

## **“Oyan, Qazaq”: A Challenge to Colonialism**

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### **Abstract**

A history of literature is not one-day process. It is the fruit of several centuries, which constantly develops with its spiritual necessities. The early 20th century was a difficult historical period for the Kazakh society, which focused on keeping its existence in the historical arena. At that time, the Soviet empire’s colonization policy caused too much pressure on Kazakhs. This period witnessed not the peasants’ overbearing voice from the khan’s period, but “zhyrau” genre, which was becoming popular in order to awaken people. At the colonization period, awakening people, calling them for independence was not easy. Kazakh poets were forced to deliver their ideas indirectly through metaphors, fables and other techniques.

One of the early 20th century poets, who openly described the social situation in the Kazakh steppe and attempted to awaken people and inspire them when the nation’s fate was under material and spiritual pressure, was Mirzhakyp Dulatuly. His first poem “Oyan, Qazaq” brought to the Kazakh literature a strong motive, brave voice and sober idea. M. Dulatuly’s “Oyan, Qazaq” collection of poems was first published in 1910 in Ufa. In 1911, “Oyan qazaq” was also published in Orynbor.

Open your eyes, awaken Kazakh and stand up.  
Do not spend your youth in darkness.  
The land is lost, religion is gone, and the situation is bad,  
My Kazakh, there is no time to rest.

He described Kazakh nation’s difficult situation in this epigraph of the book. In these four lines, he describes four troubles of the nation. His attempt to awaken people is seen from his designation of these problems throughout the book. However, this book was prohibited and its author was sent into exile under the soviet censorship. In this article, we will describe “Oyan, Qazaq” collection’s ideas and civil principles.

**Keywords:** Kazakh literature, alash, genre, poet.

### **“Oyan, Qazaq”: A Challenge to Colonialism**

The Kazakh literature between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is the one which requires a close attention, deep exploration, different perspectives and versatility. In that period Kazakh nation underwent an economical, social and spiritual crisis. These problems influenced the educated intelligentsia's view points.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the king's power was focused on colonizing the Kazakh land, establishing the new administrative system and getting its natural resources. It built fortresses to strengthen the border. The colonization policy aimed to settle the Russian peasants all over the Kazakh land, so that they could control the most fertile land and displace the local nation to the deserts and infertile territories. This was another way of increasing the control over the local residents and taking out their spirituality by turning them to Russians.

“The direction of the literary-historical process in the beginning of the 20th century was established as a necessity for reality. In order to pick up and motivate the colonized nation the national socio-political movement and literary-spiritual powers united. The “zar zaman” poets', sal-seris' poems on spiritual independence and personal sorrow, academics' works who attempted to introduce the Kazakhs the democracy of St. Petersburg” says D. Kamzabekuly (Kamzabekuly, 2002).

Some of the 20th century intelligentsia emerged due to the influence of the progressive, capitalistic development and spread of the academic direction.

One of the poets, writers, publicist and political figures who lead the nation to academical way, enlightened their minds and called for independence through his poem “Oyan Qazaq!” was Mirzhakyp Dulatuly. He was born in 1885 in Kostanay oblast, Kyzbel village. Initially, he got the religious education from mullah, and then studied at Torgay Russian-Kazakh School (1897-1902) for two years. Along with fulfilling his knowledge, this school helped him to become a real citizen. Due to his love for knowledge, he spoke Russian fluently and read Russian thinkers. Therefore, he was the first to oversee the upcoming danger.

He lost his mother when he was two and his father when he was twelve. He grew up under the care of his brother Askhar. “He spent his whole life fighting with poverty, difficulty, cruelty and inequality” (Nurgali, 2013).

He worked as a teacher for six-sever years at the village school. This was the period when he learnt the real social situation of citizens. He also learnt to differentiate the bad and the good, survival and fighting for the nation's welfare.

It was the time when the king's power over Kazakhs was strengthened. These situations caused the Kazakh intelligentsia to fight for independence. Suddenly, complaints arose in different places. The tactics of eliminating colonialism were discussed. The best solution for this problem was education. The nation's political activity rose day by day which gave a birth to independence ideas against colonialism.

In 1904 Mirzhakyp who was seeking for the solution arrived to Ombay city. He met here the Alash leader Alikhan Bukeikhan and instructor of all intelligentsia Akhmet Baitursynuly. They worked together as the teacher and followers since then.

A well-known scientist, professor Nurgali Rymgali says about Mirzhakyp Dulatuly's political life: "Mirzhakyp has been in 1904 in Ombay, in 1905 Karkaraly, in 1906 in Oral and Peterburg and took part in the revolutions. He raised the land issue and was in front lines of the elites who demanded to stop driving away Islam. He generously helped every Kazakh and spread them love and friendship. He communicated with Tatar and Russian elites too such as Potanin G.N., Divayev A., professor Krymskii A. and academic Gordelevskii V.A." (Nurgali, 2013).

Mirzhakyp became popular all over the Kazakhs and Russian Turks due to his book "Oyan Qazaq!" which was published in 1910 in Ufa. The book was republished in Orenburg in 1911. The book is mainly composed of the poems calling to fight for independence. According to the historian and scientist Mambet Koigeldiyev, the book "Oyan Qazaq!" was loved by all ethnic groups living in Kazakh land in the beginning of the 20th century. However, this book faced the harshest persecution in Kazakh literature. The King's government collected both of the publications and prohibited to read them. The author was imprisoned in 1911 in Semey. He stayed there for 19 months. Galiyev I.Z. explored several archival documents about Mirzhakyp's exile writes in his works: "After some period the censorship began to explore his ideal direction. The problems were raised by the initiation of Smirnov A., a censor in Kazan at that time. He was also a man who raised a racket against M. Dulatuly's first publication of "Oyan Qazaq!". The leaders paid too much attention to censoring the Kazakh book" (Galiyev V.Z. 2013).

Mirzhakyp wrote an article on topic "about Oyan Qazaq" in 1917 Vol. 233: "The old government considered my book "Oyan Qazaq!" which is popular among pupils as a light, hence, they were frightened of our "enlightenment" and in 1911 imprisoned me. I spent one and half year in a jail. The government made a verdict that my book should not be spread among the nation" (Dulatuly M. 1913).

In reality, the old government feared of the influence that book might have on people. Therefore, the government of the Russian Kingdom disliked it. However,

we can also notice that the nation used to search for this book anyway. Interestingly, Kazakh intelligentsia also liked “Oyan, Qazaq!”. Besides, religious people also pleased it. They fancied it so much, that churches and mullahs distributed the copies of this book. It means that the themes raised in the book were extremely important at that time. The government began persecuting the author and prohibited its distribution, says Professor Mambet Koigeldiyev (Koigeldiyev 2008).

The question emerging here is: What was the secret of the book which was disliked by the Russian Kingdom’s government?

The first page of the book begins as follows:

- Mirzhakyp, why are you not writing,  
Trophy is not yours until you fight.  
Show your power as much as you can,  
Poor, wake up, do not waste time (Dulatov 2003).

Here, the word “wake up” is the author’s main idea and purpose. He calls to fight against the system that is withdrawing their land and religion. He also describes the Kazakh’s poor lifestyle after joining it:

Everything is wasted,  
The spirit is left, but the life is gone.  
Foreigners governing our nation  
The legs are in blood and a life without reason.

The poet is worried about his nation’s destiny and sorrow. In addition, he criticizes his nation’s bad habits and calls them to aspire to education.

Kazakhs are still deeply sleeping,  
We are burning but not extinguishing fire.  
Other nations are moving forward,  
But our is staying motionless...  
He grieves about his nation’s illiteracy.  
Don’t you see your nation?  
Handcuffed in a jail  
Expelled us, we were fearful, became braver,  
What else we lose from now on?  
We are not a trading slave,  
That obeys whomever  
This is an age of troubles,  
If you see it, oh my dear Alash compatriot (Dulatov, 2003).

He criticized the youngsters, who wasted their times instead of getting knowledge. He criticized riches who only thought of themselves. He criticized the mullahs who could forget everything when it is about money.

Nevertheless, the author talks not only about sorrow. His tone in: “Justice is not lost” illustrates that he still believes there will be justice. He says that he is ready to die for justice:

I am a tree growing on the hill,  
I am not a fruitful and wonderful tree  
I am your until my last chips are left —  
Let me be useful for you, alash!

This poem reveals how much the poet understands his targets. The poet’s aim is to change his nation’s fate to better life, working for his nation. Therefore, his poems describe illiteracy, injustice inside the nation and proposes the ways to escape them.

The poet believes that the nation’s future is in the educated youngster’s hands. He says that such youngsters should be charismatic, persistent in reaching their goals and literate to be able to read the newspapers and magazines. They should get both Islamic and Russian education. He as Abay said “Think of honor, not profit” also says that each youngster should spend all his energy and knowledge for his nation’s welfare. Especially, it is clearly written in Mirzhakyp’s poem “Where are you, future of Kazakhs?”

Don’t lie, youngsters, don’t just lie,  
Do not be afraid, may your way begin.  
In the garden of the nation,  
Sing as nightingale.  
May your soul be sacrificed  
May the worst go out.  
To each fortress – one challenge,  
Let the age turn to (Dulatov, 2003).

The poet in his poems frequently uses Arabic-Farsi words. Mirzhakyp himself writes about it as follows: “Despite I didn’t get a knowledge from madrasa, starting from 1904 I began learning Nogay literature. I started to read The Newspaper of Translations and other Nogayan newspapers and books since then. Hence, I absorbed it” (Dulatuly, 1915).

At that time Kazakhs used to call Tatars as Nogay, so Nogays Mirzhakyp is talking about are Tatars thou. Tatar literature influenced his lexicon, which became similar to Arab-Farsi.

In “The last word” M. Dulatuly mentions about the poets and writers he admires. They are (from Russian literature): Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, Krylov, Turgenev, Tolstoi and from Kazakh literature Abay Kunanbayuly, Akhmet Baitursynuly, Abubakir, Akmolla, Nurzhan, Shozhe, Orynbay, Mashhur Zhusip.

Apart from “Oyan Qazaq!” in 1915 Mirzhakyp’s “Terme” and in 1915 “Azamat”, two collections of poems were published. In 1910, “The poor Zhamal” roman was published in Kazan. This roman was not a peak of his career, but also of Kazakh literature. It was the first ever roman in Kazakh literature which was written in prosaic style.

In 1913 Mirzhakyp published “Qazaq” newspaper with Akhmet Baitursynuly and actively participated in other issues. “Qazaq newspaper used to be published once a week, then twice a week.

The newspaper published the most important and sensitive issues of Kazakhs in the beginning of the 20th century. The articles were about socio-political, peasantry, land issues, international relationship, education, children’s education, literature, art, traditions, consciousness, history and genealogy. This newspaper raised the Kazakh press up to professional journalistic level. Mirzhakyp also published his positions on the nation’s fate in this particular newspaper.

The year of 1917 was full of political events. On February 27 of this year, the king’s power fell in Russian empire. February Revolution allowed all Kazakh intelligentsia to join. They organized several congresses in different oblasts’ centers on April and May, and formed a Kazakh Committee.

In 1917, from July 21 to July 26, Mirzhakyp Dulatuly was one of the organizers of the first All-Kazakh Congress that took place in Orynbor. In this Congress, the intelligentsia discussed the necessity of the creation of Alash party. Alash party was to be the first national democratic party of Kazakh (between 1917 and 1920).

“Qazaq” newspaper’s the 251st volume from November 21, 1917 published Alash party’s projects program and Congress materials. The birth of “Alash” was a political phenomenon. The program claimed that Kazakh oblasts should unite into one country and enter Russia as an autonomous state.

Mirzhakyp Dulatuly with Akhmet Baitursynuly actively took part in all these political events and as the leaders of the Party served the nation sincerely. Moreover, they participated in scientific projects, academic issues, press and literature.

Initially, the Party’s organizations in oblasts were created by Alikhan Bokeikhanuly. On November 1917, Party Committees were created in Semey (leader – Halel Gabbasov), Omby (leader – Aidarkhan Turlykhanov) and Orynbor (leader –

Alikhan Bokeikhanov). The newly emerging Party was called “Alash” (Koigeldiyev 2008).

Alash party actively participated in building a Kazakh state, electing deputies to Kuryltai from Kazakhs and so on.

Alash Party leaders aimed of getting independence for Kazakhstan which had been a colony of Russian empire for several centuries and rescuing from colonial oppression.

In 1917, between December 5 and 13 the second All-Kazakh Congress took place in Orynbor. The issues discussed there: Kazakh autonomy, creating police, National Soviet, education and so on. The elites actively discussed autonomy’s official announcement date. In this Congress one of the most active members of Alash Party Mirzhakyp made a report on: shortage of madrasas and schools, deficit of books in Kazakh, necessity of opening national schools and writing Kazakh books, which will be used nationally in schools.

Unfortunately, Alashorda could exist at a very short time. On March 9 1920, Kazrevkom made a Decree about dispersing the Departments of the first national government “Alashorda”.

Mirzhakyp Dulatuly returned to academic sphere and from 1922 to 1928 lived in Orynbor. In 1928, he protested against taking out Arabic alphabet. He thought that Language Reforms recede the nation from its history, leads to the loss of the mother language and loss of the connection between the nation and its written history. He argued to save the Kazakh language’s rights and religion’s status. The history showed that he was right. Innocent M. Dulatuly whom people respected for powerful works, articles and social activities was sent to exile innocently. In 1928, the Russian government imprisoned him for ten years with other Kazakh elites. In 1935, he died in jail. The Russian government destroyed all his works and prohibited even to mention his name.

Even though the Soviet Union prohibited to recall his name, in 1973, a well-known writer and scientist Hasen Oralay in his book “Alash” which he published in Istanbul made analysis of a long lasting civil liberation movement, Alash movement and Alash government. He objectively described the real situation and positively referred to the sufferers. In his work, he wrote his opinion (positive) about Mirzhakyp as well.

One more thing to mention is, in 1930, when Mirzhakyp was in jail, with the Turkish President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s support “Oyan Qazaq!” was published in Turkish. Publisher Tahir Shagatay wrote the preface of the book.

As you go deeper, the young author's understanding of the social, cultural and political situation surprises any reader (His ability to openly and clearly describe the situation). Therefore, people perceive the author as the founder of civil liberation movement. He was punished, sent for jail only for this particular book. This book added his to the list of the heroes of Civil Liberation Movement. The Bolshevik Russian government chased him for this particular book writes Tahir Shagatay. Shagatay describes how he found Mirzhakyp's this poem: "This book was in my compatriot's house who lived in Istanbul. Then, another our compatriot made a copy of it in "Young Turkestan" press. I got this version from him" (Dulatuly, 2013).

Despite the Soviet Government prohibited reading Mirzhakyp's book, his readers from abroad could get it. It confirms the Kazakh proverb "The golden cutlasses don't just lie in a box".

After the independence, Mirzhakyp Dulatuly's works revived. Scientists investigated his life and works. His daughter Gulnar Dulatova and scientists Rymgali Nurgali, Marat Apsemetov and Zhumagali Ysmagulov made a great investment in exploring his life. Mirzhakyp's works also paid attention of foreign scientists. In 1922, Japanese scientist Uyama Tomokiho made a dissertation on "The worldview of Kazakh intelligentsia in the beginning of the 20th century: about Mir-Yabub's book "Oyan Qazaq!"

In his difficult and short life, he covered all genres of literature and actively took part in social activities. His aim, position was not a wealth or reputation, but freedom of his nation, self-governance and escaping the oppression. He did not refuse these ideas even when he was tortured in jail. His daughter Gulnar Dulatova in her remembrances wrote: "When we faced a difficulty and cried, my father used to say calmly 'do not cry, my darlings, you should bear even more difficulties that your fate has prepared for you. You will grow up, and then you will understand everything. Be happy, do not stop studying, and do not offend your mother'. He kissed everyone and died. My father never refused his position. He stayed in jail for "Oyan Qazaq!" His persistence and the fact that he reached Solovkin without grayness of hair is fantastic. My mother saw his this condition in 1934" (Dulatova, 2010).

The dream of the freedom fighter was Kazakh nation's independence, self-governing free, developed country. In his poem "Elim-ai", he writes:

My dream is to see that day,  
I have no other dream, -

Unfortunately, the author could not witness the day of independence. His dream of future came true. Kazakhstan is an independent country nowadays. However, to reach this independence so many elites as Mirzhakyp sacrificed their lives. Hence, the young generation should understand the value of independence. The works of those freedom fighters should be an example for youngsters.

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