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Between Scientific Concept and Ideological Control: The Legacy of E. Bekmakhanov in Kazakh Historiography

The article examines the scholarly legacy of E. Bekmakhanov as a historiographical phenomenon that makes it possible to identify the mechanisms of interaction between scholarly initiative, national historical narrative, and the ideological regulation of Soviet historical scholarship. The authors analyse the content and distinctive features of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly conception, the mechanisms of its professional and ideological evaluation, as well as the main directions of the subsequent reinterpretation of the historian's legacy in Kazakhstani historiography. The source base of the study comprises E. Bekmakhanov's works, materials from scholarly discussions of the late 1940s and early 1950s, publications in the Soviet periodical press, and contemporary historiographical studies. The study applies the principles of historicism, systematicity, and objectivity, as well as historiographical, historical-comparative, problem-chronological, and contextual methods. The authors demonstrate that the distinctive character of E. Bekmakhanov's research lay not in a complete break with the Soviet methodological paradigm, but in the expansion of its interpretative possibilities through a more independent consideration of the national-political factor, anti-colonial resistance, and the autonomous political role of Kazakh society. The authors conclude that one of the key subjects of the historiographical conflict was the question of the permissible extent to which Kazakh society could be recognised as an autonomous participant in the political process. An analysis of the materials of scholarly and ideological polemics shows that the discussion surrounding E. Bekmakhanov's works gradually transformed from a professional debate over a scholarly conception into the normativisation of historical knowledge. The authors substantiate the proposition that ideological regulation affected not only the researcher's final assessments but also the very structure of historical explanation, including the relationship between national, social, and imperial factors, the characterisation of Russian-Kazakh relations, the content of the concept of the national liberation movement, and the permissible forms of interpreting the autonomous political initiative of Kazakh society. Ideological control is considered not only as a set of administrative and disciplinary restrictions, but also as a mechanism for shaping the normative language of historical scholarship and the criteria of academic legitimacy of historical interpretation. The scholarly novelty of the article lies in the transition from a predominantly biographical-rehabilitative model of studying E. Bekmakhanov to a critical historiographical analysis of the relationship between his scholarly conception and the mechanisms of the production, restriction, and legitimisation of historical knowledge. The authors propose a three-level model for analysing E. Bekmakhanov's legacy, comprising the scholarly conception of the history of Kazakhstan in the nineteenth century, the normative and institutional mechanisms of the ideological regulation of historical knowledge, and the subsequent historiographical reinterpretation of the historian's legacy.

Keywords: E. Bekmakhanov, Kazakhstani historiography, scholarly legacy, historical knowledge, ideological control, Soviet historical scholarship, Kenesary Kassymov, national liberation movement, historical narrative.

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Ғылыми тұжырымдама мен идеологиялық бақылау арасында: қазақстандық тарихнамадағы Е. Бекмахановтың мұрасы

Мақалада Е. Бекмахановтың ғылыми мұрасы зерттеушілік бастама, ұлттық тарихи нарратив және кеңестік тарих ғылымын идеологиялық реттеу тетіктерінің өзара әрекеттесуін айқындауға мүмкіндік беретін тарихнамалық феномен ретінде қарастырылады. Авторлар Е. Бекмахановтың ғылыми тұжырымдамасының мазмұны мен ерекшеліктерін, оны кәсіби және идеологиялық тұрғыдан бағалау тетіктерін, сондай-ақ тарихшы мұрасының Қазақстан тарихнамасында кейіннен қайта пайымдалуының негізгі бағыттарын талдайды. Зерттеудің деректік негізін Е. Бекмахановтың еңбектері, 1940-жылдардың соңы мен 1950-жылдардың басындағы ғылыми пікірталас материалдары, кеңестік мерзімді баспасөз жарияланымдары және қазіргі заманғы тарихнамалық зерттеулер құрайды. Зерттеуде тарихилық, жүйелілік және объективтілік қағидаттары, сондай-ақ тарихнамалық, тарихи-салыстырмалы, проблемалық-хронологиялық және контекстуалдық әдістер қолданылды. Е. Бекмахановтың зерттеушілік ерекшелігі кеңестік әдіснамалық парадигмадан толықтай қол үзінде емес, ұлттық-саяси факторды, отаршылдыққа қарсы қарсылықты және қазақ қоғамының дербес саяси рөлін анағұрлым дербес түрде ескеру арқылы оның интерпретациялық мүмкіндіктерін кеңейтуінде болғаны көрсетілген. Тарихнамалық қақтығыстың негізгі нысандарының бірі қазақ қоғамын саяси үдерістің дербес қатысушысы ретінде танудың жол берілетін дәрежесі мәселесі болған деген қорытынды жасалған. Ғылыми және идеологиялық полемика материалдарын талдау Е. Бекмаханов еңбектерінің төңірегіндегі пікірталастың ғылыми тұжырымдаманы кәсіби тұрғыдан талқылаудан тарихи білімді нормативтендіруге қарай біртіндеп трансформацияланғанын көрсетеді. Авторлар идеологиялық реттеуге зерттеушінің қорытынды бағалары ғана емес, сонымен бірге ұлттық, әлеуметтік және империялық факторлардың арақатынасын, орыс-қазақ қатынастарының сипаттамасын, ұлт-азаттық қозғалыс ұғымының мазмұнын және қазақ қоғамының дербес саяси бастамасын интерпретациялаудың жол берілетін нысандарын қамтитын тарихи түсіндіру құрылымының өзі де ұшырады деген тұжырымды негіздейді. Идеологиялық бақылау әкімшілік және тәртіптік шектеулердің жиынтығы ретінде ғана емес, сонымен қатар тарих ғылымының нормативтік тілін және тарихи интерпретацияның академиялық легитимділігі критерийлерін қалыптастыру тетігі ретінде қарастырылады. Мақаланың ғылыми жаңалығы Е. Бекмахановты зерттеудің басым түрде биографиялық-реабилитациялық моделінен оның ғылыми тұжырымдамасы мен тарихи білімді өндіру, шектеу және легитимдеу тетіктерінің өзара байланысын сыни-тарихнамалық тұрғыдан талдаумен айқындалады. Е. Бекмаханов мұрасын талдаудың үш деңгейлі моделін ұсынған, ол XIX ғасырдағы Қазақстан тарихының ғылыми тұжырымдамасын, тарихи білімді идеологиялық реттеудің нормативтік және институционалдық тетіктерін және тарихшы мұрасының кейінгі тарихнамалық қайта пайымдалуын қамтиды.

Кілт сөздер: Е. Бекмаханов, Қазақстан тарихнамасы, ғылыми мұра, тарихи білім, идеологиялық бақылау, кеңестік тарих ғылымы, Кенесары Қасымов, ұлт-азаттық қозғалыс, тарихи нарратив.

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Между научной концепцией и идеологическим контролем: наследие Е. Бекмаханова в казахстанской историографии

В статье рассматривается научное наследие Е. Бекмаханова как историографический феномен, позволяющий выявить механизмы взаимодействия исследовательской инициативы, национального исторического нарратива и идеологического регулирования советской исторической науки. Авторы анализируют содержание и особенности научной концепции Е. Бекмаханова, механизмы её профессиональной и идеологической оценки, а также основные направления последующего переосмысления наследия историка в казахстанской историографии. Источниковую основу исследования составляют труды Е. Бекмаханова, материалы научных дискуссий конца 1940-х — начала 1950-х гг., публикации советской периодики и современные историографические исследования. В исследовании применяются принципы историзма, системности и объективности, а также историографический, историко-сравнительный, проблемно-хронологический и контекстуальный методы. Авторы показывают, что исследовательская специфика Е. Бекмаханова заключалась не в полном разрыве с советской методологической парадигмой, а в расширении её интерпретационных возможностей посредством более самостоятельного учёта национально-политического фактора, антиколониального сопротивления и самостоятельной политической роли казахского общества. Авторы приходят к выводу, что одним из ключевых предметов историографического конфликта являлась проблема допустимой степени признания казахского общества самостоятельным участником политического процесса. Анализ материалов научной и идеологической полемики показывает, что дискуссия вокруг трудов Е. Бекмаханова постепенно

трансформировалась от профессионального обсуждения научной концепции к нормативизации исторического знания. Авторы обосновывают положение о том, что идеологическому регулированию подвергались не только итоговые оценки исследователя, но и сама структура исторического объяснения, включая соотношение национального, социального и имперского факторов, характеристику российско-казахских отношений, содержание понятия национально-освободительного движения и допустимые формы интерпретации самостоятельной политической инициативы казахского общества. Идеологический контроль рассматривается не только как совокупность административных и дисциплинарных ограничений, но и как механизм формирования нормативного языка исторической науки и критериев академической легитимности исторической интерпретации. Научная новизна статьи заключается в переходе от преимущественно биографико-реабилитационной модели изучения Е. Бекмаханова к критико-историографическому анализу взаимосвязи его научной концепции и механизмов производства, ограничения и легитимации исторического знания. Авторы предлагают трёхуровневую модель анализа наследия Е. Бекмаханова, включающую научную концепцию истории Казахстана XIX века, нормативные и институциональные механизмы идеологического регулирования исторического знания и последующее историографическое переосмысление наследия историка.

Ключевые слова: Е. Бекмаханов, казахстанская историография, научное наследие, историческое знание, идеологический контроль, советская историческая наука, Кенесары Касымов, национально-освободительное движение, исторический нарратив.

Introduction

The scholarly legacy of Yermukhan Bekmakhanov occupies a distinctive place in the history of twentieth-century Kazakhstani historiography. His research activity unfolded during a period when the development of historical scholarship in the USSR was shaped not only by the internal logic of academic inquiry but also by rigid ideological imperatives that defined the permissible boundaries for interpreting the past. Under these conditions, addressing issues of national history, the nature of anti-colonial movements, the role of historical figures, and the specific features of the incorporation of the Kazakh steppe into the political space of the Russian Empire acquired not only scholarly but also political and ideological significance. Therefore, the study of E. Bekmakhanov's legacy makes it possible to consider his works not in isolation, but within the broader context of the interaction between historical knowledge, state ideology, and institutional mechanisms of control over the humanities.

Of particular significance in the historian's scholarly biography was his study of Kazakhstan in the first half of the nineteenth century and, above all, the uprising led by Kenesary Kasymov. The interpretation of this movement proposed by E. Bekmakhanov became one of the most notable developments in post-war Soviet Kazakhstani historiography. His attempt to examine the uprising in the context of socio-political processes, imperial policy, and the struggle to preserve the political autonomy of Kazakh society went beyond simplified explanatory schemes in which national movements were often assessed primarily through the prism of class-based criteria. In this way, the researcher raised the question of the possibility of a more complex understanding of the historical process, one that took into account the interaction of social, political, and national factors.

At the same time, the scholarly fate of E. Bekmakhanov's concept demonstrated the limited autonomy of historical knowledge under late Stalinism. The discussion surrounding his work *Kazakhstan in the 1820s–1840s* [1] gradually moved beyond the boundaries of professional scholarly debate and assumed the character of an ideological campaign. Criticism of the researcher was connected not only with the assessment of individual propositions in his work, but also with the broader requirements of Soviet historical policy, which demanded that scholarly interpretations conform to established views concerning the nature of Russian-Kazakh relations, the class character of social movements, and the role of the Russian Empire in the history of the peoples of the USSR. As a result, scholarly controversy was transformed into a mechanism of disciplinary and political pressure, while the historian's fate became one of the most illustrative examples of the dependence of humanistic knowledge on ideological circumstances.

The relevance of revisiting E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy is determined by the fact that contemporary historiography has the opportunity to examine his works free from former ideological restrictions while at the same time avoiding their uncritical glorification. In the context of reassessing the Soviet historiographical experience, particular importance is attached to analysing which elements of his concept retain scholarly value, which were conditioned by the methodological frameworks of his time, and how the discussion surrounding his research influenced the subsequent development of historical scholarship

in Kazakhstan. Such an approach makes it possible to move beyond a predominantly biographical consideration of the scholar's personality toward an examination of his legacy as an independent historiographical phenomenon.

In contemporary Kazakhstani historical scholarship, the name of E. Bekmakhanov is rightly associated with the development of professional research into national history, the study of nineteenth-century Kazakhstan, and the defence of the possibility of a scholarly interpretation of national liberation movements. However, the existing body of research often focuses either on the historian's biography and the circumstances of his persecution or on the assessment of particular propositions in his work on the movement of Kenesary Kasymov. The relationship between E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly concept as such and the ideological mechanisms that shaped the forms of its reception, criticism, and subsequent rehabilitation has received comparatively less focused analysis. Yet it is precisely the comparison of these two aspects that makes it possible to reveal more deeply the scholar's place in the history of Kazakhstani historiography.

The scholarly problem addressed in this article lies in the need to determine how E. Bekmakhanov's research concept was formed and functioned within an ideologically regulated scholarly environment, as well as to identify its significance for the subsequent development of historical knowledge in Kazakhstan. This involves not only reconstructing the circumstances of the well-known historiographical debate, but also clarifying the boundaries of permissible scholarly interpretation within the Soviet system of producing historical knowledge. In this context, the historian's legacy serves as important material for analysing the relationship between professional research practice, official historical policy, and mechanisms of institutional control.

The aim of the article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy as a historiographical phenomenon formed at the intersection of scholarly inquiry and the ideological control of the Soviet era. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set: to reveal the particular features of the formation of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly views; to determine the content and novelty of his concept of the history of nineteenth-century Kazakhstan; to analyse the interpretation of the uprising led by Kenesary Kasymov in his works; to examine the nature and mechanisms of ideological criticism directed against the researcher; to identify the impact of this debate on the state of historical scholarship in Kazakhstan; and to determine the main directions of the subsequent reinterpretation of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy in post-Soviet and contemporary historiography.

The scholarly novelty of the study lies in examining E. Bekmakhanov's legacy not only as a body of works by an outstanding historian or as an example of the ideological persecution of a scholar, but as a complex historiographical phenomenon that makes it possible to trace the interaction between a scholarly concept, professional debate, and the political and ideological mechanisms regulating historical knowledge. This perspective provides an opportunity to reassess the significance of his works for the development of Kazakhstani historiography and, at the same time, to determine the place of the related debate in the history of Soviet scholarship in the humanities.

Materials and Methods

The source base of the study consists of published works by E. Bekmakhanov, materials from scholarly discussions of the late 1940s and early 1950s, as well as publications reflecting the official assessment of his scholarly concept during the Soviet period. A central place in the corpus of sources is occupied by E. Bekmakhanov's monograph devoted to the history of Kazakhstan in the 1820s–1840s [1]. Examination of this work makes it possible to identify the principal propositions of the author's concept, the particular features of his interpretation of the socio-political processes of the first half of the nineteenth century, and the nature of his assessment of the movement led by Kenesary Kasymov. To determine the origins and conditions under which E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly views were formed, the collective work on the history of the Kazakh SSR, prepared in the early 1940s with the participation of the researcher, was also used [2]. Its comparison with E. Bekmakhanov's subsequent works makes it possible to trace the development of the author's position and to establish the place of his concept in the formation of professional Kazakhstani historiography during the Soviet period.

A separate group of sources consists of materials relating to the scholarly and ideological controversy surrounding E. Bekmakhanov's works. The study uses the review by K. Sharipov [3], the publication by T. Shoinbaev, Kh. Aidarova, and A. Yakunin [4], as well as stenographic materials from the discussion of the historian's scholarly concept [5]. These sources are considered not only in terms of the assessments they

contain of specific propositions advanced by E. Bekmakhanov, but also as evidence of the mechanisms through which Soviet historical scholarship functioned. Their comparison makes it possible to trace the transition from professional scholarly discussion to the ideological classification of historical interpretations.

In addition, E. Bekmakhanov's later works [6] are used to identify changes in his research agenda and approaches to interpreting the history of Kazakhstan after the ideological campaign of the early 1950s. Comparison of the historian's earlier and later works makes it possible to determine both elements of continuity in his scholarly views and the changes that occurred under the influence of new political and institutional conditions. Contemporary studies of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy are used primarily as a historiographical basis for determining the degree to which the problem has been studied and for identifying existing research approaches [7], [8].

The methodological framework of the study is based on the principles of historicism, systemic analysis, and objectivity. The principle of historicism presupposes consideration of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly activity within the specific intellectual, institutional, political, and ideological conditions of the Soviet period. This makes it possible to assess his concept with due regard to the state of historical scholarship at that time and to avoid the retrospective projection of contemporary research perspectives onto scholarly practice in the mid-twentieth century. The principle of systemic analysis is used to examine E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy as an integral part of the development of Kazakhstani historiography. Within this approach, his works, scholarly controversy, the activities of academic institutions, and the mechanisms of party and ideological control are analysed as interconnected elements of a single process of the formation and regulation of historical knowledge.

The principal specialized method employed in the study is historiographical analysis. It is applied to identify the content of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly concept, the nature of its reception by his contemporaries, and its subsequent reinterpretation. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between scholarly argumentation as such and the ideological assessments that accompanied the discussion of his works.

The historical-comparative method is used to compare E. Bekmakhanov's propositions with the assessments of his opponents and with later historiographical interpretations. This makes it possible to identify changes in the understanding of the nature of the movement led by Kenesary Kasymov, Russian-Kazakh relations, and the issue of national liberation across different periods in the development of historical scholarship.

The problem-chronological method is employed to distinguish the principal stages in the formation and reception of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy: the development of his research concept, the publication of his major works, the emergence of scholarly discussion, the intensification of ideological criticism, and the subsequent reinterpretation of his legacy. This approach makes it possible to trace changes in assessments over time and to establish their relationship with transformations in the political and scholarly context.

Contextual analysis also occupies an important place, through which scholarly texts and critical publications are examined in relation to the conditions of their creation and circulation. Particular attention is paid to the use of such categories as «national liberation movement,» «nationalism,» «feudalism,» and «incorporation,» since their meanings in Soviet historiography were determined not only by scholarly considerations but also by political and ideological imperatives.

Thus, the combination of historiographical, historical-comparative, problem-chronological, and contextual methods makes it possible to examine E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy as a complex historiographical phenomenon. The approach employed is aimed at identifying the interrelationship between the historian's scholarly concept, professional debate, and the mechanisms of ideological control that shaped the development of historical knowledge in Soviet Kazakhstan.

Results

E. Bekmakhanov's Scholarly Concept and the Boundaries of Historical Interpretation

The formation of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly views took place during the period of institutional development of professional historical scholarship in Kazakhstan, when the creation of a coherent narrative of national history was combined with the need to incorporate it into the normative methodological framework of Soviet historiography. This duality determined the specific character of his research position. On the one hand, the historian's works were produced within the Marxist paradigm and relied on categories characteristic of it, including feudal relations, social differentiation, and class contradictions. On the other

hand, his engagement with issues of the political history of Kazakh society, imperial administrative policy, and national liberation movements contributed to the formation of a more complex model for interpreting the historical process.

An important stage in the development of this approach was E. Bekmakhanov's participation in the preparation of the collective work *History of the Kazakh SSR from Ancient Times to the Present Day*, published in 1943 [2]. This publication represented the first attempt at a systematic academic presentation of the history of Kazakhstan and was produced through the joint efforts of Kazakhstani historians and Soviet historians evacuated to the republic. E. Bekmakhanov's participation in this project was of fundamental importance for the subsequent formation of his research interests, particularly in the history of Kazakhstan in the first half of the nineteenth century and the national liberation movement.

E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly concept found its most consistent expression in the monograph *Kazakhstan in the 1820s–1840s*, published in 1947 [1]. Its significance was determined not only by the scale of the documentary material employed, but also by the very formulation of the research problem. The history of Kazakhstan in the first half of the nineteenth century was examined through the interrelationship of socio-economic, political, and foreign-policy processes. Particular attention was devoted to the movement led by Kenesary Kasymov, which was analysed in the context of the expansion of the Russian administrative system, changes in traditional mechanisms of political authority, land relations, and the interaction of Kazakh society with the Russian Empire and the Central Asian khanates [1].

A fundamental element of E. Bekmakhanov's concept was the recognition of Kenesary's movement as national liberationist and anti-colonial in its principal orientation. At the same time, the researcher did not exclude the social heterogeneity of the movement and did not entirely depart from the Marxist conceptual framework. However, in his interpretation, the national and political factor acquired independent analytical significance and was not subsumed exclusively within a class-based scheme. Another important feature of the work was its attention to the political organization of the movement. E. Bekmakhanov analysed Kenesary's activities not only in the context of armed struggle, but also through issues of the centralization of power, administrative governance, diplomatic relations, the taxation system, and judicial and legal regulation [1]. As a result, the movement was presented in the study not merely as a form of social protest, but also as a political project associated with an attempt to preserve or restore autonomous mechanisms of authority under conditions of increasing imperial presence.

It was precisely this aspect that later became one of the most controversial. In K. Sharipov's 1949 review, criticism was directed at what the author regarded as E. Bekmakhanov's insufficient attention to class contradictions within the movement and his favourable assessment of Kenesary's political activity [3]. At the same time, it is important to note that K. Sharipov still acknowledged the anti-colonial orientation of the movement and the participation of broad sections of the Kazakh population in it [3]. Consequently, at this stage the controversy retained the character of a professional historiographical debate, and the question of the Kenesary movement had not yet been reduced to a single mandatory interpretative formula.

This circumstance makes it possible to define more precisely the scholarly novelty of E. Bekmakhanov's concept. It lay not in a complete rejection of Soviet methodology, but in the expansion of the research space within it. The history of Kazakh society was examined not only from the perspective of social relations, but also through the categories of political action, resistance, governance, and historical agency. It was precisely this combination of class-based and national-political analysis that created an internal tension between the research logic of the work and the increasingly stringent ideological requirements of post-war Soviet historiography.

From Scholarly Discussion to an Ideological Campaign

Of particular importance for reconstructing the reception of E. Bekmakhanov's concept are the materials of the discussion of his monograph held on 14–19 July 1948 [5]. The transcript makes it possible to observe not a retrospective assessment of events, but the actual mechanism of professional discussion of the work. At the centre of the debate were the nature of the Kenesary movement, its social base, its relationship with the Russian Empire, the use of folklore sources, and the relationship between national and class factors [5]. The very fact that the discussion continued for several days indicates that the monograph was perceived not as a narrowly focused study, but as a work addressing fundamental issues in the construction of the history of nineteenth-century Kazakhstan. At the initial stage, the participants in the debate could differ in their specific assessments, while the possibility of argumentation and comparison of different research

positions was still preserved. This confirms the need to distinguish between the early stage of scholarly criticism and the subsequent ideological campaign.

A qualitative change occurred at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s. A pivotal event was the publication on 26 December 1950 in the newspaper *Pravda* of the article by T. Shoinbaev, Kh. Aidarova, and A. Yakunin, «For a Marxist-Leninist Interpretation of Questions of the History of Kazakhstan» [4]. The transfer of the discussion to the pages of the central Party press organ altered not only the scale of the controversy but also its character. The scholarly concept began to be assessed primarily in terms of its conformity with political and ideological requirements. In this context, the Kenesary movement was increasingly and unequivocally characterized as feudal-monarchical and reactionary, while E. Bekmakhanov's position was defined as methodologically and politically erroneous [4]. Thus, a fundamental change occurred in the status of historiographical assessment: from a subject of professional debate, it was transformed into a normative judgment, deviation from which could be interpreted as a political transgression. This process was not unique to Kazakhstani scholarship.

V.V. Tikhonov's study demonstrates that under late Stalinism ideological campaigns systematically affected the Soviet historical community, determining not only the organizational conditions of scholarly activity but also the boundaries of permissible interpretations [8]. Scholarly disagreements could be incorporated into the political discourse of the struggle against «bourgeois objectivism,» «cosmopolitanism,» or «nationalism,» after which professional criticism acquired disciplinary consequences.

In the case of E. Bekmakhanov, this mechanism manifested itself particularly clearly. What was subject to regulation was not the very fact of studying the Kenesary movement, but its substantive interpretation. The researcher could address the national liberation movement, but his assessment was required to conform to the established model of the relationship between class, national, and Russian factors. This makes it possible to view ideological control not only as a system of prohibitions, but also as a mechanism for shaping the normative language of historical knowledge.

Ideological Control and the Restriction of Scholarly Autonomy

The history of the scholarly controversy surrounding E. Bekmakhanov demonstrates that Soviet ideological control was exercised through a complex set of interconnected mechanisms. These included academic discussions, criticism in professional and Party publications, intervention by Party structures, the reassessment of academic qualifications, and personnel decisions. As a result, political evaluation became part of the procedure for determining the scholarly validity of research. The problem of interpreting Russian-Kazakh relations was particularly illustrative. The Soviet historical model contained an internal contradiction. On the one hand, criticism of the colonial policy of tsarism was permitted; on the other hand, historians were required to emphasize the progressive historical significance of Kazakhstan's rapprochement with Russia. Consequently, an emphasis on the anti-colonial content of a national movement could be characterized as an underestimation of the positive consequences of Russian influence.

Against this background, E. Bekmakhanov's concept acquired particular ideological sensitivity. The representation of Kazakh society as an independent subject of political action, as well as the analysis of attempts to centralize authority and resist the administrative expansion of the empire, objectively broadened the scope of the national historical narrative [1]. It was precisely for this reason that the dispute over Kenesary was simultaneously a dispute over the boundaries of permissible interpretation of Kazakhstan's political history.

The transcript of the discussion and the subsequent publication in *Pravda* make it possible to trace the gradual transformation of the language of criticism [4], [5]. Whereas the initial debate focused on source-critical, methodological, and socio-historical arguments, categories of political accusation became increasingly prominent at a later stage. It is in this transition that the mechanism of the ideologization of historical knowledge becomes most clearly visible: conformity with the established political interpretation became one of the criteria of academic legitimacy.

N.V. Grishina's study, devoted to the practice of annulment and reconsideration of academic degrees within the Soviet historical community in the late 1940s and early 1950s, makes it possible to place the «E. Bekmakhanov case» within a broader institutional context [9]. The author demonstrates that historians' dissertations and academic qualifications during this period could be reassessed under the influence of ideological campaigns. Among the cases analysed are E. Bekmakhanov's dissertations, which confirms the need to study the pressure exerted on the historian not merely as an episode specific to Kazakhstan, but as part of the all-Union system for regulating the academic community [9].

Thus, E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly fate makes it possible to identify a broader mechanism of interaction between scholarship and political power. Ideological control affected not only the researcher's final conclusions, but also the structure of the scholarly field: it determined the range of «dangerous» questions, shaped permissible terminology, influenced professional reputations, and created a system of self-regulation within the research community.

Scholarly Activity after Rehabilitation and Changes in Research Language

After his rehabilitation, E. Bekmakhanov returned to professional scholarly activity. In 1957, the monograph *The Incorporation of Kazakhstan into Russia* was published [6]. Its appearance demonstrated the continuity of the central themes of his scholarly interests: Kazakhstan's interaction with the Russian Empire, socio-economic changes, and the political history of the nineteenth century.

At the same time, a comparison of the 1947 monograph with the 1957 work reveals a change in research language. The structure of the later work contains significantly more pronounced normative terminology characteristic of Soviet historiography of the mid-1950s. This circumstance should be regarded as an important historiographical fact, since it makes it possible to analyse not only the individual scholarly evolution of the historian, but also the influence of the institutional environment on the ways in which scholarly conclusions were formulated.

However, it would be methodologically unjustified to interpret the later work exclusively as E. Bekmakhanov's complete abandonment of his earlier concept. A more productive approach is to distinguish between two levels: evaluative terminology and research problematics. Despite the change in language, anti-colonial struggle, social processes, Russian administrative policy, and the transformation of Kazakh society remained at the centre of attention [6]. Such an approach makes it possible to avoid two extreme models. The Soviet interpretation presented the scholar's subsequent works as an overcoming of his earlier «errors.» The opposite retrospective model may explain every change solely in terms of external coercion. Meanwhile, E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly evolution reflected a more complex combination of continuity in research interests, adaptation of the conceptual apparatus, and changes in the broader historiographical context.

Discussion

Contemporary historiography of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy is characterized by a gradual broadening of the research perspective: from reconstructing the historian's biography and scholarly reputation to analysing his conceptual legacy, pedagogical activity, and the institutional conditions under which historical scholarship functioned. At the same time, existing studies predominantly address individual aspects of his activity, whereas the interrelationship between the content of his scholarly concept, changes in the boundaries of permissible historical interpretation, and the mechanisms of ideological regulation requires a comprehensive examination.

A significant contribution to the post-Soviet reassessment of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly activity was made by S.F. Mazhitov [7]. The biographical and historiographical approach made it possible to restore the scholar's place in the history of Kazakhstani historical scholarship and to overcome the assessments that had become entrenched during the ideological campaign of the early 1950s. This stage was of fundamental importance for returning E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy to professional historical discourse. However, the rehabilitation perspective naturally placed primary emphasis on political persecution and the restoration of the researcher's scholarly reputation.

A different direction is represented in the work of Sh. T. Nurman, where E. Bekmakhanov's activity is analysed through his participation in the creation of educational literature and the formation of the content of historical education [10]. This perspective demonstrates that the researcher's significance was not limited to the academic study of nineteenth-century Kazakhstan. His scholarly activity was connected with the institutionalization of national historical knowledge and its incorporation into the educational sphere. This makes it possible to consider E. Bekmakhanov's influence simultaneously at the level of professional historiography and in the formation of perceptions of national history within the education system.

A directly conceptual line of inquiry is also developing in contemporary research. A. Agaidarova examines E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy in connection with the ideological environment, political persecution, rehabilitation, and his subsequent scholarly and pedagogical activity [11]. The work by R. Hesse, D.K. Kenzhebek, and A. Mamyrkhan is likewise devoted to his contribution to the development of the history of Kazakhstan, his scholarly activity, and the circumstances of his persecution [12]. The existence

of such studies demonstrates sustained interest in the figure of E. Bekmakhanov, while at the same time revealing the persistence of a predominantly personalized approach, in which the history of a scholarly concept is often examined through the prism of the biography of its author. The study by R.M. Zhumashev, A. Zh. Myrzakhmetova, G.T. Edgina, and D.S. Kozhabekov, devoted to the 1944 meeting of historians at the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the development of Soviet historiography of the history of Kazakhstan, substantially broadens the context of the problem [13]. The authors demonstrate changes in the principles governing the interpretation of Russian imperial policy and the transition from the concept of the «lesser evil» to a more positive assessment of Russia's historical role in the destinies of the national republics. From this perspective, the subsequent campaign surrounding E. Bekmakhanov's works appears as part of a longer process of restructuring the normative foundations of Soviet historical knowledge.

This conclusion is confirmed within a broader international historiographical context. L. Tillet was among the first to systematically investigate the impact of Party and state policy on Soviet historiography of the non-Russian peoples and demonstrated how the official concept of Russia's relations with the national peripheries changed over time [14]. For the analysis of Kazakhstani material, his approach is particularly significant because it makes it possible to consider the discussion surrounding E. Bekmakhanov within the context of the all-Union construction of the concept of the «friendship of peoples» and the normative revision of interpretations of national liberation movements.

D. Brandenberger's study complements this perspective through an analysis of the consolidation of National Bolshevik discourse and the strengthening of Russocentric elements in the Soviet historical and political narrative during the 1930s–1950s [15]. For the present study, what is important is not the direct application of this concept to the Kazakhstani material, but the broader shift in Soviet memory politics identified by the author: class-based and internationalist argumentation increasingly came to be combined with a positive representation of the Russian state past and the Russian national historical canon. In this context, changes in the permissible assessments of Russian expansion and national resistance acquired all-Union ideological significance.

Thus, E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly fate developed within the broader process of transformation of the Soviet narrative concerning the past of the national republics. The conflict surrounding his concept cannot be reduced solely to the assessment of Kenesary Kasymov. In a broader historiographical dimension, the subject of disagreement was the permissible relationship between national, social, and imperial factors in explaining the historical process.

The results of the present study make it possible to identify the question of recognizing Kazakh society as an independent participant in the political process as one of the key elements of this conflict. In E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly concept, the history of Kazakhstan in the first half of the nineteenth century was examined not only through external administrative intervention and internal social contradictions, but also through the independent political action of Kazakh society [1]. The analysis of anti-colonial resistance, the organization of authority, diplomatic relations, and efforts toward political consolidation broadened the framework of the national historical narrative. From this perspective, the discussion surrounding E. Bekmakhanov's concept reflected a more fundamental question concerning the permissible degree to which the independent historical agency of non-Russian peoples could be recognized within the Soviet model of the past. The problem lay not only in defining the movement as «progressive» or «reactionary,» but also in determining what place national political initiative, resistance to imperial expansion, and indigenous institutions of authority could occupy in the academic explanation of the history of Kazakhstan.

Such an interpretation is consistent with V.V. Tikhonov's conclusions regarding the systemic nature of the ideological campaigns of late Stalinism [8]. Political and ideological regulation affected not only individual conclusions, but also professional institutions, research agendas, criteria of academic legitimacy, and the permissible language of historical description. The Kazakhstani case formed part of an all-Union process, yet it possessed a distinct specificity, since the conflict centred on issues of the national liberation movement, colonial policy, and the nature of Russian-Kazakh relations. The institutional dimension of this problem is examined in N.V. Grishina's study [9]. Analysis of the practice of reassessing academic qualifications demonstrates that ideological evaluation could directly affect a historian's professional status. The inclusion of E. Bekmakhanov's Candidate and Doctoral dissertations within such a mechanism indicates that the regulation of scholarly knowledge was exercised not only through public criticism, but also through institutions of academic recognition.

Comparative material is provided by A.S. Shakieva's study devoted to changes in the interpretations of the history of the Ulus of Jochi in academic editions of the History of the Kazakh SSR [16]. Despite its different subject matter, the findings of this study demonstrate the dependence of the academic narrative on transformations in Party and ideological directives. Taken together with the research of R.M. Zhumashev and co-authors [13], this confirms that the adjustment of historical interpretations in Kazakhstan during the 1940s–1950s was systemic in nature and extended to different periods of the national past.

The body of materials examined makes it possible to define late Stalinist ideological control as a process of the normativization of historical knowledge. Its content consisted not only in the application of sanctions against individual researchers, but also in the transformation of certain historical assessments into mandatory models of interpretation. Subject to regulation were the relationship between national and class factors, the characterization of Russian imperial policy, the content of the concept of the national liberation movement, and the degree to which the political agency of Kazakh society could be recognized. Such an understanding provides greater specificity to the problem of the academic autonomy of the Soviet historian. The restriction of autonomy manifested itself not only through direct administrative intervention. It was embedded in the system of concepts and normative assessments through which historical material received an academically permissible explanation. A study's strong source base did not guarantee its professional legitimacy if its conclusions diverged from the politically sanctioned model of the past.

As a result, the very criteria for legitimizing historical knowledge changed. An interpretation that at one stage existed as a subject of professional debate could later acquire the status of being ideologically unacceptable and subsequently re-enter scholarly circulation under different intellectual and political conditions. In this sense, the history of the reception of E. Bekmakhanov's concept reflects not only changing attitudes toward a particular researcher, but also shifts in the ways of determining what kind of historical knowledge was recognized as academically permissible. E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly activity after his rehabilitation acquires particular significance in this context. A comparison of his works published in 1947 and 1957 demonstrates the persistence of a number of major research problems alongside a noticeable change in the ways in which they were conceptually expressed [1], [6]. Russian-Kazakh relations, social processes, imperial policy, and anti-colonial uprisings remained within the scope of his scholarly interests, whereas the evaluative language corresponded more closely to the normative conceptual apparatus of Soviet historiography.

The broader context of the transformation of Soviet historical knowledge can be further clarified through R. Markwick's study devoted to the development of revisionist historiography after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [17]. The researcher demonstrates that de-Stalinization opened possibilities for revising a number of previously normatively established interpretations, although this process remained politically constrained and uneven. Incorporating this perspective makes it possible to view E. Bekmakhanov's return to professional scholarship as part of a broader transformation of the institutional environment of Soviet historiography, which nevertheless did not entail the complete elimination of mechanisms of political regulation. The materials presented by M. Kh. Sergaliev confirm this ambiguity with regard to Kazakhstan [18]. The declassified documents of the former KGB of the Kazakh SSR used in his research indicate the continuing attention of state security agencies toward representatives of the scholarly intelligentsia during the period of de-Stalinization. This makes it possible to regard E. Bekmakhanov's rehabilitation not as an immediate restoration of full academic autonomy, but as part of a longer transformation in relations between the state and the professional scholarly community.

A comparison of these approaches reveals a persisting research gap. Despite the considerable number of biographical, memorial, and institutional studies, insufficient attention has been devoted to the question of how changes in political and ideological norms affected not only the assessment of E. Bekmakhanov's works, but also the structure of historical explanation, the system of concepts employed, and the subsequent conceptual formulation of his research.

The results of the study make it possible to trace this transformation across four interrelated parameters: the subject of research, the conceptual apparatus, the nature of historical assessment, and the institutional reception of the scholarly text. The persistence of research interest in the history of nineteenth-century Kazakhstan was combined with changes in terminology and normative characterizations; changes in interpretation were accompanied by changes in the professional status of the concept itself—from a subject of academic discussion to an object of ideological condemnation and subsequently to later historiographical reassessment. On this basis, it becomes possible to move from a predominantly rehabilitative model of

studying E. Bekmakhanov's legacy to a critical historiographical approach. Political persecution retains fundamental importance for understanding his scholarly fate, but it is not the only explanatory focus. The scope of research is broadened through analysis of the internal structure of the scholarly concept, the conditions of its professional legitimation, and the subsequent transformation of research language.

At the same time, the critical historiographical approach excludes an uncritical idealization of E. Bekmakhanov. His scholarly concept was formed within the Soviet methodological system and retained the categories and explanatory schemes characteristic of it. The research novelty lay not in a complete break with the existing paradigm, but in expanding its interpretative space through a more independent consideration of the national-political factor, anti-colonial resistance, and the political agency of Kazakh society. From this perspective, E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy serves as an indicator of changing regimes of the production and legitimation of historical knowledge. His concept evolved from professional scholarly discussion to normative ideological evaluation, subsequently acquired a modified conceptual expression within a different academic environment, and in the post-Soviet period became an object of the restoration of scholarly reputation and subsequent critical reassessment. The historical significance of his legacy is therefore determined not only by the content of his works, but also by the history of their reception, restriction, changes in status, and return to the national scholarly discourse.

The results obtained make it possible to propose a three-level model for interpreting E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy. The first level consists of the scholarly concept of the history of nineteenth-century Kazakhstan itself, formed within the Soviet methodological system but expanding the possibilities for interpreting the national past. The second level is associated with the normativization of historical knowledge and the institutional mechanisms of ideological regulation that determined the permissible relationship between national, social, and imperial factors. The third level reflects the historiographical fate of the legacy—the transition from ideological condemnation through the restoration of scholarly reputation to contemporary critical historiographical analysis. The proposed model combines the history of scholarly ideas with the history of the institutional environment. It makes it possible to view E. Bekmakhanov's legacy not as a static body of works and not merely as evidence of political persecution, but as a dynamic historiographical phenomenon whose content, status, and reception changed together with transformations in the intellectual and political conditions under which historical knowledge was produced.

Thus, E. Bekmakhanov's significance for Kazakhstani historiography is determined by the interaction of three processes: the formation of a research concept, the establishment of normative boundaries for its permissible interpretation, and the subsequent transformation of the ways in which it was historiographically legitimized. Such an understanding most fully reveals the problem articulated in the title of the article and makes it possible to consider E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy as one of the most illustrative cases of interaction between research initiative, the national historical narrative, and an ideologically regulated system for the production of historical knowledge.

Conclusions

The study conducted makes it possible to formulate several concluding points characterizing the place of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy in the history of Kazakhstani historiography.

First, the significance of E. Bekmakhanov is determined not only by his contribution to the study of the history of nineteenth-century Kazakhstan, but also by the fact that his scholarly activity became one of the key points of intersection between professional historical research and an ideologically regulated system of knowledge. This makes it possible to consider his legacy as an indicator of the broader processes of institutional development and restriction of historical scholarship in Soviet Kazakhstan.

Second, the analysis has shown that E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly novelty was manifested primarily in the expansion of the space for national historical interpretation within the Soviet methodological system. His approach did not represent a complete break with the dominant paradigm; however, it allowed for a more independent consideration of the political factor, anti-colonial issues, and the historical agency of Kazakh society. It was precisely this feature that gave his research particular significance for the subsequent development of national historiography.

Third, ideological control over historical scholarship should be understood more broadly than as a set of administrative or repressive measures. It affected the criteria of scholarly acceptability, the conceptual apparatus, and the means by which historical interpretations were legitimized. As a result, political

normativity became a factor determining not only the fate of an individual researcher, but also the boundaries of professional historical knowledge.

Fourth, the scholarly fate of E. Bekmakhanov demonstrates the changing status of historical interpretation depending on the political and intellectual context. A scholarly proposition could successively become a subject of professional discussion, an object of ideological condemnation, and then return to academic discourse as the historiographical environment changed. Consequently, the history of his legacy is simultaneously a history of changes in the mechanisms through which scholarly knowledge was recognized and legitimized.

Fifth, the post-Soviet restoration of E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly reputation became a necessary stage in the reassessment of the Soviet historiographical experience; however, the current level of research requires moving beyond a predominantly rehabilitative model. A critical historiographical approach is more promising, as it involves analysing not only the circumstances of political persecution, but also the structure of the scholarly concept, its methodological foundations, historical conditionality, and subsequent transformation.

Sixth, the study makes it possible to define E. Bekmakhanov's legacy as a dynamic historiographical phenomenon whose significance was shaped through the interaction of scholarly initiative, institutional constraints, and subsequent reassessments. Such an understanding makes it possible to avoid both reproducing earlier ideological characterizations and uncritically idealizing the researcher.

Overall, E. Bekmakhanov's scholarly legacy occupies a distinctive place in the history of Kazakhstani historiography because his case most clearly reveals the interrelationship between the development of national historical knowledge and the political and institutional conditions of its existence. His works and the history of their reception make it possible to view twentieth-century Kazakhstani historiography not only as a space for the accumulation of historical knowledge, but also as a field in which the criteria of its scholarly and public legitimacy were constantly changing.

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