

Between Empires and Europe: The Tragic Fate of Moldova

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This article is a narrative with several voices based on interviews conducted with various social actors from Moldova in June 1993. That was three years after the republic declared its independence and one year after the Transnistrian civil war, which ended with separation into two independent republics: the Republic of Transnistria and the Republic of Moldova. These two entities, one of them legal and the other not recognized by the international community, then entered a very difficult period of transition. Recognized by 120 countries and a party to many diplomatic relationships, the Republic of Moldova, which formed an important and particular element¹ of the former Soviet Union, in fact found it quite hard to break its links with Russia for a variety of reasons, which this paper will attempt to make clear.

A conflict between the forces of the Moldovan Popular Front, which had launched an unprecedented national liberation movement, and those of the old system, which tried to control its development, formed an obstacle to the process of stabilizing and consolidating the state and led the country into war and towards partition, leaving the Communist Party in power in both newly independent territories. The republic's geopolitical importance has always been quite considerable in the region, especially for Russia, which has continually attempted to control its access to the Black Sea and the Danube. This explains the presence of the Soviet 14th Army in the province of Transnistria, an army comprising 7000 officers, 5000 enlisted men and 2000 conscripts but with arms for 100,000 soldiers. Russia's objective was to keep that army in its empire's forward positions, facing the Balkans, in order to intervene swiftly in case of conflict. In 1991, when Ukraine became independent, the area's strategic importance was all the greater for Russia because now it was the only access route to the Danube and the Balkans, skirting round Ukraine. Like Kaliningrad, which it jealously retained in order to influence Scandinavia via the Baltic, Moldova enabled it to keep its influence in the Danube regions. The tense situation that arose in Ukraine and the Balkans after 1991 certainly acted as a brake on the Republic of

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Moldova's consolidation. The conflict with Transnistria that occurred within the country in 1992 stopped it from developing relations with other states and deterred investment. Those advocating reunification with Romania, who were in the majority in the Popular Front, also prevented the country from stabilizing by isolating themselves from the large part of the population who, it seemed, were not at all in favour. Indeed a veritable frontier, which was to a great extent underestimated by the various participants, grew up between the province of Moldova, which remained Romanian, and Romanian Bessarabia, which in 1945 became part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia in the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact secretly agreed between Hitler and Stalin. The historical doctrines pushed during the soviet period give a version of the process of forming the frontier that is not based on the archives or any treaty and they tend to allow us to forget that a Moldavian state used to exist and would do so again. This uncertainty has been wiped away by the publication of the documents related to the pact, which were revealed in 1990–1 by Popular Front activists. Then the issue of the 1945 frontiers was clearly exposed in all its complexity.

A brief history of Moldova

Moldova is a small country bordered to the east and south by Ukraine and to the west by Romania. Originally the name Moldavia belonged to a semi-independent medieval state that existed from the 14th to the 18th century on territory that once belonged to the Geto-Dacians, mythical possible ancestors of the Romanians. In the 16th century the country came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, which delegated the government of it to the local governor (*gospodar*). The most southerly territory, between the Prut and the Dniestr, fell into the Ottomans' hands in two stages, in 1484 and 1538. The governorship of Bender (and its town of the same name) formed the frontier with Turkey. To the north the land as far as the Carpathians made up the principality of Moldavia, a vassal of the sultan but autonomous. In 1775 the Hapsburg Empire grabbed the northern part of the Moldavian state, Bucovina. In the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish war of 1806–12 and lengthy diplomatic horse-trading, the Russian Empire dismembered the state of Moldavia in order to carry out its political plans between the Black Sea and the Danube, and annexed the northern section of Moldavian territory between the Prut and the Dniestr. It called it Bessarabia from the name of a small more northerly land occupied by Bessarabian princes in the early 15th century. The name was invented to distinguish it from the rest of Moldavia and the Russians then oversaw a relative autonomy-sovereignty. This was thrown into question by the 1917 revolution. Following the First World War, the collapse of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires enabled Bessarabia and northern Bucovina to assume their natural right to self-determination. After the proclamation of the Republic of Ukraine's independence in 1918, the parliament of the Moldavian Republic also declared its independence on 14 January 1918. On 27 March 1918, after much activity on the part of the country's people and given the impossibility of maintaining the Moldavian Democratic Republic's independence, the parliament voted in favour of union

between Bessarabia and Romania. On 15 November 1918 the Bucovina General Congress voted for the unconditional union in perpetuity of Bucovina with the Kingdom of Romania. The USSR government asked Romania to recognize the USSR's rights in Bessarabia, using both diplomatic and military methods:

Official soviet historiography's insistence that in 1918 the soviet authorities came out on top in Bessarabia, which is thus supposed to have become an integral part of the new soviet state, is explained by the tendency to justify exporting the revolution and the re-annexation of Bessarabia. Those who supported carrying through the Bolsheviks' revolutionary objectives and others who backed the empire, which they 'exalted as revolutionary', were almost all of ethnic origin foreign to the vital interests in safeguarding and ensuring the prosperity of the Romanian nation as a whole.²

In the early 1930s relations between the USSR and Romania improved somewhat and this led in June 1934 to a mutual agreement to guarantee full and total respect for both states' sovereignty and abstention from all interference in the affairs of either. However, on the eve of the Second World War the USSR's involvement in advantageous negotiations with Hitler's Germany ended in a joint arrangement to share out spheres of influence in Europe. In accordance with the terms of the secret supplementary protocol to the Soviet–German non-aggression treaty signed on 23 August 1939, the USSR and Germany claimed the right to decide the fate of a number of countries, Romania among them. The third section of the protocol stresses the USSR's interest in Bessarabia. North Bucovina, which was never part of the Russian Empire or Ukraine, was not mentioned in the protocol. The empire's intentions in this regard were not revealed until 1940 under Stalin:³

On 28 June 1940 the USSR occupied the two regions by force of arms, contrary to the people's wishes. The proclamation on 2 August 1940 of the Moldavian SSR was seen as an act dismembering Bessarabia and Bucovina. The transfer of Bucovina and several districts into the jurisdiction of the SSR of Ukraine was contrary to the historical truth and ethnic reality of the period and provoked mass murders, deportations, organized famines. (R–MP)

The Russians went back into Romania in 1944. The pact was signed in 1945:

By ending a 22-year-old conflict with Romania the pact gives Ukrainians and Moldavians the chance to get free of the Romanian boyars and the landowners and capitalists of Bessarabia. It establishes the borders of the SSR of Ukraine and the Federal SSR of Moldavia, which incorporates the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia⁴ and places under its authority industrial enterprises situated on Bessarabian territory and that of the SSR of Moldavia so that they might give the Republic the best development opportunities. (R–MP)

Several areas of Moldavia inhabited by Moldavians were incorporated into the Republic of Ukraine:

Once the frontier is established and described in detail, all the areas with a predominance of Ukrainians and those bordering on the SSR of Ukraine will be annexed to the Ukrainian

SSR; on the other hand all the areas with a predominance of Moldavians and those bordering on the SSR of Moldavia will also be annexed to the Ukrainian SSR. Thus the frontiers of the Soviet Union will be moved westward and reach the Danube, which is the most powerful river in Europe after the Volga and one of the main routes for exchange of goods for a whole slew of European countries. (*R-MP*, Moscow, 22 July 1940)

In accordance with tsarist practices in colonies to be populated, Bulgarians, Germans, Ukrainians, Poles and Gagauz were ferried into the conquered areas. The native people were thrown out and their plots of land granted to the colonists. It appears that this colonization caused more harm than the Ottoman occupation, which merely required a tribute to be paid. The legacy of the pact was thus explicitly confirmed in 1991 when the international community set its face against any challenge to the post-war borders.

Consequences of the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact: chaos as a result of the new borders and the mixing of populations

Various traces remain of these old and new historical upheavals. The people living east of the Prut had been Romanian for 500 years, Turkish for 300 and Russian for 200. Considerable cultural differences existed between the Moldavians who lived in the old southern part under Turkish rule and those in the part that was quite content to reunify with Valachia in Romania because of linguistic similarity. When Bessarabia was reunited with Russia in 1812, north/south cultural differences were reinforced. Even today Orthodox groups do not use the same calendar on each bank of the Prut: the Julian calendar is used east of the Dniestr and the Gregorian to the west in Bessarabia. The religious gulf seems harder to remove than linguistic and dialect differences, even though the latter have with time become more marked from one region to another.

But the greatest demographic and cultural upsets occurred in the Second World War. Whereas Romanian speakers accounted for more than 80 percent of the pre-war population, the 1989 census shows 4 million Moldovans belonging to 96 nationalities: 64 percent Romanian Moldovans, 13.8 percent Ukrainians (600,000), 13 percent Russians (562,000), 3.5 percent Gagauz or Orthodox Turks (153,000), 2 percent Bulgarians (88,000), 1.5 percent Jews (66,000), with the remainder composed of Hungarians, Germans, Poles, Czechs, and Koreans. There are 600,000 people living on the left bank of the Dniestr, 40 percent of them Romanian Moldovans and other Russian-speaking and bilingual (Romanian and Russian-speaking) minorities. A million and a half people of Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian origin were settled after the Second World War in order to industrialize the region:

Land was offered to the new arrivals and an attempt was made to unite them around soviet ideology and five-year development plans. Each stage was carefully prepared for. Factories functioned with specialized foremen and workers brought in from Russia trained dozens of service personnel and accommodated them. The local population did not have much work and remained corralled in the villages in poverty-stricken conditions. They were sent to other very difficult regions as representatives of the regional executive

committees in each village in Siberia, Asia or Kazakhstan and more often than not they never returned. Moldavians soon realized they were being conned and many of them thought they had been sacrificed to the objectives of empire, while the cities had been for the most part Russianized. In Chisinau the big factories were entirely subordinate to Moscow. (Popular Front activist)

Today these upheavals are a serious handicap for the little country, which is too weak to stand up to the appetites it arouses and so is forced to have reliable allies to protect it. The fact that some Moldovan territory was transferred to Ukraine has not always promoted good relations between the two countries. The alliance between Ukrainians and Russians, which was unstable and so potentially a threat, was in question after the implosion of the USSR. Ukraine cosied up to the Moldovans in particular in order to distance itself from the Russians and avoid getting too closely involved in the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was formed in the aftermath of that implosion to recreate a focus for economic solidarity under Russian aegis:

The most conservative forces in the eastern provinces of Transnistria were quite ready to envisage a full-on opposition between Ukrainians and Moldovans, which would serve their interests by weakening the Republic of Moldova. (Popular Front activist)

Many intellectuals who fled soviet Moldavia in 1945 sought refuge in Romania. Sustained by their common ideals of democratization in a Romania that had, however, become very 'Romanian nationalist' under Ceausescu's regime, they then organized the Romanian Popular Front, which came to the fore in Moldavia at the time of *perestroika*, with the idea behind it of reunifying with Romania to extricate itself from Russian colonization. But the attitude of Romanian allies of the Germans during the last war explains most Moldovans' ambivalent view of that idea and the resistance to it that was to end in the outbreak of the Transnistrian war in 1992. In the short period (1985–89–91) that witnessed the rise of centrifugal national movements and led to the implosion of the USSR under Gorbachev, hopes of reconquest all seemed possible. Indeed it was only in 1991 that the official party of Romania recognized Moldova and signed a treaty with Ukraine and Russia agreeing not to claim Bessarabian territory and to respect existing borders.

Moldova was a bridge between Europe and the former USSR because of its knowledge of the Romanian language and its vitally important economic connections with Russia, like Finland, whose situation was parallel. It had the advantage of acting as intermediary in commercial relations and attracting companies:

In Romania it was understood that reunification could be dangerous because of the million and a half Russians and Ukrainians who had been imported and who might be reminiscent of the situation of the Hungarians in Transylvania, despite the economic advantage for boosting Romanian might that soviet Moldavia represented from the technological and agricultural angle.

Thus in 1989–90 all these various groups were involved in redefining alliances, borders and spheres of influence.

From *perestroika* to the implosion of the USSR: the rising power of the pro-Romanian Popular Front

As was the case everywhere else in the USSR, Moldavia in fact experienced an unprecedented national renaissance from the period of *perestroika* onwards. The democratic movement backing *perestroika* coincided with the rise of the national movement. This culminated in 1988 in the younger generation's search for a democratic route that initially focused on language. For Front activists this struggle for national liberation had been present under the Russian soviet empire and earlier under the Ottoman Empire. So this was merely a contemporary stage that became established in the *perestroika* years 1985–8. The rapid growth of the cultural and political movement was a measure of the frustration felt especially by intellectuals and their desire for sovereignty and national integration.

To demand a return to calling their language Romanian and to the Roman alphabet, 15 or so poets got together illegally and were arrested and tried. To start with, the party secretary talked of an outbreak of Romanian fever. The movement swelled as people's determination grew stronger:

In 1989 we tried to widen and explain the aim of our organization (the Popular Front) through a year of meetings and confrontation with the former Communist Party, attempting to use its terminology to develop democracy, but conflicts soon flared up between us. Gorbachev wanted to introduce a more human form of communism, but we rejected communism root and branch. On 20 May 1989 the first congress brought us to a confrontation with the leaders of the Communist Party, who were opposed to democratization and especially the national liberation movement. We started to denounce the illegality of the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact because we were aware of the consequences for Moldova of that political act and we knew that it might turn into an act that split the republic. We published a document, which was distributed for world opinion, on the occupation of eastern Romania and Bessarabia, though in 1989 the Supreme Soviet still saw it as a legitimate act. We denounced the legal framework that established artificial and inequitable borders: it was a brief geopolitical and political moment of opposition to Russian imperialism and chauvinism that affected the whole of Europe. Later, in 1991, we organized an international conference on the outcome of the pact. Russia has recently acknowledged its inhuman consequences, but not in order to restore historical justice, since the Russians do not know the shape of the old frontier: we have to assist them by telling them. (Popular Front activist)

Moldova initiated its movement towards decolonization by trying to reduce the number of Russian schools in favour of Romanian ones and explained its action in an information campaign as follows:⁵

In August 1989 large popular gatherings took place all over Moldova. The law on the Roman alphabet was passed one day before the big meeting on 27 August. A priest who was a member of parliament blessed that meeting with bread and salt. Moldovan flags fluttered and music played. Representatives from the Baltic countries were present in support. And the members for the city of Tiraspol made themselves scarce. Between September 1989 and February 1990 (the date of the first parliament's election) the issue of the language law was widely debated and threw up candidates who opposed the Moldovan candidates on this question. The process of Romanian national renaissance acted as an incentive for

other minorities, especially the Gagauz, and revealed the complexity of the problem of nationalities within the republic. This had not seemed to be a priority in 1990 when independence was proclaimed and won first of all on behalf of Romanian national resurgence as well as the affirmation of human rights. (Popular Front activist)

However, the demand for a return to the Moldovan official language turned out in fact to be extremely problematic in this context, since both the minorities and also the majority of the Moldovan population had stopped speaking their language. Russianization had been far-reaching throughout the region. The fact that this part of Europe was called Little Russia (*Malo Russia*) and Transnistria and Gagauzia were called New Russia (*Nova Russia*) is significant.

The linguistic position both sides of the Dniestr

In the towns most children learnt Russian and watched Russian television. In Tiraspol no Moldovan school or kindergarten had been opened for the 35,000 resident Moldovans. The Front members announced the creation of a Romanian-language kindergarten in the media and demanded that this should be done throughout the city. A group was set up to explore the problem in businesses. Around 1000 people expressed their wish for kindergartens; seven were opened in 1989 with great difficulty. People started to demand their rights to their language:

Moldovans thought for a while that the future depended on them, their actions, their government, and they wanted to throw off their feeling of being slaves by creating a new society, like the Jews in Egypt who went off to Israel to flee slavery. They felt they were Romanians whom the Russians had turned into Moldovans to justify the occupation, creating a schizophrenic impression of state and social duality. Through the creation of *homo sovieticus* Romanians from Moldova felt they no longer had a history, a mother tongue or ancestors. (Historian close to the Popular Front)

And so the vote on the law on the Romanian language and Roman script expressed Moldovans' profound feeling towards Russia and their general situation:

We are a part of the Latin world that is resisting the invasion of expansionist slavophiles to save Europe. We feel very dependent on the sharing out of influence between great powers and feel we are never consulted on that. (Popular Front representative)

But they quickly realized that strategy was pointless in an environment that was completely sewn up by the Russian media and they knew they would lose the information war because the information machine belonged to Russia (which had flooded the whole region by direct channel from morning to night). They were clashing head-on with the Russians, who did not want to speak Moldovan or attend mixed schools, claiming Moldovan education was inferior, even though headteachers were generally Russian. The teachers, who were often army wives, were mostly incompetent and turned off people who were in favour of the Romanian language:

The national liberation process lagged two years behind other republics. The old KGB structures could no longer hold off this national liberation process by human effort. The social model stopped working, the whole society was in crisis. The nationalist movement, which was anti-communist and anti-soviet, could not be sanctioned by the soviet regime because our continual concern was to uncouple the economy from the state and create a democratic state, throwing off the terminology of *perestroika* in order to prepare public opinion for a mass movement of cultural decolonization and prevent the KGB from discrediting us in society's eyes and annihilating us. At the first congress of the first USSR parliament in 1989 we took part as a party, the Popular Front, in the election of the USSR president, alongside people from the Communist Party who were still in power and the Baltic members of the Supreme Soviet, in order to tell the truth about the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. (Popular Front activist)

**The basis for the Dniestr war:
from the August 1989 strike to partition in November 1990**

In 1989 anxiety rose in Transnistria about the prospect of the vote on language programmed for August. Public debate gradually degenerated into confrontation, culminating in autumn 1990 with it coming into force shortly after the declaration of independence:

The movement supporting the Moldovan state language was a mass movement that was not radical or extremist, and carried forward by a text signed by 68 of the most prominent figures from Moldova's culture. They were calling for a national state language and its renaissance in the form of the Romanian language, contesting the existence of two languages: Moldovan and Russian. Their very moderate statement remains an important document for the Moldovan national movement. But national resurgence soon degenerated with extremist factions that alarmed Russian speakers. It was not so much the law itself but the anti-Russian form of state that went along with that movement led by renowned literary figures. The Russians did not speak Moldovan, 70 percent of whose vocabulary is now influenced by Russian. (Representative of the Helsinki Committee)

Before that date the Communist Party tried to resist the voting on the law, which aggravated tension and completed the destruction of the party's prestige. Then it attempted to sit on the fence. The first (moderate) version from 1989 was debated openly. It gave rise to a number of criticisms and split the party into two groups: those who supported the party's old line and the more flexible ones who followed Snegur, the future president of parliament, who tried to identify himself with the national movement in order to stay in power in the republic:

The previous version of the law, replaced by a new one, was passed without debate on 31 August 1989: the vote was considered an insult by the Russians and was followed by a demonstration which, as far as the Moldovans in the Front were concerned, demonstrated the Russian speakers' lack of goodwill. Previously the Russians had been in favour of two official state languages, Russian and Moldovan. (Representative of the Helsinki Committee)

On 16 August, shortly before the vote, a two-hour strike started that was broadcast through the city over loudspeakers. It was clearly inspired by Moscow:

People were hesitant. They were being made to strike to cut off electricity. Anti-strike committees were formed. Peasants in the villages did not want to give food to those who came to collect it to support the strike. From 27 August till 25 September 1989 those who opposed the strike imposed measures of retaliation: reduction of pay and demotion. Businesses supported the strike financially. The leaders got the support of the Gagauz against the Roman alphabet, because they had long hoped to get their own republic, claiming that their rights were not being recognized. In this case the self-determination principle acted as an instrument to destroy the Republic of Moldova. (Historian close to the Popular Front)

In September 1989 the Supreme Soviet asked the committees to clarify the situation. The director of the Institute for Economic Development made a speech at the Institute of Education explaining their intentions to young people carrying Moldovan flags who thought people did not understand the situation: 12,000 people were there. But a stage had already been passed, more or less without the movement's leaders being aware of it:

The strike by Tiraspol's Russian workers was widely supported at the outset by the republic's Russian speakers. A new organization was set up in Transnistria: the United Public Workers Council. This rather vague organization introduced new radical political actors with other political objectives on to the scene. Indeed there arose from the strike the idea of autonomy, even independence, to maintain the status quo. The strike facilitated the advent of this new stage and supplied the justification for drawing up new laws. The idea of autonomy was rooted in Moldova's history and ethno-linguistic situation. Following the strike local leaders representing the anti-nationalist-internationalist grouping came to power in opposition to the nationalists who were dominant in Chisinau.

In March 1990 the first elected parliament brought the Front's radical movement, represented by A. Druc,⁶ to power. Given the views already prepared by the media for the confrontation, the parliament was turned into an arena of 'enemies': the members from Transnistria walked out in May 1990 (they would declare their autonomy in September and confirm the split in November 1990 with no possible compromise). Moldova had become very dangerous for them. At that moment a new balance of power began to appear. (Representative of the Helsinki Committee)

Druc's arrival in power in such a climate gave rise to a movement of opposition among the Front's intellectuals, who included Romanian writers and artists whose demands were utterly different from the majority of the population. This is an important factor which explains subsequent political developments. In 1988–9 the Gagauz had created their own political organization to claim their autonomy: an idea that had arisen from time to time from their ranks since the 1970s, well before *perestroika*, in response to Moldovan nationalists who were hostile to all forms of autonomy. The debate was restarted by the Gagauz members of the new parliament with a view to forcing a final decision on the matter:⁷

In April–May 1990, on 13 April, when the parliament first came on the scene, a young Gagauz was beaten to death by nationalist extremists before the very eyes of the local militia, near the Stephen the Great monument. Nothing was reported in the press. On 27 April Mr Snegur, elected president of the parliament, asked insistently for the Russians in the parliament to take an official view since Transnistrians felt abandoned. Most of them, who were Russian citizens of Tiraspol, felt very different from the Russians from Moldova: they declared they would not put up with being ill-treated in parliament. On 22 May, the day of the young man's funeral, Russian women, who had gathered in front of parliament to present a petition, asked for the culprits to be punished and were violently taken to task. The members of parliament from Transnistria, insulted as enemies, were unable to cross town. The 68 members, of whom two-thirds were from Bender, were ordered out of the parliament and never returned. (Ukrainian historian)

Moldova becomes independent in June 1990

In July 1990 the parliament reaffirmed its opposition to any claim by the Gagauz to the right to autonomy and recognition as a different people or ethnic group. The debate in parliament on the Gagauz's demand for autonomy was thus very heated. The tension resulted in their proclamation of independence in August 1990. From September to November 1990 the streets were in uproar. (Ukrainian historian)

When Russian troops were brought in to calm things down, by way of response:

Druc's government, which had no army at its disposal, organized a march of 10,000 volunteers with extremist views, made up of bandits and drunkards armed with knives, chains and sticks to face the Gagauz, with the government's approval, at the risk of causing a massacre. (Ukrainian historian)

There were no confrontations between Moldovans and Gagauz. The volunteers remained well organized so as not to fall into the trap of being provoked. Airborne troops from the Beograd unit, who were ready to intervene in case of conflict, sparked the tension. It was agreed that the Interior Ministry's special troops (soviet army) should assist the republic's government so that it could remain in control. The elections were held and resulted in the proclamation of the Republic of Gagauzia: order was maintained to make the elections legal. (Ukrainian historian)

The press fired things up. A media battle ensued that was very aggressive towards Russia on the one hand, and portrayed Druc as a Mussolini-style leader on the other. The Russian press covered the events, unlike the local press, which kept quiet. Druc clearly expressed the 1989 expectations of the pro-Romanian extremists, who were in a minority in the population and the nationalist government and wanted Moldovans' ethnic interests to be promoted almost exclusively. A delegate at the pro-Romanian Popular Front's congress, convinced the Transnistrians would not collaborate with attempts to reunite with Romania, stated he was not keen on the reunification of Transnistria with Romania, and minimized its future role. Spurned by the Transnistrian Moldovans he lost their local support and so encouraged them to organize autonomously. (Popular Front activist)

On 12 November 1990, after Transnistria's declaration of independence, elections were due to be held. Druc decided to prevent them. Moldova's army attacked Dubasari in order to

arrest their leaders, who were defended by the crowd. Volunteers went into houses. Armed Transnistrian troops opened fire and killed three people, two of them Moldovans: it was never discovered who killed those three. Druc was seen as a Romanian. The Transnistrians declared their opposition to Transnistria's reunification with Romania. Things snowballed. In Dubasari, where most of the population was Moldovan, a national guard was set up in 1990. The people of Transnistria were afraid the national resurgence movement would reach their region and quickly tried to block the democratic process. Members of the guard occupied the Institute of Education in order to adapt it to the new republic. A Civic Front was organized around companies to defend their members; they were given financial help from all quarters, Russia, the 14th Army. (Historian close to the Popular Front)

On the Transnistrian side:

It was decided to adopt a peaceful method of explanation to carry out the vote for the Republic of Transnistria, become a citizen of the republic and leave the brothers in Bessarabia in order to promote Tiraspol's policies. (Tiraspol leader)

In fact the Transnistrian Moldovans were required to choose between being citizens of Transnistria or Moldovan citizens. Relations with the Moldovan government became more strained. The Russians wanted to negotiate on an equal footing; the president of the Supreme Soviet appeared too supportive of Moldova and refused to negotiate with one of its citizens and to recognize the split. However he was forced to bow to the wishes of their leader, Smirnov, after the Bender tragedy in November 1990. Transnistria's secession was not clearly defined with the Soviet Union. Moldova, which had been sovereign since June 1990, proclaimed the supremacy of its laws over those of the Soviet Union, while the Transnistrians declared their loyalty to the USSR and not the Transnistrian authorities. The legal position was clear to no one. The confusion of loyalties lasted beyond the implosion of the USSR. Up to the 1991 putsch Moscow officially supported the president of the Republic of Moldova. During that period of great general instability the Moldovan government became a full member of the United Nations immediately after independence and attempted to put down the rebellion. The international community, opposed to the idea of reunification with Romania, tried to involve Russia and remain neutral by not getting too deep into the conflict, but it was hard to get a clear view amid such confusion. The situation culminated in the Bender tragedy recounted earlier as well as a number of provocations. The Moldovan government tried to invite its opponent to the negotiating table and itself went to Transnistria in May to argue for disengagement. This ended in an acceptable legal compromise in June 1991. After the putsch of August 1991 in Russia, Snegur attempted to buy loyalty by privatizing apartments. People living in Moldova had no army to break an insurrection of that sort, apart from the 14th Army, which was in Tiraspol. Transnistrian officers, because of their Slav origins and the fact that they lived in russified towns, shared the people's feelings; to stop Moscow taking control of the 14th Army they declared their loyalty to the Tiraspol leaders in defiance of the international community, which was demanding application of its principles and restoration of the Republic of Moldova's legal authority over the whole territory. Chisinau was therefore handed the right to resolve the problem militarily. Even after President Druc's resignation in May 1991

following the growing opposition to him since the November 1990 events in Bender, the government of the republic remained the same. Sticking to his programme, the defence and security minister put the country on a war footing to win back Transnistria and reunify with Romania, making his intentions clear. Druc was sure that Ukraine would go to war over Crimea. And so without any preparation Moldova invaded Bender with larger military forces than Moldovan troops alone (Romanians in all probability): 3000 civilians were killed.

Local consequences of secession

Our country could manage the nationality issue if there were no interference. (Gagauz deputy)

On both sides the war was seen as madness by the vast majority, who resisted it mightily. It ended in defeat for the pro-Romanian Moldovan nationalists and their withdrawal from the government of the Republic of Moldova, which was now split into two, a fact for which they were blamed. After the Transnistrian war, in July 1992, the USA agreed with the Europeans to leave Moldova in Russia's sphere of influence. Snegur had called a halt to the war on the orders of the international community:

A new economic iron curtain then fell over post-soviet Moldova. (Popular Front activist)

In the view of Popular Front activists this was a well-orchestrated scenario whose catalyst was the law on Romanian as the official language and Roman script and the plan to reunify with Romania:

The central media correspondents were altered to inform local public opinion about the changes, in order to get through to intellectual circles and work against national resurgence movements, and then new leaders were brought in, as Smirnov had been after 1985. They quickly became political leaders within a year, having been directors of businesses. The same scenario was repeated in Abkhazia. The Soviets did not wait for the states to become independent, knowing that national liberation movements followed on from the Soviet Union. (Popular Front activist)

The war ended with 1000 dead, 10,000 wounded and 51,000 refugees, 95 percent of whom were Moldovans and 5 percent Ukrainians; there were 1000 refugees from Dubasari and the surrounding villages alone, that is, central Transnistria, which was where the Moldovan population was most dense. This figure included refugees from the agricultural sector. More than 90 percent of Transnistrian Moldovans went along with Tiraspol's separatist policies, whether willingly or by force, probably deterred by the example of 500 refugee families from Moldova who could not get their apartments back. Their flats were quickly taken over and their jobs cut. Bridges were destroyed; all economic links between the two republics were broken off.

National and international reactions

In Moscow the reaction was extremely forthright: the Moldovans were accused of genocide. The 14th Army invaded Bender and centred its troops on the town. Military control was assumed by Cossacks during the conflict waged by the soldiers.

As far as the international community was concerned Moldova had attacked other Moldovans: under its pressure the Russians were given the role of pacifying the region under the command of General Lebed and the Chisinau police, strongly backed by Moscow, were ordered to declare a cease-fire. Snegur replaced his defence and security minister with a moderate in order to get peace and satisfy the people. To maintain good relations with neighbouring Ukraine he began a process of reconciliation. A tripartite commission including Ukraine was appointed. The minister of education and culture, who was a concern to the Russians, promised to introduce a multicultural policy.

But there was real difficulty in implementing it. Centrifugal tendencies grew more pressing after the Transnistrian war under the pressure of economic problems. The government concentrated on healing divisions with a multicultural policy recognizing minorities in order to restrain them. A new parliament was elected in February 1993 after the Popular Front intellectuals resigned en bloc. They were replaced by the old agrarian communists. Parliamentary activity was brought up to the level of international law to show that the government wished to establish a democratic state protecting human rights and those of minorities.

The commitment to guarantee the rights of minorities, Russian in particular, had an important psychological effect but turned out to be useless in the long term. The reforms were not sufficiently radical. The nationalists were still over-represented in the new parliament, which was entirely focused on national resurgence and completely out of touch with the situation.

It was a semi-professional parliament in a state of crisis, elected without a constitutional mechanism to implement reforms: a fresh election was needed with constitutional amendments to stabilize the situation. The national majority would not allow the Gagauz autonomy: only one compromise, on cultural autonomy, was found to save face. Negotiation achieved a result with the Gagauz but not the Transnistrians. The Moldovans who wanted to resolve the conflict peacefully came up against resistance from the nationalists from all ethnic groups. Out of 18 Gagauz deputies 12 walked out of parliament.

Reactions from Russians and Russian speakers

As far as the Russians were concerned the secession was seen as one of the results of the 'crazy' attacks by Moldovan nationalists, one of the only possible answers to Druc's nationalist policies:

The secession of Transnistria and Gagauzia made moderate groups rethink their attitude towards the nationalists. They broke free of their political control and were able to review their stance and gradually stand up to them. On one hand Transnistria played a

positive role in Moldova by weakening the nationalists. On the other, partition created a huge economic and political problem which the Republic of Moldova has not managed to solve. Russian speakers enjoy a privileged position in Transnistria. They are trying to reach compromises to solve the problem together but maintain that a change of policy in the Republic of Moldova is the prerequisite to any compromise. But they acknowledge that there is very little possible peaceful room for manoeuvre, except with the Gagauz. We find it hard to imagine a Moldova split in two, one led by Russians ruling Moldovans, and a Moldova ruling over Russians. They realize Moldova has to be rebuilt on the ideological level and recognize that there are no plans for the future. Each person sees the next person as an enemy, which distracts attention from the current economic situation of dismemberment. (Ukrainian historian)

The sole encouraging sign seems to be that Moldova is the only country that has managed to call a rapid halt to a war it started, unlike Armenia and Georgia:

Even during the Transnistrian war, people stayed loyal to each other. There was no ethnic cleansing like in Yugoslavia. Repression of local militias follows national law. All the local people have a common glue – Orthodox Christianity – and go to the same churches, whether they are Russians or Moldovans. Priests try to take services in both languages. Moldovan churches belong to the Moscow patriarchate, which uses the Julian calendar, and refused to join the Bucharest patriarchate, which uses the Gregorian calendar. Language differences are not reinforced by confessional differences, which can feed divisions. This makes the search for a common, single solution easier and does not create aggressive attitudes towards Russia day to day. That should not be underestimated. The only exception is the metropolitan of Bessarabia, who belongs to the independent church using the Gregorian calendar. (Ukrainian historian)

Not many Russians speak Romanian, depending on their level of education and kinship with Moldovans. The soviet system produced a lot of retired Russians who live in Moldova because of its mild climate. These social groups are not sufficiently protected by the state and they feel their situation is precarious:

Russian speakers feel they are a minority in the empire that is relatively homogeneous politically speaking. Being conservative, they feel similar to the Hungarians in Transylvania, active and dominant minorities without political or cultural representation that is theirs by right, as was the case under Ceausescu's rule. They feel the lack of an organization such as the Hungarians created to defend their rights; in 1991 the elections had to take account of that ethno-linguistic factor which had recently appeared on the Moldovan political scene but which determined political choices, since for 20 percent of Moldovans Russian was their mother tongue. (Ukrainian historian)

Among conservatives there are also a number of Moldovan Romanians, Russians and Ukrainians including specialists in organizing the struggle. They attempted to produce proof that the Moldovans in power were curtailing the other minorities' rights, whereas international organizations seemed to have come to the opposite conclusion. The Russians organized themselves into an international front to fight for their rights in the independent republics and tried to build up autonomous cultural organizations that had some prestige in centres with a certain level of

culture in order to create a sense of community. That strategy failed after partition; the only groups left were professional organizations such as the Russian Speakers Union in education, the Russian Doctors Union, the Association of Russian Engineers, but those organizations did not manage to forge a link with Russia as they wanted to, since at that time it was in relative chaos:

Rogozin tried to reorganize the congress of representatives of Russian communities in Moscow and visited Ukraine to that end. In 1993 the congress of Russian communities sent 10 representatives to Moscow. (Ukrainian historian)

But Yeltsin's Russia, which was anti-Gorbachev and against the preservation of the Union, distanced itself from the Russian-speaking community.

Exacerbation of interethnic tension led to the break-up of the Russian-speaking community.⁸ The Socialist Party (ex-communist) supported equal rights but did not succeed in creating an ethnic organization as the Hungarians in Romania had done.

The Gagauz community

The Gagauz community split in two as well. Initially some of the separatist deputies, persuaded by separatist activists from Tiraspol, advocated a Federal Republic of Moldova:

Some of the movement's leaders told us that if we agreed to the language law we would be taking a big step backwards. Those who supported the language law were seen as traitors to the Tiraspol separatists. (Gagauz representative in the international relations department of state)

After partition they achieved their cultural autonomy. The vote on the law relating to autonomy for the Gagauz extended the logic of national emancipation to other minorities.

A Nationalities Centre was set up in the Republic of Moldova which wanted to introduce Turkish classes for the Gagauz with a system of grants. But the Gagauz community living in the countryside knew Romanian and did not feel the need for its own language as much as the Ukrainians or Russians:

Taken up with their economic interests, the people no longer need their own mother tongue but are aware that moving to a market economy requires knowledge of the state language, even several languages. Conditions for learning Romanian were not good and were even decreasing in 1993 because of the shortage of textbooks and teachers, inertia and many people's hope of returning to the previous condition. Romanian teachers did not want to teach in our area, they were afraid because of the situation triggered by the tension in Tiraspol. One solution was to go and study in Romania. (Gagauz representative in the international relations department of state)

The Ukrainian community

Ukrainians in Moldova, who mostly came to the border villages after the Second World War, live in compact groups: out of 350 villages in Moldova around 100 are entirely Ukrainian and 200 mixed. But few feel as though they belong to the country and those who were young under the soviet regime only have eyes for Moscow. According to the 1989 census 40 percent speak Russian as their mother tongue like the Bulgarians and Gagauz. They do not know their own language and are against reunification with Romania. For them the Ukrainian state is more of a myth than Russia:

At that time we were ethnic material for building a new ethnic substrate, *homo sovieticus*. There were no Ukrainian schools. We were only allowed to wear Cossack dress. We lived through those 50 years without knowing anything about Ukrainian history, culture or language.

Very few Bessarabian Ukrainians knew their native language. The situation was the same for the Moldavian population, who for the most part spoke Russian. When the Moldovan national movement began, that realization gave rise to the introduction of a campaign to encourage Ukrainian communities to open schools. Among a population 40 percent Transnistrian Moldovan, the Ukrainians sided with Russians at first. In the rest of the republic the Ukrainians' reaction was enthusiastic because they were being offered the opportunity to learn their language and culture: the majority of them decided to set up Ukrainian cultural associations. Ukraine contributed to this initiative. The women started a movement for rapprochement with their historical fatherland. Relations with Ukraine are important for Moldova since there have long been mixed Ukrainian and Moldovan villages, sometimes for several centuries in rural areas, just like with the Jews, Bulgarians, Gagauz and Bohemians. (Ukrainian association leader)

The 'interfrontists', who were active in the conservative interfront movement for the creation of an organization for Russian speakers, coming from directors of big companies in Russia and Moldova, called them the 'Bandervtsi', which was the name of the leaders of a nationalist anti-bolshevik movement in Ukraine. Now we are nationalists since we think, as the French do, that each people must itself realize its national idea of national cultural and religious renaissance with the support of the relevant republic.

Moldova is the second republic after Kazakhstan to welcome by decree an association of Ukrainians with the support of the Ukrainian state. It has allowed 86 schools to open, but they lack staff and textbooks. Improvements are planned over the next 10 years to train staff in Higher Institutes of Education, send them out to the schools and build up again a national intelligentsia. In 1993 already we cannot cope with the demand. In three years' time we shall have a Ukrainian university of human sciences. Associations exist in compact villages. Their task is above all cultural. Links with Russian associations are being forged around the defence of culture, that is all. The Russians came more recently to the towns to promote the interests of Russia, even though old intellectual relations had been formed with Russian writers through Pushkin. (Ukrainian association activist)

The Jewish community

The Jewish community suffered particularly from the Romanian occupation, together with the Nazis from 1941 to 1943. It comprised 50,000 people, later reduced to 25,000, who lived for the most part in Chisinau and had been there for a very long time. Since independence the Jewish community has had fewer problems in Moldova than other minorities because of financial and moral support from the Israeli state, which assisted with setting up circles for studying history, culture and language, and with organizing commercial links. Today it is one of the best organized and most active communities in every respect: humanitarian, medical, legal, cultural, etc.

The difficult task of reunification

Moldova found itself in a parlous state after partition. Moldovans thought Russia had no foreign policy project or economic interest in respect of the country. Without a strategic vision for the future or any room for manoeuvre, without investment from eastern or western Europe, with an excess of population in rural areas, severe pollution of agricultural land on most of the 70 state farms, backward technology, a situation that was geographically attractive but difficult for the transport of goods, the future looked rather bleak.

The people were demotivated: independence was not achieved by the population, who were mostly still in favour of the USSR. The parliament reflected the state of mind of a disillusioned people. In fact not many parties were active at the grassroots.⁹ The moderate government was under the thumb (*coupe*) of the agrarians. The neo-communist party, chaired by Snegur, favoured reforms but needed a majority to get them through. The Gagauz and Transnistrians blocked any progress on land reorganization. (Popular Front activist)

Antagonistic to members of the Popular Front, the agrarians abandoned Roman script because its introduction once more had upset the lives of country people, who had already changed alphabet in 1940 under Romanian domination and adopted Cyrillic:

This difficult change left many people illiterate and unable to read the daily papers and so take part in political life. They do not want to read the Russian press either and are left completely bereft without suitable means to learn. (Collective farm manager)

Teaching was now carried out in both languages, Romanian and Russian. In every Russian-speaking group Bulgarians, Ukrainians and Gagauz finished school in Russian, but some learnt Romanian. However, the spread of Romanian seemed irreversible under the pressure of students, despite the difficulties:¹⁰

Moldovans did not find it hard to learn their language and go back to Roman script in the villages because they had studied French quite a bit; our people knew Roman script well

even though they spoke badly because of the influence of Russian: textbooks for higher education were published in Moscow. In order to make up for the shortage of textbooks we have had to rely on Romania's assistance. The Romanian state helps students and pupils with grants to study in other republics. Before, students used to go to France. The basic problem is the amount of effort needed to learn foreign languages given the miserable salaries paid.

Students have a peaceful experience of mixed cultures, especially as there are a lot of mixed families. Each family attempts to resolve issues of identity and language in its own way. Those who want to be part of the state learn the language of the republic. Even mothers do not know Romanian and need other school or community contacts to help their child speak it. (Moldovan intellectual)

In the economic and institutional arena the situation is quite problematical. The parliamentary majority did not break up the collective farms and start to divide up the land differently and institute agrarian reform, because a majority seemed to want to preserve that structure so as not to question the old established divisions. The new legislative framework proposed for the reallocation of land and its different forms of administration by the Front was blocked by the collective farm head, whose weight in the government was significant, since agriculture affects 50 percent of the population. Problems of job replacement arose: companies could not provide them because they were short of entrepreneurial dynamism and investment.

When the USSR imploded Romania was able to absorb agricultural output and avoid a catastrophe. But given the political context, introducing economic integration with Romania proved problematical. And so only private economic links with that country could be established because of the lack of infrastructure.

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Since 1993 the local context has deteriorated markedly. However the strategic position of Moldova is currently allowing a glimpse of fresh prospects because of its border with Romania, which will become a border with the European Union in 2007.

Since partition many attempts at reunifying the Republic of Moldova have been made by mediators, but with no result. The international community has tried to force Russia to set a timetable for the withdrawal of the 14th Army. In vain: the economic stakes for Transnistria were too high and no alternative employment solution was found to satisfy those who live off it. We had to await entry into NATO in 2004 for the 14th Army's weapons to be repatriated to Russia at that juncture.

Before then Moldova, having refused to join the CIS, was forced into it because of its dependence on Russia for energy. The Communist Party was restored to legality in 1994. The government of President Voronin, a pro-Russian who emerged from its ranks and was elected in 2001, imposed both languages, Russian and Moldovan, as state languages and linked evacuation of the military arsenal with the 14th Army's withdrawal, a demand that was unacceptable at the time. But without notable results of an economic or political nature his popularity fell as the months went by. On the other hand Romania's rose again with prospects of entry into the European Union and Moldovan citizens being granted dual nationality for a time.

Today the development of Russia's relations with Europe gives grounds for thinking the European Union could in the future form a framework for the little republic which, in the course of all its tribulations, has become one of the poorest in Europe, alongside Transnistria, the new focus for east European mafias and a corridor for illegal immigrants into the Union. So for young pro-Romanian activists pro-European prospects have marginally relaunched the question of reunification with Romania within this new environment. As for President Voronin, he once more sees Europe as a solution to his country's problems via Romania's entry into Europe. He openly displays a willingness to reform in order to attract investment. And this reinvigorates the democratic opposition, most of whom had disappeared to Romania and who are led by young elites. This has led to renewed tensions between pro-Russian and pro-Romanian media. Discussions on the territorial autonomy of minorities within a confederation of three territories – Moldova, Transnistria and Gagauzia – are the proof of that.

Is the road to democracy and the stabilization of this little society, battered by history, about to be discovered? 'Big brother's' questionable role still needs to be taken into account. Could European integration be seen by Vladimir Putin as a process complementary to the CIS, which would connect with it in innovative ways through neighbourly relations that are in the process of being forged? Feeling increasingly hemmed in by the orange and pink revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia, will he not still be tempted tomorrow to stop the European Union resolving, instead of him or with him, the fate of that 'fly in the ointment' which the Republic of Transnistria remains? These partitions, these historical divisions, which in their time were well orchestrated by various political actors during the troubled period following communism, are still wounds that keep opening whenever the context of relations changes with Russia and its western neighbours. A hostage to these fluctuating relationships, the Republic of Moldova awaits its new destiny.

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Notes

Editor's Note: In English the forms Moldova/Moldovan are generally used for the Republic of Moldova post-1989. Pre-independence spellings take the form Moldavia/Moldavian, as in the Federal SSR of Moldavia. The same term (Moldavia) now refers to the northeastern province of Romania, bordering the Republic of Moldova.

1. Moldova used to produce 40 percent of the USSR's output of tobacco and a large quantity of vegetables, dried fruit, wine, oil and alcoholic beverages such as brandy. Forty percent of its industry is situated in Transnistria and concentrated around Tiraspol, Dubasari and Rebnitsa (petrochemicals, a cotton industry linked to Uzbekistan with 10,000 workers, machine tools exclusively adapted to the Russian textile industry, heavy metals, machinery, cement, electricity, artificial satellites, atomic submarines that are quite specific to the Soviet output, food manufacturing). Moldova used to import raw materials from the USSR, prefabricate in Transnistria and redistribute throughout the USSR. Agricultural produce was not transformed on the spot.

2. In *The Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact and its Consequences for Bessarabia* (1991) – hereafter referred to as *R–MP*.
3. The final notes of 26/27 June 1940 addressed to Romania were a result of the signing of the secret protocol and the systematic preparations for war that followed the conclusion of the pact. Romania was asked to return Bessarabia to the Soviet Union and hand over to it the northern part of Bucovina to compensate for the huge damage caused to the Soviet Union and Bessarabia by Romania's 22 years of government in Bessarabia' (in *The Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact: approval of the opinion of the Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the Moldavian SSR as to the political assessment of the Soviet–German treaty by Mr Snegur, President of the Supreme Soviet of the Moldavian SSR, Chisinau, 23 June 1990*).
4. This comprised the city of Tiraspol and the districts of Gregoripol, Dubasari, Kamenka, Rebnitsa, Slobodzeya and Tiraspol.
5. All technical education was in Russian, as well as all higher education. Moldavans were the worst educated: 10 percent illiterate in 1987, 12 percent in secondary schools, 6.1 percent in higher education.
6. Society is split into two groups: the Popular Front "progressives" with their radical programme, who see independence as a demand for the sovereignty, emancipation and unity of all Romanians, and the "conservatives", who include the supporters of the soviet empire and the military-industrial complex. In the same terms they continue the idea of the empire, its interests and territorial structure over the long term, since Peter the Great in the Crimea, the Caucasus, all the territories like Transnistria, southern Bessarabia, the Ukrainian seaboard, Abkhazia . . . At the 1990 parliamentary elections the 3rd congress of the Popular Front was held with the Christian Democrats, who were split into three groupings: social democrats, Christian democrats and liberals, aspiring to join the PCD and URCD international and European groups to support the aim of reunification with Romania.

The other political groups were divided between the three following options: the unionists, who advocated the country's reunification with Romania; the republicans, who wanted a republic independent of Russia and Romania in order to have honest economic and political relations, or an alliance with one of the two countries; the federalists, who saw their future in the Commonwealth of Independent States. In the view of many independence was an illusion because Russia had many ways of exerting pressure due to its energy resources, which the republics of Moldova and Ukraine were extremely short of; some of their oil was imported from Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkey, but the majority came from Russia. Agriculture was gravely threatened when there was no more fuel (Popular Front activist).

7. 'A bill for a special legal status of territorial autonomy for the Gagauz, proposed by the Popular Front and approved by the OSCE, went in the direction of a law on minority rights and did not suggest any ethnic division. The parliamentary majority was split on the proposal; no decision was made on status during the discussion of the bill on minorities in June. The views of the inhabitants of Transnistria and the Gagauz were close even though the Gagauz had more economic interests in common with the Moldovans from the Popular Front, since their territory was essentially rural, poor, underprivileged and precarious' (Gagauz member of parliament in the department of state for national relations).
8. 100,000 people are considered to be 'Russian speakers'. The 'indigenous people' are Ukrainian (13%), Russians (12%) and Romanians who have always lived there.
9. In 1993 the party groupings were: among the unionists, the Christian Democratic Popular Front, which was represented throughout Moldova but very poorly in Transnistria; the Christian Nationalist Party, the Democratic Women's League, youth organizations, veterans associations, associations of victims of the soviet regime, the Pro-Bessarabian Association, a number of professional, cultural and denominational associations.

Republicans were grouped around Snegur: the Agrarian Democratic Party brought together collective farm managers; the Republican Party had no real political strength; the Social Democratic Party supported an alliance with the Russians; the Republican Labour Party was the big industrial-

ists' party in favour of reforms and believing in the possible existence of a Republic of Moldova; the Socialist Party, which was communist, supported Snegur as president. The Transnational Radical Party, which had no particular orientation, opposed the Popular Front, and the Federal Republican Party supported the government despite its name. The intellectuals' congress was ruled by the writers, who were centrists, the Union of Writers for *perestroika* fought for national emancipation and were in favour of strategy for independence but surreptitiously.

10. In 1988 there were 7 Moldovan, 30 Russian and 25 mixed schools. In 1993 there were 36 Russian, 37 Moldovan and 11 mixed schools.

Sources

Documentary

Field notebooks compiled in 1993 by the author and interviews with representatives from the department of state for national relations, the Republic of Transnistria, refugees, the women's league, various minorities (Ukrainian, Gagauz, Jewish), the Helsinki Committee, the mayor of Chisinau, Popular Front activists and Ukrainian and Moldovan historians.

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