

Evald Ilyenkov's legacy in Ukraine

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Abstract

This article is dedicated to the philosophical legacy of Evald Ilyenkov in Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine. The authors use the example of Ilyenkov and his legacy to show how drastically different the philosophical situation was in Soviet Ukraine in order to present a holistic viewpoint on Soviet philosophy. The authors highlight the differences between the political and philosophical circumstances in Russia and Ukraine from the 1950s to the 2010s. The Ukrainian philosophical tradition is characterized by its focus on pedagogics, aesthetics, and nonacademic forms of philosophical communication. The main organizational role in Ukrainian philosophy was played by Pavel Kopnin and Valeriy Bosenko, who introduced dialectics as logic to Kyiv universities and made an effort to create philosophical circles for students. Anatoliy Kanarskiy, the prominent Soviet philosopher who specialized in aesthetics adopted the same idea of organizing students into circles. All these personalities were connected with Ilyenkov and each other, thus proving the existence of a common tendency and tradition of thinking within the discourse of Soviet philosophy. The authors highlight that this specific tradition may be called a “Socratic tradition” with its focus on free thinking, on discussions and dialectics. This tradition goes beyond academic philosophy and roots itself in cybernetical studies by Viktor Hlushkov and exists in modern Ukraine in the form of various philosophical circles and literature clubs.

Keywords Evald Ilyenkov · Valeriy Bosenko · Viktor Hlushkov · Anatoliy Kanarskiy · Pavel Kopnin · Maria Zlotina · Dialectical logic · Soviet philosophy · Marxism · Aesthetics · Pedagogics · Socratic tradition

Introduction

Controversially, the more time passes since the dissolution of the USSR, the more interest this period gains among scientists and the general population. The dangerous tendency is, however, that this period becomes a subject of mythologization and either

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painted as a completely dark and oppressive period, or whitewashed to serve as the “golden age” for post-USSR countries. For example, his latest book Mikhail Minakov (2022) highlights the problem that, from the Western perspective, post-Communist philosophers do not generate their own ideas and copy the West. This leads to a situation where the Soviet period of philosophy is exempted from the timeline of philosophical history:

Taken together, they create a situation of overthinking in which the wealth of contradictory ideas and interpretations simply leaves no space for involving the Soviet philosophical legacy in the ongoing philosophical dialogue running from ancient philosophers up to today’s thinkers. (Minakov 2022, pp. 28–29)

In our opinion, this situation emanated from the common viewpoint that Soviet philosophy was monolithic and served only as the form of ideology. If there were dissidents they were “solitary misunderstood geniuses” who were oppressed by the regime for their anti-Soviet convictions. Such is the image of Evald Ilyenkov, one of the most prominent philosophers, as he is portrayed in a documentary by Rozhkov (2017). In our opinion, there are two methodological problems in understanding the Soviet period of philosophy. The first is that philosophy is equalized to state politics and ideology. Thus, we see the periodization of philosophy by Lektorsky and Bykova (2019) oriented towards the political process in the Soviet Union. This concept seems to be common sense among scholars, as indeed philosophical thought did try to indulge the current leader and party course. However, this paradigm leaves us baffled by the nature of philosophy per se in the USSR and its inner contradictions. Also, while we can see a number of books, for example by Bakhurst (1991), Mareev (2008), Lotz (2019), Grigorishin (2022) and other scholars, who try to explore a different side of Soviet philosophy and that highlight the conflict between the positivist orthodoxy and “creative Marxism,” we have the second problem—they all tend to share a Russia-centric, even a Moscow-centric viewpoint on the philosophical life of the Soviet Union. In order to solve these problems, we would like to use the example of Ilyenkov and his legacy to show how drastically different the philosophical situation was in Soviet Ukraine. Ilyenkov’s case is interesting not because he was a Marxist who opposed Soviet philosophy, but because he was a representative of a Socratic tradition in philosophy. This tradition implies that a thought exists only in a dialogue, or we can say that it exists in a constant struggle with itself; dialectical motion. Thus, it always requires discussion, polemic, and critique.

First, we would like to mention that on the Internet resource “Reading Ilyenkov,” created thanks to the efforts of Andrey Maidansky, where the most complete selection of works by Evald Ilyenkov is collected, users can find a list of his books and articles translated into 16 foreign languages. However, this list does not include the largest corpus of translations of Ilyenkov’s works, namely translations of his works into Ukrainian.

At the moment, some of Ilyenkov’s books have been translated into Ukrainian—*Dialectics of abstract and concrete in scientific and theoretical thinking* (Ilyenkov 2023a), *Dialectical logic* (Ilyenkov 2023b), *On idols and ideals* (Ilyenkov 2023c) and thirty-four articles. For comparison, as of September 17, 2023, according to the resource “Reading Ilyenkov” (Maidansky 2023) twenty-eight works have been translated into German, twenty-five into Chinese, thirteen into English, and fewer into the

rest. This is despite the fact that until now any Ukrainian who might be interested in the works of E.V. Ilyenkov, can easily read them in Russian. By the way, in 2006, it was in Ukraine that the book *On idols and ideals* was republished in its original language.

It is clear that this phenomenon must be somehow historically determined. After all, it was necessary for the Ukrainian reader to have a certain interest in Ilyenkov's works and a sufficient number of translators to be found. Here, it must be said that all translations and their scientific editing were done on a volunteer basis on the initiative of the public organization "Community of graduates of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Kyiv State University" and the textological group "Socrates" as part of the project of translating works of world theoretical classics into Ukrainian. Dozens of people were involved in the work. Very often it was not just personal interest, but also a purely professional one which drove these volunteers forward. After all, Ilyenkov's works are very often recommended by teachers of Ukrainian universities on courses of philosophy and psychology.

Below, we will try to explain the reasons why Ilyenkov was considered a classic in Ukraine even in the 2000s, and answer the question about the reasons for the interest in philosophy in Ukraine in the 1960s and the development of philosophical self-education circles in this wave, which, as already mentioned, became a distinctive feature of the Kyiv dialectical tradition closely associated with Ilyenkov. That is why this article is dedicated to the explanation of the philosophical atmosphere in Soviet Ukraine after WWII and its three main features: pedagogical circles of self-education, a focus on aesthetics, and specific relations between philosophy and cybernetics. This research can be proof that the Socratic tradition of philosophy still remains in modern Ukrainian nonacademic philosophical communities.

Philosophical atmosphere in Soviet Ukraine after WWII

After WWII, the Ukrainian educational system was rebuilt from the ground up and after Stalin's death came the thaw that opened up the window of opportunity to rethink the Marxist "orthodoxy" and find the way to develop the philosophical theories. However, there were different ways to approach this task. Here we would like to recall the famous letter from Ilyenkov to the CPSU Central Committee "On the state of philosophy" (Ilyenkov 2008), in which he cites one fact that clearly demonstrates how sad the situation with dialectics was in Moscow:

The fact is that the sector of dialectical materialism (by the way, one of the smallest sectors of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences USSR) over the last 10 years has not been able to find among the faculty graduates a single person, not only professionally capable, but even just wanting to work in the field of materialist dialectics... These graduates simply snort mockingly when they hear the proposal to work in the field of dialectics as logic and the theory of cognition of Marxism. (Ilyenkov 2008)

However, in Kyiv at the time that Ilyenkov writes about, and up until the end of the 1980s, the situation was diametrically opposite. When choosing a specialization, the

department of materialist dialectics was the most popular among students, followed by the department of historical materialism in terms of prestige. Those same students who did not understand anything at all in philosophy and did not even strive for it, went to the department of logic. The only thing lower in this peculiar ranking was the Department of Scientific Atheism.

We are unlikely to be mistaken if we assume that such a “scale of values” at Kyiv University was formed largely thanks to Pavel Kopnin, who from 1959 to 1961 headed the department of dialectical and historical materialism there, and from 1962 to 1968 was director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR.

Since the late 1940s in the USSR, two main “parties” have emerged in Soviet philosophy on the question of what logic should be. Moscow was dominated by a “party” that simply did not recognize the possibility of the existence of dialectical logic. For example, the compilers of the book *Ilyenkov. From abstract to concrete: Drastic route: 1950–1960* (Ilyenkov and Illesh 2017) cite the testimony of contemporaries, according to whom the former director of the Institute of Philosophy Alexandrov directly stated at one of the meetings of the Academic Council that dialectical logic backstabs Marxism. This happened in the early 1950s. By the mid-1970s, a disdainful attitude towards dialectical logic was the norm in Moscow. For example, in Kondakov’s (1975) Logical Dictionary we read the following: “Dialectical logic is a philosophical term introduced by the German philosopher Hegel at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which he, in direct contrast to the formal logic distorted by him, called his idealistic doctrine of the laws of development of all natural and spiritual things” (Kondakov 1975, p. 145).

In contrast, the first book by Kopnin (1973) is called very eloquently *Dialectics as logic and theory of cognition*. It is peculiar that it was written precisely during the Kyiv period of his work. Moreover, the works written by Kopnin before moving to Kyiv practically did not go beyond the scope of topics characteristic of formal logic. The problems addressed in his work changed radically in Kyiv. He became a pronounced “gnoseologist.”

He took the same position in the Moscow period of his biography, when he became director of the Institute of Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences. At this time, he very actively supported Ilyenkov. For example, Sergey Mareev claims that it was Kopnin who initiated Ilyenkov’s defense of his doctoral dissertation:

In the 60s, Ilyenkov wrote a number of essays that were intended for the “History of Dialectics” that was then planned at the Institute of Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences. For a number of reasons, this “History” did not take place at that time, but from the materials already written, on the initiative of the then director of the institute Kopnin, Ilyenkov compiled a doctoral dissertation entitled “The Problem of Thinking in German Classical Philosophy,” which was successfully defended in 1968 in front of a huge gathering of the philosophical public. (Mareev 1990, p. 61)

At the same time, it would be worth noting that Ilyenkov himself refused to defend his doctoral dissertation for a long time, because he was very skeptical about all kinds of scientific credentials. However, let us return to the figure of Pavel Kopnin and his

role in the formation of the dialectical tradition in Ukraine. As already mentioned, in his views on the nature of logic and on the subject of philosophy in general, Kopnin belonged to the same “party” in Soviet philosophy as Ilyenkov. For example, he directly identifies the philosophical and logical-epistemological approaches:

Philosophers involved in the theory of knowledge and logic, when they use the word “science,” first of all represent a system of human knowledge that has a specific subject and method of knowledge. The study of science in this aspect is characteristic of a philosophical or, more precisely, a logical-gnoseological approach. This approach is probably the most ancient, for philosophy began with the self-awareness of man, with the posing of the question of the relationship of thought, human knowledge to the reality existing outside of him. (Kopnin 1973, pp. 19–20)

The question is why did the positions of Evald Ilyenkov and Pavel Kopnin on the subject of philosophy and the role of dialectical logic in knowledge coincide? It is possible that the fact that both of them studied for some time at the Moscow Institute of History, Philosophy and Literature (MIHPL) plays some role. The fact is that at the same time another bright representative of the Kyiv school of dialectics studied at MIHPL—Maria Zlotina (2008). Perhaps she was the only person who could compete with Bosenko in terms of popularity among students and teachers. She was an amazing lecturer who knew how to captivate an audience precisely with the power of dialectical thought, was able to connect this thought with reality and show its true scope and power. During the Second World War, Zlotina was a front-line nurse, was seriously wounded, carried hundreds of wounded from the battlefield, for which she was awarded military orders and medals.

The contribution of Zlotina deserves a separate scientific study, but in this brief review it should be noted that the specific characteristics of the Kyiv dialectical tradition also lie in the fact that it has its own distinct “female face,” for example, among the closest friends of Zlotina, Inna Bondarchuk. It is a kind of connecting link between various completely independent “branches” of the Kyiv dialectical school, which developed completely independently and often even polemicized with each other. The Kyiv dialectical tradition was not based simply on the personal sympathies of its representatives, but formed a living, self-contradictory unity. Inna Bondarchuk was the personal embodiment of this unity. She was the wife of Anatoliy Kanarskiy and shared his worldview. Her scientific interests include the history of European dialectical tradition, aesthetics, and critics of modern philosophy (Bondarchuk 1994). In addition to them, it is worth mentioning Maria Shkepu, also Bosenko’s student, who continues her research in dialectical tradition (Shkepu 2012). Today, this tradition is represented by Marina Burik (2022) who studies modern political economy applying dialectical logic as a methodology.

Hence, it is possible that one of the sources of the Kyiv school of dialectics should be sought in the prewar MIHPL. However, for our research this is something of an interesting side issue. Let us return to the characterization of the philosophical atmosphere of Kyiv in the 1960s and the role that Evald Ilyenkov played in creating it.

Here is a short excerpt from an article by Bosenko’s daughter Evgeniya, who, among other things, very effectively used in her professional activities the circle

teaching method developed by her father and Kanarskiy, in whose circle she studied during her student years. This passage very well conveys the atmosphere that reigned then (this was in 1969) in the philosophical environment in Kyiv:

Every visit of Ilyenkov to Kyiv was an event. But that October was especially memorable. . . . He came to oppose the candidate's dissertation of the head of our aesthetics circle, Kanarskiy. . . . The assembly hall of the Institute of Philosophy was crowded. Young people stood in the aisles; the lucky ones sat on the windowsill. After the defense, students of the Faculty of Philosophy from the aesthetics circle put a garland of yellow leaves on their leader and solemnly carried him across Komsomol Square (now European Square). While the young candidate was being honored, Ilyenkov, whom the circle members wanted to invite to the circle meeting, disappeared somewhere. They set up pickets at both the Institute of Philosophy and the University near the Mir Hotel, where he was staying, but they never found him. . . . Late in the evening, one of the search participants found him at home visiting his parents along with V. Shinkaruk and other Kyiv philosophers. He willingly agreed to meet, but not in the classroom, but outdoors. So, in the autumn in the Goloseevsky park, by the lake, I remember a conversation: "You are our ideal"—they blurted out right away. "But don't turn me into an idol, I don't want to be one," Ilyenkov immediately joked. . . . What do you recommend reading to become a philosopher?—asked the freshmen. The answer is short: "Write down these names: Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Plekhanov, Lenin. The juniors were slightly disappointed by the simplicity of the advice. Many years later, the deep meaning of what was said became clear. And also "Ilyenkov,"—I want to continue the list". (Bosenko 2010)

Pedagogical circles of Valeriy Bosenko

Unfortunately, the circumstances of the personal acquaintance between Evald Ilyenkov and the most prominent representative of the Kyiv school of dialectics Valeriy Bosenko (later they were close friends) are unknown to the authors of this article, but there is one story that suggests that already at the very beginning of the 1960s he was not just familiar with the works of Ilyenkov, but was also considered his unambiguous supporter.

This is the story that Valeriy Bosenko, who loved all kinds of humorous incidents, told to one of the authors. One day, Pavel Kopnin, who at that time worked as the head of the department of dialectical and historical materialism of the Faculty of Philosophy of Kyiv State University, where Valeriy Bosenko worked, pointedly casually threw a manuscript onto his desk, accompanying it with the following words: "Again, your beloved Ilyenkov is here with his Spinoza. Please write a review, and I'll sign it without looking."

The conversation, according to Valeriy Bosenko, was about Ilyenkov's famous article "Ideal" for the *Philosophical Encyclopedia*, the manuscript of which was sent to Kopnin as a member of its editorial board, for review.

Judging by the words Kopnin, despite the pointedly dismissive tone, nevertheless read the manuscript. It is also obvious from these words that he was well acquainted with Ilyenkov's previous works. This cheerful tone also obviously indicates that he was very sympathetic to the ideas that Ilyenkov supported.

However, for us, the more important point is that with all this, he trusts Valeriy Bosenko to write a review, on which, quite possibly, it depended whether this article would be included in the *Philosophical Encyclopedia* or not.

As already mentioned, we have no information about when Valeriy Bosenko and Evald Ilyenkov met in person, but it is obvious Kopnin believed that Bosenko understood Ilyenkov much better than him.

At the same time, it is very important to point out that Bosenko did not form his way of thinking under the influence of Ilyenkov. When one of the authors of this article asked him a direct question about who exactly had a decisive influence on his development as a philosopher, he did not name Ilyenkov and not even Kopnin. Instead, he referred to Savva Chavdarov, the most famous Ukrainian teacher, who during his studies headed the Department of Pedagogy at Kyiv State University. A pedagogical circle functioned under his patronage, of which Bosenko was a member. Through this circle, Bosenko was "infected" with the ideas of the most famous Soviet teacher Anton Makarenko, which in many ways became the core of all his activities as the leader of the Kyiv tradition of dialectics. The special characteristic of this tradition was that it was always focused primarily on human upbringing. In this sense, it was a direct continuation of the Socratic tradition in education. However, Bosenko was also engaged in a very thorough development of purely theoretical problems of dialectics. His works, which were published in the second edition under the general title *The Universal Theory of Development* (Bosenko 2001), can be considered perhaps the most successful systematic "translation" of Hegel's ideas into the language of materialism. But with all this, the dialectic of Bosenko always remained pedagogically oriented. It is no coincidence that one of his most popular books is called *To educate the educator* (Bosenko 2004).

Even more convincing evidence of the pedagogical orientation of his philosophy is that which arose under the direct influence of Bosenko's system of philosophical self-education in the form of circles, at the origins of which stood one of his most talented students, Anatoliy Kanarskiy. It turned out to be so successful that it not only did not disappear with the death of its founders, but, on the contrary, over the years it only strengthened and developed. Also, with the advent of the Internet, its "metastases" long ago overcame the borders of Ukraine and today there are already dozens, and perhaps hundreds of circles, the participants of which do not even know what the origins of the system with which they are engaged are. Perhaps the only "marker" that allows one to suspect "Kyiv roots" in youth would be the study of the works of Ilyenkov. This is a distinctive feature of the Kyiv dialectical tradition associated with the name of Bosenko—introducing youth to the world of philosophical culture through the works of Ilyenkov. Bosenko considered that Ilyenkov like no one else, knew how to communicate with young people and with his works captivate them, draw them into the world of serious, deep philosophy, and develop a taste for pursuing philosophy, including a taste for the difficulties along this path. Unfortunately, Bosenko was a little overoptimistic about Ilyenkov's situation in terms of

communicating with young people. In Moscow, Ilyenkov was often denied that opportunity and, if you believe his letter to the CPSU Central Committee quoted above, the Moscow youth were not in a hurry to become acquainted with his ideas. However, if we talk about Kyiv youth, and more broadly, about the Ukrainian situation, then this will be true. Many began to learn to think and taught this to others, precisely thanks to Ilyenkov's works.

Moreover, this approach is practiced not only in self-education circles, but also in the course of studying the most ordinary university courses in philosophy and not only by the students of Bosenko. For example, his article "Philosophy and Youth" (Bosenko 2009) was included in the anthology *Philosophy: A Reader (from its origins to the current times)* edited by the then rector of Kyiv State University. It was something like a canonical collection of philosophical texts for the entire system of higher education in Ukraine.

From the world of beauty towards the beautiful world: aesthetical ideas of Anatoliy Kanarskiy

As already mentioned, one of the organizers of this movement of philosophical self-education in Kyiv was Anatoliy Kanarskiy. The scientific supervisor of his candidate's dissertation was Bosenko, and Ilyenkov was an opponent in his defense. Kanarskiy's aesthetics circle appeared at a time when he himself was a student, and the first participants in this circle were high-school students in Kyiv schools. Moreover, the form of this circle itself was not invented by Kanarskiy. It was a very broad movement, going very far beyond aesthetics and philosophy.

Kanarskiy, like Ilyenkov and Mikhail Lifshitz, understood aesthetics as the science of sensuousness in the classical German tradition. Thus, art becomes the subject of aesthetics only when "feelings" become a separate subject of human cognition. However, feelings have their own logic of development. Kanarskiy's main work *The dialectics of aesthetical process* can be compared to Hegel's *Science of logic*. Just like Hegel with his pure being, Kanarskiy unfolds the aesthetical process from the most abstract category of sensuousness—indifference. The unity of historical and logical development of this category reveals the world of culture, human feelings, goals, and desires. However, Kanarskiy's own personal goal does not lie in the sphere of pure theory, he aims to solve the contradiction of art itself. As Kanarskiy states himself:

Art reflects reality by engaging with it in some form of polemical struggle, it opposes reality by its own ideal. The very fact of the existence of such an ideal in the living organism of art makes art itself far from being irrelevant to the historical confrontation between everything that is interesting and uninteresting for people. Art always resolves this struggle in favor of the ideal as something that should be, but it resolves it only spiritually, in the form of the awareness of what is necessary, which moves through a certain form of sensual experience. (Zagorski and Jaroszkiewicz 2016)

Thus, the main question lies in how art can sublimate itself in order to overcome the alienation of the ideal from real life. In other words, how is it possible to come

from the world of aesthetics to the aesthetical world. These goals were shared by Ilyenkov and the other members of his circle. This is how Evgen Bystrytsky, who was later a graduate student of Kanarskiy and even later turned out to be the head of the Ukrainian branch of the George Soros Foundation, recalls the Kanarskiy circle and the movement of circles in general at that time:

Back in the tenth grade of an eleven-year school, I met young men who organized clubs at Shevchenko University. . . I got into an aesthetics club. It was led by Anatoliy Kanarskiy, a talented philosopher-aesthetician well known to the older generation, then still a student of the Faculty of Philosophy. . . Not only circles in aesthetics, philosophy, literary criticism, poetry, but also in the natural sciences worked. . . During that short period of the “thaw,” representatives of the Central Committee LKSMU organized a summer camp on Trukhanov Island for the participants of the circles I mentioned. . . In this camp they embodied the idea of organizing the Small Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and it so happened that the guys elected me as its president. . . However, then, in 1965, we had great curators. Oleg Antonov, Nikolai Amosov and Viktor Hlushkov are three very famous figures. They invited us to their home, I think we went to Hlushkov's for tea, it was quite interesting. (Bystrytsky et al. 2020, pp. 214–216)

We cited this recollection not only to show that representatives of the Kyiv dialectical tradition and the circles they organized are still remembered today as something extremely important even by representatives of the opposite ideological camp, but also for the reason that the name of Hlushkov is mentioned here.

Dialectics and cybernetics. Hlushkov and Ilyenkov

Hlushkov's name is important for our research for two reasons. The first is that even if it is not directly mentioned by Ilyenkov, it was he whom Ilyenkov considered as a symbol of that direction in cybernetics, against which he fought as extremely harmful myth-making. In the family archive of E.V. Ilyenkov there is a manuscript of a satirical play called “Notes of B.S. Bezumtsev, a candidate of some kind of science,” which was intended to be a mockery of cybernetics, which tries to combine “general methods of approach to the study of systems of qualitatively different nature—technical, biological and even social” (Hlushkov 1986, p. 70). It is very easy to guess who was satirized in it, given the incredible popularity of Hlushkov in the Soviet Union. The play was never published by Ilyenkov, but it is quite obvious that Hlushkov was one of those at whom Ilyenkov's critique set out in the article “Machine and Man, Cybernetics and Philosophy” (Ilyenkov 1966) was directed. However, the second reason why Bystrytsky mentions the name of Hlushkov is very important for us. If Ilyenkov was referring to Hlushkov in these texts, then he was mistaken or ill-informed about Hlushkov's philosophical views. Indeed, in addition to the huge positivist misconceptions on the question of the nature of thinking, which were very widespread not only among the then Soviet cyberneticists, but also among Soviet philosophers, Hlushkov also had something that allows us to consider him as one of the representatives of

the Kyiv dialectical tradition. Also, the point here is not only that he patronized the movement of philosophical self-education organized by representatives of this tradition, as Bystritsky recalls. The point is also that he himself believed that expertise in philosophy by cyberneticists is a necessary condition for the successful development of cybernetic science. Moreover, he himself was very proud of the fact that even during his years at school he had thoroughly worked through *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and *Hegel's Dialectics of Nature*. Also, he was sure that it was precisely this acquaintance with the philosophical classics in dialectics that allowed him personally not to make those mistakes in assessing the possibilities and prospects of cybernetics, which were so characteristic in the first stages of its development.

We can only regret that Ilyenkov and Hlushkov could not find a common language then, despite the fact that they had every opportunity for this—after all, both were very familiar with Pavel Kopnin, and the recollection of Bystritsky indicates that at least Hlushkov was very interested in the development of the Kyiv dialectical tradition.

Conclusion

The last thing the authors would like is for any of the readers to conclude from all that has been stated that in Ukraine, in particular in Kyiv, everything was in order with dialectics, that it was the dominant tradition of thinking. Of course, it was not. The dominant trend in the professional philosophical environment here, as in Moscow, as, in fact, throughout the world in the second half of the twentieth century was positivism, and after the collapse of the USSR—various forms of rebellion not just against dialectical thinking, but also against thinking as such—from postmodernism to outright religious obscurantism. We are talking about something else, that in Ukraine there was a tradition of dialectical thinking, that it was precisely a tradition, and not just the work of individuals, even very talented individuals. Lev Naumenko spoke very well about this phenomenon in his letter, an excerpt from which was published as an epilogue to the book *Our Ilyenkov* published in 2016, which is a collection of articles by representatives of the Kyiv dialectical tradition, most of whom were students and graduate students of the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute and members of the circle of dialectical logic working at this university. These are his words:

For the third decade after Evald's death, I think only about one thing: "... and the candle would not go out." There is even some analogy here with what Lifshitz wrote after meeting Ilyenkov: I thought that everything has already been trampled by a herd of pigs. But no! Here it is! A sprout, green, young, strong. . . (Naumenko 2016, p. 250)

This book has arisen as the result of the common theoretical work of a few generations in the Kyiv dialectical circle. Representatives of this circle were often guests at the "Ilyenkov Readings" conference since 2005. And in 2010 this conference took place in Kyiv, where it attracted interest from young students from every faculty, not just philosophers. This particular character is specific to Ukraine as a theoretical nation. Today, it continues its development in nonacademical forms of

communication—philosophical circles and literature clubs. This has become the subject of a dissertation by Oleksandr Havva (2023) in which he states the necessity of such forms for the development of theories in any field of human knowledge, especially philosophy. This form of communication originates from the Socratic dialogue and lives on through the ages, appearing today as the result of Ilyenkov's friends and colleagues from Ukraine. This, in fact, is the strength of the tradition of thought. That in itself may not look very convincing. However, if this is truly a tradition, and not the work of one or even several, of even the most brilliant heads; if it has the ability to be transmitted from one head to another, to capture the hearts of young people, to give birth to more and more new forms of its own reproduction, then it becomes harder to trample it down. Dialectical thinking, starting with Socrates, has been trampled down many times, but each time reappeared, capturing the hearts and heads of the youth more and more.

Hence, in our point of view the Socratic tradition in modern Ukrainian still lives on throughout Ilyenkov's philosophical legacy and its development in its pedagogical, aesthetic, and cybernetic branches.

Declarations

Competing Interests The authors declare no competing interests.

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