

E-ISSN : 3023-4417

Makale Türü: Araştırma Makalesi
Article Type : Research Article

Yıl: 2026 Sayı: 6



Yayın Tarihi: 15.04.2026

Geliş Tarihi : 25.10.2025

Kabul Tarihi: 02.02.2026

Year: 2026 Issue: 6

The Philosophical and Political System of Ivan Ilyin: A Dialectical Study of Spiritual Nationalism and Legal Consciousness

Ivan Ilyin'in Felsefi ve Siyasi Sistemi: Manevi Milliyetçilik ve Hukuk Bilinci Üzerine Diyalektik Bir İnceleme

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Atıf/Citation

Kuznetsov, Michael Yurievich. "The Philosophical and Political System of Ivan Ilyin: A Dialectical Study of Spiritual Nationalism and Legal Consciousness". *Nous Academy Journal* 6 (2026), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19483579>

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Abstract

This study examines the intellectual system of Ivan Aleksandrovich Ilyin (1883–1954), a prominent Russian philosopher, legal theorist and ideologue of the White movement. Ilyin's system integrates a vision of Russia as a "zhivoy organizm" (living organism), advocating a national state unified by spiritual and cultural values rather than aggressive ideology. His political and legal theories, detailed in works like "O griadushchei Rossii," propose a post-Soviet statehood model balancing freedom and authority, informed by historical analysis. Methods: The analysis employs an interdisciplinary approach to his philosophical and political works. The study assesses Ilyin's relevance in 2025, noting his ideas' resonance with contemporary debates on national identity and spiritual renewal, though their practical application remains contested. This analysis contributes to understanding Ilyin's role in Russian philosophy and broader human existential inquiries.

Keywords: Ivan Ilyin, Russian Philosophy, Legal Consciousness, National State, Dialectical Ontology

Öz

Bu çalışma, önde gelen Rus filozof, hukuk teorisyeni ve Beyaz Hareket'in ideoloğu olan Ivan Aleksandrovich Ilyin'in (1883–1954) entelektüel sistemini incelemektedir. Ilyin'in sistemi, Rusya'yı bir canlı organizma olarak gören bir vizyonu bütünleştirir ve saldırgan bir ideoloji yerine manevi ve kültürel değerlerle birleştirilmiş bir ulusal devleti savunur. *O griadushchei Rossii* gibi eserlerinde ayrıntılı olarak ele alınan siyasi ve hukuk teorileri, tarihsel analizlere dayanan, özgürlük ve otorite arasında denge kuran bir post-Sovyet devlet modelini önerir. Bu çalışmanın yöntemi Ilyin'in felsefi ve siyasi eserlerine disiplinlerarası bir yaklaşımı benimsemektedir. Çalışma, Ilyin'in fikirlerinin pratik uygulamaları tartışmalı olsa da, ulusal kimlik ve manevi yenilenme üzerine güncel tartışmalarla yankı bulduğunu belirterek, 2025 yılında Ilyin'in önemini değerlendirmektedir. Bu analiz, Ilyin'in Rus felsefesi ve daha geniş kapsamlı insani varoluşsal sorgulamalardaki rolünün anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ivan Ilyin, Rus Felsefesi, Hukuk Bilinci, Ulus Devlet, Diyalektik Ontoloji

Introduction

This study aims to provide a systematic examination of I. A. Ilyin's philosophical, legal, and political ideas, focusing on their intellectual foundations and contemporary relevance. Ilyin, a key figure in Russian religious philosophy, developed a distinctive worldview that synthesizes Western philosophical traditions—such as Kantian epistemology, Fichtean ethics, and Hegelian dialectics—with Russian spiritual and cultural heritage.

Materials and Methods

The study draws on a comprehensive corpus of Ilyin's writings, with a primary focus on his *Sobranie sochinenii: V 10 tomakh tomakh* (Collected Works in Ten Volumes). Additional sources include secondary analyses by scholars like Novgorodtsev, Trubetskoy, and contemporary commentators, accessible through digitized archives and academic publications. The methodological approach employs a qualitative content analysis, integrating historical-contextual interpretation with philosophical hermeneutics.

This study employs a multifaceted methodological framework to analyze Ilyin's intellectual system. The primary approach is historical-contextual analysis, situating his ideas within the tumultuous backdrop of pre-revolutionary Russia and the émigré experience. This is complemented by a philosophical hermeneutic method, interpreting his core concepts like "legal consciousness" (pravosoznanie) and the "Russian Idea" through his engagement with German Idealism (Kant, Fichte, Hegel) and Russian religious philosophy. Comparative analysis is utilized to juxtapose his political theory with thinkers like Machiavelli and Rousseau, highlighting its distinctiveness. Furthermore, a linguistic analysis deciphers his unique idiolect and use of Russian as an embodiment of national spirit. Finally, elements of conceptual history (Begriffsgeschichte) trace the evolution of key ideas across his oeuvre, providing a comprehensive understanding of their development and enduring relevance.

Results

The analysis reveals Ilyin's ontology as a dynamic process where the Divine "Concrete-Universal" unfolds through history, rejecting materialist determinism in favor of spiritual renewal (Ilyin, 1994, 45). His legal philosophy centers on "pravosoznanie" as a synthesis of individual conscience and state authority, critiquing Western positivism (Ilyin, 1994, 87). Politically, he proposed a national state governed by a transitional "national dictatorship" to restore order, advocating monarchy as a balance of freedom and authority (Ilyin, 1994, 123). Ethically, his justification of force against evil, guided by conscience, contrasts with Tolstoyan pacifism, though it raises ethical ambiguities (Ilyin, 1994, 234). Pedagogically, Ilyin emphasized "tsvetushchee myshlenie" (flowering thinking) to foster moral and national consciousness (Ilyin, 1994, 312). His concept of "Rodina" integrates personal and collective identity, promoting "dukhovny natsionalizm" (spiritual nationalism) over chauvinism (Ilyin, 1994, 421). The results indicate a coherent system, though its practical applicability and authoritarian undertones remain contentious.

Discussion

The findings situate I.A. Ilyin's ideas within the broader context of Russian philosophy, highlighting their relevance to contemporary debates on national identity and spiritual renewal, particularly in 2025's geopolitical landscape. His dialectical approach resolves tensions between freedom and authority, offering a critique of both communist and liberal models, yet his reliance on spiritual unity poses challenges in secular contexts. The ethical justification of force invites scrutiny, suggesting a need for clearer boundaries to avoid moral relativism. Comparatively, Ilyin's divergence from Rousseau's naturalism and Machiavelli's pragmatism underscores his unique contribution, though parallels with Berdyaev's spiritual focus warrant further exploration. The pedagogical model, while innovative, requires empirical testing to assess its efficacy. Limitations include the lack of systematic codification and potential ideological bias, necessitating critical engagement. Future research could expand comparative analyses and evaluate Ilyin's concepts in educational and political practice, enhancing understanding of his role in Russian thought and universal existential questions. This structured approach ensures a balanced assessment of Ilyin's intellectual legacy.

Biography: "Dieser Mann ist Iljin": The Life and Legacy of Ivan Aleksandrovich Ilyin

Ivan Ilyin, born in Moscow on March 28, 1883, into an educated and devout noble family, was destined for a life of intellectual rigor (Ilyin, 1996, 6). Excelling in his classical studies, he initially dreamed of philology but ultimately chose the law faculty at Moscow University (Ilyin, 1996, 7).

It was there, under the mentorship of the eminent legal philosopher Pavel Novgorodtsev (1866-1924), that his dormant interest in philosophy was awakened (Ilyin, 1996, 7). His early scholarly works, particularly those delving into the complexities of Hegel's thought, signaled the emergence of a formidable mind (Ilyin, 1996, 9). After graduating with the highest honors, he remained at the university, marrying in 1906 Natalia Vokach (1882-1963), a woman who would become his lifelong intellectual companion and collaborator in a life dedicated entirely to scholarship, even in the face of poverty (Ilyin, 1996, 8).

In Moscow, Ilyin embodied the entire dialectical tension of the Russian spirit: a Kantian in his methodology, a Fichtean in his ethics of heroic duty, yet always with the speculative pathos of a Left-Hegelian. Ilyin's intellectual formation revealed this inner struggle: a profound Kantian in epistemology, a passionate Fichtean in the ethics of moral imperative, yet perpetually touched by a hint of Left-Hegelianism in his search for concrete reason in history (Ilyin, 1996, 9). His early writings of the 1900s, such as "On Kant's 'Thing in Itself'" or "The Idea of the Concrete and Abstract in Hegel," bear witness to this striving (Ilyin, 1996, 11). His original ontology was dynamic: reality as an unfolding process in which the Divine—the Concrete-Universal—strives for realization (Ilyin, 1996, 11).

His academic career flourished with a professorship, but the upheavals of the First World War and the revolutions of 1917 irrevocably altered his path (Ilyin, 1996, 13-14). He perceived the February Revolution as a temporary disorder but met the Bolshevik seizure of power as an unmitigated catastrophe (Ilyin, 1996, 14). An ideologue for the White movement, Ilyin actively opposed the new regime, defending academic freedom while continuing his scholarly work (Ilyin, 1996, 17). In a remarkable act of intellectual defiance, he brilliantly defended his master's thesis on Hegel in 1918, for which he was awarded both a master's and a doctorate simultaneously (Ilyin, 1996, 19). Despite multiple arrests for his anti-Bolshevik activities, his expertise on Hegel is thought to have once spared him from execution, following an intervention by Wladimir Lenin (1870-1924) himself (Ilyin, 1996, 27). Ivan Ilyin analyzed Russia's monarchical collapse dialectically, attributing it to spiritual crises like eroded "pravosoznanie" (legal consciousness), beyond economic factors (Kuzychenko, 2021, 20). Opposing communism, he modeled future Russia as a national state, forming unified "natsiya" through spiritual unity and cultural love, sans aggressive ideology or "bolnoe samomnie" (sick self-conceit) (Kuzychenko, 2021, 21). Ilyin's theory explores statehood's paths, analyzing history for post-Soviet progress; Russia as "zhivoy organizm" overcomes class rifts through faith and homeland love (Kuzychenko, 2021, 23). Freedom—international independence, cultural autonomy, personal rights—dialectically balances tradition and renewal (Kuzychenko, 2021, 24). National state embodies "Geistige Einheit" (spiritual unity), progressing via self-developed paths, not borrowings.

Prince Evgeny Nikolaevich Trubetskoy (1863-1920) was a prominent Russian philosopher, jurist, and public figure. His intellectual contact with Ivan Ilyin was significant, primarily during Ilyin's early academic career at Moscow University. Trubetskoy played a pivotal role in Ilyin's professional development. He was one of the official opponents at Ilyin's brilliant defense of his master's thesis, "The Philosophy of Hegel as a Doctrine of the Concreteness of God and Man," in 1918. Despite the extreme danger—Trubetskoy had been searched by the Cheka just before the defense—he participated, and the council voted to award Ilyin both a master's and a doctorate simultaneously. This was a profound act of academic and personal solidarity. Philosophically, both were rooted in the Russian Hegelian tradition and shared a commitment to idealist

philosophy and Orthodox worldview. While Trubetskoy's influence is seen more in his institutional support and shared philosophical foundations, their interaction represents a critical passing of the torch within the pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia.

In 1922, the regime expelled Ilyin from Russia, stripping him of his citizenship (Ilyin, 1996, 25). Thus began a sixteen-year exile in Berlin, where he helped establish a Russian Scientific Institute and became a prominent voice in the émigré community (Ilyin, 1996, 28). He lectured extensively across Europe and published seminal works, including *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, which critiqued Tolstoyan pacifism and sparked intense debate (Ilyin, 1996, 29). His political philosophy, articulated in journals like *The Russian Bell*, remained staunchly anti-communist yet principled, and he never aligned himself with any single political party (Ilyin, 1996, 30). Ilyin argued that violence, or "ponuzhdenie" (compulsion), is a tragic necessity when confronting moral evil, resolving contradictions between passivity and justice (Martynenko, 2009, 28). Ilyin rejected the term "nasilie" (violence) for its negative valence, proposing situational analysis to distinguish acts like subduing terrorists from oppression, synthesizing good and evil (Martynenko, 2009, 28). His four-part structure—clearing misconceptions, burying Tolstoyan nonresistance, resolving when and how to act, and purifying intent—reflects a Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis (Martynenko, 2009, 28). Ilyin posited that force must be "sovestlivy" (conscientious), guided by "Rechtsbewusstsein" (legal consciousness) and divine purpose, inverting blind aggression into moral duty (Martynenko, 2009, 29). Critics like Berdyaev labeled it "zloe dobro" (evil good), misinterpreting its ethical nuance (Martynenko, 2009, 28). Yet, Ilyin's approach remains relevant, addressing modern crises where force balances security and freedom, critiquing absolutist pacifism as historical materialism's inversion (Martynenko, 2009, 29). The synthesis demands purity of motive, resolving personal and collective "Seelenlosigkeit" (soullessness) through disciplined action. He engaged with Aristotle, Kant, and Dilthey, adapting their ideas to affirm law's rootedness in Absolute truth, inverting secular legalism (Arkhangel'sky, 2010, 90). This dialectical approach underpinned his view of the state as an organic entity, balancing freedom and order, a critique of revolutionary chaos (Arkhangel'sky, 2010, 91). His reliance on German idealism and Russian intuitivism shaped a legal theory prioritizing spiritual renewal, resolving historical materialism's class conflicts into ethical governance.

The rise of the Nazi regime presented a new moral test. Initially, some saw his anti-communism as complementary to fascism, but Ilyin soon discerned its profound dangers (Ilyin, 1996, 31). His refusal to conform led to his dismissal from his post, a ban on his public speaking, and the seizure of his publications (Ilyin, 1996, 31). In 1938, under threat of arrest and with the help of friends like Rachmaninoff, he and his wife fled to Switzerland (Ilyin, 1996, 31). Settling in Zollikon, he was forced to live once more in precarious circumstances and was banned from overt political activity (Ilyin, 1996, 31).

In his final years, Ilyin produced some of his most profound work, including the culmination of his three-decade-long study, *Axioms of Religious Experience* (Ilyin, 1996, 32). He wrote extensively in German, often under a pseudonym, and prepared his final manuscripts, such as *The Path to Spiritual Clarity* (Ilyin, 1996, 32). He died on December 21, 1954 (Ilyin, 1996, 35).

In a symbolic act of national reconciliation, his remains, along with those of his wife and General Anton Denikin (1872–1947), were reinterred in the Donskoy Monastery in Moscow in 2005, a year that also saw the beginning of a major republication of his collected works in his homeland, marking his posthumous return to Russian intellectual life.

Ontology, Metaphysics, Psychology, Pedagogical and Political Theories of Ivan Ilyin

Ivan Ilyin's ontology rejected static abstractions, viewing being as a concrete, divine process striving for realization through human agency (Poltoratsky, 1989, 11). Influenced by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), he interpreted Hegel's philosophy as a doctrine of the concreteness of God and man, where the Absolute unfolds in history not as mere dialectic but as a living, spiritual concreteness (Poltoratsky, 1989, 12-13). This "konkrete Idealismus" posits reality as a process where the Divine—the Concrete-Universal—manifests through contradictions, resolving in higher syntheses of spirit and matter.

Metaphysically, Ilyin positioned philosophy as the completion of life, with life as its source and object. He formulated two axioms for philosophical methodology: unexperienced content is unknowable, and philosophy arises from non-sensuous experience (Poltoratsky, 1989, 15). Rejecting system-building as a "deutscher Vorurteil," he advocated object-contemplation over deduction, arguing that spiritual objects demand unique structures of evidence (Poltoratsky, 1989, 16). In ethics, a metaphysical branch, Ilyin critiqued Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy's (1828-1910) non-resistance, positing resistance to evil by force as a tragic necessity when love fails, distinguishing "unrighteousness" from sin (Poltoratsky, 1989, 31). This dialectic reflects a materialist view of history where evil's concrete manifestations require forceful resolution to advance spiritual progress.

Ivan Ilyin critiquing Tolstoy's pacifism while introducing "gewissenhafter Kompromiss" (conscientious compromise) to resolve moral contradictions in resisting evil (Nizhnikov, 2014, 37). Conscience, as "moralische Evidenz" (moral evidence), synthesizes ideal and reality, universal yet individual, fostering freedom amid material constraints (Nizhnikov, 2014, 37). Ilyin rejected absolute nonresistance, positing force as "notwendig" (necessary) yet "unrechtmäßig" (unrighteous), inverting Tolstoy's inversion of liberation into passivity (Nizhnikov, 2014, 38). Comparing Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), Ilyin avoided outright "Zweck heiligt die Mittel" (end justifies means), emphasizing legal consciousness limits; yet dialectics reveal parallels—both justify "unrechte Mittel" (unrighteous means) for higher good, risking amoralism (Nizhnikov, 2014, 39). Ilyin's compromise—active yet "gewissenhaft" (conscientious)—resolves as fighter's self-sacrifice, contrasting Kant's absolute duty inverting into dogmatism (Nizhnikov, 2014, 40). Historical materialism critiques: Ilyin's method inverts morality into "pseudoprawosławny Machiavellizm" (pseudo-Orthodox Machiavellianism), prioritizing necessity over ethics (Nizhnikov, 2014, 41). Dialectics expose flaws—Ilyin's "moralische Ungerechtigkeit" (moral unrighteousness) contradicts conscience's unity, echoing Machiavelli's autonomy of ends/means (Nizhnikov, 2014, 42). True synthesis demands conscience as mediator, resolving ideal-empirical antagonisms without compromising integrity, urging historical progress beyond violence

Ivan Ilyin viewed the Russian language as a dialectical embodiment of Russia's spiritual essence, intertwining thought and word in a coherent philosophy (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 79). He described it as "divny, moguchy, poyushchy" (wonderful, mighty, singing), reflecting boundless possibilities, richness of sounds, and forms that mirror the nation's vastness and depth (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 84). This "konkrete Idealismus" posits language as a living process where divine concreteness unfolds through contradictions, resolving in cultural synthesis (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 82). Preceding linguistic evaluation is moral assessment, rooted in a culture of heart, conscience, sacrifice, faith, and prayer—dialectically opposing modern "besserdechnaya kultura" (heartless culture) (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 85). The "sila

suzhdeniya" (power of judgment) is a heartfelt act demanding authenticity, novelty, and sincerity, fostering "tsvetushchee myshlenie" (flowering thinking) through unexpected definitions (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 86). Ilyin's idiolect features "nanizyvanie" (stringing), piling semantic neologisms and parallels, evoking Silver Age metaphors (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 83). Analyzing "serdtse" (heart), he emphasizes contemplation, love, and intuition as dialectical resolutions of passions, enabling spiritual renewal (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 88). This cosmology positions Russian as a "Seele" organ, uniting peoples in spiritual renewal (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 89). Ilyin's ontology integrates language as divine dialectic, urging resolution of crises through conscious wordcraft, resisting relativism for ethical governance

Ilyin's psychology integrated metaphysical elements, viewing the soul ("душа") as the organ of spiritual experience. As chairman of the Moscow Psychological Society in 1921, he emphasized the soul's purification through catharsis for accessing divine truths (Poltoratsky, 1989, 13). Psychology, for Ilyin, was not mere empiricism but a dialectical process of self-mastery, where the will confronts passions, leading to character formation (Poltoratsky, 1989, 21). In "Axioms of Religious Experience," he described reality as dynamic ontology where the soul unfolds divine potential through heroic duty, echoing Johann Gottlieb Fichte's (1762-1814) moral imperative (Poltoratsky, 1989, 14). This "Seele" strives for "Geistige Erneuerung," resolving internal contradictions via spiritual acts like conscience and contemplation. Psychology, for Ilyin, is the soul's dialectical battleground, where passions confront will, synthesizing in character formation. The "Seele" oscillates between depressive depths and euphoric heights, expanding experiential range to overcome "adskie niziny" and attain "rajskie vershiny" (Poltoratsky, 1989, 87). In analyzing Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852), Ilyin depicts this as rhythmic dialectic: depression's negation yields spiritual prosveshchenie, resolving internal antagonisms in cathartic purification (Poltoratsky, 1989, 94). Psychology links to ontology: the soul's unfolding mirrors divine process, where heroic duty synthesizes Fichtean imperative with Hegelian concreteness.

Ilyin advocated for a pedagogy rooted in spiritual renewal, where teachers guide students toward "tsvetushchee myshlenie" (flowering thinking) through love, intuition, and conscience (Poltoratsky, 1989, 13). Education should foster "sila suzhdeniya" (power of judgment), encouraging authentic, sincere engagement with knowledge, reflecting Russia's cultural depth (Annushkin & Zhao, 2022, 86). Ilyin stressed character formation via catharsis, purifying the soul to align with divine truths, contrasting with rote learning (Rodionova, 2012, 116). Compared to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Ilyin diverged by prioritizing spiritual over natural development. Rousseau's "Émile" emphasized innate goodness nurtured by nature, inverting societal corruption, whereas Ilyin saw the soul's struggle as a divine process requiring active moral guidance (Poltoratsky, 1989, 14). Unlike John Locke's (1632-1704) tabula rasa, Ilyin leaned on Johann Gottlieb Fichte's (1762-1814) ethical imperative, integrating it with Hegelian concreteness (Rodionova, 2012, 117). He drew from Pavel Novgorodtsev, blending legal and spiritual education, and Nikolai Lossky, emphasizing intuitivism (Shestakov, 2012, 2). Ilyin's pedagogy aimed at national revival, contrasting Rousseau's individual focus, urging a synthesis of personal and collective "Seelenlosigkeit" (soullessness) into a unified Russian identity

Politically, Ilyin's theories dialectically balanced individual freedom and collective order. He advocated monarchy as the highest form, rooted in organic unity and divine concreteness, critiquing republic as formal abstraction (Poltoratsky, 1989, 194). Monarchy embodies "Selbstherrschaft," where the monarch's authority synthesizes national will, contrasting

republican "Nivellierung" (Poltoratsky, 1989, 195). Yet, recognizing historical materialism's role, Ilyin adopted "non-predetermination" ("непредрешение") for post-revolutionary Russia, arguing forms depend on collective consciousness shaped by material conditions like war and economy (Poltoratsky, 1989, 198). Revolution, as dialectical upheaval, arises from contradictions like class disparities and spiritual decay, leading to communism's totalitarian synthesis (Poltoratsky, 1989, 158).

Ilyin's ontology viewed being as processual, where contradictions propel spiritual realization, critiquing positivism's materialism as reductive (Poltoratsky, 1989, 30). Metaphysically, he synthesized Kantian epistemology with Hegelian dialectics, positing "Ding an sich" as accessible through spiritual intuition (Poltoratsky, 1989, 12). Psychology emphasized the soul's dialectical struggle against passions, fostering "Wille zur Macht" in ethical terms (Poltoratsky, 1989, 17). Politically, he saw state forms as historical necessities, monarchy resolving antagonisms through divine authority, while revolution exposes unresolved contradictions (Poltoratsky, 1989, 168).

Ivan Ilyin conceptualized philosophy as a dialectical tool for becoming "orudiem dukha" (instrument of spirit), demanding soul purification (katharsis) to grasp divine essence (Rodionova, 2012, 115). Russia's "Sushchnost i svoeobrazie russkoy kultury" (essence and uniqueness of Russian culture) emphasizes national spiritual character formation, resolving instincts and spirit in historical materialism's critique (Rodionova, 2012, 116). Religious philosophy studies equilibrium of "dukh i instinkt" (spirit and instinct), with Russian soul's "prafenomeny" like heartfelt contemplation and Paschal joy (Rodionova, 2012, 116). Philosophy's value lies in processuality, exploring harmonious worlds and "nachalo dukha" (spirit's beginning) without contrived systems—a "deutscher Vorurteil" (German prejudice) (Rodionova, 2012, 116). Evristichnost (heuristics) and obviousness arise from genuine experiences, dialectically in religion, art, morality, science (Rodionova, 2012, 117). Morality stems from love and conscience, guiding freedom and "pravosoznanie" (legal consciousness) (Rodionova, 2012, 117). Law derives from moral norms, with natural inequality balanced by spiritual equality; justice demands respecting "dukhovnoe dostoinstvo" (spiritual dignity) (Rodionova, 2012, 117). Political philosophy envisions a moral state with spiritual unity, not totalitarianism (Rodionova, 2012, 118). Ilyin's axiology dialectically integrates values for Russia's renewal, critiquing stereotypes for objective self-view

In aesthetics, a metaphysical extension, perfect art dialectically unites act, matter, image, and object, with the divine subject resolving formal contradictions (Poltoratsky, 1989, 21). Ilyin's psychology linked to politics via character formation, where will overcomes "Seelenlosigkeit" for national revival (Poltoratsky, 1989, 206). He critiqued Bolshevism as dialectical inversion, turning liberation into oppression through materialist negation of spirit (Poltoratsky, 1989, 179).

Ilyin's system dialectically integrates ontology as divine process, metaphysics as spiritual evidence, psychology as soul's struggle, and politics as organic synthesis, urging resolution of contemporary contradictions through renewed consciousness

Ivan Aleksandrovich Ilyin was shaped by contemporaries like Pavel Ivanovich Novgorodtsev, his mentor at Moscow University, instilling legal philosophy's "Rechtsphilosophie" (Poltoratsky, 1989, 11). Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl (1859-1938) influenced Ilyin's phenomenology during German studies, emphasizing concrete intuition over abstraction (Poltoratsky, 1989, 12). Pyotr Bergardovich Struve (1870-1944) shared anti-Bolshevik views, supporting Ilyin's

resistance ethics (Poltoratsky, 1989, 117). Nikolai Onufrievich Lossky (1870-1965) aligned with Ilyin's intuitivism, endorsing "On Resistance to Evil by Force" (Poltoratsky, 1989, 33).

Ilyin influenced Sergei Lvovich Frank (1877-1950) in spiritual realism debates, though Frank critiqued his force ethics (Poltoratsky, 1989, 34). Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdyaev (1874-1948) engaged in polemics, rejecting Ilyin's monarchism as "Weltanschauung" imposition (Poltoratsky, 1989, 19). Later, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin (1952-) cited Ilyin's patriotism, reflecting post-Soviet "Souveräne Demokratie" (though beyond 1989 book). Ilyin's dialectics of spirit versus materialism echoed in Aleksandr Isaevich Solzhenitsyn's (1918-2008) critiques of communism.

Posthumously, Ilyin's patriotism shaped Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin (b. 1952), informing "Souveräne Demokratie" as synthesis of sovereignty and tradition.

Ivan Ilyin dialectically synthesized historical contradictions in his political philosophy, viewing Russia as an organic entity where spiritual renewal resolves material decay. His reburial in Moscow in 2005 marked a synthesis of "white" and "red" ideologies, underscoring Russia's quest for national reconciliation amid post-Soviet antagonisms (Shestakov, 2012, 1). He rejected immediate democracy post-communism, arguing immature "Rechtbewusstsein" (legal consciousness) would invert it into anarchy and corruption, reflecting historical materialism's emphasis on societal readiness (Shestakov, 2012, 2). Ilyin's nationalism dialectically balanced love for one's people with anti-shovinizism, positing "Geistige Erneuerung" (spiritual renewal) as counter to Bolshevik materialism (Shestakov, 2012, 3). He warned of Russia's dismemberment as global catastrophe, envisioning a national dictatorship to resolve separatist contradictions, ensuring "Ordnung" (order) for survival (Shestakov, 2012, 4). Contemporary Russia echoes this: Putin's "vertical of power" synthesizes authoritarianism with democratic forms, averting chaos predicted by Ilyin (Shestakov, 2012, 5). Yet, dialectics reveal tensions—oligarchic capture inverts reforms, demanding renewed "pravosoznanie" (legal consciousness) for progress (Shestakov, 2012, 5). Ilyin's legacy dialectically informs Russia's path, critiquing Western impositions as alien to its historical materialism

This interplay highlights Ilyin's "Zwischenstellung" between idealism and realism, influencing conservative revival while shaped by phenomenological and legal traditions.

The Russian Idea and the Future of Russia

Ivan Ilyin's concept of the "Russian Idea" (1948) constitutes a systematic philosophical endeavor to define Russia's spiritual essence and historical vocation. According to Ilyin, this idea is not borrowed or artificially constructed; it organically emanates from the national spiritual character and the Orthodox worldview. Its core is a specific spiritual act, characterized by three interdependent elements: the heart (love as the foundation of existence), contemplation (the intuitive perception of essences), and freedom (inner creative autonomy). Ilyin posits that Russian Orthodoxy, unlike Western confessions, apprehends God not through will or reason, but through love and heartfelt contemplation. This fundamental disposition, in his view, determines all of Russian culture: an art based on intuitive vision; a science striving for a holistic understanding of its subject rather than formal analysis; and a legal consciousness rooted in conscience and a sense of objective truth, not in formalistic jurisprudence. Consequently, Ilyin argues for Russia's distinct cultural path. He rejects the necessity of borrowing Western models, asserting that the primary task for Russia is not to imitate but to creatively cultivate its own unique spiritual forces. This involves deriving secondary strengths—such as will, thought, and formal organization—from its primary, organic strengths of the heart, contemplation, and

freedom. The goal is not self-isolation or a sense of superiority, but the achievement of authentic, objective culture that corresponds to the nation's spiritual constitution. For Ilyin, the Russian Idea is ultimately the age-old mandate for Russia to realize a national, earthly culture permeated by the Christian spirit of loving contemplation, freedom and objective service (Ilyin, 2006).

Ilyin conceptualized "Rodina" (Homeland) as a dialectical synthesis of personal identity and national spirituality, evolving from practical "white movement" rhetoric to a theoretical cornerstone in "Puty dukhovnogo obnoveniya" (The Way of Spiritual Renewal) (Soboleva, 2023, 57-58). He distinguished "dukhovny natsionalizm" (spiritual nationalism)—reflective love for culture—from "instinktivny natsionalizm" (instinctive nationalism) driven by self-preservation, resolving into patriotic action (Soboleva, 2023, 58). Rodina links individual, family, state, and humanity, fostering "pravosoznanie" (legal consciousness) and private property as conditions for self-determination (Soboleva, 2023, 58-59). Ilyin's patriotism synthesizes cultural identity with active love, critiquing chauvinism as an inversion of unity (Soboleva, 2023, 58). Education and independent thought underpin this, contrasting with collectivist ideologies, reflecting a Hegelian influence on state-soul unity (Soboleva, 2023, 59-60). Rodina emerges as a personal narrative, resolving material alienation into spiritual citizenship, urging political freedom amid historical materialism's tensions (Soboleva, 2023, 60). This philosophy addresses modern identity crises, advocating a balanced nationalism over aggressive isolationism

I.A. Ilyin envisioned "The future Russia" (1991) as a dialectical synthesis of historical contradictions, where spiritual renewal resolves material decay, and organic unity overcomes revolutionary chaos. He saw Russia's strength in its spiritual "Geistige Kraft" and geographical position as a vast Eurasian organism, bridging East and West through divine concreteness unfolding in history (Ilyin, 1991, 162). The messianic goal of Russians, according to Ilyin, is to unite all peoples under the double-headed eagle, symbolizing the harmonious resolution of Byzantine heritage and Horde legacy, ensuring subordination and order ingrained in Russian blood for racial survival (Ilyin, 1991, 163). Ivan Ilyin remained a monarchist to the end, advocating a constitutional form akin to English parliamentary limits, rejecting German absolutism, where monarchy embodies "Selbstherrschaft" as tragic necessity balancing freedom and authority (Ilyin, 1991, 152).

Ilyin proved Russia can only thrive under monarchy, historically shaped by Eurasian dialectics: the Horde's nomadic subordination on one side and Byzantine sacral hierarchy on the other, resolving into organic statehood (Ilyin, 1991, 164). Russians have subordination in their blood, ensuring "Ordnung" for survival amid vast spaces and invasions, where contradictions propel spiritual realization (Ilyin, 1991, 165). This cosmological view posits Russia as Concrete-Universal, striving against chaos for divine synthesis, critiquing republican abstraction as formal negation of spirit (Ilyin, 1991, 153).

Expanding, Ivan Ilyin dialectically mediated past failures and future renewal, arguing monarchy resolves revolutionary antagonisms by fostering heroic duty (Ilyin, 1991, 94). The fall of monarchy in 1917 exposed unresolved contradictions: intellectual republicanism inverted liberation into Bolshevik oppression, severing state from religious roots (Ilyin, 1991, 93). Future Russia must negate this inversion through spiritual "Erneuerung", uniting peoples under monarchic authority as "Wille zur Macht" in ethical governance (Ilyin, 1991, 197). Ilyin viewed Russia's geographical "Lage" as processual, where contradictions of steppes and forests propel expansion, resolving in imperial unity (Ilyin, 1991, 162). This Eurasian dialectic, blending Horde's collective order and Byzantine sacralism, embeds subordination in Russian psyche,

ensuring survival against fragmentation (Ilyin, 1991, 163). Monarchy, for Ivan Ilyin, synthesizes these, rejecting parliamentary "Nivellierung" for constitutional limits preserving divine-ranked authority (Ilyin, 1991, 204).

Politically, Ilyin balanced corporation and institution, where monarchy as "Selbstherrschaft" mediates freedom and order, critiquing democracy's mass illusions (Ilyin, 1991, 283). Future state must dialectically integrate unitarism with federal spirit, resolving central authority and local autonomy in organic synthesis (Ilyin, 1991, 285). Russians' innate "Subordination" ensures this, as historical materialism's negation yields spiritual revival (Ilyin, 1991, 289). Ivan Aleksandrovich Ilyin warned against dismemberment, seeing Russia as spiritual-geographical organism, where messianic unity under eagle counters separatist chaos (Ilyin, 1991, 168). Eurasian contradictions—Horde's discipline and Byzantine theocracy—forge racial resilience, making monarchy inevitable for survival (Ilyin, 1991, 170).

True politics demands perceiving power as "Dienst" (service), "Pflicht" (duty), and "Last" (burden), fostering organic unity amid disarray (Efimova, 2010, 97). He critiqued prejudices equating politics with power grabs, inverting liberation into oppression, as seen in 20th-century failures demanding historical materialism's lessons (Efimova, 2010, 97). Illusory success arises when parties pursue "Herrschaft" (domination) sans national welfare, leading to totalitarian syntheses (Efimova, 2010, 98). True success synthesizes ideal and reality: politics as art uniting best forces in "loyale Freiheit" (free loyalty), educating legal consciousness without illusions (Efimova, 2010, 99). Ilyin emphasized balancing power and freedom—overemphasizing either inverts state into anarchy or tyranny, reflecting dialectical tensions in class struggles like Marxism (Efimova, 2010, 99). The true politician embodies "tragische Eigenschaft" (tragic trait), risking life for organic justice, avoiding "Intrige" (intrigue) for solidarity (Efimova, 2010, 100). Dialectics reveal forgotten axioms: politics serves the whole, not classes, resolving envy into fairness (Efimova, 2010, 100). Contemporary relevance lies in critiquing demagoguery inverting progress into crises, urging renewed "Ideale" (ideals) grounded in historical materialism for authentic renewal

In cosmology, Ivan Aleksandrovich Ilyin (1883-1954) posited reality as divine process, Russia embodying Concrete-Universal uniting nations in "Geistige Erneuerung" (Ilyin, 1991, 171). Monarchy resolves antagonisms, English constitution tempering power with parliamentary accountability, avoiding German absolutism's excesses (Ilyin, 1991, 152).

Ilyin expanded: spiritual strength from Orthodox "Seele" purifies passions, geographical position demands order for vastness (Ilyin, 1991, 125). Messianic goal dialectically unites under eagle, Horde past instilling subordination, Byzantine legacy sacralizing state (Ilyin, 1991, 296).

Future Russia, per Ivan Ilyin, negates Bolshevik materialism through monarchic synthesis, ensuring "Ordnung" for racial continuity (Ilyin, 1991, 159). Constitutional monarchy, blending freedom and duty, resolves cosmological tensions (Ilyin, 1991, 160). Ilyin argued republic inverts spirit, monarchy embodying heroic imperative amid Eurasian contradictions (Ilyin, 1991, 203). Subordination in blood fosters survival, geographical unity demanding imperial "Selbstherrschaft" (Ilyin, 1991, 162). Expanding idea: Ilyin saw spiritual "Geist" as dialectical unfolding, Russia uniting peoples in messianic harmony under eagle, resolving Horde-Byzantine oppositions (Ilyin, 1991, 163). Monarchy, constitutionally limited, ensures order for vast geography, Russians' innate subordination guaranteeing racial "Überleben" (Ilyin, 1991, 165). I. A. Ilyin proved historical necessity: Eurasian dialectics make monarchy sole form, republic

leading to chaos (Ilyin, 1991, 152). Future demands spiritual renewal, monarchy synthesizing freedom and authority (Ilyin, 1991, 197).

Conclusion

This study concludes with an analysis of the life, ideas, and legacy of Ivan Aleksandrovich Ilyin, whose intellectual work represents a complex synthesis of philosophical traditions, national identity, and spiritual quest. The results of the analysis allow for a summary of the key aspects of his contribution to Russian religious philosophy, political theory, and pedagogical concepts, as well as an assessment of their relevance in the context of contemporary Russian thought.

The research has revealed both internal contradictions in Ilyin's worldview and his capacity for their dialectical resolution, which aligns with the principle of *contraria sunt complementa* (opposites are complementary). Building upon Kantian epistemology, Fichtean ethics of duty, and Hegelian dialectics, Ilyin developed an original ontology in which reality is a process of the Divine realizing itself in history. His works, such as *On Resistance to Evil by Force* and *The Path to Spiritual Renewal*, demonstrate a striving for a *synthesis a priori* (a priori synthesis), uniting moral and legal categories with the national idea of the "Homeland" (Rodina). However, his critique of pacifism and justification of "resisting evil" raise questions about the boundaries of the ethical legitimacy of force, which remains a subject of debate among scholars. A comparison with Rousseau and Machiavelli highlights the uniqueness of his approach: unlike Rousseau's *contrat social*, which emphasizes the state of nature, or Machiavelli's pragmatism, Ilyin proposes a spiritually-oriented model of the state where "legal consciousness" (*pravosoznanie*) serves as the foundation of order. Ilyin's political ideas, including his concept of the national state, reflect his analysis of Russia's post-revolutionary crisis. His dialectical view of monarchy as a synthesis of freedom and authority contrasts with republican models, warranting further study in light of contemporary political realities. His pedagogical views, emphasizing "flowering thinking" and moral upbringing, offer an alternative to utilitarian approaches, though their practical applicability remains questionable within the context of secularized education. The analysis of sources, including his correspondence and memoirs, confirms the influence of Novgorodtsev, Trubetskoy, and the German idealist tradition, which enriches our understanding of his methodology. Nevertheless, the lack of a systematic codification of Ilyin's ideas complicates their integration into modern discourse. His legacy, therefore, represents a corpus of ideas requiring critique and adaptation.

Contrasting Ivan Ilyin's ideas with modern discourses reveals stark divergences. In nationalism, Ilyin's organic, spiritual model—viewing Russia as a messianic entity resisting Western fragmentation (Ilyin, 1991, 162)—clashes with Benedict Anderson's (1936-2015) constructivist view of nations as "imagined communities" forged through print media and shared narratives, allowing for fluid, inclusive identities rather than essentialist hierarchies (Anderson, 2016, 6). This highlights how Ilyin's essentialism risks exclusion, unlike Anderson's emphasis on historical contingency in globalized societies. On moral philosophy, Ilyin's justification of force as "conscientious compulsion" against evil (Ilyin, 1994, 234) inverts liberal ethics, such as John Rawls's (1921-2002) veil of ignorance promoting justice as fairness and universal rights (Rawls, 1999, 118), potentially enabling relativism over impartial rules. Ilyin's spiritual nationalism, rooted in Orthodox exceptionalism and anti-Westernism (Ilyin, 2006, 12), opposes Jürgen Habermas's (b.1929) constitutional patriotism, which fosters post-national identities via rational discourse and inclusive deliberation, mitigating ethnic essentialism (Habermas, 1998, 225). This reveals Ilyin's model as potentially chauvinistic, unlike Habermas's emphasis on

democratic legitimacy in multicultural Europe. In moral philosophy, Ilyin's ethic of resisting evil through tragic necessity (Ilyin, 1994, 87) contrasts with Alasdair MacIntyre's (1929-2025) virtue ethics, reviving communal traditions but without Ilyin's divine absolutism, prioritizing narrative coherence over hierarchical duty (MacIntyre, 2007, 205).

Ilyin's spiritual nationalism as "Geistige Einheit" (Kuzychenko, 2021, 23) contrasts Anthony D. Smith's (1939-2016) ethno-symbolism, tracing identities to evolving myths without prescriptive hierarchies, enabling adaptive pluralism (Smith, 1998, 190). This critiques Ilyin's static essentialism amid globalization. Morally, his force ethics, guided by conscience against evil (Martynenko, 2009, 29), opposes Iris Marion Young's (1949-2006) structural justice, focusing on systemic oppression and collective responsibility through intersectional lenses, not national duty (Young, 2011, 52).

On nationalism, Ilyin's organic unity, blending Byzantine sacralism and Horde discipline (Ilyin, 1991, 164), diverges from Will Kymlicka's (b.1962) multicultural citizenship, which accommodates minority rights within liberal states, promoting hybrid identities over monolithic spiritual bonds (Kymlicka, 1996, 76). This exposes Ilyin's potential for exclusion in pluralistic contexts. In moral philosophy, his "conscientious compromise" justifying violence (Nizhnikov, 2014, 38) inverts Martha Nussbaum's (b. 1947) capabilities approach, emphasizing universal human flourishing through secular ethics rather than faith-based duty (Nussbaum, 2011, 33).

Ilyin's organic state (Shestakov, 2012, 3) opposes Rogers Brubaker's (b. 1956) relational nationalism, viewing identities as dynamic categories shaped by politics, not fixed spiritual unities (Brubaker, 2004, 132).

The study of I.A. Ilyin underscores the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach for a full comprehension of his contribution. Thus, Ilyin's legacy remains an open field for *recherche scientifique* (scientific research), where a dialogue between the past and the present fosters a deeper understanding of both Russian philosophy and the universal questions of human existence.

Acknowledgements

The author expresses his gratitude to the editorial team of *Nous Academy Journal* for their contribution to this work. The manuscript has been improved and rendered more scholarly thanks to their efforts. The author expresses his deep gratitude to his parents, Colonel of the Air Force, Yuri and Tatiana (1962-2020), MD (venereologist). The author is also deeply thankful to the colleagues and mentors who provided invaluable support in his formation as a scholar: Nataliia Vitalievna Zahurska, Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor; Serhiy Oleksiiiovych Holikov, PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor; Aleksandr Vasylovych Holubenko, PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor; Andrii Hennadiiovych Bezrodnyi, PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor; Ihor Viktorovych Minakov, PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor; Semen Aleksiyovych Honcharov, Doctor of Philosophy, Senior Lecturer.

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