

**THE ACTIVITY OF CULTURAL CENTERS AND CIRCLES IN KHIVA DURING THE
SOVIET PERIOD**

Madrimova Gulzira Shakhnazarovna

Doctoral student of Urganch State University

doktarantgulzira@gmail.com

94(575.171)"19/20"

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9616-8899>

Abstract: This article analyzes the establishment and development of cultural centers and circles in Khiva during the first half of the 20th century, their role in the life of the local population, and their influence on social and cultural life. It also examines these institutions as instruments for disseminating Soviet ideology. The ideological functions of cultural institutions are discussed through a critical lens

Keywords: Khiva, cultural center, circle, Soviet ideology, cultural institution, public activity, communist ideas, ideology, social environment.

Khiva, with its centuries-old history and rich cultural heritage, has long been one of the major cultural centers of the Turkestan region. With the fall of the Khiva Khanate and the establishment of Soviet power in the early 20th century, significant changes occurred in the city's cultural environment. These transformations were primarily carried out through the creation of state-controlled cultural institutions aligned with a centralized administrative system. Among them, the establishment of cultural centers and various circles played a leading role in this process.

From the early 1920s, the traditional forms of cultural life in Khiva were replaced by "clubs" managed by the state. These clubs were created as centers for cultural and educational activities aimed at workers, students, and youth, serving as instruments for ideological supervision under the Soviet regime. By the 1930s, these institutions were officially renamed "Houses of Culture," and their network expanded rapidly.

The decision "On the Reorganization of Clubs" adopted in 1932 and the introduction of new trade union clubs in 1938 reflected the process of centralization and structural reformation of cultural life. During this period, the Houses of Culture carried out useful tasks such as promoting literacy, enhancing social consciousness, and fostering creative activity. Nevertheless, their main function was to strengthen the propagation of communist ideology among the masses.

In 1948, Khiva had one House of Culture, ten clubs, and eleven libraries operating as cultural hubs. Through circles established within these institutions, ideological education was intensified among the population, particularly children and youth. In 1957, the Khiva House of Culture moved into a new building, which improved its technical and organizational capacity.

The activities of these institutions encompassed a variety of circles, including drama, literature, music, technology, aircraft modeling, cinema mechanics, electronics, and military training. For example, in 1946, 103 participants were involved in circles at the Khiva Children's Technical

Station. During the 1950 aircraft modeling competition, a motor-powered model plane built by B. Madaminov flew for 1 hour and 32 minutes, setting a new republic record — evidence that these circles were not only ideological tools but also fostered practical and scientific skills.

Technical circles operating under factories and workshops played an important role in applying theoretical knowledge to practice. The technical circle at the Khiva Oil Factory, led by A.N. Fokin, familiarized youth with modern industrial methods through lectures and hands-on production activities.

Through these institutions, Soviet ideology penetrated all layers of society, especially targeting youth and children. Under the guise of “cultivating culture,” the Houses of Culture and circles served to educate citizens within a unified ideological framework, limiting personal and national thought. Traditional customs, religious beliefs, and independent ideas that did not align with ideological demands were partially or entirely suppressed.

Despite its historical and cultural significance, Khiva became one of the centers of ideological transformation. Theatrical troupes, musical ensembles, and various circles formed within cultural centers drew citizens into public life but simultaneously created a tightly controlled ideological environment. Consequently, the city’s historical and national features were partially overshadowed.

The activities of the Houses of Culture and circles in Khiva can thus be evaluated from two perspectives: first, their positive contribution to education, culture, and technical knowledge; and second, their role as instruments of political and ideological propaganda that maintained a centralized and restricted intellectual environment.

In the years of independence, cultural institutions — particularly Houses of Culture and circles — have become important centers for preserving national identity, promoting traditions and values, fostering creativity among youth, and expanding opportunities for free intellectual development. These institutions now play an active role in shaping cultural dialogue, respecting heritage, embracing innovation, and supporting the moral stability and intellectual progress of society in the modern era.

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