asks Kazakhstan to feel grateful for its Soviet philosophical inheritance, and nothing asks it to feel ashamed of it either.

Gratitude and shame are both the wrong register for a question this practical. The right register is closer to stewardship. A country that inherits a working method, however it arrived, has to decide what to do with it before the people who best understand it are no longer there to explain it firsthand. That is the decision this paper has tried to make a case for, as clearly and as carefully as the subject allows.

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Алматы диалектикалық логика мектебі және Қазақстандағы зияткерлік егемендік

Аңдатпа. Қазақстан кеңестік дәуірден күшті философиялық мектеп мұра етіп алды. Бұл көп жыл академик Жабайхан Әбділдин басқарған Алматы диалектикалық логика мектебі. Мектеп логиканы, таным теориясын және абстрактіліктен нақтылыққа өрлеу әдісін зерттеді. Оның еңбегі салмақты әрі түпнұсқалы болды. Дегенмен мектеп марксистік еді әрі кеңестік жүйенің ішінде қалыптасты. Тәуелсіздік алғаннан кейін бұл мұраға баға беру қиындай түсті. Бүгінгі жаһандық деколониялық бетбұрыс посткеңестік ұлттардан отаршыл кірмелерді төл ойдан ажыратуды талап етеді. Мақала бір нақты сұрақ қояды. Қазақстан Алматы мектебін сақтауы керек пе, әлде оны отаршыл қабат ретінде алып тастауы керек пе? Авторлар оны сақтауды, бірақ сын көзбен сақтауды

жақтайды. Мектеп бір мезгілде кеңестік туынды әрі нағыз отандық жетістік болды. Оның мүшелері ұлттық институттар құрды, ал кейбірі кейін өз еркімен егемен Қазақстан философиясына бет бұрды. Мектеп өзінің басты мәселелерін Эвальд Ильенковпен ортақ көтерді, ал оның идеялары бүгінде әлемде қайта қызығушылық тудырып отыр. Мектептің өзегіндегі әдіс - жай тәсіл емес, терең мазмұны бар ойлау философиясы, әрі оны қазақ дәстүрінен бөлектемей, онымен ұштастыруға болады. Жұмыста мектептің негізгі еңбектері деколониялық теориямен салыстырыла, тарихи-салыстырмалы әдіспен оқылады. Авторлар зияткерлік егемендік диалектикалық логиканы қазақ ойынан бөлектеуде емес, оны - Мұқан Орынбеков сынды қазақ философтары бастап кеткендей — қазақ ойымен ұштастыруда деген қорытындыға келеді.

Түйін сөздер: диалектикалық логика, Алматы мектебі, Жабайхан Әбділдин, зияткерлік егемендік, деколониялық теория, қазақ философиясы.

Ж.Н. Иманкул, К.С. Багашаров

Алма-атинская школа диалектической логики и интеллектуальный суверенитет в Казахстане

Аннотация. Казахстан унаследовал от советского периода сильную философскую школу. Это Алма-Атинская школа диалектической логики, которую многие годы возглавлял академик Жабайхан Абдильдин. Школа изучала логику, теорию познания и метод восхождения от абстрактного к конкретному. Её работа была серьёзной и оригинальной. При этом школа была марксистской и сложилась внутри советской системы. После обретения независимости это наследие стало трудно оценивать. Современный деколониальный поворот требует от постсоветских наций отделять колониальные заимствования от собственной мысли. Статья ставит один прямой вопрос. Должен ли Казахстан сохранить Алма-Атинскую школу или удалить её как колониальный слой? Авторы отстаивают сохранение, но с открытыми глазами. Школа была одновременно советским продуктом и подлинным местным достижением. Её участники создавали национальные институты, а некоторые из них позже сами обратились к философии суверенного Казахстана. Школа разделяла свои главные проблемы с Эвальдом Ильенковым, чьи идеи сегодня вновь привлекают внимание в мире. Метод в основе школы - не просто техника, а философия мышления с реальной глубиной, и его можно соединить с казахской традицией, а не противопоставлять ей. В работе используется историко-сравнительное чтение основных трудов школы в сопоставлении с деколониальной теорией. Авторы заключают, что интеллектуальный суверенитет достигается не разведением диалектической логики и казахской мысли, а их синтезом, как это уже начал делать, например, Мукан Орынбеков.

Ключевые слова: диалектическая логика, Алма-Атинская школа, Жабайхан Абдильдин, интеллектуальный суверенитет, деколониальная теория, казахская философия.

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