

B.B. Aktailak<sup>1\*</sup> , Zh.S. Begimbayeva<sup>2</sup> , O.D. Tabyldiyeva<sup>3</sup> , Z.Sh. Aitkenov<sup>4</sup> <sup>1</sup>*L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan;*<sup>2</sup>*K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Aktobe, Kazakhstan;*<sup>3</sup>*S. Yessenov Caspian University of Technology and Engineering, Aktau, Kazakhstan;*<sup>4</sup>*Pavlodar Pedagogical University named after A. Margulan, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan*(E-mail: [a.bakytzhan1992@gmail.com](mailto:a.bakytzhan1992@gmail.com); [zbegimbayeva@zhubanov.edu.kz](mailto:zbegimbayeva@zhubanov.edu.kz); [oryngul.tabyldiyeva@yu.edu.kz](mailto:oryngul.tabyldiyeva@yu.edu.kz); [ziyat15@mail.ru](mailto:ziyat15@mail.ru))

## Hasan Oraltay and the Construction of a Kazakh Counter-Narrative (1956–1991)

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the life and work of Hasan Oraltay, a central figure in the twentieth-century Kazakh diaspora and the foundational historian of its anti-Soviet, anti-communist intellectual tradition. This study addresses the key question of how, under the rigid ideological control and censorship of the Soviet regime, an alternative historical narrative for the Kazakh people was constructed and effectively disseminated. The key issues investigated include the systematic distortion of Kazakh history by official Soviet historiography, the suppression of the history of Kazakhs outside the USSR, and the role of the diaspora in preserving national consciousness. This research conducts a systematic analysis of H. Oraltay's major published works, declassified archival documents from his personal collection, and the broadcast records of Radio Azattyq (RFE/RL). The central thesis argues that Hasan Oraltay was not merely a publicist, but the principal architect of the Kazakh diaspora's historiography. His work is presented as a deliberate, strategic project to build a counter-narrative founded on three pillars: first, the transformation of the collective trauma of the Great Kazakh Exodus into a heroic epic of a struggle for freedom; second, the restoration of historical continuity by linking the mid-century national liberation struggle to the state-building legacy of the Alash movement; and third, the masterful use of Cold War media, specifically Radio Azattyq, to broadcast this narrative into Soviet Kazakhstan. The article concludes that H. Oraltay, acting as an "intellectual warrior", successfully forged and propagated a coherent alternative vision of the Kazakh past, which played a crucial role in preserving historical memory for the diaspora and nurturing the national consciousness that underpinned Kazakhstan's post-1991 intellectual revival.

**Keywords:** Hasan Oraltay, Kazakh diaspora, Radio Azattyq, Soviet historiography, Alash, Cold War, historical memory, emigration, national identity, Kazakh refugees.

### Introduction

The twentieth century was a period of profound upheaval and transformation for the Kazakh people, marked by wars, famine, political persecution, and the establishment of communist rule. Under the stringent ideological control characteristic of the Soviet Union, historical scholarship in Kazakhstan was subordinated to the dictates of Moscow, and official historiography cultivated a Soviet worldview, subjugating knowledge to political objectives. The history of Kazakhs who found themselves beyond the borders of the Kazakh SSR and their subsequent dispersal across the globe was largely suppressed. Into this vacuum stepped Hasan Oraltay — a historian, publicist, and public figure whose life was dedicated to giving voice to the history of this displaced nation.

The relevance of this study is underscored by the necessity of re-evaluating twentieth-century Kazakh history from a perspective free from the ideological strata of the Soviet era. Examining the legacy of figures such as Hasan Oraltay allows for the reconstruction of alternative historical narratives that were formulated outside the USSR and were influential in the preservation of national consciousness. A historiographical review indicates that while the activities of Radio Azattyq and the legacies of individual émigré figures have been subjects of study, a comprehensive analysis of Hasan Oraltay's contribution as a historian, publicist, and radio broadcaster who systematically constructed a counter-narrative to Soviet ideology has not yet been undertaken. This article aims to fill this lacuna. The research problem centers on the distortion of Kazakh history by Soviet ideology and the suppression of alternative viewpoints. The article addresses the question of how, despite censorship, a narrative opposing the official doctrine was constructed and disseminated.

The objective of this article is to analyze the scholarly and public legacy of Hasan Oraltay as a key figure in the creation of an alternative historiography of Kazakhstan in the twentieth century. To achieve this objective, the following tasks have been set:

\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [a.bakytzhan1992@gmail.com](mailto:a.bakytzhan1992@gmail.com)

- 1) To analyze the biography of H. Oraltay and his personal experience as the foundation of his work.
- 2) To investigate his key published works, which focus on the exodus from motherland and the rehabilitation of the Alash movement.
- 3) To evaluate his role at Radio Azattyq in the ideological confrontation with Soviet historical concepts.
- 4) To determine his contribution to the formation of modern Kazakh national identity.

The chronological scope of the research covers the twentieth century, with a particular focus on H. Oraltay's active period from the 1950s until the end of the Cold War.

### *Materials and Methods*

This study is grounded in a qualitative analysis of a diverse range of primary and archival sources, triangulated through multiple historical research methods.

The primary source base for this research is composed of three main categories: published works, personal archives, and institutional records.

First, the foundational materials are Hasan Oraltay's own published works. These include his seminal memoir, *Elim-ailap ötken ömir* (A Life Lived with "Elim-ai"), which provides invaluable context on his personal motivations and experiences. His key monographs, which formed the ideological bedrock of the diaspora, were analyzed, including *Kazak Exodus*, *Himalaya destanı* (The Himalayan Epic), *Kazak Türkleri: hürriyet uğrunda Doğu Türkistan* (Kazakh Turks: For the Freedom of East Turkestan), *Büyük türkçü Mağcan Cumabayoglu* (The Great Turkist Magzhan Zhumabayev), and his most significant political-historical work, *Alaş: Türkistan türklerinin millî istiklal Parolası* (Alash: The National Independence Slogan of the Turkestan Turks). These texts are crucial for tracing the development of his historical and political thought.

Second, the research draws heavily on two major archival collections. The personal fund of Hasan Oraltay, which was transferred to the National Academic Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Astana in 2005, contains his manuscripts, reports, photographs, and private correspondence. Further materials from this collection are held at the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, specifically within Fund 269-NL. This fund, covering the years 1946 to 2008, is a uniquely valuable source complex, offering unparalleled insight into Oraltay's multifaceted activities, his ideological struggle, and the Kazakh emigration's re-establishment of connections with an independent Kazakhstan.

Third, the study utilizes the archival records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) held at the Open Society Archives (OSA) in Budapest. These archives house the records and transcripts of Radio Azattyq broadcasts from its Munich period (1953–1995). This research specifically analyzed 87 of Oraltay's radio broadcasts, which are essential for reconstructing the informational confrontation during the Cold War and understanding the practical mechanisms he used to disseminate his counter-narrative.

A comprehensive methodological approach was employed to analyze the source materials. The historical-biographical method was applied to H. Oraltay's memoir and personal archives to establish the link between his personal trauma — specifically the Great Kazakh Exodus and the loss of his family — and his lifelong dedication to the national cause. This method allowed us to conclude that his scholarly work was not a detached academic exercise but an extension of his lived experience.

Discourse analysis was systematically applied to the 87 radio broadcast transcripts from the OSA archives. This method was instrumental in identifying the key rhetorical strategies, recurring themes (e.g., the illegitimacy of Soviet rule, the heroism of the Alash leaders), and the consistent ideological line, influenced by Mustafa Shokay, that H. Oraltay used to challenge official Soviet narratives.

A historical-comparative method was used to contrast H. Oraltay's historical claims, particularly regarding the Alash movement and the "voluntary unification" with Russia, against the official doctrines presented in Soviet publications like the *History of the Kazakh SSR*. This comparison was critical to demonstrating how H. Oraltay actively constructed a counter-narrative rather than simply recording events.

Finally, the historical-systemic method framed the analysis, allowing for an interpretation of H. Oraltay's activities not as isolated events but as a cohesive and strategic project. This approach enabled the research to situate his work within the broader systems of the Cold War ideological conflict, the pan-Turkic movement, and the Kazakh diaspora's struggle for identity, revealing him as a conscious "architect of identity".

### Results

The analysis of Hasan Oraltay's life and work reveals a systematic and lifelong project to construct and disseminate an alternative history of the Kazakh people. His efforts can be traced from his earliest experiences through his published works and his long career in radio broadcasting.

Born in 1933 in East Turkestan, H. Oraltay's worldview was forged in the crucible of his family's resistance to communist authorities. His father, Kalibek Hakim, was a leader in the local Kazakh resistance. The defining event of his youth was the Great Kazakh Exodus of 1949, a tragic flight across the Taklamakan Desert and Himalayas to escape the consolidation of Mao Zedong's power. This journey was a profound personal trauma; H. Oraltay and one brother were the only two of his father's eight children to survive [1; 10]. This experience of loss, survival, and displacement became the foundational motivation for all his subsequent scholarly and public activities. After finding asylum in Turkey in 1954, he began his work as a historian.

His collaboration with British journalist Godfrey Lias on the book *Kazak Exodus* (1956) was the first step in transforming his personal trauma into a historical narrative for a global audience. This was followed by a series of seminal works that established the ideological foundations of the Kazakh diaspora. His 1961 book, *Kazak Türkleri: hürriyet uğrunda Doğu Türkistan* (Kazakh Turks: For the Freedom of East Turkestan), was a foundational study of the Kazakh struggle against communism from a native perspective. In *Büyük türkçü Mağcan Cumabayoğlu* (1965), he undertook the political act of rehabilitating the repressed poet Magzhan Zhumabayev, introducing a key figure of the Kazakh national awakening to the broader Turkic world.

Arguably his most significant work, *Alaş: Türkistan türklerinin millî istiklal Parolası* (1973), directly confronted Soviet historiography. While Soviet authorities denigrated the Alash movement as "bourgeois-nationalist", H. Oraltay's analysis presented its figures as national heroes and the founders of an independent, modern Kazakh state. Written outside of Soviet ideological constraints, it was the first objective, scholarly work on the subject and stood as a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the Soviet narrative of Kazakh history.

It was in Turkey that Hasan Oraltay began his development as a researcher. A pivotal moment was his collaboration with the British journalist Godfrey Lias on the book *Kazak Exodus* (1956) [2], for which he provided invaluable eyewitness testimony. H. Oraltay recalled that Lias, then a correspondent for *The Times*, sought out him and his father, stating his desire to write a book about the Kazakhs. "We told him we would help him. And indeed, we helped," H. Oraltay wrote in his memoir. Lias acknowledged H. Oraltay's contribution in the book's preface. Soon after, in 1957, Oraltay co-authored a series of articles with Özdemir Atalan titled *Himalaya destanı* ("The Himalayan Epic") [3], which detailed the hardships of the exodus. These early works served as the first step in transforming personal trauma into a historical narrative.

Beginning in the late 1950s, H. Oraltay published a series of seminal works that defined the ideology of the diaspora.

- *Kazak Türkleri: hürriyet uğrunda Doğu Türkistan* (1961) (Kazakh Turks: For the Freedom of East Turkestan) was one of the first comprehensive studies of the Kazakh struggle against communist rule written from a Kazakh perspective [4]. The book described not only the armed resistance but also the sociocultural life of the Kazakhs in the context of their fight for national survival.

- *Büyük türkçü Mağcan Cumabayoğlu* (1965) (The Great Turkist Magzhan Zhumabayev) was dedicated to rehabilitating the legacy of the repressed poet Magzhan Zhumabayev [5]. By translating his poems into Turkish, Oraltay introduced the Turkic-speaking world to a key figure of the Kazakh national awakening, thereby strengthening pan-Turkic solidarity.

- *Alaş: Türkistan türklerinin millî istiklal Parolası* (1973) (Alash: The National Independence Slogan of the Turkestan Turks) is arguably his most significant work [6]. While in the USSR the Alash movement was denigrated as "bourgeois-nationalist", H. Oraltay presented its figures as national heroes and the founders of a modern, independent Kazakh state. This book, written outside the confines of communist ideology, was the first objective work on the subject and stood as a political act aimed at reviving the ideals of the Alash-Orda.

Even while living far from his homeland, Hasan Oraltay demonstrated a profound and sustained interest in the history, literature, and art of the Kazakh people. Furthermore, through his various works on these subjects, he systematically introduced the Kazakh nation to the Turkish public.

Beginning in 1962, Hasan Oraltay published a journal in Izmir titled *Büyük Türkeli* (The Great Turkic Land). Alongside materials pertaining specifically to the Kazakhs, the journal also published information of general interest to the broader Turkic world.

In the second issue of the journal *Komünizmle savaş* (Struggle with Communism) in 1965, Oraltay published an article titled “*Esir Milletler Haftası*” (Captive Nations Week) [7]. Following the discovery of the Golden Man at the Issyk kurgan, he published the article “*Altın Elbiseli Adam*” (The Golden Man) in 1971 [8].

In 1973, his book *Alash: The National Independence Slogan of the Turkestan Turks* was published in Istanbul [6]. The book provided an overview of the centuries-long national liberation movement of the Kazakh people. It is considered one of the first scholarly works about the Alash party and government, the Kazakh intelligentsia, and Kazakh periodicals to be written outside the constraints of communist ideology and with a commitment to factual accuracy. This was particularly significant because, at the time, no substantive works about Alash were being written in Kazakhstan; those that were published served only to denigrate the movement. Regarding his book, Hasan Oraltay stated: “...We have accomplished a certain amount of work. We wish to see this book and the sources indicated herein improved upon, and we hope for future specialists who will work toward this goal” [6; 10].

The scholar’s book *Doğu Türkistan tarihindeki bazı meseleler ve ithamlara cevaplar* (Some Issues in the History of East Turkestan and Answers to Accusations) is also of clear interest to researchers. This work presents considerable data on the national liberation uprising in East Turkestan and on the Kazakhs [9].

In 1984, the *Kazakh-Turkish Dictionary* was published in Istanbul [10]. Hasan Oraltay was one of its primary authors. In this dictionary, Kazakh words were written in the Latin script and provided with explanatory translations in Turkish. This suggests that the authors’ ultimate goal was to create a resource for those wishing to gain a deep command of the Kazakh language and for individuals interested in Kazakh history and linguistics.

In 1984, H. Oraltay’s article “*Doğu Türkistan Seyahatı*” (A Journey to East Turkestan) was published [11]. In it, the author describes his journey to East Turkestan in the summer of 1984 at the invitation of the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region’s Institute of Languages. This was the author’s first time in the region since 1949. The article provides details about the changes that had occurred since that time and the contemporary life of the region.

In 1985, another of the scholar’s articles appeared in *Central Asian Survey*, titled “The Alash movement in Turkestan” [12]. In this article, the author discusses the historical origins and legends of the concept of “Alash”, as well as the Alash movement and its representatives.

Hasan Oraltay’s activities at Radio Azattyq require separate consideration, as it was during this period of his life that he engaged in his most active public advocacy [13]. In 1968, he began working for the Kazakh service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). Broadcasting from Munich, he became one of the most influential voices reaching Soviet Kazakhstan. For nearly three decades, often under the pseudonyms “Kazakbalasy” (Kazakh Child), “Kadashuly” (Son of Kadash) or “Tarbagatayly” (One from Tarbagatai), he systematically challenged the official Soviet narrative.

The analysis of H. Oraltay’s radio programs reveal a clear ideological line consistent with the ideas of Mustafa Shokay, a prominent leader of the Turkestani independence movement. This influence becomes evident through a detailed examination of the broadcast content. The materials aired on Radio Azattyq were produced by the “Turkestan” desk, which broadcast to all regions of Central Asia, ensuring a common ideological and thematic vector.

Staff at Radio Azattyq closely monitored publications in the Soviet press and actively engaged in on-air polemics. They offered alternative perspectives on information presented in newspapers like *Pravda*, *Sotsialistik Qazaqstan*, and *Leninshil Zhas*. For instance, a report on a conference of ethnographers in Ashgabat in 1967 accused “Soviet colonizers, the successors of Tsarist Russia”, of attempting to “destroy the historical literature and the ethnic and geographical unity of the Turkestani people” to maintain their colonial grip. The broadcast expressed concern over the Soviet historiographical concept of “Kazakhstan and Central Asia”, viewing it as a threat to Turkestani unity, and concluded with the assertion that “in the Soviet Union, the interests of the Communist Party are paramount” [14].

In late 1967, H. Oraltay produced a radio report based on an article by the American scholar Lowell Tillet, “Nationality and History”, published in *Problems of Communism*. H. Oraltay’s report presented a detailed analysis of Tillet’s work, highlighting chapters such as “Under the Guise of Friendship of Peoples”, “The Kazakhs and the New History”, and “The Party’s Violence Against E. Bekmakhanov”. He quoted

Tillett's assertion that "the history of the national, state, and national liberation struggle of the Kazakhs is distorted and closely tied to the interests of Soviet policy", which was the reason "Kazakh history constantly undergoes changes... and distortions" [15].

The station also actively countered inaccurate information about Kazakh history and culture published abroad. It criticized tendentious materials where foreign journalists, invited by Soviet authorities, presented a sanitized version of history. A notable example was the station's response to a series of articles by Turkish journalist İlhan Selçuk, who, after a trip to Central Asia, claimed that "the Kazakhs, like other Turkic peoples of the country, formed as a nation only under Soviet rule" [16]. Radio Azattyq subjected this claim to a rigorous critical analysis, amplifying refutations from émigré figures like Professor Zeki Velidi Togan.

By initiating discussions on such contentious topics, Radio Azattyq filled an information vacuum. In early 1968, the station posed the provocative question, "Who is distorting the history of Turkestan?" This prompted a lengthy rebuttal in Pravda titled "An Answer to the Falsifiers of History". The radio, in turn, critiqued the Pravda article, retorting that "historians are forced to serve the interests of the CPSU completely", while "foreign historians and the Turkestan intelligentsia abroad tell the truth in their works, showing that the Turkestan republics have in fact become a Soviet colony" [17].

In 1969, a broadcast highlighted the critical shortage of history textbooks in Kazakhstan's schools. Citing an article in the newspaper *Leninshil Zhas*, the report underscored the lack of attention to teaching Kazakh history. Analyzing the situation, H. Oraltay concluded, "...for the viability of our people, our youth must know our national history", and insisted that "the history of a country must be developed by the scholars of that country, who defend its interests and do not distort historical truth" [18].

In any study of Hasan Oraltay's service to the cause of freedom, his memoir, *Elim-ailap ötken ömir* (A Life Lived with "Elim-ai"), holds a place of particular importance [1]. This work is, in the scholar's own words, "the memorable collection of what he heard, saw, and did" [1; 4]. The work is unequivocally a primary source for the various events experienced by our people, and its value as a source is exceptionally high.

H. Oraltay was not only a historian but also a meticulous archivist. He collected a vast array of documents, photographs, and manuscripts related to the history of the Kazakh diaspora. In 2005, under the "Cultural Heritage" state program of Kazakhstan, his private archive was transferred to the National Academic Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This collection contains unique materials on the history, daily life, economy, religious beliefs, and literary and scientific life of Kazakhs both in Kazakhstan and around the world.

The Personal Fund of Hasan Oraltay (Fund 269-NL), housed in the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, constitutes a highly valuable complex of sources for the study of the socio-political and intellectual history of the twentieth-century Kazakh diaspora. Covering the period from 1946 to 2008, the documents in this collection enable in-depth research not only into H. Oraltay's multifaceted activities but also into the broader history of the Kazakh emigration during the Cold War era, its ideological struggle, and the processes of re-establishing connections with an independent Kazakhstan [19].

The documents within the fund can be categorized into several thematic groups. The first group comprises documents evidencing H. Oraltay's biography and public activities. This includes invitations to scholarly conferences, such as those dedicated to the 110th anniversary of Kh. Dosmukhameduly and the 90th anniversary of the Alash movement, which demonstrates his recognition among the Kazakh intelligentsia as an established researcher of the Alash legacy. Furthermore, his correspondence concerning the operations of Radio Azattyq with "Deutsche Krankenversicherung" and T. Dine, the president of the radio corporation, reveals the organizational and international dimensions of his work in Munich. Correspondence regarding the transfer of his personal archive either to the Hoover Institution in the USA or to Astana via Academician R. Nurgali attests to his profound understanding of the historical value of his legacy and his objective to ensure its availability for the benefit of his homeland.

The second category consists of official documents reflecting H. Oraltay's ideological position and research interests. A key item in this group is a copy of M. Zhumabayev's collection of poems published in Tashkent in 1928, featuring H. Oraltay's own handwritten annotations; this signifies his deep engagement with national liberation literature. Concurrently, documents such as the 1946 German edition of Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto, bulletins concerning the leaders of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and the Constitution of the USSR indicate his meticulous study of the fundamental tenets of his ideological adversaries. This underscores that his activities were not limited to mere propaganda but were grounded in thorough analysis.

The third group includes photographic documents and personal notes. This collection of sources is crucial for studying H. Oraltay's private life and his professional network. Photographs of his father, Kalibek Hakim, family members, and colleagues in Turkey and Germany serve as a visual chronicle of his life journey. Particularly valuable are photographs from his meetings with Kazakh intellectuals such as M. Koigeldiev and N. Mukhametkhanuly, and those taken during his visits to Kazakhstan (Turkistan, Zhanaqorgan, Shymkent, Almaty, Astana); these documents evidence the revitalization of spiritual and scholarly ties with his historical homeland following independence. His notebook, containing the addresses of relatives, colleagues, and friends both abroad and in Kazakhstan, opens avenues for researching the geography of the internal and external connections of the Kazakh diaspora during that period.

As we say, H. Oraltay's most impactful work was conducted during his nearly three-decade tenure at Radio Azattyq (RFE/RL), which he joined in 1968. Broadcasting from Munich under pseudonyms like "Kazakbalasy" (Kazakh Child), he became one of the most influential voices reaching into Soviet Kazakhstan. His radio programs systematically deconstructed the official Soviet narrative. Analysis of his broadcasts reveals he:

- Covered forbidden topics, including the Great Famine (Asharshylyq) and Stalinist repressions.
- Directly criticized Soviet academic publications, such as the History of the Kazakh SSR, for their factual distortions concerning the "voluntary unification" with Russia and their erasure of Kazakh agency.
- Popularized Western scholarship that was banned in the USSR, such as Lowell Tillett's work on the persecution of historian Yermukhan Bekmakhanov.
- Countered Soviet propaganda in real-time, such as using ancient Turkic inscriptions as an allegory to critique modern imperialism in response to celebrations of the "250th anniversary of voluntary unification".
- Highlighted critical social issues, such as the lack of Kazakh history textbooks in the republic's schools, arguing that "for the viability of our people, our youth must know our national history".

Finally, H. Oraltay acted as a meticulous archivist. He collected a vast array of documents, photographs, and manuscripts related to diaspora history. His decision to transfer his personal archive to the National Academic Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2005 under the "Cultural Heritage" program demonstrates his ultimate objective: ensuring his life's work would be available to future generations in his homeland.

### *Discussion*

The results of this study, which Hasan Oraltay establish as the foundational architect of an anti-Soviet Kazakh historiography, must be situated within the broader context of Cold War ideological struggles and the development of modern Kazakh historical thought. While the introduction to this article notes a lacuna in comprehensive studies of H. Oraltay, his work did not occur in a vacuum. The findings presented here both confirm and significantly expand upon the limited existing scholarship concerning émigré intellectuals and Radio Azattyq.

An examination of the historiography reveals that the primary recognition of Hasan Oraltay's works and contributions is directly linked to Kazakhstan's acquisition of independence and the establishment of a national historiography independent of the Soviet historical narrative.

Indeed, the earliest works concerning his life and activities were authored by foreign researchers. For instance, G. Lias recalls: "I have a letter from Hasan, the son of Qalibek, written on behalf of his father who did not know a single word of English... In any case, one does not expect such words from a nomadic people. Make no mistake: he was not begging for charity, but only sought solidarity and understanding... Despite all this, the Kazakh refugees believe their country one day will be free again..." [20; 281-282].

Furthermore, considerable information about Hasan Oraltay and his family can be found in the dissertation of Milton J. Clark, defended at Harvard University in 1955 [21]. In the appendix to the dissertation, the author provides biographical information on the life of the 20-year-old Hasan Oraltay [21; 326]. In addition to H. Oraltay, the appendix contains the personal histories of his father, Qalibek Hakim, Nurkozha Batyr, and others. This makes the work of particular interest, as it captures the first-person accounts of Kazakh refugee representatives. The dissertation itself is dedicated to leadership and the political distribution of power in Kazakh society.

In Soviet historiography, all representatives of the Kazakh emigration, beginning with M. Shokay himself, were perceived as traitors to the people and enemies of Soviet Kazakhstan. "No less an odious figure in the Kazakh section (of the radio) is Hasan Oraltay, a.k.a. Kalibekov. ...grew up abroad... has not seen Kazakhstan. Oraltay is the author of two books published in Turkey, ...filled with anti-Soviet and nationalist

fabrications. ...he did not fail to pass himself off as an “ideological fighter and theorist of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan.” ...a newfound Kazakh Solzhenitsyn of Chinese-Turkish origin...” [22; 3]. As is evident from the quotation, the Soviet establishment assessed Hasan Oraltay as an “outsider”, an “anti-Soviet”, a “nationalist”, and a “Kazakh Solzhenitsyn”. Even his Kazakh identity was called into question, citing his purported “Chinese-Turkish origin”.

Beginning in the 1990s, the attitude towards Hasan Oraltay began to change. This was, of course, linked to the political transformations in Kazakhstan. The perception of Hasan Oraltay’s activities and his works shifted in a positive direction, and his contributions came to be recognized. Thus, in his work on the Alash movement, M. Koigeldiev notes: “In understanding the fate of the Alash figures, especially the lives and work of those from Alash who were forced to emigrate to foreign countries, the work of H. Oraltay holds a special place” [23; 19].

The renowned scholar Kenes Nurpeisov is an author who has highly valued H. Oraltay’s work in the study of the Alash movement’s history. He conveys that at a time when Soviet historiography produced no truth-based works on this topic, H. Oraltay’s writings were uniquely valuable and relevant [24].

Academician Rymgali Nurgali, in his own words, equated Hasan Oraltay’s work to a great feat: “In 1973, he published the book “Alash...” in Turkey. Using the documents, data, photographs, and texts available to him, the author created what could be called a brief reference guide, a mini-encyclopedia, about Alash Orda and the Alash figures. He later continued his work in this field at Radio Liberty” [25; 10].

In addition to recognizing H. Oraltay’s merits, domestic authors also pointed out his shortcomings: “This work also has its contentious points. For example, it is difficult to agree with the author’s decision to begin the history of the Alash party from 1905, and to classify the publications “Aiqap” and “Qazaqstan,” alongside the “Qazaq” newspaper, as organs of this organization. It is true that these publications were voices of the national liberation movement, but to claim they were organs of a specific political organization is unfounded” [23; 19]. As we can observe, the practice of domestic scholars viewing H. Oraltay’s works in a one-sided and negative manner, as was common during the Soviet era, has shifted towards a more objective assessment. Nevertheless, the shortcomings in H. Oraltay’s works have also been highlighted.

Furthermore, Hasan Oraltay’s works became a foundational source of valuable data for studying the history of the Kazakh diaspora. After Kazakhstan gained independence, a number of works studying the history of the diaspora were published. Among the first of these, one must mention G. Mendikulova’s monograph, “The Kazakh Diaspora: History and Modernity” [26]. In this work, too, steps have been taken to objectively evaluate the works written by representatives of the Kazakh diaspora. The strengths, as well as the weaknesses, of works written by diaspora representatives, including those of H. Oraltay, are presented.

Previous studies have often focused on Radio Azattyq’s general role as a Western propaganda outlet or on individual émigré figures in isolation. This research challenges that fragmented view by demonstrating that H. Oraltay’s work was a coherent, long-term project executed across multiple platforms — books, articles, and radio broadcasts. His activities at Radio Azattyq were not merely propagandistic; they were deeply rooted in scholarly engagement. For instance, his on-air polemics were meticulously prepared. When critiquing Soviet publications or responding to articles in newspapers like Pravda and Sotsialistik Qazaqstan, he did so with specific, evidence-based counter-arguments. His alignment with Western scholars like Lowell Tillett was not simple citation, but a strategic amplification of external, credible voices to validate the émigré narrative and expose Soviet academic fraud to a Kazakh audience.

Furthermore, this study’s findings place H. Oraltay in direct intellectual lineage with earlier leaders of the Turkestani independence movement, most notably Mustafa Shokay. The ideological consistency between Shokay’s pre-war writings and the themes of H. Oraltay’s broadcasts — pan-Turkic unity, the colonial nature of Soviet rule, and the importance of the Alash legacy — is a key finding. H. Oraltay thus emerges as a crucial bridge figure who adapted the ideals of the first wave of Turkestani emigration to the media and political realities of the Cold War.

In comparing H. Oraltay’s findings with the work of his contemporaries, his unique contribution becomes clearer. While other émigrés like Professor Zeki Velidi Togan also worked to refute Soviet historical claims, H. Oraltay’s position at Radio Azattyq gave him an unparalleled platform for mass dissemination. While Togan engaged in academic debate, H. Oraltay weaponized historical scholarship, broadcasting it directly into the homes of Kazakhs. This study argues that it was this combination of rigorous historical work and strategic media use that made him singularly effective. His work confirms, challenges, and extends previous research by presenting him not just as a voice of the diaspora, but as its chief historical narrator and

intellectual strategist, who successfully created a durable and influential counter-narrative that would have a profound impact on the re-emerging national identity in Kazakhstan after 1991.

### Conclusions

This research set out to analyze the scholarly and public legacy of Hasan Oraltay and his role in creating an alternative historiography for Kazakhstan. The findings lead to several clear conclusions that directly correspond to the initial research objectives.

First, the analysis of H. Oraltay's biography demonstrates that his work was fundamentally shaped by his personal experience. The trauma of the Great Kazakh Exodus, the loss of his family, and his life as a refugee were not merely background details but the driving force behind his lifelong mission to preserve the history of a people he felt was being erased. He transformed this personal trauma into a powerful historical narrative of national struggle and survival.

Second, the investigation of his key published works reveals a deliberate intellectual project. In books like *Alaş: Türkistan türklerinin millî istiklal Parolası*, he systematically rehabilitated the Alash movement, directly challenging the "bourgeois-nationalist" label imposed by Soviet ideologues and re-establishing its leaders as the founders of a modern, independent Kazakh state. This was a direct act of political and historical revisionism aimed at restoring a suppressed historical continuity.

Third, the evaluation of his role at Radio Azattyq confirms that he masterfully utilized the media resources of the Cold War to wage an ideological struggle. For decades, he bypassed Soviet censorship to broadcast a counter-narrative into the Kazakh SSR, covering forbidden topics, critiquing official doctrine, and popularizing alternative historical perspectives. He transitioned from the armed struggle of his father's generation to an intellectual one, where the radio broadcast was his primary weapon.

Fourth, in determining his contribution to modern Kazakh national identity, it is evident that his work was immense. By preserving historical memory for the diaspora and stimulating national consciousness within Soviet Kazakhstan, he helped to lay the intellectual groundwork for the national revival that followed independence in 1991.

In conclusion, Hasan Oraltay was far more than a chronicler or polemicist; he was a "keeper of memory" and an "intellectual warrior". He successfully constructed a coherent, powerful, and enduring alternative history of the Kazakh people, confirming his status as one of the most significant Kazakh intellectuals of the twentieth century. Further research into his rich archival legacy is essential to fully understand the mechanisms of foreign dissent and his outstanding contribution to the history of his people.

### References

- 1 Оралтай Х. Елім-айлап өткен өмір / Х. Оралтай. — Алматы: Білім, 2005. — 632 б.
- 2 Lias G. Göç / G. Lias. — İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1973. — 343 p.
- 3 Atalan Ö. Himalaya destanı / Ö. Atalan. — Ankara: Özkültür Yayınları, 1975. — 144 p.
- 4 Oraltay H. Kazak Türkleri: hürriyet uğrunda Doğu Türkistan / H. Oraltay. — İzmir: Türk Kültür Yayını, 1961. — 210 p.
- 5 Oraltay H. Büyük türkçü Mağcan Cumabayoğlu / H. Oraltay. — İzmir: Büyük Türkeli Yayınları, 1965. — 40 p.
- 6 Oraltay H. Alaş. Türkistan türklerinin millî istiklal Parolası / H. Oraltay. — İstanbul: Büyük Türkeli Yayınları, 1973. — 200 p.
- 7 Oraltay H. Esir Milletler Haftası / H. Oraltay // Komünizmle savaş. — 1965. — № 2. — 2 p.
- 8 Oraltay H. Altın Elbiseli Adam / H. Oraltay // Türk Kültürü. — 1971. — IX. — 100 p.
- 9 Oraltay H. Doğu Türkistan tarihindeki bazı meseleler ve ithamlara cevaplar / H. Oraltay. — İstanbul: Büyük Türkeli Yayınları, 1975. — 45 p.
- 10 Oraltay H. Kazak türkçesi sözlüğü / H. Oraltay, N. Yüce, S. Pınar. — İstanbul: Büyük Türkeli Yayınları, 1984. — 328 p.
- 11 Oraltay H. Doğu Türkistan Seyahatı / H. Oraltay // Büyük Türkeli. — 1984. — № 8. — P. 20–33.
- 12 Oraltay H. The Alash movement in Turkestan / H. Oraltay // Central Asian Survey. — 1985. — Vol. 4. — № 2. — P. 41–58.
- 13 Баймолда Д. Шындық жаршысы / Д. Баймолда. — Алматы: «Нұр принт-75» баспасы, 2011. — 336 б.
- 14 Оралтай Х. Түркістандық этнографтардың Ашхабаттағы жиналысы / Х. Оралтай // Азаттық радиосы, Түркістан редакциясы, 17.12.1967. — 3 б.
- 15 Оралтай Х. Америка ғылымының Қазақ тарихы турасындағы пікірі / Х. Оралтай // Азаттық радиосы, Түркістан редакциясы, 19.12.1967. — 3 б.

- 16 Оралтай Х. Қазақстан жөнінде Түркия баспасөзінде болған бір айтыс / Х. Оралтай // Азаттық радиосы, Түркістан редакциясы, 23.11.1967. — 3 б.
- 17 Оралтай Х. Түркістан тарихын кім бұрмалауда? / Х. Оралтай // Азаттық радиосы, Түркістан редакциясы, 11.01.1968. — 3 б.
- 18 Оралтай Х. Тарих пәні оқушыларына жеткілікті оқулықтар берілмеуде / Х. Оралтай // Азаттық радиосы, Түркістан редакциясы, 21.01.1969. — 3 б.
- 19 АП РК. — Ф. 269-NL. — Оп.1. — Д.1.
- 20 Лайас Г. Аспантау асқан үркін көш / Г. Лайас; Б. Бұқарбайдың жет. ауд. — Алматы: AmalBooks, 2018. — 288 б.
- 21 Clark M. Leadership and political allocation in Sinkiang Kazak Society. A thesis presented by Milton J. Clark to the Department of Social Relations in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the subject of Clinical Psychology. — Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. January, 1955. — 330 p.
- 22 Козыбаев С. На фронтах идеологической борьбы. Оборотни / С. Козыбаев // Казахстанская правда, 20.12.1983. — 3 р.
- 23 Қойгелдиев М. Алаш қозғалысы / М. Қойгелдиев. — Алматы: Санат, 1995. — 368 б.
- 24 Нұрпейісов К. Алаш һәм Алашорда / К. Нұрпейісов. — Алматы: Ататек, 1995. — 256 б.
- 25 Нұрғали Р. Тәуелсіз Қазақстан мұраттарының Алаш идеяларымен сабақтастығы / Р. Нұрғали // Әлем қазақтарының рухани сұхбаты: тіл, мәдениет және Алаш мұраты. Халықаралық ғылыми-теориялық конференция материалдары / Құраст.: Е. Тілешов, Г. Әріпбекова, О. Сүлейменов. — Алматы: Сардар, 2008. — 364 р.
- 26 Мендикулова Г. Казахская диаспора: история и современность / Г. Мендикулова. — Алматы: Всемирная Ассоциация казахов, 2006. — 343 с.

Б.Б. Ақтайлақ, Ж.С. Бегимбаева, О.Д. Табылдиева, З.Ш. Айткенов

### **Хасан Оралтай және қазақ тарихына балама көзқарасты қалыптастыру (1956–1991 жж.)**

Мақалада XX ғасырдағы қазақ диаспорасы бас тұлғаларының бірі, оның антикеңестік, антикоммунистік зияткерлік дәстүрінің негізін қалаушы тарихшы — Хасан Оралтайдың өмірі мен қызметіне жан-жақты талдау жасалған. Зерттеу қатаң кеңестік идеологиялық бақылау мен цензура жағдайында қазақ халқының балама тарихы қалай құрылымдалды, тиімді түрде қалай таратылды деген түйінді мәселеге арналған. Зерделенетін негізгі мәселелерге ресми кеңестік тарихнаманың қазақ тарихын жүйелі түрде бұрмалауы, КСРО-дан тыс жердегі қазақтар тарихының тұншықтырылуы және ұлттық сананы сақтаудағы диаспораның рөлі жатады. Зерттеуде Х. Оралтайдың негізгі жарияланған еңбектеріне, оның жеке қорынан алынған архив құжаттарына және Азаттық радиосының хабарлар жинағына жүйелі талдау жасалған. Негізгі тезис Хасан Оралтайды жай ғана публицист емес, қазақ диаспорасы тарихнамасының басты тұлғасы ретінде қарастырады. Оның қызметі үш тұғырға негізделген тарихты құрылымдаудың мақсатты, стратегиялық жобасы ретінде ұсынылған: біріншіден, Ұлы қазақ көшінің ұжымдық трагедиясын азаттық үшін күрестің қаһармандық эпопеясына айналдыру; екіншіден, ғасыр ортасындағы ұлт-азаттық күресті Алаш қозғалысының мемлекет құру мұрасымен байланыстыру арқылы тарихи сабақтастықты қалпына келтіру; үшіншіден, осы тарихты кеңестік Қазақстанға тарату үшін қырғи-қабақ соғысының медиа құралдарын, атап айтқанда Азаттық радиосын шебер пайдалану. Қорытындылай келе, авторлар Х. Оралтай «зияткер жауынгер» рөлін атқара отырып, қазақтың өткен тарихын сақтап, таратқан деген тұжырымдамаға келген. Яғни Қазақстанның 1991 жылдан кейін интеллектуалды жандануына негіз болған диаспораның тарихи жадын сақтауда және ұлттық бірегейлікті нығайтуда шешуші рөл атқарған.

*Кілт сөздер:* Хасан Оралтай, қазақ диаспорасы, Азаттық радиосы, кеңестік тарихнама, Алаш, қырғи-қабақ соғыс, тарихи жады, эмиграция, ұлттық бірегейлік, қазақ босқындары.

Б.Б. Ақтайлақ, Ж.С. Бегимбаева, О.Д. Табылдиева, З.Ш. Айткенов

### **Хасан Оралтай и конструирования казахского контрнарратива (1956–1991 гг.)**

В статье представлен всесторонний анализ жизни и деятельности Хасана Оралтая, центральной фигуры казахской диаспоры двадцатого века и основоположника ее антисоветской, антикоммунистической интеллектуальной традиции. Исследование посвящено ключевому вопросу, каким образом в условиях жесткого советского идеологического контроля и цензуры был сконструирован и эффективно распространён альтернативный исторический нарратив для казахского народа. В работе рассматриваются такие важнейшие проблемы, как систематическое искажение истории Казахстана официальной советской историографией, замалчивание истории казахов за пределами СССР и роль диаспоры в сохранении национального самосознания. В данном исследовании проводится системный анализ основных

опубликованных работ Х. Оралтая, архивных документов из его личной коллекции и материалов Радио «Азаттык» (Радио Свободная Европа/Радио Свобода). Основной тезис заключается в том, что Хасан Оралтай был не просто публицистом, а главным архитектором историографии казахской диаспоры. Его деятельность представлена как целенаправленный, стратегический проект по созданию контрнарратива, основанного на трех столпах: во-первых, трансформация коллективной травмы Великого казахского исхода в героический эпос о борьбе за свободу; во-вторых, восстановление исторической преемственности путем установления связи между национально-освободительной борьбой в середине века и государственным наследием движения «Алаш»; и, в-третьих, виртуозное использование медиаресурсов времен холодной войны, в частности Радио «Азаттык», для трансляции этого нарратива в Советский Казахстан. В заключение автор приходит к выводу, что Х. Оралтай, действуя как «интеллектуальный воин», успешно создал и распространил целостное альтернативное видение казахского прошлого, которое сыграло решающую роль в сохранении исторической памяти для диаспоры и в укреплении национального самосознания, послужившего основой для интеллектуального возрождения Казахстана после 1991 года.

**Ключевые слова:** Хасан Оралтай, казахская диаспора, Радио «Азаттык», советская историография, Алаш, холодная война, историческая память, эмиграция, национальная идентичность, казахские беженцы.

## References

- Oraltay, H. (2005). *Elim-ailap otken omir* [A Life Lived with "Elim-ai"]. Almaty: Bilim [in Kazakh].
- Lias, G. (1973). *Göç [Exodus]*. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları [in Turkish].
- Atalan, Ö. (1975). *Himalaya destanı* [The Himalayan Epic]. Ankara: Özkültür Yayınları [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H. (1961). *Kazak Türkleri: hürriyet uğrunda Doğu Türkistan* [Kazakh Turks: For the Freedom of East Turkestan]. İzmir: Türk Kültür Yayını [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H. (1965). *Büyük türkçü Mağcan Cumabayoğlu* [The Great Turkist Magzhan Zhumabayev]. İzmir: Büyük Türkeli Yayınları [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H. (1973). *Alaş. Türkistan türklerinin millî istiklal Parolası* [Alash: The National Independence Slogan of the Turkestan Turks]. İstanbul: Büyük Türkeli Yayınları [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H. (1965). Esir Milletler Haftası [Captive Nations Week]. *Komünizmle savaş — Fight communism* [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H. (1971). Altın Elbiseli Adam [The Man in the Golden Dress]. *Türk Kültürü — Turkish Culture* [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H. (1975). *Doğu Türkistan tarihindeki bazı meseleler ve ithamlara cevaplar* [Answers to some issues and accusations in the history of East Turkestan]. İstanbul: Büyük Türkeli Yayınları [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H., Yüce N., Pınar S. (1984). *Kazak türkçesi sözlüğü* [Kazakh Turkish dictionary]. İstanbul: Büyük Türkeli Yayınları [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H. (1984). Doğu Türkistan Seyahatı [East Turkestan Travel]. *Büyük Türkeli — Great Turkeli* [in Turkish].
- Oraltay, H. (1985). The Alash movement in Turkestan. *Central Asian Survey*, 4, 2, 41-58.
- Baimolda, D. (2011). *Shyndyq zharsysy* [Herald of Truth]. Almaty: "Nur-Print-75" baspasy [in Kazakh].
- Oraltay, H. (17.12.1967). Turkistandyq etnografardyn Ashkhabattagy zhinalysy [Meeting of Turkestan ethnographers in Ashgabat]. *Azattyq radiosy, Turkistan redaksiiasy — Radio Liberty. Turkestan editorial office* [in Kazakh].
- Oraltay, H. (19.12.1967). Amerika galymynyn Qazaq tarih turasyndagy pikiri [The opinion of American science on Kazakh history]. *Azattyq radiosy, Turkistan redaksiiasy — Radio Liberty. Turkestan editorial office* [in Kazakh].
- Oraltay, H. (23.11.1967). Qazaqstan zhoninde Turkiia baspasozinde bolgan bir aitys [A controversy in the Turkish press about Kazakhstan]. *Azattyq radiosy, Turkistan redaksiiasy — Radio Liberty. Turkestan editorial office* [in Kazakh].
- Oraltay, H. (11.01.1968). Turkistan tarikhyn kim burmalanda? [Who is distorting the history of Turkestan?]. *Azattyq radiosy, Turkistan redaksiiasy — Radio Liberty. Turkestan editorial office* [in Kazakh].
- Oraltay, H. (21.01.1969). Tarikh pani oqushylaryna zhetkilikti oqulyqtar berilmeude [History students are not being provided with enough textbooks]. *Azattyq radiosy, Turkistan redaksiiasy — Radio Liberty. Turkestan editorial office* [in Kazakh].
- AP RK [Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan]. — F. 269-NL. — Op. 1. — D. 1. [in Kazakh].
- Lias, G. (2018). *Aspantau asqan urkin kosh* [The great exodus that crossed the Sky Mountains]. Almaty: AmalBooks. [in Kazakh].
- Clark, M. (1955) Leadership and political allocation in Sinkiang Kazak Society. A thesis presented by Milton J. Clark to the Department of Social Relations in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the subject of Clinical Psychology. Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Kozybayev, S. (20.12.1983). Na frontakh ideologicheskoi borby. Oborotni [On the fronts of the ideological struggle. Were-wolves]. *Kazhastanskaia pravda — Kazakhstan Pravda, 20th of December* [in Russian].
- Koigeldiev, M. (1995). *Alash qozgalysy* [Alash movement]. Almaty: Sanat [in Kazakh].
- Nurpeiisov, K. (1995). *Alash ham Alashorda* [Alash and Alashorda]. Almaty: Atatek [in Kazakh].

25 Nurgali, R. (2008). Tauelsiz Qazaqstan murattarynyn Alash ideialarymen sabaqtastygy [The lesson of the supporters of independent Kazakhstan with the ideas of Alash]. *Alem qazaqtarynyn rukhani sukhbaty: til, madeniet zhane Alash muraty. Khalyqaralyq gylymi-teoriialyq konferentsiia materialdary — Spiritual dialogue of Kazakhs of the world: language, culture and Alash heritage. Materials of the international scientific-theoretical conference*. Compiled by: E. Tilešov, G. Äripbekova, O. Süleimenov. Almaty: Sardar [in Kazakh].

26 Mendikulova G. (2011). *Kazakhskaiia diaspora: istoria i sovremenost* [Kazakh Diaspora: History and Modernity]. Almaty: World Association of Kazakhs [in Russian].

#### Information about the authors

**Aktailak Bakytzhan** — PhD Doctoral Student, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7614-2935>

**Begimbayeva Zhibek** — Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate Professor, Department of History and Religious Studies, K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Aktobe, Kazakhstan, <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9827-379X>

**Tabyldiyeva Oryngul** — Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate Professor, Department of History, S. Yessenov Caspian University of Technology and Engineering, Aktau, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9561-2461>

**Aitkenov Ziyat** — Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate Professor, Higher School of Humanities, Pavlodar Pedagogical University named after A. Margulan, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8070-7150>