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HISTORY OF ETHNO-NATIONAL RESEARCH
IN THE MOLDAVIAN ASSR/SSR

611.02 - HISTORY OF ROMANIANS (BY PERIODS)

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CONTENTS

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH	4
THE CORE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	7
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	25
BIBLIOGRAPHY	28
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS BY THE AUTHOR ON THE THESIS TOPIC	30
ANNOTATION	31
ADNOTARE	32
АННОТАЦИЯ	33

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance and importance of the chosen topic. The current ethno-national structure of the Republic of Moldova was formed over the centuries and was influenced by Roman provincial culture, the great migration of peoples, the arrival of the Slavs, and, beginning in the 19th century, by the annexation of Bessarabia by the Russian Empire (1812). At that time, colonization processes directed by the Tsarist government, as well as spontaneous ones, began – many peasants from the inner provinces of the Empire relocated to Bessarabia. As a result, in addition to the majority titular ethnic group – Romanians-Moldovans, Ukrainians, Roma (Gypsies), Jews, Greeks, etc., who had already been present, other peoples also settled in the region – Bulgarians, Gagauz, Germans, Russians, and others.

The annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR in 1940 and its re-annexation in 1944 required considerable efforts on the part of Soviet authorities to demonstrate the existence, first in the MASSR and then in the MSSR – both artificially created in 1924 and 1940 respectively – of a distinct “Moldovan people,” separate from the Romanian people, and of a “Moldovan language,” different from Romanian. From this point of view, understanding the essence of the process of studying ethno-national aspects during the Soviet period in the MASSR/MSSR is highly relevant today, as the consequences of these approaches continue to be actively promoted by certain forces within present-day Moldova.

For the history of science in the Republic of Moldova, it is especially important to trace how both academic research institutions and the field of ethno-national studies evolved – domains that were directly controlled by party authorities and heavily funded by the state, where many academic careers were built. Financial resources, human efforts, and time were wasted to satisfy interests far removed from science. As a result, the concept of anti-Romanian Soviet “Moldovenism” was created, meant to divide the Bessarabian Romanians from those across the Prut River and to justify their “liberation” from “Romanian-landlord occupation”. Today, the problem of “Moldovenism” remains relevant, as political circles in the Russian Federation continue to promote differences between the “Moldovan language” and the Romanian language, and between the “Moldovan people” and the Romanian people. Publications continue to appear, funded by forces hostile to Moldova’s European orientation and its fraternal relationship with Romania, which use old theses from Soviet historiography as “arguments” against this orientation. These same “arguments” are invoked by local pro-Russian forces to indoctrinate the mindset of ordinary people in the republic. In this regard, well-argued critique, based on a solid scientific foundation, of opinions expressed during the Soviet period is particularly timely.

During the Soviet era, the history of ethnic communities was entirely ideologized, being a component of the ideology promoted by communist authorities. Scientific schools in this field were absent – the only “scientific” school was based on the so-called “Marxist-Leninist teaching”. While research directions varied, researchers as a whole belonged to the same ideological school – Marxism-Leninism. Each justified their point of view through the Marxist-Leninist ideology on the national question. Some of them held important positions in the party and state leadership of Soviet Moldova.

The inclusion of this research topic in national and international scientific concerns, in an inter- and transdisciplinary context, gives it heightened relevance, as preventing errors in future research and conducting a correct scientific investigation require an objective examination of works from the Soviet period. Ultimately, this will lead to harmonization of interethnic relations in the Republic of Moldova.

The aim of this study is to study the evolution of science in the MASSR/MSSR regarding the investigation of the history of ethno-national research during the expansion of the dictatorship on the left bank of the Dniester, where the Moldavian ASSR (1924–1940) was established, and during the existence of Soviet statehood in Bessarabia and the former Moldavian SSR (1940/1944–1991). The study also aims to highlight the specific features of the research process on this issue, depending on the ethno-national policy of the communist regime at different stages of its evolution.

Research Objectives:

- To investigate the historiography and historiographic sources from socio-human and historical sciences, including unpublished ones, that allow for the exploration of the proposed topic.
- To identify the forms and methods of organizing science in the ethno-national field throughout the evolution of the Soviet regime, with the aim of effectively using scientific potential to support the false narrative about the early medieval formation of a “Moldovan people” and “Moldovan language,” distinct from the Romanian people and language.
- To examine sources regarding the role of the Communist Party and the Soviet state in determining policies related to ethno-national research in the USSR and in the MASSR/MSSR.
- To investigate the evolution of forms and trends in organizing science in the ethno-national field in the MASSR/MSSR and its relationship with scientific centers of the USSR.

- To highlight researchers' strategies for adapting to the directives of Soviet party and state authorities.
- To establish the main historical periods during which the issue addressed in the thesis was studied and to identify the key characteristics of these periods.

The research hypothesis stems from the fact that, during the Soviet period, ethno-national research was primarily directed toward justifying the ethno-national policy of the Communist Party in the non-Russian territories of the USSR—regions often inhabited by ethnic groups that extended beyond the Soviet borders. In order to avoid territorial claims from neighboring states, the regime resorted to the „creation” of ethnic groups distinct from their co-nationals across the border, an idea that was to be „scientifically” substantiated. Our hypothesis demonstrates that researchers were assigned a false objective: to divide a single people and to „argue” that there were two; to split a language and to „demonstrate” that there were two. Academic research in the MASSR/MSSR was overseen by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and under the strict conditions of dependence on the center, no local scientific school in the field of ethno-national studies emerged.

Summary of the Research Methodology and Justification of the Chosen Research Methods. The history of science regarding the ethno-national issue incorporates traditional research methods such as analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, as well as the approach from the concrete to the abstract, classification, and typologization. The use of these methods made it possible to identify various groups of authors and works, such as local researchers and those from Soviet Union scientific centers, scholars from the interwar and postwar periods, researchers who came to the MASSR/MSSR from other regions of the USSR, or those educated within the local educational system. Additionally, the following methods were applied throughout the research: the chronological method, the problem-chronological method, periodization, and the comparative-historical method.

Keywords: ethno-national, MASSR, MSSR, “Moldovan people”, “Moldovan nation”, “Moldovan language”, “Moldovan literary language”, Romanian language, Romanian literary language, Moldovans, Romanians.

THE CORE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The doctoral thesis consists of the table of contents, abstracts in Romanian, English, and Russian, the Introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, and the bibliography.

The *Introduction* justifies the relevance and significance of the researched topic, defines the geographical and chronological framework, outlines the aim and objectives of the research, and presents the research hypothesis. In addition, it describes the selected research methods, the novelty and originality of the study, the scientific problem addressed, as well as the theoretical significance and practical value of the thesis.

Chapter I. The Historiographical Dimension and Sources Concerning Ethno-national Research in the MASSR/MSSR examines the historiography of studies related to the ethno-national issue, revealing that research in this area has remained rather modest. The chapter identifies and analyzes both historiographical and historical sources, including previously unpublished archival materials discovered in the archives of Chişinău.

In *Subchapter I. The History of Ethno-national Research: Soviet and Post-Soviet Historiography* it is emphasized that, through an article published in 1925, the direction was set for the research of historians in the MASSR regarding the ethno-national issue, aiming to demonstrate the existence of a “Moldovan people” east of the Prut River, distinct from the Romanian people¹.

The chapter mentions that in the postwar historiography of the MSSR (1944-1991), the first publications regarding ethno-national investigations focused on the characterization of the opinions presented at the conferences and meetings of the Moldovan Scientific Committee. In 1949, N.A. Mohov published a brief report on the scientific session held by the Institute of History, Language, and Literature of the Moldovan Base (transformed in 1949 into the Moldovan Branch) of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, which took place in December 1947. The session discussed the plan for the work dedicated to the History of Moldova. After consultations with specialists from the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, this plan became the basis for the future textbook². A generalization of the research was carried out in 1954 by the president of the Moldovan Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Ia.S. Grosul, who emphasized the importance of the ethno-genesis of the “Moldovan

¹ Державин, К.Н. Кто такие молдаване? În: *Вестник знания*, 1925, № 7, pp. 519-522.

² Мохов, Н.А. Работа сектора истории Института истории, языка и литературы Молдавской научно-исследовательской базы Академии наук СССР. În: *Вопросы истории*, 1949, nr. 4, p. 156-157.

people”, highlighting the role of the Slavs in this process. In 1956, N. Mohov referred to the discussions on the ethno-genesis of the “Moldovan people”, pointing out that these discussions took place within a narrow circle and were rarely published in the press³.

The first synthesis of historiography in the MSSR was published in 1963 by Ia.S. Grosul and N.A. Mohov. They criticized the opinion of N. Borețki-Bergfeld (1880-1913), who had accepted the views of “Romanian chauvinist historians” on the origin of the Eastern Romance peoples. However, the authors made no reference to the achievements of MSSR historiography in the issue of the ethno-genesis of the “Moldovan people”⁴. In the study published in 1964, Ia.S. Grosul warned that the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR had discussed measures regarding research in the ethno-national field: the study of the history, language, and literature of the “Moldovan people”. In 1967, Ia.S. Grosul and N.A. Mohov published an article dedicated to the development of historical science in the MSSR, noting that the issue of the “ethno-genesis of the Moldovan people” had not been satisfactorily solved. They criticized Romanian historiography, which, in their view, underestimated the role of the Slavs, stating that the formation of the “Moldovan socialist nation” had been well studied⁵.

The activity of the *Scientific Council for the Complex Study of the Problem of Slavo-Wallachian Relations and the Formation of the Moldovan People* was presented in the studies signed by V.S. Zelenciuc and T.D. Zlatkovskaia, G.I. Spataru, and G.F. Cebotarenco. The activity of the Moldovan Scientific Committee in the field of research on the history of the “Moldovan people” and the “Moldovan language” was addressed by O.I. Tarasov.

In general, Soviet researchers failed to develop historiographical works with a profound and objective analysis of publications on the ethno-national issue, limiting themselves to informative descriptions that included declarative criticisms of “bourgeois” and Romanian authors. The presence of materials in local or union journals, which briefly presented the issue at hand, was intended to reassure the reader that investigations were being carried out in this direction.

The chapter mentions that the proclamation of independence stimulated the evolution of historiography in the Republic of Moldova, including the history of ethno-national research in the MSSR. Specialists were expected to evaluate/re-evaluate the research carried out during the Soviet period. It was a complicated task. Initially, researchers approached certain issues through

³ Мохов, Н.А. Научная работа историков Молдавии. În: *Вопросы истории*, 1956, nr. 5, p. 206.

⁴ Гросул, Я.С., Мохов, Н.А. Историография Молдавии. În: *Очерки истории исторической науки в СССР*. Москва: Издательство АН СССР, 1963, т. 3, pp. 657-658.

⁵ Гросул, Я.С., Мохов, Н.А. Историческая наука в Молдавской ССР. (Период социализма). În: *Вопросы истории*, 1967, nr. 2, pp. 22-26, 41.

the lens of personnel policy at the Institute of History in the post-war period, when individuals from outside the republic or from left-bank Moldova were promoted, while local specialists were treated with clear suspicion⁶.

An informative article on the achievements of the period 1946–2006 was published by D. Dragnev and I. Jarcutschi in 2006. The authors list a series of works without providing an analysis of the various problems related to the history of Moldova, including those concerning the “origin of the Moldovans”⁷.

Ethnocultural processes in the Carpathian-Dniester area during the 2nd–14th centuries, as reflected in post-war Soviet research, were examined in S. Matveev's monographic study, highlighting the politicization and monopolization of research by certain individuals, the exaggerated emphasis on the role of the Slavs, and the denial of the continuity of the Romance population east of the Carpathians⁸.

The chapter emphasizes that only in the last decade have studies begun to appear on the proposed research topic, with authors analyzing investigations in the ethno-national field, the institutionalization of research, and the biographies of some researchers. The article by Ion Xenofontov and Lidia Prisac draws attention to the fact that during the Soviet period, studies were elaborated referring to the existence of “Moldovans” as distinct from Romanians, while the thesis concerning the “primary rights of the Slavs” over Bessarabia is described as “purely propagandistic”, both ideas being promoted under the direction of the Propaganda Section of the Central Committee of the CPSU⁹. The study elaborated by I. Jarcutschi, C. Manolache, and I. Xenofontov underlines that, at the command of the Bolshevik party, specialists from the MASSR tried to “prove” the existence of a “Moldovan literary language”¹⁰.

In 2016, linguist Vasile Bahnaru published a review of the scientific achievements related to the creation of the “Moldovan people” and the “Moldovan language”, describing them as “two scientific-sounding aberrations developed to justify the seizure of Bessarabia in 1812 and 1940”¹¹. D. Dragnev's study notes that the activity of scientific personnel in the MSSR was under the supervision of the totalitarian regime, and the works were elaborated at the request of

⁶ Negru, E., Negru, Gh. Politica de cadre la Institutul de Istorie al AȘ a RSSM în perioada postbelică. În: *Basarabia*, 1991, nr. 12, pp. 184-186.

⁷ Dragnev, D., Jarcuțchi, I. Știința istorică din Moldova în anii 1946-2006. In: *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei*, 2006, nr. 1-2, p. 6.

⁸ Matveev, S. Procesele etno-culturale din spațiul Carpato-Nistean în secolele II–XIV. Istoriografia sovietică. Chișinău: Pontos. 2009, pp. 141-142.

⁹ Xenofontov, I., Prisac, L. File din activitatea Institutului de Istorie, Limbă și Literatură al Bazei/Filialei Moldovenești a AȘ a URSS (1946-1958). În: *Enciclopedia: Revista de istorie a științei și studii enciclopedice*, 2013, nr. 1, pp. 27-29, 36-37.

¹⁰ Jarcuțchi, I., Manolache, C., Xenofontov, I. Știința în Republica Moldova: file de istorie (I). În: *Enciclopedia. Revista de istorie a științei și studii enciclopedice*, 2013, nr. 1, p. 12.

¹¹ Bahnaru, V. Filologia și istoria sovietică moldovenească – diversiune științifică cu suport ideologic și geopolitic. În: *Akados*, 2016, nr. 2, p. 135-142.

authorities from Moscow and the MSSR. The author considers that the “Khrushchev Thaw” was a “period of limited liberalization of the totalitarian regime”, and that the main objective until 1991 was the “scientific substantiation” of the existence of two Eastern Romance peoples – Moldovan and Romanian – each with distinct histories and languages¹². Evaluating the scientific results in the ethno-national field, C. Manolache and I. Xenofontov consider them to be “rather modest”¹³. The same authors also addressed the institutionalization of academic science in the MSSR during the years 1946–1960, highlighting that priority was given to the study of the history, archaeology, and ethnography of the “Moldovan people”¹⁴.

Referring to the establishment of the Moldovan Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1949-1950, I. Xenofontov highlights the “shortcomings noted in its activity, particularly within the Institute of History, Language, and Literature, whose collaborators still lacked a common opinion regarding the origin of the 'Moldovan language,' its 'specific characteristics,' its literary heritage, and the incorporation of Marxism into the study of the Moldovan language”¹⁵.

D. Dragnev and I. Xenofontov examined the involvement of scientific institutions in the MSSR in Stalinist campaigns during 1946-1953, a period in which the existence of a “Moldovan language”, distinct from Romanian, was once again being “scientifically justified”. The authors analyzed the creation and activities of the Moldovan Scientific Research Base of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR between 1944 and 1949, which, in their view, led to the integration of scientific activity in the MSSR into the Soviet academic structure. At the same time, they emphasize that the primary research focus was on the formation of the “Moldovan people” and the “Moldovan language”, with a particular emphasis on the role of the Slavs in these processes. The authors point out that researchers were compelled to demonstrate the existence of the “Moldovan people” as distinct from the Romanian people, as well as the historical unity of the “Moldovan people” first with the Slavs, and later with Russians and Ukrainians.

The chapter also highlights that, in recent years, some studies have been published on the biographies and scientific work of specialists from the Soviet period, which, to some extent, have addressed ethno-national issues.

Subchapter II. Historiographical and Historical Sources. In this chapter, both historiographical and historical sources were examined. The term historiographical source refers to the studies carried out by specialists on a given topic, which, in this case, concerns the history

¹² Dragnev, D. Științe socioumanistice: evoluție și personalități. În: *Akademios*, 2016, nr. 3, p. 57-58.

¹³ Manolache, C., Xenofontov, I. Academia de Științe a RSS Moldovenești în perioada 1961-1990. Studiu retrospectiv. În: *Akademios*, 2016, nr. 2, pp. 7-17.

¹⁴ Manolache, C., Xenofontov, I. Instituționalizarea științei academice în RSS Moldovenească (1946-1960). În: *Akademios*, 2016, nr. 1, pp. 17-19.

¹⁵ Xenofontov, I. Constituirea Filialei Moldovenești a Academiei de Științe a URSS (1949-1950). În: *Studia Universitatis Moldaviae. Seria Științe Umanistice*, 2017, nr. 10, p. 239.

of ethno-national research in the Moldavian ASSR (MASSR) and the Moldavian SSR (MSSR). In other words, these are printed works or manuscripts produced between 1924 and 1991, which include research on the evolution of ethno-national processes over the centuries within the examined historical space. It is emphasized that a characteristic feature of historiographical sources is that they are part of socially oriented history. According to Soviet authorities, socially oriented history was expected to play a decisive role in shaping the Moldovan national identity of the indigenous population, distinct from the Romanian nation and language.

The historical sources used in this research are both *unpublished and published*. The unpublished historical sources were found in the archival funds nos. 12, 49, and 52 of the Archive of Social-Political Organizations of the Republic of Moldova (AOSPRM; currently the National Archives Agency) and in the Central Archive of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (currently the Archive, Restoration, and Document Pathology Department under the Scientific Library (Institute) “Andrei Lupan” of the Moldova State University). The unpublished historical sources were classified into 26 categories, including the transcripts of conferences between party and Soviet leaders and academic institutions of the MASSR/MSSR, official addresses from academic institutions to party officials from the CC of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Moldova, expert opinions from USSR scholars on studies conducted by MSSR specialists, decisions of the CC of the CP (b) of Moldova regarding the organization of scientific research, as well as various memoranda addressed to the highest party leadership by individuals involved in Soviet administrative structures. This classification also included activity plans of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Sector of the CC of the CP (b) of Moldova, confirming the strict control exerted by the party bodies over scientific research in the MSSR, including the planning and outcomes of research conducted at the Institute of History, Language and Literature and other research units. Likewise, personal files of historians active during this period were used.

The published historical sources are found in various volumes of documents from the archives of the USSR, MASSR, and MSSR, which were published in the USSR, the Republic of Moldova, and the Russian Federation. Some materials regarding the state of research after the re-annexation of Bessarabia in 1944 were published in volumes that appeared in 1976 and 1986. Relevant information on the subject is also provided by the transcripts and materials of the 8th Congress of Soviet Writers (1986), published in 1988. In certain cases, to illustrate the distorted arguments of MSSR researchers, representative documents were cited from collections covering periods up to the early 18th century, as well as from some medieval chronicles.

Of particular interest are two volumes published in 2000, which include documents from 1922 to 1958, revealing the Communist Party's complete control over historical research. It is

shown that research institutions within the Academy of Sciences of the USSR were established only upon the request of the Propaganda and Agitation Directorate to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). Another volume, published in 2014, contains the speeches of participants at the 1929 Conference of Ethnographers held in Moscow and Leningrad, demonstrating the complexity of the process of shaping Soviet ethnographic science¹⁶.

The documents published by historians from the Republic of Moldova, concerning the Soviet policies of *Moldovenization* and *Latinization* implemented in the MASSR, as well as the beginnings and development of the national liberation movement in the MSSR – which gave a new impetus to the process of scientific research¹⁷ – proved to be of great value. Valuable information was also provided by the documents published by E. Negru and Gh. Negru, which reflect the Soviet-Romanian dispute and the anti-Romanian campaigns of the party and Soviet bodies in the MSSR and beyond, during the years 1965–1989¹⁸.

The volume published in 2015 contains useful data from the period 1944–1991, including information regarding the scientific research carried out within academic and university institutions in the MSSR¹⁹. The difficult situation faced by research collectives in the MSSR after 1944 is well illustrated by the declassified documents from the NKGB-MGB archives, covering the years 1944–1946²⁰.

Interesting information regarding the issue under investigation is also found in the materials of the 3rd Congress of the Union of Writers of the Moldavian SSR, held in 1965 and published in 2016²¹.

The unpublished materials from the Joint Session of the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Institute of History, Language, and Literature of the Moldavian Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, held between December 3–7, 1951, were later published by the linguist Vasile Bahnaru²².

¹⁶ *От классиков к марксизму: Совещание этнографов Москвы и Ленинграда (5-11 апреля 1929 г.)*. Под ред. Д. В. Арзютова, С. С. Алымова, Д. Дж. Андерсона. Санкт-Петербург: МАЭ РАН, 2014.

¹⁷ *Partidul Popular Creștin Democrat. Documente și materiale, 1988-2008*. Vol 1. 1988-1994. Chișinău: S. n., 2008.

¹⁸ Negru, E., Negru, Gh. „*Cursul deosebit*” al României și supărarea Moscovei. *Disputa sovieto-română și campaniile propagandistice antiromânești din RSSM (1965-1989)*. Vol. 1. (1965-1975): Studiu și documente. Chișinău: CEP USM, 2013. 616 p.; Vol. 2. (1976-1989). Chișinău: CEP USM, 2016. 926 p.

¹⁹ *Cultura Moldovei Sovietice în documente și materiale, 1944-1991*. Ed. V. Ursu. Selecție V. Burlacu, et al. Ed. a 2-a rev. și compl. Chișinău: Pontos, 2015.

²⁰ *Purgatoriul sovietic în Basarabia: Directive, ordine și indicații ale NKGB-MGB, 1944-1946*. Editori A. Malacenco, L. Rotaru. Chișinău: S. n., 2022.

²¹ Bahnaru, V., Cojocaru, Gh. E. *Congresul al III-lea al Uniunii scriitorilor din RSS Moldovenească (14-15 octombrie 1965)*: Studiu și materiale. Chișinău: Tehnica-Info, 2016.

²² Bahnaru, V. *Calvarul limbii române în timpul dominației sovietice*: (Studiu și documente de arhivă), Chișinău: S.n., 2015, pp. 77-399.

Of particular value for this research are the memoirs of the linguist S.B. Bernstein, who provided previously unpublished information regarding the attitude of certain intellectuals from the MSSR towards the so-called “Moldovan language”. Bernstein also expressed his own objective position in his memoirs²³. Additional useful information regarding participation in an archaeological expedition in the MSSR is offered by M.S. Velikanova²⁴.

Chapter II. Research on Ethno-national Issues in the MASSR/MSSR under the Impact of the Communist Dictatorship (1918–1944). This chapter is structured into four subchapters.

*Subchapter I, entitled **The Beginning of Ethnological Investigations under the Influence of the Bolshevik Regime's Expansionist Policy towards Bessarabia***, presents a brief overview of publications from the Russian Empire and the early Soviet period concerning the origins of the “Moldovans”. The initial investigations were conducted by the Commission for the Study of the National Composition of the Population of Russia and Neighboring States, established in February 1917. After the Bolshevik coup in October 1917, the Commission retained only those specialists who accepted the new Soviet regime. Among its members was Leo Berg, who, in 1918 and 1923, published studies addressing the ethnic structure of Bessarabia, relying on works by authors from the Russian Empire. Although Berg acknowledged that Moldovans were of Romanian ethnicity, he rejected the 1918 Union Act and attributed primacy to the Slavs in the settlement of territories east of the Carpathians, claiming that Moldovans only appeared there in the 14th century. Consequently, according to Berg's perspective, Bessarabia was to be considered an integral part of Soviet Russia.

In *Subchapter II, The Formation of the “Autochthonous” Concept in the Identity Issue during the Constitution of the RASSM and the Institutionalization of Ethno-national Research in the Years 1924-1931*, it is emphasized that during the interwar period, the Soviet authorities recognized the presence of the Moldovan/Romanian population on the territories to the left of the Dniester River, and the task of studying the process of the formation of this identity was set before specialists, in accordance with the Soviet imperial perspectives to annex Bessarabia as well. Thus, ethno-national research was, from the very beginning, assigned a false task, a political issue, not a scientific one. The existence of a “single Moldovan people” on both banks of the Dniester River had to legitimize Soviet claims to Bessarabia.

The subchapter mentions that a new stage in the examination of ethno-national issues in Soviet historiography began during the formation of the RASSM. In the view of some Bolshevik

²³ Бернштейн, С.Б. *Зигзаги памяти. Воспоминания. Дневниковые записи*. Москва: Ин-т славяноведения, 2002.

²⁴ Великанова, М.С. О создании одной палеоантропологической коллекции (сокращенный вариант рукописи «Молдавские воспоминания»). In: *Вестник антропологии*, 2019, nr. 3 (47), pp. 90-106.

leaders, both unionist and local, the Moldovans on both banks of the Dniester were Romanians who spoke the Romanian language. They were opposed by other leaders who advocated for the creation of a local language based on the dialects spoken by the people. Since, during the constitution of the RASSM, there were no local researchers on identity issues, the theoretical principles underlying these issues were addressed by authors from scientific centers in Moscow and Leningrad. Among them was the linguist C.N. Derjavin, who insisted that the territories of the RASSM and Bessarabia were Russian lands, and that the Moldovans came there later than the Slavs²⁵. The attitude of some representatives from academic centers stimulated the tendency of the party authorities in the RASSM to request the union party leadership to establish local research institutions on identity-related issues. As a result, the institutionalization of scientific research in the RASSM occurred in 1926 with the formation of the Moldovan Scientific Committee²⁶, which was tasked with studying the origin of the “Moldovan people”, distinct from the Romanian people. During the years of activity of the Moldovan Scientific Committee, studies on the “Moldovan language”, anthologies, and dictionaries were published, in which the authors sought to demonstrate the differences from the Romanian language. At the same time, research in the field of history stagnated, as it was not a subject of study at the union level at the time, and linguistic research was based on class principles and Marxist-Leninist methodology. In 1931, the Moldovan Scientific Committee was harshly criticized for not being up to par in fighting deviations from the Leninist national policy, as well as for “narrow” chauvinism and nationalism, and for “Romanianizing tendencies”²⁷.

Subchapter III is titled *The Activity of the Moldovan Scientific Committee in the Field of Ethno-national Research in the Years 1932-1938*. This subchapter mentions that during the 1920s in the USSR, a campaign of Latinization was initiated for the non-Russian peoples of Central Asia and the North Caucasus. It was believed that the transition to the Latin alphabet was a powerful means of spreading the cultural revolution. Regarding the RASSM, for political reasons, in order to prevent the awakening of national consciousness and a spiritual connection between the Romanians from the left bank of the Dniester and those from Bessarabia, the party authorities did not allow the introduction of the Latin script.

Only towards the end of the 1920s, when the possibility of extending Soviet power over Bessarabia was no longer real, and the RASSM had not yet become a political center for the Bessarabians, and the “Moldovan” literary language created isolated the Romanians from the left bank of the Dniester from those in Bessarabia, the decision was made to switch to the Latin

²⁵ Державин, К.Н. Кто такие молдаване? În: *Вестник знания*, 1925, № 7, pp. 519-522.

²⁶ Dragnev, D., Xenofontov, I.V. Organizarea instituțională a cercetărilor istorice academice în RSS Moldovenească: premise, etape și elaborarea discursului legitimant. În: *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie: materialele sesiunii șt. anuale, 20 dec. 2018*. Chișinău: Institutul de Istorie, 2019, p. 271.

²⁷ AOSPRM, F. 49, inv.1, d. 2025, f. 26-30.

alphabet. As a result of the decisions of the party authorities between 1932 and 1937, literacy was carried out in the Latin script²⁸. Through press publications and works by writers, the Romanian language was promoted, which contributed, to some extent, to halting the denationalization of the Romanians on the left bank of the Dniester. As a result of the switch to the Latin script, the “Moldovan language” was to be enriched with words from the Romanians of Old Moldavia and Bessarabia. However, the party authorities did not advocate for Romanianization, but only for the creation of a “Moldovan language” understood by the inhabitants of both Bessarabia and the RASSM, and they did not support historical research, believing that the switch to the Latin script did not, in their view, require scientific proof of the identity of the Moldovan language with the Romanian language and the Moldovans with the Romanians. The main focus was on the imperial interests of the USSR to create a language understood by the inhabitants of both the RASSM and Bessarabia, in preparation for the annexation of the latter to the USSR.

At the same time, the Communist Party kept the Moldovan Scientific Committee under strict control. Its activities were discussed at party meetings, where it was accused of not understanding the importance of Latinization in the Republic, of hiring counter-revolutionary nationalists, and of admitting errors and distortions in the national-cultural construction in the RASSM. The leadership of the Moldovan Scientific Committee was blamed for sabotaging this measure. The Linguistics Section, in particular, was criticized for publishing a Grammar that abounded with serious mistakes and “distortions of a narrow-nationalist character”. The illustrative material was considered primitive and politically harmful²⁹.

As a result, in 1935, the Moldovan Scientific Committee was reorganized into the Moldovan Institute of Scientific Research under the Commissariat of the People’s Education, structured into two sections: the History Section and the Linguistic-Literary Section. The Institute was tasked with preparing a bibliographic index related to the history of Moldova and an agrobiological dictionary. The commitment to prepare a history of Bessarabia was never realized. A certain success was the collaboration with the well-known Romanist philologist, Professor M.V. Serghievski from Moscow University. He believed that it was impossible to provide a definitive answer regarding the formation of the “Moldovan people” and its language, noting that the sources examined allowed, with some foundation, to speak about the independent development of the “Moldovan language”. He also mentioned that the fact that a literary language was formed in Wallachia, which Moldova adopted in the 17th century, in no way

²⁸ *Despre învățarea în masă a scrisului latinizat de către locuitorimea vârstnică moldovenească în anul de învățământ 1933-1934: Hotărârea Comitetului regional al PC(b)U de la 26 septembrie 1933. Tiraspol: CNI RASSM, 1933 (textul a fost publicat în grafie latină). Politica de moldovenizare..., Op. cit., p. 165.*

²⁹ AOSPRM, F. 49, inv. 1, d. 2600, f. 33.

diminished the importance of the independent evolution of the “Moldovan language”. However, he considered that these conclusions were not definitive³⁰. Of course, under the conditions of the totalitarian regime of the time, the linguist could not express an opinion about the unity of the Romanian language. Among the local historians, N. Narțov accused Romanian historiography of using history to capture new territories. The author took historical data from the works of Romanian historians, treating them tendentiously and unprofessionally, and declared that “Daco-Slavs who were romanized” formed the states of Moldova and Wallachia, which were considered to be Slavic states³¹.

In 1936, when the victory of socialism was declared in the USSR, enshrined in the Constitution, ideological mutations occurred in the Communist Party's ethno-national policy, and the policy of Russification in the republics expanded. In 1937, a campaign of “de-Romanianization”³² began in the RASSM, during which many representatives of the national intelligentsia were declared “enemies of the people” and executed.

Subchapter IV: Ethno-linguistic Research from the Outbreak of World War II to the Second Annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR (1939-1944). In 1939, when the leadership of the USSR began preparations for a potential annexation of Bessarabia, the Moldovan Institute of History, Economics, Language, and Literature was founded in Tiraspol, under the Soviet Council of People's Commissars of the RASSM³³. In 1940, the Institute was transferred to Chișinău. The annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR required new “arguments” from Soviet researchers regarding the existence of the “Moldovan people” and their language, which was distinct from the Romanian language. The publications of local historian-propagandists like N. Narțov, V. Senchevici, and others typically adopted the views of Soviet Slavicists, emphasizing the presence of Slavs in Bessarabia and RASSM. To lend more credibility to the arguments, scholars from Moscow and Leningrad, including academician N. Derjavin, were involved. Derjavin stated that Moldovans were descendants of Slavs, and Romanians were Balkan immigrants from the 12th-13th centuries who settled in the territory of Wallachia and later spread to the territory of Moldova³⁴.

On July 6, 1941, the Institute was evacuated to Buguruslan, Orenburg region. An undated memorandum from V. Senchevici, the director of the Institute, addressed to the CC of the

³⁰ Сергиевский, М.В. *Молдавские этюды*. Москва; Ленинград: Изд-во Акад. наук СССР, 1936, pp. 29- 46.

³¹ Нарцов, Н. Вплотную заняться историей молдавского народа. În: *Революция и национальности*, 1936, nr. 10, p. 87; Нарцов, Н. Пора заняться историей молдавского народа. În: *Красная Бессарабия*, 1936, nr. 6, p. 5; Нарцов, Н. Подготовка книги по истории молдавского народа. În: *Красная Бессарабия*, 1937, nr. 7, p. 20; AOSPRM, F. 49, inv. 1, d. 3775, f. 37-40.

³² Holostenco, M. Munca național-culturală în Republica Moldovenească și chestia națională în Basarabia. În: *Octombrie*, 1937, nr. 6-7, p. 61.

³³ Сергиевский, М.В. *Молдавские этюды*. Москва; Ленинград: Изд-во Акад. наук СССР, 1936, pp. 29- 46.

³⁴ Державин, Н.С. Происхождение молдавского народа. În: *Советская наука*, 1940, nr. 12, pp. 3-28.

Communist Party (b) of the USSR, noted that in the fall of 1942, the CC of the Communist Party (b) of Moldova and the Soviet Council of People's Commissars adopted the decision to restore the Institute. At that point, only seven people were working there, and its activities were very limited. Senchevici does not mention any achievements in the field of ethno-national research³⁵. The Institute began to operate more effectively in July 1943 when its tasks were discussed in a joint meeting of the CC of the Communist Party (b) of Moldova and the Soviet Council of People's Commissars of the RASSM, held in Moscow. During the meeting, N. Națov declared that the history of the "Moldovan people" and their language was a rather complicated issue, one that had been discussed for two centuries in Western literature (he listed the names of 14 Romanian and Western historians), but the issue of the origin of the "Moldovan people" and their language remained unresolved³⁶. It was later clarified that none of the historians listed by Națov had addressed the issue of the origin of the "Moldovan people", and all had focused on the origin of the Romanian people and the Romanian language. Națov accused Romanian historians of nationalism³⁷.

Chapter III: Ethno-national Research in the MSSR between 1944-1991 consists from 4 subchapters.

Subchapter I: Ethno-national Research Under the Impact of Stalinist Ideology (1944-1956): Institutional Organization and Promotion of the Official Conception. This subchapter highlights that after the reannexation of Bessarabia, Soviet authorities institutionalized scientific research in the MSSR. The Moldovan Institute of History, Economics, Language, and Literature was recognized as the primary center for the future structure of the USSR Academy of Sciences in the region. The task was set to develop the history of the "Moldovan people". For this purpose, specialists from scientific institutions of the USSR were brought in, emphasizing that most local personnel had studies from Romania, did not know Soviet science, and had to be trained in Marxist-Leninist thought³⁸.

The subchapter further emphasizes that Moscow made efforts to correctly guide ethno-national research in the MSSR. At the scientific session of the Institute (August 1945), A.D. Udaltov stated that the "Moldovan people" were formed as a result of the "fraternal rapprochement of the Romanesque elements with the Eastern Slavic ones"³⁹. Similar conclusions were drawn by Professor M. Serghievski⁴⁰.

³⁵ AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 5, d. 539, f. 26.

³⁶ AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 1, d. 134, f. 2.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 6.

³⁸ AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 5, d. 539, f. 35-35 verso.

³⁹ Udaltov, A.D. Temeiurile teoretice ale cercetărilor etnogenetice. În: *Însemnări științifice ale Institutului de Istorie, limbă și literatură al Bazei Moldovenești de Cercetări Științifice a AȘ a URSS*, 1947, vol. 1, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Сергиевский, М.В. *Молдаво-славянские этюды*. Москва: Изд-во Акад. наук СССР, 1959, pp. 200-202.

It is also mentioned that local authors weighed in on the issue of the “Moldovan language”. I.D. Ceban's article was a manifesto against Romanians and “Moldo-Romanian nationalists”, accusing them of banning the “Moldovan written language”, introducing the Romanian alphabet and Romanian language, expressing hatred toward Slavic-derived words, and failing to recognize the “Moldovan people” and their “Moldovan language”. The author claimed that the “true Moldovan literary language” was created in the RASSM and should be protected from “Romanian-French” influence⁴¹.

An interesting aspect is the attention paid to ethno-national research by party and state organs. The goal was for scholars to “prove” that the territories east of the Carpathians in the 3rd-4th centuries were inhabited by Slavs, then became part of the Kievan and Galician-Volhynian principalities, and that the Romance-speaking population entered the region after it was occupied by Slavs. This was intended to ensure the primacy of the Slavs in these regions. This is one of the fundamental theses of the imperial concept. However, the attempt to publish *Short Sketches on the History of Moldova* failed, as the manuscript omitted the issue of the origin of the “Moldovan people” and did not argue that Slavs were the indigenous inhabitants of Moldova until the 15th century⁴².

In May 1946, the Moldovan Base of the USSR Academy of Sciences was created, and it started functioning in January 1947⁴³. All subdivisions of this institution were legally incorporated into the structure of the Union Academy and were required to execute the political and ideological directives of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

The publication in 1950 of Stalin's article *Marxism and the Problems of Linguistics*, in which Marr's linguistic theory was criticized and the “Moldovan nation” was mentioned as a Soviet nation, set new objectives for researchers in the Moldavian SSR. They were expected to “demonstrate” the existence of the new “socialist Soviet Moldovan nation”. Linguists from the Moldavian SSR hastened to respond to Stalin's call, and in 1951⁴⁴, they published a volume that, in their view, reflected the issues of the “Moldovan language” in light of Stalin's works. The authors criticized Marr's theory but also questioned some of the theses put forth by specialists from Moscow and Kyiv. As a result, they were accused of failing to recognize the beneficial influence of the Slavic and Russian languages. Their articles were deemed scientifically weak, and the authors were blamed for insufficient knowledge of Stalin's teachings on language. To keep matters under control, a session was organized in Chişinău in December 1951, attended by

⁴¹ Чебан, И. Очищать молдавский язык от чужих влияний. În: *Советская Молдавия*, 1945, 1 июля (nr. 127).

⁴² AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 3, d. 242, f. 51.

⁴³ AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 7, d. 289, f. 2; Dragnev, D., Xenofontov, I.V. Crearea şi activitatea Bazei Moldoveneşti de Cercetări Ştiinţifice a URSS (1946-1949). În: *In memoriam Gheorghe Palade, 1950-2016*. Chişinău: Bons Offices, 2018, p. 428; AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 4, d. 19, f. 294-299.

⁴⁴ *Вопросы молдавского языка в свете трудов И. В. Сталина*. Отв. ред. И.Д. Чебан. Кишинев: Шкоала советикэ, 1951, p. 24.

philology specialists from the USSR, as well as party and state leaders, giving the session a distinctly political character.

Gradually, archaeologists also became involved in researching the ethnogenesis of the “Moldovan people”. They asserted that the archaeological monuments between the Dniester and the Prut from the 9th–10th centuries belonged to the Slavic Tiverians, followed by the old Russian population. According to them, the Moldovans appeared in the region towards the end of the 13th century, and the Slavs played a significant role in the formation of the “Moldovan people”. However, an article published by Ion Hîncu noted the emergence, between the 12th and 14th centuries, of a new type of pottery, which was considered Romance or old Romanian⁴⁵. Clearly, even during the “Thaw” period, claiming that an old Romanian ceramic tradition might have existed between the Dniester and the Prut was an act of courage – after all, the ceramics in the region were supposed to be only Moldovan and Slavic.

Subchapter II is titled *Ethno-national Issues in Research during the Khrushchev Thaw (De-Stalinization) (1957–1964)*. It is noted that the Khrushchev Thaw marked a rejection of Stalinist interpretations of history and a tendency to reevaluate history based on Lenin’s perspectives.

The activity of historians in the Moldavian SSR was closely monitored by academic institutions in the USSR. The issue of scientific research in the field of ethno-national studies was addressed by Ia. S. Grosul. He emphasized that the Marxist interpretation of the ethnogenesis of the “Moldovan people” had great scientific and political importance, but bourgeois nationalists were using various anti-scientific theories on the subject for reactionary political purposes.

An important moment in the scientific life of the Moldavian SSR was the publication in 1962 of the study by Iurie Kojevnikov (1922–1992), in which local authors were accused of neglecting the word *Romanian* in their studies and replacing certain notions with others, such as Moldo-Wallachia instead of Romania, and Moldova instead of Romanian and “Moldovan people”⁴⁶. While these observations were accurate, they had little chance of success in the Moldavian SSR, where the existence of a “Moldovan people” distinct from the Romanian people was being “demonstrated”. Kojevnikov’s article was discussed at the joint meeting of the Social Sciences Section of the Academy of Sciences of the Moldavian SSR and the leadership of the Writers' Union of the Moldavian SSR in December 1962. The resolution adopted at the meeting emphasized the need to put the literary heritage in the service of building communism, while the periodization principles of Moldovan literary history formulated by Kojevnikov were declared

⁴⁵ Хынку, И.Г. Раскопки на селище XII-XV веков Лукашевка V. În: *Краткие сообщения о докладах и полевых исследованиях Института Археологии АН СССР*, 1961, вып. 86, pp. 90-91.

⁴⁶ Кожевников, Юрий. Бережно относиться к классическому наследию. În: *Вопросы литературы*, 1962, nr. 1, pp. 103, 113-114.

debatable⁴⁷. The discussion and the resolution were reported to Ivan Bodiul, who was also sent a copy of the adopted decision⁴⁸.

The subchapter mentions that one of the leading figures of *Moldovenism* was N. Mohov. In his study, published in 1964, Mohov insisted that most of the territory of future Moldova had not been part of the Roman Empire, although the empire's influence had been considerable. He further claimed that the Dacian language had been replaced by Vulgar Latin, from which the “Moldovan language” later developed. According to Mohov, in the 6th–7th centuries, the future territories of Wallachia and Moldova were occupied by Slavs, while the region between the Dniester and the Prut was part of the Kievan Rus’ and later the Principality of Halych (9th–13th centuries). He argued that the “Moldovan language” emerged as a result of the intermingling of Slavic and Romance languages. The study also emphasized that the ancestors of the Moldovans and Wallachians were the *Volokhs* and that after the expulsion of the Tatar-Mongols, the dominant population consisted of Moldovans, who had migrated from the Carpathians.

The end of 1964 brought a major blow to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine as understood in the USSR with the publication of Karl Marx’s manuscripts. In these manuscripts, Marx correctly referred to the language of the inhabitants of Moldova and Wallachia as the *Romanian language*, noting that the inhabitants “call themselves Romanians”, while their neighbors refer to them as *Vlachs* or *Wallachians*⁴⁹. However, the work was confiscated and was not made available to researchers for investigating historical issues from a “Marxist perspective”, as the Marxism presented in it did not align with the Soviet imperial concept.

Subchapter III: Ethno-national Investigations in the Moldavian SSR During the Period of Stagnation and the Romanian-Soviet Dispute (1965–1984). This section emphasizes that the end of the “Thaw” led to the resurgence of Moldovenist supporters, who upheld the theses promoted by the Communist Party regarding ethno-national issues. The study of the history of science in this field reveals that freedom of expression was further suppressed, and an open struggle against Romanian historiography began.

A significant event was the Third Congress of Writers (October 14–15, 1965), where, among other issues, the replacement of the Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin script was discussed. The authorities labeled the congress as “nationalist”⁵⁰. The measures taken after the congress effectively blocked the progress of ethno-national science, leaving only the falsified path of investigating the ethno-genesis of the “Moldovan people” and the “Moldovan language”. In

⁴⁷ AOSPRM, F. 51, inv. 23, d. 224, f. 3-4. f. 6-7.

⁴⁸ Marx, K. *Însemnări despre români (manuscrise inedite)*. Publicate de A. Oțetea și S. Schwann. București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1964, pp. 115, 171.

⁴⁹ Marx, K. *Însemnări despre români (manuscrise inedite)*. Publicate de A. Oțetea și S. Schwann. București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1964, pp. 115, 171.

⁵⁰ Bahnaru, V., Cojocaru, Gh.E. *Congresul al III-lea al Uniunii Scriitorilor din RSS Moldovenească (14-15 octombrie 1965): Studiu și materiale*. Chișinău: Tehnica-Info, 2016; Bahnaru, V. *Calvarul limbii române în timpul dominației sovietice: (Studiu și documente de arhivă)*, Chișinău: S.n., 2015.

1970, the Council for the Comprehensive Study of *Slavo-Volokh Relations and the Origin of the Moldovan People* was established within the Social Sciences Section of the Academy of Sciences of the Moldavian SSR. The council included specialists from the USSR⁵¹. At its meetings, the process of the formation of the “Moldovan people” was discussed, but researchers merely reiterated the old theses – that the *Volokhs* were the ancestors of both Moldovans and Wallachians and that, as a result of contacts between the Volokhs and the old Russian population east of the Carpathians in the 12th–14th centuries, the “Moldovan people” emerged.

A constant direction of the investigations conducted by authors in the Moldavian SSR was the “*unmasking of bourgeois falsifiers*”, who “*falsified*” the issue of the formation of the “*Moldovan nation*”. However, the “*arguments*” of Soviet researchers were declarative and propagandistic in nature. In 1974, a volume dedicated to Moldova's ancient material culture was published, in which the opinion of I. Hîncu regarding the Balkan-Danubian culture was presented. The author considered that four ethnic elements were at its foundation: Slavic, Turkic-Bulgar, Eastern Romance, and Nomadic⁵². I. Hîncu was accused of arbitrarily extending the chronological limits of this culture up to the 14th century and drawing conclusions for the entire territory of Moldova. In August 1977, N. Mohov addressed a letter to B.A. Rybakov, the director of the Institute of Archaeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences, asking for his opinion on this issue. In his response, B.A. Rybakov considered I. Hîncu's concept as “*anti-Slavic*”. The Russian scholar underlined that I. Hîncu “*exaggerates the role and importance of the Eastern Romance ethnic element*” in the territory between the Prut and Dniester, which he saw as a flawed opinion “*from an ideological point of view*”. B.A. Rybakov reiterated that “*until the 14th century, there was no significant Eastern Romance population*”, one of the particularities of “*the formation of the Moldovan people being the contact and mixing of the Volokhs with the old Russian indigenous population*”, which “*differentiates Moldovans from Romanians*”. As a consequence, I. Hîncu was removed from investigations, and the monograph was withdrawn from print, being published posthumously only in 2016⁵³. Researchers from the Moldavian SSR, in collaboration with those from Union academic centers, developed the monograph *Moldovans*⁵⁴ – a work in which they believed they had “*demonstrated*” “*the fundamental laws and characteristic features of Moldovan popular culture throughout its history and existence*”⁵⁵. The conclusions formulated were questioned by the supporters of the Moldovenist movement after 1991, who, in a study with

⁵¹ Зеленчук, В.С., Златковская, Т.Д. О работе Научного совета по проблеме «Славяно-волошские связи и формирование молдавской народности». În: *Советская этнография*, 1978, nr. 2, p. 124.

⁵² *Древняя культура Молдавии*. Кишинев: Штиинца, 1974, pp. 148-149.

⁵³ Хынку, И.Г. Население и культура Молдавии в X-XIV вв. În: Hîncu, Ion. *Scara vieții*. Chișinău: Cartdidact, 2016, pp. 78-242.

⁵⁴ *Молдаване: Очерк истории, этнографии, искусствоведения*. Кишинев: Штиинца, 1977.

⁵⁵ АСАШМ, F. 24, inv. 1, d. 1, f. 1.

the same title, published in Moscow, wrote that the *Moldovans* work, published in Chişinău, was inaccessible to the Russian reader and of little interest due to its extremely ideological content⁵⁶. In 1978, a work examining the process of the formation of “*the Moldovan bourgeois nation*” was published⁵⁷. The authors committed serious falsifications, asserting that after the inclusion of the territories on the left bank of the Dniester and Bessarabia into the Russian Empire, this territory acquired the general name of Moldova and became the area for the formation of “*the Moldovan nation*”, the national territory of “*the Moldovan people*”. The Tsarist administration never used the term Moldova to designate the illusory ethnic, cultural, etc., unity of the inhabitants on both banks of the Dniester. The authors were also unable to demonstrate the existence of a “*Moldovan intelligentsia*” that spoke “*the Moldovan language*”. To support the absurd claims regarding the Moldovan intelligentsia and the “*Moldovan language*”, the authors crossed the Prut River, declaring Romanian writers (V. Alecsandri, M. Eminescu, I. Creangă, etc.) as the founders of “*the Moldovan literary language*”.

The subchapter demonstrates the involvement of local party bodies in the research process and in informing the central bodies of the USSR regarding the situation in the republic and the measures to be taken to counteract Romanian propaganda in the Moldavian SSR. The information note of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova from April 7, 1978, proposed deepening research on “*the genesis of the Moldovan and Romanian peoples*”, organizing conferences on “*the formation of the Moldovan people*” and the “*role of Slavs in the formation of Eastern Romance peoples*”. On December 29, 1981, the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova reported the intensification of ideological pressures on research in the ethno-national field⁵⁸.

The materials included in the subchapter confirm the importance that the authorities placed on the ethno-genesis of the Romanian people as reflected in Romanian historiography, which did not take into account the Soviet concept of the “*ethno-genesis of the Moldovan people*”. The leadership of the Academy of Sciences of the Moldavian SSR proposed measures to counteract this approach. In 1983, several resolutions were adopted, which provided for responding to Romanian historians, prioritizing the highest ideological and scientific treatment of the “*ethno-genesis of the Moldovan people*”⁵⁹ and emphasizing the need to develop issues related to the ethno-genesis of the people and the formation of the “*Moldovan bourgeois nation*”⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ Губогло, М.Н., Дергачев, В.А. Введение. În: *Молдаване*. Москва: Наука, 2010, p. 9.

⁵⁷ *Формирование молдавской буржуазной нации*. Отв. ред. А.М. Лазарев. Кишинев: Штиинца, 1978. 220 p.

⁵⁸ ACAŞM, F. 24, inv. 1, d. 148, f. 4-13.

⁵⁹ ACAŞM, F. 24, inv. 1, d. 148, f. 10-11.

⁶⁰ ACAŞM, F. 24, inv. 1, d. 86, f. 34; d. 94, f. 39; d. 148, f. 4-13.

Subchapter IV. The Impact of Gorbachev's Restructuring on Ethno-national Research in the Moldavian SSR (1985–1991) demonstrates that the new political course proclaimed in the USSR in the spring of 1985 led to profound changes and opened new opportunities for the affirmation of research in the ethno-national field. However, restructuring in this direction did not begin immediately. In the same year, the head of the Section of Ethnography and Art Studies, V. Zelenciuc, undertook a documentation trip to Italy with the aim of identifying sources to unmask “*bourgeois historiography*”, which denied the history and culture of the “*Moldovan people*”⁶¹. Thus, even under the conditions of restructuring, the tone of discussions on identity and linguistic issues in the union republics was set by events in Moscow. In 1987, the last Soviet synthesis of the *History of the Moldavian SSR* was published, stating that the ethnic basis of the “*Moldovan people*” was the Carpathian-Dniester branch of the Volokhs and the Eastern Slavs, and that contacts with the old Russian population led to the formation of the “*Moldovan language*”⁶². The earlier falsification was repeated, claiming that the term *Moldovan* first appeared in 1360.

Gradually, however, things began to change. At one of the meetings of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Ethnography and Art Studies, V. Zelenciuc insisted that the work dedicated to the “*ethno-genesis of Moldovans*” be approved, but D. Dragnev opposed it, stating that “*the work has a clear ideological and political component*”⁶³. This was the first time that a planned work, considered a priority, was rejected due to its ideological component.

The year 1988 was decisive in the process of dismantling the Soviet concept in addressing identity and linguistic issues in the Moldavian SSR. In April, an article by V. Mândăcanu was published, emphasizing that the so-called “*Moldovan language*” was, in reality, the Romanian language and that its role “*in all spheres of human activity as a language of culture in general*”⁶⁴ needed to be expanded. The Communist Party of Moldova closely monitored the developments in the republic. At the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the party on September 5, 1988, it was noted that society had raised the issue of the Latin alphabet and the Romanian language. According to S. Grossu, First Secretary of the CPM, “*scientists are showing cowardice*”⁶⁵.

However, events were unfolding against the communist leadership. On September 17, 1988, *The Letter of the 66* was published, signed by scientists and writers who called for the recognition of the identity of the “*Moldovan*” and Romanian languages and the return to the

⁶¹ ACAȘM, F. 1, inv. 1, d. 143, f. 100-101.

⁶² *История Молдавской ССР*: В 6 т. Т. 1. Отв. ред. В.Л. Янин. Кишинев: Картя молдовеняскэ, 1987, p. 330-332.

⁶³ ACAȘM, F. 24, inv. 1, d. 191, f. 95.

⁶⁴ Mândăcanu, V. Veșmântul ființei noastre. În: *Nistru*, 1988, nr. 4, pp. 145-146.

⁶⁵ Negru, E., Negru, Gh. „*Cursul deosebit*” al României... Vol. 2. (1976-1989), p. 596.

Latin alphabet. On October 19, 1988, Ion Buga published an article explicitly stating that the indigenous population of the Moldavian SSR was Romanian, spoke the Romanian language, and called for the reinstatement of the Latin script⁶⁶. As a result of these developments, between October 31 and November 1, 1988, the *Conference of Romanianist Scholars from the USSR* took place in Chişinău. It recommended the proclamation of the national language of the Moldavian SSR as the state language, the recognition of the unity of the languages spoken in the Moldavian SSR and Romania, and the return to the Latin script – a recommendation that was taken into account. However, the party and state authorities opposed these changes. In July 1989, the Central Committee of the CPM and the Council of Ministers of the MSSR adopted a resolution requiring the Academy of Sciences of the MSSR and the Institute of Party History under the CC of the CPM to form a group to study materials “*related to the main historical landmarks in the life of the Moldovan people after 1812*”. At the meeting of the CC Bureau of the CPM that same month, S. Grossu demanded that the draft law on the transition to the Latin script “*omit references to the identity of the Moldovan and Romanian languages*”. Moreover, the resolution of the CC Bureau of the CPM on September 12, 1989, noted that the ethnogenesis, as well as the formation of the “*Moldovan bourgeois and socialist nation*”, had been insufficiently researched. The authors of studies from 1990, on the one hand, emphasized that Moldovans were Romanians and that the language was Romanian⁶⁷; on the other hand, they avoided information mentioning the migration of Romanians from Maramureş to the east of the Carpathians, instead emphasizing that the contacts between the Vlachs and the South and East Slavs led to the formation of two distinct peoples – the Wallachian and the Moldovan. By the end of 1990, researchers from the Institute of Ethnography and Art Studies continued to develop topics such as *The Ethno-genesis and Ethno-demographic History of Moldovans*⁶⁸.

Research conducted by the so-called *Moldovenists* also intensified, as they continued to “*demonstrate*” the formation of the “*Moldovan bourgeois nation*” in Bessarabia and the districts on the left bank of the Dniester. They criticized those scholars who denied the existence of the “*Moldovan socialist nation*” and acknowledged the unity of the Romanian and Moldovan nations, failing to understand, in their view, that the Romanian and Moldovan nations were distinct.

⁶⁶ Buga, I. O limbă maternă – un alfabet. În: *Învăţământul public*, 19 octombrie 1989.

⁶⁷ Mîndîcanu, V. Regăsirea de sine. În: *Nistru*, 1990, nr. 2, pp. 69-86.

⁶⁸ ACAŞM, F. 24, inv. 1, d. 219, f. 1-34, 142-163, 238-245.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Scientific research conducted through an in-depth study of national and international specialized literature, as well as primary documentary sources aligned with the purpose and objectives of the doctoral thesis, which have been materialized in scientific publications, has allowed us to formulate the **following general conclusions**:

1. The ethno-national issue was approached according to the Marxist-Leninist methodology, declared to be the only one capable of answering all questions posed by humanity. The false objectives set from the outset for researchers – to “*demonstrate*” the formation of a “*Moldovan people*” distinct from the Romanian people since the Middle Ages, and a “*Moldovan language*” distinct from the Romanian language – predetermined the failure of this “*scientific*” approach.

2. During the Soviet period, the historical sources available for research were extremely limited because archival documents were not published. Research in the ethno-national field was considered a political issue, with many archival files classified under Secret, Strictly Secret, or Internal Use Only categories.

3. The theoretical foundation of works published during the Soviet period was characterized by the dominance of imperial ideology, which aimed to deprive the population of the Moldavian SSR of its ethnic and linguistic identity. It exaggerated the role of the Slavs in the false ethnogenesis of the “*Moldovan people*” and promoted the “*greatness*” of the Russian people. Notably, ethnonational science was part of Soviet imperial propaganda.

4. In the interwar period, Soviet authorities planned the research of ethno-national processes in the Moldavian ASSR in line with imperial perspectives for the annexation of Bessarabia. A false issue was introduced into ethno-national science – the existence of a “*Moldovan people*” on both sides of the Dniester, distinct from the Romanians.

5. The scientific personnel in the Moldavian ASSR involved in the research process were limited both in number and in expertise, and Soviet authorities did not create the necessary conditions to improve the situation. Researchers from Moscow and Leningrad involved in these studies did not have the freedom to examine these false issues – the existence of the “*Moldovan people*” and the “*Moldovan language*”.

6. After the re-annexation of Bessarabia (1944), the Communist Party took total control of ethno-national research. Institutional measures were taken to organize science. The Moldovan Institute of History, Economy, Language, and Literature in Chişinău was designated as the main scientific center for creating the Moldovan Base of the USSR Academy of Sciences (1946), followed by the establishment of the Moldovan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences (1949–1950), tasked with elaborating the history of the “*Moldovan people*”.

7. During the post-war period, the research process on the ethno-genesis of the “*Moldovan people*” and the formation of the “*Moldovan bourgeois*” and “*socialist nations*” was predominantly carried out by scientific personnel from the Moldavian SSR, with less involvement from USSR scientific centers.

8. The goal of the party authorities was to “*prove*” that the territories east of the Carpathians had been inhabited by Slavs since the 3rd–4th centuries, later becoming part of the principalities of Kiev and Galicia-Volhynia, while the Romance population supposedly arrived only by the late 13th century, ensuring the primacy of the Slavic population.

9. To achieve this goal, historical, documentary, and narrative sources were deliberately falsified, creating a distorted image of the region's ethnic situation. Published sources omitted the term *Romanian* and the phrase *Romanian language*, replacing them with *Moldovan* and “*Moldovan language*”. By falsifying documentary sources, the ethnonym *Moldovan* was artificially “*antiquated*”.

10. In some cases, specialists from Soviet academic centers acknowledged that there was, in fact, only one language. At other times, they insisted on differences between “*Moldovan*” and *Romanian*, indicating that their stance varied depending on the political situation in the USSR and the pressure exerted on them.

11. A series of synthesis works commissioned by party and state authorities aimed to demonstrate the ethnic specificity of Moldovans distinct from Romanians. However, critically examined, these works still allowed for some understanding of the ethno-cultural heritage of all Romanians.

12. The “*Khrushchev Thaw*” offered limited freedom for the study of the history of the humanities. “*The ethno-genesis of Moldovans*”, the primacy of the Slavs, and their decisive role in the formation of the “*Moldovan people*” were issues that remained under strict ideological control by party authorities. A compromise was impossible, as it would have undermined the imperial foundations of the USSR.

13. After 1964, amid the Soviet-Romanian dispute, collective works were published to “*prove*” the existence of a “*Moldovan people*”. However, they failed to argue convincingly that the single Romanian entity was divided before the 14th century in such a way that it led to the formation of two distinct peoples and languages. The identity and linguistic issue remained under strict control by the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Central Committee of the CPM, and USSR academic institutions, with any real or perceived deviations being categorically suppressed.

14. The restructuring initiated in the USSR in the spring of 1985 had consequences for ethno-national research in the Moldavian SSR. The analysis of investigations shows that they

lagged behind the pressing demands of society. The Communist Party continued to maintain strict control over this research direction. The year 1988 was decisive in altering the discourse on the ethno-national issue, as problems and their solutions were clearly formulated: “*Moldovan language*” is identical to Romanian, the transition to the Latin script, and the recognition that Moldovans are Romanians.

15. Overall, the Soviet period was characterized by the Russification of scientific research, which was initially published in Russian and, if permitted by authorities, later printed in “*Moldovan language*”. Research in the ethno-national field did not pursue scientific goals but rather ideological and political objectives: no evidence was provided to *prove* the existence of a “*Moldovan people*” distinct from the Romanian people, and linguists failed to demonstrate the existence of a “*Moldovan language*” distinct from Romanian. Researchers were investigating these two false problems.

Based on the scientific research conducted and the results obtained, we propose the following **recommendations**:

1. The phrases “Moldovan people” and “Moldovan nation” should be excluded from all legislative acts in the Republic of Moldova, as well as from history textbooks, and replaced with the phrases “Romanian people” and “Romanian nation”.
2. Cease funding research projects that promote false concepts regarding the “Moldovan language”, “Moldovan people”, and “Moldovan nation”.
3. Widely propagate in the mass media materials about the falsification of ethno-national history in the former MSSR/RSSM, about the ethno-genesis of the Romanian people, their ethnic and linguistic unity, and scientifically combat the Soviet anti-Romanian “Moldovenism”.
4. Use the research results to develop synthesis works, a special course related to the historiography of ethno-national research in the MSSR/RSSM, and undergraduate, master's, and doctoral theses.
5. The use of research results to investigate other regions of the former Soviet Empire, where nations were divided and attempts were made to create “socialist nations”.

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ANNOTATION

**MOROI Natalia. History of Ethno-National Research in the Moldavian ASSM/SSR.
Doctoral thesis in history. Chisinau, 2025.**

Structure of the thesis: annotations, introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography comprising 432 titles; 147 pages of main text. The results obtained are published in 7 scientific papers.

Keywords: ethno-national, RASSM, RSSM, “Moldovan people”, “Moldovan nation”, “Moldovan language”, “Moldovan literary language”, Romanian language, Romanian literary language, Moldavians, Romanians.

Purpose of the study: is to analyze ethno-national research in the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR, 1924–1940) and the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR, 1940/1944–1991), as well as to highlight the specific features of how this issue was investigated, depending on the ethno-national policy of the communist regime during different stages of its evolution.

Research objectives: to systematize the historiography and historiographic sources relevant to the proposed topic; to examine sources concerning the role of the Communist Party and the Soviet state in shaping ethno-national research policy in the USSR and in MASSR/MSSR; to investigate the evolution of the organizational forms of ethno-national science in MASSR/MSSR and its relationship with scientific centers of the USSR; to highlight researchers' strategies for adapting to the directives of Soviet party and state authorities; to identify the main historical periods during which the stated issue was studied and to specify the essential features of these stages.

Scientific novelty and originality: the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the history of ethno-national research in MASSR/MSSR, demonstrating that the issue of the existence of the „Moldovan people” and the „Moldovan language” was an artificial construct imposed by Soviet authorities to serve the imperial interests of the USSR. Based on documentary sources, the research clarifies the decisive role of party and Soviet bodies in organizing the research process and formulating the objectives of ethno-national studies.

The solved scientific problem consists in the elaboration, for the first time, of a fundamental scientific work concerning the history of ethno-national research in MASSR/MSSR during the period of communist dictatorship.

Theoretical significance: the study develops a conceptual and theoretical framework regarding the history of ethno-national research in MASSR/MSSR and introduces new and previously unexplored data into scientific circulation, enriching the existing knowledge in the field and filling the scholarly gap on the topic.

Practical value of the work: the research results may serve as valuable informational support for future studies, providing empirical and conceptual-theoretical material. They can be used in the development of a special course on the historiography of ethno-national research in MASSR/MSSR, as well as for the writing of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral theses.

Implementation of scientific results: the theoretical and practical results have been validated through the publication of 3 articles in accredited scientific journals, 2 theses, and 2 contributions presented at national and international scientific events.

ADNOTARE

**MOROI Natalia. Istoria cercetărilor etno-naționale din RASS/RSS Moldovenească.
Teză de doctor în istorie. Chișinău, 2025.**

Structura tezei: adnotări, introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 432 de titluri; 147 de pagini text de bază. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 7 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: etno-național, RASSM, RSSM, „popor moldovenesc”, „națiune moldovenească”, „limba moldovenească”, „limba literară moldovenească”, limba română, limba literară română, moldoveni, români.

Scopul studiului: analiza cercetărilor etno-naționale în RASSM (1924-1940) și în RSS Moldovenească (1940/1944-1991), precum și evidențierea specificului procesului de investigare a problemei respective în dependență de politica etno-națională a regimului comunist la diferite etape istorice.

Obiectivele cercetării: sistematizarea istoriografiei și surselor istoriografice relevante pentru cercetarea temei propuse; examinarea surselor referitoare la rolul Partidului Comunist și al statului sovietic în determinarea politicii în domeniul cercetărilor etno-naționale în URSS și în RASSM/RSSM; cercetarea evoluției formelor de organizare a științei etno-naționale în RASSM/RSSM și a relației acesteia cu știința din centrele științifice ale URSS; evidențierea strategiilor de adaptare a cercetătorilor la directivele autorităților de partid și de stat sovietice; stabilirea principalelor perioade istorice în care s-a studiat problema nominalizată și precizarea particularităților esențiale ale acestor etape.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică: studierea complexă a istoriei cercetărilor etno-naționale în RASSM/RSSM, prin care s-a demonstrat că problema existenței „poporului moldovenesc” și a „limbii moldovenești” este una falsă, impusă de autoritățile sovietice pentru satisfacerea intereselor imperiale ale URSS; elucidarea, în temeiul surselor documentare, a rolului decisiv al organelor de partid și sovietice în organizarea procesului și formularea obiectivelor în cercetarea etno-națională.

Problema științifică soluționată constă în realizarea, pentru prima dată, a unei lucrări științifice fundamentale referitoare la istoria cercetărilor etno-naționale în RASSM/RSSM în perioada dictaturii comuniste.

Semnificația teoretică: elaborarea cadrului conceptual-teoretic privind istoria cercetărilor etno-naționale în RASS/RSSM, punerea în circuitul științific a datelor noi, inedite, ce îmbogățesc cunoștințele existente în domeniu, completând, astfel, vidul științific referitor la tematica respectivă.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării: rezultatele obținute în urma cercetării pot prezenta interes informațional pentru cercetările viitoare, constituind un material empiric și conceptual-teoretic valoros; ele pot fi utilizate în elaborarea unui curs special referitor la istoriografia cercetărilor etno-naționale în RASSM/RSSM, precum și a unor teze de an, de licență, de masterat și doctorat.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice: rezultatele teoretice și practice au fost aprobate prin publicarea a 3 articole în reviste științifice acreditate, 2 teze și 2 materiale la manifestări științifice naționale și internaționale.

АННОТАЦИЯ

МОРОЙ Наталья. История этно-национальных исследований в МАССР/МССР.
Диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора исторических наук. Кишинэу, 2025.

Структура и объем диссертации: аннотации, введение, три главы, общие выводы и рекомендации, библиография из 432 названий, 147 страниц основного текста. Полученные результаты опубликованы в 7 научных статьях.

Ключевые слова: этно-национальный, МАССР, МССР, «молдавский народ», «молдавская нация», «молдавский язык», «молдавский литературный язык», румынский язык, румынский литературный язык, молдаване, румыны.

Цель исследования: анализ этно-национальных исследований в МАССР (1924-1940) и в МССР (1940/1944-1991), а также выделение специфики процесса исследования данной проблемы в зависимости от этно-национальной политики коммунистического режима на разных этапах своего развития.

Задачи исследования: систематизация историографии и историографических источников, значимых для изучения указанной тематики; изучение источников, указывающих на роль Коммунистической Партии и советского государства в определении политики в области развития науки по этно-национальным вопросам в СССР и МАССР/МССР; исследование эволюции организационных форм этно-национальной науки в МАССР/МССР и ее взаимоотношениях с научными центрами СССР; выявление стратегий адаптации исследователей на директивы партийных и советских органов; установление главных исторических этапов изучения данной проблемы и установление их основных особенностей.

Научная новизна и оригинальность: комплексное изучение истории этно-национальных исследований в МАССР/МССР, которое доказало что проблема существования «молдавского народа» и «молдавского языка» является ложной, поставленной советской властью для удовлетворения имперских интересов СССР; выявление, на основе документальных источников, решающей роли партийных и советских органов в организации процесса и формулировке задач исследования этно-национальной проблемы.

Решение научной проблемы заключается в реализации первой фундаментальной научной работы по истории этно-национальных исследований в МАССР/МССР в период коммунистической диктатуры.

Теоретическая значимость: разработка концептуально-теоретических рамок истории этно-национальных исследований в МАССР/МССР; включение в научный оборот новых, оригинальных данных, которые обогащают существующие знания в данной области, тем самым ликвидируя научный вакуум по данной тематике.

Прикладная ценность работы: полученные научные данные могут представлять информационный интерес для будущих исследований, составляя ценный эмпирический и концептуально-теоретический материал.

Внедрение научных результатов: теоретические и практические результаты подтверждены публикацией 3 статей в аккредитованных научных журналах, 2 резюме и 2 материалов на республиканских и международных научных мероприятиях.

MOROI NATALIA

**HISTORY OF ETHNO-NATIONAL RESEARCH
IN THE MOLDAVIAN ASSR/SSR**

611.02. HISTORY OF ROMANIANS (BY PERIODS)

Abstract of the Doctoral Thesis in History

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