**Charles University in Prague**

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Seminar of General and Comparative History

**Regional Identity and Conflict in Transnistria
since Late Communism**

Master Thesis

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I hereby declare that I researched and wrote this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.

Prague, 15 May 2013                                                    Olga Niutenko

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## Abstract

This study examines the issues of Transnistrian conflict, Transnistrian identity and Transnistrian statehood through the fields of historiography, economic development, language and educational politics, religion, Soviet ideology and the place of memory in two parts of the Republic of Moldova, Bessarabia and Transnistria.

The results of this study reveal the influence of the above—listed spheres on identity in both regions, the significant role of the leadership of Transnistria and the Republic of Moldova in shaping peoples' opinion and strengthening the idea of Transnistrian statehood, and the existence of regional identity in Transnistria during a phase of transition.

# Contents

**Abbreviations**

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| CIS | Commonwealth of Independent States |
| CPSU | Communist Party of the Soviet Union |
| TMR | Transnistrian Moldovan Republic |
| MASSR | Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic |
| MSSR | Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| SSR | Soviet Socialist Republic |

## Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union caused a significant number of intractable problems that were the consequences of the disintegration of a state. In addition to the general political and economic difficulties of the transition period the central questions for the former Soviet republics included redefining the status of the Centre and the regions, undetermined borders, and on-going conflicts, based on the previous migration policies. The process of declaration a sovereignty over the territory of new republics and the integration of ethnic minorities in the new states, often densely populated, became one of the most significant disputes in the post—Soviet period.

The Transnistrian conflict in the Republic of Moldova is one of the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Republic of Moldova occupies an area of 33 843,5 square km, including Transnistria. According to the national census held in October 2004, the permanent population of Moldova, excluding the region of Transnistria, is 3 383 332. [1] Transnistria, which literally means "beyond the Dniester River" is a narrow strip in Moldova, located between the Ukrainian border on the east and the Dniester River on the west that includes a number of settlements and the city of Bender, which lie beyond the river. The area is 4016 sq. km. [2] The population of Transnsitria is 509 439 (2012). [3] There are three major ethnic groups: Moldovans (31,9%), Russians (30,4%), and Ukrainians (28,8%). [4] Representing 75,8% of the population, the Moldovans are the most numerous nationality in the country. Ukrainians compose 8,4%, Russians – 5,9%, Gagauz 4,4%, Romanians 2,2%, Bulgarians 1,9%, and other nationalities – 1,0% of the population, while 0,4% did not indicate their nationality.[5]

Transnistria has numerous versions of the name, including Transnistria, Transdnistria, Transdniestria, Trans—Dniester, and Pridnestrovije. It is officially known in Russian as the *Pridnestrovskaya Moldavskaya Respublika*. The existence of many forms of the names already shows the special multicultural and multinational status of this region. In this paper the name "Transnistria" will be used, as the majority of the sources use this form.

Transnistria is defined as an autonomous territory within Moldova, not internationally recognized

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[1] *Population Census 2004: Demographic, National, Linguistic, Cultural Characteristics,* Chisinau 2006, p.18.
[2] *Статистический ежегодник 2012* [Annual Statistical Report], Tiraspol 2012, p.17.
[3] *Пресс-выпуск "Демографическая ситуация в Приднестровской Молдавской Республике за 2012 год"* [Press Release "The Demographic Situation in TMR in 2012"], Tiraspol 2013, p.1.
[4] *Country overview*, http://mfa-pmr.org/index.php?newsid=389 [Last retrieved on 07.05.2013].
[5] Ibidem, p.19.

as a nation[6], therefore the terms "State", "President", "Law", "Sovereignty", "Independence", "Constitution" will not indicate de jure recognition of the territory and will be used only for the convenience of the reader. Such expressions as "left bank" and "right bank" of the Dniester River indicate Transnistria and Republic of Moldova or Bessarabia respectively. [7]

In order to understand the Transnistrian conflict, we should first address basic questions of definition. Johan Galtung describes seven elements of conflict: actors, goals, the acceptability-region ("the set of positions in the many dimensional goal space acceptable to all actors"), incompatibility-region (set of points that cannot be realized), conflict attitude, conflict behavior and the conflict itself, "a property of the action-system which obtains when there is no overlap between acceptability-region and compatibility-region.[8] The Transnistrian conflict possesses all of these elements and features.

The conflict started when the "Law on the Functioning of Languages", which asserted the Romanian language as the state language of Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR), was passed in 1989.[9] Subsequently, the law resulted in unrest from Russian speaking population of the MSSR. In 1990 Transnistrian Moldavian Republic (TMR) proclaimed its independence, and since then it has sought international recognition. Emerged situation influenced the rise of nationalistic mood. Mass protest demonstrations in 1992 were suppressed by the Moldovan military resulting in thousands of deaths.[10]

The emergence of discussions on Transnistrian identity and statehood characterizes the post-Soviet period. Therefore, this thesis examines the existence of Transnistrian identity, such markers of identity as religion, language, and culture [11] and discovers the main motives of agents for accepting this new identity. It is hardly possible to build an identity based on conflict alone, especially in the case of the "Transdniestrian people," who did not exist as such before the

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[6] *Transnitria Definitions*, http://www.wordnik.com/words/Transnistria [Last retrieved on 07.05.2013].
[7] Region in eastern Europe bounded by the Prut River on the west, the Dniester River on the north and east, the Black Sea on the southeast, and the Chilia arm of the Danube River delta on the south, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/63021/Bessarabia [Last retrieved on 08.05.2013]
[8] J. Galtung, *Theories of conflict. Definitions, Dimensions, Negations, Formations,* Columbia University 1958.
[9] *Закон Nr. 3465 от 01.09.1989 "О функционировании языков на территории Молдавской ССР"* [The Law "On the Functioning of Languages in MSSR"],
http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=312813&lang=2 [Last retrieved on 29.04.2013].
[10] G. Dura, *The EU and Moldova's Third Sector: Partners in Solving the Transnistria Conflict?*, in "MICROCON Policy Working Paper", 2010, pp.1-34.
[11] A. Hatoss, *Language, Faith and Identity. A Historical Insight Into Discourses of Language Ideology and Planning by the Lutheran Church of Australia*, in *"Australian Review of Applied Linguistics",* 35, 2012, pp.94-112.

conflict.[12] What other origins enabled the existence of this conflict? The ability of political elites to use language, education, and symbols to manipulate the minds of a people and shape their identity, to spread the idea of the loyalty to the state among the local population, and to spread the idea to call themselves "Transnistrian citizens" will be evaluated in order to understand that phenomenon.

The ethnic explanation of the Transnistrian conflict is weak, as Moldova's three ethnic groups are of almost equal proportions. Therefore, the hypothesis of the work is:

— the Transnistrian conflict is not based primarily in ethnic categories; it is an economic and political conflict, a conflict of the elites and a conflict of identities;

— the Transnistrian conflict was a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Because of the region's important geopolitical position (sharing a border with Ukraine, proximity to Russia and the Balkans) and its economic development, Transnistria became a struggle for influence of external powers;

— the Transnistrian conflict became a driving force in the formation of regional identity for the Transnistrian population, standing above ethnic identification, which was a sufficient reason for the Transnistrian people to create their own independent and sovereign state.

A synchronic asymmetric comparative approach is used in this thesis, which allows the examination of differences and similarities in certain aspects of social life in both regions — economic, political, cultural and historical — and leads us to a possible conclusion about the origin of Transnistrian identity.

Manuel Castells writes that the "construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations,"[13] therefore these will be the tools used to examine the existence of Transnitrian identity. According to Miroslav Hroch, a nation can be defined as "a large social group integrated not by one but by a combination of several kinds of objective relationships (economic, political, linguistic, cultural,

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[12] A. Bencic, T.I. Hodor, Transdniestria. Ethnic Conflict or Geopolitical Interests?, in "Eurolimes", Supliment, 2011, pp.403-417.

[13] M. Castells, *The power of identity*, Wiley-Blackwell 2009.

religious, geographical, historical), and their subjective reflection in collective consciousness."[14] — In order to arrive at a deeper understanding and explanation of the Transnistrian conflict, we can examine it and the consequent creation of Transnistrian identity in the context of the above-mentioned areas.

The historiography of Transnistria in this paper will be examined in the context of the historiography of Moldova, for reason that the two histories cannot be separated. Attempts to do so invariably leads to a fragmented perception of developments in the region.

The problem of Transnistria will not be examined in isolation, but in the context of its relation with lands on its border. This work consists of three sections. The first section, on the "Formation of Transnistrian statehood", will be devoted to the historiography of Transnistria and Bessarabia, economic development and the premises of the armed conflict. It will review the ethnic characteristics of both regions, the formation of first 'statehood' in 1924, the development of Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) and MSSR in the Soviet period and the specifics of the formation of the Transnistrian enclave after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It should be noted, that the history of the two regions will be highlighted simultaneously, as it is important for understanding the problem comprehensively. Developments in Transnistria and Moldova in language, education and religion will be analyzed in the second section. In the third section, the phenomenon of "sovietness" in Transnistria will be analyzed, examining the legacy of the Soviet regime in Transnistria and Bessarabia, which can be found in state symbols, ideology, public holidays, the renaming and reshaping of public spaces and places of memory. Examination of these aspects will show how the distinct historical fates of Transnistria and Bessarabia caused differences in political and cultural self-identification. The socio-political context will be present in all parts of the thesis. The conclusion will summarize the main points of the thesis.

The primary sources that will be used in the thesis will include official documents: agreements, decrees, declarations, constitutions, acts and laws, public speeches, reports of international organizations, target programs, statistical data, etc. A critical view of these materials, which include objective information, can help define aspects of social life. However, some of these sources, such as statistical data, can be biased. It is not always possible to determine objective truth from these documents, and the researcher must be careful in analyzing them. Books, monographs, articles, and other mass media, which present the views of multiple authors, will be

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[14] M. Hroch, *From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation*, in "New Left Review", I/198P, 1993, pp.3-20.

used as secondary sources for the paper.

The theoretical basis of the thesis can be found in the works of Miroslav Hroch, Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson. Misroslav Hroch is a leading Czech historian in the field of nationalism and author of the theory of the three phases of national movements.[15] Comparative historical approach is one of the main tools of this paper. Eric Hobsbawm is a British marxist historian in the field of nationalism and socialism. His idea that "traditions which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented" [16] within the concept of "invented traditions" helps explain the phenomenon of "sovietness" in Transnistria. This concept is supported with the idea of "imagined communities" by Benedict Anderson, whose definition of nation affirms that "it is an imagined political community", and that imagination lies in the "cultural roots of nationalism." [17]

The Transnistrian concept of history arose in the context of political and then military confrontation in 1989-1992 and is directly related to the ideological explanation of Transnistrian statehood. Therefore, a considerable attention in the region is paid to the history of the conflict. The subject of the conflict is examined mostly by the Transnistrian authors Vladislav Grsul, Nickolai Babilunga, Boris Bomeshko, Vladislav Shurigin and Petr Shornikov.[18] The notion of "history of the Transnistrian region" was delineated by Transnistrian scholars who examined the historical, geopolitical, economic and socio-cultural aspects of the conflict between Moldova and Transnistria. However, since the information in these works is likely to be subjective, the works of authors from other regions, including Arcadie Barbarosie (Moldova), Oazu Nantoi (Moldova), Charles King (US), Viktor Diukarev (Ukraine), [19] etc., will also be examined to avoid the

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[15] Hroch, *From National* cit., p.6.

[16] E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 1983.

[17] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso 1991.

[18] V. Grosul (ed.), *История Приднестровской Молдавской Республики* [The history of TMR], Tiraspol 2000.
V. Grosul, *О терминах "молдавский народ" и "молдавский язык"* [On the Terms "Moldovan People" and "Moldovan Language"], Tiraspol 1991.
N. Babilunga, B. Bomeshko, *Приднестровский конфликт: исторические, демографические, политические аспекты* [Transnistrian Conflict: Historical, Demographical, Political Aspects], Tiraspol 1998.
N. Babilunga, B. Bomeshko, *Дубоссары – Кровоточащая рана Приднестровья* [Dubossary – Bleeding Wound of Transnistria], Tiraspol 1993.
N. Babilunga, *Население Молдавии в прошлом веке: миграция, ассимиляция, русификация* [Population of Moldova in Last Century: Migration, Assimilation, Russification], Chisinau 1990.
V. Shurigin (ed.), *Белая книга ПМР* [White Book of TMR], Moscow 2006.
P. Shornikov, *Молдавская самобытность* [Moldovan Identity], Tiraspol 2007.
P. Shornikov, *Поля падения. Историография молдавской этнополитики* [The Falling Ground. Historiography of Moldovan Ethnic Policy], Chisinau 2009.
P. Shornikov, *Покушение на статус: этнополитические процессы в Молдавии в годы кризиса 1988*-1996 [Attempt against the Status; Ethno-political Process in Moldova in crisis 1988-1996], Chisinau 1997.

[19] C. King, *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*, Stanford 1999.

possibility in this thesis of a biased interpretation of the conflict.

Numerous articles about Transnistria were published in such periodicals as *"Vestnik MID Pridnestrovija"* [Bulletin of Transnistrian Ministry of Foreigh Affairs], *"Moldovo-Pridnestrovskij Region"* [Moldavian-Transnistrian Region], *"Rusin,"* *"Vestnik Tsentra Issledovanij Uzhno-Ukrainskogo pogranich'ya"* [Bulletin of the South Ukrainian Border Research Center], Communist and Post-Communist Studies, Cambridge Journal of Social Policy, Human Security Journal, Electoral Studies, European Center for Minority Issues Working Papers, Slavic Review, etc. Articles on the Transnistrian conflict from the electronic mass media were also used: newspaper *"Sovety Naroda"* [People's Soviets], *"Nezavisimaya Moldova"* [Independent Moldova], "Pridnestrovije," *"Komsomolskaya Pravda v Moldove"* [Komsomol's Truth], "Olvia Press," "Panorama", etc.

V. Diukarev, *Дубоссары 1989-1992: за кулисами войны* [Dubossary 1989-1992: Behind the Scenes of War], Tiraspol 2000.
A. Barbarosie, O. Nantoi, *Aspects of the Transnistrian Conflict*, Chisinau 2004.
A. Barbarosie, O. Nantoi, *Интеграция этнических групп и консолидация гражданской нации в Республике Молдова* [Integration of Ethnic Groups and Consolidation of Nation in the Republic of Moldova], Chisinau 2012.

## I. Formation of Transnistrian statehood

### Historiography

Historically, the region of Transnistria never had a stable state-affiliation. In the 1360s the northern part of the Dniester River was included in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and was part of the historic region of Podolia. In 1569, after the unification of Poland and Lithuania it became part of the joint Polish-Lithuanian State. The territory was mostly inhabited by Poles, Ukrainians and the other Slavic groups, and in smaller quantities, Jews, Armenians, Moldavian and German immigrants. The Dniester River was the border with Moldova and thus with the Ottoman Empire. During the Russo-Turkish wars in the end of 18th century, Russia was fighting for the return of its southern lands and an exit to the Black Sea. With the Peace Treaty of Jassy in 1791, Transnistria was annexed to Russian Empire.[20] In the process of the partition of Poland, the northern territory of modern Transnistria was annexed to the Russian Empire. After the second partition of Poland in 1793, a larger part came to Russia and two years later the southern part of the Dniester-Bug Polish lands was annexed to the Russian Empire.

On 28 May 1812 Russia and the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Bucharest that ended the Russo-Turkish war of 1806-1812. According to the treaty, the Russian Empire obtained the eastern part of the principality of Moldavia, the Prut-Dniester interfluve, which became known as Bessarabia.[21] The border between Russia and the Ottoman Empire was established on the Prut River, making Transnistria an internal province of the Russian Empire. Thus, by the beginning of the 19th century, both banks of the Dniester River for the first time became a part of one state, the Russian Empire, where they remained until the October Revolution in 1917. However, the left and right banks of the Dniester River belonged to different provinces (*guberniya*), the left (future Transnistria) to the Kherson and Podolia *Guberniya* and Bessarabia to the Bessarabian *Guberniya*.

The 19th century was characterized by mass migration organized within tsarist policy. Bessarabia outstripped not only Transnistria, but Russia itself, in demographic development.[22] Serfdom was not implemented there, and the majority of peasants were free; of the rural population, only 1%

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[20] Signed on 9 January. 1792 between Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire, which ended the Russo-Turkish war of 1787-1792.
[21] *Бухарестский мирный договор 1812* [Bucharest Peace Treaty 1812], http://www.rusarchives.ru/publication/buharestsky-mir/foreword.shtml [Last retrieved on 29.04.2013].
[22] N. Babilunga, *Население* cit., p.34.

were serfs.[23] In the middle of the 19th century the majority of the population was Ukrainian (54,1%), then Moldovans (17%), Germans (11,5%), Jews (5,5%) and Russians (4,6%).[24] During the 19th century, the region played an important role in the transit of trade. The exchange of business information spread via waterways and land routes from Transnistria and Bessarabia to the Black Sea ports, the Danube, Ukraine, Saint Petersburg and the Baltic countries. This favorable geographic location gave the region many economic advantages.

In December 1917, Romania occupied Bessarabia. In 1918, the National Assembly of the province of Bessarabia *(Sfatul Ţării)* voted for its inclusion in Romania.[25] The Soviet authorities, who had continued the Russian Empire's policy of territorial expansion and tried to maintain control of territories that had been part of Empire, did not recognize the right of Romania to the annexed lands.[26] In 1924, the politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine issued a decree on the creation of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) as a part of the Ukrainian SSR.[27] The politburo considered this territory highly important and pursued the accession of Bessarabia, expressed in such language as: "we consider necessary the selection of Moldovan population into a special Autonomous Republic as a part of Ukraine, first of all for political reasons." [28]

The decree established the MASSR; it defined the territory, its borders, its internal division into districts, and the structure of its future government. Inclusion of the area on the left bank of the Dniester River, where the Moldovan population was not a majority, into the MASSR allowed the Soviet leadership to ensure a special status to the new autonomous Republic. The MASSR consisted of nine entire and five partial districts of Ukraine. In the autonomous Republic, they were reorganized into twelve districts. The town of Balta became the capital of the Republic. During this period, the territory increased almost 2 000 km in area, and the population increased by 26,7%. In the 1920s, the majority of population was Ukrainian (48,49%), then Moldovan (30,13%), then Russian, Jews and others. In 1940, a rise in the Russian population in the MASSR was noted, even as the number of Moldovans was dropping.[29] However, in 1936, in the territory now known as Transnistria, Moldovans were the majority of population with 41,8%, Ukrainians

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[23] V. Andruschak, P. Bojko, *История Республики Молдова: с древнейших времен до наших дней* [The History of the Republic of Moldova from Ancient times to Nowadays], Chisinau 2002.

[24] Babilunga, *Население* cit.*,* p.50.

[25] King, *The Moldovans* cit., p.35.

[26] Bessarabia was annexed to Romania after the WWI.

[27] Andruschak, Bojko, *История* cit., p.206.

[28] Ibidem, p.207.

[29] O. Galuschenko, *Этнический состав населения Молдавской АССР* (1924-1940) [Ethnic Composition of MASSR Population 1924-1940], Chisinau 2001, p.12.

28,7%, Russians 14,2%, Jews 7,9%, and the others with 7,4%.[30]

Numerous authors define this period as the formation of this territory's statehood, but how can we define statehood? State could be defined as a "territory built by conquest in which one culture, one set of ideals and one set of laws have been imposed by force or threat over diverse nations by a civilian and military bureaucracy." [31] According to the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933), a state "as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states." [32] Transnistria was a part of the autonomous MASSR, not a separate state, but it possessed certain of the criteria described in the Montevideo Convention: it had defined territory, a permanent population, and government controlled from the center.

The MASSR remained part of Soviet Ukraine for 16 years, during which cultural traditions that differed from the traditions of Bessarabia were created. The right bank of Moldavia assimilated Romanian cultural values, while the left bank kept the Slavic ones.[33] In the inter-war period, the differences in culture, mentality, lifestyle, psychology among the nationalities of MASSR and Bessarabia increased. The regions differed in terms of political institutions, economic structure, and social life. Furthermore, a low level of communication blocked convergence. Subsequently, the differences in the political history of Bessarabia and Transnistria affected the identity of Moldovans living in the regions.

A break in the formation of Transnistrian statehood occurred with the displacement of the Bessarabian Romanian government by the Red Army in June 1940. On 28 June 1940, Bessarabia was annexed to the Soviet Union. The foundation of the Moldavian SSR occurred on 2 August 1940. The Moldavian Soviet Republic included the cities of Grigoriopol, Tiraspol, Dubossary, Kamensky, Slobodzejsky, and the Rybnitsa districts of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, as well as the cities city Chisinau, Balti, Orhei, Chisinau, Cahul, Soroca and

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[30] M. Emerson, M. Vahl, *Moldova and the Transnistrian Conflict*, in B. Coppieters, M. Huysseune, T. Kovziridze, *Europeanization and Conflict Resolution: Case Studies from the European Periphery*, Academia Press 2004, pp.149-190.
[31] Independent States of the World, http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/states.htm [Last retrieved on 13.05.2013].
[32] *Convention on Rights and Duties of States (inter-American),* 26 December, 1933, Article 1. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam03.asp [Last retrieved on 04.05.2013].
[33] N. Dymchenko, *Этнокультурный феномен Приднестровья в контексте диалога культур* [Ethno-cultural Phenomenon of Transnstria in the Context of Culture Dialogue], *Диалог культур в условиях глобализации: XI Международные Лихачевские научные чтения* [Dialogue of Cultures in the Context of Globalization: XI International Likhachev Scientific Readings] 12-13 May 2011, Saint Petersburg 2011, Vol.1, pp.292-294.

the Orhei districts of Bessarabia.[34]

The socio-economic development of the region in this period can be divided into three phases: first, restoration of the economic sector, reaching pre-war levels of production and establishment of the local industrial base (1944-1955); second, creation of new industries and large industrial enterprises, determining the specialization of its economic sector in the planned economy of the Soviet Union, and division of labor (1956-1985); and third, restructuring of the economy (1985-1989). Taking into account the modern historiography of Moldova, the period of 1960-1990 can be considered as one in which the region truly flourished. During these years, the Moldovan Republic consolidated its place and importance in the Soviet economic system, achieving reaching leading positions in some industries.[35]

**The Conflict on Independence of Transnistria**

Active ethno-politicization of Moldovan society and its top bureaucracy began in the late 1980s as a result of soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika campaign. Beginning in 1988, nationalist organizations became active in Moldova and members of the union of writers Grigore Vieru, Leonida Lari, among others, played a special role. The club of Mateevich and the Democratic movement for Perestroika, with the largest number of members, became the most significant. The most important focus was on achieving, for the Moldovan language, the status of a state language. Also important was the struggle for recognition of its identity with the Romanian language and a return to the Latin alphabet. The Club of Mateevich became one of the symbols of the national revival of Moldova in the late 1980s. The Club's official objective was to uncover the secrets of the Soviet period, which had been suppressed in the media and scientific literature.[36] Apart from the new politics of memory, the movement attempted to establish Romanian culture and values.

In the spring of 1989, four political organizations reflecting the ethno-political polarization of the population appeared in the MSSR: *"Frontul Popular din Moldova"* [Popular Front of Moldova], the international movement *"Unitate-Edinstvo"*, the movement *"Gagauz Halky"* and *"Vozrozhdenie"* [Revival]. These "movements" represented different segments of the population

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[34] *Закон об образовании МССР №28* [The Law on Foundation of MSSR Nr.28], in V. Jakovlev, *Бессарабский вопрос и образование Приднестровской Молдавской республики: сборник официальных документов* [Bessarabian question and the Foundation of TMR: Collection of Official Documents] Tiraspol, 1993, p.66.

[35] V. Stati, *История Молдовы* [The History of Moldova], Chisinau 2003.

[36] *"Молдавские Ведомости"*, 20 March 2012, http://www.vedomosti.md/news/Klub_Imeni_Alekseya_Mateevicha [Last retrieved on 28.04.2013].

of MSSR, according to ethno-linguistic criteria. The Popular Front, whose members identified themselves as Moldovan/Romanian, was pro-Romania, including support for unification with Romania. [37] The International movement *"Unitate-Edinstvo"* included the Russian-speaking population mainly concentrated in Chisinau and other cities on the right bank of the Dniester River. Its main purpose was to give equal status to both the Moldovan and Russian languages.[38] The movements *"Gagauz Halky"* and *"Vozrozhdenie"* represented ethnic Gagauz [39] and Bulgarians living in the south of the MSSR. These public organizations quickly took precedence over the CPSU.

The appearance of these organizations coincided with discussions in the MSSR about the problem of giving official status to Moldovan/Romanian language. This situation became even more tense when the leadership raised the problem of returning to the Latin alphabet and the rejection of the Cyrillic one.

As opposition to the nationalists of Moldova, the United Work Collective Council (UWCC) was created in Tiraspol. The UWCC revived the labor movement and raised it to a new level. This organization played a decisive role in the creation of the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic and in its resistance to pro-Romanian nationalism. Since their very beginning political processes in the Transnistrian region had greater local specificity compared with those that occurred on the right bank of the Dniester River. Neither the Popular Front, nor the movement *"Unitate-Edinstvo"* had enjoyed a broad support there, because the proposed reforms would negatively affect the Russian-speaking population.

On 23 August 1989, an informational press group was created in Transnistria. The newspaper *"Bastuyuschiy Tiraspol"* [Striking Tiraspol], which was published at the plant, "Kirov," where workers were on strike, debuted on 24 August 1989. It became the first uncensored and free newspaper distributed throughout Transnistria.[40] *"Bastuyuschiy Tiraspol"* broke the information blockade and spread the demands of Transnistrians and their desire to maintain a unified country. Following *"Bastuyuschiy Tiraspol"* similar newspapers, including *"Izvestiya Benderskogo*

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[37] J. Chinn, S. D. Roper, *Ethnic Mobilization and Reactive Nationalism: the Case of Moldova*, in "Nationalities Papers", 2, Vol. 23, 1995, pp.291-325.

[38] C. King, *Языковая политика в МССР* [Language Policy in MSSR], in A. Pogorelsky (ed.), *Научные тетради Института восточной Европы* [Scientific Notebooks of the Eastern Europe Institute],Vol. II., Moscow 2009, pp.6-25.

[39] Turkic-language people, mainly living in southern Moldova, south-eastern Romania, south-western Ukraine.

[40] *"Приднестровье"*, 19 June 2009,
http://www.pridnestroviedaily.net/gazeta/articles/view.aspx?ArticleID=13890 [Last retrieved on 28.04.2013].

*Rabochego Komiteta*" [the news of the working committee of Bender], "*Hronika Zabastovki Rybnitsy*" [Ribnitsa Strike chronicle], "*Bastuyuschiy Komrat*" [Striking Comrade], appeared. The main demands of the strikers remained the same: to prevent the cultural and political transformation of the region under the Moldovan and Romanian influence and to retain two official languages — Russian and Romanian.

By the end of the summer of 1989, the socio-political situation in Moldova had escalated. The Supreme Soviet of the MSSR adopted the law "On the functioning of languages" on 1 September 1989. It defined Romanian, based on the Latin script, as the official language of Moldova.[41] This law met resistance from the Russian-speaking population of the republic. The dramatic change of the language environment increased the negative attitude of the Transnistrian population to official Chisinau and became one of the causes of the conflict.

The adoption of the national flag of the Moldavian SSR, whose colors matched those of the Romanian flag, on 27 April 1990, was a significant sign of closer relations between Moldova and Romania. In addition, a large-scale demonstration, the "*Podul de flori*" [Bridge of Flowers], which celebrated the fall of state socialist system[42] and symbolized the establishment of "special fraternal relations" between Romania and Moldova[43], was held on the Prut River. It took place on 6 May 1990, and residents of Romania were allowed to cross the Prut River into the Moldavian SSR without any documents at eight crossing points along the 700-km border. After this event, crossing the border between Romania and MSSR became much simpler, described by those who crossed the river to see family members long separated by the frontier as a watery Berlin Wall.[44] 16 June 1991, a similar action, allowing citizens of Moldova to cross the border into Romania without documents, took place.

Thus, in 1990, during the last years of existence of the Soviet Union, the conflict line was clear in Transnistria. On one hand, there was the Moldovan national elite represented by the nationalist-Democrats, who made every effort to bring the country under the influence of Romania. On the other hand, there were groups attempting to minimize Western influence and to preserve either the project of independence or affiliation to Russia. This made possible the escalation of conflict between extremes, diametrically opposed in ideology and political views.

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[41] *The Law "On the Functioning* cit.
[42] A. Brezianu, V. Spânu, *The A to Z of Moldova: historical dictionary*, Scarecrow Press 2010.
[43] *Podul de flori 1990 – 1991*, http://istoria.md/articol/204/Podul_de_flori [Last retrieved on 28.04.2013].
[44] King, *The Moldovans* cit., p.149.

When the Supreme Soviet of the Moldovan SSR adopted a declaration of sovereignty on 23 June 1990 and declared the establishment the Moldavian SSR in 1940 as an illegal part of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Transnistrian elites decided to found their own sovereign state. First, on 2 September 1990, the Transnistrian Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was established within the USSR. Then, on 25 August 1991, the Supreme Council of the PMSSR adopted a declaration on the independence of Transnistria, which stated: "The Transnistrian Moldovan Republic was created as a democracy, to secure the equality of state law and the duties of citizens of all nationalities that form the people of the Transnistrian Moldavian Republic. The historical and political-legal basis of the self-determination of Transnistria is the announcement of the creation of the MSSR on 2 August 1940, by the Supreme Council of MSSR as illegal without taking into account the views of the peoples of MASSR."[45]

On 5 November 1991, the Supreme Council decided to rename the Transnistrian MSSR, changing it to the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic (*Pridenstrovskaya Moldavskaya Respublika*). Referendums also played an important role in the formation of Transnistria's statehood. A referendum on the  independence of the TMR in political and economic union of sovereign states, in which 97,7% of the population voted "for" was held on 1 December 1991.[46] In presidential elections on 1 December 1991, 65,4 % voted for Igor Smirnov,[47] who was a director of Tiraspol's factory *"Elektromash"* from 1987 to 1990, and then became a member of MSSR Supreme Soviet. In this way Transnistria was establishing the primary requirements for its statehood.

The Republic of Moldova continued to use force to solve the Transnistrian problem. In April 1991 the Moldovan police detained G. Marakutsa, chairman of the Supreme Council of the PMSSR, and V. Zagradsky, first vice-chairman of the Supreme Council of the PMSSR. After the events of August 1991 in Moscow known as the "August putsch," Moldovan authorities declared Transnistria a stronghold of supporters of the State Committee on the State of Emergency[48] and

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[45] *Декларация о независимости Приднестровской Молдавской Республики* [Declaration of Independence of TMR], http://mfa-pmr.org/index.php?newsid=230  [Last retrieved on 28.04.2013].

[46] A. Volkova, *Референдумы в контексте истории становления и развития демократических институтов Приднестровья (конец XX –начало XXI вв.)* [Referendums in the Context of Formation and Development of Democratic Institutions of Transnistria], in "*Дипломатический Вестник Приднестровья*" [Diplomatic Bulletin of Transnistria], 5, 2011, pp.20-27.

[47] A.Volkova, *Выборы – центральное звено в демократической системе Приднестровья* [Elections- the Central Part of Democratic System of Transnistria], in "*Дипломатический Вестник Приднестровья*" [Diplomatic Bulletin of Transnistria], 4, 2011, pp.17-32.

[48] State Committee on the State of Emergency was the self-proclaimed government body in the Soviet Union, existed from 18 August to  22 August 1991, and was formed from the officials of the Soviet Government, who opposed Gorbachev's *Perestroika*  and transformation of the Soviet Union into the new union of sovereign States

took the measures to seize the members of the Supreme Council of the PMSSR[49]. The Presidium of Tiraspol supported the State Committee on the State of Emergency, and published in the newspaper *"Trudovoy Tiraspol"* [Working Tiraspol]: *"We entirely support the decisive actions of the State Committee the State of Emergency of USSR, which intended for preservation of our great Motherland, stabilization of socio-political situation."* [50]

Entering into this conflict, both sides relied primarily on external support. Chisinau expected support from Romania, while Transnistria hoped to keep affiliation to the union center (Moscow). The military assistance of Romania to Chisinau and the willingness of the 14th Russian army[51] to defend Tiraspol created conditions for the transition of the conflict from a latent stage to a stage of armed confrontation. On 1 March 1992, the confrontation between Chisinau and Tiraspol escalated further. Chisinau declared a state of emergency in the republic on 28 March 1992. The climax of the conflict took place in June 1992 in Bender after Moldovan authorities attempted to take the city by force.

During the period 1990-1992 Dubossary became the target of Moldovan military operations. The Moldovan military strategy consisted of dividing the region of Transnistria into two parts. Intense military struggles lasted throughout March 1992 in Dubossary, at the Poltava Bridge river crossing and at the Dubossary hydroelectric power plant dam. The attacks continued in June and the first part of July 1992. Not until 18 July was Moldova forced into a ceasefire under pressure from the Russian military.

On 21 July 1992 Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, Republic of Moldova President Mircea Snegur and TMR President Igor Smirnov signed the agreement "On principles for a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova."[52] It approved the withdrawal of the armed forces, the establishment of a security zone and creation of a Joint Control Commission. On 29 July the Russian peacekeeping contingent entered the region. The Transnistrian war resulted in more than 1 000 dead and wounded, and

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[49] Diukarev, *Дубоссары* cit., p.229.
[50] *"Независимая Молдова"*, 22 July 2011, http://www.nm.md/daily/article/2011/07/22/0103.html [Last retrieved on 02.05.2013].
[51] *"14 Гвардейская Общевойсковая Армия"* [14th Guard General Army], http://www.oa-14.narod.ru/poslevoiny-1.htm [Last retrieved on 28.04.2013].
[52] *Соглашение о принципах мирного урегулирования вооруженного конфликта в Приднестровском регионе Республики Молдова* [The agreement "On the principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed conflict in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova],
http://www.peacekeeper.ru/ru/?module=pages&action=view&id=89 [Last retrieved on 28.04.2013].

some 13 000 refugees.[53]

Since July 1992, more than 50 different documents regarding Transdnistria have been produced. The initial position of the West on the status of TMR is written in report № 13 (12 November 1993) by the OSCE mission to Moldova. This report proposes the creation of a special Transnistrian region with autonomy status and that Moldovan (Romanian, de facto) would be the state language with additional official languages in the special region.[54] According to the report, the jurisdiction of Transnistria would include only matters of culture, education, a "Basic Law" that would not contradict the Constitution of Moldova and the right to establish regional socio-political structures.

An agreement on economic sanctions and non-use of military force in mutual relations was signed in 1995.[55] The parties began to develop primary bases for settlement of the conflict. Important definitions like "the common state", "international legal personality", "guarantee system", "economic self-sufficiency", etc., were established. A memorandum "On the Bases for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria" was signed on 8 May 1997, in Moscow.[56] In the history of negotiations on settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, the presence of Russian troops and Russian weaponry on Transdnistrian territory plays a special role. For the Transnistrian leadership the presence of Russian military contingent and Russian peacekeepers was the main guarantee of independence.

An orientation toward Russia and Russian civilizational values and historical traditions was evident in the 1995 constitution of the TMR, which borrowed its fundamental points from the constitution of the Russian Federation, slightly adapting them to the specificities of the local state regime.[57] In 1995, the basics of the Transnistrian state were generally established. The second phase in the history of the region is associated with the formation of political traditions and improvement of interactions in all spheres of public life, particularly among public authorities. The third phase was connected with the adoption of a new version of the Constitution of TMR in

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[53] King, *The Moldovans* cit., p.178.

[54] *Report No. 13 by the CSCE Mission to Moldova*, 13 November 1993, http://www.osce.org/moldova/42307 [Last retrieved on 02.05.2013].

[55] I. Botsan, *Переговорный процесс как откладывание решения* [Negotiation Process as a Postponement of Decision], in D. Matveev (eds.), *Молдова-Приднестровье: общими усилиями к успешному будущему* [Moldova-Transnistria: With Common Effort to Prosperous Future], Chisinau 2009, pp.8-27.

[56] *Memorandum On the Bases for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transdneistria 8 May 1997*, http://www.osce.org/moldova/42309 [Last retrieved on 02.05.2013].

[57] *The Constitution of the Russian Federation*, http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-01.htm [Last retrieved on 06.05.2013].
*The Constitution of the TMR*, http://mfa-pmr.org/index.php?newsid=644 [Last retrieved on 06.05.2013].

2000 and was characterized by the final establishment of a state structure and a relatively well-functioning mechanism of interaction between the bodies of state power, political institutions and civil society.

Although the United States and the European Union joined negotiations on the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict as observers in October 2005, but there had been little progress in solving the region's problems. In 2006 the Transnistrian Supreme Council decided to hold a nationwide referendum, in which two questions were submitted (see Table 1 below). More than 97 % voted for Transnistrian independence and possible inclusion in Russia.[58]

| Table 1[59] | | |
|---|---|---|
| Questions submitted for voting | "For" | "Against" |
| "Do you support the policy for the independence of Transnistria and the subsequent free accession of Transnistria to the Russian Federation?" | 301 332 97,2 % | 5 905 1,9 % |
| "Do you consider possible the denial of independence of TMR with subsequent accession in the Republic of Moldova?" | 10 308 3,3 % | 294 253 94,9 % |

A new period of Transnistrian and Moldovan historiography began with parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova on 5 April 2009. Four competitors passed the electoral threshold: the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (49,48% votes, 60 seats), the Liberal Party (13,13%, 15 seats), the Liberal-Democratic Party of Moldova (13,43%, 15 seats) and the "*Moldova Noastră*" (Our Moldova) Alliance (9,77%, 11 seats).[60] The Communist Party of Moldova, led for eight years by President Vladimir Voronin, won the overall victory in the elections. Despite the fact that the leadership of the country and the international observers, including OSCE, stated that the elections were free and fair and all OSCE and Council of Europe commitments were met[61], the opposition (the Liberal Party, the Liberal-Democratic Party and the "*Moldova Noastră*" Alliance) insisted on a recount of the vote. At a rally on 7 April the opposition Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova claimed that the election results had been falsified.[62] The

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[58] The results were published by TMR Central Election Commission. The number of electors was 310169 or 78,6 %.

[59] A. Volkova, *Референдумы* cit., p.26.

[60] *Results of the April 5, 2009 Parliamentary Elections*, http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/parliamentary/2009/results/ [Last retrieved on 05.05.2013].

[61] *Republic of Moldova Parliamentary Elections 5 April 2009. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report*, http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/37568 [Last retrieved on 04.05.2013].

[62] *"Лента"* [Lenta], 7 April 2010, http://lenta.ru/news/2009/04/07/moldova/ [Last retrieved on 03.05.2013].

demonstration developed into a riot, during which the protesters, under Romanian flags, shouting the slogans "We are Romanians" and armed with rocks and bottles, raided the buildings of Parliament and Presidential administration in Chisinau.[63] On 8 April Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin announced the introduction of a visa regime for Romanian citizens and declared the Romanian Ambassador in Chisinau as a persona non grata.[64]

The April riot did not lead to a change of power in the country. Under the constitution, the president of Moldova is elected by Parliament using secret ballots and requiring a three-fifths majority (61 of 101) of the votes.[65] Two attempts to elect a President had failed, because the opposition boycotted the voting. New parliamentary elections were organized on 29 July. The Communist Party received five percent fewer votes than in the previous election (44,69%, 48 seats[66]), losing its majority in the Parliament. A new government was formed, by the four other parties, the Liberal-Democratic Party of Moldova (16,6%, 18 seats), the Liberal Party (14,7%, 15 seats), the Democratic Party of Moldova (12,5%, 13 seats) and the *"Moldova Noastra (Our Moldova)"* Alliance (7,4%, 7 seats) [67], which *had* created the "Alliance for European integration."
[68]

### Transnistrian Media and Public Discourse since the 1990s

The appeal for revival of Transnsitrian statehood, which frequently appeared in the media, was the main tool for shaping the identity of the people, attempting to persuade them to believe that Transnistria was the last island of the USSR, the guarantor of peace and stability. In the post-war period, numerous works by local authors (Bomeshko, Babilunga, Shornikov) supporting the need for a rebirth of Transnistrian statehood appeared in the region.

The works of Transnistrian authors used language praising and revering statehood, for example: "...our statehood is the result of the creativity of the masses, the result of consolidated efforts of the community, inhabiting the same area, united by the common ideals and aspirations, and

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[63] S. Buntman, *Неоранжевые. Кишинев - апрель 2009* [Not Orange. Chisinau –April 2009], in *"Форум"* [Forum], 231, 2009, p.2.

[64] *"Ольвия Пресс"* [Olvia Press], 08 April 2009, http://www.olvia1.idknet.com/index.php?Option=com_ content&view=article&id=10642:2009-10-15-12-02-51&catid=1:latest-news [Last retrieved on 04.05.2013].

[65] *Constitution of the Republic of Moldova*, http://legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/16261/preview [Last retrieved on 06.05.2013].

[66] O.Senyuva, *Parliamentary elections in Moldova, April and July 2009*, in "Electoral Studies", 2010, 1–6, pp. 190-195.

[67] Ibidem, p.192.

[68] M.Kosienkowski, *The Alliance for European Integration and the Transnistrian conflict settlement*, in "Sprawy Narodowościowe", 38, 2011, pp.23-32.

established their own political forms to protect their natural rights and freedoms. … Transnistrian statehood is, therefore, a necessary tool to protect public interests and civil liberties."[69]

The mass media played an important role in this sphere as well. Local journalists not only produced newspapers and radio broadcasts, but also served as sources of first-hand information for Russian and other foreign media. Transnistrian journalists were able to present the armed conflict to the Russian public, which enthusiastically followed stories of the war, resistance against Moldovan aggression and human tragedies in a struggle for what was predominantly seen as a post-Soviet and pro-Russian struggle. The terrifying details of the war eventually became the long-playing record of ideological and mental confrontation between two regions.[70]

Since 1990 and the liberalization of the press, periodicals in the Republic of Moldova were established primarily with the support of political powers as mouthpieces of political structures. Some did so openly; others did not, resulting in the emergence of newspapers during election campaigns and their disappearance afterwards. Taken together, ideological confrontation by mass media in the Republic of Moldova, the armed conflict and post-conflict syndrome in the public consciousness, international non-recognition, and the economic, political and informational blockade are factors that influenced the formation and development of mass media in Transnistria.

During the Transnistrian conflict, numerous newspapers appeared on both banks of the Dniester River. Both Transnistria and Bessarabia used mass media as a tool to exert influence on the thinking of the population. Slogans recalling the single-party era could be seen in the press: "The President of Moldova has set himself above and beyond the law. His actions must be regarded as a coup d'état for the genocide against the people of the free independent State — the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic."[71] "We need a Common House — a Great State."[72] The positive and superlative characteristics of the Tiraspol regime were publicized as well: "Igor Smirnov is the guarantor of peace and stability and is the authority that does not have a competent opponent."[73]

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[69] *Историко-правовые предпосылки создания приднестровской государственности. Роль и значение Приднестровской Молдавской Республики в мировом политическом процессе* [Historic and Legal Basis for Creating Transdniestrian Statehood. Role and Significance of the Transdniestrian Moldavien Republic in the World Political Process], in *"Дипломатический Вестник Приднестровья"* [Diplomatic Bulletin of Transnistria], 1, 2010, pp.8-13.

[70] V. Tsesliuk, *Информационное Пространство Приднестровья* [Informational Space of Transnistria], http://www.ipp.md/public/files/Proiecte/blacksee/rus/_Tesliuk_-_rus.pdf [Last retrieved on 24.04.2013].

[71] *Заявление Верховного Совета ПМР* [Statement of Supreme Council of TMR], in *"Днестровская Правда"* [Dniester Pravda], 23 June 1992, 141, p.1.

[72] N. Cojocaru, S. Suhan, *The Collective Memory and Identity Construction in Transnistria*, in A. Barbarosie, O. Nantoi (eds.), *Aspects of the Transnistrian Conflict*, Chisinau 2004, pp.138-146.

[73] Ibidem, p.140.

The newspaper *"Pridenstrovje"* [Transnistria] quoted Igor Smirnov after the TMR presidential election of 10 December 2006, in which he got the majority of voices: "These elections proved that democracy here is not drawn, not implanted, it is born in the society. In the referendum the population of Transnistria has chosen its own geo-strategic way to independence and development together with Russia." [74] In addition, an abundance of mobilization verbs was present in the media: "We have not done yet everything we could do together. Let us support each other and win." [75]

The major mechanism for shaping the memories of the Transnistrian conflict in the mass media was based on the "victim-aggressor" relationship. [76] For instance, one of the columns in the *"Dnestrovskaja Pravda"* newspaper was called "Chronicle of aggression." Transnistria considered Bessarabia as an aggressor in this conflict. The media also use multiple negative metaphors describing bordering Bessarabia as the invader: "The barbaric action to seize the city of Bendery has started by order of the president of the Republic of Moldova," [77] "our Transnistrian city of Bendery is a victim of the Romanian national-fascism." [78] In this way the media actively promoted ideological stereotypes on both banks of the Dniester River. The existence of a 'real enemy' image and the social call to destroy it made periodicals active and powerful in the construction of TMR statehood.

The Soviet leadership was acting in the same way, while using the realities of the period of Romanian occupation for strengthening of Romano-phobia in the post-WWII period among the local population. In 2013 it is difficult to determine what percentage of the population of Transnistria retained the collective memory of the events of 1924-1940 and 1941-1944, because the industrial centers of the region became populated by workers who moved to the area in the 1960s. The Transnistrian war of 1992 helped to shape the new image of enemy.

However, Transnistria was not the alone in using the slogans of statehood revival and blaming Romania for all wrongs. This process was mutual, as Moldova appealed to the people for union with Romania and restoration of the historic borders of Great Romania in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and condemning the Transnistrians as rebels.

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[74]"Pridnestrovje", 12.12.2006,
http://www.pridnestroviedaily.net/gazeta/articles/view.aspx?ArticleID=4925   [Last retrieved on 07.07.2012].
[75] Cojocaru, Suhan , *The Collective* cit., p. 140.
[76] Ibidem.
[77] " *Днестровская Правда"* [Dniester Pravda], 23 June 1992,  141, p.1.
[78] Ibidem.

**Building the Economy**

While Bessarabia was under the rule of Romania, the MASSR was an industrial area, where the youth from Russia and Ukraine came for work. It quickly became an industrialized and economically and intellectually developed region of the Soviet Union. Because of considerable material means and human resources, the level of social development saw much growth.[79] During the 1930s, although Bessarabia acquired new roads, bridges, airports, radio stations and telephone exchanges under Romanian public works projects[80], the situation in the region could be described as stagnant. The economic life of the region was negatively affected by the loss of Ukrainian and Russian markets.

The unification of the two different administrative units (Bessarabia and part of the MASSR) into one Republic had a specific goal— to bring Bessarabia up to Soviet standards through the economic potential of Transnistria as soon as possible. There was a considerable contrast between the two regions in 1940. During the interwar period, Transnistria underwent major phases of industrialization, collectivization and the Cultural Revolution with all their positive and negative aspects. A developed industry, agriculture, transport, culture, science and education existed there, and the population enjoyed free education and health care.[81]

Bessarabia at the same time was an underdeveloped outskirt of the Romanian Kingdom. The lack of industry was noticeable there, and agriculture had a feudal character.[82] Many years of assimilation of Bessarabian Moldovans with Romanians resulted in the development of a national consciousness and mentality different from that of the Transnistrian Moldovan people.

After the formation of the Moldavian SSR, overcoming of differences in economic development between the left-bank and the right-bank areas became one of the main objectives of the central party leadership. USSR government aid was directed toward the recovery of inoperative enterprises and the development of industry in the liberated territory.

During the Second World War, the MSSR was occupied by the German army, which caused great losses to the economy of the republic. As a result of the occupation, industry, transport and communications were significantly damaged. Food factories, wineries and distilleries built in the

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[79] *Приднестровье как камень преткновения для евроинтеграции* [Pridnestrovie as a Stumbling Block for the European Integration], in *"Дипломатический Вестник Приднестровья"* [Diplomatic Bulletin of Transnistria] January, 1 (3), 2011, pp. 94-96.
[80] King, *The Moldovans* cit., p.41.
[81] Grosul, *История* cit., p.193.
[82] Ibidem.

pre-war years were completely destroyed and their equipment was taken to Romania and Germany.[83]

During the Soviet era, Transnistria was an important region for the party leadership. It became especially significant in 1950 when Leonid Brezhnev, on the recommendation of Nikita Khrushchev, held the post of first secretary of the Central Committee of the MSSR Communist Party. Transnistria became a kind of training ground for future general secretaries of the Communist party.[84] Brezhnev's group of supporters in the MSSR subsequently became his colleagues in Moscow. From 1948 to 1956 Konstantin Chernenko was head of the propaganda department of the Communist Party of Moldova, where in the early 1950s, he met Brezhnev. From that moment, his career was inseparably linked with the career of Brezhnev. In 1950, Brezhnev was supposed to wipe out the local Bessarabian opposition to the Party.[85] In addition, he was in charge of the collectivization of agriculture, liquidating the private sector and the rich peasants.

The Brezhnev period was characterized by an increasing investment in industry and new industries and large enterprises soon appeared in the region. The industrial units were concentrated generally in Transnistria: around Tiraspol and Bender, Ribnita, Dubăsari, and other cities. In 1959, the number of Transnistrian enterprises had reached 99. The number of people employed at these enterprises in the 1950s increased 2,4 times, and gross production 3,5 times.[86]

The high industrial potential of the Transnistrian region was recognized in the 1950s. Primarily, heavy industry enterprises, governed by the ministries directly from Moscow rather than locally in Chisinau, were located there. The plant *"Pribor"* was established in 1971 in Bender as a branch of the Moscow machine-building plant *"Salyut"*. The plant was built as a military enterprise to produce ship radar systems, and its activity was classifies as secret.[87] This branch later became completely separate from Moscow's *"Salyut."* Goods for national consumption as well as military products were produced at the plant. After the collapse of the Soviet Union production volume sharply declined. To avoid a crisis production of equipment for the mechanical engineering industry and other consumer goods was started.

Many enterprises and associations of Transnistria had all-USSR importance and produced unique

[83] Grosul, *История* cit., p.245.
[84] King, *The Moldovans* cit., p.98.
[85] Brezianu, Spânu, *The A to Z* cit., p.12.
[86] Grosul, *История* cit., p.289.
[87] *Промышленность Приднестровья. Завод "Прибор"* [Industry of Transnistria. The Plant "Pribor"] http://novostipmr.livejournal.com/20799.html [Last retrieved on 08.04.2013].

goods. For instance, Tiraspol casting machine plant *"LITMASH,"* named after S.M. Kirov, was the main enterprise producing press molding equipment, automatic molding machinery and footwear fabrication lines.[88] Its products were exported to more than 40 countries around the world.[89]

In the period 1961-1990 new industries were created and developed in the MSSR, including electrical engineering, instrument making, energy and metallurgical, production of hydraulic pumps, tractors, agricultural machines, and equipment for food and light industry. The all-Union model of production, in which raw materials were imported from and finished products exported to the other republics, was the main feature of construction of new enterprises.

The region produced significant quantities of electricity and exported it to Romania, Bulgaria and other countries. The Kuchurgan and Dubossary power stations were the main enterprises in the energy sector. The construction of the Kuchurgan hydroelectric power station (*Moldavskaya GRES)* began in 1961 in Dnestrovsc, Transnistria and was brought into operation in 1964. With its start of operation the total capacity of power plants increased by more than six times, and electricity production by nine times compared with 1958.[90] The association of the Moldovan energy system solved the power problem for the whole MSSR.

Development projects in industrial zones on the outskirts of cities were widely implemented in the post-war period in the Soviet Union. Residents were to be accommodated in satellite-cities of the new enterprises that would become the economic core for development of the suburbs, which would lessen environmental and transport problems in cities, while maintaining the light and food industries and the service sector. The people of Transnistria experienced the realization of the main goals of the Communist party. At the XXII congress of the CPSU it was announced: "In the next decade (1961-1970) … the economic welfare, and cultural and technical level of all workers will grow considerably; everyone will be provided with material prosperity; generally, the needs of the Soviet people for comfortable dwellings will be satisfied; hard physical labor will disappear; the Soviet Union will become the country with the shortest working day." [91] This was not the unsubstantiated promise of the leadership. In Transnistria this policy was truly implemented.

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[88] Litmash official website, http://www.litmash.com/eng/goals_and_objectives.html [Last retrieved on 09.04.2013].
[89] Grosul, *История* cit., p.266.
[90] Grosul, *История* cit., p.256.
[91] *Материалы XXII съезда КПСС* [The Materials of XXII Congress of CPSU], Moscow 1961.

In determining the main goals of building Communist society, the party was guided by Lenin's slogan: "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country."[92] The Dubossary hydroelectric power plant was the beginning of the big electrification of Moldova. It went into operation in 1954 and was the first of its kind on the Dniester River. Its construction is connected with the revival of the city. The 1950s to the 1970s was a period of construction of new neighborhoods, streets, industrial enterprises, kindergartens, schools, and medical, cultural and sports institutions.

Rapid industrial development changed the look of the cities. The urban territory widened. In this way the center of Transnistria, Tiraspol, grew. For instance, the Kirovsky district, the northernmost part of Tiraspol, is a relatively new area. It was built in the 1950s and 1960s. The area is associated with industry, because there are many large enterprises of Tiraspol. Tiraspol was dynamically developing until the late 1980s. High rates of industrial production, and construction of new infrastructure promoted the influx of population, both from Moldova and from Russia and Ukraine.

The creation of the Moldavian GRES was accompanied by the simultaneous construction of Dnestrovsc. The town was founded in 1961. The base of the power station was built first, and one year later a series of multi-story housing blocks, shops, a hair salon, and other everyday life services opened. In addition, schools and a "House of Culture" appeared in the town.

Alhough the new districts were not always built according to technical norms and safety standards, for the inhabitants of Transnistria, they meant something special: to get a job, to receive an apartment from the state, to work at an enterprise highly important at the all-Union level. It is clear to see that, in Transnistria, the formulated goals of the party were embodied in a real life.

The period of from the 1950s to the 1980s in the MSSR was characterized by strong positive demographic trends. The population grew quickly due to a high birth rate and relatively low mortality rate and the exceptionally large positive migratory balance that prevailed in the region. The natural increase in the Moldavian SSR was higher than in the three Baltic republics combined. Favorable weather conditions, the tolerant multinational composition of the population, an advantageous geographical position, and a high level of development within the economic complex of the USSR all influenced the attractiveness of migration during the pre-conflict period.

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[92] Ibidem, p.368.

In the late 1980s Transnistria was an urbanized and highly industrialized region. Well-developed industry and agriculture were the basis of its economy. Transnistria, with a population composed of 0,25% from the USSR and 17% from the MSSR, produced approximately 1% of the gross domestic product of the USSR (including 2% of agricultural production) and about 35% of the gross national product of the MSSR (including 90% of electricity, 56% of consumer goods, and one-third of agricultural products).[93] The formation of the industrial structure of the Transnistrian economy was determined by environmental conditions (climate, fertile soil), favorable for the development of agriculture.

The regional advantages of Transnistria were evident: transport accessibility (railway, highways and the Dniester River), the availability of water resources, low seismic activity, proximity to the ports of Odessa and Donetsk and to the Dnieper region, which was rich in metal and coal. Some 100 enterprises of machine-building, light industry, building materials, furniture, and microbiological, etc., were located in the Transnistrian part of the MSSR.[94] However, the region lacked fuel, energy and raw material resources. Of minerals important for industry, only limestone, clay and sand were present.

Such economic indicators and the special status of Transnistria (i.e., partly autonomous in the context of the USSR) could be seen as influencing attitudes in a future Pridnestrovian Republic regarding nationalism and the influence of the Moldovan Central Committee. Subsidized from Moscow during the Soviet years, Transnistria is still tied to Russia, despite the collapse of the USSR. Many Transnistrian enterprises partly or completely belong to Russian owners. In 2003 the plant *"Pribor"* was purchased by the Moscow machine-building production enterprise *"Salyut."* This sale led to the appearance of the first Russian Federation state property in the territory of Transnistria.[95] In 2005 the Kuchurgan power station was privatized and then became part of the Russian group Inter RAOUES.[96] Since 2009 *Moldavskaya GRES* has been the main supplier of electricity to Moldova. We can say that continuity and the orderly operation of business are present in the region.

Today Moldova remains one of the poorest countries in Europe, with an economy critically

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[93] Grosul, *История* cit., p.327.
[94] *Эволюция экономики Приднестровья: критическая оценка* [Evolution of Transnistrian Economy: Critical Assesment], http://www.cisr-md.org/pdf/0111%20Transnistria_Report_En_Final%20RUS.pdf [Last retrieved on 05.04.2013].
[95] Official website of Bender, http://bendery.su/Ekonomika/pribor.html [Last retrieved on 09.04.2013].
[96] INTER RAO official website, http://www.interrao.ru/en/company/structure/[Last retrieved on 09.04.2013].

dependent on agricultural exports.[97] This situation seems unusual, when taking into account the level of economic development of Moldova during the Soviet period. However, we should be cautious with such statistics. According to the GDP per capita in 1973 Moldova was ranked approximately in the middle of the Soviet republics, beneath Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and the Baltic republics.[98] Moldova is one of the few post-Soviet countries where agriculture plays the most important role in the economic sector.[99]

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Transnistria and Bessarabia have had separate economic policies and development. From 1990 to 1999 the Bessarabian part of Moldova was in crisis. During this period, GDP decreased almost three times.[100] Moldova was affected by the monetary crisis in Russia in 1998. During 2000, the economy registered a small growth of approximately 2%, the first time since the reforms began in 1997. In 2006 unfavorable climatic conditions, a ban on the export of certain goods to the Russian Federation, difficulties associated with access to other export markets, a rise in prices for energy resources imported from Russia, and a significant increase in energy prices on world markets negatively affected economic development in Moldova.

By the beginning of the 1990s Transnistria, in comparison with other parts of the Soviet Union, had a good transportation system that included highways and railways and navigation on the Dniester River.[101] However, after its separation from Moldova and the collapse of Soviet Union the region's situation changed for the worse. Sea access was lost, since the port of Odessa belonged to Ukraine. Railway transport became complicated because Transnistrian borders are not recognized as such internationally. An "economic border" with 30 customs posts was established under an agreement between Moldova and Transnistria. Goods crossing the border from the TMR are taxed as if they were imported goods from Russia.[102]

Freight and passenger railway traffic via Transnistria stopped on 4 March 2006 after Moldavian and Ukrainian authorities introduced new rules for the passage of goods across the Moldovan-

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[97] *Republic of Moldova, Facts and figures*, http://www.euro.who.int/en/where-we-work/member-states/republic-of-moldova/facts-and-figures [Last retrieved on 09.04.2013].

[98] A. Libman, *Институты, границы и экономическое развитие. Опыт Молдовы* [Institutes, Frontiers and Eonomic Development. Experience of Moldova], in A. Pogorelsky (ed.), *Научные тетради Института восточной Европы* [Scientific Notebooks of the Eastern Europe Institute],Vol. II, Moscow 2009, pp.206-239.

[99] Ibidem, p.209.

[100] *Экономика* [Economy], http://www.moldova.md/ru/economie/ [Last retrieved on 09.04.2013].

[101] Grosul, *История* cit., p.286.

[102] *Приднестровский конфликт: прошлое и настоящее* [Transnistrian Conflict; Past and Future], in *"Информационно-аналитический бюллетень"* [Informational-Analytical Bulletin], 9, 2000, http://zatulin.ru/institute/sbornik/009/00.shtml [Last retrieved on 04.05.2013].

Ukrainian border, which required that Transnistrian goods have Moldovan customs clearance. These border restrictions were viewed in Tiraspol as an economic blockade, and the leadership responded by blocking railway traffic through the region. Because of this, the Republic of Moldova redirected all passenger and freight trains from the CIS through northern Moldova rather than through Transnistria. As a result, the length of the trip increased by 500 km. The cost of transporting goods increased significantly while the volume of freight traffic declined because the capacity of the railway in northern Moldavian is less than half that of Transnistria.

The situation with air transport is complicated as well. Transnistria has an airport located 1 km from Tiraspol. Until 1989 it was used as a military airfield by the Soviet Air Force. Conversion of the Tiraspol airfield into a passenger airport began in 1991 but stopped soon due to lack of funding and the unsettled political status of Transnistria, which did not allow the placement of customs and border controls of the Republic of Moldova at the Tiraspol airport, making it impossible to maintain international air service. Transnistrian citizens can use only the airports in Bessarabia, which are located in Chisinau and Bălți.

Beginning in the mid-1990s Transnistria was perceived by Moldova, and partly by international organizations, as a source and transit zone for the black economy. In 2001, when Moldova joined World Trade Organization, new customs procedures at the Moldovan border were introduced, and the situation exploded.[103] The hidden sector of the Transnistrian economy uses the geo-economic advantages of the region to avoid paying customs duties and reap profits from the transit and re-export of goods imported to the region (oil, alcohol, cigarettes, food, pharmaceutics, etc.). The estimated scale of this sector is around 50 % of the official GDP.[104]

In this context it is worth mentioning one of the largest private companies of Transnistria, "Sheriff." "Sheriff" was established in 1993. In the beginning trade was its main activity. Over the years "Sheriff" has developed into one of the largest companies in Transnistria. Today, the company employs 3 000 people, and about 13 000 people are employed by the holding company, which includes "Sheriff." Since 1996 "Sheriff" supermarkets have opened and the "Sheriff" sports club was founded in 1997. The "Sheriff" football team has won multiple championships in Moldova, including the Moldova and Commonwealth Cups.[105]

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[103] *Эволюция экономики* cit., p.1.
[104] *Эволюция экономики* cit., p.10.
[105] Commonwealth Cup is a regional football tournament for youth teams of the former Soviet Union under the aegis of the FIFA.

In August 1997, the company launched a multichannel television network throughout Transnistria. "Sheriff" operates its own construction company. In June 1998 the first gas "Sheriff" station began operations. Since then, there has been a gradual expansion of the network, and the number of stations in the Transnistrian region has reached 20. In July 2000, an oil products reservoir was built and in February 2003, after privatization and reconstruction, the Tiraspol petroleum storage depot began operations. In October 2005, the Rybnitsk petroleum storage depot was privatized and reconstructed.

"Sheriff" owns the *"Delo"* publishing house (1999) and  the "IDC" company, which holds a monopoly on fixed-line and mobile telephone connections in Transnistria. It is also one of the biggest internet providers in Transnistria. In July 2002, a deluxe football arena that is highly regarded by FIFA, opened. It includes eight training fields, an indoor football field, a residential complex for the "Sheriff" players, a five-star hotel, and a youth football training school.

In 2005 "Sheriff" privatized the Tiraspol bakery plant. That same year, the first lite salon of gaming machines was opened in Tiraspol.[106] The Tiraspol wine and cognac distillery "KVINT" was privatized in 2006. There were those who believed that "Sheriff" profited from close relations to the state, particularly with the president's family,[107] since Vladimir Smirnov, the son of President Igor Smirnov, was chairman of the Republican Customs Committee.[108] However, after the change of power in Transnistria in December 2011, the new president, Yevgeny Shevchuk, immediately proclaimed the policy on distraction the monopolistic system, clearly implying on "Sheriff" company.

Today, the situation in the Transnistria remains complicated, especially considering the fact that the world economic crisis negatively affected the industrial complex of the region. In 2008 the output of main industrial goods was approximately 30% compared to 1990. Growth could be seen only in the iron industry (33%).[109]

Since 2007 Russia has provided financial aid to Transnistria. According to monthly reports on the

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[106] *"Шериф"* [Sheriff], http://newspmr.com/business/sherif [Last retrieved on 11.04.2013].

[107] M. Bobick, *There's a new "Sheriff" in Town: Corruption and Captive Markets in Transnistria*, The 11th Annual International Young Researchers Conference, 29-31 March 2012, pp.1-21.

[108] *Владимир Игоревич Смирнов* [Vladimir Igorevich Smirnov], http://news.yandex.ru/people/smirnov_vladimir_10.html [Last retrieved on 13.04.2013].

[109] *The Decree of the Supreme Council of TMR at April 29, 2010 Nr. 30 "On approval the concept of the industrial policy of the Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic for 2010-2014",* http://www.justice.idknet.com/web.nsf/952ef148a704e588c22574d5002acf1b/52582737ed91c7a3c225773e0022 04cf!OpenDocument&ExpandSection=1.2.1 [Last retrieved on 15.03.2012].

website of the TMR Ministry of Finance, humanitarian aid from the Russian Federation is spent on food for students and supplementary pensions, among other things.[110] It is not surprising that Transnistrian authorities focus on Russia. A certain continuity of relying on money from the center, as was the case during Soviet times, can be seen in the region today. In July 2010, Russia stopped transferring money, doubting the transparency of the distribution of humanitarian funds, but in March 2011 the financial support was resumed.[111]

A decline can be seen in the demographics of the region. The "frozen conflict" between Moldova and Transnistria has a negative impact on the socio-economic and geopolitical situation of the region. A complicated demographic situation is a side effect of conflict. The military phase of the conflict caused a large exodus of the civilian population. Some 32,2 thousand people left Transnistria in 1992, and the region continued to lose 17 000 to 20 000 people annually until the end of 1990s.[112] As of 2011, the population of Transnistria was 513 400[113], a decline to 1924 levels.[114]

This brief analysis of economic development in both regions brings us to several conclusions. Transnistria and Bessarabia had different levels of development during the pre-Soviet and Soviet periods. Transnistria was more developed, but this economic situation changed in 1990s. The older generation feels nostalgia for the soviet past. They live in Transnistria, but they do not respect their political leaders, because of low living standards in the region. The younger generation, facing low employment prospects, is leaving Transnistria for bigger salaries and a better life. The Soviet Red star and the star of "Sheriff" are both symbols of Transnistria today. The first symbol is taken from the USSR and signifies the high industrial potential of the Soviet years. The second symbolizes the business model of the West, the European version of the future of the region. Despite a slight rise in economic indexes, the Transnistrian economy stays at the level of the early 1990s and is not growing. With the idea that Transnistria is a last stronghold of USSR, it is hard for the people to be loyal to their government and share the common values of the state, because things were different under the Soviet rule.

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[110] *Отчеты министерства* [Ministry Reports], http://www.minfin-pmr.org/index.php/otchety-ministerstva [Last retrieved on 10.04.2013].
[111] *"Коммерсантъ"* [Businessman], http://www.kommersant.md/node/6782 [Last retrieved on 14.04.2013].
[112] V. Fomenko, *Демографическая ситуация в Приднестровье в постконфликтный период [*Demographic Situation in Transnistria in post-Conflict Period], in D. Matveev (eds.), *Молдова-Приднестровье:* cit., p.86.
[113] *Статистический ежегодник 2012* cit., p.19.
[114] Fomenko, *Демографическая* cit., p.85.

## II. The Culture of the conflict

### The Language of Nation and State

"Ethnic identity generally operates as a way to gain access to, or be alienated from, some economic, political or cultural resources. Ethnicity is linked to cultural identity, because in order to categorize people, one must often refer to some of their cultural, linguistic or religious specificities." [115] Miroslav Hroch, a leading historian of national movements, states that national existence depends on "development or improvement of national culture based on local language, and the demand for its usage in education, administration and economic life." [116] Transnistria does not have its own language; the region uses Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian as official languages. If language is one of the most important indications and determiners of ethnos [117], is it even possible to talk about Transnistrian ethnos and Transnistrian identity? This chapter analyzes the cultural aspects of the Transnistrian conflict and the influence of culture and its constituent parts on the formation of the identity in that region.

Communties use language that expresses the ideas, values, and attitudes of their members. Language is, in most nations and national movements, a fundamental element of ethnic identity, a major indicator of belonging to a certain ethnic group and crucial marker of the culture. John E. Joseph, a leading scholar of contemporary applied linguistics, points to the central importance of the language–identity nexus. [118] Language can go beyond its communicative function and become a symbol of ethnic identity. The importance of language is magnified by the fact that it is used to sustain other ethnic experiences; parties, clothing, etc., together with the sense of community, are expressed through language. [119]

The number of conflicts over language issues is growing. "With 6,700 languages in the world, by some scholars' count, and only 225 "nation-states"…complex webs of resistance, dominance, and cooperation among language groups grow." [120] There are important similarities among the

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[115] L.-J. Dorais, *Language, Culture and Identity: Some Inuit Examples* in "Canadian Journal of Native Studies" 1995, 15, pp.294-295.

[116] M. Hroch, *National Self-Determination from a Historical Perspective*, in "Canadian Slavonic Papers", Vol. 37, No. 3/4, *1995,* pp. 283-299.

[117] V. Stati, *Языки моей страны* [The Languages of my Country], in "*Молдово-Приднестровский регион*" [Moldovan-Transnistrian Region], 1, 2010, pp.62-66.

[118] J. Joseph, *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious*, New York 2004, p.12.

[119] C. Lapresta, A. Huguet, *A model of relationship between collective identity and language in pluricultural and plurilingual settings*, in "International Journal of Intercultural Relations", 32, 2008, pp. 260–281.

[120] N. Lake, *"Language Wars"*, in "Harward Magazine", March-April 2002, http://harvardmagazine.com/2002/03/language-wars.html [Last retrieved on 23.04.2012].

conflicts defined by language. The crucial point is usually whether the language should be obligatory for the citizens of a nation or state. This issue defines conflicts on the status of the language in the national and state community — a language is supported by some groups and rejected by others.

The language issues were especially important in the Soviet Union since its very beginnings. In the early 1920s, state policy was to involve the local population in the state administration. Originally, attempts were made in many regions to accomplish work at the republican and local levels using only national languages. It was assumed that the Russian-speaking population of the Soviet republics would learn the local languages, and that the party-State officials, in particular, would do so it as soon as possible. In fact, that period is known for its principle of multilingualism. For example, in Ukraine during the 1920s books were published in eleven languages and periodicals in eight languages (Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish, Polish, German, Greek, Bulgarian, Tatar). [121]

However, at the beginning of the 1930s this policy changed. At the XVI Congress of the CPSU in 1930, Stalin announced new national policy goals: "The prosperity of the cultures, national in form and socialist in content, under the proletarian dictatorship in one state for merging them into single common socialist (in form and in content) culture with a common language, where the proletariat will win around the world." [122] It profoundly changed the situation in Soviet Union. Instead of the previous multilingual approach to building socialism, Stalin required a strong unification, and introduced the practice of ruthless suppression of non-Russian languages and nations. The Constitution of 1936 (the so-called 'Stalin Constitution'), like the previous one guaranteed the equality of all peoples and languages on paper, and the right for education in their native languages.[123] However, this right was in fact infringed.[124]

In the 1930s, MASSR language policy reflected the domestic competition between the different national groups — Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians, etc. — while remaining subordinate to central Union policies. There were two approaches of solving the region's language problem: the "Moldovenist" one, which supported separation from Romanian influence, and the "Romanists,"

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[121] V. Belikov, L.Krysin, *Социологистика* [Sociologic], Moscow 2001.
[122] J. Stalin, *Сочинения* [Sochinenija], Vol.12, Moscow 1949.
[123] Art.121, 143, 40, 110 of the Constitution of USSR 1936,
http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/cnst1936.htm  [Last retrieved on 07.03.2013].
[124] Belikov, *Социологистика* cit., p.393.

who supported a convergence of the Moldavian and Romanian language.[125] Originally the trend was toward the Moldovenist approach. They argued that the Romanian language contained many French words that people were unable to understand. The Cyrillic alphabet was used in schools and in the media. In addition, linguist Leonid Madan had created a new literary language based on the Moldovan dialects of Transnistria and Bessarabia, with borrowings from the Russian language and the addition of his own neologisms.[126]

In the early 1930s, shortly before the introduction of the Soviet Union's strong Russification policy, Soviet authorities began a campaign for the latinization of the alphabets of minorities of the USSR. This campaign was based on the theories of Soviet linguist Nikolai Marr, who advocated the development of a single world language — the language of the classless society that would emerge after the world revolution.[127] In 1932, the Central Committee of the Communist Party ordered the MASSR to convert the Moldovan language to the latin alphabet. In part, this decision was based on the assumption that Soviet power would spread to Romania. By 1937, the attitude regarding the Latin alphabet in the MASSR had changed profoundly. The new policy was based on the trend toward cultural unification of the Soviet Union, which included the project of Russification of non-Russian nations. In 1938 the Moldovan regional authorities made the decision to switch the Moldovan language from the Latin to the Cyrillic alphabet. The Central Committee Decree on "Compulsory study of the Russian language in the schools of the national republics and regions" in 1938 became an important step in Stalin's Russification policy. According to this decree, the teaching of Russian language in the schools of the RSFSR should begin in the first grade, and in the other Soviet republics in the second or third. [128] It was accompanied by changing the native alphabets in the republics to the Cyrillic one. In the newly created Moldavian SSR (1940), which consisted of Bessarabia and part of the Autonomous Moldavian SSR, this process was followed by a mass migration of ethnic Russians to the region in order to consolidate the use of the Russian language.[129]

The value of the Russian language increased considerably during the Second World War, when soldiers from different Soviet republics fought together in a single army with a single language.

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[125] Barbarosie, Nantoi, *Интеграция* cit., p.148.

[126] Ibidem.

[127] N. Marr, *Основные вопросы языкознания* [Fundamental Questions of Linguistics], Vol.2, Leningrad 1936.

[128] *Постановление СНК СССР, ЦК ВКП(б) от 13.03.1938 N 324 "Об обязательном изучении русского языка в школах национальных республик и областей"* [Decree "On compulsory study of the Russian language in schools in the national republics and regions"], http://archive.nbuv.gov.ua/portal/soc_gum/Istst/2010_3/R1/publikacii.pdf [Last retrieved on 03.05.2013].

[129] L. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*, Kluwer Academic Publishers 2003.

After the WWII Russian language crossed the borders of the state and became one of the official languages of the Organization of United Nations.

Russification began under Stalin, and it continued to be implemented during Nikita Khrushchev's rule, especially with educational reforms in the late 1950s. The rising influence of Russian language continued into the Brezhnev era (1964-1982). Use of the Russian language spread to all spheres of everyday life, especially to the administrative one. One of the goals was the establishment of a "Soviet people" [*sovetskii narod*]. At the Party Congress in 1971, Brezhnev formulated his view of a "new human community sharing a common territory, state, economic system, culture, the goal of building communism and a common language." [130] This policy was intended to overshadow the national diversity of the country and to create one nation, in social, political and even cultural terms. However, the USSR did not implement a process of complete Russification. Party leaders were not interested in the fate of the other republican languages, so the level of their support depended on the local authorities [131], but still under the strong control from the Union-center.

The situation changed profoundly after 1986, the era of perestroika. As internal ideological struggle escalated in the USSR, contradictory statements from officially-conservative to anti-Soviet and nationalistic appeared in the media. Attitudes toward the political regime, social values, and religion began changing.

One of the components of perestroika was the policy of reinstatement and development of the national cultures and languages of the people of the Soviet republics. Great attention was paid to the languages issue: "The most important principle of our multi-ethnic state is the free development and equal use of the USSR languages for all citizens… It is important to show more concern about the functioning of national languages in different spheres of public, civic and cultural life; to encourage learning languages, which are named after the republic's name…" [132] This policy was followed by the rise of nationalist movements in the Soviet republics. [133] In the Moldavian SSR Gorbachev's statement and loosening of central governmental control can be seen as one of the impetuses for local intellectuals and party leadership to revive the Moldavian language, and giving it official status in the territory of the republic.

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[130] Grenoble, *Language* cit., p.59.
[131] Belikov, *Социологистика* cit., p.404.
[132] *Материалы* XIX *Всесоюзной конференции КПСС* [The Materials of XIX All Union Conference of CPSU], Moscow 1988.
[133] R. Strayer, *Decolonization, Democratization, and Communist Reform: The Soviet Collapse in Comparative Perspective*, in "Journal of World History", 2, 2001, pp.375-406.

As of 1987, a pro-Romanian nationalistic attitude and calls for unification with Romania were significantly rising in the MSSR. At the meeting of the Writers Union of Moldova in 1987 the union's leadership passed to representatives of the Democratic Movement of Moldova [*Mişcarea Democratică din Moldova*] [134], whose purpose was to support the Party in implementing perestroika[135]. The issue of the revival of the Moldavian language and its conversion into Latin was raised at the meeting.

The 19th all-USSR Conference of the Communist Party took place in Moscow from 28 June-1 July 1988. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized reform of the political system: "The Party Conference considers that in the context of the restructuring of the political system we should implement arrangements for further development and strengthening of the Soviet Federation based on democratic principles. First and foremost it is the extension of powers of the Union Republics and autonomous entities through the distribution of authority of USSR and the Soviet republics, decentralization; through the transfer of some management functions to the provincial offices; through increasing of autonomy and responsibility in the sphere of economic, social and cultural development…"[136] This speech, which, in effect, announced the transition from one political system to another, led to crucial changes in Soviet society. The system became "politically pluralistic and different from the Communist" one. [137] From the "reform of the system" the Soviet Union moved to "systematic transformation." [138]

This was the starting point for democratic change, i.e., the policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*. This included a comprehensive enrichment of human rights, increasing of the social activity of the Soviet people[139], economic reforms, reconstruction of the political system, humanistic revival and new political thinking. [140] In Moldova, the initiative groups of the democratic movement were demanding reforms in the context of perestroika. Primarily, they called for the assignment of ethnic Moldovans to higher positions in government and promoted the idea of giving Moldovan the status as a of state language. In 1989 the democratic movement converted itself to the Popular Front, which brought together cultural, student and professional associations, and some parts of

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[134] National-democratic movement in Moldova in 1987-1989, which had a goal to recognize of Romanian as the official language of MSSSR and to replace Cyrillic script with Latin one.
[135] King, *The Moldovans* cit., p.186.
[136] *Материалы* XIX *Всесоюзной* cit., p.146.
[137] A. Brown, *Seven Years that Changed the World,* Oxford University Press 2009, p.202
[138] Ibidem, p.212.
[139] *XIX Всесоюзная конференция Коммунистической партии Советского Союза* [XIX All Union Conference of CPSU], Vol.1., Moscow 1988, p.49.
[140] Ibidem, p.37.

the administrative and party elite.[141] It advocated restoring the primacy of the Romanian language written in the Latin alphabet.[142]

In March 1989, at the thirteenth session of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR, the law "On the functioning of Languages in the Territory of the Moldavian SSR" was passed. According to that law the Moldavian language, based on Latin script instead of Cyrillic one, became the official language of the republic: "The Moldavian language is to be used in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and performs the function of the language of inter-ethnic communication."[143] The Russian language, as well as the minority languages of the Republic, were declared as a secondary languages for inter-ethnic communication. Under this document, Moldavian became the working language and the official language of record-keeping in state government bodies and non-government organizations, with translation to Russian language also allowed.[144]

The Parliament decree "On the enactment of the law of the Moldavian SSR on the return to the Latin alphabet" (1989) described the transition to the new alphabet. It was to be accomplished within two periods:

1) 1989-1993: re-equipment of service industries and print–media for the publication of newspapers, magazines and other materials in the Latin alphabet; conversion of the educational system to the Latin alphabet; training and retraining teachers and professors in the Latin alphabet, issuing official documents, textbooks, teaching and learning materials for general education, vocational schools, secondary specialized and higher education, the use of the Latin alphabet in visual information;

2) 1994-1995: completion of transliteration of Moldavian language to the Latin alphabet in political, economic, social and cultural life including legal procedures, financial records, activities of state government bodies and enterprises, and issuing new identity cards.[145]

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[141] I. Munteanu, *Political Parties Legislation in Moldova: Review and Recommendations for Reform*, Viitorul and OSCE/ODIHR 2010.
[142] M. Chodakiewicz, *Intermarium: The Land between the Black and Baltic Seas*, Transaction Publishers 2012.
[143] The Law "On the Functioning cit.
[144] Ibidem.
**[145]** *Parliament decree № 3463 (31.08.1989) 'On the enactment of the law of the Moldovan SSR "On the return to Latin script",*
http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=308865&lang=2 [Last retrieved on 25.04.2012]

It is worth of mentioning that Moldavian, not Romanian, was named the state language, but in the preamble to the law the reality of the Moldovan-Romanian linguistic identity is evident[146]. It was also declared in the law "On return of Moldavian language to the Latin alphabet" that "the transliteration of the Moldavian language — Romanic in its origin and structure — to the Latin alphabet is based on more accurate phonetics and grammar, and helps to eliminate errors in the language, improve the linguistic culture of the Moldovan people, and improve the role of the scientific, ethical, cultural, psychological, pedagogical and social factors in the development of the Moldavian language."[147] Such a statement about the identity of two languages seems quite politicized in a pro-Romanian direction. This law was a good example of the existing situation in Moldova at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. There were two opinions on the origin of the language in Moldova. One group stressed the Romanian origin of the language since the 19th century creation of a unified Romania. The other group emphasized the 14th century origin of a Moldovan language based on the Cyrillic alphabet.[148] This group asserted that there were two independent states on the territory of modern Romania and Moldova in 14th century: Wallachia [*Ţara Românească,* 1330] and Moldavia (1359). The slavonic language was the language of government administration and of the Orthodox Church in Moldavia and Wallachia, explains the existence of a long tradition of writing Romanian texts in the Cyrillic alphabet. The use of the Latin alphabet is related to the spread of Calvinism and Lutheranism in the Romanian lands, including Moldavia, during the 16th century. The Orthodox church opposed this, so the use of the Latin alphabet did not become established until the 19th century.[149] Jakov Ghinkulof, philologist and dragoman, Romanian by birth, says that the Slavic letters were brought into Moldavian-Wallachian language in 15th century.[150]

It is important to mention that the voivodes[151] of the initial period of Moldavian history were Russians, and the Russian (Slavonic) language was the official language of the Moldavian and Wallachian principalities until the beginning of the 18th century.[152] Moldavia was a bilingual state in its origin, and this situation tradition still prevails. The book "Slavonic-Moldavian chronicles of XV-XVI centuries," composed and edited by scholars of the Soviet Academy of Sciences,

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[146] *The Law "On the Functioning* cit.
[147] *Parliament law № 3462 "On return of Moldovan language to the Latin script"*, http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=2&id=313124 [Last retrieved on 25.04.2012].
[148] V. Merkulov, *Русско-молдавские связи с древности до наших дней* [Russian- Moldovan relations from antiquity to nowadays], in "*Русин*" [Rusin], 2, 2006, pp.105-110.
[149] L. Luht, B. Narumov, *Румынский язык* [Romanian Language], Moscow 2001.
[150] Y. Ghinkulov, *Начертание правил Валахо-Молдавской грамматики* [Tracing of Rules of Walachia-Moldovan Grammar], Saint Petersburg 1840.
[151] A *domn* (lord), which was the supreme administrative leader.
[152] Merkulov, *Русско-молдавские* cit., p.106.

includes ten Moldavian chronicles in the Slavic language.[153]

Even today's Moldavian authorities share this idea and base their claims on the predominance of the Cyrillic alphabet and Russian language in the area. In a speech at the opening of the "Day of Slavonic culture and writing system" in Moldova in 2008, Moldavian President Vladimir Voronin said: "The Cyrillic alphabet is the first alphabet of the Moldavian people. Book culture, church services, secular documentation and correspondence over the centuries were developed in Moldavia in the Slavic language and in Cyrillic script, and later in Moldavian language, but then again in Cyrillic alphabet." [154] However, since this is the opinion of Moldovan elites on this idea it cannot be considered as objective truth.

Linguists are still arguing about whether the Moldovan language is a separate language from Romanian or a dialect. In the late 1980s "The Interdepartmental Commission for the Study of the History and Problems of the Development of Moldova" was created in the MSSR. This new body for researching the language question and making recommendations issued guidelines addressing the relations between the Romanian and Moldovan languages in this way: "There is no doubt that Moldovan and Romanian are languages of the same Romance group. But the recognition of their commonality, the identity (of Moldovan) with other languages from the same Romanic group, cannot serve as a real reason for renouncing one in favor of the other." [155] It also stated that "the Cyrillic alphabet had served the Moldovan people for ages and corresponded exactly to the phonetic structure of Moldovan." [156] However, the Moldavian authorities ignored did not react on this document and continued its pro-Romanian policy.

Both groups used history to support their ideas. The group supporting the Romanian origin of the Moldovan language dominated the party leadership at the end of the 1980s, and laws adopted by the authorities at that time were formulated under the strong influence of visions of Moldovan national unity. The Popular Front of Moldova, the successor to the Democratic Movement of Moldova, supported independence, which brought together the ethnic Romanians. It was the main Moldavian opposition against the Soviet authorities at the end of the 1980s. After the passing the law "On the functioning of languages," the representatives of that organization marched through the streets, committed open violence against their national "enemies" and burned the offices of

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[153] V. Buganov, F. Grekul, *Славяно-молдавские летописи XV-XVI вв*. [ Slavonic- Moldovan chronicles of XV-XVI centuries], Moscow 1976.
[154] "Regnum news agency", 19 May 2008, http://www.regnum.ru/news/1003001.html [Last retrieved on 26.04.2012].
[155] King, *The Moldovans* cit., p.125.
[156] Ibidem.

Russian newspapers. Among their slogans were "Russians over the Dniester, Jews into the Dniester!" ("*Russkih za Dnestr, Evreev v Dnestr*!"), "Russian Ivan, pack your suitcase!" ("*Russkij Ivan, sobiraj chemodan*!") or "Suitcase-railway station- Magadan!" ("*Chemodan-vokzal-Magadan*!").[157] The anti-Russian movement became the breeding ground for a strong nationalist campaign against the non-Moldovan speaking population.

Although the 31st article of the law "On the functioning of languages" stated: "The propaganda of enmity, contempt towards the language of any nationality, creating obstacles to the functioning of the state and other languages spoken in the territory of the Republic, as well as the encroachment on citizens' rights for linguistic motives is punishable in accordance with the law,"[158] these actions, which contradicted the law, were tolerated. Moldovans regarded themselves as the majority in the Republic and asserted their own national identity. They refused to accept the notion of a Russian cultural superiority, and there was an atmosphere of seeking revenge the "Russian injustices" to Moldovans in the Soviet period.

The Russian language was pushed out of official life of Moldova. Millions of books written in Russian were removed from libraries and educational institutions. During the period of the Soviet Union, the majority of publications were in Russian (64% of books and brochures in 1986); in 2010 only 33,8% were in Russian. In 1985, 33,7% of books and 32% of magazines were in Moldovan in 1996, those totals were 73,5% and 53% respectively. In addition, the circulation of pamphlets in Moldovan language in 1996 was 85.9% (23,1 million copies of 26,9 million copies).[159] The minimization of the Russian language was also apparent in broadcasting. Only 15% of time on state television and 10% on radio was allocated for Russian language transmissions.[160]

In 1994, when the Agrarian Democratic Party of Moldova came to power, there was some liberalization of the language regime established by the Popular Front. The new constitution of the Republic of Moldova gave the Russian language a special status: "The state shall acknowledge and protect the right to the preservation, development and use of the Russian language and other

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[157] Babilunga, Bomeshko, *Приднестровский* cit., p.20.
[158] *Law "On the Functioning of Languages* cit., [Last retrieved on 27.04.2012].
[159] S. Sulyak, *Русский язык в Республике Молдова* [Russian Language in the Republic of Moldova, in *"Молдово-Приднестровский регион"* [Moldovan-Transnistrian Region], 3, 2010, pp.50-52.
[160] A. Arefyev, *Русский язык на рубеже XX-XXI веков* [Russian Language at the turn of 20th and 21st centuries], Moscow, 2012, 1 CD-ROM, http://www.socioprognoz.ru/files/File/russkij_yazyk.pdf [Last retrieved on 10.05.2013].

languages spoken within the territory of the State."[161] When the post-Soviet Communist Party of Moldova came to power in 2001, additional prospects for strengthening the positions of the Russian language appeared in Moldova. At the end of 2001, the Party submitted a bill to the constitutional court to give Russian the status of a second official language in Moldova.[162] The bill made provision for the free use of the Russian language in the country, and said that citizens of Moldova must be fluent in both languages. The bill was passed by the parliamentary majority of the republic, based on the fact that more than a third of the population were Russian-speakers. However, in June 2002 the constitutional court declared Moldovan the only official language of the country, counteracting the parliament's decision.

The reform of language legislation in Moldova is complicated, because this question is highly politicized. Unlike in other post-Soviet countries facing problems of this kind, the problem even extends to what the official name of the national language should be, Romanian or Moldovan. The different political parties highlight these problems in their election campaigns to a great extent.[163]

Romanian culture was deliberately re-established by the Moldovan intelligentsia. They adopted the image of history, in which the Romanians were an island of Romanic culture surrounded by and, opposing the Slavs. In this view, 1812 is not the year of the liberation of Bessarabia from the Turkish Empire by troops of the Russian Empire, but the "partition of Moldova" and the "capture of Romanian lands" by the Russian Empire; 1918 is not the year of the "Romanian occupation," but the "Great national unity," and 1940 is not the year of the "liberation" of Bessarabia by the Red Army, but a "tragic national oppression" of the region.

When the activities of the Moldovan nationalist movement on the right bank of the Dniester increased, retaliatory movement for independence started in the TMR. While Moldova was created on the basis of nationality, Transnistria was founded on non-national, citizen-related principles with a policy of trilingualism.[164] On 8 December 1990 a declaration of the sovereignty of the Pridnestrovian SSR was adopted. The chapter on "cultural development" stated: "The languages of all people living on the territory of the PMSSR (Moldavian, Ukrainian, Russian, etc.)

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[161] *Constitution of the Republic of Moldova*, Art.13, [Last retrieved on 06.05.2013].

[162] *В Молдавии русский язык может стать официальным* [Russian Language Could Become the Official Language in Moldova], http://www.newsru.com/arch/world/29dec2001/moldova.html [Last retrieved on 20.04.2013].

[163] Barbarosie, Nantoi, *Интеграция* cit., p.176.

[164] M. Riegl, T. Vaško, *Comparison of language policies in the post-Soviet Union countries on the European continent*, in "The Annual of Language & Politics and Politics of Identity", 1, 2007, pp.47-78.

are equal." [165]

After Transnistria declared its sovereignty and independence on 25 August 1991, the constitution and the law "On languages" were adopted in the region. The preamble of the law "On Languages of the TMR" stated, that bilingualism and multilingualism were the historically established language standard.[166] The article "The legal status of languages" stated: "All languages of the TMR have equal legal status and are equally secured and supported by the state. The status of official language on equal terms is given to the Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian languages."[167] De jure, Transnistria should have been tolerant to the language issues in their region, but de facto, the situation was different — the Russian language prevailed. Books in Transnistria are published mainly in Russian. Russian also dominates in the local printed media: of 62 newspapers, 59 are in Russian, one in Moldovan and one in Ukrainian. There is also an English-language newspaper, the "Tiraspol Times." [168] The confrontation within the language issues between Moldova and Transnistria can be seen in other areas.

## Education Issues

Educational policy is one such area. "Education can be part of the problem as well as part of the solution. Policies and practice at all levels within the education system need to be analyzed in terms of their potential to aggravate or ameliorate conflict."[169]There are numerous definitions of education. In this chapter we will consider education in the sense that education can influence identity formation in the region.

When the Soviet Union was established, education in the USSR became fully centralized and secularized, and the schools were separated from the church. The educational process involved "anti-religious indoctrination expressed in militant atheistic teaching." [170]

In the Soviet period, there was a centralized educational policy and program. In August 1932, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued the decree "On the curriculum and regime in primary and secondary schools." There was a major change in the

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[165] V. Jakovlev, *Бессарабский* cit., p.114.
[166] *Закон о языках в Приднестровской Молдавской Республике* [The law "On Languages of TMR"], from: http://zakon-pmr.com/DetailDoc.aspx?document=36286 [Last retrieved on 30.04.2012].
[167] Ibidem.
[168] A. Arefyev, *Русский* cit., p.76.
[169] A. Smith, *The Influence of Education on Conflict and Peace Building,* http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001913/191341e.pdf [Last retrieved on 30.04.2013].
[170]A.M. Chabe, *Soviet Educational Policies: Their Development, Administration, and Content*, in "Educational Leadership", Vol. 28, Issue 5, 1971, pp.525-531.

approach to the teaching of history, de-emphasizing past methods and interpretations. In 1933 new standard textbooks for all subjects were introduced throughout the USSR.[171]

Stalin personally took charge of teaching materials on history, and he controlled their preparation. He considered the teaching of history important for the ideological education of Soviet citizens. "Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed," [172] he said in an interview. In other words, history had to reflect events based on the Marxist-Leninist point of view and emphasize the historical mission of the Communist Party. The task of preparation of Soviet history textbooks was not easy, and history was not taught in schools until the beginning of the 1930s. History faculties had been closed, and the former professors purged from universities for ideological reasons. In 1934, history departments were restored in universities. This decision rehabilitated many "bourgeois" historians. The newly opened departments were involved in the preparation of new history textbooks and training history teachers for secondary schools.

The first Soviet textbook on history, "A short course on the history of the USSR," by Andrey Shestakov, appeared in the 1930s. Its composition was strictly controlled by the party leaders, Sergey Kirov, Andrei Zhdanov and Joseph Stalin himself. The book was based on the idea of continuity: from ancient times to the present the great leaders of the past (Alexander Nevsky, Ivan the terrible, Peter the Great) built a powerful state and fought off invaders.[173] The chronology and the method of description the historical events in this textbook were copied in later Soviet history books, and the leading role of the ruling party under the leadership of its secretary, the perfection of its strategy and the superiority of the Soviet system over other regimes was emphasized unchanged in all textbooks.

In later editions of Shestakov's textbook we can find this evaluation of Stalin after his death: "On 5 March 1953 the Soviet people, and working people all around the world suffered a severe and irretrievable loss. The follower and successor of Lenin's ideas, the Great Stalin died in his 74th year of life. The death of Joseph Stalin, who devoted his entire life to serving the people, was a terrible loss. The blessed memory of Joseph Stalin will live forever in the hearts of workers all around the world." [174] This description clearly shows the ideological propaganda in history

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[171] L. Shpakovskaja, *Советская образовательная политика* [Soviet Educational Policy], in *"Журнал исследований социальной политики"* [The Journal of Social Policy], 7(1), 2009, pp.39-64.
[172] J. Stalin, *Сочинения* [Sochinenija], Vol.14, Moscow 1997, p.35.
[173] A. Shestakov, *История СССР. Краткий курс* [The History of USSR. Brief Course, Moscow 1955.
[174] Ibidem, par.67.

textbooks and praise for the cult of personality imposed from above. In another history textbook for tenth grade students, we can find a similar positive idolizing evaluation: a paragraph entitled "The Great Stalin Constitution."[175]

The representation of the history of the USSR remained largely unchanged. Additional chapters appearing in the textbooks after the Second World War described the "treacherous attack" against the USSR and victory thanks to the genius of Stalin, the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet people in general.

From 1940 to 1991, when Bessarabia and Transnistria formed a unified Moldovan SSR, education policy in the republic was under the control of the central government in Moscow. The curriculum used in Moldovan schools, could be divided into three groups:

> a. The curricula of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (mathematics, physics, chemistry, mechanics, technical drawing, geography of foreign countries);
>
> b. The curricula of RSFSR including material that reflecting the specific and particularities of the development of the economy and culture of the Moldavian SSR (history, geography, biology, drawing, singing);
>
> c. Original programs developed by the Institute of Education of the Ministry of Education of the MSSR (Moldovan and Russian languages, Moldovan and Russian literature, Moldovan language for schools with Russian as the language of instruction).

Despite this range of possibilities only the first and second options were used in the majority of cases. The Ministry of Education of the Moldavian SSR concentrated on counteracting what had been taught during the Romanian-German occupation.

The period 1944-1956 was characterized by the replacement of local schools by Soviet schools. Instruction in the schools of the republics schools was solely in the official language; local culture was not permitted to develop. "National in form but socialist in content" was the slogan of Soviet policy.[176] Minority nationalities were allowed to keep their native language, arts, and book publishing, but the content was supposed to be "Socialist", thus reflecting Communist beliefs,

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[175] K. Bazilevich, *История СССР* [History of USSR], Moscow 1952.
[176] Chabe, *Soviet* cit., p.530.

values and goals.[177]

In 1957 The MSSR Council of Ministers adopted a decree making education in the Moldovan language compulsory in the MSSR as of 1 September 1958.[178] In 1957 the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party MSSR adopted the decree "On the implementation of teaching the history of Moldova in secondary schools in the MSSR," which included publishing the textbook "History of Moldavia" for 8th grade students, and in 1959, for secondary schools.[179] According to the reforms, parents would decide which language their children would use in school. However, since knowing Russian was essential for a successful career in the Soviet Union, most children were enrolled in schools with the Russian language of instruction.

Major changes in Soviet educational policy were contained in the law "On Strengthening the Ties of School with Life and on the Further Development of the System of Public Education in the USSR" (December 24, 1958). The law was intended to bring the schools closer to real life: "The tasks of building communism require that the higher school be brought closer to life and production, and that the theoretical level of specialist training be raised in correspondence with the latest advances in science and technology." [180] The leadership had the objectives of increasing the spirit of Communist consciousness among the Soviet people by acquainting the the people with the basics of the professions. [181] The Brezhnev period saw Soviet education in terms of the demands of science and technology. [182] However, one thing remained unchanged during these years —central party control of educational policy in all the Union Republics.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of the nationalist movement and the declaration of independence of the Republic of Moldova caused many changes in Moldova, particularly in the educational system. Centralized control was replaced by different educational policies in Transnistria and the Republic of Moldova. The 1990s were characterized by the numerous education reforms.

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[177] Ibidem.
[178] Stati, *История* cit., p.384.
[179] Ibidem.
[180]*Article 27 of the Law "On Strengthening the Ties of the School with Life and Further Developing the System of Public Education in the USSR",*
http://mesharpe.metapress.com/app/home/contribution.asp?referrer=parent&backto=issue,17,32;journal,463,598; linkingpublicationresults,1:110918,1 [Last retrieved on 12.03.2013].
[181] L.Shpakovskaya, *Советская образовательная политика: социальная инженерия и классовая борьба* [Soviet Educational Policy; Social Engineering and Class Struggle], in *"Журнал исследований социальной политики"* [The journal of social policy studies], Vol.7, 1, 2009, pp.39-64.
[182] A. M. Chabe, *Soviet Education faces the '70's*, in "Educational Leadership", Vol. 27, Issue 7, 1970, pp. 678-82.

In 1994 the law "On education" was passed in the TMR, and then abolished and replaced by a new law in 2002. The structure and content of the 2002 law is actually a copy of the Russian Federation's 1992 law "On education," which clearly demonstrates the influence of Russia in TMR and highlights the strong link between the states. The Transdnistrian version contains six chapters and 58 articles, as does the Russian, and the levels of education in Transnistria also have the same name and structure.

In the Transnistrian region education policy is oriented mostly toward the Russian educational space. The basic principles of education policy in the TMR are almost the same as those of Russian state policy. For example, one of the principles in the Transnistrian law describes the "Humanistic nature of education with a priority given to universal human values, human life and health, and the free development of personality."[183]The same principle can be found in the law of the Russian Federation: "Humanistic nature of education with a priority given to universal human values, human life and health, free development of personality; and the development of civic consciousness, diligence, respect for the rights and freedoms of each person, love for the Motherland, family." [184] This again shows the desire of Transnistrian to be closely connected with Russia.

Comparing these documents we can see that Transnistria has a state educational standard almost identical to that of Russia, but it differentiates from those of Moldova and Romania. The orientation to Russian educational policy is can be rooted in the history of the region. The left bank of the Dniester became the part of the Russian Empire and started being actively exploited by settlers in the 18th century. Neighboring Bessarabia became part of Russia in 1812. The particular Transnistrian mentality formed during two centuries of assimilation. In Bessarabia these processes were interrupted by the First World War and the occupation by Romania. The Transnistrian region developed faster than Bessarabia. There was equality among languages used in Transnistria during the Soviet era. In the Constitution of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic adopted in 1925 (art. 9) it was written: "The most spoken and recognized languages in the AMSSR are Moldovan, Ukrainian and Russian." [185]

According to Transnistrian legislation (The law "On education", art. 7) the language of instruction

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[183] Закон ПМР об образовании [TMR Law on Education], http://zakon-pmr.com/DetailDoc.aspx?document=36262 [Last retrieved on 06.03.2013].
[184] *Закон РФ "Об образовании"* [The Law on Education of Russia], http://www.zakonrf.info/zakon-ob-obrazovanii/2/ [Last retrieved on 06.03.2013].
[185] Shornikov, *Молдавская* cit., p.296.

in public schools must be ~~is~~ one of the official state languages (Russian, Moldavian, Ukrainian). The law also allows freedom to choose a language of instruction, although in actual fact, Russian was chosen as ~~is~~ the language of instruction in the majority of schools (more than 70% of the total).

In 2010 the number of Transnistrian general education schools according to the language of instruction had this hierarchy:

| Language of instruction | Number of schools | Percentage of total |
|---|---|---|
| Russian | 115 | 69,2 |
| Moldovan | 34 | 20,6 |
| Russian and Moldovan | 12 | 7,2 |
| Russian and Ukrainian | 3 | 1,8 |
| Ukrainian | 2 | 1,2 |
| | | |
| **Total number of schools** | **166** | **100** |

**Table 2. Transnistrian schools according to the language of instruction in 2010**[186]

Although the data from the State Statistics Service (2010) show that about 165,2 thousands Moldovans (31,9%), 157,5 thousand Russians (30,4%) and 149,2 thousand Ukrainians (28,8 %) live in the TMR, more than 70% of the schools adopted a program in Russian. Thus, although the proportion of Moldovans in the population is around 32%, children can be taught in the Moldovan language only in 20% of schools, and Ukrainians in approximately 1,5% of schools. On the one hand, the right to be educated in the mother tongue is prescribed in the TMR's Constitution; on the other hand, we can say that some citizens are deprived of this right. However, it is possible that Moldovans and Ukrainians accept the superiority of the Russian culture over their own, and they willingly send their children to Russian schools.

In Republic of Moldova the opposite situation prevails. The quantity of people studying in the Romanian language (in the Latin alphabet) is three times greater than than in Russian:

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[186] *Статистический ежегодник 2011* [Annual statistical report of TMR 2011], Tiraspol 2011, p.57.

|  | **2000/2001** | **2005/2006** | **2006/2007** | **2007/2008** | **2008/2009** | **2009/2010** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total students** | 629 327 | 517 029 | 491 482 | 460 951 | 434 320 | 413 657 |
| **Number studying, per language:** | | | | | | |
| **Moldavian** | 494 783 | 410 897 | 390 867 | 366 952 | 345 192 | 328 333 |
| **Russian** | 133 641 | 105 251 | 99 765 | 93 131 | 88 374 | 84 585 |
| **Other** | 903 | 881 | 850 | 868 | 754 | 739 |
| **Percentage of total** | | | | | | |
| **Moldavian** | 78,6 | 79,5 | 79,5 | 79,6 | 79,5 | 79,4 |
| **Russian** | 21,2 | 20,3 | 20,3 | 20,2 | 20,3 | 20,4 |
| **Other** | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,2 |

**Table 3. Students in day schools, by language of instruction**[187]

De jure, Moldavian is the official language of Bessarabia, as confirmed by state documents, but de facto Romanian is used. In secondary schools children are taught the subject "Romanian language and literature," not "Moldovan language and literature." The current generation of students has not known anything different.

To understand this process we can refer to the history textbooks used by secondary schools in both regions. In 1990 after getting a majority in the Supreme Soviet of the former Moldavian SSR, pro-Romanian authorities started purges in the Institute of History of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences and at the social science faculties of universities. The teaching of Moldavian language and literature was replaced by the teaching of the Romanian language and literature, and the course "History of Moldova" was replaced in the curriculum by "History of Romania". The bases of the course "History of Romania" was the idea of continuity of the Romanian people for more than 2 000 years, the idea of the Romanian nation as the highest form of the Romanian community, and the establishment in 1918 of "Greater Romania" (including Bessarabia) as the highest achievement of the Romanian history.

The "History of Romania" by the Romanian nationalist historian Petre Panaitescu was the main

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[187] *Education in the Republic of Moldova: publicaţie statistică 2009/2010,* Chişinău 2010.

textbook of the history of the Republic of Moldova. It was originally published in Romania in 1943 during the dictatorship of Ion Antonescu and the war against the Soviet Union. In 1990 the book was republished in Chisinau, first in Romanian, and then in Russian. In the book, the inhabitants of Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania the book were classified together under the ethnonym "Romanians." Neighboring peoples were presented as enemies, and strong rulers, such as like Vlad III, Prince of Wallachia[188] (popularly known as Dracula), were presented as saviors.

The interpretation of the WWII in history textbooks was significant. Hitler's ally Marshal Ion Antonescu was presented as the most important character of 20th century Romanian history, as the "Savior of the nation." [189] The book omitted the crimes of those times, including denying of the Holocaust in Bessarabia under Romanian occupation. Panaitescu's textbook became the model for a series of textbooks on Romanian history published in Moldova, which Moldovan schoolchildren have been using for the past 20 years. In 2003, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, having analyzed the course "History of Romanians" in Romania (which used the same textbooks as in the Republic of Moldova), requested the Romanian government to modernize history teaching in Romanian schools and universities. The document's language included these statements: "…in a number of Romanian school and university textbooks … certain periods of contemporary history, especially the role of Romania and its leadership in the Second World War is interpreted in a way to rehabilitate the war crimes and the Holocaust … the leadership of Romania also denied the participation of the country in mass extermination of Jews during the Second World War … At the level of public perception Marshal Ion Antonescu, a war criminal, is considered a national hero. Such interpretation of history contributes to the perpetuation of the nationalistic, anti-Semitic and xenophobic spirits in the Romanian society, a spirit that is in flagrant contradiction with modern European values." [190]

In 1990 the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova accepted the first secondary school curriculum on the history of Romania. The new subject replaced the history of USSR for students from 5th to 11th grade. However, after the Democratic Agrarian Party of Moldova won the elections in 1994, the ministry decided to change History of Romanians to History of Moldovans.

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[188] A historical region of southeast Romania between the Transylvanian Alps and the Danube River.
[189] V. Bukarsky, *Молдова - Приднестровье: война за детские умы*,
http://ruskline.ru/monitoring_smi/2012/10/26/moldova_pridnestrove_vojna_za_detskie_umy/
[Last retrieved on 16.12.2012].
[190]Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Document No. 9955 on "Modernisation of history teaching in Romanian schools",
http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewHTML.asp?FileID=10316&Language=EN [Last retrieved on 15.01.2013].

This decision was followed by mass protests and resulted in the creation of two subjects: History of Romanians and Universal History.

The rise to power of Communist party in 2001 revived the discussion about replaceing History of Romanians by History of Moldovans. But after mass demonstrations and protests the authorities abandoned their attempt to do so. In September 2002, a national commission was established to develop the teaching of history in the Republic of Moldova. Most of the members of the commission Communists and supported the introduction of "integrated history" [*Istoria integrate*]. The Ministry of Education organized a pilot project to introduce the new subject in approximately 100 schools.

On 1 September 2006 "Integrated History," in which historical events were seen from the worldwide point of view, became a compulsory subject for study in all schools in the country. In 2006 the curriculum in gymnasiums and lyceums in the Republic of Moldova included recommendations for content in educational programs for students from 5th to 12th grade in both Romanian and Russian languages and covering such topics as:

1. Ancient civilizations;
2. The formation of medieval states and their evolution;
3. Medieval Europe;
4. Asia in 5th-15th centuries;
5. The Renaissance and Reformation;
6. The age of discovery;
7. The First World War and the geopolitical map of Europe after 1918;
8. Fascism and national socialism;
9. The geopolitical map of Europe after 1945;
10. The era of the cold war: NATO and the Warsaw Pact;
11. International relations in the modern era;
12. Conflicts in the 20th century;
13. International organizations and their role in the modern world;
14. Culture and science in modern times;
15. The formation of new democratic states in central and eastern Europe;
16. Culture in modern times. [191]

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[191] *История: Куррикулум для лицеев с русским языком обучения, X - XII классы* [History: Curriculum for the Schools with Russian Language of Instruction, *X - XII grades*], Chisinau 2006.

These neutrally formulated historical topics were typical for the period of teaching the "Integrated History" course. Students in schools with Russian language instruction had limited exposure to some crucial themes, since their curriculum did not include topics on the history of the Slavic population of Moldavia and the history of Russia, while more attention was paid to the history of Greece, Italy, France, Britain, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. [192]

After the victory of a right-liberal coalition (the Alliance for European Integration) in the elections of 2009 the situation changed again. The elections were followed by the introduction of yet more new textbooks and new disputes about the interpretation of history. Moldova returned to the school course "History of Romanians," and while the content of the curriculum in 2010 was deeper than the previous one, the pro-Romanian bias was clearly evident. The new recommendations included such topics as:

1. Dacia and the Roman Empire;
2. The ethnogenesis of Romanians;
3. The formation of the medieval Romanian states;
4. The political organization of the Romanian principalities during the second half of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century;
5. The economy of Bessarabia in the Russian Empire (1812-1917);
6. The independence of Romania, foreign relations of Romania (1878-1914);
7. National movements in Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transylvania;
8. The great reunion of 1918, specifics of the economic development of the Moldavian SSR in the post-war years (1945-1991);
9. The Republic of Moldova since 1991.

The annexation of Bessarabia to the Russian Empire after the 6th Russian-Turkish war in 1812 was called "Colonization of Bessarabia." [193] The WWII is represented from the Romanian side: "Romania during WWII." [194] The curriculum also included the item "Collective identity in Romania and the Republic of Moldova," [195] which clearly reveals the main purpose of the state history textbooks. It is interesting to note that in 2011 the textbooks for "History of Romanians"

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[192] G. Gucu, *Проблемы преподавания истории в школах с русским языком обучения* [Problems with Teaching History in the Schools with Russian Language of Instruction], in *"Русин"* [Rusin], 2, 2006, pp.198-200.

[193] *Куррикулум для 10-12 классов* [Curriculum for 10th-12th grade], Min. Educaţiei al Rep. Moldova, Ştiinţa 2010.

[194] Ibidem, p.15.

[195] Ibidem, p.17.

and "Universal history" were sponsored and republished by the Romanian Government.[196]

In July 2011, the Government of Moldova adopted and officially published a plan for the "Optimization" of 1 044 classes and 378 schools before 2013. Most of them would be schools with instruction in the Russian language. Simultaneously, in the 2011/2012 school year, an experiment introducing the teaching of some subjects in the Romanian language began in 20 Russian-language schools in Chisinau. The aims of the experiment were to make it easier for Russian-speaking families to learn the official language and to create an "optimal" language environment. [197]

Some authorities in Moldova advocate the Romanization of the Republic of Moldova and do not recognize Moldovan identity. As a result, an inter-generational conflict appeared in the Republic of Moldova. It was intentionally created by politicians and officials of the education system. Parents consider themselves to be Moldovans, and their children see themselves as Romanians. Parents link their life to Moldova, but the children see themselves primarily as Europeans and Romanians. Romania for them is a "ticket" to Europe, to a better life. Moldovans, therefore, are a people with a forked identity.

A regular general education subject became an ideological and political instrument of rival elites, one of which supports the unification of the Romanian and Moldavian peoples, the other asserts their historical and ethnic separation. However, both sides turn to the West, to Europe.

A different situation can be seen in Trasnistria, where educational policy is strongly linked to Russian standards. In the 1990s the situation in the educational system in Transnistria was difficult due to the shortage of textbooks and the lack of financing to publish and purchase them. School library collections were 80-90% empty in 1992 after the 1989 removal by Chisinau of all textbooks written in Cyrillic. In order to solve the problem a group of teachers, methodologists and translators in Tiraspol, Bender, and Dubasari formed to create new textbooks in the Moldovan language and translate textbooks printed in Russia into Moldovan.

In 1996, the publication of educational literature had become planned and systematic. In December 1998 the Transnistrian government approved the state target program *"Uchebnik"*

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[196] *Учебники "История румын" и "Всеобщая история" будут переизданы* [The Textbooks 'History of Romanians' and "Universal History' will be Republished], http://ru.publika.md/link_215091.html [Last retrieved on 09.01.2013].

[197] Arefyev, *Русский* cit., p.67.

[Tutorial]. It established a process for the stable functioning of a unified system of acquiring, creating, printing and distributing educational and methodological literature for general education institutions of the TMR. Contracts were made with such Russian publishers as "*Prosveschenie*" and "*Drofa*" for the delivery of the newest educational literature to TMR. Educational institutions received approximately 180 000 textbooks in 1999-2000, which meant that Russian history textbooks were used in Transnistrian schools[198]. Among these materials were four volumes of "the History of Russia" that did not devote much attention to the acquisition of the territories of Transnistria and Bessarabia.

Simultaneously new groups for translating textbooks into the Moldovan language began to appear in Transnistria. Creative teams worked on the preparation of textbooks in the Moldovan language for schools teaching in Moldavian and Russian languages. The scientific laboratories of Pridnestrovian State University of Taras Shevchenko produced monographs and textbooks on geography, economy and the history of Moldavia and Transnistria. These textbooks were translated into the official languages of the TMR.

In the secondary schools of Transnistria, the basis for history courses is a program of the Russian Federation. A regional republican element can be seen only in the course "The history of the native land," which is an important element influencing the identity of people. The materials for the 6th-7th grades included training for students in history from ancient times until the Middle Ages, allowing pupils to become familiar with key periods of historical development. In 8th-9th grades, attention is given to the period of reforms in the 1860s, the socio-political and spiritual life of the Transnistrian region in the early 19th century, the October Revolution in 1917, Civil War in 1918-1920, the years of the "Great Patriotic War" and the post-war decades.

In 2005 a new textbook, "The history of the native land," for secondary schools (for 8th-9th grades), was published. This book was negatively reviewed in the media because the language in the textbook was not considered accessible for the pupils of that age. Since then, it is possible to see that Transnistrian authorities began to pay more attention to education with regional elements. For example, one theme for primary schools, "Our homeland," was designed to make pupils familiar with the national symbols, the Constitution of the Republic, and the rights of children. Teachers explained to them who was the president, told about the major holidays celebrated in the Republic, and introduced other basic concepts.

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[198] *Постановление о Целевой Отраслевой Программе "Учебник"* [Resolution on the State target program "Uchebnik", http://zakon-pmr.com/DetailDoc.aspx?document=55048 [Last retrieved on 17.01.2013].

In 2005 a new department of history of the TMR was created in the Taras Shevchenko University on the initiative of the President of the TMR. Anna Volkova, head of this department, stated: "The study of the history of Transnistria must be a priority, because we are talking about a State ideology." [199] "State ideology" is a key point in Transnistrian politics.

In 2004 several Transnistrian schools that based their instruction on the Latin alphabet were closed by TMR authorities for ideological reasons. The administration demanded that these schools register officially and to switch to the Cyrillic alphabet. What happened in Transnistria was nothing new for the people of the region. In August 1994 the authorities of the TMR prohibited the use of the Latin alphabet in schools and required all schools to use the Cyrillic alphabet. Then the authorities began to close all the schools that used the Latin alphabet. In 2012 European Court of Human Rights convicted Russia for the forced closure of Moldovan schools in Transnistria. The Court considered that the separatist regime in Transnistria in the beginning of 1990s could not have existed without the military, economic and political support of Russia, and therefore, the closure of schools fell under the jurisdiction of Russia. [200]

The same process of closing schools took place in Moldova. Between 2009 and 2012 entire areas in Moldova remained without Russian educational institutions, both primary and secondary. The "optimization" politics hit thousands of Russian children who had no opportunity to get education in their native language; even the constitution guaranteed that right. In addition to closing schools in smaller cities the authorities found another method of derussification. The Ministry of education reduced the number of disciplines in Russian.

The article 19 of the law "on the functioning of languages" spoken on the territory of Moldavian SSR provides for mono-lingualism in pre-school institutions and secondary schools in Moldova; pre-school institutions and secondary schools were established on the basis of bilingualism in areas where the number of children and students did not permit the opening of monolingual institutions and schools. [201] Implementation of this law does not follow universal values and multilingual principles and leads to the segregation of children by language of education, and, de facto, by majority or a minority ethnic group.

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[199] *"Приднестровье"* [Transnistria], 06 September 2005, http://www.pridnestrovie-daily.net/gazeta/articles/view.aspx?ArticleID=1169 [Last retrieved on 20.01.2013].

[200] *Пресс-релиз секретаря Европейского суда по правам человека* [Press Release of the Secretary of the European Court of Human Rights], http://hr-lawyers.org/files/docs/1351717082.pdf [Last retrieved on 20.01.2013].

[201] *The Law "On the Functioning* cit.

Education and the language of instruction has been a highly politicized issue; the authorities were using education to form group identity as well as support the regime.[202] Perceptions of history can mobilize, legitimize, politicize and shape national identity, even trigger bloody conflicts.[203] Indeed, the closures of Russian and Romanian schools were not concerned with educational issues; they occurred as moves in the political gaming of the two regions. These policies had a profound impact on people's identity, especially for those born at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century. This is the exact group of children that are being educated under the new conditions, in which the choice of languages is limited. The educational policies of these two regions can be described as wars for children's minds.

## Religion

Many conflicts in history have been based on a clash between religions, but is the Transnistrian conflict one of them? Does religion affect the identity of people on both sides of the Dniester River? These are difficult questions, but if we consider the history of religion in the Transnistrian and Bessarabians regions and consider the current situation, it is possible to find some answers.

After annexation to the Russian Empire in 1812 Bessarabia fell under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Chisinau Eparchy was established and remained part of the Russian Orthodox Church until 1918. The local Orthodox Church was thoroughly Russianized: the public liturgy was performed in the Church Slavonic language and instruction teaching at the Chisinau seminary was in Russian. The bishops, which were appointed by the synod in Bessarabia, were generally ethnic Russians.[204]

After the October revolution the new Soviet government adopted the decree "On the separation of church and state and school from church." Freedom of conscience and religious beliefs were proclaimed in this document.[205] However, practical policy turned out to be a terror against the

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[202] S. D. Roper, *Education as an Instrument of Moldovan Identity Formation,* in E. Osamu, U. Tomohiko (eds.), *Reconstruction and Interaction of Slavic Eurasia and Its Neighboring Worlds,* Sapporo 2006, pp.183-200.

[203] S. Troebst, *"We Are Transnistrians!" Post-Soviet Identity Management in the Dniester Valley* in "Ab Imperio", 1, 2003, pp.437-466.

[204] *"Бессарабское православие" между Румынией и Россией* [Bessarabian Orthodoxy between Romania and Russia], http://www.religion.in.ua/main/history/5174-bessarabskoe-pravoslavie-mezhdu-rumyniej-i-rossiej.html [Last retrieved on 02.04.2013].

[205] *Декрет "Об отделении церкви от государства и школы от церкви"* [Decree 'On the separation of church from the state and the school from the church'], http://constitution.garant.ru/history/act1600-1918/5325/ [Last retrieved on 26.03.2013].

Orthodox Church, clergy and believers. The state and the society were declared to be atheistic.[206] Many churches were closed and destroyed, priests were arrested, tortured and killed, and many monasteries were transformed into concentration camps.[207] In 1930 church bells were banned in Moscow. The theology and moral teaching of the church was replaced by the ideology of communism.[208] Communist atheism was established as the state religion of the Soviet Union, compulsory for members of the Communist party.[209]

As first secretary of the Moldovan Communist Party in 1950-1952 Leonid Brezhnev started forced collectivization and deportation of ethnic Romanians. Seminaries, church schools, printing presses and university programs were closed; no religious texts were published in Moldova from 1944 to 1990.[210]

After the death of Stalin, an era of greater religious freedom began in the USSR. However, in 1959 First Secretary of CPSU Nikita Khrushchev started an anti-religion campaign, which resulted in the closures of churches, monasteries and seminaries all over the Union.[211] The Soviet Union controlled religion through a comprehensive system of administrative, political, ideological and legal institutions, including the Fifth Directorate of KGB in 1967-1989[212], which dealt with ideological sabotage, and anti-Soviet and religious-sectarian groups.

The Church was obliged to maintain a position of detachment from societal problems while at the same time demonstrate a high level of loyalty to the Soviet state. In the Brezhnev period the Soviet Union did not seek to completely abolish the Church and transform believers into atheists. Rather, the State simply tried to control the believers. The leadership did not classify religion as an active power opposing official ideology.

In 1965 the Council for Religious Affairs, which was responsible for the implementation of religious policy in the Soviet Union, was founded. The authorities tried to use ~~the~~ religious

[206] N. Flornskiy, *Влияние Православной церкви на культуру народа* [Influence of Orthodox Church on People's Culture]// [Rusin], 2(4), 2006, pp.130-135.
[207] Ibidem, p.133.
[208] C. D. Harris, *Society, Science, and Education in The Soviet Union*, in "Anthropology: Symposium on Science in Society", Vol. 45, 1959, pp.684-692.
[209] Ibidem, p.685.
[210] L. Turcescu, L. Stan, *Church–state conflict in Moldova: the Bessarabian Metropolitanate*, in "Communist and Post-Communist Studies", 36, 2003, pp.443–465.
[211] D. Pospelovskiy, *Русская Православная церковь в XX веке* [Russian Orthodox Church in 20th century], Moscow 1995.
[212] M. Bezborodov, *Государство и церковь: от советской модели к поиску новой* [The State and the Church: from Soviet Model to the New One], in *"Северное измерение: социально-политический альманах"* [Northern Dimension: Socio-Political Almanac], Vol.3, 2008, pp.91-100.

structures to further state interests and to obtain political and ideological information. All relations between the state and the Orthodox Church were based on the subordination of the Church to the Union center, which had an absolute right to interfere in the activities of the religious organizations. All internal processes and international activities of the Russian Orthodox Church were regulated by the Council for Religious Affairs, and no policy decisions could be approved without it. [213] This council existed till 1991.

The crucial point in the relationships between the Church and the Government occurred at the end of 1980s. The meeting of the Holy Synod, between the Patriarch of Moscow, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pimen, and Mikhail Gorbachev, on 29 April 1988 became the official date of readjustment between the Soviet state and the Russian Orthodox Church. Gorbachev promised to stop discrimination against religious groups and to liberalize Soviet religious legislation. This meeting was held in conjunction with the 1 000th anniversary of the Christianization of the Kievan Rus'. [214] The meeting was followed by the adoption of two laws: "On freedom of conscience and religious organizations" and "On freedom of belief" in 1990, which allowed religious organizations to gain the status of juridical entities. [215]

In the beginning of 1990s a complicated situation, connected with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of former Soviet republics, emerged within the Russian Orthodox Church. Particularly challenging was the position of the Church on the southwestern edge of the Moscow Patriarchate, as many leaders of the newly independent states introduced the principle of "an independent church for an independent state." [216] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Moscow Patriarchate granted self-governing status the Moldavian Church (the former Chisinau Eparchy).

Nationalist unrest, accompanied by public rallies, began to occur in the Republic of Moldova. In 1992, these rallies escalated into armed conflict between the right and the left banks of the Dniester River. In addition, the situation of the Moldovan Church was complicated by Romania's activities to access Moldavia. To achieve this goal, Romania used a variety of means, including the Romanian Orthodox Church, which in 1992 established the so-called 'Bessarabian

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[213] Ibidem, p.93.
[214] Ibidem, p.94.
[215] *Закон СССР о Свободе Совести и Религиозных Организациях* [The Law of USSR on "Freedom of conscience and Religious Organizations], http://www.r-komitet.ru/vera/26.htm [Last retrieved on 26.03.2013].
[216] N.Stratulat, *Православная церковь в Молдавии в контексте истории молдаво-румынских межэтнических отношений в XX веке* [Orthodox Church in Moldova in the Context of History of Moldovan-Romanian Inter-Ethnic Relations in 20th Century], Saint Petersburg 2010.

metropolitanate'[217] in Moldova in the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Attempts to solve the Church conflict were repeatedly made at the 1990s. In particular, representatives of the two Patriarchates met for negotiations in February 1997 in Geneva. A second round of talks took place in June in Graz, Austria. Although no concrete decisions were reached, the parties agreed on the necessity to move from confrontation to harmony and reconciliation.[218]

However, this reconciliation did not last. The Bessarabian Metropolitanate was officially recognized by the government of Moldova in 2002. [219] In addition, the creation of parishes outside the borders of the Moldovan Republic started in 2000s. In 2003, the Bessarabian Metropolitanate established a parish in the village of Kamishevka (Odessa region, Ukraine), which happened to be was located in the existing on the territory of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. [220]

The conflict between two Eparchies remains unsolved. In addition the new government of the Republic of Moldova officially announced the celebration of two Christmas holidays in 2009. One was held on 25 December, as in Romania, and the second on 7 January, according to Orthodox practice. [221] However, the labor code of the Republic of Moldova includes only 7 January as a non-working day[222], so the authorities agreed to designate one weekend day as a work day in order to make 25 December a holiday as well as a first step towards making it an official holiday. These innovations are ambiguously perceived in the society.

However, religious belief in Transnistria and Bessarabia is not required. According to the constitution of Moldova, "all citizens of the Republic of Moldova shall be equal before the law and public authorities, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political affiliation, property or social origin." [223] Transnistria is also a secular state. No

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[217] Ibidem, p.224.

[218] Ibidem, p.232.

[219] "*Бессарабская митрополия претендует на имущество РПЦ*" [Bessarabian Metropolitanate Claims the Property of ROC], http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=monitor&id=2402 [Last retrieved on 02.04.2013].

[220] V. Bukarsky, *Конфликт цивилизаций в Молдавской Церкви* [Conflict of Civilizations in Moldovan Church], http://www.pravoslavie.ru/analit/071119194104.htm [Last retrieved on 27.03.2013].

[221] "Комсомольская Правда" [Komsomol Truth], 24 November 2009, http://www.kp.md/daily/24399/575920/ [Last retrieved on 26.03.2013].

[222] *Трудовой кодекс Республики Молдова. Статья 111. Нерабочие праздничные дни* [Labour Code of Moldova. Article 111, Holidays], http://www.tk-md.ru/trud_kodeks_moldova_4_2/page/4.html [Last retrieved on 15.03.2013].

[223] *Constitution of the Republic of Moldova* cit.

religion can be established as a national or obligatory one. [224]

The percentage of believers within the Bessarabian Patriarchate is too low to have much political influence. According to a George Gallup sociological survey in 2011, 97% of the population of the Moldovan Republic declared membership in one of the Orthodox confessions: Moldovan Orthodox Church, 86%, and Bessarabian Orthodox Church, 11%.[225] Seventy years of suppressing religion under Soviet rule left a deep imprint on the identity of the population in both regions, and the Romanian attempts to establish their Church in Moldova are not succeeding well. The Besarabian Metropolitanate sought recognition within ten years, which could indicate that the leadership of Bessarabia is not interested in a conflict with Russian Orthodox Church and is content to let the Romanian church to dominate. The majority of the population refuses union with Romania, but the unionist parties make up about 12 % of popular support.

In its constitution Transnistria is a secular state, but non-Orthodox religious organizations in Transnistria are under pressure. They face extreme intolerance, as the regional authorities hinder them from practicing their religion through bans on peaceful assembly and distribution of literature in public places. [226] It is likely that the Transnistrian authorities use the Russian Orthodox Church to emphasize the differences between Bessarabian Moldovans and Transnitrian Moldovans, frightening the people with the possibility of Romanian invasion and occupation. The axis "We"-"Other", which is typical for exaggerating differences between peoples, is strongly visible.

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[224] *The Constitution of the TMR* cit.
[225] *Молдова. Краткий обзор* [Moldova. Brief Review],
http://photos.state.gov/libraries/moldova/106281/PDF-RU/2011-IRF-RU.pdf
[Last retrieved on 03.04.2013].
[226] Turcescu, Stan, *Church* cit., p.453.

### III. Sovietness, Places of Memory and the Invention of Tradition

Was there a historic community called "Soviet people" or is the phrase no more than an ideological slogan? Discussion of this question diminished sharply after the collapse of Soviet Union. However, a new battle for "Soviet" identity began in the early 1990s, and one of the strongest proponents of Soviet identity was the unrecognized Transnistrian Moldovan Republic.

The right to hold a referendum was used for the first time in the USSR in Transnistria in 1989-1990. On 3 December 1989 a referendum was held in Transnitrian city of Ribnitsa. The vote in favor of founding the Transnistrian Moldovan Autonomous SSR on the basis of equal functioning of all languages was 91,1%, with only 5,5% against. [227] The next referendum on the future of the Soviet Union was held on 17 March 1991, although the government of Moldova attempted to forbid it. In Transnistria from 94% to 98% of people supported the preservation of USSR. [228] A third referendum, on the independence of Pridestrovian Moldovian Republic, was held on 1 December 1991 with 98% of the population voting in favor of the resolution.[229]

In 1998 researchers from the Institute of Ethnology and Enthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Department of Political Science of the University of Chicago, and the Transnistrian State University studied the problem of self-identification in the Transnistrian population. Only 9% of respondents replied "no" to the question, "Do you think that Transnistria has the right to its own statehood?" [230] The reason for these results can be found in the historical context of the region. In August 1940 Transnistria lost its autonomous status and was united with Bessarabia, which was included in USSR under the according to Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The new Moldavian SSR was established. A multiethnic region that had existed for more than 100 years was combined with a region that had a very different history and culture. In the USSR internal borders were a mere formality; they did not impede the exchange of goods, information and cultural values. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the situation changed, and all the former Soviet republics–acquired clear borders. The mood for revival of statehood began in Transnistria.

While some Soviet republics started separation on the basis of nationality, self-identification in Transnistria was more complicated. Ethnic aspects were too weak to be the reason of the secession

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[227] A. Volkova, *Референдумы* cit., p.22.
[228] Bomeshko, Babilunga, *Приднестровский* cit., p.31.
[229] Ibidem.
[230] Ibidem, p.36.

of TMR from MSSR since the population of the region consisted of three approximately equal ethnic groups: Moldovans, Russians and Ukrainians. Such motives were more visible in terms of culture — people protested against the new Moldovan law "On language" — in the economic and the political program. Uniting against Romanization, Transnistrian authorities were not able to rely on the ethnic factor. Possibly the legacy of the Soviet Union helped the Transnistrian population to unite in the region not on the basis of nationality, but "sovietness."

During almost 70 years, Transnistria, as a part of Soviet Union, used the communist symbols. After the collapse of USSR and self-proclamation of TMR it was to create new state symbols for the new state. The easiest and the most attractive way was to borrow and transform the Soviet ones, creating a special new symbolism. The Soviet symbols were well recognized by the people and gave them a feeling of confidence and loyalty to the leadership–that was using these symbols.

The Transnistrian authorities continued to use the flag of MSSR as the state flag of the TMR. The coat of arms of the TMR is a remodeled version of the MSSR coat of arms. The only major change was the addition of waves, representing the Dniester River. Surprisingly, the hammer and sickle and the red star are retained in every Transnistrian state symbol. In May 2009 the Supreme Soviet of Transnistria proposed to use a Russian tricolor as the national flag of the region. This proposal was made in connection with numerous requests of citizens who consider Russian Federation as "the successor of the USSR, the guarantor for settlement of a Transnistrian conflict, the country with which they strive to unite."[231]

The coat of arms of the TMR is an image of two crossed hammers and sickles, symbolizing unity between workers and peasants. In the rays of the sun rising over the Dniester River, surrounded by a garland of ears of corn, fruits and grapes, are the words "Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic" in Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian. At the top, there is a five-pointed red star with golden edges. The coat of arms shows the principle of multiethnicity and tolerance in the region.

Transnistria state awards the state also have Soviet symbols. The Order "Of the Republic", "The Labour Glory" Order and three Orders "For the service to the homeland in the armed forces of Transnistria" includes the hammer and sickle and red stars. [232]

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[231] *"Коммерсантъ"* [Businessman], 04 May 2005, http://kommersant.ru/Doc-rm/1164262 [Last retrieved on 22.01.2013].

[232] *Указ "Об утверждении положения о государственных наградах Приднестровской Молдавской Республики"* [Decree 'On State Awards of TMW], http://zakon-pmr.com/DetailDoc.aspx?document=43991 [Last retrieved on 22.01.2013].

State symbols should reflect the history of the state, the relationship of the present with the past and the focus on the future. For the effective implementation of state symbols functions they should be original, i.e. their own design, not copied from others. Hence, how effective are the current state symbols of the Republic of Moldova? If one takes into account the point of view of those who believe that the Moldovan people are an invention of Stalin, and that in fact Moldovans are Romanians, these state symbols are not appropriate since some of them were copied from Romanian ones (flag, coat of arms). For the supporters of Moldovan who believe that the current Republic of Moldova is the historical continuation of medieval Moldavia, the appropriateness of the national symbols is greater. It should be remembered that the current flag and coat of arms of the Republic of Moldova[233] were copied from Romanian samples[234] when the idea of unification with Romania was extremely popular.

A second wave of pro-Romanian attitudes started in 2009 and continues to the present. On 13 July 2012 the Moldovan Government banned the use of Communist symbols for political purposes. The new law "On political and legal assessment of the totalitarian regime" was based on the work of the Commission for studying the totalitarian regime. The Liberal Party (one of the parties of the ruling parliamentary coalition) was an initiator of this prohibition. The law primarily concerned the Communist Party of Moldova — the biggest opposition party — led by former President of the Republic Vladimir Voronin. The law condemns "the totalitarian Communist regime in the Moldavian SSR, which committed crimes against humanity," [235] and prohibits the use of communist symbols (the hammer and sickle were mentioned as the examples) for political purposes. It is also forbidden to "promote totalitarian ideology." [236] In addition, the proposal for prohibition of the Soviet symbols in Chisinau was made by local authorities, as well as a ban on using the ribbons of Saint George, the symbol of Victory Day (9 May). [237]

As far as monetary system is concerned, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Transnistria has managed to create its own self-sustaining system. On the kopek coins there are communist symbols, while well-known personalities of the region are depicted on Transnistrian ruble

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[233] *Национальные символы Республики Молдова* [National symbols of Moldova], http://www.moldovenii.md/ru/section/721 [Last retrieved on 13.03.2013)].
[234] *Romania, an overview. The National Symbols*, http://chisinau.mae.ro/en/romania/311 [Last retrieved on 13.03.2013].
[235] *Proiectul hotărîrii privind aprecierea politico-juridică a regimurilor totalitare în republica Moldova No. 1677* [The draft decision on the Political and Legal Assessment of Totalitarian Regimes in Moldova No.1677],http://www.parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeactelegislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/1319/Default.aspx [Last retrieved on 30.01.2013].
[236] *Proiectul hotărîrii* cit.
[237] *"Лента"*[Lenta], 30 April 2013, http://lenta.ru/news/2013/04/30/kishinev/ [Last retrieved on 04.05.2013].

banknotes. On 1-ruble to 25-ruble notes there is Alexander Suvorov, a Russian general famous for outstanding military service. On the 50-rubles note the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko is represented. On the 100-ruble banknote is Dimitrie Cantemir, Prince of Moldavia (1693, 1710-11). On 200-ruble note Petr Rumyantsev-Zadunaisky, one of the foremost Russian generals of the 18th century is depicted. And on the 500-ruble banknote Catherine the Great is portrayed. Transnistrian authorities chose figures from ethnic groups represented in the region: Romanian-Moldavian Cantemir, Ukrainian Shevchenko, Russian Suvorov, and Russian-Transnistrian Rumyantsev-Zadunaisky. Thus, we can see the multiethnic tolerance of the Transnistrian people represented in their currency. In contrast, the Republic of Moldova is using the Leu, like the Romanian leu, which means "lion".

The TMR celebrates the main holidays of USSR: Army Day (23 February), Labor Day (1 May), Victory Day (9 May) and October Revolution Day (7 November). The holidays hail the accomplishments of professional groups and serve as a reminder of the history of the Transnistrian state.[238] The regional authorities exploit the Soviet past to legitimize their power and to influence the identity of Transnistrians. While celebrating the above-mentioned holidays, certain statements from state authorities predictably appear in media. The leadership continuously draws a parallel between the Second World and Transniatrian War: "Since the foundation of the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic, 23 February is our national holiday, the day of the Defender of the Fatherland. It was in 1918-1922, during the First World War and military intervention; it was in 1941-1945, when the Soviet Union gave the invincible resistance to the fascists in the Great Patriotic War. In this it was in 1990-1992, when Transnistrians defended the independence of the new state in the struggle against the national-fascist of Moldova." [239]

The emphasis on tradition is evident in these speeches as well. One of the Communist leaders of Transnistria announced on Labor Day that the value of the holiday is significant in both past and present: "The holiday is symbolic because it has been celebrated for more than 100 years. For decades our fathers and grandfathers attended these demonstrations with a positive attitude, with

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[238] N. Cojocaru, S. Suhan, *Stratagems in the construction of the Transnistrian identity*, in "Psihologia Sociala", 15, 2005, pp.119-134.

[239] *Выступление Президента ПМР Игоря Смирнова на встрече с руководителями общественных организаций, посвященной Дню защитника Отечества* [The speech of TMR president Igor Smirnov on the Army Day],
http://pmr-kazaki.ucoz.ru/news/vystuplenie_prezidenta_pmr_igorja_smirnova_na_vstreche_s_
rukovoditeljami_obshhestvennykh_organizacij_posvjashhennoj_dnju_zashhitnika_otechestva/2011-02-23-870
[Last retrieved on 24.04.2013].

hope and faith in a better future." [240]

Despite the fact that the Soviet Union has not existed for more than 20 years, people in Transnistria continue to commemorate October Revolution Day. They go to demonstrations, some people because of tradition, some because of nostalgia, others to express political opinions. These commemorations of the October Revolution are quite small, but there is no disaffected attitude towards the Soviet past, as can be seen in other post-Soviet successor states. The leadership of the TMR tries to maintain continuity and promote mutual understanding through such activities as exhibitions of historical materials illustrating the events of the revolutionary era or concerts, but these activities appeal mainly to the older generation. This attitude is supported, however, by political propaganda in mass media: "Today, celebrating this feast, we should not forget the lessons of history. We have to remember the connection of the history of our region with the October Revolution." [241] "Today we pay tribute to the revolutionaries, who later became the Soviet leaders, who defended the USSR with weapons in their hands, who worked in the fields and factories, in order that our state might prosper." [242]

In Russia, however, October Revolution Day was renamed The Day of Accord and Reconciliation in 1996, which altered attitudes toward the events of history. In 2005, October Revolution Day was abolished as a state holiday and a new one, National Unity Day, was established on 4 November. [243] Thus, it can be shown that Russia is attempting to forget the Soviet past and educate future generations in new historical conditions. The same situation can be seen in the Republic of Moldova (Bessarabia) where even in the years of the presidency of Vladimir Voronin, leader of the Moldovan communists, 7 November was a normal working day. Nevertheless, Transnistria is not alone celebrating this holiday;–October Revolution Day continues to be celebrated in Belarus[244] and Kyrgyzstan[245].

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[240] I. Hohlovskaya, *"Мир!Труд!Май!" Как это звучит сегодня?* [Peace! Labour! May! How Does It Sound Today?], in *"Правда Приднестровья"* [Transnistrian Truth], 4 May 2012, 16, p.3.

[241] *7 ноября в Приднестровье отмечают 94-ю годовщину Великой Октябрьской революции* [Transnistria Celebrates 94th Anniversary of October Revolution on 7 November], http://mkspmr.idknet.com/content/view/7185/230/ [Last retrieved on 24.04.2013].

[242] *В Приднестровье отметили 93-ю годовщину Октябрьской революции* [Transnistria Celebrated 93rd Anniversary of October Revolution], http://radiopmr.org/news/1659/3/V-Pridnestrove-otmetili-93-yu-godovshhinu-Oktyabrskoj-revolyucii/ [Last retrieved on 24.04.2013].

[243] *Федеральный Закон о внесении изменений в статью 112 Трудового Кодекса Российской Федерации N 201-FZ* [Federal law "On alteration in article 112 of Labour Code of Russian Federation" N 201-FZ], http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=LAW;n=50993 [Last retrieved on 01.04.2012].

[244] *Belarus official holidays*, http://www.belarus.by/en/about-belarus/national-holidays [Last retrieved on 24.04.2013].

[245] *National Holidays of the Kyrgyz Republic*,

Moldova in the same way uses its national holidays to affect people's attitudes. The national holiday Limba Noastră is one of those days. It appeared in 1989 with the law "on the use of languages." It is not only the day of the state language, but also the day of the national cultural heritage of the country. Limba Noastră means "our language," the same as the title of the country's national anthem. Limba Noastră is very similar to Independence Day, but the difference is that on Independence Day the country's sovereignty and its territorial and political autonomy is celebrated, while at Limba Noastră the inviolability of the national language, and traditions and freedoms related to the cultural development of society are celebrated. We can see in the media such statements from the leadership: "I express my deep gratitude and respect for those who fought so that today we are speaking Romanian, and feeling ourselves as masters in our own house." [246] Beginning in schooldays, we should raise children to respect the official language. For their own good, those who wish to make a good career in the Republic of Moldova or be nominated for a responsible job in a state agency should know the official state language." [247]

In 2012 the Liberal Party of Moldova proposed an initiative to rename the holiday "*Limba noastră cea română*" (our Romanian language). [248] The Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs and Immunities issued a positive opinion on the draft law submitted by the Liberal Party. This document will be presented in the parliament. Such actions can only increase the controversy between both banks of the Dniester River.

The leadership of the two regions uses the Soviet past for their purposes not only with the public holidays, but also with the image of a cities: monuments, names of streets and public places such as cinemas, shopping malls, cafes, squares, clubs, etc. Scriptwriter and journalist Joseph Reaney wrote in one guide: "Walking around Tiraspol is akin to wandering around Leningrad in its heyday, with stunning spectacles of the Cold War era on every corner. From severe-looking statues of Lenin and haphazardly-parked Soviet tanks to anti-imperialist graffiti and home-owned hammer and sickle flags; this is a city that is proud to be keeping the socialist end up." [249]

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http://www.kgembassy.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=109&Itemid=222 [Last retrieved on 24.04.2013].

[246] *Филат, Гимпу и Киртоакэ о родном языке* [Filat Ghimpu and Chirtoacă on Native Language], http://news.mail.ru/inworld/moldova/politics/6697796/ [Last retrieved on 23.04.2013].

[247] *Николай Тимофти: Уважение к официальному языку надо воспитывать с детства* [Nicolae Timofti: Respect for the Official Language Should be Cultivated from the Childhood], http://www.terra.md/ru/news/moldova/n_t/default.aspx [Last retrieved on 24.04.2013].

[248] *Либералы подготовили проект ликвидации праздника Limba noastră* [The Liberals Prepared a Draft on Liquidation of Limba noastră Holiday], http://www.noi.md/ru/news_id/15598 [Last retrieved on 24.04.2013].

[249] J. Reaney, *Travelling under Lenin's Watchful Eye*, in "Shoestring", 2, 2010, pp.18-19.

The fate of Soviet monuments after the collapse of the Socialist system and the collapse of the Communist regimes differs across the USSR successor states. Many of the monuments of the Soviet era have become the objects of vandalism. Most of them were disassembled or destroyed by the authorities of the new republics; some were moved to other locations, often on the outskirts of cities, or in cemeteries, or special "Museums of Soviet occupation." Some of the monuments were sold to collectors or as scrap metal or were moved to Western Europe and the United States.

Soviet monuments, including statues of Lenin and Stalin, memorials to the October Revolution and its heroes, or to the Second World War and to the consolidation of the Communist regime, or the history of the armed forces of the USSR and other socialist countries, are perceived differently in the two regions.

For example, the monument to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that was installed in 1976 near the Parliament building of the Republic of Moldova in Chisinau was smashed with hammers by vandals in 1991. Then on 25 August 1991 it was disassembled by decision of the Presidium of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova.

Another case concerns the statue of Lenin that was built in October 1949 in the central square in front of the Government House, which was dismantled in 1991. Now it is located in the free economic zone "Moldexpo." Attempts to demolish the monument were made several times. Again in April 2012, group of veterans of the armed conflict in the Dniester region had the idea to destroy the statue of Lenin. Dozens supporters gathered at "Moldexpo" to destroy the monument, but they were met by representatives and supporters of the Communist Party, who protected the monument with great zeal. The disagreement between the two groups continued for several hours, and eventually the representatives of Communist Party persuaded the veterans to abandon their plan to destroy the monument.[250]

Even as old monuments are being dismantled in Moldova, new ones are appearing. A bust of the historian Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940) was unveiled on 31 August 1993 in the Shtefan chel Mare Park. Nicolae Iorga was a Romanian historian, Byzantine scholar, literary critic, writer, politician, member of the Romanian Academy and one of the founders of the National Democratic Party. In 1931-1932, he held the posts of prime minister and minister of national education. This demonstrates how Moldova is restoring the cultural heritage of the time when Bessarabia was the

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[250] *Попытка снести памятник Ленину в Кишиневе - как это было* [An Attempt to Demolish the Monument of Lenin in Chisinau – How It Was], http://ru.publika.md/link_487711.html [Last retrieved on 09.07.2012].

part of Romania.

A new monument in Chisinau was built at the national holiday *"Limba Noastra"* on 31 August 2012. The bust of the first ruler of Romania, Cuza-Voda, was a gift from one of the Romanian District Council of Prahova.

On 27 June 2010 a memorial stone in memory of the victims of the Soviet occupation and the totalitarian Communist regime was installed at the place where the statue of Lenin had been located before 1991. In the same year acting President Mihai Ghimpu declared 28 June as the Memorial Day for victims of the Soviet occupation and the totalitarian Communist regime. According Ghimpu's speech, on 28 June 1940, Bessarabia, the eastern part of the historical territory of Moldova, was invaded by Soviet troops. [251] In his comments on the introduction of the new memorial date, Mihai Ghimpu stated that he considers this day as a "black day" for Moldova, when the tragedy of the Moldovan people began. [252] However, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova on 12 July 2010 declared the decree unconstitutional. [253] These attempts to abandon the Soviet past have an influence on self-consciousness formation of young people in Moldova.

On the contrary, monuments in Transnistria are closely linked to the history of Russia and the Soviet Union. On one Transnistrian tourism website it is written: "…we Transnistrians appreciate our history and unlike many of our fellows in the CIS, we are not fighting a war against it. We have not destroyed our monuments to Lenin and the great men of the Soviet era, and we have not renamed the streets honoring Soviet greatness. We recognize our history with pride, while still looking to the future." [254] This shows continuity from Soviet times, and the tolerant attitude of the local population to the Soviet heritage.

This attitude is apparent in the cities of Transnistria. In the center of Tiraspol, in front of the building of the Supreme Soviet and the Government of Transnistria, the monument of Lenin, which was built in 1987, still stands. It is interesting that in Transnistria there are monuments not

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[251] *В Молдове отменен указ о Дне советской оккупации* [Decree on Abolishemnt of the Day of Soviet Occupation Is Abrogated in Moldova], http://www.delfi.ua/news/daily/foreign/v-moldove-otmenen-ukaz-o-dne-sovetskoj-okkupacii.d?id=1076125 [Last retrieved on 05.07.2012].

[252] Ibidem.

[253] *Конституционный суд Молдовы признал незаконным указ о Дне советской оккупации* [Constitutional Court of Moldova did not Recognize the Decree on the Day of Soviet Occupation], http://ru.tsn.ua/svit/konstitucionnyy-sud-moldovy-priznal-nezakonnym-ukaz-o-dne-sovetskoy-okkupacii.html [Last retrieved on 06.07.2012].

[254] *About Transnistria*, http://www.transnistria-tour.com/en/about-transnistria [Last retrieved on 13.07.2012]

only of the Soviet politicians and leaders, but also of the Russian Empire important figures.

The equestrian monument to Alexander Suvorov in Tiraspol (1979) is considered one of the best monuments of the general in the territory of the former USSR. Alexander Suvorov is considered to be the founder of Tiraspol. The fortress Sredinnaja was established, according to his instructions for strengthening the new borders of the Russian Empire in 1792, on the left bank of the Dniester River. From that fortress the city of Tiraspol was founded.

### Changing street names

The changing of the names of streets is also crucial in the process of forming the identity of a people. Mia Swart affirms that "since memory is closely connected to the identity symbolized by a name, those who cannot be named cannot be remembered. To retrieve a name is to rescue a person from oblivion." [255]

Commemorative street names are a common feature of modern political culture, but it is not obligatory. Streets can have the alphanumeric names, like 5th Avenue and 62nd Street in New York, which take their names from the practical function of denoting a location. "Commemorative street names, together with commemorative monuments and heritage museums, not only represent a particular version of history but are also participants in the ongoing cultural production of a shared past." [256]

The naming of streets is an administrative and political act, the responsibility of the authorities, which expresses their power. One of street-naming's functions is the construction of a politicized version of history, which is "prone to manipulation and should therefore be viewed with caution." [257] The Soviet leadership used the names of the streets extensively, commemorating political figures such as Vladimir Lenin. "The renaming of streets is a conventional manifestation of a stage of liminal transition in political history, when the need of the new regime for legitimacy and self-presentation is especially high; it is an act of political propaganda with immense proclamative value and public resonance." [258]

The Soviet period had also had its decommemorations. After the death of Stalin the deposition of

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[255] M. Swart, *Name Changes as Symbolic Reparation after Transition: the Examples of Germany and South Africa*, in "German Law Journal", Vol. 9, 2, 2008, pp.105-120.
[256] M. Azaryahu, *The Power of commemorative street names*, in "Environment and Planning D: Society and Space", Vol.14, 1996, pp.311-330.
[257] Swart, *Name* cit., p.106.
[258] Azaryahu, *The Power* cit., p.318.

his personality cult began in USSR. These actions were done to eliminate the symbolic presence of party leaders from the public realm. Thus, what happened in the union republics after the collapse of USSR (renaming of streets, destroying the monuments of communist regime) was the typical process. The names of many streets in Chisinau were changed under the pro-Romanian policy. An attempt to rename the streets associated with the Soviet period could mean the intention to interpret history in a different way.

In 1970 one of the new streets in Chisinau was named Belski Street [*Strada Beliski*] in honor of the hero of the Soviet Union and honorary citizen of the city, Colonel Alexei Belski (1914-1970), under whose command Soviet troops in 1944 broke through to the center of the city and hoisted the red flag over one of the collapsed buildings of Chisinau. In 1991 the street was renamed in honor of Alexandru Ioan Cuza-Vodă, the prince who in 1859 united the part of Moldavia over the Prut River (which was not a part of the Russian Empire) and Wallachia under the sovereignty of Turkey. He called the new territorial union Romania. Under his rule the Romanian language started to be used in with the Latin alphabet. This renaming of the street underlined the desire of Moldovan authorities to introduce their language policy and to consolidate their identity in the public sphere. However, after 21 years, and numerous street rallies, the original name "Belski Street" was restored.

Pushkin Street [*Strada Puşkin*] is a street in the municipality of Chisinau, one of the main streets in the city center. Pushkin Street was known as Episcopal Street [*Arhierejskaja ulitsa*] from 1834 to 1874. In 1874 the street was renamed Provincial Street [*Gubernskaja Ulitsa]* in honor of receiving the status of province [*guberniya*] of the Russian Empire by Bessarabia in 1873. It had this name until 1899. In 1899 the street was renamed again in honor of the Great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin and until 1918 it was called Pushkin Street. In 1924 after the occupation of Bessarabia by Romania it had name of King Charles I. [259]

In 2009 a fierce dispute took place over renaming the Pushkin Street in honor of Grigore Vieru, a Moldovan poet and supporter of the unification of Romania and Moldova who was killed in a car accident. The idea of renaming one of the central streets of the city in honor of Vieru was proposed by Moldavian composer Eugen Doga, who later commented in the press that he did not

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[259] The title existed until 1944 when it was again renamed to Pushkin Street.

specify which street should be renamed. [260]

In January 2010 the Mayor of Chisinau, Dorin Chirtoaca, once again took the initiative to rename Pushkin Street. From 22 February 2010 the name of Grigore Vieru was officially awarded to the part of the Renaşterii Avenue and Pushkin Street retained the title.

Another case is the renaming of the Boulevard Stefan cel Mare (Prince of Moldavia between 1457 and 1504), the main street of Chisinau. In the early 19th century it was called the Millionaya Street *(ulitsa Milionnaja).* In the 1840s it was renamed Moscow Street. This name existed until 1877, then it became the Alexander Street until 1924. While Bessarabia was the part of Romania the street was renamed again. From 1924 until 1944, it was divided into two parts: one retained as Alexander Street, and the second was named Boulevard of King Carol II. In 1944 it became known as the Lenin Street and from 1952 to 1990 as Lenin Avenue. As we can see, most of the time this street carried names connected with Russian Empire or with Soviet Union, and only in 1991 did the street receive a new identity.

The Boulevard of the Soviet army [*Bul'var Sovetskoy Armii*] was built in the 1970s in Chisinau. The street was opened on the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Moldova in 1944. After the declaration of independence of Moldova the street was renamed Traian Boulevard (Mold. Bulevardul Traian) in honor of the Roman emperor Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus, who conquered the land of Dacia in the beginning of 100 AD.

"*Prospekt Mira*" [Peace Avenue] was built in the second half of the 1960s in Chisinau, and was declared to be one of the main roads of the city. In the late 1980s the housing estate "Gate City" was built on the road leading to the city's airport. After 1990 the street was renamed *Bulevardul Dacia* [Dacia Avenue] in honor of the people of Dacia, from whom, as is commonly believed, the Moldovans descended. The name change in this case is especially symbolic, because this is the street you follow while entering to the city from the airport.

Alba Iulia Street [*Strada Alba-Iulia*] is also one of the many renamed streets in Chisinau. It was originally called Buiucani Street, and later renamed as Engels Street in honor of one of the founders of Marxism, Friedrich Engels. From 1970 to 1990 it was called "*Prospekt Engelsa*" [Engels Avenue]. Finally, in 1990 it was named after the Romanian town Alba Iulia.

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[260] *Улица Пушкина станет улицей Виеру?* [Will Pushkin Street Become Vieru Street?], http://baza.md/index.php?newsid=395 [Last retrieved on 08.07.2012].

Decebal Boulevard [*Bulevardul Decebal*] has a long history as well. The street was built in the late 19th century and was named *Bachojskaya* Road. Until the 1950s it passed through the suburbs of Chisinau, where gardens and vineyards were located. After the liberation of Moldova from the Romanian occupation and reconstruction of the area the road was named Lvov Street. From the end of 1960s it was called Timoshenko Street in honour of the marshal of the Soviet Union of that name. In 1989 the street acquired a new name — Decebal Boulevard. Decebalus (originally named *Diurpaneus*) was the last ruler, military leader and high priest of Dacia (87-106 AD).

By contrast, we can see that in Transnistria the names of the streets remained largely unchanged. 25th October Street [*Ulitsa 25-go Octyabrya*] is one of the main roads of the Transnistrian capital Tiraspol. Before the 1880s it was the postal road, therefore its name was "Post Street" [*Pochtovaya ulitsa*]. Later, the street was called "*Pokrovskaya*" after the Pocrov Church, which was founded in 1798 and wrecked in 1931. In 1921, it was renamed "25th October Street", the name it retains today.

The longest street of Tiraspol is in honor of Karl Liebknecht, the leader of the German and international labor and Socialist movement, one of the founders in 1918 of the German Communist Party. Earlier, it had been called Trade Street [*ulitsa Remeslennaja*]. It is noteworthy that even Lenin Street still exists in Tiraspol.

There are not only Soviet names of streets in Transnistria, there is in fact a mixture of names from the of Russian Empire and the Soviet epoch: Chekhov Street, Tolstoy Street, Gogol Street, Kutuzov Street, *Odesskaja* Street, Suvorov Street, Cantemir Street, etc.

Other public places also underwent name changes. The Park "*Ştefan cel Mare*" is located in the heart of Chisinau. It was created in 1818, on the initiative of the wife of Bessarabian Governor Aleksej Bakhmetev. Originally, it had no name and was called simply "City Garden", although the townspeople informally referred to it as *Alexandrovskij* Park. In 1885, a bronze bust of Russian poet Alexander Pushkin was put in the middle of the park. In Soviet times the park was known as "Pushkin Park." After the collapse of the Soviet Union it was given the renames Park "Ştefan cel Mare."

Thus, we can see that place names plays a major role in the creation of a positive or negative sense

of place. "Names change because society changes." [261] There are many examples throughout history, when authorities changed the names of public places. For instance, in the French Revolution the names of streets were used for purposes of political representation. Instead of the statue of Louis XV in Paris a huge monument of Liberty was erected in 1792, and the square where it was located was renamed Place de la Revolution, today the Place de la Concorde. "The practice of commemoration by choosing and changing street and square names in Paris became an important component of French political symbolism." [262]

In this chapter, we have seen how the authorities of Transnistria exploited the Soviet past to justify the legitimacy of their power and affect people's mentalities using Soviet symbols, holidays and customs. The Soviet past was artfully used to retrieve images, symbols and examples, enabling the creation of an idealized history and initiating the idea of a Transnistrian nation. [263] In contrast, the authorities of the Republic of Moldova excluded the Soviet legacy from the state's reality and created new symbols to highlight new figures and thus influence the identity of the people as well as future generations.

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[261] S. Guyot , C. Seethal, *Identity of Place, Places of Identities Change of Place Names in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, in "The South African Geographical Journal", 89, 1, 2007, pp. 55-63.
[262] Swart, *Name* cit., p.114.
[263] Cojocaru, Suhan, *Stratagems* cit., p.126.

## Conclusion

This thesis has examined the issue of the existence of Transnistrian identity, Transnistrian statehood and the reasons for conflict in the region through analysis of political, historic, economic, religious and cultural aspects of social life. Analysis and examination of the hypothesis proposed in the introduction brings us to several conclusions:

First, the ethnic situation in the region differed from that in other former Soviet republics. The deep restructuring of the system as part of perestroika policy influenced the emergence of national movements in Soviet republics and subsequently led to social-political conflict in Moldova, which started with the language laws. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, numerous national movements appeared its former territories, but the population of Transnistria remained a multicultural and ethno-diverse community. In general, in the history of Transnistria, confrontations have not been based on ethnic, religious or cultural differences.

The trial experience of statehood in 1924-1940, albeit strongly limited by the totalitarian Stalinist regime, serves for the modern Transnistrian leadership as one of the main arguments for shaping the identity of the region. The formation of Transnistrian statehood in 1990s was a consequence of a conflict, in which ideological confrontation, rather than cultural, religious or economic issues, played a crucial role, leading to the territorial division of MSSR. Although the TMR has not been recognized by the international community, it has such attributes of an independent state as: a parliament, its own government, a constitution, local authorities, self-government bodies, national symbols, currency, etc., which contribute to the development of the very idea of Transnistrian statehood.

As there is no single dominant ethnic group in the region, the emphasis in Transnistria is on civil ideals of statehood, rather than on ethnic issues; priority is given to the creation of a new political identity. Referendums in Transnistria help support the idea of statehood, giving citizens the feeling that they are living in a democracy, and that the government is acting according to people's will. The establishment and strengthening of Transnistrian identity means its competitiveness with the Moldavian identity, and therefore the conflict between political and intellectual elites over the interpretations of the historical past and legitimacy of the regional borders.

Second, different economic development affected the identity of local population. Transnistria and Bessarabia not at a similar rate within the history of the two regions. In Soviet Moldova,

Transnistria was an industrialized and urbanized region with numerous unique and important industrial enterprises. Having de facto lost Transdnistria, the Republic of Moldova faces a serious energy deficit. However, both regions live in a precarious economic condition, which influences mass out-migration of people in search of better future prospects. Nearly 700 000 Moldovans, that is, approximately 20% of the total population of the Republic, are working abroad.[264]. Failure of government economic policies undermines people's loyalty and their belief in the legitimacy of the existence of Transnistria.

Third, the conflict in Transnistria split not only the territory of a state, but challenged the very existence of an independent Moldovan ethnos. Since the inhabitants of Moldova are considered to be Romanians by the new government, Moldovan identity, if it exists, is a minor, and regional phenomenon.

Today, students in Moldova study Romanian history and geography with inclusion of the territory of the Republic. They are using Romanian programs and textbooks. In contrast, TMR uses mainly Russian, Transnistrian and Ukrainian textbooks of history. As a result, the lessons of history of the same events are interpreted differently. Education and the language of instruction is a highly politicized issue in Transnistria and Moldova. The ideological element is persists in school textbooks, where the authors claim "scientific understanding" of the teaching of national history based on 'objective truth'. The Transnisrian leadership artfully used the image of "enemy", the idea of "we" against "the other," to manipulate people's attitudes. The mass media of both regions used similar techniques to influence negative attitudes among people on both sides of the Dniester River.

Fourth, the Moldovan version of language legislation attracted attention to the problems of the national language and culture, but the ideological dominance of the new language policy did not replace the model of linguistic interaction, but caused deformation of inter-ethnic relations in society, and influenced its division. The split transformed language loyalty even within the 'titular ethnic group" and divided it into supporters of the Romanian and the Moldovan national idea.

In fact, the idea of "greater Romania" is being implemented in Moldova at present, which changes civil and national identity. All the vital socio-cultural spheres underwent crucial changes. National symbols — flag, national anthem, language; switching to the Latin alphabet; education — school

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[264] V. Moshnyaga, *Социально-политическое влияние трудовой миграции в Молдове* [Socio-Political Influence of Labour Migration in Moldova], European University Institute 2012.

programs, where "history of Romania" replaced "history of Moldova"; scholarships Romanian Universities given to Moldovan youth; a relatively easy procedure for obtaining Romanian citizenship; and, finally, the Church — emergence of Romanian patriarchate parishes.

Is is clear that a specific regional identity exists in Transnistria. This territory is a striking example of a complex identity. Historically, this area was a passage on the way from the East European plain to the Balkans and southern Europe. The acquisition of Transnistria in the 18th century by the Russian Empire provided security for Moldovan, Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox population in the form of Russian troops and Cossack forces. Settlement in Transnistria by colonists of different nationalities created a multi-ethnic structure and the adoption of traditions of mutual respect and tolerance. With the exception of the period of the civil war 1917-1922 in Russian Empire and WWII, Transnistria did not escaped military operations within its borders until the conflict in 1992. Transdnistria had never been a part of Romania, except during the WWII years, "Romanization" is perceived by Transnistrians as a forced action and an external threat. Transnistrian identity includes both features: it is artificially constructed, but had natural preconditions for its formation as well. It is not stable.

Indeed, the Transnistrian leadership spared no effort to strengthen Transnistrian identity. It uses the Soviet past, Soviet symbols, holidays, names of the streets, and monuments to justify republican statehood and the legitimacy of power. Hence, there is nostalgia for Soviet ideology, which formed Soviet political identity as an alternative to an ethnic one. In contrast, Moldova excludes Soviet symbolisms in order to reinforce their own national idea of statehood. Special attention is given to the history of Transnistrian region. Numerous museums include exhibitions commemorating the Transnistrian war of 1992. The memory of Chisinau as "enemy" is used in the formation of a collective Transnistrian consciousness. The identity in this case is defined via such terms as "our land", "our language", and in opposite terms such as "aggressors-victims", "invaders-victims."[265] However, there is the question of how long the leadership will be able to use these terms to promote national cohesion. As new generations replace their elders, the memory of the Transnistrian War period will weakens, and it will become harder to manipulate people's attitudes.

Despite significant differences in identities of Moldovan citizens on both sides of the Dniester River, there are similarities as well. Identity in Moldova and Transnistria, based on linguistic and

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[265] Bencic, Hodor, *Transdniestriac* cit., pp.403-417.

ideological controversies, has a clearly transitional nature. It is not completely shaped, and a certain period must pass before it either solidifies or, on the contrary, becomes weaker.

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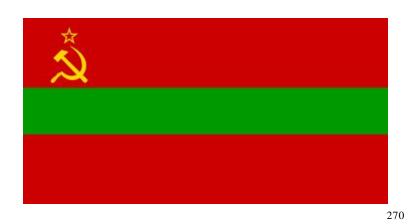*Экономика* [Economy], http://www.moldova.md/ru/economie/ [Last retrieved on 09.04.2013].

# Appendixes



266



267

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*Sommaire*

*La thèse examine l'existence d'une identité Transnistrienne, ces marqueurs d'identité comme la religion, le language, la culture et découvre les principales justifications pour accepter cette nouvelle identité. Ces problèmes observés à travers les champ de l'historiographie, l'économie en développement, le language, l'éducation politique, la religion, l'idéologie Soviétique et lieux de mémoire dans deux régions de la République de Moldavie: la Bessarabie et la Transnistrie.*

*Le problème de la Transnistrie n'est pas traité avec une vision isolée, mais dans le contexte des relations des territoires frontaliers. La recherche est composée de trois sections. La première section de "La formation d'un Etat Transnistrienne" est dévouée à l'historiographie de la région de la Transnistrie et la Bessarabie, au développement économique et aux prémisses du conflit armé. Elle passe en revue les caractéristiques ethniques des deux régions, la formation d'un nouvel "Etat" en 1924, le développement de la République socialiste soviétique autonome moldave (RSSAM) et République socialiste soviétique moldave (RSSM) dans la période Soviétique et se spécialise avec la formation de l'enclave Transnistrienne après la chute de l'Union Soviétique. Il faut noter que l'histoire des deux régions a été mise en lumière de manière simultanée, ce qui est un fait essentiel à la compréhension. Le développement de la Transnistrie et de la Moldavie dans son aspect linguistique, éducatif et religieux sont les aspects abordés dans la seconde section. La troisième partie analyse le phénomène de "sovietness" en Transnistrie, examinant l'héritage du régime soviétique dans les deux régions en leurs symboles nationaux, idéologiques, fêtes nationales, changements de noms et restructuration de l'espace public et de lieux de mémoire. Ces aspects montrent que les destins historiques distincts de la Transnistrie et de la Bessarabie causent des différences dans l'identification politique et culturelle propre. Le contexte socio-politique est présent dans toutes les parties du mémoire. La conclusion résume le point clé du mémoire.*

*Le mémoire conclut qu'en dépit des différences significatives dans les identités des citoyens moldaves, des deux côtés de la rivière du Dniester, il y a néanmoins des similitudes. Identité Moldave et Transnistrienne, est basée sur des controverses historiques et idéologiques ayant clairement une nature transitoire et non stable.*