

THE ROLE AND PLACE OF MUSEUMS IN PERPETUATING THE MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF REPRESSION

Ashurova Makhbuba Akhtamovna

Independent Researcher at the Department, Memorial Museum Employee,
Islamic History and Source Studies, Philosophy
Victims of Repression Within the Structure of Bukhara State University

Abstract

The article analyzes the activities of museums as important socio-cultural institutions in perpetuating the memory of victims of repression, understanding national history, restoring historical justice in society, and ensuring the continuity of historical memory between generations, their role in preserving, researching, promoting, and conveying historical realities to the general public, and the important tasks of museums in perpetuating the memory of victims of repression.

Keywords: Despotic regime, repressive policy, victims of repression, national identity, cultural institution, social memory, historical justice, national intelligentsia.

Introduction

The "repression policy" of the totalitarian regime separated the people from the people, the nation from the nation, and the individual from the individual. This policy, along with other nations, brought unprecedented hardships to the people of Uzbekistan. As a result of this policy, thousands of our compatriots were subjected to repression and thrown into GULAG prisons. Their family members were subjected to many hardships, suffering, and violence. The policy of repression was especially directed against the national intelligentsia and representatives of the Jadid movement. During this period, about 100,000 people were repressed, and about 13,000–15,000 people were executed. Thousands of people were sent to long-term prisons and camps. The national intelligentsia, such as Abdulla Qodiriy, Abdurauf Fitrat, Chulpan, and Usman Nasir, was almost completely destroyed; a break in cultural and educational development occurred, an atmosphere of fear and submission was formed in society, and the ideas of national statehood were undermined¹.

Under the personal leadership of the President of our country, our government has carried out both practical and noble work to identify our compatriots who were repressed for the sake of independence, to vindicate their names, to immortalize their memory, and to inscribe them on the pages of history. In 2001, August 31 was declared the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Repression. The "Shahidlar Khotirasi"² memorial complex has been erected. The "Shahidlar Khotirasi" public fund, the State Museum of the Memory of Victims of Repression, and its branches at regional higher educational institutions have been established.

¹Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On increasing the effectiveness of the promotion of the national idea and spiritual and educational work" dated August 25, 2006 // Lex.uz.

²Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-3920 dated August 26, 2018, "On measures for the innovative development of the sphere of culture and art in the Republic of Uzbekistan" // Lex.uz.



Today, when national self-awareness and the restoration of our true history are becoming more important than ever, perpetuating the names and memory of state and public figures, representatives of science, culture, art, and literature, and thousands of ordinary compatriots who were brutally repressed by the totalitarian regime, and educating the younger generation in the spirit of love and devotion to the Motherland and the people through the example of their courage and resilience, remains an urgent task. The issue of perpetuating the memory of the victims of repression is of particular importance in understanding national history, restoring historical justice in society, spiritual purification, and ensuring the continuity of historical memory between generations. In this process, museums function as important socio-cultural institutions and play an invaluable role in preserving, researching, promoting, and conveying historical realities to the general public. Especially the heavy political pressures of the 20th century, mass repressions, illegal repressions, and spiritual loss.

The perpetuation of the memory of victims of repression is not merely the recording of historical events, but a complex socio-philosophical process that serves the spiritual revival of society, strengthening faith in justice, and elevating the dignity of human rights. Museums are viewed not only as institutions that preserve material monuments but also as spiritual centers that express historical truth, shape public memory, and strengthen national identity.

The role of museums in perpetuating the memory of the victims of repression is primarily related to the collection, preservation, and scientific interpretation of historical sources. Documents, personal belongings, photographs, letters, and archival materials related to individuals who were unjustly accused, imprisoned, executed, or persecuted during the years of repression will become an important part of the museum's collections. These sources provide an opportunity to reveal the true picture of that period not only for historians and researchers but also for the general public.

Especially in Uzbekistan during the years of independence, the restoration of the memory of the victims of repression and the study of their lives and activities have risen to the level of state policy. The Museum of Memory of the Victims of Repression, established in Tashkent in 2002, serves as a scientific and educational center dedicated to one of the most difficult periods in the country's history. The expositions of this museum present numerous historical documents, photographs, and physical evidence regarding the political repressions carried out in the 1920s–1950s, the fates of intellectuals, statesmen, enlighteners, and ordinary citizens.

Through the museum's expositions, the lives of the victims of repression, their contribution to the development of the nation and the state, the suffering they endured, and their tragic fate are highlighted. This fosters not only historical knowledge but also a deep spiritual feeling, humanism, the pursuit of justice, and a critical attitude toward totalitarianism. In this sense, museums serve as a cultural space that transforms history into a "living memory."

Another important task of museums in perpetuating the memory of victims of repression is educational and upbringing activities. Lectures, roundtables, scientific conferences, exhibitions, and interactive excursions organized in museums play an important role in shaping historical consciousness among the younger generation and strengthening national pride and patriotism. In particular, schoolchildren and students will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding



of history through special excursions, open lessons, and multimedia materials on the topic of repression³.

From a philosophical perspective, perpetuating the memory of repression victims through museums strengthens the concept of "historical justice" within society. Historical justice is the process of restoring the dignity of those who suffered unjustly in the past, vindicating their names, and bringing the truth to the public. Museums perform this task by protecting historical truth from political or ideological distortions and presenting a realistic historical picture.

Museums are also important as symbolic and spiritual spaces for perpetuating the memory of the victims of repression. Such museums encourage people to reflect on the past, understand the lessons of history, and feel a sense of responsibility to prevent such tragedies from recurring in the future. The events, personal fates, and documentary evidence depicted in the exhibitions evoke deep reflection in the human mind regarding the consequences of totalitarian violence.

In the process of perpetuating the memory of the victims of repression, museums can become cultural and educational centers of not only national but also international significance. This is because political repressions are not unique to a single state or people, but are a universal tragedy observed throughout human history. Therefore, museums have the opportunity to convey the truth about the victims of repression to the world community through international scientific cooperation, joint exhibitions, and research projects.

Practice shows that in perpetuating the memory of the victims of repression, museums not only recall the past but also provide important socio-spiritual lessons for current and future generations. They serve as an effective tool for promoting universal human values such as human rights, freedom, justice, and the rule of law. Thus, the place and role of museums in perpetuating the memory of the victims of repression are multifaceted, combining historical, spiritual, educational, philosophical, and social tasks. Through these institutions, the truth about past tragedies is preserved, historical memory is strengthened in society, and the spiritual consciousness of future generations is enriched.

Analyzing the activities of museums in perpetuating the memory of the victims of repression more deeply, it is necessary to emphasize their role in the formation of social memory. Social memory is the sum of the general perceptions, values, and spiritual relationships of society's members regarding the past. Recognizing and remembering tragic historical events such as repression is a vital component of social memory. Museums act as an important cultural institution that forms and strengthens this memory.

Museum exhibitions on the theme of repression not only recount historical events in chronological order but also illuminate them through human destinies, personal dramas, and spiritual tragedies. For example, personal letters, diaries, manuscripts, and photographs belonging to victims of repression accurately and impressively express human destinies, connecting history not with abstract reality, but with real human life. The coverage of the personal lives and activities of victims of repression by museums is also important in promoting humanitarian ideas. They are presented not only as victims but also as enlighteners, scientists, writers, statesmen, and selfless individuals who contributed to the development of society. This

³ Катагон курбонлари ва уларнинг адабий-бадий хамда публицистик мероси "Ўзбекистонда сталинча катагонга учраган ва фаолияти кам ўрганилган маданият ва жамоат арбобларининг фаолияти хамда илмий-маърифий, ижодий меросининг истиқлол йилларида ўрганшиши" мавзуидаги Республика илмий-амалий анжумани материаллари 2015 й 15 апрел / масъул муҳаррир Н.Каримов. – Тошкент, "MUMTOZ SO'Z". 2015. - 128 б.



increases the audience's respect and attention to these figures, strengthens the sense of national identity and loyalty to historical heritage.

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