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## FORMATION OF CULTURAL CENTERS IN UZBEKISTAN HISTORY AND FUNCTION

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** The purpose of this article is to analyze the stages of formation and development of cultural centers in Uzbekistan. At the same time, with a brief pause in the history of clubs, culture and population recreation centers, the study of the current state and tasks of cultural centers.

**Methods:** comparative analysis, art studies analysis, statistics and narrative analysis methods were used.

**Results:** the process of transition of clubs, which are considered cultural and educational institutions, to the current cultural centers, their social, cultural and educational functions were studied. It was noted that there are problems facing cultural centers. Their activities proved to be moving from one form to another.

**Scientific novelty:** A systematic study of the activities of cultural centers will allow for a deeper study of the development prospects of these institutions and scientific forecasting.

**Practical significance:** the results of this study serve to scientific study and further improve the activities of cultural centers in Uzbekistan. Since the role of cultural centers in society is evaluated on the basis of historical sources, at the beginning of the article, the hypothesis that the danger facing cultural centers needs scientific scrutiny is put forward for the attention of mature scientists in the field.

**Keywords:** *cultural centers, cultural and population recreation centers, clubs, social renewal, history of cultural activities*

### Introduction

There is a great danger in the cultural and social life of New Uzbekistan. Yes, a huge socio-cultural risk, and scientists in the field cannot hypothesize this threat. The reason is that it has accumulated a long-standing meeting: due to such problems as the fact that education is slightly behind the practice, the unemployment of graduates, the lack of staff landing, the

scarcity of wages, it still hides its result from the public. In the next decade, the Centers of culture in our republic are very likely to retreat from the pages of history and fall out of culture transport, fulfilling their mission in glorious history. Or work activities may also stop altogether. Problems in the activities of the current field are not in the work of cultural centers, the reason for the absence of real specialist per-

sonnel in the field may arise. It's just a hypothesis, but it can also become a reality. Today, a negative assessment of the activities of all cultural centers at once is also inappropriate. Not all centers are the same. Some are very active, some are the opposite. Attempts are being made by the Ministry of culture to assess the activities of cultural centers in terms of "efficiency". The legislation has certain norms for each district and city to be a center of culture and for their continued functioning. In 2019, 74 "inefficient functioning" cultural centers are planned to be liquidated. So it is possible to end their activities. But, if possible, some center should not be terminated. When reshaping and work were helped until they were able to progress further, cultural centers were more likely to decrease or end their activities. But, if possible, some center should not be terminated. When reshaping and work were helped until they were able to progress further, cultural centers were more likely to decrease or end their activities.

"Evolutions actually occur at a turning point that occurs on the way to the result. That is, the fading of one star means not the end, but the moment of the emergence of dozens of new planets. People should also admit that they have no choice but to change when they take new tests" (West, Brianna. 2024, 6). Cultural-educational institutions are socio-cultural organisms. Therefore, like culture itself, they are also characterized by "emergence, maturation, aging, and decline." By "decline," we do not mean complete disappearance, but rather the transition from one form to another, as O. Spengler envisioned, because nothing is eternal. Such changes constantly occur in the social functions, internal systems, and networks of cultural-educational institutions. This perspective likewise helps us understand that cultural-educational institutions are social systems that emerge in response to ever-changing life demands, modify their functions, and continue to exist by transforming from one form into another (Alimasov, V. A., 2001, 72).

### **Materials and methods**

The changes observed today in the activities of cultural centers may also seem difficult and unexpected to us. Some centers are being reorganized, while others are being consid-

ered for closure due to inefficiency. Various opinions are being expressed about these processes. In fact, we may view this either as a decline or, from a positive perspective, as the beginning of a new stage. Every system needs renewal: without change, there can be no development. In this regard, the idea of the "New Uzbekistan" envisions building cultural life on a new foundation, alongside political and economic renewal. Therefore, it is both appropriate and necessary to establish the activities of new cultural centers in parallel with the New Uzbekistan. In any field, transformation and renewal occur over a certain period. Just as the New Uzbekistan requires new thinking, cultural centers also require a new format. This represents the spiritual demand and need of the present generation. It is precisely at such moments that renewal begins. If cultural centers are at such a turning point, it is not surprising. "If we look to history," says Malcolm, "we find good answers to the research we are conducting. If you have a certain problem, it is enough to turn to the historical method used by those who have faced similar problems. If you examine how they resolved their issues, you will find the solution to your own problem and be able to overcome it" (Malcolm, H., 2024, 28).

Most importantly, the reforms and renewals taking place in cultural centers today are, in fact, a continuation of historical processes. Every period of renaissance has begun with revisiting the previous system, updating it, and restoring its weak points. If we study global experience, we see that every country has undergone the process of reconstructing its cultural infrastructure to meet the demands of the time: modern centers have replaced old buildings, and new interactive methods have emerged in place of outdated approaches. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the current developments in cultural centers are not a crisis, but rather a continuation of a historical pattern. Just as past generations progressed through renewal, today's cultural sphere will also be strengthened through the same path. The root of any problem lies in the past, while its solution lies in renewal. The foundations of cultural centers reach back to the deepest layers of our history. Since ancient times, our people have fostered cultural life through festivals,

cultural events held in open spaces, councils, and centers of art. Starting from the 1917s, the Soviet government itself began to highly value the importance of houses of culture and clubs. They were regarded as key centers for promoting revolutionary ideas and the ideology of social equality. In September 1917, Proletarian cultural-educational organizations were established. The purpose of this institution was to prepare propaganda materials, including literary works, and to provide scientific-methodological support to workers' clubs. They published numerous professional booklets and small manuals for club employees. During the USSR period, houses of culture were categorized as follows:

- Territorial houses of culture, which were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture;
- Trade union houses of culture belonging to enterprises, institutions, educational establishments, and other organizations;
- Houses of culture for intellectuals (such as the House of Actors, House of Teachers, and similar institutions);
- Collective farm (kolkhoz) and state farm (sovkhoz) houses of culture;
- Soviet Army officers' houses (Laletina, O.N. 2013, 2).

The activities of houses of culture fulfilled several social functions: organizing the leisure time of workers and employees, and performing a political function that included shaping the type of the new person of the era—the Soviet individual. For many years, the main forms of club activity remained the following: library services, establishing amateur art groups, improving various clubs and circles, holding evening events, organizing excursions, presenting films, and conducting dance and sports events. Houses of culture also provided citizens with professional theater performances and New Year celebrations. As confirmation that such events were held and widely enjoyed, we can refer to artistic films shot in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For example, one can see how a house of culture operated, how amateur activities were organized, and how celebrations were conducted in the 1956 New Year film *Carnival Night*. The 1961 film *The Girls* (Devchata) tells the story of the role of the club in the lives of working youth.

Although the plots of these films are not directly connected to clubs, they show that young people preferred to spend their free time specifically in these clubs. In their activities, clubs used various methods to influence the population—ranging from simple slogans and posters to the development of folk theater and the organization of lecture courses. A distinctive feature of club work was that they tried to find an activity of interest for every individual. In this way, clubs and houses of culture contributed to the formation of the “Soviet person,” directing their thinking and interests in accordance with the requirements of the party (Latysheva, M., 2016, 62). Uzbekistan's scholars have recognized the main functions of clubs as follows:

X. Y. Asletdinova – conducting educational and propaganda work; Sh. K. Berdiyev – enlightenment; developing the creative and social activity of the individual; facilitating broad communication and shaping public opinion; providing cultural recreation and entertainment; A. Muhammedov – satisfying various spiritual needs of people, developing their abilities, increasing their political, labor, and social activity, and cultivating qualities and character traits necessary for society; B. Esonov – ideologically and politically educating the masses and enhancing their knowledge, organizing leisure for workers, and developing amateur creativity and talents; U. Qoraboyev – providing continuous education and upbringing for individuals, involving them in amateur creative activities, and organizing meaningful recreation and leisure; M. Oltinov – shaping a scientific-materialist worldview in people, fostering respect and interest in all spheres of culture and art, aesthetic taste, amateur artistry, and creative initiative; F. G'afurov, N. Hakimov, B. Aliyev – serving national independence, educating people to be enlightened and cultured, and organizing their leisure and amateur activities; A. Jalolov – forming national ideology and culture based on historical and cultural heritage; M. Abdullayev – educating individuals, supporting their socialization and individuation, and helping them realize heuristic goals (Alimasov, V. A., 2001, 65).

The formation of the first club institutions in Uzbekistan dates back to the early years following the establishment of Soviet power. This

process, based on the Russian experience, began under the new government's cultural and educational policies. With the establishment of Soviet power, new types of club institutions began to be organized in Turkestan, built on the foundations of the old "people's houses," the Jadid educational centers, and libraries. The first clubs in Uzbekistan, namely workers' clubs, were opened on May 7, 1918, in Tashkent under the Turkestan People's University and in the Muslim club of the Qushhovuz neighborhood in Samarkand. Clubs were mainly organized within military units, educational organizations, trade unions, and party organizations. In the 1920s, specialized cultural and educational institutions were established under the People's Commissariat of Education. By 1924, the number of clubs had reached 134. In 1925, the total number of clubs and peasant houses reached 140, and by 1928, it had increased to 244. Initially, club institutions emerged in regional and district centers, and later expanded to republican districts and rural areas. Between 1920 and 1928, their number increased from 40 to 531. From 1933 to 1937, 1,490 cultural workers were trained across the republic. The training of these specialists was carried out through specialized courses. By 1959, club institutions numbered 342 in cities and urban-type settlements and 2,691 in rural areas. In the republic, there were 3,471 clubs in 1971, 3,704 in 1975, and 4,041 in 1980. Specifically, the number of clubs in rural areas increased from 2,812 to 3,199. By 1980, approximately 20 centralized club systems were operating in our republic. On October 7, 1975, a Union-wide scientific and practical conference on pressing issues of club activities was held in Moscow.

### **Result and discussion**

Clubs existed even before 1924, but they did not operate independently. Their activities were carried out in conjunction with libraries and cultural-educational sectors. The first club and library were established in the city of Khiva in the summer of 1920, in the former Khan's palace building. Additionally, clubs and libraries were set up in Yangi Urganch, Toshhovuz, and in the cities of Khorezm, Xo'jeli, Qo'ng'iro't, and other towns of the Karakalpak ASSR. By 1923, in the Khorezm Republic, there were 8 clubs and cultural

houses, 5 public libraries, 4 Red Tea Houses, and cinemas serving the population. In Tashkent, workers' clubs were first organized in 1924. In 1926, the First Congress of Club and Library Workers was held in Uzbekistan. From the 1930s, workers' and youth clubs began to be built according to uniform designs at factories, plants, kolkhoz (collective farm) and sovkhoz (state farm) centers. These clubs included auditoriums (with stages), rooms for hobby circles, libraries, and other facilities. In addition, there were also Palaces and Houses of Culture. To provide a more complete genealogy of this term, the "Uzbek National Encyclopedia, Volume M" (page 975) mentions the terms Palaces and Houses of Culture. Indeed, these were also clubs, but they are considered large-scale club institutions.

Palaces and Houses of Culture are large-scale club institutions, featuring spacious auditoriums and lecture halls, permanent cinema facilities, libraries, rooms for hobby circles, visual arts, and other specialized spaces. The activities of these Palaces and Houses of Culture contribute to the development of all forms of folk creativity and amateur arts. They host folk theaters, orchestras, choirs, opera and choreography ensembles, as well as song and dance groups. In Uzbekistan, district, city, and rural Palaces and Houses of Culture, which are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, have also been established and maintained by large enterprise trade union committees. The Palaces and Houses of Culture in Chirchiq (Machinery Plant, 1968), Navoi (Farhod, 1972), and Tashkent (Aviation Plant, 1980) stand out for their modern architectural design. As of 2003, under the authority of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, there were 2,177 Palaces and Houses of Culture operating throughout the republic (*Uzbek National Encyclopedia*. 56).

Until 2013, the current cultural centers were commonly referred to by the public as clubs or Houses of Culture. On February 14, 2013, in accordance with Clause 65 of the "Obod Turmush Yili" (Year of Prosperous Life) State Program, attached to Resolution No. 1920 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the State Program 'Obod Turmush Yili'," the task of developing a State Program was approved. This program aimed

to organize “Centers of Culture, Art, and Public Recreation” based on existing clubs by reconstructing, comprehensively repairing, and equipping the club institutions under the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Furthermore, to implement Clause 65 of the “Obod Turmush Yili” State Program, approved by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on March 14, 2013 (Decree PQ-1920), on June 25, 2013, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 178, “On Measures to Establish Modern Centers of Culture and Public Recreation in 2013–2018.” Based on this resolution, taking into account 1,777 Houses of Culture and club institutions in the districts (cities) of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the regions, and Tashkent city, and ensuring broad access of the population to the cultural and public services they provide, a scheme was approved for identifying and allocating 894 centers of culture and public recreation, of which 38 were designed for people with disabilities. Thus, Houses of Culture and club institutions were transformed into centers of culture and public recreation. From this point onward, the term “clubs” began to be legally removed from official sources. In particular, on September 13, 2013, in accordance with Resolution No. 249 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which introduced amendments and additions to certain decisions of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan (based on Resolution No. 178 of the Cabinet of Ministers dated June 25, 2013, “On Measures to Establish Modern Centers of Culture and Public Recreation in 2013–2018”), the following changes were made:

In the amendments and additions to certain decisions of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

a) In Clause 23 of Section I, the word “clubs” shall be replaced with “centers of culture and public recreation”;

b) In Clause 1 of Section III, the words “clubs, Houses of Culture, and Palaces” shall be replaced with “centers of culture and public recreation.” Furthermore, in the Cabinet of Ministers’ Resolution No. 177 of June 24, 2009 (Uzbekistan Republic Gazette, 2009, No. 6, Article 51), which approved the Rules on Mandatory Civil Liability Insurance of Employers, in Appendix 9 regarding the hazard levels of employer activity types and in-

surance tariff coefficients for mandatory civil liability insurance of employers, the words “Palaces and Houses of Culture, permanent and mobile clubs (auto clubs, club-carriages, floating cultural bases, etc.)” were replaced with “centers of culture and public recreation” ([https://lex.uz/docs/2238210 / 1](https://lex.uz/docs/2238210/1)).

Thus, following these legislative acts, the term “club” has remained only in the older literature of our specialty, and it would not be an exaggeration to say so. Before comprehensive textbooks and teaching manuals were developed by our scholars to scientifically analyze these changes, the names of the Centers of Culture and Public Recreation were already being altered. Based on Decree No. 4038 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, dated November 28, 2018, “On Approving the Concept for Further Development of National Culture in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” it was decided that cultural centers would be established based on the existing Centers of Culture and Public Recreation operating in the country. The Concept for Further Development of National Culture in the Republic of Uzbekistan specifies: “Based on the Centers of Culture and Public Recreation operating in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the regions, and the city of Tashkent, cultural centers shall be established.” The Concept also outlines forward-looking tasks and programs to be implemented within the activities of these cultural centers. Subsequently, on March 30, 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 263, “On Measures to Organize the Activities of Cultural Centers.” These changes indicate the necessity of deeper study and analysis of the field. Questions such as which organizations a cultural center belongs to in terms of cultural activity, and what legal functions it performs, continue to engage the attention of specialists. While writing about the historical development of cultural centers, I did not consider it appropriate to bypass these questions. The law states the following: Cultural organizations in Uzbekistan are classified according to the types of cultural activities they perform into the following categories:

- Cultural and performance organizations;
- Cultural and educational organizations;

- Other cultural organizations.

Cultural organizations whose primary activity is the creation of performing arts works and their presentation to the public (such as theaters, philharmonic societies, circuses, concert organizations-including professional creative teams, musical groups and ensembles, etc.-as well as cinematography organizations) are classified as cultural and performance organizations. Cultural organizations whose main activity involves providing access to cultural facilities, satisfying individuals' intellectual, moral, ethical, cultural, and educational needs, creating conditions for the development of personal creative abilities, supporting the restoration and further development of national culture, and preserving cultural heritage objects (such as cultural centers, national cultural centers, museums, art galleries and exhibitions, exhibition halls, historical and cultural reserves, parks of culture and recreation, club institutions, Palaces and Houses of Culture, educational institutions in the field of culture and arts, cultural-information centers, and cultural-educational centers) are classified as cultural and educational organizations.

Therefore, according to the law, cultural centers are cultural and educational organizations. However, it is noteworthy that the law still mentions club institutions. Perhaps in some regions, club institutions continue to operate. A cultural center is defined as a legal entity established in the form of a state institution, which studies the cultural needs of the population, provides cultural-educational and recreational services, and engages in artistic creativity, applied arts, and amateur activities. Over time, clubs gradually expanded the scope of their activities. In this way, clubs became central spaces of cultural life and, for many years, played a decisive role in the development of art, propaganda, education, and political culture. Clubs, and their modern successors, the cultural centers, reflect the cultural needs of society and its social dynamics. Moreover, studying the history of clubs allows for the formulation of new scientific hypotheses and provides an opportunity to analyze our culture on a theoretical basis. The history of clubs is significant and relevant not only for understanding contemporary cultural policy and strategies but also for shaping and developing them, as it holds both theoretical and practical importance.

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