

THE CULTURAL WAY OF LIFE DURING THE SOVIET ERA

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Abstract: This article highlights the importance of the activities of cultural houses and circles within organizations and institutions as a means of instilling communist ideology during the establishment of the Soviet era. Their activities, state support, and achievements and shortcomings are analyzed.

Introduction Throughout every stage of history, Khiva has been a cradle of culture and spirituality. With the abolition of the khanate and the establishment of Soviet power, the dissemination of communist ideology became central. In these difficult conditions, the people managed to preserve their national culture. The effort to spread communist ideas widely among the masses was closely connected to the establishment and functioning of culture houses. The first such institutions appeared in the early 1920s in the form of workers' "clubs." The creation of cultural houses began in the 1920s and expanded significantly in the 1930s. Studies have mostly focused on the history of Khiva up to the 1930s. However, the period after the 1930s must be examined more comprehensively through archival sources. The insufficient study of archival funds on this subject enhances the relevance of further research. For instance, on October 19, 1932, a resolution was adopted regarding the reorganization of clubs, and by 1938, new trade union clubs were formally approved.[2] Cultural institutions played an important role in developing spiritual life. By the 1940s, illiteracy was officially declared eradicated, which provided the basis for expanding cultural initiatives. In 1948, Khiva had one culture house, ten clubs, and eleven libraries in operation.[3] From 1957 onward, Khiva's culture house began functioning in a new building.[4] During the collectivization period of the 1930s, culture houses also appeared in villages, where political propaganda, theatrical performances, and circles were organized. The establishment of amateur circles in culture houses, schools, organizations, and industrial enterprises contributed to the spread of communist ideology. For example, one of the first amateur Komsomol drama circles in Khiva was formed in 1922 during Hamza Hakimzoda's visit. Its members organized a theater troupe of 72 people, which marked the origins of Khiva's theater tradition.[1] In 1934, due to the poor organization of club activities, a directive was issued requiring the district education department to introduce regular programs and supply clubs with qualified personnel.[5] Amateur circles were also established in every school. For instance, Anabibi Masharipova, an excellent student at the Vorislov secondary school, was also known as a young actress and an active member of the youth theater.[6] Alongside these positive developments, shortcomings were also observed. For example, the amateur drama circle at Vorislov school disbanded after staging only one concert during the first quarter of the school year.[7] These amateur groups extended their influence to secondary specialized educational institutions as well. Circles were organized in diverse fields. The Osoviakhim society, for example, introduced military training programs for youth. In 1940, a defense circle was established at the Sverdlov Pedagogical College No. 19, which trained 120 sharpshooters.[8] Most of these circles operated in Khiva, the regional center. The regional youth station for technical and medical training prepared young cinema technicians, aviomodellers, electricians,

blacksmiths, carpenters, and skilled masters. In 1946, the total membership reached 103, demonstrating the effectiveness of these circles.[9] R. Masharipov led the circle dedicated to Eastern ornamentation and ganch carving at Khiva's children's technical station.[10] The aviation modelling circle achieved significant successes, presenting models equipped with canvas and rubber motors in addition to simple panels.[11] Members of this circle participated in the 18th aviation modelling competition in 1950, where they achieved major results. For instance, B. Madaminov set a republican record by flying his self-made motorized airplane for 1 hour and 32 minutes.[12] Such achievements inspired youth to generate new ideas and innovations.

At Khiva's oil factory, Anatoly Nikolaevich Fokin, founder of the technical circle, introduced young people to engineering knowledge through lectures that were reinforced with practical experience in factory operations.[13] In 1951, a literary and artistic circle was established under Khiva's cultural education department, boasting over fifty members.[14] In 1964, discussions were held to improve the activities of the Young Naturalists' Station, leading to the creation of five new circles involving 120 students.[15] Such changes reflect the systematic development of circles during the Soviet period. The above examples demonstrate how the Soviet regime spread communist ideology across all layers of society by organizing the activities of cultural houses and circles. While culture houses played the role of embedding communist ideology through practical initiatives, circles helped train young communist cadres.

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