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# Kazakh Writers Illegally Accused of “Opposing Soviet Power”: Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly

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## ABSTRACT

During the repression in Kazakhstan, Mukhtar Auezov was accused because his works on Kazakh Literature were considered nationalistic, and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly was illegally prosecuted due to false errors in his research work. The article examines accusations that Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly, who studied the works of the Kazakh poet and writer Abai Kunanbayev, promoted nationalism that contradicted the policies of the Soviet government, leading to their illegal persecution. During the totalitarian period, Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly focused their works on Kazakh national traditions and literature. The purpose of the article is to reveal the mechanism of repression by studying the illegal persecution of Kazakh writers Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly carried out by the Soviet government. During the study of the history of repression carried out by the Soviet government against the Kazakh intelligentsia, it was revealed that the work of Kazakh writers Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly was not directed against the Soviet government but, on the contrary, aimed at developing the science of Kazakh literature. Their literary heritage is of high scholarly value for Kazakh literature and contains many documentary sources. The questions raised during the study will help readers who place particular importance on getting to know specialists in Kazakh literature to analyze our past in a new way. Today, Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly are among the scholars who have made significant contributions to the development of Kazakh literature through their educational work.

**Keywords:** Repression, totalitarian system, elite, Kazakh intelligentsia.

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## Introduction

The Kazakh people were among those who suffered most under Soviet policy during the reign of Joseph Stalin, who came to power after the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922 (Çetin, 2025). In an article by Tomohiko Uyama on the history of the Kazakh intelligentsia, it is noted that several Kazakh figures who were later persecuted became leaders of the national movement. However, it occurred in different regions and became increasingly severe (Uyama, 2015).

In the 1930s, authoritarian-administrative methods of governance were established, leading to further expansion of the USSR's repressive policies and the strengthening of punitive sanctions. In an effort to preserve and strengthen their power at any cost, J. Stalin and his entourage resorted to terror, destroying all potential opponents, including former Leninist cadres who doubted and disagreed with the Soviet course (Shaimukhanova, 2000). The absence of political democracy and the concentration of power in one person's hands paved the way for tyranny and lawlessness.

The main reason for this was the fear that opponents of Soviet power would undermine J. Stalin's authority. In this regard, Stalin pursued a policy of repression against the intelligentsia, believers, and politicians whom he considered opponents. In fact, the repressive policy was used not only by Stalin, but also by the leadership of the USSR. Therefore, scientific research on political repression and its liquidation in the USSR was banned for a long time (Çetin, 2025).

In the republics that were part of the USSR, the Soviet government, although it declared amnesty for the leaders of the Alash party in Kazakhstan, pursued a policy of removing from power public figures who contributed to the development of their countries and resumed persecution in the 1920s (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>).

Mukhtar Auezov is the first author of the "History of Kazakh Literature". Writer Mukhtar Auezov was repressed in 1922 for his ties to the "Alashorda" government established in Kazakhstan and sentenced to 2 years in prison (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>).

The repression in Kazakhstan did not happen suddenly. The country had a developed infrastructure

and rich experience. After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee's December 19, 1917 decree established methods of repression and liquidation (Çetin, 2025). This decree explained the procedures for establishing revolutionary courts, adjudicating cases, and imposing criminal penalties. Crimes committed against the Soviet government were transferred, and punishments for them, as well as crimes committed against the people who used the press, were transferred to a specially created Revolutionary Press Court. However, this organization was dissolved by the decision of the Central Executive Committee of the RKFSR on February 6, 1922 (Çetin, 2025). At this time, an open process of persecution of the Kazakh intelligentsia began in Kazakhstan.

Since 1928, all Kazakh intellectuals who were members of the Alash party were persecuted, illegally arrested, and later, most of them were shot. This is because they were accused of creating a secret organization of Kazakh nationalists, relying on the support of capitalist states and the White Guards, and trying to overthrow Soviet power and create an autonomy in Kazakhstan called "Alash" (<https://adyrna.kz/ru/post/135011>).

In the Soviet Union, power formally belonged to the Supreme Soviet, represented by its unanimously elected people's deputies. In fact, political power and the mechanism for its formation were taken over by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, headed by the Politburo and its General Secretary. General Secretaries changed - the policy of the party and the state changed. The top of this pyramid was the command-and-control power concentrated in the hands of the General Secretary (Shaimukhanova, 2000).

In the USSR, a decree was adopted (01.12.1934) "On the procedure for conducting cases on the commission or preparation of terrorist acts" (Collection of legislative and regulatory acts on repression and rehabilitation of victims of political repression, 1993: 33), according to which independent investigations were conducted in all republics regarding those accused of resisting Soviet power. The judicial authorities promptly reviewed the case of the accused within ten days, petitions for pardon were rejected, and the death penalty was carried out on the day the verdict was passed.

The Resolution of the Criminal Code of the USSR and the Code of Administrative Offenses of the USSR "On

Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code of the Union Republics" (Collection of Legislative and Regulatory Acts on Repression and Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression, 1993: 34) stipulated that the case of a suspect accused of resisting Soviet power must be sent to court one day before the trial, the case must be considered without the participation of a prosecutor and defense attorney, and the death penalty must be carried out immediately.

In Kazakhstan, the repression of the 1930s targeted members of the Alash party. In the 1930s, former supporters of Alash were subjected to brutal mass repression and deprived of the right to express their opinions (Sarsenbaev, 2015). Similar to the Moscow trials, show trials were organized locally, with the necessary "evidence" confiscated from the accused. In the AlashOrda case, 4,297 people were subjected to repression, 2,062 of whom were shot (Sarsenbaev, 2015).

In 1932, Mukhtar Auezov was repressed for the second time as a propagandist of the AlashOrda movement (Shaimukhanova, 2000). Mukhtar Auezov, who collaborated with the Kazakh intelligentsia, survived thanks to a written appeal to the authorities asking for his acquittal.

The political repression of the 1940s and 1950s was also directed against the intelligentsia, who were punished as bourgeois nationalists and cosmopolitans without a homeland (Shaimukhanova, 2000). At that time, Kazakh writers Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly were accused of "nationalism". This is because their works were dedicated to the literature of the Kazakh people of the 19th century and to Kazakh national traditions.

To attract prominent political and public figures of the national economy, representatives of all social groups into the orbit of repression, they were artificially given all-Union significance. As studies have shown, there were no legal grounds to accuse the defendants in this case of engaging in anti-party and anti-state acts. The case was completely distorted by the joint state political directorate (OGPU) organs, and illegal political trials were carried out aimed at further strengthening the leading role of Stalin in suppressing any dissent in the country. The Kazakh elite was almost destroyed.

## Findings and Discussion

### 1. The works of Mukhtar Auezov, his exile, and his call to justify himself.

On May 22, 1921, the "Regulations on the Scientific Commission for the Study of the Life of the Indigenous Peoples of Turkestan" were approved (TsGA RU, f. - 25, op. - 1, d. - 331, l. 157). This commission was supposed to "determine which peoples inhabit the vast territory of Turkestan, what are their places of settlement and how they are located there" (TsGA RU, f. - 1021, op. - 1, d. - 489, l. 156).

In June 1921, the Academic Council was officially organized, based on the principles of N.A.'s project. Iomudsky (TsGA RU, f. - 34, op. - 1, d. - 1219, l. 36). The Academic Council was formed from the boards of three national scientific commissions (Uzbek, Kazakh, Turkmen) and three special scientific commissions (scientific and pedagogical, theatrical and artistic, musical and ethnographic), created in early 1921. The functions of the Academic Council included the unification of scientific research work of all scientific institutions and societies, its regulation, involving the population in scientific work, monitoring the implementation of the publishing service plan in the field of education, popular science, educational and pedagogical literature, solving theoretical and methodological problems of higher and secondary schools, conducting independent research in the field of local history, ethnography, folklore, language, musical art, compiling educational literature in the local language, etc. (Regulations on the Academic Council, approved in November 1921, 1922: 15).

The Kazakh Scientific Commission was created in January 1921 under the People's Commissariat of Education of the Tashkent SSR. The Kazakh Scientific Commission differed from other national commissions in its strong intellectual composition. It included the collector of Kazakh folklore, A. Divaev, the young researcher Mukhtar Auezov, and others. The commission relied on the teaching staff of the Kazakh Institute of Public Education in Tashkent. It maintained contacts with the Council of People's Commissars of the Kirghiz ASSR in Orenburg (Bendrikov, 1960).

In 1922, the Scientific Oriental Studies Commission began its work in Tashkent - an interdepartmental body of the Turkestan branch of the All-Russian Association of

Oriental Studies and the representative offices of the People's Commissariats of Internal Affairs. The main tasks of this scientific commission were scientific research on the history of the Central Asian republics and the publication of materials on their mutual political and economic relations (TsGA RU, f. – 34, op. – 1, d. – 2103, l. 156). The overwhelming majority of these works, which began in the mid-1920s, in connection with the strengthening of the totalitarian system in the country, represented a spiritual struggle with current problems of the history and culture of the Kazakhs in the 20th century, primarily with the history of Kazakhstan's accession to Russia, the issue of national liberation movements, and the gross distortion of the history of the land, water, and national culture. One area of such spiritual struggle was the local press. In 1918, the Ak Zhol newspaper began to be published in Tashkent (TsGA RU, f. – 34, op. – 1, d. – 2461, l. 64). Mukhtar Auezov published his articles in the Ak Zhol newspaper. He contributed to various genres of literature and the press (Bendrikov, 1960). His articles raised the newspaper's educational and artistic standards to a high level.

On March 2, 1925, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) "Considering the state of the Kyrgyz press and measures to improve it, indicated that the political direction of the periodicals "Ak Zhol", "Sana", "Tilshi" was under the influence of the intelligentsia, who were not members of the nationalist party" (Koigeldiev, 2007).

For example, in the issue of the newspaper "Ak Zhol" from September 15, 1923, it was written about the creation of the society "Talap", whose goal was to collect cultural values, knowledge, Kazakh literature of the Kazakh people, the development of ancient Kazakh art..." (TsGA RK, f.-693, op.-1, delo-7, l.-1).

The charter of the Talap society, which defined the goals and objectives of the society created for the development and improvement of Kazakh culture, was approved by the Academic Council of the Turkestan People's Commissariat of Education on December 4, 1922 (TsGA RK, f. - 693, op. - 1, file - 15, p. 28).

In 1922-1924, Mukhtar Auezov was an active member of the Talap society and served under its leadership. During the year from December 4, 1922, when the Talap society began its official activities, to December 4, 1923, it consisted of 25 full members and 30 corresponding members (TsGA RK, f. - 693, op. - 1, file - 7, p. 4-5).

H. Dosmukhameduly, M. Esbolov, M. Tynyshbaev, and M. Auezov were elected as members of the board of the Talap society for a term of three years. Still, every year, two former members left the council, and two new members were elected in their place (Кемелгер, 2025).

During the years of Soviet power, the Kazakh intelligentsia, through the activities of the Talap society, set the goal of eliminating illiteracy in the country, studying literature and language, the history of the people, and raising the national culture to a civilized level. Among such events, weekly discussions and lectures among the intelligentsia on various topical issues were regularly held.

For example, M. Tynyshpayev gave two lectures on Turkic-Mongolian history, M. Auezov on the development of Kazakh literature, H. Dosmukhamedov on the peoples inhabiting Turkestan based on archaeological data, S. Kozhanov on issues of rural public education, M. Esbolov on the life and work of Y. Altynsarin, and M. ZhumAbaiev on the creative legacy of Abai (TsGA RK, f. - 693, op. - 1, file - 15, p. 6).

As a member of this society, Mukhtar Auezov participated in the congress of cultural and educational workers of the local population, which took place in March 1922 in Tashkent, and was engaged in educational work on the issue of literacy of the population (TsGA RU, f. - 86, op. - 1, file - 621, sheet 5.) made several proposals on folk oral art, terms and words used in the Kazakh language (TsGA RU, f. – 372, op. – 1, file – 3215, sheet 5.).

At the end of 1923, an agreement was signed between the Turkic ACR and the Kazakh ASSR to maintain regular contacts and jointly promote the development of the Kazakh language and the literacy of the Kazakh people (TsGA RU, f. - 25, op. - 1, file - 1414, sheet 299). Along with famous public and government figures of Kazakh origin, T. Ryskulov, N. Torekulov, S. Kozhanuly, S. Asfendiyarov, in the 1920s, members of the Alash party, M. ZhumAbaiev, M. Auezov, Zh. Aimaulytov, M. Tynyshpayev, Zh. Dosmukhameduly and others worked in various positions. One of the people associated with the Central Asian State University in Tashkent in the 1920s was the great thinker, social reformer, and classic of Kazakh literature, Mukhtar Auezov. With the support of R. Divayev, T. Ryskulov, S. Kozhanuly, and other prominent figures of the Alash party, he entered the literary and linguistic faculty of Leningrad University. After graduating in 1928, he was accepted to graduate

school at the Central Asian State University in Tashkent (Serdalina, 2024).

According to documents, when the university hired him, Mukhtar Auezov underwent a thorough check of his previous activities. On February 21, 1929, the rector of the university, Professor B. Gordetsky, sent a letter to the secretary of the Kazakh regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), F.I. Goloshchekin, with the following content: "Comrade Auezov is one of the greatest representatives of Kazakh literature. His textbooks have been accepted in Kazakh schools. We do not have enough specialists in Kazakh literature. Therefore, the admission of Comrade Auezov is of great importance for the university. Having reviewed his candidacy, we found out that he had previously been a member of the party. But, according to him, he apparently left for certain reasons. We ask you to respond as soon as possible. After all, all this is connected with the organization of the Kazakh literature sector at the university's oriental faculty" (Serdalina, 2024).

In a response letter from the deputy head of the department of the Kazakh regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Russia, Mantynenko, it is stated that Mukhtar Auezov was indeed a member of the Communist Party, that before joining the party he was a member of the Alash-Orda organization, that since then he adhered to a conservative-nationalist orientation, and that his views subsequently changed. This evidence, combined with the shortage of specialists in Kazakh literature, forced the Kazakh regional committee of the party to make such a statement (Serdalina, 2024). This created difficulties for Mukhtar Auezov in gaining spiritual and creative freedom.

Mukhtar Auezov was arrested on October 1, 1930, while completing his postgraduate studies at the Oriental Department of the Central Asian State University in Tashkent, along with other representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia. The list of arrested Kazakh intellectuals initially numbered 20 people, but by July 1931 it had grown to 32, all of whom were imprisoned on charges of "nationalism." Among them were Mukhamedzhan Tynyshbayev, Abdulkhamit Akbayev, Ashim Omarov, Dosan Sultankulov, Ilyas Akhmetov, Zhakyp Akbayev, Zhakhansha Dosmukhamedov, Mukhtar Auezov, and many others. Most of them were

teachers in the Oriental Department at Central Asian State University (Yessimova et al., 2023).

The goal of the Kazakh Institute of Education is not only to train highly qualified personnel in various fields of knowledge, but also to act as a cultural and educational center for the Kazakh people (TsGA RU, f. 372, op. 1, d. 20, l. 20). At this educational institution, Mukhtar Auezov lectured on Kazakh and Russian literature (TsGA RU, f. - 25, op. - 1, file - 1414, l. 221).

The literary-critical concept of the Kazakh intellectual Akhmet Baitursynov was further developed in the monograph by the young scholar Mukhtar Auezov, "History of Literature". At this time, Mukhtar Auezov wrote the works "Kily zaman" and "Karash-karash okigasy" (Kendirbaeva, 1999)(Nurpeis K., 1998: 36). In the first years of Soviet power, the Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov made a significant contribution to the formation of public consciousness and political thought with national content in the country's national education system, in science, culture, and the country's national education system.

Mukhtar Auezov sought to convey to the government, through his articles, the social problems raised by the Kazakh intelligentsia who were part of the Alash party, as well as their education and national interests (<https://adyrna.kz/ru/post/135011>). Mukhtar Auezov, a member of this party, was viewed negatively by the Soviet government and included among outcasts (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>).

The overwhelming majority of the Kazakh intelligentsia engaged in cultural and educational activities among the Kazakhs were members of the Alash party. Soon, a large group of Kazakh intellectuals, former activists of the "Alash-Orda" - 44 people (Shaimukhanova, 2000). In September-October 1930, Akpayev, A. Ermekova, M. Auezov, and K. Kemengerova were arrested. 15 of them (M. Tynyshbayev, Zh. Akpayev, Kh. Dosmukhamedov, Zh. Dosmukhamedov, K. Kemengerov, and others) were exiled to the Central Black Sea region of Russia. Some were shot, the rest spent many years in prisons, camps, and exile (Shaimukhanova, 2000). In 1930, a second case was opened against Mukhtar Auezov, who aimed to develop the Kazakh cultural and educational sphere, on charges of creating an underground organization with the Alashites and opposing Soviet power (<https://adyrna.kz/ru/post/135011>).

Fleeing renewed persecution in the 1930s, Mukhtar Auezov sent a letter to the Chairman of the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU) of the Kazakh ASSR, Karutsky, on April 20, 1932. In it, he wrote that he agreed with the conclusion that his literary work contradicted the path and aspirations of the cultural revolution of Soviet Kazakhstan. This was explained by the fact that his works, such as *Enlik-Kebek* and *Karakoz*, were written based on the customs and traditions of the Kazakh people of the 19th century and could have a negative impact on the consciousness of Soviet youth. He also admitted the error of his views on the Alka organization and promised not to make such mistakes in the future (<https://adyrna.kz/ru/post/135011>).

In Kazakhstan, «the Alka» organization was founded in 1924 by members of the Alash party. Its goal was to prevent the imposition of the Bolshevik dictatorship's ideology on Kazakh literature. It included many Kazakh poets and writers. A freedom-loving spirit guided the Alka organization. Through authentic works of Kazakh literature, it called on Kazakh youth to serve the people, fight to preserve the land and country, and create a national state. The proletariat must have its own literature. In colonized countries, the Kazakh people should not destroy their literature, since there was a difference between a Kazakh poet and a proletarian poet. A proletarian poet is a poet of the revolution, and a Kazakh poet is a poet of a country with a different history, a different way of life, a country that joined the revolution. Therefore, the literature of these two poets could not be the same (<https://egemen.kz/article/379109-alqa-uyymyna---100-dgy>).

In 1932, Mukhtar Auezov was forced to once again turn to the newspapers "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda" and "Socialist Kazakhstan", declaring the groundlessness of the accusations of "nationalism", admitting his mistake, his "nationalism", which he did not commit before the Communist Party. After this, in 1932, the Writers' Union gave Mukhtar Auezov the following description: "Mukhtar Auezov, having realized his bourgeois-nationalist errors, switched to the principles of Soviet literature" (<https://adyrna.kz/ru/post/135011>).

However, in 1934-1936, at meetings of the Writers' Union, opinions were often expressed that Mukhtar Auezov was a propagandist of the ideology of the Alash-Ordan people. Articles by writers about this were

also published in the press. They claimed that Mukhtar Auezov did not have any truly Soviet work. His literary works had a strong political subtext, as he glorified the Kazakh elite who lived in abundance, nationalism, and feudal society, and sought to present this to Kazakh youth in a positive light, which was contrary to Soviet literary policy (<https://adyrna.kz/ru/post/135011>). In 1933, Auezov published the first complete collection of Abai's poems (in Latin) in *Kyzylorda*. (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>).

At the first plenum of the Writers' Union of Kazakhstan in May 1937, Mukhtar Auezov was recognized as an outstanding figure in Kazakh literature. However, the Soviet authorities, following an old habit, banned his works through local PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (NKVD) bodies, and his books were removed from libraries (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>). The Kazakh newspaper "Kazakh Literature" on August 13, 1937, criticized Mukhtar Auezov for still promoting the idea of the Alash-Ordan people in his work (Kazakh Literature, 1937).

In 1947, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan adopted a resolution "On gross political errors in the work of the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR" (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>). In an effort to strengthen its influence in Kazakhstan, the Soviet government took strict control over fiction that shaped the people's worldview. This resolution did not prevent the writer Mukhtar Auezov from becoming a laureate of the Stalin Prize in 1948 for his novel "Abai", which later became the first part of the epic "The Path of Abai". In 1952, his first book in Kazakh, "The Path of Abai," was published, and in the same year, Mukhtar Auezov was again accused in the press (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>).

After that, in the 1940s and 1950s, the Soviet government, seeking "nationalist" manifestations in the works of the Writers' Union, harshly criticized Mukhtar Auezov's work. At the 5th Plenum of the Writers' Union of Kazakhstan in 1951, his novels "Khan Kene" and "Abai Kunanbayev" were recognized as works written in the spirit of bourgeois nationalism, which adversely affected his international standing (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>).

In the same year, 1951, S. Nuryshev accused Mukhtar Auezov of "nationalism" (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>). In connection with this, in 1953, Mukhtar Auezov's novels "Abai" and "Abai Zholy" were again discussed at a meeting of the Union of Writers of Kazakhstan. In connection with this, in 1953, Mukhtar Auezov was suspended from teaching at the university and expelled from graduate school. Mukhtar Auezov was expelled from the authors' collective of the multi-volume "History of the Kazakh SSR" for "bourgeois-nationalist mistakes". To avoid further arrest, he was forced to leave Moscow in secret, where, for two years, he lectured on Kazakh literature at the Department of Literature of the Peoples of the USSR at Moscow State University (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>). As research shows, the persecution of Mukhtar Auezov, constantly renewed due to accusations of the nationalistic spirit in his works, on the one hand, and the nomination of his works for the award, on the other, reveal the contradictory aspects of the policy of the Soviet government.

In this regard, the transcript stored in file No. 698 of the 1778 fund at the State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan is noteworthy. It cites the words of 15 Kazakhstani writers who gathered in 1953 to discuss Mukhtar Auezov's novel "The Path of Abai". Among them, the writer Takhai Akhtanov said: "Mukhtar Auezov's novel 'The Path of Abai' describes the friendly relations between the Kazakh people and the great Russian people." The author, through the life and work of the hero of his novel - the Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayev, through the history of the Kazakh people, shows the depth of the historical friendship of the Kazakh and Russian peoples. For the sake of vital necessity, the Kazakh people forever and fairly linked their fate to that of the Russian people. The important idea of this novel, through the images of such heroes, describes the historical position of the people of that time" (TsGA RK, f. - 1778, op. - 1, delo - 698, p. 1). From this, it should be noted that the people who were part of the USSR could survive the persecution only by choosing friendly relations with the great Russian people and not protesting against them, writing works glorifying the Russian people.

Professor Mukhtar Auezov secretly left for Moscow in 1953 for two years to survive the third wave

of persecution. In Moscow, he served on the editorial boards of the magazines "Foreign Literature" and "Friendship of Peoples". In 1954, in Moscow, he completed the third book of the tetralogy "The Path of Abai". On September 23, 1954, at a meeting in the Column Hall of the House of Unions, Mukhtar Auezov gave a report on the work of Abai, solemnly returned to Alma-Ata, and began to fulfill all his duties (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>).

In 1956, he finished his fourth and last book, "The Path of Abai". During the Kazakh Decade in Moscow (1958), public attention was drawn to Mukhtar Auezov's two-volume epic novel "The Path of Abai", published in Russian in the "Anthology of Kazakh Poetry" (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auezov>). However, after Stalin's death, it became possible to acknowledge the mistakes of the past and restore the names of people repressed by the totalitarian system. When Nikita Khrushchev came to power, especially after the 20th Congress of the COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNIO in 1956, those repressed began to justify themselves (Çetin, 2025).

## **2. The activities of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly and his persecution as a "nationalist".**

Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly wrote in his memoirs dated June 25, 1989: "On April 7, 1951, I defended my dissertation on the topic of 'Abai's Literary School. '" Seven months later, on December 1, 1951, I was arrested and sentenced to 25 years in prison. In 1955, by decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Court of the Kazakh SSR, I was reinstated in my position and returned to my previous teaching job at the Pedagogical Institute in Semey," he wrote (TsGA RK, f.-2196, op.-1, delo-44, p. 4). Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly's scientific works are also devoted to the study of the works of Kazakh poet and writer Abai Kunanbayev. His articles were first published in 1936. In 1938-1939, local newspapers published articles by Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly, "On the Work of Young Poets of the Semipalatinsk Region", M. Auezov, "On the Border", G. Musrepov "Kyz-Zhibek", and others (TsGA RK, f. - 2196, op. - 1, file - 44, p. 5). These articles are devoted to the formation of Kazakh literature.

In his memoirs, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly wrote: "For 20 years, M. Auezov generously shared his deep reflections on the history of Kazakh literature and the literature of the peoples of Central Asia, and his influence

determined the main direction of my further research work." Also in the 1940s, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly wrote a scientific article about the Kazakh heroes Kabanbai and Bogenbai (TsGA RK, f. – 2196, op. – 1, file – 44, p. 2). It describes the heroism of Kazakhs who defended their homeland and country in the war, serving as an example for the reading public.

Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly discovered previously unknown handwritten copies of the works of the Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayev, proved that they belonged to the great poet, provided scientific commentary on them, and included them in the collected works. The Complete Works of Abai Kunanbayev, published in 1945, included 9 poems found by Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly.

In 1945-1950, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly published articles entitled "Abai and Pushkin", "Abai and Lermontov", "Abai and Krylov" (TsGA RK, f. – 2196, op. – 1, file – 44, p. 3). Professor Z.S. Kedrina wrote about Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly's dissertation "Literary School of Abai", which linked the work of these famous Russian writers with Abai Kunanbayev: "At present, articles and essays create the impression that among Abai, S. Mukanov, M. Auezov, and other Soviet writers in Kazakh written literature, there is not a single truly progressive figure. And this, in turn, prevents the correct reflection of the formation of Kazakh literature in the democratic public opinion of Russia and Russian classical literature. Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly's research fills this gap, thereby contributing to the successful study of current issues in literary criticism. His work is not archival research, but an effective tool for the development of science" (TsGA RK, f. - 2196, op. - 1, file - 44, p. 4).

However, the following charges were brought against Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly during the investigation: On December 1, 1951, the KGB Directorate for the Semipalatinsk Region arrested Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly for nationalist activity against the Soviet government and held him criminally responsible. As it turned out during the investigation, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly, being from an antisocial environment and hostile to the existing political system in the USSR, had been conducting nationalist propaganda against the Soviet government among his acquaintances for several years. He slandered the activities of the Soviet government and the collective farm system, praised the heroic life of the pre-revolutionary Russian people, and

fought against the revolution. And during the Patriotic War, he spread right-wing sentiments and a desire for defeat.

Literary scholar and scientist Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly, using his position as the museum's director, carried out nationally oriented activities in Kazakh literature for several years. In addition, he distorted historical facts about the great Kazakh poet Abai and his poetic heritage, transferred them to Kazakh literature, and disseminated in the press the ideas of reactionary, anti-Soviet poets directed against Soviet power. He praised and promoted the leaders of the counter-revolutionary nationalist movement "Alashorda".

At the same time, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly wrote anti-Soviet poems. In them, he slandered Soviet reality and, from a hostile nationalist position, denied the progressive role of Kazakhstan's accession to Russia (TsGA RK, f. 2196, op. 1, file 56, p. 1). During the period of organized political repression in Kazakhstan, an atmosphere of general suspicion was established; people were ready to accept even the most serious accusations against them.

In accordance with Article 208 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Soviet Union, investigation case No. 679 of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly was sent for execution to the prosecutor of the Kazakh SSR on April 16, 1952 (TsGA RK, f. - 2196, op. - 1, delo - 56, p. 2). Such illegal accusations fundamentally undermined Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly's scientific work and deprived him of the right to study Kazakh literature.

The scientific research direction of Kazakh writers Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly, who became the subjects of research, is associated with the work of the Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayev. However, the truth, long hidden, is gradually revealed, and a genuine historical consciousness is formed. Public education, science, and culture have entered a broad path of their development, freed from the oppression of ideological forms and ready-made models. Ultimately, the accusation of "nationalism" brought against Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly by the Soviet government could not prevent them from studying Kazakh literature.

Kazakhstan's independence opened the way for the rapid development of the history of the Motherland and the discovery of historical records. Especially in the

years of independence, unprecedented changes were made to our spiritual life. These years were distinguished by the recognition of the heritage of the past, rather than the search for the values of today or tomorrow, as the basis of Kazakhstan's culture, above all, its own strength. The national traditions of the Kazakh people were revived, and the true history of our country was rewritten. In this regard, data and documents on the Alash figures and other representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia who worked to develop Kazakhstan's cultural and educational sphere began to be published.

Later, collections of documents prepared by historians S. Tileuklov and others were published as sources, presenting new documentary data that had not previously been the subject of historical research (Aleksandrovich, 2023). In 1999, the Commission on Archives under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan was created, which prepared and published the work "Political Representative Offices in Kazakhstan in 1937-1938: Collection of Documents". The work, comprising 119 archival documents, contains important information on the repressive practices of the USSR during the Great Terror in Kazakhstan (Çetin, 2025).

Now we have the opportunity to study this tragic period of our history in a comprehensive and all-round way. It is the duty of every Kazakhstani scientist and historian to convey this information to every citizen without exception. To comprehensively study and resolve issues related to compensation for victims of political repression, the Decree of the President of Kazakhstan, K.K. Tokayev, established the State Commission for Full Compensation of Damages to Victims of Political Repression. A project office has been created, and 11 working groups of the State Commission have been formed. Each group carries out its activities in accordance with the categories of victims of repression. Regional commissions for compensation to victims of political repression have been created in the regions, including scientists, public figures, and representatives of government agencies and organizations. The main task of the State Commission is the legal and political rehabilitation of all categories of victims of political repression in the Soviet period.

### Conclusion

At that time, repression against the Kazakh intelligentsia was carried out in the periodicals "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda", "Socialist Kazakhstan",

"Leninshil Zhas", "Kazakh Literature", and others. Articles about "enemies of the people" were published daily in the press. The materials published in these publications contributed to the strengthening of repression in Kazakhstan. The first volume of Mukhtar Auezov's novel "Abai Zholy" was translated into Russian in 1945 and subsequently entered the treasury of world literature.

Mukhtar Auezov, who actively participated in the development of the cultural and educational sphere of the Kazakh people, paid special attention to the study of the history of the East, Kazakh culture and language, and sought a comprehensive study of the region in historical, philological, ethnographic, and legal respects. Mukhtar Auezov was a Kazakh writer. He is the author of many literary works related to Kazakh literature. Among them is the world-famous novel "Abai Zholy" about the Kazakh poet and writer Abai Kunanbayev. The 175th anniversary of the birth of the Kazakh poet and writer Abai Kunanbayev was celebrated in 2020 within the framework of UNESCO. Auezov's novel "The Path of Abai" about the life of the great Kazakh poet and educator Abai Kunanbayev is an outstanding work of Soviet literature. The novel depicts the collapse of the Kazakhs' centuries-old nomadic way of life in the second half of the 19th century. It presents a complex picture of Kazakh society.

After the 20th Congress of the COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNIO in 1956, when the rehabilitation of the exiles began, in 1959, M. Auezov was awarded the Lenin Prize for the novel "The Path of Abai". In 1960, he, along with Shchipachev, Leonov, Gonchar, and other Soviet writers, went to the United States (Washington, New York, Los Angeles, Fresno, California, Phoenix, Arizona, Boston). After returning, he worked on a series of essays, American Impressions, and a new novel, The Young Tribe. Like Mukhtar Auezov, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly also studied the work of the Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayev.

This article examines the illegal prosecution of Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly on charges of supporting nationalism that opposed the policies of the Soviet regime, and their appeal to the authorities with a statement of their innocence. In addition, the literary works of Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly, their main ideas, and their contributions to Kazakh literature are examined. In

particular, the persecution organized by the Soviet regime against Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly could not destroy the value of their work. The persecution of Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly was stopped in 1953 after Stalin's death.

The article tells how the Soviet government, seeking to establish its dominance in Kazakhstan, amended the Constitution to legalize repression against Kazakh poets and writers. A study of the works of Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanuly, illegally persecuted for resisting the Soviet regime, proves the gross political shortcomings that existed from the very beginning of the Soviet regime.

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#### Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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