



Rivar

REVISTA IBEROAMERICANA DE
VITICULTURA, AGROINDUSTRIA
Y RURALIDAD

Editada por el Instituto
de Estudios Avanzados de la
Universidad de Santiago de Chile

SOVIET INDUSTRIALIZATION NARRATIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF CONSTRUCTING POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A MUSEUM COMMEMORATION (CASES OF THE KARAGANDA LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUM AND KARLAG)



*La narrativa de la industrialización soviética en el contexto
de la construcción del discurso político:
Una conmemoración en un museo (casos del museo de
historia local de Karaganda y Karlag)*

*A narrativa da industrialização soviética no contexto
da construção do discurso político:
Uma comemoração num museu (casos do museu de
história local de Karaganda e Karlag)*

Vol. 12, N° 34, 125-143, enero 2025

ISSN 0719-4994

Artículo de investigación
<https://doi.org/10.35588/fgegnm62>

Recibido

16 de noviembre de 2023

Aceptado

29 de diciembre de 2023

Publicado

Enero de 2025

Cómo citar

Zhumakanova, F., Abetova, Z., Nurligenova, Z. y Mukhambetova, K. (2025). Soviet Industrialization Narrative in the Context of Constructing Political Discourse: A Museum Commemoration (Cases of the Karaganda Local History Museum and Karlag). *RIVAR*, 12(34), 125-143, <https://doi.org/10.35588/fgegnm62>

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ABSTRACT

Examining museum narratives subjectively can enhance our understanding of political discourse formation. For this, the article aims to cover the events of industrialization in Kazakhstan as part of the modern historical and political discourse and collective memory, covered by the Kazakh regional museums. The basis of the scientific approach consists of different historical methods: the historical-comparative, the typological, the systematic, etc. The historical-comparative and historical-systemic methods were also used, which helped to determine the value of this topic in the general scientific discourse. This research presents the activities of the regional museums of Kazakhstan as a counterbalance to the Soviet narratives concerning the process of industrialization on the territory of Kazakhstan, which transmitted Soviet political myths to the domestic audience. The results of the study can be used further as material for political and socio-historical analysis.

■ KEYWORDS

National memory, colonialism, Kazakhstan, history, museums.

RESUMEN

Examinar subjetivamente las narrativas de los museos puede mejorar nuestra comprensión de la formación del discurso político. Por ello, el presente artículo tiene como objetivo cubrir los acontecimientos de la industrialización en Kazajistán como parte del discurso histórico y político moderno y la memoria colectiva, considerando los museos regionales de Kazajistán. La base del enfoque científico consta de diferentes métodos históricos: el histórico-comparativo, el tipológico, el sistemático, etcétera. También se utilizaron los métodos histórico-comparativo e histórico-sistémico, que ayudaron a determinar el valor de este tema en el discurso científico general. Esta investigación presenta las actividades de los museos regionales de Kazajistán como contrapeso a las narrativas soviéticas sobre el proceso de industrialización en el territorio de Kazajistán, que transmitieron los mitos políticos soviéticos al público nacional. Los resultados del estudio pueden utilizarse posteriormente como material para el análisis político y sociohistórico.

■ PALABRAS CLAVE

Memoria nacional, colonialismo, Kazajistán, historia, museos.

RESUMO

Examinar subjetivamente as narrativas dos museus pode melhorar nossa compreensão da formação do discurso político. Por isso, este artigo tem como objetivo cubrir os acontecimentos da industrialização em Cazaquistão como parte do discurso histórico e político moderno e a memória coletiva, considerando os museus regionais de Cazaquistão. A base do enfoque científico consta de diferentes métodos históricos: o histórico-comparativo, o tipológico, o sistemático, etcétera. Também utilizaram-se os métodos histórico-comparativo e histórico-sistémico, que ajudaram a determinar o valor deste tema no discurso científico geral. Esta investigação apresenta as atividades dos museus regionais de Cazaquistão como contrapeso às narrativas soviéticas sobre o processo de industrialização no território de Cazaquistão, que transmitiram os mitos políticos soviéticos o público nacional. Os resultados do estudo podem utilizar-se posteriormente como material para o análise político e socio-histórico.

■ PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Memória nacional, colonialismo, Cazaquistão, história, museus.

Introduction

Research on Soviet industrialization in Kazakhstan remains relevant due to its connection to the enduring Soviet state myth, which has not been completely debunked, especially among the populations of former USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) countries. This topic is often exploited by certain political forces for propaganda and as a point of contention in political debates. Some proponents of Russian colonial policies and Soviet ideologies still use the myth of Soviet industrialization, highlighting its selectively positive aspects, to justify colonialism in Kazakhstan and other former USSR countries (Doszhan, 2023). This perspective contradicts the modern historiographies of most post-Soviet nations, which interpret these events as part of a broader policy of expansion and russification within the USSR. Various museums, both national and regional, play a crucial role in preserving cultural identity and shaping national memory while confronting the legacy of former colonial policies (Brych, 2022).

Active scientific discussions on this subject began only in the period of “perestroika” and after the collapse of the USSR, and the revision of post-Soviet historiography through the prism of the newfound national consciousness. The first researchers who raised this topic of the “dark side” of collectivization and industrialization in Kazakhstan were Maksudov (1989: 32-40), Polyakov et al. (1990: 1-7), and Tatimov (1989: 30-34). Starting from the 2000s and now, Kazakh historiography openly speaks about the crimes of the Soviet regime during the reign of Josef Stalin, often characterizing the activities of the Soviet authorities in Kazakhstan by such terms as genocide and ethnocide (Abylkhozhin et al., 2015: 64-67). The study of collective memory and the concept of a “place of memory”, concerning memorial complexes and historical museums are of interest. This topic was discussed in the works, including European researchers. Nora et al. developed the concept of “the place of memory”, his method of reconstruction allows us to distinguish memory and history as different practices: “Memory is always an actual phenomenon that has an uninterrupted connection with the permanent present, while the reconstruction is a representation of past events” (Nora et al., 1999: 131-136).

The concept of social memory in the work *Collective and Historical Memory* is described by the European researcher Halbwachs (1967: 21-29). The idea of work is the thesis that human memory cannot function without a social context. He argues that collective memory is always selective and that the collective memories of different people depend solely on a person’s affiliation with a particular socio-political group. According to author, each person’s memory is formed by his or her environment, and no memory can be formed without a social framework. The author defines a memory frame as a set of recent memories and related ideas.

The aim of this research is to cover the process of industrialization in Kazakhstan in 1926-1940, addressing the problem through the prism of museum expositions and exhibitions presented in the regional museums of Kazakhstan. This work will help to better understand the principle of museums as memorial complexes, their role in the formation of national memory, and coverage of events of the past without relying on old Soviet narratives.

Materials and methods

This research combines historical and sociological methods. Systemic analysis was employed to study scientific works and historical sources, forming the basis for further research. Periodization was used to structure the chronology of industrialization in Kazakhstan and the formation of national memory. Historical, systemic, and narrative analysis of documents helped define the role and consequences of industrialization in Kazakhstan. Additionally, the comparative method was used to contrast industrialization in Kazakhstan with other Soviet republics and its outcomes. Discursive analysis of documentary sources and institutional museum discourse was applied to compare the Soviet historical myth, as seen through historiography and propaganda, with later studies based on eyewitness testimonies and documents, highlighting the disparities between them.

The study extensively utilized a wide range of literature and archival sources to investigate the industrialization of Kazakhstan. Primary sources, such as official documents, memoirs, personal notes, and contemporary testimonies, played a significant role. Secondary sources, including historical and scholarly works, were used to provide context. The research involved a comparison between the Soviet historical myth presented in historiography and propaganda and the actual events witnessed through firsthand accounts and official documents. Discrepancies between the official narrative and real-life experiences were revealed. An institutional discourse perspective was applied to analyze archival data, shedding light on the policies and decisions of the time. Furthermore, the study corroborated the historical analysis with physical evidence from museum exhibits, creating a comprehensive understanding of Kazakhstan's industrialization period.

The theoretical basis consists of the results of publications of researchers. Moreover, such sources as documents, memoirs, personal notes, and interviews were used in the course of this research work. Materials located in several regional museums of Kazakhstan were also used. Museum exhibits were used as documentary sources of a visual range, conveying the features of the period under study, as a visual demonstration of tools for the formation of collective memory to ensure its support by the population and the state. The description of museum exhibits involves the use of observation, whereby the exhibits of interest are identified, each exhibit is carefully examined and all relevant details are recorded. In doing so, the content, location, information presented, interaction with visitors and context within the overall museum narrative were noted. Also, additional sources such as scientific publications, documents and interviews were drawn upon, further deepening the understanding of the exhibit.

The scientific work was conducted in three main stages. In the first stage, a theoretical foundation was established, serving as the primary basis for subsequent research. This stage involved a systematic analysis of methods, sources, literature, and the work of other researchers. The second stage focused on an analytical examination of the topic's prospects. It included the periodization of industrialization in Kazakhstan and its subsequent recognition as part of national memory. This stage involved comparing the research results with those of other scholars and writers, aiming to clarify and consolidate the findings while expanding the study's scientific potential. During the second stage of the study, extensive research was conducted, involving in-depth interviews with museum staff. These interviews yielded a wealth of qualitative data and were conducted at the Karaganda Local History Museum and the Karlag.

The semi-structured interviews aimed to uncover the employees' perspectives on the social, political, and historical roles of these museums. Participants were encouraged to share their views on the social mission and narrative language of Soviet industrialization, their understanding of the value system related to this narrative, and normative model of typical events or status-role communication during Soviet industrialization. These interviews provide first-hand insights into the workers' perceptions, offering unique perspectives that complement the study's historical context and shed light on the museums' current operations.

In the third, the study's conclusions were derived from the analyzed materials, representing the scientific outcome of this research. These results reflect the key trends in the formation of national, collective, and cultural memory in Kazakhstan, particularly in the context of moving away from Soviet narratives regarding the industrialization policy of 1926-1940. These research findings and conclusions can be practically applied as a valuable scientific foundation or component for further studies on the 20th-century history of Kazakhstan, particularly focusing on Soviet industrialization in the country.

Soviet industrialization of Kazakhstan: State of art

The industrialization of Kazakhstan was a crucial aspect of Soviet policy. By 1925, the USSR had recovered from post-war crises but remained agrarian, posing military vulnerabilities. Thus, the need arose to shift towards industrialization, focusing on heavy and light industry. The process began with geological exploration, with notable contributions from scientists like Kanysh Saptaev, leading to the discovery of mineral deposits including copper, coal, iron, lead, and manganese. Infrastructure development was equally important, especially the construction of the Turkestan-Siberian railroad (Turksib), spanning 1,145 km. It played a pivotal role in Kazakhstan's industrial transformation and involved workers from across the USSR. Other railroads connecting various cities supported production chains, resulting in a 50% increase in Kazakhstan's railroad network from 1928 to 1940, totaling 1,658 km (Isingarin, 2021: 51-53).

Workers engaged in Kazakhstan's industrialization faced harsh living conditions, often living in barracks, makeshift shelters, or tents. Despite these challenges, by 1940, Kazakhstan had become an industrial powerhouse. The Karaganda coal basin ranked third in the USSR in production, rivaling the Donbas and Kuzbass. Light industry and agriculture also experienced substantial growth (Masyukova, 2019: 90-96). F.I. Goloshchyokin, who served as the Secretary of the Kazakhstan Regional Committee of the AUCP(b) from 1925 to 1933, implemented the "Little October" policy. This policy aimed to suppress local elites and enhance control over the republic's economic and political affairs in response to criticism of the industrialization policy. Local elites wanted production centers closer to mineral deposits, resisting becoming solely a "raw materials appendage" to Kazakhstan. Additionally, the mass relocation of workers from other republics, totaling 559,000 from RSFSR and Ukraine between 1931 and 1940, significantly altered Kazakhstan's ethnic composition, along with the socioeconomic changes brought about by industrialization (Dykha et al., 2024).

Smagul Sadvakasov, a Komsomol leader in Kazakhstan, voiced his discontent in a 1928 article titled "Peoples and Peoples of the Nation". He criticized the central government for sending unqualified personnel from other republics instead of adequately training local talent, a sentiment echoed by many. The AUCP(b), however, saw worker resettlement as essential

for building a future Soviet working class (Eleuhanova, 2009: 112-116). During this period, the Karaganda region and Kazakhstan as a whole were marked by the presence of Karlag. Established in December 1930, Karlag was one of the largest correctional-labor camps in the USSR, covering 1,780,000 hectares and spanning 300 km north to south and 200 km west to east. The number of prisoners in Karlag grew significantly, from 10,000 in 1930 to a peak of 65,000 in 1949. Karlag prisoners were an integral part of the processes of industrialization and development of central Kazakhstan. They not only took part in the construction and extraction of minerals but also worked in the sphere of providing the industrial base. Thus, in 1930 the state farm “Gigant” was created, the labor base of which was based on the Karlag prisoners. The chief agronomist of Karlag, A.G. Bakhtin, claimed that during the period from 1939 to 1941 agricultural work involved about 40 thousand prisoners. They were engaged in the cultivation of 2.2 million hectares of land (Bastemiyev, 2021; 54-59).

The high productivity in the camp was achieved through the exploitation of laborers who worked 12-15 hours a day. Notably, the majority of those employed in the camp were not prisoners but rather peasants, often referred to as “kulaks,” who had been relocated from agrarian regions in the early 1930s, such as Volga, Ukraine, Kuban, Tambov, Penza, Kursk, Voronezh, Samara, and Orel. These individuals had extensive experience in agriculture. In 1931, as part of a plan by the head of the United State Political Administration Andreev, 52,000 families from the mentioned regions were moved to Central Kazakhstan. Additionally, prisoners played a role not only in agriculture but also in various other tasks, including construction work on railways, copper smelters, mines in the Karaganda coal basin, and the development of industrial, civil, and infrastructure projects across the republic (Fevr, 2021: 130-135).

All of the above-mentioned events are an integral part of the national memory formation in Kazakhstan. For the first time at the state level, the theme of the attitude of Kazakhstanis toward this historical segment was raised in the late 1990s – early 2000s. Exactly in this period in Kazakhstan several museums and memorial complexes, demonstrating the period of industrialization in Kazakhstan not from the point of view of the Soviet historical myth, were established.

Conceptualizing Kazakh past: The cases of Karlag and Karaganda local history museum

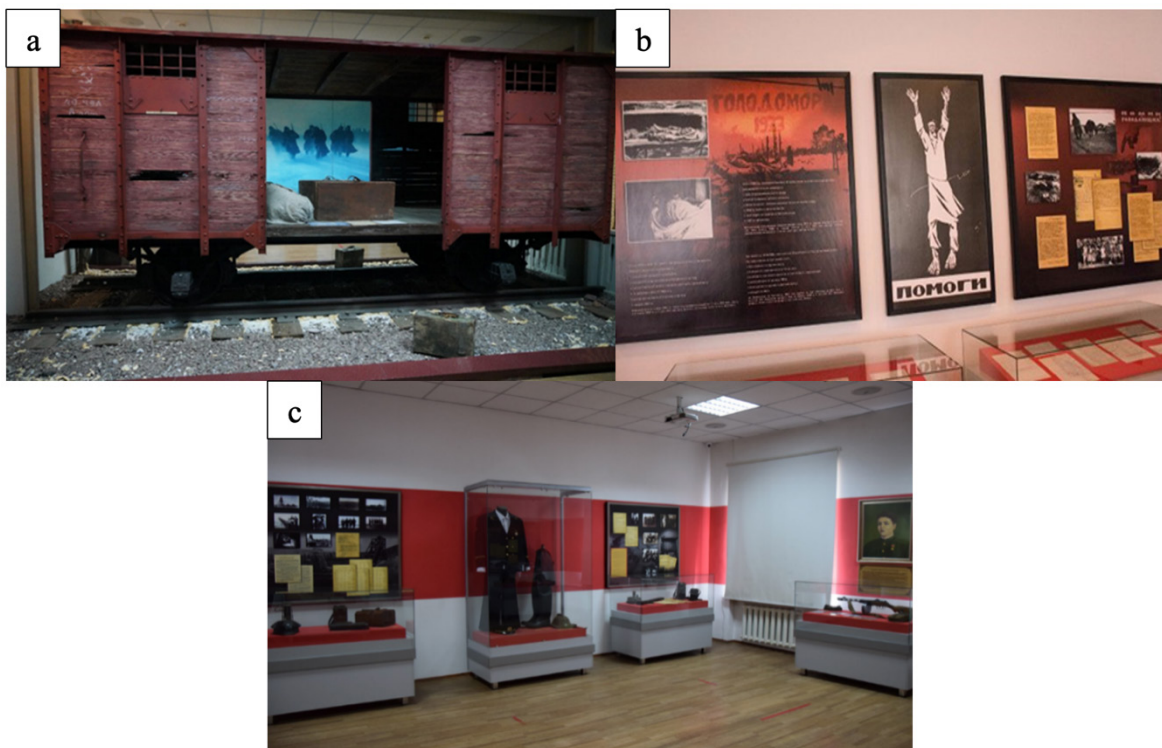
In 2001, the Dolinka Museum of Memory was established to commemorate the victims of political repressions. It is currently housed in the former Karlag camp administration building in Dolinka, Karaganda (Figure 1). The museum features exhibit, installations, wax figures, etc. that depict the harsh daily life of camp inmates during that historical period. The Karlag Museum, along with similar historical and memorial complexes, plays a crucial role in shaping national memory and identity. It offers a contemporary historical perspective on past events, free from Soviet narratives and the associated historical myths. Key museum exhibits and displays are showcased in Figures 2, 3 and 4.

Figure 1. Karlag museum after restoration
Figura 1. Museo Karlag después de la restauración



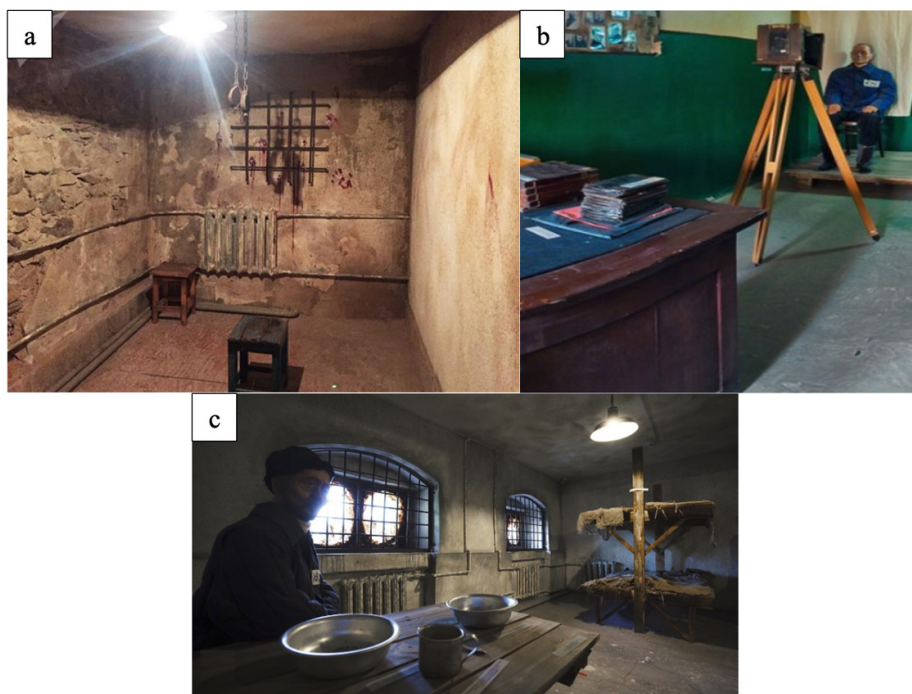
Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Figure 2. Karlag museum. An introduction to the social mission of Soviet industrialization
Figura 2. Museo Karlag. Una introducción a la misión social de la industrialización soviética



Where (a) model of a train, "People of 30s-50s and relocation", hall No. 27; (b) Kazakhstan famine hall of 20s-30s, tablet, picture D. Moor "Help", hall No. 4, and (c) Karlag industry during the World War II. Source: compiled by the authors. Donde (a) maqueta de tren, "Personas de 30 a 50 años y reubicación", sala n° 27; (b) sala de la hambruna de Kazajstán de los años 20-30, tablilla, fotografía de D. Moor "Ayuda", sala n° 4, y (c) Industria Karlag durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Fuente: compilado por los autores.

Figure 3. The narrative language of Soviet industrialization
Figura 3. El lenguaje narrativo de la industrialización soviética



Where (a) torture chamber, hall No. 19; (b) photographic and fingerprinting room, hall No. 15; (c) male barracks. Source: compiled by the authors. Donde (a) cámara de tortura, salón n° 19; (b) sala de fotografía y toma de huellas dactilares, salón n° 15, y (c) cuartel masculino. Fuente: compilado por los autores.

Figure 4. Formalized constructs of stereotypical practices
Figura 4. Constructos formalizados de prácticas estereotipadas



Where (a) the polyclinic room at Karlag, hall No. 13; (b) isolation ward, hall No. 10, and (c) death-row inmate figurine. Source: compiled by the authors. Donde (a) la sala del policlínico de Karlag, pabellón número 13; (b) sala de aislamiento, salón n° 10, y (c) estatuilla del condenado a muerte. Fuente: compilado por los autores.

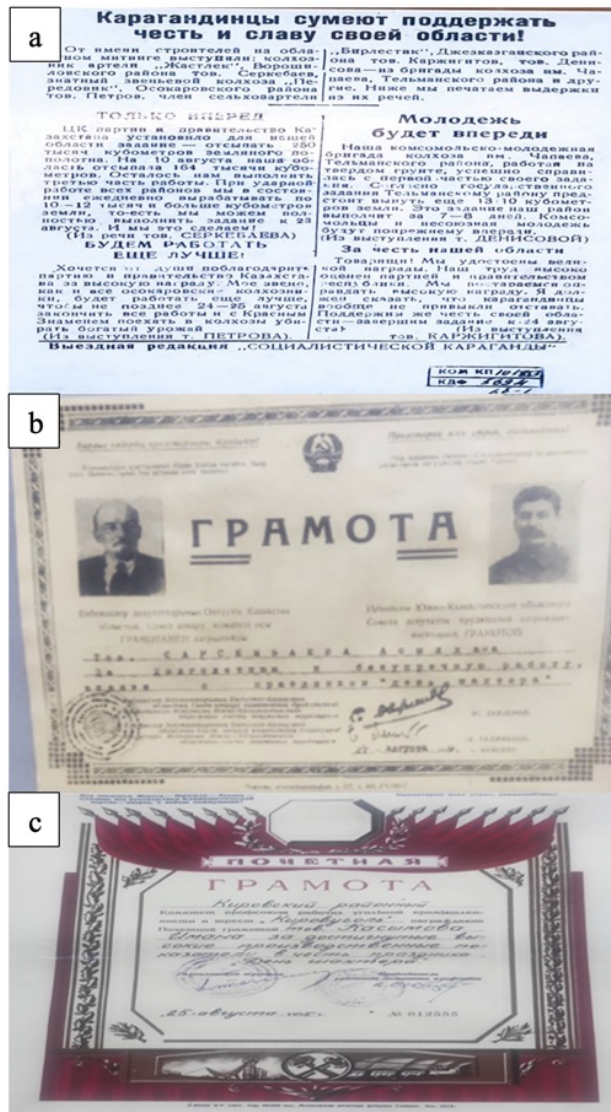
The Karlag exhibition is indeed a nuanced representation of the past. While it certainly portrays the hardships endured by prisoners, it also incorporates a range of perspectives and narratives, reflecting the complex reality of life within the Gulag system. Visitors to the Karlag Museum, located in Dolinka in the Karaganda, are presented with an array of exhibits, installations, and wax figures that depict the harsh conditions of the camp. These museums serve an essential role in shaping national memory and identity, providing a modern historical perspective on the past that is untethered from Soviet narratives.

Performances of prison life in Gulag museums, though impactful, can be contentious. These performances, intended to immerse visitors in the oppressive atmosphere of the epoch, are meant to foster a personal connection to the tragedies that occurred. However, such reenactments can be seen as exploitative, potentially causing distress to local communities and descendants of victims. While some view these performances as accurate historical representations, others may perceive them as voyeuristic and disrespectful. While the potential to increase visitor numbers is a positive aspect, the performances may remain controversial if they are perceived as serving tourism interests rather than memorialization (Lennon and Tiberghien, 2020).

The Karaganda Local History Museum is the largest museum in the region. The museum was opened in November 1932 as a polytechnic museum. In 1936 the museum funds were enriched with a collection of archeological finds sent by the USSR Academy of Sciences expedition. In 1938 the institution was renamed the Regional Museum of Local Lore, then the historical department, as well as the departments of nature and socialist construction were opened. To date, the museum has more than 140,000 exhibits in its collections, making it the largest museum in the region. The museum consists of four departments: the Department of General History, Archaeology and Ethnography, the Department of Funds, the Department of Modern History and the Department of Excursion and Mass Work. The expositions of the museum are presented in 14 halls and reflect the history of the region, starting from ancient times and ending with the formation and development of the region in the conditions of independent Kazakhstan at the present stage.

The Karaganda Local History Museum exhibition does not contradict the official post-Soviet historiography of the period of industrialization in Kazakhstan, but it does not follow the Soviet historical myth. The purpose is to show the history of the region from the earliest periods, showing the flora and fauna of the region without concentrating on any period. Nevertheless, there is an exhibition devoted to the period of industrialization, showing the peculiarities of everyday life of the inhabitants of the region at that time, the formation of Karaganda as a city, the history of enterprises, and political and ideological features. Museum exhibits and exhibitions that address the topic of the study and describe the features of life in the relevant historical period are shown in the Figure 5, 6 and 7.

Figure 5. Karaganda local history museum. An introduction to the social mission of Soviet industrialization
 Figura 5. Museo de historia local de Karaganda. Una introducción a la misión social de la industrialización soviética



Where (a) an exempt from a *Socialists Karaganda* newspaper: “The country during the formation of a totalitarian system in the 20-30 years of the 20th-century”. “Newspapers in the Soviet period were an integral part of propaganda. Karaganda’s first newspaper, called *Bolshevik Kochegarka*, opened in 1931 (and worked until 1936). The newspaper. promoted advanced methods of labor, agitated for a worldwide increase in labor productivity, the development of drumming, the easel movement”; (b) letter of commendation to employees of the mine “Formation of the Karaganda coal basin. Coal combine”, and (c) letter of commendation to employees of the mine. Source: compiled by the authors. Donde (a) extracto del periódico *Socialistas Karaganda*: “El país durante la formación de un sistema totalitario en los años 20-30 del siglo XX”. “Los periódicos en el periodo soviético eran una parte integral de la propaganda. El primer periódico de Karaganda, llamado *Bolshevik Kochegarka*, abrió sus puertas en 1931 (y funcionó hasta 1936), y promovía métodos avanzados de trabajo, agitaba por un aumento mundial de la productividad del trabajo, el desarrollo del tamborileo, el movimiento de caballete”; (b) carta de felicitación a los empleados de la mina “Formación de la cuenca de carbón de Karaganda. Combinación de carbón”, y (c) carta de felicitación a los empleados de la mina. Fuente: compilado por los autores.

Figure 6. Karaganda local history museum. The system of values regarding the narrative of Soviet industrialization

Figura 6. Museo de historia local de Karaganda. El sistema de valores respecto de la narrativa de la industrialización soviética



Where (a) layout “Karaganda miners mined a billion tons of coal”, “Karaganda and the Karaganda region in 1946-1980 years”; (b) exposition “Miners”, and (c) peace Watch at the Mikhailovskoe mine. Source: compiled by the authors. Donde (a) presentación “Los mineros de Karagandá extrajeron mil millones de toneladas de carbón” “Karagandá y la región de Karagandá en los años 1946-1980”; (b) exposición “Mineros”, y (c) Vigilancia de la paz en la mina Mikhailovskoe. Fuente: compilado por los autores.

Figure 7. Karaganda local history museum. Formalized constructs of stereotypical practices: exposition “Miners”. Hall No.10 “Formation of the Karaganda coal basin”

Figura 7. Museo de historia local de Karaganda. Constructos formalizados de prácticas estereotipadas: exposición “Mineros”. Sala nº 10 “Formación de la cuenca de carbón de Karaganda”



Source: compiled by the authors. Fuente: compilado por los autores.

During the research, author also conducted a survey interview with the employees of the Karaganda Local History Museum and the Karlag (Table 1, 2 and 3). The museum workers shared their opinions on the social, political, and historical role of the above-mentioned museums. Many employees regardless of their length of service, age, and ethnicity agree with the conclusions obtained during this study. Museum workers see museum complexes as a tool to form a national memory, as well as to debunk Soviet historical myths, and to form a unified attitude to the period of Stalinist repression and industrialization.

Table 1. Data from respondents (employees of regional museums) of the detailed interview
Tabla 1. Datos de los encuestados (empleados de museos regionales) de la entrevista detallada

Respondents	Occupation	Age, ethnicity	Years of experience	Place of work	Interview time
1	Museum director	39, male, Kazakh	18	Karaganda local history museum (Karaganda)	July 4th, 2022
2	Head of the Funds Department	58, female, Kazakh	31	Karaganda	July 4th, 2022
3	Head of the Archeology Department	Age not established, male, Kazakh	15	Karaganda	July 24th, 2022
4	Museum director assistant	29, female, Kazakh	5	Karaganda	July 24th, 2022
5	Senior scientist	42, female, Kazakh	7	Karaganda	May 22th, 2022
6	Senior scientist	38, male, Kazakh	15	Karaganda	May 22th, 2022
7	Head of the Tour Department	58, female, Kazakh	25	Karaganda	June 24th, 2022
8	Head of the Scientific-research Department	37, male, Russian	14 year and 9 months	Karlag	May 18th, 2022
9	Head of the Exposition and Exhibition Department	42, male, Kazakh	11 years and 5 months	Karlag	May 18th, 2022

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Table 2. Detailed interview data, Karaganda local history museum
Tabla 2. Datos detallados de las entrevistas, museo de historia local de Karaganda

Karaganda local history museum	Interview data
Comprehension of the social mission of Soviet industrialization	<p>Slogans at the time as we know “Some kind of Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (SU) and Lands to farmers, factories to workers”. Worth admitting that ideology was in first place then and it worked. For example, I remember myself as an octogenarian and I firmly believed that Soviet power was inviolable and that Comrade Lenin, who created it, was great. But then it turned out that it was all nonsense, and they were all lying... but the ideology worked well from kindergarten to school, from school to adulthood that is, it was all multistage: October Fellow, Pioneer ... brainwashing was enormous, and people believed in it (Respondent No. 1). This is part of the USSR culture, where everything was based on the ideology (No. 2). The museum has long since abandoned the stereotype of “storage, museum dust, storage, and a boring place. Today the museum is a research center, which has all the resources to do science. Likewise, the museum today is a social institution that plays an important function in the cultural integration of the people of Kazakhstan (No. 3). The agitation and call of the common people to the factories and plants, the idealization and elevation of the proletariat. The promise of jobs and conditions, which, as we remember, were not kept (No. 4).</p>
Soviet industrialization narrative language	<p>Well then in USSR it was about workers, peasants, world peace. Now first of all we show our history from the Stone Age to the present history was so... then customs and traditions. In Soviet times there was a clear definition of a Soviet man, all nations were united, and everyone spoke Russian even if you were Armenian even if you were Tatar or Kazakh, and now it turns out there was no Soviet man... So, we fill this vacuum, and we go back to the roots... It turns out we are Turks, and we have customs and traditions that were preserved in villages but were not preserved in the city. Now we are trying to fill these voids... (No. 1). Ideological: exhibitions, collecting money (No. 3). Ideological: a call to labor for a cause. Ideological: a call to labor for a cause (No. 5). Since we grew up in the village, we did not see the Soviet museum visually, but it is true that the ideology that was taught in school in the village was there. Even now, the concept of the museum remains the same. Everything is made to the same standard (No. 6).</p>
Formalized constructs of stereotypical practices (stands, tours, etcetera)	<p>In museum, this theme is presented by copies of archival documents, photographs, and the art panel “Confiscation of the Baikal Estate” (No. 7). Construction and creation of cultural sites theaters, museums. The arrival of the first train to the city. Subjects of the totalitarian regime. Food cards, the deficit era (No. 3). A history shown from a single point of view (No. 5). Our museum was created in 1932 as the Polytechnic Museum, which showed the technique and history of how the coal basin, nature developed. And now we have exhibitions devoted to famous people: singers, scientists, athletes – the museum has displays of personal belongings of workers, the first model of a locomotive, the first sketches of minerals (No. 4).</p>

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Table 3. Detailed interview data, Karlag
Tabla 3. Datos detallados de la entrevista, Karlag

Karlag	Interview data
Comprehension of the social mission of Soviet industrialization.	For me, the Soviet museum is interesting because it conveys the mood of that era (No. 8). During the period of industrialization, industry in our region began to grow rapidly (No. 9).
Soviet industrialization narrative language	Prison labor was used everywhere, so Central Kazakhstan rose quickly. Nowhere was child labor used as much as in the SU. Children of the repressed People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs-seniors were sent to the sorting station in Maikuduk after 2 weeks were distributed. Children 14-16 years old were taught the skills of factory workers, they had to make up the labor force, they were brought up that way. Because workers often died (No. 8). The Gulag was a place of free labor. In the camps people worked for free and did not eat enough. Everyone was entitled to 800 grams of bread. No one went hungry in the camp... No money was paid for work (No. 9).
The value system in relation to the narrative of Soviet industrialization	The museum was created to memorialize the victims of political repression and the famine, has moral aspects and is engaged in patriotic education (No. 8). Museum of Dolinka was created to popularize and moral potential of the peoples living on the territory of the region and to fulfill the aspiration of wide masses of people to perpetuate the memory of innocent victims of concentration camps, who were on the territory of Kazakhstan (No. 9).
Normative model of the typical event, status-role communication of the Soviet industrialization of the museum chronicle	As before, museum business is primarily the collection of materials and their proper presentation to visitors (No. 8). For me, the Soviet museum, as well as the modern one, is primarily aimed at the patriotic education of citizens... The preservation of history for future generations has been, is and will be the priority of museum affairs (No. 9). COAL, MINES (No. 8). Miner, Karaganda, metallurgy (No. 9).

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

The Soviet industrialization and ideology held significant influence. The first respondent acknowledges the effectiveness of Soviet ideology, which permeated society from kindergarten to adulthood. The second respondent notes that Soviet culture was fundamentally based on ideology. The respondents highlight the museum's importance as a social institution within the Soviet context. The interview data reflects the ideological narrative language prevalent during Soviet industrialization. The rhetoric emphasized the elevation of the proletariat, the promise of jobs and improved conditions, and the idealization of workers and peasants. However, the respondents also point out the failure to fulfill these promises and the subsequent disillusionment of the common people.

During the Soviet era, the Karlag museum aimed to convey the mood of the time and memorialize the victims of political repression and famine. It had moral aspects and was engaged in patriotic education. Respondents emphasize the rapid growth of industry in the region during the period of Soviet industrialization. They also highlight the widespread use of prison labor, particularly in Central Kazakhstan, which contributed to the region's industrial development. The narrative language of Soviet industrialization in the museum reflects the use of prison labor and the harsh conditions in the Gulag camps. Children of repressed individuals were sent to work at young ages to make up for the labor force. Respondents mention that people worked for free in the camps and were fed in a regulated manner, with everyone entitled to a specific amount of bread.

The Karlag museum continues to fulfill its mission of memorializing the innocent victims of concentration camps and promoting the moral potential of the people in the region. It also aims to educate citizens patriotically and preserve history for future generations. The normative model of the museum remains consistent, focusing on the collection and proper presentation of materials to visitors. The respondents highlight the importance of the museum's role in preserving history and prioritizing the patriotic education of citizens.

Summing up, the period of industrialization in Kazakhstan was one of the keys turning points in the history of the Karaganda region. During this period the modern industrial and ethnic portrait of the region was formed. However, even though industrialization had an "impetus" to the industrial development of the region, it was accompanied by so harsh actions and methods of Soviet power, which many modern researchers call criminal, and even see in their manifestations of the genocide of the Kazakh (Spytska, 2023).

The post-Soviet era has witnessed a widespread rejection of Soviet narratives and historical myths among many former republics, including Kazakhstan (Mikhnevych et al., 2023). This shift in perspective represents the evolving historical memory in Kazakhstan and contributes to the broader international shared memory. The creation of shared international memory is a diplomatic tool that serves to strengthen connections among different peoples through a common understanding of past tragic events (Volkov, 2012; 2017). One notable example of this international shared memory is the monument erected in Karlag in 2005, dedicated to Ukrainians who suffered there during the Soviet era. This monument serves as a symbol of remembrance for individuals from various backgrounds, including notable figures like Greek Catholic priest Aleksey Zaritsky. Many political, religious, scientific, cultural, and military figures from different former Soviet republics and neighboring countries also endured imprisonment or exile in Karlag. This collective memory of Soviet industrialization in Kazakhstan extends beyond the nation's borders, contributing to a shared historical memory among all peoples who were affected by Russian and later Soviet imperialism.

Discussion

The study of Soviet industrialization is an important aspect of both Soviet and Kazakhstani history, which is expressed in detail and extensively in historiography. The historiography devoted to this issue can be conventionally divided into two main groups according to the views and conclusions of the historians who conducted the research (Kostruba, 2023). The first group is "pro-Soviet", which defends the Soviet mythologeme regarding this topic, and accordingly plays up the nostalgic feelings of some groups in the former USSR countries, and the second group is modern Kazakhstan, which destroys the Soviet narratives and focuses on the consideration of this period of history as part of the formation of modern Kazakhstani society, history, and state.

Pro-Soviet historians adhered to strict Marxist-Leninist ideology and portrayed Soviet industrialization in Kazakhstan as entirely positive. For instance, Russian historian Verkhoturov's work, "Stalin's Economic Revolution" (Verkhoturov, 2006: 120-126), treats Kazakhstan as part of the broader Stalinist industrialization process, emphasizing economic metrics and urbanization. However, negative aspects are either omitted or downplayed as minor "side-effects" of industrialization. Post-Soviet historiography typically ignores or attributes the 1932-1933 famine in Kazakhstan to crop failure and weather conditions rather than Soviet agricultural

policies. It also overlooks the challenges posed by collectivization in Kazakhstan, which was ill-suited for nomadic cattle breeding and is believed by some historians to have contributed to the famine.

Soviet historical myths still find use as propaganda tools by certain political groups in regions of the former USSR, primarily Russia and Belarus, which harbor nostalgia for the colonial Soviet era (Komilova et al., 2019). These individuals perceive Soviet industrialization as a narrative of developing and colonizing previously underdeveloped regions. They claim that the Soviets built cities, infrastructure, and industry in other Soviet republics from the ground up, while also providing education and skills to previously illiterate populations (Kerimkhulle et al., 2023). However, this perspective is considered a myth driven by chauvinism and Soviet nostalgia among select groups within the former SU. This myth is employed by political forces not only in relation to Kazakhstan but also to other former Soviet republics that have distanced themselves from the Soviet past, opting for a pro-European policy in both domestic and foreign affairs, such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia (Gaufman, 2016: 43-51).

Modern Kazakh historiography differs significantly from Soviet historiography. Since the late 1980s, Kazakh historians have challenged the Soviet myths surrounding the 1920s-1930s, particularly regarding the victims of political repressions and the region's industrialization. In addition to discussing collectivization, which led to a devastating famine causing the death of nearly 25% of the population (according to the 1926 and 1937 census), Kazakh historians have scrutinized the policy of replacing this percentage with migrants from other regions, primarily Russia and Ukraine. Some view this as an attempt to assimilate Kazakhs and erode their national and cultural identity (Abylkhozhin et al., 2015: 64-67). The implementation of the "Little October" policy during industrialization is reinterpreted in modern Kazakh historiography. While post-Soviet historiography portrays it as a struggle against "counterrevolution" and "bourgeois elements," contemporary Kazakh works see it as purges of unwanted, nationally oriented political figures within the AUCP(b) in Kazakhstan. Some historians even label the famine of 1932-1933 and the subsequent repopulation of the region by inhabitants from other republics as an act of genocide against the Kazakh people.

This research, supported by modern sources and scholarly works, makes a significant contribution to revising the historiography of industrialization in Kazakhstan. It effectively challenges and debunks common myths propagated by Soviet historiography. Key aspects of the Soviet historical myth that this work addresses include the social impact of industrialization on the people of Kazakhstan, the portrayal of industrialization as a merit of the Soviet economic system, changes in the ethnic and national composition of Kazakhstan during industrialization, and the role and impact of correctional camps in the region. This research provides valuable insights and critical analysis of these topics (Beckman, 1972: 57-63).

Most contemporary researchers have moved away from perpetuating the Soviet historical myth of industrialization in Kazakhstan and the USSR. However, some researchers in regions like Russia and Belarus still adhere to Soviet narrative ideas, often expressing chauvinistic and colonial-imperial views on Kazakhstan's history. This research aims to debunk these historical myths and promote the development of collective memory in Kazakhstan through museum and memorial complexes. An exemplary case of such a museum and memorial complex is the Karlag museum. This institution not only authentically depicts the realities

and lives of penal camp inmates during industrialization but also serves as a memorial complex. The Karlag museum's goal is to not only strengthen Kazakhstan's national memory but also to foster a shared memory with others who suffered from repression.

Conclusions

Soviet industrialization had a profound impact on Kazakhstan, bringing both progress and tragedy. The rapid development of industry and infrastructure came at the cost of mass repressions, cultural upheaval, forced collectivization, and the devastating famine of 1932-1933. These events led to a significant loss of life and a transformation of the republic's demographic composition as settlers from other Soviet republics were brought in to replace the deceased. This period can be viewed as colonial, as it imposed new ways of life and disrupted traditional practices, eroding cultural identity. The GULAG camps, especially the Karaganda camp, played a central role in this industrialization process, with the Karaganda Museum and memorial complex serving as a poignant reminder of the harsh conditions endured by prisoners. This museum stands as a testament to the human suffering and serves as a vital tool for preserving the memory of those who perished during this challenging period in Kazakhstan's history.

Museum and memorial complexes play a crucial role in shaping national and collective memory by providing spaces for shared remembrance and a deeper understanding of past events, particularly those marked by tragedy. These complexes contribute significantly to the formation of a unified national identity and help individuals in Kazakhstan to identify with their history and heritage. Modern historians and researchers are actively challenging Soviet and Russian historical myths and narratives, aiming for a more accurate and authentic interpretation of history. This shift in historical interpretation not only influences academic studies but also impacts public policies related to national memory and the self-identification of the Kazakh people. The ultimate goal is to create a collective memory that recognizes the past's tragedies while fostering a sense of unity and a stronger national identity among the people of Kazakhstan. This process reflects a broader trend of rejecting misleading historical narratives and seeking a more truthful and inclusive understanding of the nation's history.

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