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ABBREVIATIONS

NAA GDNA – National Archives Agency, General Directorate of the National Archive
NAA DSPO – National Archives Agency – Directorate of Social-Political Organizations
AASM – Archive of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova
AMSU – Archive of Moldova State University
AARSUB – Archive of Alecu Russo State University of Balti
CC of the PM(b) – Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova (Bolshevik)
CCof the CPM – Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova
CC of the AUP(b) – Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)
CC of the CPSU – Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
UC for HE – Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR
MHE of USSR – Ministry of Higher Education of the USSR
MHSSE– Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the USSR
RCP – Romanian Communist Party
MSSR – Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic
KSSR – Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic
USSR – Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
CPC of MSSR – Council of People's Commissars of the MSSR
CPC of USSR – Council of People's Commissars of the USSR
RCYU – Russian Communist Youth Union / All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League
USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
MSU – Chisinau State University /Moldova State University
ЦДАВОУ – Центральный державный архів вищих органів влади та управління України / Central State Archive of the Highest Authorities and Government of Ukraine
ЦДАГОУ – Центральний державний архів громадських об'єднань та україніки / Central State Archive of Public Associations and Ukrainica

INTRODUCTION

Topicality of the theme. Higher education in the Republic of Moldova inherited the Soviet system with all its qualities, but also its weaknesses and shortcomings, and their elimination and overcoming, to which others have been added – inherent to the development of the Republic of Moldova and national education – has taken a long time and, in some respects, is still ongoing. In this context, it is particularly important to understand, acknowledge, and accept the Soviet legacy, especially that which is still felt today in the social practices of everyday life, but also in the theoretical reflections of some intellectuals in the Republic of Moldova. Academic and public spheres continue to invoke, perhaps more insistently than after the fall of the Soviet Union, the perpetuation of a „Soviet Moldovanus", who would combine the inherited qualities of „homo soveticus" with those of a „Moldovan". Higher education in the MSSR was entrusted by the communist regime with the mission of training and educating this „new kind of person", with higher education being transformed into an instrument of social mobilization and national construction for the realization of the ambitious Bolshevik project. However, the subject has remained little or completely unexplored in historiography, while the intellectuals who built and, to a large extent, determine the fate of the Republic of Moldova are, to a greater or lesser extent, the product of the Soviet education system, and identifying the „particularities" of Soviet-style higher education and training may explain its concepts, opinions, and actions. In this respect, our investigations can also provide explanations for understanding the gravitation of the intellectuals and, by extension, of the entire Moldovan society for more than 30 years between two worlds – one congenital, left as a legacy that had to be assumed, and another new one, produced by the consequences of assuming independence and the republic's European and democratic path.

Our research is also relevant in the context of the endless identity and linguistic controversy in Moldovan society and the political polarization that prevents it from promoting common interests and building a functional state. An impartial analysis of the subject is useful in the context of Moldova's accession to the European Union and the need to strengthen social and national cohesion by eliminating ethnic and linguistic divisions between cohabiting communities. The relevance of the research topic also stems from the importance of understanding the role of higher education in the socio-economic and political development of a nation and from the need to exploit valuable experiences from the history of educational policies, taking into account new methodological approaches and research tools, that have become accessible after the collapse of the USSR and the opening, albeit partial, of the archives.

Furthermore, the Soviet experience of forming a „Moldovan" intelligentsia can offer solutions to the challenges facing higher education in the Republic of Moldova, while an analysis of the policies and practices of the communist regime can make it possible to improve the driving forces behind the process of building and managing the university system, given the lack of human capital, demographic decline and challenging migration, the imbalance between the declining number of students and the large number of higher education institutions, and the mismatch between the demand for skilled labour in the market and the supply from higher education institutions.

From a contemporary perspective, higher education perhaps best expresses the aspirations, illusions, and limitations of the societies to which they belong. Faced with current geopolitical challenges, including the hybrid war between the Russian Federation and the West, it is essential for the country to develop an „educational ideal" based on European values. In this regard, the experience of identifying and implementing the directions, forms, and methods of Soviet-style education for students in higher education in the MSSR may be relevant.

Thus, the analysis of the national and social policies of the Soviet regime in and through higher education in the MSSR is not only a scientific and academic necessity, but also a social and national imperative, with the potential to improve social cohesion and build a more prosperous future for all communities in the state.

The purpose of the scientific research lies in the analysis of the national and social policies of the Soviet communist regime, their transformation into instruments of national and social engineering in higher education in the MSSR[1] from its establishment after the first Soviet annexation of Bessarabia (1940) until the mid-1960s, and the attitudes and reactions of actors in higher education towards the experiments of national and social construction of the „Moldovan" Soviet intelligentsia.

Achieving the proposed goal required the following *objectives*:

- ✓ Analysing the theoretical and methodological framework of Soviet national and social engineering in higher education;
- ✓ determining the premises and socio-demographic context that made possible the implementation of Soviet national and social policies in higher education in the MSSR;

[1] The network of Soviet-style higher education institutions was formed in the MSSR between 1940-1941 and 1964, consisting (in order of creation and reorganization) of: the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute (1930-1941)/ Teacher Training Institute (1944)/ State Pedagogical Institute in Tiraspol (since 1952); State Pedagogical Institute in Chișinău (1940-1960); State Agricultural Institute in Chișinău (1940); Chisinau State Conservatory (1940); Teacher Training Institute (1945)/ Pedagogical Institute in Balti (since 1953); Chisinau State Medical Institute (1945); Chisinau State University (1946); Teacher Training Institute in Soroca (1949-1954); Pedagogical Institute in Cahul (1953-1954); Polytechnic Institute in Chișinău (1964). The research was conducted based on an analysis of the processes that took place during the investigated period in these higher education institutions in the MSSR.

- ✓ studying the national and social engineering mechanisms applied in the process of access, selection, and retention of student quotas in higher education, as well as assessing their impact on the ethno-social structure of students in the MSSR;
- ✓ examining staff policy and its transformation into an instrument of ideological and ethnic control of university teaching staff;
- ✓ analysing communist language policy and education in higher education, with a view to understanding their role in shaping an ideologically and nationally compliant intelligentsia;
- ✓ analysing the mechanisms, practices and results of communist education promoted in higher education in the MSSR, in order to understand how it was used as an ideological tool for training Soviet-style intelligentsia;
- ✓ highlighting the contradictions and limitations of national and social policies in higher education by investigating the reactions and forms of resistance of students and academics to the actions of the regime.

Habilitation dissertation hypothesis: Our scientific approach starts from the hypothesis that, immediately after the annexation of Bessarabia, with the formation of Soviet-style higher education institutions, the communist regime implemented national and social policies in higher education in the MSSR, which it had developed and tested in the pre-war period in higher education institutions, including national ones, in the USSR. In this context, we assume that the Soviet state and party authorities intervened in higher education with official and unofficial, formal and informal instruments of these policies, seeking to create a „Moldovan", Russian, or Russian-speaking Soviet intelligentsia with a Marxist-Leninist worldview, educated in the communist spirit of patriotism and devotion to the state and the communist party.

The subject of the research covers the **chronological** period from 1940/1944 to the mid-1960s. The *lower limit* refers to the implementation of national and social policies with the establishment of Soviet higher education in the MSSR, after the first Soviet occupation of Bessarabia (1940) and its resumption after the reoccupation in 1944. *The upper limit* refers to the mid-1960s, when the process of testing and consolidating national and social engineering tools was completed, marked by the transition to the stage of „developed socialism", with the end of the Khrushchev period and the beginning of a new ideological direction. This context led to the institutionalization and detailed regulation of educational, national, and social policies in higher education in the MSSR: the cancellation of class criteria for admission (18.III.1965), the postponement of military service for students 27.III.1965), finalization of the canon of ideological education through the introduction of scientific communism as a compulsory subject and final exam (1964), and orientation of education towards the training of

„convinced builders of communism”. In addition, Russian was established as the main language of instruction by order of the MHSSE of the USSR (19.V.1964), position maintained until the collapse of the USSR. At the same time, after the Third Congress of the Writers' Union of the MSSR (14–15.X.1965), the authorities intensified their campaigns against „nationalism”, emphasizing the internationalist and anti-Romanian line of education [130, 54]. This period allowed us to identify and examine in detail the national and social engineering tools implemented *in* and *through* higher education and to establish a correlation between the regime's efforts in this regard and their effects, including in the long term.

Methodology of scientific research is determined by the complexity of the objectives assumed, the investigation being carried out on the basis of fundamental principles of scientific research, such as objectivity, determinism, historicism, systemic approach, etc., which determined the selection and application of research methods specific to historical sciences (historical narrative, diachronic methods, critical analysis, historical-typological analysis, comparative-historical analysis, etc.), interdisciplinary methods (quantitative, systemic, semantic analysis, etc.), as well as general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, explanation, generalization, etc.).

Scientific novelty and originality of the habilitation dissertation lie in the fact that this is a first attempt to approach Soviet-style higher education as a mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR, as well as to frame it within the complex historical phenomenon of the formation of the „new kind of person” in accordance with the communist ideal of the disappearance of nationalities as distinct entities and the creation of a supra-ethnic identity called the „Soviet people”. Another outcome of our research is that, based on the generalization of historiographical experience and an important source base, a complex analysis is undertaken of the implementation of national and social engineering tools in and through higher education in the MSSR, which, adjusted to the objectives of the ambitious Soviet project of creating a Soviet-style „Moldovan” intelligentsia, aimed at the denationalization of the future intelligentsia through its simultaneous Russification and „Moldovanisation” in order to create a separate identity in the MSSR, different from the Romanian one in Romania.

Elements of originality and novelty can be found in the following monographs [148; 150], articles and studies, including introductions to volumes of documents [1; 5] developed by the author and expressed through:

- ✓ cataloguing and systematising historiographical approaches with reference to various aspects of the social and national policies of the communist regime *in* and *through* Soviet higher education in general, and that of the MSSR in particular;

- ✓ identifying, systematizing, analysing, and putting into scientific circulation a significant number of unpublished sources from the central archives and institutions of the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine, which reflect and elucidate the national and social policies of the Soviet regime in higher education in the MSSR, the regime's policies and attitudes toward the intelligentsia in the MSSR and its role in society, as well as other aspects of the functioning of the Soviet state. An original element in this regard is the collection and combined use of oral history sources [58] and memoirs to enhance the effectiveness of research, reveal new aspects, and clarify conclusions made on the basis of archival documents;
- ✓ approaching a comparative-historical and systemic way of the little-studied or completely unexplored aspects of higher education in the MSSR, such as the process and specifics of student admission to higher education, the policy of „positive discrimination of Moldovans" and its contradictions, the specifics of the formation of teaching and research bodies and staff policies at different stages of the period under review, the specifics of the behaviour and relations between the university intelligentsia and the authorities, the evolution of language policy in higher education in the MSSR in a formal and extracurricular context, the effectiveness of these policies and manifestations of resistance to Russification and/or „Moldovanisation", the forms, methods, and directions of communist education and the strategies/tactics for adapting them to the „specifics" of student contingents, the teaching of ideological disciplines, extracurricular education, the mood of students in relation to the regime's educational offensive, the layers of identities in higher education in the MSSR, etc.;
- ✓ highlighting and analysing the political, socio-demographic, and ethno-demographic premises that determined and facilitated the transplantation and implementation of Soviet national and social policies in higher education in the MSSR, and conditioned their adjustment to the „specifics" of student contingents and teaching and scientific bodies;
- ✓ identifying and analysing national and social engineering tools *in* and *through* higher education in the MSSR (policies for training and retaining student contingents, establishing teaching and research bodies, language policies, communist education, etc.) and strategies/tactics for adapting them to the „specifics" of student contingents and teaching bodies in higher education institutions in the MSSR;
- ✓ evaluating the effectiveness of national and social engineering tools in higher education in the MSSR, distinguishing and characterizing the layers of student identities and teaching and research staff in the MSSR;

- ✓ analysing comparatively the types of attitudes/reactions of the academic community (students and teaching and research staff) towards the national and social policies of the Soviet state;
- ✓ estimating the impact of applying national engineering instruments (admission control and the policy of „positive discrimination of Moldovans", indigenization of student contingents and teaching staff, Russification and „Moldovanisation", political-ideological education, etc.) and social instruments (policies of proletarianization of student contingents and teaching and scientific bodies, ideological campaigns, material and financial „motivational" instruments, etc.) promoted by the communist regime *in* and *through* higher education in the MSSR;
- ✓ using interdisciplinary research methods, including for collecting, presenting, and analysing quantitative data;
- ✓ identifying and promoting new research perspectives, such as studying the history of social and/or ideological sciences in the MSSR and establishing their role in the evolution of social sciences in the Republic of Moldova, investigating the history of party education and its role in shaping the political, academic, and scientific elite of the MSSR and the Republic of Moldova.

Fundamentally new results for historical science the findings of our investigation have established a new paradigm regarding the purpose of the creation, functioning, and exploitation of the Soviet-style higher education system in the MSSR as a mechanism of national and social engineering in the context of the communist project of ethnic and social (re-)modelling in a national republic. The research represents a first attempt in historiography to demonstrate that the national and social policies of the Soviet state in and through higher education in the MSSR functioned as instruments of national and social engineering, highlighting the manner and tactics in which these instruments were adapted to the „specifics" of the student contingents and the teaching and scientific bodies of the MSSR, with the aim of constructing a „Moldovan" Soviet intelligentsia that would support the socio-cultural, economic, and political realities of this republic in the MSSR, the socio-cultural, economic, and political realities of this republic, with the aim of building a „Moldovan" Soviet intelligentsia that would support the Soviet theory of the existence of a „Moldovan language" and a separate identity, different from the Romanian one, which would promote the interests of the Soviet regime and contribute to the construction of socialism. The analysis of the attitudes, reactions, and forms of expression of students and teaching and research staff toward the national and social policies of the regime and the identification of identity layers in the academic environments of higher education institutions in the MSSR are topics of scientific

novelty. A fundamentally new result is the establishment of the relationship between the regime's efforts to achieve its goal and the effects of implementing national and social engineering tools in higher education in the MSSR, which largely explains the socio-political views, opinions, and actions of the intelligentsia in the Republic of Moldova (largely a product of the Soviet higher education system) and, implicitly, of the entire Moldovan society, which has been caught between two worlds for more than 30 years – one congenital, left as a legacy that it had to assume, and another new one, produced by the consequences of assuming independence and the European and democratic path of the Republic of Moldova.

The theoretical importance result from addressing an important and topical scientific problem that has not been addressed in the historiography of the Republic of Moldova. For the first time in historical research, based on solid documentary sources and a complex methodology, higher education in the MSSR is analysed as a mechanism of national and social engineering, and the theoretical results and conclusions formulated have led to the crystallization of a new scientific direction. Along with the concepts, notions, and theories outlined and/or explained in various publications by the author, the research provides a theoretical basis for further scientific investigations on this and related topics.

The applied value is dictated by educational reforms, the need for spiritual rebirth and social cohesion in the Republic of Moldova, as well as the tasks of improving scientific research in the field of national history. The conclusions of the research might be used by state institutions in the process of developing educational and cultural policies, concepts of spiritual, state, and social development; by higher education institution managers to streamline staff policies and strengthen the academic environment, improve the quality of the educational process, etc.; they can be used to set new research directions, as well as by authors of synthesis works on the history of the MSSR, by researchers of the history, practices, or essence of communist regimes; can also be used in the teaching of university courses, in methodological work and the development of teaching technologies, for the development of teaching and scientific materials for university and school education (textbooks, lecture notes, etc.).

The implementation of scientific results has been reflected in my academic and scientific activity as an Associate Professor at the Department of Romanian, Universal History and Archaeology, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Moldova State University. This is further evidenced by my research involvement in state-funded programs and national projects, including: Project No. 18PD, "Higher Education as a Mechanism of Social and National Engineering in the Moldavian SSR" (2019–2021); Project No. 20.80009.1606.11, "The Academic Heritage of Higher Education in the Moldavian SSR: Investigating and Valorizing Good Practices" (2020–2023); and Project No. 010402, "Culture and Politics in the Context of

Regime Changes: From Bessarabia to the Present" (2024–2027). The outcomes have also been disseminated through scientific publications related to the research topic and through the supervision of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral theses in the field of Romanian History (by periods), specialization 611.02.

Approval of scientific results. The research findings were discussed and approved during the meeting of the Department of Romanian History, Universal History and Archaeology of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, Moldova State University, held on June 24, 2025, as well as during the ad hoc Scientific Seminar convened on July 18, 2025. The results were also presented and validated within the framework of national and international conferences and other scientific events.

Publications Related to the Topic of the Synthesis Paper: The topic of higher education history in the Moldavian SSR and its use as a tool for national and intellectual engineering has been a focus of the author's research for several years, with some results presented at conferences and other national and international scientific events. The author has published two monographs on the researched topic, including one international, two collections of documents with introductory studies, over 60 chapters in collective monographs, articles, and studies in specialized journals and collections, published in the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Italy, over 36 theses from national and international scientific conferences, and contributed to the editing of several scientific volumes and collections published in the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Italy. The research results were presented at 52 international scientific events, 5 national events with international participation, and 13 national events.

Structure of the habilitation dissertation. The habilitation dissertation was prepared in accordance with the rules established by ANACEC (Guidelines for writing a doctoral/habilitation thesis, approved by Decision No. 5 of December 18, 2018, Recommendations for the preparation and defence of habilitation theses/synthesis papers, approved by Order No. 10-A of 25 February 2021). The synthesis paper reflects the content of the papers published between 2016 and 2025 and contains: a list of abbreviations, an introduction; a chapter on the conceptual landmarks of the research, historiography, and historical sources; four basic chapters, divided into 16 subchapters; general conclusions and recommendations; bibliography, appendix, annotations in Romanian and English.

Keywords: communist regime, USSR, MSSR, higher education, national engineering, social engineering, indigenization, Russification, denationalization, „Moldovanisation", „positive discrimination of Moldovans", social discrimination, proletarianization, communist education, nationalism, anti-Sovietism.

CONTENTS OF THE HABILITATION DISSERTATION

The problem of transforming and operating higher education in the MSSR as a mechanism of national and social engineering has been addressed in our work, on the basis of which, in the text of this summary, we have presented the historiography of the problem and the substance of the fundamental issues in four chapters, our effort being complemented by general conclusions and recommendations.

I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

1.1. Research methodology and terminology

The methodological support for the research on the national and social policies of the communist regime *in* and *through* higher education and the transformation of the latter into a mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR is determined by the complexity of the objectives undertaken and the available documentary and historiographical basis, requiring an interdisciplinary approach based on the fundamental principles of scientific research and the application of research methods specific to the historical sciences, interdisciplinary methods, and general scientific methods to an important base of published and unpublished documents and identified historiographical sources, selected and classified by the author, which ensured the rigor and credibility of the author's studies.

The research was based primarily on the principle of objectivity, which made it possible to avoid biased attitudes in investigating Soviet national and social policies applied *in* and *through* higher education in the MSSR. This principle excluded simplistic judgments such as „good–bad" or „progress–regression" in the analysis of these policies, as well as the reactions and attitudes of teachers and students, providing an appropriate framework for a balanced and contextualized understanding of the phenomena in their historical context, without anachronisms or ideological assessments.

The principle of *determinism* provided a coherent framework for analysing how higher education in the MSSR was used as a strategic mechanism in the process of national and social engineering. It guided the demonstration that the phenomena and processes in the Soviet educational system were not random or isolated, but determined by a set of causes and factors, both objective and subjective. At the same time, the principle allowed for the identification of these factors and the analysis of how they conditioned the particular evolution of national and social policies in higher education in the MSSR, facilitating the understanding of the causal relationships involved in the design and application of Soviet strategies for controlling the intellectualization of the republic.

The principle of *historicism* provided the analytical framework necessary for understanding how the regime's national and social policies, applied in higher education in the MSSR, were shaped by the political, ideological, socio-economic, and cultural developments of the Soviet state as a whole. By applying this principle, the policies promoted were not treated as isolated realities, but as the results of complex historical processes, reflecting the dynamics of relations between the centre and the periphery, between the objectives of modernisation and those of ethno-social and cultural homogenisation. This approach made it possible to identify the distinct stages of implementation of Soviet policies, the ideological and practical motivations that generated them, as well as their immediate and lasting effects.

The application of the *systemic* approach principle allowed for the analysis of higher education in the MSSR as an integral part of a coherent system, consisting of interdependent elements embedded in the political-administrative, socio-economic, and cultural structures of the republic and the USSR. This perspective facilitated the understanding of higher education not only as a space for academic training, but as a central strategic tool in the Soviet mechanism of social and national engineering. Policies of ethnic and social selection of students, teacher training, language regime, and ideological education were approached as parts of a whole, designed to highlight how they were calibrated and correlated, contributing to the ethno-social and ideological transformations in the MSSR.

Our scientific approach is multifaceted and multidisciplinary, intersecting several fields, such as political history, social history, institutional history, etc. Thus, the research required the use of a corroborated set of methods specific to historical science, interdisciplinary and general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, explanation, generalization, etc.). The *historical* method formed the basis of the research, being essential for reconstructing and interpreting the processes that shaped national and social policies in higher education in the MSSR; for tracking the evolution of these policies in the context of political, ideological, and social transformations in the USSR and the republic; for reconstructing the stages of implementation of national and social engineering policies; understanding the mechanisms of „proletarianization", „indigenization", and ideological control of the intelligentsia, identifying the causal relationships between central decisions and local effects on the formation of student contingents and university staff, as well as highlighting the contradictions and results of these policies. At the same time, it allowed for the exploration of the impact of major events, such as World War II, etc., on the continuities and adjustments of these policies.

The application of the *diachronic* method allowed the subject to be presented in a coherent chronological sequence, facilitating the analysis of processes and phenomena in their historical development and in the context of historical and political transformations, identifying continuities and ruptures in national and social engineering policies, etc. to highlight how the educational process was influenced by the historical, political, and social context, contributing to the development of a „Moldovan" national and social identity within a Soviet framework.

For the analysis and critical interpretation of sources and historiographical opinions, we rigorously applied *the critical analysis* method, which ensured the contextualized evaluation of historical sources, the decoding of official discourses and secondary interpretations; the identification of the real intentions, implicit or manipulated meanings of the party-state policies in higher education in the MSSR; highlighting the differences between the regime's stated goals and their actual effects, the internal limitations and contradictions of these policies, and framing them in the context of the phenomenon under study, etc. The *comparative-historical* method also made it possible to conduct comparative analyses of processes and phenomena in the higher education system of the MSSR at different stages of national and social policy implementation, comparing them with those in other union republics of the USSR (e.g., the social structure of students at the union level with that in the MSSR, the forms and nature of resistance by students and teachers against Russification in the MSSR, the USSR, and the Baltic republics, etc.) and allowed for the identification of common features and specific differences between the various stages of implementation of the policies analysed, the instruments of national and social engineering, and the assessment of their results and consequences, both in the short and long term. *The historical-typological* method was applied to classify the historical stages and policies of the Soviet state in higher education in the MSSR, to systematize internal phenomena in the Soviet „Moldovan" educational field, and to systematise types of student identity.

In addition, *the quantitative (cliometrics)* method was used to collect, analyse, and interpret data collected from historical sources regarding the number of students, teaching staff, social disciplines, forms and methods of ideological education, data regarding the ethnic and social structure of students and teachers, their geographical origin, the professional qualifications and work experience of teachers, etc. Using *graphical* methods, the collected data were synthesized and transposed into tables, graphs, and diagrams [148, 788-882], which provided an empirical perspective on the degree of accessibility of higher education based on ethnic and/or social affiliation, on trends toward the „indigenization" and „proletarianization" of student contingents and teaching staff, on the level of professionalization and political

loyalty of teachers, in order to understand how Soviet educational policies influenced the social and ethnic structure of the MSSR, etc. The *systemic* method allowed for a complex and interconnected analysis and interpretation of all elements involved in the process of identity construction and social control in and through higher education in the MSSR. Higher education institutions, teaching staff and their training, students, study programs, educational policies, relations between the centre and the periphery (MSSR), and the goals of national and social engineering were analysed as systemic components that were interrelated and influenced each other. The systemic method provided a framework for correlating educational policies with identity and social policies, for identifying contradictions and dysfunctions in the system, and allowed us to avoid a linear and descriptive approach and understand the complex functioning of education as a mechanism of control and ethnic and social reconstruction of the intelligentsia in the MSSR.

Our scientific approach dedicated to analysing Soviet educational policy from the perspective of its participation in national and social engineering *in* and *through* higher education in the MSSR involved the use of a set of terms, notions, and phrases, and in order to avoid anachronisms and ambiguities, we resorted to specifying and clarifying the meaning of the terminology and concepts used in the research. Several terms, notions, and concepts were taken from thematic dictionaries and from the works of renowned specialists in the fields addressed, while others were adapted to the specific nature of the topic investigated.

The term "social engineering," which is used with different meanings in the social sciences[2], of management, information security, psychology, etc., was adopted and adapted from the concept formulated by British philosopher Karl Popper. Based on Popper's concept of „utopian social engineering" (including communist social engineering), which argues that it seeks to reshape society as a whole according to a defined blueprint or plan, by seizing key positions and expanding the power of the state until the state becomes almost identical to

[2] Russian sociologist A.V. Veselov defines „social engineering" as „an interdisciplinary scientific and practical activity associated with the formation and transformation of social systems of varying levels of complexity." He identifies three contemporary paradigms of „social engineering": utopian, characterized by the construction of ideal concepts of social order; scientific-applied, which involves a technological approach to social systems; synergistic, where social engineering develops as an interdisciplinary scientific and practical activity associated with the formation and transformation of social systems of varying levels of complexity. Social engineering paradigms, on the one hand, express the historical succession in the development of theoretical ideas about social engineering, and on the other hand, they coexist and interact in the modern era as specialized methods of social engineering development, depending on the nature of the specific social systems being studied. (А. В. Веселов. *Социальная инженерия: сущность и парадигмальная методология.* Автореферат дисс. на соск. уч. ст. канд. филос. наук. Москва, 2012, сс. 28-29). In social sciences, „social engineering" is understood as „a set of applied approaches focused on 1) changing people's behavior and attitudes; 2) solving social problems; 3) adapting social institutions to changing conditions; 4) maintaining social activity." (В. К. Мокшин, А. В. Миронов. *Словарь-справочник по социологии.* Москва: Дашков и К, 2011, с. 30).

society, replacing the claim of building a new society in which men and women can live with the claim of shaping these men and women to fit its new society [140, 46-48], we have used the term „social engineering" in the sense of a methodological approach to the social policy of the Soviet state in higher education in the MSSR, which involves a deliberate and systematic technological attitude and action to train a „first-generation intelligentsia" *in* and *through* higher education, complemented by tools to change behaviour and attitudes in line with the interests of the party-state and, implicitly, the social reconstruction of MSSR society in accordance with communist ideals, an action carried out „from above" and involving significant transformations or the creation of new social institutions (institutional engineering), as well as the advanced formation of the legal and public space (socio-legal engineering).

In line with Popper's concept, which argues that social engineering views institutions as means to serve certain ends, and the effectiveness and accessibility of their use, we assert that the Soviet-style higher education system was established and operated in the MSSR as a mechanism of social engineering, which, through recruitment and selection tools, authorized individuals' access to different social positions. In this sense, the Soviet state's policy on higher education provides an example of how the political and ideological interests of the communist regime favoured certain social groups and disadvantaged others in order to intentionally create a Soviet intellectual „class" with „working-class" origins, while also reshaping their conception of the world and life, and the human condition itself, with a view to creating a „new kind of person".

While the concept and notion of „social engineering" remain a topic of scientific and public debate, they have been substantiated by theorists and are used by many researchers [99, 266-301; 302, 83-101; 262, 372-377], including with reference to the communist policy of building a classless society of a „new kind of person", those of „national engineering" have not been used in the specialized literature. By analogy with „social engineering", we have adapted this term by formulating the concept of „national engineering", by which we mean a deliberate and systemic policy of the Soviet regime to ethnic (re-)modelling of student contingents and teaching and scientific bodies in higher education in the MSSR in accordance with the communist ideal of the disappearance of nationalities as distinct entities and the construction of a supra-ethnic identity called the „Soviet people", which would have a common socialist homeland and a single economic base, a single social and class structure, a Marxist-Leninist ideology, a common goal—the construction of communism, and the same spiritual and psychological traits" [300, 29], made up of individuals who had been denationalized, deprived of their language and national culture, without national and/or social identity, and, „in absolute

terms, Russian, or at least Russified" [116, 6]. „National engineering" *in* and *through* higher education involves the denationalization of the future intelligentsia through its simultaneous Russification and „Moldovanisation" in order to create a „Moldovan language" and a separate identity in the MSSR, different from the Romanian one. We contend that, while the instruments of social engineering are largely common to all Soviet higher education, those of national engineering are specific and arose from the „specificity" of the creation of the MSSR and its ethno-demographic conditions.

Inherently linked to the concept of „national engineering" is the notion of „positive discrimination towards Moldovans". In general, the term „positive discrimination", also known as „affirmative action", is widely used in specialized literature, although the concept remains one of the main and controversial topics of scientific discussion. Oxford Dictionaries and Encyclopaedia Britannica define the terms „positive discrimination"/ „affirmative action" as „a practice or policy of favouring/giving limited preferences to persons/minorities belonging to groups that suffer discrimination"[3]. We concur with the conclusion of American historian Terry Martin that the Soviet Empire was the first state in the world to develop affirmative action programs for ethnic minorities between 1920–1930 [121, 87–90]. Even though, as some researchers show, at the end of the 1930s, Stalin radically changed national policy, with „Russian Great Power chauvinism" dominating it until the mid-1950s [310, 106-107], we consider that after the re-annexation of Bessarabia, the communist regime applied a practice of positive discrimination towards „representatives of the indigenous nationality – Moldovans", transforming it into one of the important instruments of national engineering *in* and *through* higher education in the MSSR.

Based on the analysis of several sociolinguistic definitions and interpretations of the concept of „language policy" [95, 5-7; 244, 616; 243, 7-11; 291, 213-226], we have extensively explored the phrase „language policy in higher education in the MSSR", considering a system of written and unwritten, official and semi-official, as well as the curricular and extracurricular practices of the Soviet authorities, which sought to establish the principles and manner in which Russian and Romanian („Moldovan") languages are used in higher education in the MSSR, so as to contribute to the ultimate achievement of the Soviet regime's national policy.

In our studies, it was impossible to avoid using the term „Moldovan language", since this was the name given to the language spoken by Romanians in the MSSR at the time, and it appeared in all the documents on which our research was based. Even the Romanian-speaking

[3] *Affirmative action*. Disponibil : https://www.britannica.com/topic/affirmative-action (accesat: 19.V.2025).

intellectuals with a „nationalist mindset" in the MSSR „accepted" to officially use this phrase (even though they thought „Moldovan language" was the same as Romanian). Like the glottonym „Romanian language", the ethnonym „Romanian people" was taken out of use and banned by the Soviet regime [130, 3], and political interference in the cultural-scientific sphere through the „Moldovanist" theory imposed the use of the terms „Moldovans", „native nationality – Moldovans" and others as identifiers of the language and ethnicity of the native population of the MSSR, in order to „demonstrate" a different origin for them than that of the Romanian people. We used the term „Moldovan"/ „Moldovans" to refer to ethnic Romanians living in the MSSR and in the neighbouring regions of the USSR.

We would like to clarify that by the term „Transnistrians" (regionalism), we refer to the inhabitants of the former Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, who were displaced to the right bank of the Dniester in 1940-1941 and after the re-annexation of Bessarabia in 1944. At the same time, we emphasized that ethnic Romanians on the left bank of the Dniester were pejoratively called „shantishti" because they spoke a Romanian language mixed with Russian and Ukrainian words, spiced with invented words to avoid Romanian terms. The term „shantist" is a derivative of the regionalism „shanti" („it must be" or „it seems"), with which Transnistrians began every sentence [65, 257].

As regards the concepts of „Sovietization", „Russianization" and „Russification", we accept the meanings assigned to them by theorists of the phenomenon of denationalization [64, 143-158; 97, 34-35; 193, 5], namely: the concept of „Sovietization" refers to a process of imposing and accepting Soviet institutions, of integration into the communist system by transforming political, social, and economic structures in accordance with the Soviet model, of politicizing and ideologizing all aspects of life; „Russification" is the dissemination of the Russian language and culture (and, one might add, the Russian population) in non-Russian territories and concerns exclusively the linguistic aspect, in other words, the imposition and assimilation of Russian as the official language; and „Russification" is a complex, much longer process, both individual and collective, through which individuals belonging to non-Russian ethnic groups are objectively and psychologically transformed into Russians, without this necessarily implying the loss of identity or national consciousness.

1.2. The historiography of the research topic

As we have clarified in our research, the issue of the transformation and functioning of higher education as a mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR was not a subject of research either in Soviet historiography, for understandable reasons, or in post-Soviet

historiography, which was more oriented towards the political and economic history of the USSR and the union republics. However, some aspects of the issue under investigation were addressed, in one way or another, by some Soviet and Western specialists until the disintegration of the USSR, as well as after its collapse. Our historiographical analysis led us to identify two categories of works that address, to a greater or lesser extent, some aspects of our research.

I. The first category of historiographical sources includes general works dealing with Soviet public education in general, the issue of the formation and role of the Soviet intelligentsia, socialist cultural construction, the social policy of the Soviet state, and other issues that led the authors to address, in one way or another, certain aspects of the history of higher education in the USSR. Although it does not refer to or reflects little and/or tendentiously some aspects of the issues we address, the examination of this category of works is necessary to establish the general context of the development of Soviet higher education, to analyse some opinions regarding certain processes and phenomena that characterized higher education at different stages of its evolution, especially since some authors held state and party positions, were exponents of certain ideologies or political currents, carried out orders from the state or from organizations/institutions specific to the periods in which they were active, etc.

Furthermore, analysis of works in this category indicates the presence of several historiographical lines: a) a *Soviet* one, including that of the MSSR, b) another *Western* one from the Cold War period, c) and a third one – *post-Cold War*, which differ in terms of their purpose and mission, degree of objectivity and level of documentation, depth of examination of the issues addressed, as well as the professional qualifications and/or political and ideological orientation of their authors.

a) Our research highlights several dominant trends in Soviet historiography on higher education in the USSR, valid until the late 1980s. Based on Marxist doctrine and methodology, it treated Soviet higher education as a unique phenomenon in the global landscape, promoting an idealized image of the efficiency and superiority of the Soviet system over the capitalist one. The real problems of education were ignored, and the emphasis was placed on the success of „ideological work" and communist education among staff and students. Soviet historiography is also notable for its high degree of ideologization and politicization, with an optimistic and apologetic discourse that emphasized the progress of the system under the „wise leadership" of the CPSU, presented as a coherent and contradiction-free process. Similarly, the history of higher education was often addressed in general works devoted to public education, the

construction of intellectuality, or socialist culture, written on the basis of official sources and archives interpreted in accordance with party lines.

Analyses show that, in terms of union historiography, higher education in the MSSR was treated superficially, generally and quantitatively. In works published until the mid-1950s on Soviet education, the territories annexed in 1940 were almost completely ignored, including in chapters dedicated to the education of non-Russian peoples [268; 289]. It was only in the 1950s that „Moldovan" historiography began to address the history of education in the MSSR, particularly on the occasion of the „25th anniversary of the MSSR", when Artiom Lazarev outlined the official interpretive paradigm, attributing the „successes" of education in the MSSR to the „care of the Communist Party", the „Soviet state", and the „brotherly help of the Russian people", in opposition to education in the interwar period under „bourgeois-landlord Romania" [265, 115-131]. Although historians such as Timofei Craciun [257; 258; 259; 260] and Onufrie Andrus [212; 213; 214] introduced relevant factual data into the scientific circuit, their analysis faithfully followed Soviet templates, without addressing in depth the social and national policies in higher education.

An analysis of the evolution of Soviet historiography, including that of „Moldovians", indicates that, towards the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, a new stage began, marked by the appearance of the first works dedicated to higher education in the USSR. Most of these were written by party and state officials, with a strong emphasis on ideology and propaganda [144, 223, 235, 245, 294]. The authors sought to reinforce the positive image of the Soviet educational system, in the context of Western interest in the Soviet model and the regime's efforts to improve its image and promote socialist values in Western leftist circles and former colonies. Unlike central historiography, researchers in the MSSR continued to treat higher education within the general framework of public education in the republic, but from a historical perspective, presenting it as an essential pillar of socialist construction and the technical and scientific advancement of the USSR [259, 282, 283, 284, 304].

Between 1960s and 1970s, Soviet historiography outlined a tendency to examine the development of higher education within the framework of cultural construction and socialist society, considering the formation of intellectuality an ideological priority [215, 216, 241, 256, 264, 297, 299, 307, 308]. Within this framework, research in the MSSR branched out in two directions: anniversary histories of higher education institutions [281] and thematic studies, integrated into the „fashionable" trends of Soviet historiography, focused on the leading role of the party. Although works published after 1970 are better documented and include unpublished sources, they retain their ideological character, continuing to reflect a convenient

image of the past and present, including the social and national policies applied in higher education in the MSSR.

b) Historiographical analysis reveals that, until the launch of the first artificial Earth satellite (1957), *Western scientific* interest in Soviet higher education was limited and superficial. The first works, published in the late 1950s with the support of the American-Soviet Council for Friendship, were purely informative in nature, praising the standardization of the system and stating that Russian schools had „made progress" compared to capitalist schools „since the communists came to power" [124, 59-60].

The development of Western Sovietology in the late 1950s sparked interest in higher education in the USSR, giving rise to two distinct trends: the first was supported by left-wing researchers and representatives of the US government and presented Soviet higher education as superior to that of the West, positively assessing the regime's policies, including its language policy [124]; the second, more critical, questioned the veracity of information from Soviet sources, highlighted a discrepancy between constitutional declarations, Marxist-Leninist ideals, and the realities of the higher education system, and emphasized the limits of economic planning, the omnipresence of the party, forced Russification and indoctrination, etc. [69; 75, 86, 105; 171; 182; 183; 112;]. Some studies have suggested, but with little evidence, that Soviet education sought to instil loyalty to the party and the state, generating nationalist reactions in certain regions [122].

Both groups of authors relied mainly on official Soviet sources, state media, reports from Western embassies in the USSR, accounts from visitors, and statements from Soviet dissidents. But while the former supported Soviet propaganda, the latter group, consisting of academic Sovietologists and government analysts, focused their efforts on understanding the mechanisms of formation of the Soviet workforce and scientific elite.

Since the late 1950s, Western historiography has initiated studies on particular aspects of the functioning of higher education in the USSR, such as Khrushchev's reform of the school system, language policy in education [112; 113; 115], social mobility in the USSR in the post-revolutionary period, etc. [111], but the authors only tangentially expressed opinions on some of the aspects analysed in our research. However, these remained limited by restricted access to archives and focused on identifying the "secrets" of the Soviet system, with the aim of transferring good practices to their own countries, a fact confirmed by some authors [86].

c) An analysis of *post-Cold War* historiography shows that few general works have been written on higher education in the USSR, and none focused on the subject of our research. The opening of Soviet archives, the avalanche of memoirs, and the largely abandoned Marxist

approaches have directed researchers in the former Soviet space, as well as those in the West, toward the political and economic history of the communist regime, rather than toward educational policies. The lack of fundamental studies on the regime's educational policies in higher education in the USSR or the union republics confirms this trend.

In the Republic of Moldova, research has been conducted to recover certain elements of the history of higher education in the MSSR, tangential to political or economic reforms, major events in the USSR or the „socialist camp", etc., biographies of personalities from higher education and/or science in the MSSR, higher education institutions, etc. related to reforms, major political events, biographies of personalities, or histories of higher education institutions. Among these, institutional histories [66; 108; 142; 203; 218] (a tradition revived by historian Valeriu Cozma in 1996 [79]), although still influenced by the encomiastic style, benefit from access to archives and offer a more objective approach to the history of higher education in the MSSR. Some works touch on issues such as ethnolinguistic policy, staff selection, or student recruitment, but a systematic analysis of higher education as a mechanism of national and social engineering is still lacking.

Biographical works dedicated to teachers and scientists from the period in question [85, 145, 146, etc.] are also included in this category, providing valuable information about individual motivations, adaptations, and reactions to the regime's policies, contributing to a better understanding of the mechanisms of conformity and resistance in the context of Soviet education.

It has been found that the works of historians, sociologists, philosophers, and other researchers in the post-Soviet space—especially in Russia [116; 247; 248; 249; 254; 285], Ukraine [138; 219], Estonia [295], the West [71; 193; 267; 277], and the Republic of Moldova [72; 87; 96; 106; 125; 128; 129; 130; 131; 135; 143; 189; 190; 191; 198; 199] – which address aspects of Soviet history, the former union republics, the regime's national and social policies, or anti-Soviet resistance – contributed to the foundation of our research. They helped us identify the premises for the formation of Soviet higher education in the MSSR, conceptualize its transformation into a mechanism of social and national engineering, and compare how these policies were applied at the union and republican levels.

In this category of general historiographical sources, we have referred to several articles and studies written in Russian that address topics related to our research: from the entire Soviet higher education system to specific cases (schools, regions, periods). Although many of these works deal with the issues superficially, using isolated examples, they are useful for reconstructing the general context. None explicitly analyse social and national policy in higher

education in the territories annexed in 1940. However, studies dedicated to the proletarianization of pre-war higher education [211; 232; 234; 276; 292; 301], social policies during the Khrushchev era [80; 114; 270; 285], the teaching of ideological subjects [220; 231, 252; 253; 255; 269; 272; 280; 296], extracurricular education, the role of party organizations or trade unions [221; 246; 274; 278; 279], the provision of staff [210; 303], or the relations between academics and the authorities [217; 222; 261] provided valuable benchmarks for comparing the situation in higher education in the MSSR and other regions of the USSR.

Our concluding observation is that, although the topic of higher education functioning as a mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR was not directly addressed in general works during the Cold War period or after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, some works—which we have included in *category II, special sources*—have examined certain relevant elements of Soviet social and national policies applied in this area.

a) Among the first researchers who, in the late 1960s, addressed the issue of forming a „truly national" intelligentsia in the MSSR through higher and specialized secondary education in the MSSR were Gh. Bîrca [70; 226; 227; 228; 229], Z. Fedco [297; 298; 299], and S. Galuscenco [237; 238], followed in the second half of the 1970s by Gh. Rusnac [286; 287; 288]. Their works, developed within the Soviet historiographical paradigm, praise the „successes" of higher education in the MSSR, attributed to the „care of the party" and the „brotherly help" of the USSR, presenting the formation of the republic's intelligentsia as a success of Leninist national policy. It has been shown that these studies take up themes and perspectives from Russian Soviet historiography [236; 306], seeking to emphasize the harmony between the educational and cultural processes in the MSSR and those throughout the Union. The emphasis is on the material support provided by the state, social protection policies, and the party's efforts to train „well-prepared" cadres, all compared favourably with education in interwar Romania or the West.

Although the authors use some unpublished sources and correlate education with Soviet political and economic processes, their interpretations remain ideologically and politically biased. They ignore the contradictions and real problems of higher education in the MSSR, such as Russification, the distortion of the identity of student contingents and teaching and scientific bodies, or the failures of social and national policies, and do not objectively analyse the relationship between the regime's goals and the results achieved. Therefore, although some of the data provided by these authors was useful to us (after verification), their conclusions are irrelevant today.

b) Historiographical research shows that the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, along with the depoliticization of historical science and the opening up of access to new sources, stimulated interest in national history, including certain aspects of education in the MSSR. In the 1990s and 2000s, however, there were few studies dedicated to higher education in the MSSR, with historians in the Republic of Moldova focusing mainly on the „blank spots" of national history. Several articles have highlighted some problems related to personnel policy in higher education institutions, but they remain influenced by Soviet methodologies [61; 62; 132; 133].

To date, the history of higher education in the MSSR continues to be approached in a fragmented manner—either by field of professional training [117; 206] or by period [135-137; 161; 168], institutions [79; 82; 108; 163; 164; 169; 197; 200], and faculties [88; 89], or through case studies and biographies [83]. In the early 2020s, multifaceted research was initiated, focusing on the analysis of the „particularities" of staff policy in some institutions [82; 84; 206], the careers of individuals who opposed Russification or contributed to the development of higher education [92-94; 100; 102; 118-120; 141, etc.], the relations between university staff and authorities [154; 155; 186; 187], both during the years of ideological campaigns [155; 156; 181; 185; 192; 205], as well as during the Khrushchev „thaw" [73; 89; 167; 170]. However, the research does not address the overall impact of these policies on the behaviour and collective consciousness of academics.

Although historians have exploited underexploited archival materials, oral sources, contemporary press, and scientific literature, certain aspects and contradictions of the Soviet state's staff policy in higher education in the MSSR have remained outside their attention, being analysed by the author of the present research in several studies [154; 172; 174; 175; 178; 179].

Policies regarding the formation of student contingents and teaching and research staff, national and social engineering, attitudes toward communist education, and language policy received even less attention. A few existing works have focused on the living conditions and material situation of students in certain periods and institutions [103; 104; 207], on the admission process in some institutions [139; 177; 180], and the role of students in certain phenomena in the history of the republic [176], noting the negative influence of post-war trauma and ideological pressure on students in the MSSR [135-137], effects that were still felt even after 1989.

Although language policy and resistance to Sovietization were important topics in research on the denationalization of the MSSR [95; 128-130; 149, etc.], the implementation of this policy in higher education and the attitudes of students and university intellectuals towards

it have not been systematically analysed [150, 6-16]. During the Soviet era, such an approach was impossible, and in the post-Cold War period, historiographical interest focused on other topics. The author of the research argumenta in her own studies [148, 402-585; 150; 151; 154; 167; 170; 171; 173], that the Russian language was a central tool of national engineering in higher education, and that resistance to Russification policies existed, even if it was not systematically documented.

With regard to communist education in higher education in the MSSR, the formation of the „correct" worldview among students and teaching and research staff, extracurricular education and its effectiveness, historiography has so far paid no attention to these topics, which are essential for understanding the role of higher education in shaping the Soviet person.

1.3. Historical sources of research

The research on the transformation and functioning of higher education as a mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR was based on historical sources, which we analysed, classified, and characterized in several studies [148, 50-71; 150, 16-25; 159; 166].

First, we used *unpublished sources* kept in the state archives of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania, as well as in the institutional archives of the Republic of Moldova, including those of the MSU, USARB, and the Pedagogical Institute (Teachers' Institute) in Tiraspol, kept in the Tiraspol Branch. The unpublished sources were key references in our research, supporting our efforts to understand, analyse, and interpret the policies of the communist regime in higher education in the MSSR. Depending on their nature and accessibility, the documents were classified into 1. *policy documents* (laws, decisions, provisions, orders, etc. of state and party authorities at the union and republican levels, transcripts of congresses, conferences, and plenary sessions of the CPSU(b)/CPSU and CPM(b)/CPM, educational plans, study programs, etc.); 2. *implementation documents* (correspondence of an indicative nature, documents produced by party organizations, Komsomol organizations, trade unions, local authorities, management structures of higher education institutions, etc.); 3. *reporting documents* (informative notes, memoranda, reports, control minutes, statistics, etc.); 4. *ego-documentary sources* – complaints, letters, requests, and other documents addressed to party and state authorities, higher education administrations, etc. by citizens. It should be borne in mind that, although the administrative-directive command system generated the well-known Soviet bureaucracy, the analysis of Soviet-era documents, even those marked „Not for publication", „Not subject to disclosure", „Secret", „Strictly

secret", and declassified after 1991, shows that these documents reflect the realities desired by the regime. We concluded that the documents from 1944-1946 are more „sincere" and provided us with valuable information for achieving our research objectives, while those from the later period, although more voluminous, having been drafted after the Soviet repressive machinery was put back into operation, are written in a kind of Orwellian *newspeak*, depersonalized, full of clichés, used to obscure the discourse and camouflage reality.

The information obtained from archival sources was supplemented with data from the few published sources on Soviet higher education in general and that in the MSSR in particular, most of which were published after 1991. An investigation of published sources shows that during the Soviet period only a few „guides for the daily activities" of educational institution leaders were published [6; 8; 9; 10;13], which contain documents „on public education", the organization and functioning of higher education in the USSR, as well as a volume on the CPSU's policy in the field of culture, education, and science [18]. In both cases, the collections were compiled „in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist principle of partisanship and historicism", with documents selected to illustrate the triumphalist side of Soviet state and Communist Party policy. An important source for researching the processes and phenomena specific to Soviet higher education in our study, but with the same characteristics, were the articles and speeches of Soviet political leaders and high-ranking officials published in volumes, newspapers, and magazines, in which the authors detailed and „decoded" important laws or decisions regarding higher education; textbooks and study programs (analytical); statistical materials reflecting the quantitative aspects of the evolution of Soviet higher education [11; 20; 21], etc.

The opening of the archives after the fall of the communist regime resulted in the publication of volumes of documents reflecting the history of the MSSR. However, our analysis shows that few of these directly reflect the creation and evolution of the higher education system in the union republic, the internal workings of higher education, its relations with the state and party authorities of the USSR and the MSSR, as well as other aspects investigated by us. At the same time, at the end of the 2010s, the identification and publication of unpublished documents and materials directly related to the issue we studied was initiated, such as the one on the history of MSU [3] and the two volumes of documents [1; 5], edited by the author of this research.

The documentary support for the research includes a large number of documents reflecting the activity of the CPSU(b)/CPSU and its structures [16; 17; 25], Komsomol organizations [14; 15; 32; 35], the union government and the MSSR government [26],

published in Moscow and Chișinău, both during the Soviet period and after the collapse of the USSR, the latter revealing many secrets from the corridors of communist power [24; 30; 31; 34] and the socio-cultural, ethno-demographic, political, and economic realities of the MSSR [2] and others.

Another documentary source used in our research is the central, republican, and institutional *periodicals* published during the Soviet period. Examination of these sources reveals the „specificity" of the Soviet press, requiring serious critical analysis and corroboration with archival documents, oral history, memoirs, and other sources.

The nature of Soviet sources, whether published during the Cold War or afterwards, led us to resort to alternative and supplementary sources, in particular *oral history* [49-60] and *memoirs* [36-48]. It was emphasised that these represented the „eyewitness" in the trial for our research, being relevant for unravelling certain realities, phenomena, and elements that were intangible through the analysis of official documents, to cover „blank spots" or areas that were vaguely exposed in the documents issued by the authorities, to explain the „silences" or „half-opinions" of the nomenclature regarding various aspects of the regime's policies, as well as to „test" the veracity of the written documents. At the same time, being essentially subjective sources, we corroborated them with other types of documents, applying several research principles and methods.

1.4. Conclusions to Chapter I

The methodological support for researching the subject of the communist regime's national and social policies in and through higher education and the transformation of the latter into a mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR, determined by the complexity of the objectives undertaken and the available documentary and historiographical basis, requires an interdisciplinary approach based on the fundamental principles of scientific research and the application of research methods specific to the historical sciences, interdisciplinary methods, and general scientific methods to an important base of published and unpublished documents and historiographical sources identified, selected, and classified by the author, which ensured the rigor and credibility of the research.

The issue of transplanting, transforming, and operating the higher education system as a mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR has not been specifically addressed in either Cold War or post-Cold War historiography.

Soviet historiography, including that of the MSSR, which developed within a totalitarian state, investigated higher education in the MSSR within the Marxist-Leninist

paradigm and methodology, highlighting only the achievements and triumphant march of „Moldovan" higher education within the Soviet state on the basis of mostly quantitative „arguments". Even though Soviet researchers based their work on sources, including unpublished ones, the specific nature of these sources reduces the credibility of their conclusions.

Western historiography until 1991 took a late interest in the Soviet higher education system, only after the launch of the first Soviet satellite (1957), had limited access to sources, largely aligned with totalitarian ideology, reflecting opinions specific to "capitalist historiography" with regard to higher education in the USSR, and did not address higher education in the MSSR, aside the issues examined in our research.

The opening of the archives after the "fall of the Iron Curtain" channelled researchers' efforts toward elucidating the "blank spots" in the history of the USSR and the MSSR, with Soviet-style higher education and its problems remaining, with the exception of some onomastic histories of higher education institutions, outside the attention of historians until the second half of the 2010s.

Research shows that Moldovan historiography on the history of higher education in the Moldavian SSR is still in the process of gathering sources and providing a partial scientific interpretation of the issues addressed in our research. At the same time, there are attempts in the Republic of Moldova to keep the historiographical discourse within the Soviet and Russian imperial clichés, with some researchers drawing inspiration from Russian historiographical production developed after 2014, which serves the new paradigms of the Russian Federation's foreign policy.

In conducting our scientific research, we mainly used archival sources, most of which were unknown, which provided us with valuable information on the aspects investigated, but they required critical examination and analysis, as well as corroboration with memoirs, oral history sources, published documents, and periodicals.

II. POLICIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NATIVISATION AND PROLETARIANISATION OF STUDENT BODIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE MSSR

2.1. The social component of Soviet policy in the field of higher education and the creation of the premises for national and social engineering policy in MSSR

The social and national policy of the Soviet state in higher education in the MSSR was determined by the Bolsheviks' program to achieve social equality and produce a „new kind of person" for communist society, a project that was achieved by connecting subtle mechanisms of national and social engineering and by incursions into the daily life and consciousness of the masses. The ephemeral concept of „class abolition", reformulated in the Stalinist Constitution (1936) into the theory of „friendly classes" and the admitted „special social class" – that of the Soviet intelligentsia – determined the regime's deliberate policy of perpetually (re)creating a „first-generation intelligentsia" that would become its social base and solid political support. In this sense, along with the other „measures" of Sovietization of Bessarabia, the regime exported to the new union republic the instruments tested in the pre-war period of social and national construction of a „first-generation Moldovan Soviet intelligentsia", including through higher education.

The social and demographic consequences of the (re-)annexation of Bessarabia, the mood of the population, and the socio-economic conditions in the MSSR created the foundation and premises for the implementation of Soviet policies in the national, social, and educational spheres, giving them a certain specificity [1, V-XXV; 5, 84-96; 150, 38-42; 165; 175; 177]. We have proven with arguments gathered from historiography and documentary sources that the withdrawal of part of the population of Bessarabia across the Prut River after the first annexation (from 68,953 to 300,000 refugees, and those „repatriated" – from 112,000 to 221,000 people in 1940); population displacements (over 133,000 Bessarabians Germans); the importation of foreign elements from Soviet territories to populate the "remaining free territories" (approximately 15,000Polish, 25,000Ukrainian, and 2,500collective farm households from across the Dniester River); deportations of „anti-Soviet elements" from Bessarabia (22,648 people in 1941); political repression and execution of Bessarabians who were "hostile or potentially hostile" to the regime; the mobilization of over 50,000 young Bessarabians for forced labour in the regions of the USSR in 1940-1941; the massive importation of Soviet cadres, etc. These factors „diluted" the Romanian element in Bessarabia, producing significant changes in the ethno-social structure, which constituted the first premises

for the creation of a Soviet-type higher education system and the promotion of policies for the national and social (re)construction of the intelligentsia in the MSSR [148, 84-89].

The German-Soviet war and post-war events and processes intensified socio-demographic changes in Bessarabia/MSSR, although the human losses caused by the war are difficult to calculate [96], as is the number of Bessarabians who retreated across the Prut River in 1944-1945. At the same time, comparing Soviet statistics, we have highlighted that the population of the MSSR decreased by up to approximately 358,000 people in 1946 compared to 1941. During the establishment of the Soviet higher education system, the number of the native population decreased even further as a result of the resumption of the „measures" of Sovietization implemented in 1940-1941 and their supplementation with others, specific to the process of consolidating the Soviet regime. We have highlighted that approximately 200,000 people died during the organized famine (1946-1947); 35,050 Bessarabians were deported in 1949 and another 2,617 in 1951; several thousand inhabitants of the MSSR were sent annually, either forcibly or through organized migration, to work in the industrial areas of the RSFSR, USSR, and KSSR (in 1947—36,635 people, in 1948-1950—over 96,000); Starting in 1947, young people from the MSSR were continuously recruited and sent to vocational schools attached to factories and plants (the number of young people recruited to FZO (Школа фабрично-заводского обучения FBT - Factory-based training) schools has not yet been calculated, but it is known that in 1947, 8,536 young people were mobilized in the Donetsk area, and in 1948 – over 14,000 in Donbas) [148, 88-96]. We have proven that, on the other hand, the regime organized a massive import of Soviet „specialists" from the very first months of the „liberation" of Bessarabia. Although the Soviet government continuously delegated „specialists", with others coming to the MSSR for their own interests, Soviet historiography presented, for understandable reasons, only separate data, and in post-Soviet historiography the number of those who came from outside the republic has not yet been calculated, being known, as we have shown in our research, only approximately [148, 92-93].

At the same time, it was highlighted that, in addition to shaping a new ethnic balance, all the measures of Sovietization and consolidation of the communist regime also brought about a change in the social structure of the republic, which also created conditions for the Sovietization, Russification, and denationalization of the MSSR. Although pre-war documents do not provide information about the social structure of Bessarabia in the sense of Marxist theory, the data presented by historian Nicolae Enciu regarding the 1930 censuses, which establish that Bessarabian society was composed of approximately 82.5% farmers, allowed us to equate the latter with the „peasant class", and the group of civil servants, which included

teachers, priests, and local government employees and accounted for only 3.5% [96, 69], with the intelligentsia. Our analyses show that the "intellectual class" in Bessarabia became even smaller during World War II, with many representatives of the intellectual professions, as well as pupils and students, retreating to the right bank of the Prut River in 1940-1941 and 1944 [148, 93-96; 820-821], while others perished in the war and during the famine, were deported or repressed after the restoration of Soviet power in the MSSR.

Thus, the socio-demographic and political-economic processes that followed the (re-)annexation of Bessarabia and the creation of the MSSR disrupted the ethnic and social landscape on the right bank of the Dniester, creating „favourable" conditions for the implementation of Soviet policies aimed at the ethno-social construction of a new, Soviet-style „Moldovan" intelligentsia.

2.2 Student quotas: objects of national and social engineering

In our studies, we have traced the process of creating an extensive network of Soviet-style educational institutions of all levels and types, even after the first annexation of Bessarabia, replacing the Romanian education system with the Soviet one, transplanting the entire regulatory and legislative framework of the USSR, as well as the experiences of organizing and operating Soviet higher education [1, V-X; XXXVI-LIX; 5, V-X; 158; 161; 163, 168, 169], including the admission process – one of the most important instruments of national and social engineering of student contingents, respectively of building the intelligentsia of the MSSR.

Student quotas became objects of national and social engineering with the creation of higher education institutions in the MSSR, and the regime's policies in this regard went through several stages [1, XVIII-XXV; 5, XVIII-XXX; 148, 96-211; 177; 180]. Intending to tailor in MSSR an soviet *intelligentsya* „with healthy social origins", with „correct" political and ideological views, but aware of the annexationist nature of the creation of the republic, of the existence of representatives of „social classes foreign" to socialist society, who are or could constitute a „hostile element" to the new power, as well as of the lack of a sufficient source of student contingents for the new higher education institutions, in *the I stage* (1940-1941), the regime deviated from the provisions of the Stalinist Constitution (1936), applying a policy of positive discrimination in favour of the „working classes", but at the same time offering equal rights to education to all „peoples of the MSSR" [1, 61]. Unlike the policy of proletarianization of contingents, openly promoted in the 1920s and 1930s, the regime used more subtle instruments in building contingents in the MSSR, pursuing pragmatic goals, but especially

political-ideological and propaganda goals. On the one hand, the communist authorities opened a social mobility elevator for the „children of workers" in the MSSR, „freeing" them from tuition fees (decreed in the USSR on October 26, 1940). on the other hand, they imposed it on „citizens living on unearned income", who, in fact, had the prerequisites necessary for access to higher education [1, XVIII-XXV]. Thus, the authorities secured a socially appropriate resource to supplement the student body among those who „can only dream [...] of higher education" [1, 58], while at the same time, the „manoeuvre" also aimed to convince the people of Bessarabia of the superiority of the new power over that of the „Romanian occupiers". The opening of rabfaks in Chișinău (closed in the USSR around 1940) „for the children of poor workers and peasants", the provision of scholarships, the provision of accommodation in dormitories, etc., confirm the vector of proletarianization of higher education in the MSSR.

A characteristic feature of the admission policy at the beginning of Soviet rule was that the regime did not officially declare a „special" policy towards Moldovan Romanians, although the policy of „Moldovanisation" had been implemented immediately after the annexation. This stratagem was determined by the intention to demonstrate the Soviet state's „concern" for the literacy of the inhabitants of Bessarabia, in contrast to the „Romanian bourgeois-landlord regime", and to predispose all ethnic groups in the MSSR favourably toward the new power. Thus, the regime relied on young people from all ethnic groups to fill the quotas and diminish fear of the new Soviet school, aware that by applying social criteria, it could indirectly implement ethnic criteria as well, since most of the „poor peasants" were inhabitants of villages populated mainly by Romanians. To ensure the „correct political orientation" of students, they were required to submit a declaration of hostility towards the Romanian state, with the regime alternating between gentle means of anti-Romanian and Moldovan propaganda and those of coercion.

Although the results of the regime's measures are difficult to identify for such a short and poorly documented period, it can be seen that the withdrawal of the Romanian intelligentsia across the Prut River, the rural character of Bessarabian society, the novelty of the Soviet system, repressive policies, arbitrary taxation, the high cost of living, the lack of an „appropriate" recruitment pool, and discriminatory policies in education compromised the regime's objectives in 1940–1941. Most students came from non-proletarian backgrounds, and ethnically, the contingents were not „Moldovan", a fact reflected both in the contradictory nature of the documents and in the ethnic structure of the students evacuated to Buguruslan. The research confirms that, from the early years after the annexation, the regime implemented policies of national and social engineering in higher education, aiming to form a Soviet

intelligentsia of working-class and peasant origin, ethnically heterogeneous and oriented towards Russification, despite the official discourse on the creation of a „Moldovan" school for „Moldovans".

The II stage of the process of building student contingents corresponds to the period of evacuation of higher education institutions from the MSSR behind the front lines (1941-1944), when, under the conditions of the so-called occupation of Bessarabia by Romania and the functioning of the „Moldovan" education system in evacuation, the regime abandoned the social principle of admission to „Moldovan" higher education in favour of an open policy of positive discrimination in favour of „Moldovans". The authorities' efforts to enrol „as many Moldovans as possible" at the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute in Buguruslan (RSFSR) had modest results. In the 1943–1944 academic year, the proportion of "Moldovans" reached only 6.4%, while Jews accounted for 64%, Russians for 25%, and other ethnic groups for 4.6% [148, 103–105; 1, XXV–XXXVI] – an ethnic structure which, correlated with the teaching process in Russian, contradicts the official explanation regarding the maintenance of a „Moldovan" institute in evacuation due to the need to train „national cadres for Moldovan schools" – unless the real goal was for these cadres, trained in a Soviet system with instruction in Russian, to subsequently contribute to the Russification of the national school and the construction of socialism in the MSSR [150, 42–45].

The III stage of the process of national and social construction of the contingents began after the re-evacuation of higher education institutions to the MSSR in the summer-autumn of 1944 and lasted until the second half of the 1950s. During this stage, the Soviet-style higher education system was established, which remained in place until the dissolution of the USSR. In the context of the need for specialists to restore the post-war economy and the economic and political-ideological confrontation of the Cold War, the Soviets officially returned after the war to the principles and rules of non-discriminatory admission to higher education, but these were only apparently respected in the process of forming contingents in the MSSR. The regime promoted policies and implemented instruments of national and social engineering of the student body, successfully disguised under the slogan of a shortage of „intellectual workers", supported by anti-Romanian propaganda and pro-Soviet agitation [1, LXXVII-XCVIII; 148, 103-105; 168, 432-441].

This research shows that the Soviet regime successfully took advantage of the post-war social, demographic, economic, and political conditions in the MSSR, adjusting higher education admission policies to these realities. Aware of local limitations in student recruitment, the authorities (re)opened nine higher education institutions and approved

admission plans that exceeded the republic's capacities, creating the conditions for national and social engineering *in* and *through* higher education. Through state plans, the union authorities forced republican structures to resort to the easy solution of filling quotas by importing young people from outside the MSSR. Centralized statistical data [148, 788–814; 877–880] indicate a massive influx of foreigners, which contributed to the formation of ethnically, linguistically, socially, and culturally heterogeneous student bodies. At the same time, the low proportion of „representatives of the indigenous nationality" was in clear contradiction with the demographic structure of the MSSR – where Moldovan Romanians accounted for 66.8% (1941) and 65.4% (1959) – and with the official rhetoric regarding the „national form" of education in the union republics.

Our calculations show that "Moldovans" accounted for only 13–15% of students enrolled immediately after the war, with their share increasing to about 45% only in the second half of the 1950s, despite the expansion of the school network, affirmative action policies, and social support. This slow growth can be explained by the low productivity of „Moldovan" secondary schools, the reduction in the number of candidates from rural areas caused by famine, deportations, and collectivization, language barriers (lack of knowledge of Russian), lack of material resources, ambiguous policies towards „Moldovan" students, etc. They were poorly represented in non-educational institutions, a striking example being the Agricultural Institute in Chișinău, where, although specialists in agriculture were being trained – the main occupation for Romanians, Gagauz, and Bulgarians – foreign students, predominantly Russian-speaking and of non-proletarian social origin, dominated. At the Institute of Medicine, although „Moldovans" accounted for 50% of the student body in the 1950s, instruction was conducted exclusively in Russian, thus maintaining the mechanisms of cultural and linguistic control [148, 120–122; 173, 490–491].

We have demonstrated that the Soviet authorities insisted more on admitting „representatives of the indigenous nation" to pedagogical institutions than to other higher education institutions, and that this „prudence" reveals the hidden tendency of Soviet national policy to create a predominantly rural „Moldovan" pedagogical intelligentsia, since most Moldovan Romanians lived in villages. Knowing „their native Moldova, the language and psychology of the people", these young people were to become effective agents of „Moldovanisation" and communist education of the new generations. As a result, educational institutions enrolled more „Moldovans", but until the introduction of compulsory 7-year (grades) education (1949), they remained a minority even here [148, 808].

Pragmatic, ideological, and propaganda reasons have led to the promotion of positive discrimination towards „Moldovans" both in admission and during university studies, with republican authorities and higher education institution management being urged, albeit only verbally, to admit „as many Moldovans as possible", so that their share would reflect the ethno-demographic structure of the MSSR. In practice, an informal support policy was applied, which involved preferential treatment and leniency towards „Moldovan" candidates and students in order to facilitate their completion of studies [1, XCVIII–CXI; 148, 143–167; 177, 130–140; 180, 238–243]. In this endeavour, the authorities exploited the difficult socio-economic conditions of the post-war period and beyond, removing some of the social and educational barriers faced by local youth and thus justifying a paternalistic-populist policy of „supporting" them.

At this stage, the regime's priority was the ethnic construction of the contingents in the MSSR, while the social construction occurred, for the most part, implicitly, as a result of national policies. The social origin of students was monitored according to the particular interests of the party-state in the context of Stalinist ideological campaigns, organized famine, deportations, collectivization, etc., in order to restrict access to citizens who „do not live off physical labour", „foreign elements", „kulaks", undesirable intellectuals, etc. An analysis of the social structure of the student body revealed that in the early post-war years, representatives of the intellectual-civil servant „class" (most of whom were of foreign origin) predominated, and that the policy of promoting „representatives of the indigenous nationality" (most of whom came from rural-peasant backgrounds) led to an increase in the proportion of representatives of the „working classes" from the mid-1950s onwards. The rearrangement of social groups into contingents was specific mainly to educational institutions, while non-educational schools remained dominated by civil servants and intellectuals. Admitting as many children of „working people" as possible did not result in the desired increase in their share of the overall contingents, as many of those admitted, facing material and academic difficulties, dropped out of school. It was emphasized that, under these conditions, the authorities monitored the social structure of the student body in order to adjust the forms and methods of political-ideological education, as well as for some practical needs, such as monitoring the ability to pay tuition fees, which became mandatory for all students after 1944, establishing the categories of students who were offered accommodation in dormitories, etc.

Along with the restoration of the higher education system, the authorities intensively exploited the process of admitting and retaining „Moldovans" in higher education as a tool for national and social engineering of the student body, opening a social elevator for young people

from Bessarabia. At this stage, the authorities were particularly concerned with the construction of student bodies and promoted a covert policy of positive discrimination towards „Moldovans", seeking to assimilate and proletarianize them in order to create a „Moldovan" and „first-generation" Soviet intelligentsia. The number of students increased almost tenfold between 1944 and 1958, with the regime succeeding in forming ethnically heterogeneous contingents that contributed to the denationalization and Russification of the future intelligentsia. However, the policy of indigenization of the student body did not achieve its goal of equalizing their share, either ethnically or socially, with that of the republican population.

Our investigations have shown that the adoption of the "school law" (1958) marked the beginning of *the IV stage* in the evolution of national and social construction policies for student contingents in the MSSR. The fact that the „school reform" of the late 1950s was determined by the dismantling of Stalinist ideology, the promotion of the theory of the „state of the whole people", the creation of a „classless" and nationless society, the education of a „new kind of person", new social and economic policies and that of „peaceful coexistence" with the West, as well as other „novelties" promoted by Khrushchev's team, which aimed, to a large extent, at mobilizing the subjective factor, seen as a guarantee of the success of building the new Soviet society [148, 127-143].

We agree with the accepted view in historiography that Khrushchev's team was aware that education, including higher education, which was highly politicized, did not correspond to the new policies, that schools, although part of the centralized state planning system, could not provide the economy with the necessary number of qualified specialists required by the new economic and political course, and that there was a contradiction between the increase in the number of higher education graduates and the shortage of personnel in the real economy [80, 110-111; 195; 196, 310-370; 285, 95-104]. The analyses carried out highlight the fact that, without abandoning the policy of indigenization of higher education in the MSSR, from the second half of the 1950s, the Soviets transferred it to the background, camouflaging it with positive social discrimination of the „working classes". If, between 1953 and 1957, the proportion of Moldovans in higher education had stagnated at 46-47% due to unfair competition between young people from rural and urban areas, the new admission rules at the end of the 1950s, which expanded access to higher education for the „working classes" by giving preference to „production candidates" in the admission process, also led to an increase in the number of „Moldovan" students. It has been argued that, by the mid-1960s, the quota of „Moldovans" admitted to the first year was equivalent to that of Moldovan Romanians in the

population of the MSSR, and in the general contingents, the proportion calculated by us remained below 60%. Most „Moldovans" were enrolled in pedagogical, agricultural, and medical institutes, considered less elitist than MSU and the Polytechnic Institute in Chișinău, where their number was smaller, which led to the formation of a „Moldovan" technical intelligentsia, largely Russian-speaking. Calculations show that, in addition to the fact that the MSSR had the fewest students (63) per 10,000 inhabitants (the average for the USSR was 110:10,000), in 1961, there were 51 „Moldovan" students, 70 Ukrainian students, 150 Russian students, and 129 Jewish students per 10,000 inhabitants of that ethnic group [148, p. 220, 876].

Apart from Moldovan Romanians, whose share grew steady, the most common ethnic groups in the student groups in the MSSR were Russians, Ukrainians, and Jews. It has been shown that in the post-war period, Russian students, recruited both from the MSSR and from outside the republic, formed a significant majority (e.g., in non-pedagogical institutions they formed 63–84%), but their proportion gradually decreased as the number of graduates from „Moldovan" secondary schools increased. In the mid-1960s, Russians continued to represent an important segment: about 30% in non-pedagogical higher education and 12–18% in pedagogical higher education [148, pp. 796–812], while their demographic share in the MSSR was only 10.2%. We found that the Russian-speaking segment of the contingents was reinforced by Ukrainians and „representatives of other ethnic groups", whose shares increased from 10–13% (at the beginning of the period studied) to 14–15% (in the mid-1960s) and from 2% to 6%, respectively. The „other ethnic groups" component initially consisted of foreign students, supplemented by indigenous ethnic minorities—Gagauz and Bulgarians. It was noted that after the „school reform" (1958), they were intensively Russified and thus contributed significantly to establishing the „tradition" of teaching and institutional and interpersonal communication in Russian, and in the long term, they participated in the formation of the Russophile enclave in the Republic of Moldova [151, pp. 606–622].

Jewish students were a big part of higher education in the MSSR, making up about 90.5% during the German-Soviet war, and slowly dropping to about 5.5-6% in the mid-1960s, although Jews made up only 3.3% of the MSSR's population. In the early post-war years, a large number of Jewish students who had studied in Romanian schools opted for „Moldovan groups", but over the years, they adopted Russian and filled the Russian-language groups, contributing to the ethno-linguistic reconfiguration of the intelligentsia in the MSSR and to the strengthening of the Russian-speaking component.

2.3. Contradictions in the policy of positive discrimination towards "Moldovans"

In our studies, we have highlighted that the policy of indigenization of student contingents was duplicitous and insidious and contained a series of contradictions produced by the hidden motives of the communist government. In addition to concerns about not admitting „class enemies" to higher education, the selfish and petty interests of some foreign administrators of higher education institutions, who disregarded and treated „Moldovan" students with contempt from their positions as „big brothers", I mentioned that there were other reasons for their moderate promotion. First of all, aware of the artificial nature of the MSSR, the regime wanted „social peace" and to avoid actions that could antagonize cohabiting ethnic groups, primarily the Russian-speaking foreigners delegated to the new republic. The children of the latter, as well as many of these specialists without higher education, were integrated into the institutions of the MSSR, where they were to be treated in a privileged way. A sudden increase in the proportion of „Moldovans" would have required teaching in Romanian and a corresponding number of Romanian-speaking teachers, and the situation would have forced the authorities to acknowledge the uselessness of the thousands of „invited" specialists from the USSR, who were, in fact, the regime's main support and promoters of its policies in the MSSR. At the same time, the possibility of an unpredictable evolution of the „Moldovan" intelligentsia would have jeopardized the regime's position by losing control over the processes of Sovietization, Russification, and denationalization. Thus, it was in the regime's interest to have a moderate increase in the number of „Moldovan" students, who could be persistently trained in Russian and educated accordingly in politics and ideology. In a „reasonable" number, „Moldovan" students could be more easily monitored and controlled, without committing excesses of national thinking or other actions considered dangerous to the regime.

Affirmative action towards "Moldovans" followed, rather, the logic of „give with one hand and take with the other". Graduates of „Moldovan" secondary schools who applied for higher education were discriminated against in two ways: by being required to take an exam in Russian language and literature and by the „tradition" of taking competitive exams in specialized subjects in Russian. These practices led to Russian speakers accumulating a higher number of points and discriminatory treatment of „Moldovan" candidates. Furthermore, statements about education in the „Moldovan" language were inconsistent with the practice of forming mixed academic groups, in which teaching was conducted only in Russian. While pedagogical institutions established academic groups based on the language of instruction, non-pedagogical institutions retained mixed groups with instruction in Russian until the first half of the 1960s, perpetuating a teaching process in Russian and producing a Russified

intelligentsia. Furthermore, the fact that educational institutions formed an equal number of groups taught in Russian and „Moldovan" languages each year, in a republic where ethnic Russians made up only 6.6% (1941) – 10.2% (1959) of the population, demonstrates the regime's intentions to Russify, alongside the titular nation, ethnic minorities in the MSSR, who, given the position of Russian as the language of interethnic communication, chose to study in Russian [151, pp. 618-620]. Thus, national discrimination prevailed both at the entrance to higher education institutions and during studies, including through the creation of mixed academic groups, the use of Russian as the language of entrance exams, the study process, and institutional communication.

In the same vein, it was pointed out that, while in 1940 Bessarabians had been exempted from tuition fees, they were obliged to pay them after 1944, and the requests of the MSSR government and the CC of the PM(b) to exempt „Moldovans" from the tax, in the circumstances caused by famine, monetary reform (1947), the cancellation of the ration card system, etc., were considered unfounded by the union government, although other ethnic groups in the union republics were privileged in this regard. Similarly, after the change in the procedure for awarding scholarships (1948), the request of the Chișinău government to offer scholarships to all „Moldovans" who passed their exams was considered unfounded, even though it was clear that they did not know enough Russian to master university studies and could not achieve „good" or „very good" academic performance. Furthermore, the violation of the instruction to give priority to "Moldovans" in dormitories, leaving them to fend for themselves, with the authorities providing accommodation to foreigners first, is further evidence of the hypocrisy of the policy of supporting „Moldovans". On top of that, „Moldovan" students were humiliated, disregarded, and insulted by some representatives of the „big brother".

If until the mid-1950s, Russian-speaking actors in the higher education system of the MSSR tolerated, or at least did not openly declare their opposition to the privileges enjoyed by „Moldovan" students, Khrushchev's „liberalization" and the concept of the „new historical community – the Soviet people" caused their frustrations to erupt, expressing their annoyance that „young people of other nationalities will not have access to higher education if we insist on enrolling Moldovans". The new provisions of the imported intelligentsia directed the regime toward identifying new ways and methods of „supporting" young „Moldovans", who were sent to study at higher education institutions outside the republic, with the obligation to return home and support the construction of communism [148, 219-221].

2.4. Conclusions to Chapter II

In *conclusion* to this chapter, we contend that the social and national policy of the Soviet state in higher education in the MSSR was determined by the Bolsheviks' program of achieving social equality and producing a „new kind of person" for communist society. The Soviet-style higher education system, created in the MSSR after the first annexation of Bessarabia, was tasked with (re)creating a „layer" of „first-generation" intellectuals who would become a social base and solid political support for the regime in the new union republic. To this end, the regime exploited the socio-demographic and economic-political conditions, as well as the mood of the population of Bessarabia, both after the first and second annexations, in order to export and exploit in the higher education system of the MSSR several instruments, tested in the pre-war period, for the social and national construction of a „Moldovan Soviet intelligentsia" and to transform higher education into a mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR.

One of the most important instruments of national and social engineering *in* and *through* higher education in the MSSR was that of controlling and managing access to studies for the purpose of ethnic and social construction of student contingents. Student contingents were transformed into objects of national and social engineering with the creation of the higher education system in the MSSR after the first annexation of Bessarabia, and the regime maintained this status throughout the entire period studied. The admission instrument was adjusted by the communist authorities, in derogation from the constitutional principles of general and universal accessibility of higher education for Soviet citizens, according to the political-ideological and socio-economic interests of the party-state. This „evolution" was similar to the movement of a pendulum, with the logic of alternating admission policies allowing us to highlight four consecutive stages.

Thus, if in the first stage (1940-1941), the Soviet authorities openly promoted the proletarianization of student contingents through positive discrimination in favour of representatives of the working and peasant classes to the detriment of those „who lived off unearned income", seeking to build a social student body in the MSSR and, only implicitly, an ethnic one, in order to unite „all the peoples" of the MSSR, in the second stage (1941-1944), determined by the circumstances of the German-Soviet war, the regime abandoned the social principle of admission and openly but informally promoted a policy of indigenization of the contingents of the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute in Buguruslan through positive discrimination in favour of „Moldovans". Neither in the first nor in the second stage did the authorities achieve their goals, both because of the brevity of the stages and the lack of sources adequate to the Soviet requirements for filling the contingents, which remained socially and

ethnically unsuitable for the regime's intentions. In stage III (1944–mid-1950s), although they declared admission based on meritocratic principles, determined by the imperatives of rebuilding the post-war economy and confronting the „capitalist camp", the Soviets actually implemented positive discrimination in favour of „representatives of the indigenous nationality", seeking a controlled and monitored ethnic and social reconfiguration of the contingents. An analysis of the implementation of the admission policy reveals several contradictions, aimed at controlling the access of young „Moldovans" who had not yet gone through the Soviet education system and did not know Russian well enough, to create ethnically and socially heterogeneous contingents, which were to facilitate the process of manufacturing a „Moldovan" Soviet intelligentsia in accordance with the regime's real objectives. The post-war realities, the measures of Sovietization of the MSSR, and the controlled access of young „Moldovans" to higher education led to the expected successes for this stage: the total number of students increased almost tenfold, but the proportion of „Moldovans" increased from 13-15% to about 45% in the mid-1950s, which ensured the Russification of higher education, proclaimed „for Moldovans" and for „children of workers".

Without abandoning the indigenization of quotas, in the second half of the 1950s, the authorities officially returned to positive social discrimination in favour of „candidates from production", a fact highlighted by the new domestic and foreign policies of Khrushchev's team. The new approach to admission to Soviet higher education reopened the social elevator for the „working classes" and, with it, led to an increase in the percentage of „Moldovan" students to about 60%. thus, bringing the ethnic and social structure of the student body closer to that of the MSSR population by the mid-1960s. The contingents remained ethnically heterogeneous, but asymmetrically bilingual and more homogeneous in terms of the academic prerequisites already obtained through Soviet schooling, which created favourable conditions for a more effective communist education of students and the Russification and denationalization of higher education.

III. POLICIES FOR BUILDING THE TEACHING AND RESEARCH FACILITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE MSSR

3. 1. Establishment of teaching and research bodies

As we have highlighted in our investigations, the Soviet state's personnel policy in higher education was based on Stalin's dictum – „The staff will decide everything!" – and remained one of the most opaque, incomprehensible, and mythologized policies, because the requirements for staff, the reasoning, reasons, traditions, and procedures for selecting and distributing people to positions and posts were aligned with the regime's objectives of creating social, national, and political loyalties to ensure its stability and perpetuation, and were adapted to them [172, 113-137; 179, 255-264]. It has been proven that state authorities, but especially party authorities, monopolized personnel policy in higher education in the MSSR, implementing it authoritatively in the process of creating the higher education system after the first Soviet annexation of Bessarabia [161, 287-301]. The increased and priority attention to the issue of selection, sorting, and distribution of personnel and the particularities of this policy were determined by the tasks of forming a teaching and scientific corps that was reliable from the point of view of the regime, on which the latter could rely in implementing the most complex measures of Sovietization, Russification, and communization of the „Moldovan" higher education system and, subsequently, through the new Soviet-style „intelligentsia" – the inhabitants of the republic [174, 452-468; 175, 292-307].

During our research, we traced the evolution of staff policy in higher education institutions in the MSSR and its transformation into an instrument of national and social engineering in higher education and in „Moldovan" science. It was emphasized that immediately after the first occupation of Bessarabia, the Soviets imported into the MSSR the Bolshevik experiences exploited in the post-revolutionary period for the establishment of teaching staff in the MSSR, adjusting them to the socio-demographic realities of the republic and the tasks of training a reliable teaching staff on which the regime could rely in implementing the most complex measures of communization. and demographic realities of the republic and the tasks of forming a reliable teaching staff on which the regime could rely in implementing the most complex measures of communization, Sovietization, and Russification of higher education.

Our studies have pointed out that the issue of forming teaching and research staff was influenced, on the one hand, by the thinness of the intellectual „layer" in the (re-)annexed territories, and, on the other hand, by the lack of or limited compliance with Soviet

requirements (primarily political and ideological ones) of the few people with higher education who remained in Bessarabia, as well as by the regime's intentions to Sovietize and Russify higher education in the MSSR. It has been argued that the regime „solved" the problem of training the teaching staff by identifying „acceptable" sources for replenishing it in the early years of the functioning of higher education institutions in the MSSR, relying primarily on *Transnistrian* resources, which, having been educated in the Soviet education system and undergoing „checks" in the 1930s, had to ensure, along with Sovietization, the „Moldovan" character of higher education in the MSSR [161, 288-289; 168, 435-440]. Most *Transnistrians* were employed in educational institutions both in 1940–1941 and after 1944. Our analysis shows that although some Transnistrians were criticized for insufficient professional competence, insufficient knowledge of Russian and „Moldovan" languages, as well as for immoral acts, misappropriation of public property, or for „remaining in the occupied territories", most were left in their positions throughout the entire period under review, and some of them had important careers in education, science, state and party leadership.

I agree with the conclusions of some authors [188, 118-134], including Soviet ones, about the severe deficit of specialists in the postwar period [61, 92-102; 84, 26-31; 134, 394-402; 173, 477-492; 188, 118-134; 226; 240, 64-70; 242, 3-38], but we have provided arguments demonstrating that, in addition to the lack of scientific and teaching staff, the growth not covered by higher education institutions [158, 391-418; 163, 148-151; 164, 222-245; 175, 297-307] and the regime's objectives to guarantee the Soviet, communist, and Russian character of the "Moldovan" higher education system led the authorities to resort to the massive importation of *non-native Soviet staff*, indoctrinated and Russian-speaking, from various regions and republics of the USSR.

The first non-native staff members were assigned to the MSSR in 1940–1941, and the proportion of non-native Russian-speaking staff, who were bearers of Russian/Soviet culture and civilization and were considered „healthy" from a political and ideological point of view – was strengthened during the German-Soviet war. It has been noted that the ethnic and linguistic structure of the teaching staff of the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute in evacuation remained specific for the entire post-war period. After studying the process of consolidation of the higher education system in 1944-1946, we showed that the influx of specialists for higher education in the MSSR became organized, well-directed, and constant, leading to the creation of significantly foreign and Russian-speaking teaching and scientific bodies. Even though, from the second half of the 1950s, the flow of foreigners was more moderate, and the staff of educational institutions was supplemented with former graduates of higher education

institutions in the MSSR, foreign staff ensured the preservation of the Russian and Soviet character of „Moldovan" education, especially in non-pedagogical institutions. The massive inflow of Soviet specialists from outside the republic was part of the communist socio-national experiment, which highlights the true aims of the regime, which sought to create, *in* and *through* higher education, a pseudo-national elite, a „first-generation" Soviet intellectual class — denationalized, deprived of its national language and culture, without national and social identity, indoctrinated, a Russian or, at least, Russified intelligentsia.

It was also pointed out that the few „Moldovan" staff on the left bank of the Dniester, in addition to their questionable professionalism, were insufficient to ensure the teaching process in the „Moldovan" language, which led the regime to reduce its ideological intransigence, as the Bolsheviks did after establishing Soviet power in Russia, and resort to another source of teaching staff — Bessarabians with degrees from „bourgeois" universities in Romania and other European countries. In the second half of the 1940s, they made up about one-third of the teaching staff in the MSSR [148, 835-848], with the Soviet state pragmatically capitalizing on their professional, cultural, and linguistic skills, first and foremost, and secondly, exploiting them for propaganda purposes, claiming to support the formation of a „Moldovan" higher education system „for Moldovans". An analysis of their professional careers indicates that the regime treated them as a temporary solution and, as long as teachers with „bourgeois" education fulfilled their utilitarian and propagandistic role, ensured the functioning of the education system, and demonstrated loyalty, albeit complacent in some cases, these „firefighters" were kept in their positions, and when some of them became undesirable, the regime purged them from higher education, incriminating them for their „past sins", anti-Sovietism, „bourgeois nationalism", cosmopolitanism, and others [172, 122-134]. Most of them being ethnic Jews, they were eliminated from higher education during Stalinist ideological campaigns [5, LXXVII-LXXIX; 148, 322-366; 155, 84-85; 156, 45-58], known for their anti-Semitic character [254; 233, 136-138]. By the mid-1960s, only about 15 people from this category remained in higher education institutions.

It has been argued that, as higher education institutions produced a larger number of graduates, they became, from the mid-1950s onwards, an important but insufficient source of new teaching and research staff. The number of graduates entering university teaching positions grew steadily in the second half of the 1950s and early 1960s, reaching approximately 2/3 of the teaching and research staff by the end of the period under review. It has been argued that by the mid-1960s, staff policy had been finalized, with the authorities emphasizing the *„local"* source in the process of replenishing teaching and research positions. At the same

time, it was shown that, while in the post-war period, hiring young graduates of higher education institutions in the MSSR remained a difficult goal to achieve, due to their small number, insufficient preparation for a university career, and „inappropriate" biographies, from the mid-1950s, in addition to their increase in number, young people educated in the Soviet general school system began to graduate with a solid knowledge of the Russian language, which supported their professional training efforts and simplified their political-ideological education. Also, by the mid-1950s, a doctoral training system for teaching and research staff had been established, and even though several educational and scientific institutions in the MSSR had obtained the right to open doctoral programs, graduates of MSSR institutions mostly pursued doctoral studies outside the republic, which were considered more prestigious. At the same time, it was noted that the primacy of this source did not reflect an equivalent increase in the proportion of local and Romanian-speaking members of the teaching staff. because, in addition to the constant import of staff from outside the MSSR, very few of the graduates of „Moldovan" higher education institutions represented the „indigenous nationality", as evidenced by the identified ethnic structure, and even fewer spoke Romanian. Thus, the policy of indigenization of the teaching staff in the MSSR was Machiavellian, and the communist authorities always found the most plausible explanation to ensure balanced arguments for a personnel policy appropriate to the goals of forming a „Moldovan" Soviet university intelligentsia with all the characteristics that this entails.

During our research, we looked at how the hierarchical repositioning of these four sources contributed to the national and social construction of teaching staff in the MSSR. Thus, the imperatives of Sovietization, „Moldovanisation", and Russification, concealed by Bolshevik propaganda about the need to create a „Moldovan" Soviet higher education system in Bessarabia with the „help" the „Moldovans" from the left bank of the Dniester and the „brotherly Soviet peoples", led to the favouring of the first two sources in 1940-1941, with little involvement of Bessarabians educated in Romanian universities who came or remained in the MSSR. After the restoration of Soviet power in 1944, the new paradigms of the party-state's national policy emphasized the key role of the Russian people at the ideological and cultural level, assigning them the role of „ethnic glue" [121, 67-70; 310, 106], emphasized the external source, even though the shortage of teaching and research staff was specific to the entire Soviet space [208, 130-138; 233], with other sources remaining complementary until the mid-1950s. After Stalin's death, Soviet national policy returned to the principle of assimilation/indigenization, while also preserving that of latent and covert Russification. Against this backdrop, once higher education institutions in the MSSR had produced more

graduates who had gone through the Soviet education system and were familiar with Soviet political, ideological, and linguistic requirements, they became the main source for training teaching and research staff. However, the regime did not abandon the external source of replenishment of the teaching staff of higher education institutions, and most graduates of domestic higher education institutions were trained through doctoral and postdoctoral programs in research institutions in the main university cities of the USSR [1, XIV-XVIII, LIX-LXXVII; 5, XLII-XLV; 148, 231-322].

3.2. Staff policy in higher education in the MSSR: statements and realities

In our investigations, we looked at how teaching and research staff are hired at higher education institutions in the MSSR, identified the criteria for selecting and placing staff in teaching, scientific-teaching, and managerial positions, and argued that the authorities used rules and strict requirements, both written and unwritten, that were quite logical and understandable from the point of view of the communist authorities' objectives.

Thus, it was emphasized that, although egalitarianism was declared part of the ideology in the USSR, party membership was considered a natural unwritten convention, but recommended for employment in academia, especially in leadership positions in higher education institutions, as these individuals were considered trustworthy by the regime. At the same time, party membership provided the authorities with more leverage to control, „adjust" behaviour, and sanction university staff. Our analyses attest to the communist authorities' interest in increasing the number of party organizations in higher education institutions, but one that was carefully supervised and controlled. Thus, by the mid-1950s, most of these organizations were made up of communists „imported" from outside the MSSR, usually cadres with party and/or Komsomol experience, whose devotion and loyalty had been verified and/or tested. This mostly foreign group was joined by communists from the former Moldavian ASSR, as well as former members of the RCP. It was pointed out that, even though being a party member was really important for getting teaching and, especially, management jobs, the share of „Moldovans", especially those from the right bank of the Dniester, in the primary organizations of higher education institutions remained very low throughout the entire period studied, due to the very difficult procedure for joining the party for this category. Thus, a contradiction arose between the declared imperative of indigenization of staff, which kept the issue of attracting members from among local teaching staff and students on the authorities' agenda, and the rigorous and difficult conditions. In addition to knowledge of communist doctrine, Marxist-Leninist works, party history, Soviet state and party politics, and the

obligation to carry out voluntary community activities and those mandated by Komsomol or party organizations, candidates had to demonstrate an „unblemished" biography spanning several generations of qualities, and deeds and actions disapproved of by the regime. The applicant had to meet formal and informal conditions, such as proletarian social origin, not having owned, parents, or relatives, and not have „lived off unearned income", not have been a member or sympathizer of interwar political parties, not have been friends with or had relations with „enemies" of Soviet power, etc. Our research reveals that most Bessarabians either did not meet one of these conditions or were suspected of violating them, and thus the authorities „exploited" their intentions to join the party for educational purposes, and in the case of those who became party members before their „sin" was „discovered", for blackmail and „re-education".

On the other hand, we mentioned that a large number of students who wanted a scientific and teaching career and teachers from the right bank of the Dniester constantly aspired to become party members. Firstly, to „place under the protection" of the party their professional career, but also their personal life, in some cases, and secondly, because party members gained access to decision-making in the institution to which they belonged and to the levers of control over various aspects and segments of the educational institution's activity, but also over their students and colleagues, especially those who were not party members. The party organization and office had enormous influence in any higher education institution, with party meetings keeping their finger on the pulse and discussing any situation, issue, or person they considered not to comply with the rules governing socialist society – from the political and ideological education of actors in higher education, to the personal lives of teachers and students, personnel policy, scientific research topics, planning, organization, and evaluation of the teaching process, institution management, and more. Party members had to carefully monitor that party decisions were carried out on time.

Our studies have highlighted the fact that the party organizations of educational institutions in the MSSR did not represent unified and harmonious bodies of communists who approved decisions by consensus and blindly pursued the implementation of the party line. Personal ambitions and group interests often clashed at party meetings, being decisive in the formulation of resolutions, as was seen in the case of Russian-speaking communist lecturers, who, united against the "nationalists" from the Institute in Balți and those from the ME of the MSSR in the late 1940s, whom they accused of insulting the communists – and therefore the party – approved decisions that strengthened their personal position [154, 54-81]. Party membership also offered members a certain security in their professional, social, and

sometimes personal positions, as party membership was a kind of indulgence in the context of endless ideological campaigns and interminable „hunts" for nationalists, cosmopolitans, and other „enemies" of Soviet power, but also in the case of personal or professional „blunders"/ „misconduct", internal struggles between party members, or between different groups/factions for the regime's favour.

In addition to the symbolic values that party members enjoyed preferentially, they participated, first and foremost, in the free or advantageous distribution of goods and financial resources, and benefited from other advantages (travel outside the USSR, allocation of apartments, etc.). It has been argued that party membership was an important factor in staff policy: on the one hand, the recruitment of as many cadres as possible was a guarantee of the loyalty of academics in the MSSR, with the regime largely establishing and determining the social models of their personal and professional behaviour; on the other hand, party membership offered them security in the uncertain conditions of the communist regime, as well as *carte blanche* in their professional advancement.

Another unwritten but mandatory postulate of staff policy was the need to take into account the social origin of those employed in the higher education system of the MSSR. The proletarian/„healthy" origin of applicants for university positions remained one of the most important conditions for admission, opening the way for hundreds of peasants and peasant children into the world of the „Moldovan" university intelligentsia and allowing them to radically change their social status. Although this social elevator did not shield them from the harsh realities of socialist life, it was demonstrated that representatives of the peasantry in the MSSR assimilated and accepted Soviet education and values and were thus able to truly count on improving their situation and their lives.

It was mentioned that, although intellectuals from other social backgrounds were constantly suspected of disloyalty, the regime, faced with a shortage of qualified Romanian-speaking staff, hired several intellectuals of „bourgeois origin" in higher education in the MSSR. It was revealed that representatives of this part of the teaching staff stood out for their erudite and scholarly education in European universities, their professional and scientific competence, their demeanour and manner of relating to others, their Romanian language skills, etc., traits that allowed comparisons with the newcomers, educated in Soviet schools, and these comparisons were not in favour of the latter. The „flaws" resulting from their social background and „bourgeois" education were condemned by most of their colleagues of proletarian origin, who, overcome by an inferiority complex, felt uncomfortable with the parallels between them. Most of the intellectuals with „unhealthy" social origins, caught up in the turmoil of Stalinist

ideological campaigns and involved in settling scores with their „proletarian" colleagues, were removed from the „Moldovan" higher education system as the institutions produced their first graduates, educated in the Soviet and communist spirit. However, some of those who allowed themselves to be „re-educated", who adopted Russian as the language of teaching, research, and communication, who adapted to the rules of the regime and devoted themselves to the development of Soviet education and science, retained their positions, and some even rose to leadership positions in higher education in the MSSR.

An unwritten principle of staff policy in higher education in the MSSR was positive discrimination in favour of „Moldovans", taken from the national policy of the party-state, which sought to legitimize and consolidate itself in the reannexed territories, reduce the national sensitivities of the Bessarabians, and build national loyalties. We have argued that, although the Soviets declared an increased interest in the indigenization of higher education staff in the MSSR (regardless of the fluctuations in national policy), for the employment and promotion of „representatives of the indigenous nationality", the statements remained a propaganda tool, because the Soviet state aimed to create a school that was „Moldovan" in form and Soviet in content. Thus, while the principles of party affiliation and social origin were easier to achieve in staffing policy, that of „Moldovan" representativeness was difficult to achieve for objective reasons, but especially because of the subjective grounds of the regime.

The statistical data we have compiled indicate that the participation of Romanian and Romanian-speaking elements in the formation of the „Moldovan" academic body remained fairly low throughout the period under review, due to the lack of sufficient sources for recruiting scientific and teaching staff, both on the right bank of the Dniester and in the former Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. It has been shown that this situation was skilfully exploited by the Soviet regime, which imported Russian-speaking staff on a massive scale in the early years of the higher education system and „diluted" the teaching staff ethnically by delegating teaching and scientific personnel from educational and research centres in the USSR, even after local higher education institutions produced graduating classes of „Moldovan" students, the proportion of local staff in university faculties increased from 15% in the 1944-1945 academic year to only 31% in the mid-1960s [148, 831-836].

The authorities also resorted to various stratagems to "justify" the need to increase the number of „Moldovans" in higher education institutions. Investigations show that the increase in the number of staff registered as „Moldovans" did not correspond to an expansion of teaching and research capacity in Romanian. Often, „Moldovans" were recruited from among Bessarabian emigrants settled in Russian territories (N. Dimo, M. Pavlov, etc.) or from the left

bank of the Dniester, speakers of an archaic, Russified dialect that was difficult for students to understand, which is why they preferred to teach in Russian. Likewise, the desire to conform to the regime led some intellectuals from the right bank of the Dniester, educated in Romanian schools (M. Debner, F. Ostasco, etc.), to adopt Russian as the language of instruction. Even some „Moldovan" graduates of higher education institutions in the MSSR, educated in the Russian-language system, later opted for teaching in Russian, including in groups where Romanian was theoretically taught. Thus, the declared policy of indigenization of the academic bodies in the MSSR did not lead to the establishment of a national higher education system, as promised to the „Moldovans", but rather consolidated a predominantly Russified, ideologized, and obedient teaching staff.

We agreed with some historians who argued that people from the left bank of the Dniester were given priority when it came to state and party jobs and positions in the MSSR [81, 395; 129, 72], arguing that this also applies to higher education, as Transnistrians were seen as cultural agents for the „deromanisation" of students and the implementation of the „Moldovan" language and culture in higher education. Behind the positive discrimination of „Moldovans", staff policy was dominated by the principle of regional affiliation, with the authorities distrusting the „Moldovans" from Bessarabia, even though they were better educated, more professional, and had a better knowledge of Romanian and Russian, with most of them accepting Soviet power. An analysis of the biographies of the leaders of higher education institutions in the MSSR shows that, until the mid-1960s, none of them were originally from Bessarabia, as they were appointed by the union authorities either from among the non-natives or from among the „natives" from the left bank of the Dniester [1, XIV-XVII]. Thus, education, work experience, and political-ideological experience in the former MASSR offered an additional opportunity to those who aspired to a university or scientific career in the MSSR.

The importance of social origin, party affiliation, and place of study of teaching, research, and management staff have always remained valid criteria in the staff policy of "Moldovan" higher education, even though the rules have become somewhat blurred over time, as the development of science required higher education employees to have more professionalism, experience, and education. However, as exemplified in our studies, lack of experience and insufficient professionalism were not an obstacle to the promotion of individuals convenient to the regime.

However, it was evident that employment, and especially retention, in a teaching or research position was also regulated by written rules inherent to the higher education system,

which could not be ignored. One of the canonical and indispensable conditions for employment in a teaching and research position was the requirement of higher education in the field required by the position. The regime gave preference to candidates educated in the Soviet higher education system, including in the MASSR, but it also provisionally hired teaching staff trained in European universities, who, despite their qualifications and experience, were replaced as „untrustworthy persons" with graduates of higher education institutions in the MSSR or outside the republic, regardless of the qualifications and experience of the latter. Most of the foreign staff had higher education, even doctoral degrees, were highly professional, and contributed greatly to the development of education and science in the MSSR, but in addition to them, especially in ideological departments and managerial positions, were also filled by people with secondary education who had „merits" towards the Soviet power and in whom the regime had placed its trust.

Another requirement for appointment to a professorship was the possession of scientific and scientific-teaching titles. And while the first written rule was violated in rare cases, especially in the post-war period, the second was regularly ignored in the case of appointments to teaching positions, leadership positions in institutions, or chairs. It was mentioned that the practice of appointing people without titles to university positions was common in the 1940s and 1950s and that some institutions failed to hire any holders of scientific or scientific-teaching titles for years, which largely determined to a large extent, the quality of training of specialists for the MSSR economy. At the same time, we clarified that by keeping them in their departments, the Soviet authorities could count on their loyalty, as they owed their position to them and thus became dependent on it [148, 849-850; 169, 30-56].

The loyalty of the „Moldovan" academic „intelligentsia" was also reinforced by extensive social measures, as a result of which hundreds of former peasants radically changed their status and, despite the hardships and shortages of post-war everyday life, improved their situation and quality of life. After receiving a higher education in the communist, Russian, and Soviet spirit, a large part of the local graduates filled university departments, seduced by the propaganda of participating in the creation of a new communist society, of affiliating with the „great" Russian and Soviet cultural values, etc. In addition to the benefits that came from complying with the written and unwritten rules of staff policy, teachers also enjoyed other advantages, being given preference over other urban categories. Their position at the university opened up a range of development opportunities and access to the distribution of values coveted by other professional groups in socialist society: a very motivating salary, which increased with career advancement; privileges related to the post-war system of insurance cards for food and

industrial goods, procured according to increased norms; obtaining „American gifts”; food „packages” and meal vouchers in special canteens during the famine of 1946-1947; priority insurance with housing in cities, etc. [1, LXVI-LXVIII; 148, 236-256].

The research emphasizes that Soviet personnel policy was well-argued and skilfully managed, with the regime largely succeeding in striking a balance between pragmatic and real needs and political-ideological goals in the process of establishing and staffing the academic corps of higher education institutions in the MSSR.

3.3. The „Moldovan” academic establishment: between emulation and resistance

In published studies, we highlighted the fact that the staff policies promoted by the regime, together with the socio-economic and political conditions specific to the MSSR, as well as individual or group interests, contributed to the formation of hybrid and compromise academic communities of professors, characterised by internal fragmentation, articulated in factions that cohered around various principles of affiliation. Most of the time, these groups did not have clearly defined contours, and membership in them was fluid: members often migrated from one faction to another, depending on personal interests or how they were perceived and accepted by other colleagues.

A first faction consisted of academics who identified themselves as "Moldovans" and claimed to speak "Moldovan and Romanian," without necessarily being of Romanian ethnicity. The faction consisted of several components, including,

Transnistrians with careers built in the MASSR, of relative professionalism and, at times, morality, speaking an altered form of the Moldavian language and having a modest knowledge of Russian, claimed the role of main pillars of higher education in MSSR throughout the entire period studied, with most of them fulfilling the mission assigned to them by the Soviet authorities.

Bessarabians with academic training in „bourgeois” universities, highly qualified professionally, but criticized by the authorities for a series of personal „shortcomings” (bourgeois education, „unhealthy” social origin, petty-bourgeois mentality, etc.), professional (they spoke Romanian, taught from foreign sources, used foreign terms, etc.) and political-ideological (they showed adulation for Western culture and science, did not apply Marxism-Leninism in teaching, etc.). It was precisely these traits that made them appreciated by students, but also vulnerable to the authorities, thus becoming susceptible to pressure and adaptable to the regime's demands;

young Moldovan specialists, trained in Soviet educational institutions, promoted in the context of the positive discrimination policy of the „indigenous population". Although inexperienced, they were better educated, more ambitious, and motivated to change their social and professional status, and could teach in the „Moldovan" language to „indigenous" students.

The faction lacked cohesion, as the younger generation threatened both the traditional positions of the Transnistrians and those of the Bessarabians with a „bourgeois" education. There was no unity between the first two components either. The Transnistrians claimed moral and historical superiority, invoking the sacrifices made for the construction of the Soviet „new world", in contrast to the Bessarabians, whom they claimed „lived in the lap of luxury in the arms of the landowning bourgeoisie", while the Western-educated Bessarabians mocked the Transnistrians for using a language altered by Russian and Ukrainian influences, opposing them with a more elaborate didactic and scientific discourse, which generated competition both in the academic sphere and in that of professional legitimacy.

The number and proportion of fractions were adjusted and brought into line with the regime's national and social policies in higher education: in higher pedagogical education, tasked with training teachers for general education schools in the MSSR, which were largely „Moldovan", „Moldovan" staff did not exceed 50% at the end of the period under investigation, which meant that a large proportion of academic subjects were taught in Russian. Even fewer teachers from among the „natives" were employed in non-pedagogical institutions, their share increasing from 2-15% in the post-war period to 20% in the mid-1960s, with the exception of the Institute of Medicine, where their number increased to 48% by 1965, which allowed for the teaching of some subjects in Romanian [148, 318-319].

Another component of the teaching staff in Moldovan higher education institutions was the group conventionally referred to as „Jews", which mainly consisted of Jewish teachers from Bessarabia, across the Prut River, and from regions of the USSR. They were generally graduates of prestigious educational institutions in Europe, the former Russian Empire, and the USSR. The data analysed shows that, in the early post-war years, this faction represented about one-third of the total teaching staff of higher education institutions in the MSSR, but that in the context of Stalinist ideological campaigns and the intensification of Soviet anti-Semitic policies, their proportion fell to about 12.5% in the mid-1960s. Another significant aspect is linguistic: in the 1940s, a considerable number of these professors taught in Romanian, but in the following decades, many of them gradually switched to using Russian as their main language of instruction, thus contributing to the consolidation of the Russian-speaking component in „Moldovan" higher education.

The most representative and influential faction within the teaching staff was the „Russian-speaking faction” — a group that brought together representatives of Slavic nations, as well as non-Slavic ethnic groups from the USSR, who spoke Russian and upheld the values of Russian and Soviet civilization, most of whom were party members sent to build socialism in the MSSR. It has been argued that, with a few exceptions, such as the teaching staff at the Kislovodsk Institute of Medicine, who were transferred *in corpore* to Chișinău, or the professors who „self-exiled” themselves to the MSSR to escape the regime's repression, the level of qualification, experience, and professional skills of these cadres were often questionable, sometimes even dubious. However, this did not stand in the way of their career advancement.

The process of implementing the staff policy and its effects frequently provoked reactions of discontent or resistance among some members of the academic community. Many staff members had reasons to be upset by the unfair distribution of positions, material or symbolic resources, the lack of transparency in professional promotion, or other forms of institutional injustice. However, these manifestations remained, in general, isolated and subjective cases, being managed in such a way as not to affect the stability of the regime and the ideological loyalty of the staff involved.

The investigations highlight a variety of anti-Russian reactions, challenges to the Velicovist attitudes manifested by colleagues from the USSR, condemnation of their arrogant, contemptuous, and defiant behaviour toward the locals, as well as protests against Russification and denationalization, dissimulating statements regarding the promotion of the „local element” in education, and the lack of a national identity among the local population. contemptuous and defiant towards the locals, as well as protests against Russification and denationalization, dissimulative statements regarding the promotion of the „local element” in higher education and in the process of building a national school. Most of these reactions reflect passive and nonviolent resistance, expressed verbally, either in class, among colleagues, at meetings, or at gatherings. These reactions did not seek to undermine the legitimacy of the Soviet and communist regime in the MSSR. On the contrary, many were staunch communists who, marked by the existence of the regime's „glass ceiling”, continued to believe and hope in the fulfilment of promises regarding „Moldovan higher education” intended for „Moldovans”. Our conclusions are illustrated by the "case of the nationalists" at the Teacher Training Institute in Balti, who, dissatisfied with the accelerated pace of Russification of the so-called „Moldovan” education system, tried to „set things right” by launching a revolt against the Russian-speaking

staff of the Institute, a phenomenon that marked higher education in the MSSR between 1948 and the early 1950s [154, 366-391].

3.4. Conclusions to Chapter III

In *conclusion,* we emphasize that, given the role of cadres in the Soviet system, the authorities monopolized personnel policy in higher education in the MSSR, implementing it authoritatively immediately after the first Soviet annexation of Bessarabia. The authorities relied on Bolshevik experiences in training teaching staff in the post-revolutionary period, adapting them to the socio-demographic and political-economic characteristics of the MSSR and the objectives of forming a loyal and reliable teaching and scientific corps on which to rely in the process of Sovietization, Russification, and communization of the „Moldovan" higher education system and, subsequently, through the new „Moldovan" Soviet intelligentsia—the inhabitants of the republic. In this sense, the teaching staff in higher education in the MSSR was subjected to national and social construction and was itself transformed into an instrument of national and social engineering of the intelligentsia.

The Soviets paid close attention to the selection, sorting, and distribution of staff in higher education in the MSSR throughout the entire period under investigation, relying on reliable sources in the process of filling teaching and research positions. Pragmatic and propaganda considerations led the authorities to delegate and co-opt the following into higher education institutions in Chișinău: 1. specialists from educational, scientific, and cultural institutions in the former MASSR, who contributed to the creation of a higher education system that was both Soviet and „Moldovan"; 2. Russian-speaking staff from various regions and republics of the USSR, who ensured the „birth" of a Soviet, ideologized, Russian-language higher education system; and 3. Bessarabians with higher education obtained in „bourgeois" universities, who ensured a high-quality teaching process in Romanian. The proportion of the three components of the teaching staff is difficult to determine for the period 1940-1941, but in the years 1941-1944, the German-Soviet war and the conditions in which the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute operated in the RSFSR led to a rapid increase in the number of Russian-speaking foreign staff to the detriment of Romanian-speaking and native staff.

The shortage of teaching and research staff, post-war internal and external realities, and the regime's economic and political-propaganda objectives led the authorities to reposition the sources of university staff recruitment after the war. They resorted, first of all, to a massive import of Soviet specialists from outside the republic, co-opted Bessarabians with „bourgeois" education, and initiated the employment of graduates of educational institutions in the MSSR,

without taking into account their professionalism and experience and, in many cases, political and ideological requirements. By the mid-1950s, this staff policy had produced a scientific and teaching body that was ethnically and socially heterogeneous in terms of education, experience, and professional qualifications, as well as in terms of the goals they pursued and the methods, they used to curry favour with the government and build their academic careers and personal lives.

Once higher education institutions in the MSSR began producing more and more graduates, the main source of new teaching and research staff became local, without abandoning the import of foreign specialists. By the mid-1960s, local graduates made up almost 2/3 of the teaching staff at some institutions, but this increase did not equate to a strengthening of the Romanian-speaking element, as very few of the higher education graduates represented the „indigenous nationality" and/or knew the Romanian language. At the same time, these graduates were already products of the Soviet education system, who had benefited from the social and professional mobility opportunities offered by the regime and had to be loyal to it. The Soviet regime's propaganda statements about the indigenization of higher education were inconsistent with Soviet national policy and with the realities that reflected the regime's intentions to create a Soviet and Russified higher education system in the MSSR: for the most part, the teaching staff of higher education institutions, declared „Moldovan", were speakers of the Russian language and bearers of Russian culture and Soviet civilization. The teaching staff, who had come to Chișinău, Balti, or Tiraspol from various cities and regions of the USSR, were, in most cases, ideologized or on the verge of accepting, at least formally, the official ideology and were obedient or loyal to the Soviet state and the Communist Party.

IV. LANGUAGE POLICY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE MSSR

4.1. Curricular norms and practices of language policy in the 1940s – late 1950s.

As we have demonstrated in our research, the Soviet communist regime promoted a conscious and consistent language policy of Russification in higher education, whose instruments were implemented through pressure, disguised as propaganda, from the creation of the higher education system in the MSSR and were finalized in the mid-1960s through the official policy of transforming Russian into a „second mother tongue" and spreading bilingualism [148, 402-473; 150, 33-146; 151, 606-622].

The language policy in higher education in the MSSR was implemented in several successive and complementary stages, and in each stage largely similar instruments of Russification and denationalization were used. The degree of obligation, the level of intensity, and the depth of control over the implementation of these tools varied at different stages, generally relating to the foreign and domestic, including national, policy of the Soviet state and, in particular, to the process of Sovietization of the MSSR, the events and phenomena that accompanied it and were characteristic of society in the MSSR in the 1940s-1960s, and the constituent elements and specific processes of higher education in the MSSR.

Although the short period of the first Soviet occupation of Bessarabia does not allow us to identify the specifics of language policy in higher education in the MSSR, it is certain that the Soviet model of higher education reached the MSSR via Transnistria [161, 287-301], where Russian was a compulsory subject for all non-Russian students (from 1938), and the language skills of the teaching staff determined the organisation of the teaching process in Russian and in Transnistrian „Moldovan". It was emphasized that, once applied on the right bank of the Dniester, this model oriented the process of training the future intelligentsia of the MSSR towards Russification and „Moldovanisation", with the regime maintaining the language policies previously promoted in the MASSR, although these were masked by propaganda slogans about the need to train specialists „from among the local population—the Moldovans".

Research into language policy in Moldovan higher education during the German-Soviet war confirms that Moldovan students were deprived of their constitutional right (1936) to study in their mother tongue at the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute, which had been evacuated to Buguruslan. Finding themselves in a „Russian sea", the few Romanian-speaking students were quickly Russified, our research showing that after re-evacuation, several graduates employed as teachers in 1944-1945 chose to teach their courses in Russian [150, 42-45].

After the (re)establishment of the higher education system in the fall of 1944, a new stage began in the implementation of Soviet language policy in the MSSR, in which Russification and „Moldovanisation" coexisted complementarily in the education of students. At the same time, although higher education institutions in the MSSR adopted the RSFSR model curriculum, „minor adjustments" were made to „strengthen the teaching of Russian language and literature", because „Moldovan" students did not know it or mastered it „shockingly unsatisfactorily", and Russian was taught without any system. Our investigation shows that, at this stage (1944-1948), the main instrument of Russification was the teaching process organized entirely in Russian in all non-pedagogical higher education institutions and partially in pedagogical ones in Tiraspol, Balti, and Chișinău, while „Moldovanisation" was carried out by Transnistrian staff through courses taught in the „Moldovan" language. The curricular tools for Russification were „naturally" complemented by extracurricular ones, by the Russian institutional environment of written and oral communication in Russian, and by the increasingly Russian social context of the university towns in the MSSR. At the same time, analysis of the progress made by „Moldovan" students in learning Russian showed a slow pace, which delayed the rapid achievement of the regime's goal of creating a Soviet intelligentsia from among the „natives". It has been argued that, at this stage, the communist authorities, faced with the persistence of Romanianism among students, focused their efforts on erasing national identity from their memory, combating „bourgeois nationalism" and promoting the „purification of the Moldovan language" from „Romanianisms", phrases, and expressions that were „foreign" to the new „Moldovan" language.

Research has shown that, in the early post-war years, the regime implemented a language policy of Russification and „Moldovanisation" as part of the Soviet policy of identity engineering among students in higher education in the MSSR, and that greater attention was paid to the level of literacy in Russian and Russianization „under cover" than to „Moldovanisation". It was revealed that Soviet language policy had precise and clear objectives, determined by the regime's need to create national sensitivities, and the fact that these had to be formed in a territory torn from the Romanian state forced the regime to apply a language policy of *soft power*. The Soviet authorities exploited (and in some cases created) conditions favourable to Russification and „Moldovanisation" (the insignificant share of Moldovans in student contingents and teaching and research staff, the import of foreign-language students and teachers, the transfer of „scholars" and teaching staff from higher education and research institutions in the former MASSR, scientific and educational literature in Russian, etc.), without resorting to threats and/or direct sanctions.

We highlight a new stage in Soviet language policy after the establishment of the „Iron Curtain", marked by ideological campaigns to „affirm Soviet patriotism", combat the „pernicious influence of the West", and „re-educate" the intelligentsia, including those from the recently annexed peripheries. It was emphasized that the orders of the MHSSE of the USSR of September 11 and October 29, 1948, which imposed compulsory study of the Russian language in all national higher education institutions, marked the end of the confusing and arbitrary period in the learning of the Russian language and conferred on Russian a canonical status in the university curriculum. Our investigations show that, with the increase in the number of Romanian-speaking students and teachers, Russification measures intensified, and the promotion of fluent knowledge of Russian became increasingly insistent. Through the regulations of 1948, the regime imposed normative constraints to sanction the lack of knowledge of Russian among „Moldovan" students [150, 91].

At this stage, the curricular instruments of the Russification policy were finalized and applied in the teaching process and in student scientific research, and academic progress was monitored by assessing the „degree of literacy" in Russian, on the basis of which the authorities adjusted the number of hours, teaching methods, and the level of training of teachers of Russian. It was emphasized that mastery of the Russian language had become essential for the acquisition of specialized disciplines, taught predominantly in Russian, using Russian textbooks, under the pretext of a shortage of teaching and scientific literature in Romanian [150, 84-110].

It has been demonstrated that the Russian language dominated the teaching process in most higher education institutions in the MSSR and was the main instrument of Russification. This was supported by the exclusive use of Russian in all compulsory university activities for students, which created an environment conducive to Russification. Another tool was the policies for the formation of academic groups, especially in non-pedagogical institutions, where, even after the increase in the number of Romanian-speaking candidates, no groups were formed with teaching in the „Moldovan" language, under the pretext of the small number of „Moldovans" admitted. The use of Russian in administrative activities and the Russian-speaking environment of university towns followed the same logic, which reinforced the effects of Russification policies in higher education.

It was noted that, although in the early post-war years the academic progress of „Moldovan" students was modest, the linguistic conditions in higher education and everyday life gradually „convinced" them of the elitist status of the Russian language, leading them to accept the need for fluent, accent-free speech by the 1950s. This „understanding" had, first of

all, a pragmatic motivation: the Russian language was essential for academic success and access to careers and material and symbolic benefits in the USSR. Secondly, the desire for social integration and avoidance of humiliation in the Russian university environment and the Russified city motivated the effort to adapt linguistically. At the same time, Soviet ideology—with its ideas about Russian exclusivity, the „liberation" of Moldovans, and the superiority of Russian as the only bridge to Soviet and universal culture and civilization—contributed to the internalization of the need to speak Russian fluently among „Moldovan" students.

Our analyses show that, by the mid-1950s, conditions had been created for asymmetrical bilingualism, in which the „Moldovan" language was studied sporadically and perceived as unimportant, being disregarded by allophone students. At the same time, „Moldovan" students, appreciated for their interest in the Russian language, ended up no longer knowing their mother tongue, using Transnistrian barbarisms and calques from Russian [150, 281-282].

This was a natural consequence in a context where any call for the introduction of „Moldovan language" courses or for changing the language regime in a „Moldovan" institution was labelled as „bourgeois nationalism" or ignored. Students at pedagogical institutions could learn their mother tongue only from Transnistrian teachers or teachers with Romanian training, while in other higher education institutions, Romanian was absent from the curriculum and restricted to family use. Thus, in the late Stalinist period, the conditions were created for the formation of a Russian-speaking „Moldovan" intelligentsia, graduates of higher education institutions in the MSSR, especially those with doctorates from union centres, perpetuating the process of Russification, including in the higher education institutions where they were employed.

4.2. New directions in language policy during the Khrushchev era

As our investigations show, the end of the Stalinist era and Khrushchev's thaw, which brought about a relative liberalization of Soviet society, also stimulated a certain revival of national energies in the MSSR. It became apparent that some Romanian-speaking intellectuals in higher education, encouraged by the defeat of Transnistrian linguists in the „language battles" and animated by the hope of correcting some of the distortions of the early years of the communist regime, attempted to address the issue of teaching the „Moldovan" language in higher education. It was noted that the little progress made was concentrated mainly in philology faculties, but events in Poland and Hungary, internal conflicts within the party, and

„nationalist” manifestations in the western republics of the USSR led to a reorientation of Soviet national policy, including in the linguistic field [148, 473].

It has been argued that a stage of „concretization” of language policy occurred in the late 1950s, with Khrushchev's school reform (1958), which regulated the right of non-Russian nationalities to choose their language of instruction in general education. This measure affected the primary status of the titular language in the union republics, aiming to transform Russian into a second „mother tongue” for non-Russians. The reform inaugurates a new stage of Russification—that of imposed asymmetrical bilingualism. In a short time, the reform led to the expansion of the internal Russian-speaking pool for higher education in the MSSR, as minorities such as the Gagauz, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, but also some „Moldovans” who chose Russian-language schools contributed to maintaining a significant number of Russian-language teaching groups, even with fewer students coming in. Thus, by forming completely Russified ethnic enclaves in the MSSR over two generations, the regime created a stable ethnopolitical base which, after the collapse of the USSR, continues to show loyalty to its „creator” and serves as a political tool of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Moldova.

In the early 1960s, Soviet authorities reported that the study of Russian was not producing the „desired results”, even though school reform had emphasized the importance of knowing Russian, which, given the „closeness and fusion” of Soviet peoples during the „building of communism” phase, was supposed to become a „second mother tongue”. The new regulations on the teaching of Russian in higher education in the union and autonomous republics, imposed by the MHSSE of the USSR in 1964, unlike those of 1948, addressed the issue systematically, referring exhaustively to all aspects of the organization and management of the teaching-learning-assessment process and the practical acquisition of Russian „as a second mother tongue” by non-Russian students. In the mid-1960s, an important stage in the process of the upward and aggressive imposition of the Russian language in higher education in the MSSR came to an end. Along with other linguistic instruments, which would continue to exist in a more or less stable hierarchy, the Russification of the new Moldovan Soviet intelligentsia bore fruit through the development and consolidation of an asymmetrical bilingualism among Romanian-speaking students and teachers.

4.3. Manifestations of resistance to Soviet language policy

Our studies have highlighted the contradictions of Soviet language policy in national higher education: on the one hand, it proclaimed the right of Soviet peoples to education in their mother tongue and respect for „national differences and particularities”; on the other hand,

the Russian language was systematically and aggressively promoted in higher education in the MSSR, transforming it into a „national" one in form, but Russian in content. The intense and provocative Russification of the teaching staff and contingents, of the teaching and educational process, the manifestations of Great Russian chauvinism towards the „representatives of the indigenous nationality", etc., generated resistance from Romanian-speaking actors in higher education, amplifying tensions in the „multinational" university environments of the MSSR.

This resistance was largely passive and peaceful, with most demonstrations being spontaneous and sporadic, and the protagonists usually remaining anonymous. The reactions—whether from students or teachers—expressed dissatisfaction with the restriction of the right to use their mother tongue in the educational process, in their relations with the authorities, or in public spaces, with the elimination of the Romanian element from local culture, with the „Moldovanisation" of the language, and with the attempt to artificially create a „Moldovan people" distinct from the Romanian one, but also with the personnel policy, which favoured foreigners and, respectively, the denationalization of higher education in the MSSR [148, 500-568; 150, 160-266; 154, 37-96].

This phenomenon was present in all higher education institutions in the MSSR, and the communist regime condemned any attempt to articulate dissatisfaction with Soviet language policy, labelling them as „manifestations of bourgeois nationalism". However, the occasional and limited nature of the resistance of the few Romanian-speaking students and teachers, as well as the fact that they did not exceed the limits tolerated by the system, led Soviet leaders to avoid implementing the traditional repressive machinery. This was especially true since the regime often allowed controlled „national expressions" as outlets to mimic freedom of opinion and ensure the stability of the regime. We noted that the reduced presence of Romanian-speaking students in the allophone and allogeneic contingents in the higher education institutions of the MSSR, the lack of solidarity, conformism, but also the obedience of those who were convinced that Soviet power had offered them an opportunity to change their social status and an „access ticket" to a better world, along with the collective traumas of childhood (famine, deportations, collectivization) and other socialist realities, contributed to keeping resistance at a low level, allowing the regime not to perceive it as a real threat.

The authorities preferred to closely monitor, through the vigilance of the „competent authorities", those who did not exceed the limits tolerated by the regime, using „gentle" methods of intimidation, blackmail, and „re-education" designed to induce fear, mistrust, and a permanent state of tension. Intimidated and constantly under the regime's „sword of Damocles", most students and academics with a „national mindset" suppressed their opinions

on language, identity, and the realities imposed in the MSSR, including higher education. At the same time, the communist authorities emphasized political and ideological education, anti-Romanian, pro-Soviet, and internationalist propaganda, as well as improving living conditions, associating these measures with actions to consolidate power (famine, deportations, collectivization) in order to „convince" students and university staff of the superiority of the Soviet system and to induce them to believe in a happy future in the USSR [148, 568-571; 150, 266-276].

It was found that in academic circles there was a rumbling of dissatisfaction and disappointment, a „discreet dissent" and „silent resistance" to Soviet language policy, and that only in isolated cases, such as in the context of accelerated Russification, did this resistance become vocal and organised. A notable example is the „case of the nationalists" at the Teacher Training Institute in Balti (which erupted in 1948), where „Moldovan" lecturers moved from anti-Russian criticism to a form of organised resistance against chauvinistic Russian-speaking lecturers and contemptuous attitudes towards the local language and population. I concluded that the actions of the „nationalists from Balti" and their supporters within the ME of the MSSR were neither anti-Soviet nor anti-communist, and their demands were in line with the Moldovanist logic promoted by their leader, Minister Artiom Lazarev—the main ideologist of „Moldovans".

As in the case of the students' „manifestations of nationalism", the high republican and union authorities resorted to an arrangement, applying the soft weapons of „calibration" of the teaching staff of higher education institutions in the MSSR, subjecting teachers to intense political and ideological education and creating an atmosphere of psychological pressure and mutual suspicion. By injecting a number of Romanian-speaking graduates into the teaching and scientific corps, the authorities „diluted" the foreign and Russian-speaking element, thus reducing the aggressiveness of the Russification of the teaching process in pedagogical institutions and the denationalization of students, improving the quality of teacher training for the national school in the MSSR and, by extension, the linguistic education of students in „Moldovan" schools.

Our studies show that, with the increase in the number of Moldovan students in higher education institutions in the MSSR, intellectuals with a „national mindset" involved in the educational process transmitted or reactivated, explicitly or implicitly, the awareness of Romanian linguistic and ethnic belonging, especially within the departments of „Moldovan" language and literature at the Pedagogical Institute in Chișinău [167, 243-258; 170, 96-104] and MSU [171, 185-200]. This process was facilitated by the „fertile ground" represented by

students from rural areas, who preserved the Romanian spirit and language, often coming from families with parents educated in the interwar period and marked by Soviet denationalization policies. In addition, there has always been individual, spontaneous, episodic, and situational resistance to the processes of Russification and „Moldovanisation", expressed during the late Stalinist period in disguised and camouflaged forms.

It has been proven that, with the increase in the number of Romanian-speaking students and teaching staff in the second half of the 1950s, Khrushchev's „thaw" formed a new type of student with their own independent view on many issues of Soviet reality. Although the authorities tried to channel student political activism in the „right direction" [217, 11-14; 222, 3-23; 239, 457-472; 247; 252, 64-72; 290], we have shown that, after 1956, students from the Faculty of Philology at MSU and other institutions initiated a dissenting discourse, evolving from university „nationalism" to open ethno-nationalism, with clear national demands, of a Romanian, anti-Russian, and anti-Soviet nature. It was argued that their actions were no longer isolated, but called for collective action – „because the nation is dying". The „fighters for the rebirth of the nation", as the philology students defined themselves, were part of a resistance movement that was common and consonant with that of the Romanian-speaking intelligentsia in the MSSR.

4.4. Conclusions to Chapter IV

The conclusions in this chapter demonstrate that, during the period under review, the Soviet authorities promoted a coherent and phased language policy of Russification of higher education in the MSSR, in which they alternated and combined normative, administrative, and propaganda instruments, calibrated according to the internal and international context, but also to the specificities of the MSSR and „Moldovan" society.

Along with the import of the Soviet model of higher education, the linguistic model previously tested in the MASSR was also adopted, in which Russian was a compulsory subject, the teaching process was carried out in Russian and, partially, in Transnistrian „Moldovan", supported by Russian-speaking staff and textbooks imported from the USSR, in a Russian-speaking institutional environment. While it is difficult to determine the „success" of such a language policy for the years 1940-1941, during the German-Soviet war (1941-1944), students at the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute were deprived of the right to education in their mother tongue, which accelerated the assimilation of the Russian language.

The context of campaigns to „affirm Russian and Soviet patriotism" created conditions for the augmentation of language policy, with Russian being declared a compulsory subject in

national higher education (1948) and the authorities introducing punitive „rewards" for failure to learn it. The teaching process in Russian remained one of the most important instruments of Russification, supported by extracurricular, administrative, communication, and institutional culture in Russian, as well as by the Russian environment of university cities. Such a formal and informal offensive led to some progress in the acquisition and use of Russian by „Moldovan" students, most of whom were „convinced" of the elitist and „pioneering" status of the Russian language, which, in the context of the total disinterest in the „Moldovan" language among allophones and in university and social linguistic communication in the MSSR, created the conditions for the emergence of asymmetrical bilingualism in the mid-1950s.

The defeat of „primitive Moldovans" and „Khrushchevist liberalization" brought the issue of the „Moldovan" language back into higher education, but events in the socialist camp and national movements in the western republics of the USSR nullified the efforts of intellectuals with a „national conscience" and prompted the authorities to draft a language policy. The new educational policies (1958), associated with the theory of „rapprochement and fusion" of the Soviet peoples, and the regulations on teaching, learning, and assessing the degree of proficiency in Russian in national higher education (1964), sought to transform Russian into the „second mother tongue" of students, to displace their mentality in order to instil a love for the „great" Russian language and for the socialist homeland as a matter of duty for every Soviet citizen. In this sense, language policy was one of the most important instruments of Russification and denationalisation of the future „Moldovan" Soviet intelligentsia, produced in and through higher education, with significant long-term consequences for the ethnic shaping of the non-Russian population of this union republic.

The contradictions of Soviet language policy, provocative Russification, chauvinistic contempt for the native language, the construction and imposition of a „Moldovan" language different from Romanian, the history of a „Moldovan people", etc. These contradictions provoked resistance from Romanian-speaking actors in higher education in the MSSR, manifested with varying intensity and in different forms, usually passive and peaceful, spontaneous and episodic, sometimes producing vocal protests, such as the „case of the nationalists" at the Teacher Training Institute in Balti (1948-1950), that of the teaching staff at the Pedagogical Institute in Chișinău and the students at the MSU Philology Department (1956), etc. Resistance to the Russification and denationalization of higher education hindered the achievement of the goals of Soviet language policy *in* and *through* higher education in the MSSR, which were only partially achieved. The authorities were forced to eliminate the „nests

of nationalism" by „pacifying" the „nationalists". The satisfaction, albeit partial, of some of the students' demands (partial revision of the curriculum, expansion of the number of subjects taught in Romanian, etc.) was complemented by an offensive of political-ideological education and mass cultural education, with the diversification of instruments for preventing potential opposition and channelling students' energy towards achieving „internationalism" on the construction sites of communism.

V. COMMUNIST EDUCATION AND THE SHAPING OF STUDENTS' "CORRECT" CONCEPT OF THE WORLD

5.1. Communist education of students in the MSSR during the Stalinist period

From its earliest years, the Bolshevik regime treated education as a strategic priority, shaping a complex paradigm cantered on the formation of a „new kind of person" devoted to communism. Our studies support the thesis that, in the USSR, the ideological education of young people often took precedence over actual professional training [195; 277; 252].

Higher education in the MSSR was involved in a „general offensive" of ideological, ethical-moral, aesthetic, atheistic, and internationalist education as early as 1940, immediately after the first annexation of Bessarabia. This education combined the accumulation of theoretical knowledge with practical and extracurricular activities, aiming to form a Marxist-Leninist worldview. The main function of ideologization was ensured through compulsory social sciences (dialectical and historical materialism, political economy, history of the CPSU), to which other disciplines were gradually added until the mid-1960s: scientific atheism, Marxist ethics and aesthetics, scientific communism, etc. [148, 602-685]. Specialized disciplines were also integrated into this logic, complemented by an extensive system of extracurricular education [148, 685-747].

We have highlighted the fact that educational institutions, departments, teaching staff, and party, Komsomol, and trade union organizations were responsible for the systematic organization of educational and cultural activities designed to attract students into official structures. By promoting amateur art, sports, socialist competitions, and other mass activities, the regime exercised permanent control over students, including during their free time, cultivating loyalty to the USSR, anti-Romanian sentiment, and „Moldovanist" ideology [148, 605-747, 149, 224-248].

As early as 1940–1941, communist education in higher education in the MSSR showed apparent effectiveness, characterized by persuasion, motivation, and manipulation. Available sources show that some Bessarabian students expressed enthusiasm for Soviet „sciences", and some claimed that they had been „oppressed" by the Romanian regime. However, we argue that it is unlikely that Marxist ideology could have produced, in such a short time, real shifts in mentality among young people educated in the Romanian spirit.

During their evacuation to Buguruslan, students at the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute were less exposed to classical Marxism, with the emphasis being on the history of the USSR and patriotic education adapted to the war. Their confrontation with Soviet realities and a distorted history of the Romanian language and culture revealed the limits of communist

education: young people were accused of „nationalist", „petty bourgeois", and „anti-Soviet" attitudes [1, XXIX-XXXII; 148, 605-607; 149, 227-228].

The conclusions of the research show that, in the process of restoring the Soviet regime, the authorities adapted ideological education methods to the artificial nature of the MSSR and the „specificity" of the student contingents, seeking to cultivate pro-Soviet loyalties and instill systemic anti-Romanian sentiment, especially among Bessarabians considered ideologically „contaminated" during Romanian administration. Although the „natives" had a small representation in educational institutions, the regime systematically sought to isolate them from Romanian influences, „eradicate" capitalist reminiscences, and forcefully construct an identity by legitimizing a „Moldovan nation" and a „Moldovan language" distinct from Romanian.

In this context, the ideological canon (Marxism-Leninism, political economy, history of the CPSU), which accounted for 10–15% of the curriculum, was gradually expanded with complementary disciplines, depending on the political objectives of the party-state. Our investigations show that, in the context of organised famine, deportations, forced collectivisation and the regime's inability to provide a decent living for students, the Soviet authorities amplified the role of extracurricular education as an instrument of control and ideological influence. To compensate for the lack of conviction in the superiority of socialism, the regime combined *theoretical-academic methods* (political information lessons, conferences, supplementary courses in Marxism-Leninism, ideological circles) with *extracurricular and non-academic activities* (scientific, artistic, literary, and sports circles, socialist competitions, festivals, trips, film and theater viewings, work brigades, and agitation, etc.) [148, 699-760]. These activities, carefully tailored to the age and interests of the students, acted as „gentle instruments" of communist education, accessing the emotional component of the training process, and through their recreational and seemingly harmless nature, they managed to gradually and effectively shape young people's worldviews, contributing to the consolidation of ideological control over the public and private lives of students in the MSSR.

Our studies show that the political and ideological education of students in the MSSR was a key priority for party and state authorities, both at the union and republican levels. However, even though higher education adopted all the forms and methods of communist education in the USSR, in the higher education institutions of the MSSR, these were not consolidated into a coherent system until the mid-1950s, and educators, under pressure from the party, were forced to apply a variety of forms and methods, often without taking into account the available resources, which led to the modest effectiveness of communist education. Thus, one of the defining features of the system in the late Stalinist period was the directive

expansion of educational methods, coupled with strict control over the teaching of ideological subjects and the mood of students. Despite these efforts, the authorities reported manifestations of „bourgeois nationalism", „servility to the West", and apoliticism, which were considered signs of the failure of ideological education [5, XLVI-XLIII, LXXIII-LXXIX; 148, 721-723].

There were multiple causes for this failure: teaching Marxism-Leninism in Russian to students with limited language skills; differences in values and intellectual training among Bessarabian students, influenced by Romanian education; and a lack of motivation generated by the low level of lecturers. Furthermore, the retention of loyal but incompetent staff reflected the regime's preference for obedience over quality. For fear of misinterpreting ideological dogmas, they adopted a formal, rigid, and dogmatic teaching style, which generated apathy and disinterest among students. In addition, the prioritization of the economic and social emergencies of higher education pushed educational activities into a declarative and formal area, with an emphasis on quantity, in order to be reported favourably to superiors [5, XXXI-XXXVI; 156, 45-58].

5.2. Curricular and extracurricular practices during the Hrușovist period

In our studies, we have argued that Stalin's physical disappearance, the beginning of Khrushchev's „thaw", and the adjustments to the Soviet state's internal and external policies in the mid-1950s marked a new stage in Soviet policies toward the younger generation, especially students. While in the first phase of „liberalization" (1954–1956), the authorities tolerated a certain amount of critical activism among students, adopting a relatively lenient attitude, the regime's fear of its own vulnerabilities, fuelled by events in the „socialist camp" in the second half of the 1950s, new internal and external challenges, including „unhealthy manifestations" of nationalism and anti-Sovietism among students, led to the imposition of strict limits on freedom of thought and a review of strategies for the education of Soviet youth [148, 723-728].

The restructuring of communist education was carried out in a relatively short period of time and had a significant impact on both formal ideological education and extracurricular and after-school activities. After the 20th Congress of the CPSU, reforms aimed at „modernizing" ideological disciplines — by adjusting the content and teaching methodology to state policies and the party's new concepts regarding the evolution of Soviet society towards communism — and expanding their list with new subjects such as scientific atheism, Marxist-Leninist ethics and aesthetics, which reflected the reconfiguration of the hierarchy of communist education directions.

We totally agree with researcher M. Nemtev that making scientific communism a required subject and part of the final exam for Soviet higher education in the 1964-1965 academic year cemented the conceptual structure of Marxism-Leninism as the „official" philosophy, establishing a definitive „canon" of ideological disciplines, which remained valid until the collapse of the USSR [272, 35-38]. Although the curricula for these disciplines were developed centrally in Moscow, in the first half of the 1960s, the republican authorities adapted them to the „specifics of the MSSR and the profile of higher education", determined by the „persistent religiosity" of the inhabitants and the „nationalist manifestations" in the republic. Thus, under the strict control of local party authorities, ideological subjects placed special emphasis on anti-sectarian atheism, moral and internationalist education of the "builder of communism" and the inculcation of "Moldovan identity" [148, 732-746].

In parallel with the „modernization" of ideological subjects, the regime strengthened extracurricular and out-of-school education, developing a flexible system of forms and methods from the arsenal of „soft" instruments, harmonized in a versatile way with the policies and particular needs of the party-state, but also adapted to the interests and concerns of students in higher education institutions in the MSSR, which served as an additional tool for ideological modelling and control of the student body. Forms and methods available in culture, the arts, sciences, and sports were used, and emphasis was placed on „education through the models" of cultural leaders, heroes of the revolution, war, and „socialist labour".

During the Stalinist period, the particularities of communist education for students in the MSSR were influenced by the „ethnic specificity" of the contingents, with the aim of denationalizing, Russifying, and „Moldovanizing" young Bessarabians, as well as inserting them into Soviet and communist political-ideological molds. Without abandoning the main directions of communist education, after the repression of the „unhealthy", „nationalist", and anti-Soviet „dispositions" of students in the MSSR in 1956-1957, as well as after the return to a policy of positive discrimination in favour of the „working classes" in higher education admissions in the late 1950s, the distinctive features of communist education were determined by the social and ethnic structure of student cohorts.

Our analyses show that although more than half of the students in higher education institutions in the MSSR came from „working" backgrounds, graduates' preferences for jobs in cities led to an undesirable increase in the urban intellectual stratum, perceived by the regime as distant „from the people", reluctant to engage in physical labour, attracted to unofficial culture, including Western culture, and prone to political dissidence. Our analyses show that although more than half of the students in higher education institutions in the MSSR came from

„working” backgrounds, graduates' preferences for jobs in cities led to an undesirable increase in the urban intellectual stratum, perceived by the regime as distant „from the people”, reluctant to engage in physical labour, attracted to unofficial culture, including Western culture, and prone to political dissidence. In this sense, „education through work” and patriotic education took on a new meaning, with students being involved in work activities in collective farms, state farms, industrial enterprises, etc., both during the school year and during vacations. Also, in this sense, the state exploited the romanticism and enthusiasm of students, encouraging them to get involved in the „great construction sites of the Patriotic land” as part of Khrushchev's „economic experiments”.

We mentioned that communist education was adapted to the realities of the time, and „Moldovan” students were integrated into the general education system. The open and aggressive Romanophobia of political-ideological education during the Stalinist period was abandoned in favour of promoting „Moldovan” ethnic identity and emphasizing „Moldovan specificity” in language, culture, and traditions, as well as the idea that the „Moldovan people” occupy a place of honour within the „Soviet brotherhood”. To this end, the authorities resorted to organizing a large part of extracurricular activities in Romanian for „Moldovan” students, giving them the opportunity to learn about their traditions and customs and to communicate with personalities from the culture and science of the MSSR. This opening up of access to Romanian-language culture constituted a modest obstacle to the Russification and denationalization of the future intelligentsia, but we emphasized that the „Moldovan form” of cultural events necessarily implied „socialist content” that would educate students in the communist and „Moldovanist” spirit.

5.3. The outcome of communist education: layers of student identities

With regard to the effectiveness of communist education and the level of formation of a „communist consciousness”, we subscribed to the view that there are no precise instruments capable of accurately assessing or measuring these aspects [290; 296]. However, our investigation of the subject allowed us to conclude that, until the mid-1960s, constant efforts to indoctrinate and ideologically standardize young people's views of the world and life, in accordance with the official patterns of the regime, led to the crystallization of several identity layers among students in higher education institutions, as well as among the intelligentsia in the MSSR [148, 747-760; 149, 247-248]. These identity layers were shaped by students' attitudes toward ideological disciplines, their involvement in extracurricular activities, and the way they assumed their „public” responsibilities. These attitudes were manifested in the

frequency of participation in social science courses, in the interest shown in the content taught and, in the questions, asked during lessons, seminars, Komsomol meetings or in dialogue with teachers, but also in the general level of involvement and political and social activism shown by students.

Our studies have highlighted several key factors that have influenced—both directly and indirectly—the receptivity, degree of influence, and effectiveness of the communist educational message, as well as the stratification of student identities. A primary factor is *educational background*, represented by the set of values, norms, and principles formed in the family environment and in secondary school, which constituted the initial educational foundation of the students. Another important element is the *institutional framework* of higher education, which has created the conditions for educational activities to take place, including in terms of their frequency, intensity, and quality. Equally relevant is the *professionalism of educators*, the ability of teaching and research staff to respond appropriately to students' questions and concerns, and the way in which they managed to convey ideological messages coherently. *The paternalistic* policy promoted by the communist authorities and the ways in which the regime supported young people's involvement in educational, social, and professional initiatives were also a factor that had an impact. Finally, the *ideological and social contradictions* generated by the discrepancies between the theoretical content of ideological disciplines, Marxist-Leninist precepts, and political (including national), economic, social, and international realities, especially in the context of the increasingly strong influence of the West, significantly affected the effectiveness of the communist education process and the process of forming student identity in higher education in the MSSR [148, 747-760].

An analysis of students' attitudes toward ideological subjects, extracurricular activities, and „public" responsibilities allowed us to identify several layers of student identity formed within higher education in the MSSR until the mid-1960s. The first layer, designated as that of the *„convinced"*, brought together students of various ethnicities and social backgrounds, all members of the Komsomol, although not necessarily active leaders, who expressed genuine attachment to communist ideology, confidence in the superiority of the socialist system, respect for Russian culture, science, and language, and gratitude for life in the USSR. The „Moldovans" in this group identified with the „Moldovan nation", were convinced that the language they spoke was different from Romanian, and sincerely believed in the idea of the „Soviet people" and a common socialist homeland. As a rule, these students were diligent, regularly attended social science courses, and were actively involved in community life, believing that through their daily actions and gestures they were contributing to the building of

communism. This group provided the regime with certainty about the success of its educational policies.

The second layer, the *„opportunists”*, displayed similar attitudes and behaviours, but their motivations were pragmatic. Their conformist behaviour was driven by their desire to meet the expectations of their educators, fear of sanctions, ideological pressure, and a tendency to overcome their inferiority complex toward their „big brother”. Many of them, including „Moldovan” students, saw conformity to ideological norms as a way to obtain symbolic or material advantages and access to a professional career. Some were genuinely influenced by the ideological message, while others accepted it only partially and selectively, developing a duplicitous conscience and way of thinking. A third layer, that of the *„indifferent”*, comprised students characterized by the authorities as „apolitical”, „passive”, or „without ideas”. They participated in extracurricular activities more out of obligation and learned ideological subjects just like any other discipline. Their attitudes and behaviour were influenced by their family background, their level of general culture, and their disappointment with the discrepancy between the regime's promises and the socio-economic reality in the MSSR. Although they did not have strong communist convictions, many of them tacitly accepted the regime's policies and some of the party's dogmas.

In addition to these categories, our research also identified a small group of „rebels”, consisting mainly of Romanian students from Moldova who were disillusioned by the limits of Khrushchev's „liberalization” and the realities of the socialist regime. They displayed an attitude of passive resistance and obvious scepticism towards political and ideological education and the insistent extracurricular activities with ideological overtones. As a rule, they avoided open conflict, but silently rejected official dogmas, expressing their disagreement through passivity, irony, tacit refusal to get involved, or a duplicitous attitude. Many of them channelled their efforts into fields such as art, literature, research, or sports, or adopted nonconformist, eccentric, or even provocative behaviours that contradicted the ideal of the „Soviet kind of person” promoted by the regime.

5.4. Conclusions to Chapter V

The research findings highlight the fact that the Soviet regime assigned a central role to higher education in the process of shaping a „new kind of person” loyal to communist ideology. In the MSSR, this objective was pursued through the complete transposition of the Soviet educational paradigm, which combined formal ideological training with an extensive system of extracurricular and after-school activities. Students were subjected to constant

pressure of political, ethical-moral, aesthetic, atheistic, and internationalist indoctrination, aimed at restructuring their national and cultural identity.

Social sciences (dialectical and historical materialism, political economy, and the history of the CPSU made up 10-15% of the curriculum), which were based on Marxist-Leninist theory, became the main way to shape ideology, and by the 1960s, other required and optional ideological subjects were added. Communist education was also carried out within the framework of specialized subjects, and in order to channel the energy and activism of young people into „Leninism and partisanship", an extensive system of extracurricular and after-school forms and methods was used to consolidate theory and create skills for the practical implementation of Marxism-Leninism. During the period under review, the regime adapted educational content, forms, and methods to the „specifics" of the MSSR, promoting ideas such as the existence of a distinct „Moldovan nation" and the superiority of Russian culture, while denigrating Romanian values.

The communist education model was introduced into higher education in the MSSR when it was established, with the aim of convincing students of the superiority of the socialist state and Russian and Soviet civilization, as well as cultivating hostility towards everything Romanian. At the same time, „Moldovanism" and anti-Romanianism were promoted as defining elements of the imposed identity. While in 1940–1941 ideological education, although insistent, managed to attract some students, during the German-Soviet war, despite strict control of the educational process carried out under the pretext of the „war to defend the socialist Patriotic land", the system began to fail. At the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute, accusations of „anti-Sovietism", „nationalism", or „petty bourgeois behaviour" levelled at Bessarabian students reflected their opposition to the realities of the regime and to attempts to impose a distorted view of their own history, languages, and cultures on them.

Aware of the artificial nature of the MSSR and the risks of its proximity to Romania, in the context of post-reannexation and the Cold War, the Soviet authorities adjusted the forms and methods of education to the "specifics" of the local student community. The goal was to cultivate pro-Soviet, anti-Romanian, and anti-Western attitudes by re-educating those who remained in the „occupied territories" and were „contaminated" by „fascist and bourgeois" propaganda, by eliminating „capitalist reminiscences" from their mentality and lifestyle, by imposing the idea of a „Moldovan nation" and a „Moldovan language", and by promoting the superiority of socialism and Russian culture. Efforts to improve students' living conditions and diversify extracurricular and after-school activities tailored to their interests were used to

strengthen ideological education and exercise strict control over the public and private lives of young people by appealing to the emotional dimension of the formative process.

The „thaw" led to an increase in student activism, which the regime perceived as a threat. The regime's fear of its own vulnerabilities, against the backdrop of political and social events in the second half of the 1950s, the „peaceful competition between socialism and capitalism", and the Soviet economy's shift toward an extensive development model, prompted the authorities to revise their educational strategies. The reformulation of communist education took place rapidly, significantly influencing both formal ideological education and extracurricular activities. The list of ideological subjects was expanded with the compulsory subject „scientific communism" (1964) and optional subjects such as „scientific atheism" and „Marxist-Leninist ethics and aesthetics", forming a stable „canon" until the collapse of the USSR. At the same time, extracurricular and after-school activities were organized into a flexible system of „gentle" methods, adapted to party guidelines and student interests, maintaining ideological control within an apparently open framework.

Depending on the educational prerequisites of the students, the degree to which they absorbed the ideological message, the institutional framework and environment in which they studied, the professionalism of the educators, the emphasis on Soviet paternalism, and the extent to which political, ideological, and social contradictions were revealed, by the mid-1960s, several layers of identity had emerged among students and, implicitly, among the intelligentsia of the MSSR. In addition to the „convinced" and „opportunists", who were indicators of the effectiveness of communist education, the „indifferent" and „rebels", fewer in number than the former, on the contrary, reflected the cracks in the project of ideological modelling of youth and signalled the existence of critical and independent thinking, despite the constraints imposed by the system. Thus, conceived and applied as an instrument of national and social engineering, communist education produced partial results, far from the ideal pursued.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our scientific approach has led to the formulation of fundamentally new results in the field of research and treatment of issues related to social and national policy in higher education in the Moldovan SSR and offers new perspectives on understanding the process of transforming higher education into a complex mechanism of national and social engineering. Our investigations have provided comprehensive answers not only to questions about the manner and principles of transplanting the Soviet-style higher education system into the MSSR and adjusting it to the internal and external policy objectives of the communist state, but also provided theoretical and cognitive explanations for the multilateral and exhaustive exploitation of this system to create a „Moldovan", Russian, or Russian-speaking Soviet intelligentsia with a Marxist-Leninist worldview, educated in the communist spirit of Soviet patriotism and devotion to the state and the communist party.

Our research led us to the following conclusions:

1. The issue of national and social engineering *in* and *through* higher education in the MSSR has not been a specific subject of research to date. The few works of Soviet (Union) and Western historiography from the Cold War period, referring to the organization and functioning of the higher education system in the USSR, present the subject in a politicized and ideologized manner, based on specific research methodologies and accessible sources, without addressing or referring statistically to higher education in the MSSR. At the same time, the few studies of „Moldovan" historiography, framed within the paradigms of Soviet historiography, reflected an apologetic and triumphalist history, dealing only with the permitted aspects of the regime's national and social policies. The fall of the „Iron Curtain" directed historiographical concerns, including in the Republic of Moldova, towards recovering the „blank pages" of the country's history. Starting in the 2010s, Russian-language historiography-initiated research into particular aspects of Soviet higher education, presenting its history as a process of modernization and showing that the former union republics belong to a civilization and community created during the Soviet period.

2. The transformation of higher education in the MSSR into an effective mechanism for national and social engineering was the result of a combination of objective and subjective, favourable and constructed factors. On the one hand, the Soviet authorities exploited a fragile socio-demographic context, generated by the collapse of interwar Romanian structures, massive population losses during the war, the exodus of elites, and the forced depopulation of the province through deportations, starvation, and directed migration. These processes created an intellectual and social vacuum that facilitated the restructuring of higher education

according to the Soviet model. On the other hand, the communist regime actively intervened to create favourable conditions for its consolidation: it reduced the Romanian element and altered the social structure through repressive measures, the imposition of collectivization, and the massive importation of ideologically loyal Soviet „specialists" who became the bearers of the new Soviet order. At the same time, the authorities promoted a policy of „social advancement" for young people from the „working" classes, creating a controllable pool of future specialists, educated in the spirit of the official ideology, loyal to the regime, and willing to support the socialist project in the MSSR. Thus, through a combination of structural factors (inherited) and deliberate social and ethnic engineering strategies, the Soviet regime succeeded in imposing an educational system that not only trained specialists, but also shaped mentalities, built identities, and secured the loyalty of new elites, transforming higher education into an essential pillar of ideological and political domination in the MSSR.

3. The Soviet policies of national and social engineering applied in and through higher education in the MSSR were deeply rooted in the political and ideological objectives of the regime, aiming simultaneously at the reconstruction of the identity of the Romanian majority population and the formation of a local Soviet-style elite, in line with the Soviet model. In this sense, higher education was transformed into a complex mechanism of political, ethnic, and social control, achieved through a set of well-calibrated instruments, one of the most effective of which was the directed construction of student contingents. By implementing rigorous control over access to higher education, selecting students on ethnic and social grounds, carefully regulating educational mobility, and applying a policy of positive discrimination—both overt and covert—in favour of the „working classes" and „representatives of the indigenous nationality—the Moldovans", the Soviet authorities sought to create a new „Moldovan" intelligentsia loyal to the regime. This was to be not only an exponent of the official ideology, but also a vector for legitimizing and reproducing the social and political order imposed by the centre, contributing to the consolidation of the identity and politics of the MSSR in accordance with the Soviet project.

4. Although the Soviet regime sought, through the ethnic and social construction of student contingents, to form a loyal Soviet „Moldovan" elite capable of legitimizing the new political and ideological order, the results of these policies were deeply contradictory and only partially achieved. Ethno-social construction policies led to the formation of ethnically and socially heterogeneous contingents, with the proportion of ethnic and social groups remaining below the level corresponding to the demographic structure of the republic and the official discourse of the regime. Despite the numerical growth of „Moldovan" students and

representatives of the working classes, from which the former originated, higher education in the MSSR did not become „Moldovan" in the ethno-cultural sense until the mid-1960s. In practice, the regime perpetuated a structure of symbolic and functional domination of Russian-speaking ethnic groups (Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, etc.) and the working class, which were overrepresented, especially in prestigious technical and scientific institutions. In addition, „Moldovans" were concentrated mainly in pedagogical, agricultural, and medical institutes, which were considered peripheral from a symbolic and political point of view and oriented toward the formation of a more rural intelligentsia, while their access to technical-scientific or elite institutions (MSU, Polytechnic Institute) was significantly limited. This selective targeting contributed to the formation of a dominant foreign and Russian-speaking technical and scientific intelligentsia and perpetuated ethnic and cultural hierarchies in the MSSR.

5. From the early 1940s to the mid-1960s, the Soviets instrumentalized cadre policy in higher education in the MSSR, transforming it into one of the most important tools of national and social engineering. Through this, the authorities sought to ethnically, linguistically, and ideologically reshape the teaching staff, as well as to exercise strict control over the process of forming a new intelligentsia in line with the Soviet model. The selection, training, and strategic placement of cadres in teaching, research, and administrative positions were intended not only to ensure the educational process and scientific research, but above all to consolidate political and ethnocultural control over the university space. Thus, despite the official discourse promoting the „indigenization" of the teaching staff, in practice, the regime massively favoured Russian-speaking foreign staff, imported from other Soviet republics, who were selected mainly for their ideological conformity, loyalty to the party-state, and ability to reproduce Soviet values, with professional criteria often being secondary. The Russian-speaking faction held the levers of decision-making and imposed the dominant directions of the teaching, educational, and administrative process, contributing significantly to the Sovietization, Russification, and cultural uniformity of higher education in the MSSR.

Towards the mid-1960s, the number of graduates from higher education institutions in the MSSR began to increase, especially in pedagogical and medical institutes, where they came to constitute 40–45% of the teaching staff. However, in institutions considered more prestigious, their share remained low, below 20%, which perpetuated a deeply asymmetrical and unbalanced distribution. This disparity limited the real influence of local staff on the general orientation of' educational and cultural policies in higher education and science in the MSSR. The group of „Moldovan" teachers—who came from both sides of the Dniester—was a minority both numerically and symbolically, and was often marginalized professionally.

Although some of them showed passive or open resistance to the policies of Russification, denationalisation and marginalisation of „Moldovans", these attempts were isolated and, in most cases, neutralised by the institutional and ideological mechanisms of the regime. As a result, the cadre policy generated and preserved a teaching staff that was deeply fragmented in ethnic, linguistic, ideological, and professional terms. This university intelligentsia, largely ideologically assimilated, controlled, and politically loyal, became the main agent of reproducing the Soviet model of education, culture, and loyalty in the MSSR, to the detriment of the emergence of an autonomous national academic elite.

6. The Soviet language policy applied in higher education in the MSSR was a central instrument of national and ideological engineering, aimed at both the Russification and forced „Moldovanisation" of students and teaching staff. Under the guise of balanced bilingualism, the regime promoted a strategy of linguistic domination of the Russian language, imposing its status as the lingua franca in the educational process and in university life. This process was accompanied by the systematic discrediting of the Romanian language, officially disguised as the „Moldovan language", and the marginalization of Romanian speakers through curricular, symbolic, and administrative policies. By imposing Russian as the main means of instruction, communication, and professional advancement, the Soviet authorities sought to create an asymmetrical bilingual intelligentsia, loyal to the official ideology, culturally disconnected from the Romanian matrix, and integrated into the Soviet civilizational paradigm. However, the regime failed to fully achieve the objectives of its language policy. The poor linguistic performance of „Moldovan" students in Russian, as well as the persistence of forms of resistance—passive or overt—among students, teachers, and Romanian-speaking intellectuals in general, limited the effectiveness of linguistic assimilation policies. The inherent contradictions of this policy, exacerbated by the ambivalence between Russification and „Moldovanisation", generated not only identity confusion but also discreet opposition with national overtones. Although the authorities succeeded, over time, in imposing institutionalized linguistic domination, this hegemony was not complete and uncontested. On the contrary, it fuelled reactions of cultural contestation and latent national consciousness, which would contribute, in the following decades, to the formation of a critical nucleus among the Romanian-speaking intelligentsia in the MSSR.

Overall, language policy in higher education in the MSSR was a fundamental component of the Soviet strategy to form a loyal, culturally Russified, and ideologically compliant elite, but its effects were partial, tense, and deeply marked by internal resistance,

which limited the transformation of higher education into a space of complete Russian symbolic domination and Soviet identity engineering.

7. The educational policy promoted in higher education in the MSSR was an essential pillar of the Soviet project of national and social engineering, designed as a complex ideological tool for training a politically, ethnically, and linguistically compliant intelligentsia. Communist education — carried out through a coherent set of curricular, extracurricular, and after-school practices — sought to instil a „correct" conception of the world, based on Marxist-Leninist values, loyalty to the Soviet state, and acceptance of the „Moldovan" identity as an expression of the national construction imposed by the regime. Under the pretext of cultivating Soviet patriotism and „friendship between peoples", the authorities combined the systematic Russification of the educational process with a controlled form of „Moldovanisation", adapted to the ideological needs of the regime and subordinated to the consolidation of Russian cultural and linguistic domination. Educational discourse and practices were constantly adjusted to the internal and external political context, serving to legitimize the artificiality of the MSSR, distance students from Romanian cultural and linguistic values, and create a social base devoted to the regime.

However, the effectiveness of these policies was relative. Despite a sophisticated and intrusive educational arsenal, the results were fragmented, generating a complex identity stratification among students: from ideologically loyal „convinced" students to „opportunists", „indifferent" students, and „rebels". This result reflects the limits of the internalization of the Soviet project among a significant part of the student body, especially the Romanian-speaking one, and reveals the existence of forms of passive resistance and strategic adaptation, which partly compromised the goal of creating a fully Sovietized intelligentsia. Thus, communist education in higher education in the MSSR failed to produce a homogeneous intelligentsia deeply loyal to the regime, but rather an ideologized, in which the interference between coercion, conformism, and resistance determined not only ambiguous intellectual careers and biographies, but also a model of professional socialization with lasting effects on the mental and value structure of the post-Soviet elite in the Republic of Moldova.

8. A critical analysis of the national and social policies promoted in higher education in the MSSR highlights the profoundly contradictory nature of the Soviet project of identity and ideological engineering. Although the regime set out to build a „Moldovan" Soviet intelligentsia through a sophisticated combination of policies aimed at building student, cadre, linguistic, and educational contingents, the institutional and social reality demonstrated the limits of these policies. Under the guise of progressive modernization and indigenization of

higher education, a deeply asymmetrical structure was perpetuated, dominated by Russian-speaking factions loyal to the regime, which monopolized decision-making functions and imposed an educational model oriented toward Russification, conformism, and ideological uniformity. Despite the pressure exerted through communist education, aggressive language policies, and strict control over the selection and training of students and university staff, the regime failed to completely eliminate the latent or overt opposition of a portion of the Romanian-speaking student body and faculty. These forms of resistance—ranging from silent rebellion and opportunistic adaptation to more direct expressions of dissatisfaction with Russification and denationalization—demonstrated the existence of significant reserves of national consciousness and critical thinking, which partially compromised the regime's goals and delayed the completion of the process of complete Sovietization of the university space.

Ultimately, these reactions—however fragmented and inconsistent—revealed the internal cracks in the Soviet educational system and helped maintain a core of cultural and ethnic identity among students and teachers. The regime's failure to produce an ideologically and ethnically completely homogenized intelligentsia reflected not only the limits of the mechanisms of control and re-education, but also the latent force of symbolic resistance and cultural memory, which became active again in the context of the national revival movements in the last decades of the MSSR's existence.

Based on our published works and scientific findings, we have formulated the following **recommendations**:

1. The question of how Soviet-style higher education was used as a tool for national and social engineering in the Moldovan SSR, which we looked at in a concise and critical way in our research, is scientifically valuable both in theory and in practice. In view of this, it is recommended that research be expanded by broadening the chronological framework and conducting comparative studies with other former union republics or states of the socialist bloc. This will make it possible to identify the similarities and particularities of the national and social engineering strategies implemented through higher education, as well as their consequences for the recent history of these states.
2. Deepening research into the repressive dimension of the regime in higher education in the MSSR, through the declassification and access to documents from the Special Depository of the Security and Intelligence Service of Moldova. This approach will allow for a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the mechanisms of control and repression exercised over the academic environment.

3. Use of the research material, value judgments, and conclusions to inform and develop state policies in the field of training and education, both in pre-university and university institutions in the Republic of Moldova. This approach will contribute to improving the quality of the educational process and adapting it to the current needs of society.
4. Use of research content and conclusions to develop textbooks and teaching materials for the education system in the Republic of Moldova. This will contribute not only to the scientific foundation of educational materials and the improvement of the quality of the teaching process at all levels of education, but also to the awareness and critical assessment of the Soviet legacy in the field of education. This will support the development of a balanced and informed perspective on the past, which is essential for building contemporary educational identity and policies.
5. 5. Formulating lessons based on the historical analysis presented, in the current context of the Russian Federation's foreign policy towards the post-Soviet republics, especially regarding the situation of the Russian language and Russian-speaking citizens perceived as being wronged. It is important to be aware of recent trends toward the revival of historical practices similar to those studied in this research, practices that may have a direct or indirect impact on Moldovan society and the country's European path.
6. Given the continued influence of Russia on the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova and the perpetuation of a Russian-style education system in the area, it is recommended that the results of the research be used to support the efforts of the republican authorities to consolidate an integrative and European educational and cultural policy, aimed at promoting a balanced interpretation of common history and strengthening the democratic identity of the Republic of Moldova – essential measures to prevent the country's historical path from deviating towards undemocratic and non-European directions.
7. Dissemination and promotion of the investigation results through a series of thematic programs on television and radio stations, as well as through articles published in print and online media. The purpose of this dissemination is to inform the general public and encourage the formation of a critical attitude towards the policies, methods and instruments used by the Soviet regime to transform the society of the MSSR into an object of national and social engineering. This instrumentalization resulted in the denationalisation, Russification and ideologization of the population, including through the creation, via higher education, of a „Moldovan" intelligentsia in line with the Soviet model.

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Appendix

SYNTHETIC CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

of the implementation of national and social engineering policies in higher education in the Moldavian SSR (MSSR).

Data, anul	
12.VIII.1940	Decree of the Council of People's Commissars (CPC) and Regional Party Committee of the Moldavian SSR "On the Reorganization of Schools in Soviet Bessarabia"
21.VIII.1940	Decree No. 1504 of the CPC of the USSR and Central Committee (CC) of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) [PC(b)US] "Regarding Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina"
23.VIII.1940	Decree of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR and CC of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Moldova [PC(b)M] "On the Establishment of Higher and Specialized Secondary Educational Institutions"
23.IX.1940	Decree of the CC of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Moldova "On the Transition of Moldovan Script from Latin to Cyrillic"
2.X.1940	Decree of the CPC of the USSR "On the Introduction of Tuition Fees in Upper Grades of Secondary Schools and Higher Education Institutions of the USSR and on the Amendment of the Scholarship Granting Procedure"
2.X.1940	Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On the State Labor Reserves of the USSR"
9.X.1940	Decree of the CPC of the USSR "On Free Education for Children of Workers from the Latvian SSR, Lithuanian SSR, Estonian SSR, and Moldavian SSR, as well as those from Western Districts of the Belarusian SSR and Ukrainian SSR for the Academic Years 1940-1941 and 1941-1942"
28.X.1940	Decree of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR and CC of PC(b)M "On Measures to Strengthen the Agricultural Institute of Chișinău"
2.I.1941	Decree No. 6 of the CPC of the USSR "On Scholarships for Students Studying at Higher Education Institutions in Chișinău, Chernivtsi, and Akkerman"
16.I.1941	Decree No. 26 of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR and CC of PC(b)M "On the Subordination of the Agricultural Institute of Chișinău to the Union's Agricultural Commissariat"
10.II.1941	First Session of the Supreme Soviet of the Moldavian SSR adopts the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Moldavian SSR
16.V.1941	Decree No. 1362 of the CPC of the USSR "On the Preparation of State Labor Reserves in the Moldavian SSR"
17.IX.1941	Decree No. 690cc of the State Defense Committee "On Mandatory Military Training of Citizens of the USSR"
31.XII.1942	Decree No. 2032 of the CPC of the USSR "On the Abolition of Free Attendance of Courses by Students of Higher Education Institutions"
1942–1943	Order of the Central Committee for Higher and Secondary Specialized Education (CUpȘS) of the CPC of the USSR on the Introduction of the Mandatory Course "Political Economy" and the Optional Course "The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union"
14.VII.1943	CC of PC(b)M orders the administration of the Moldovan Pedagogical Institute in Buguruslan to fill the student contingent "from among Moldovans" evacuated to various regions of the RSFSR and Central Asia

15.IX.1943	Decree No. 996 of the CPC of the USSR "On Scholarship Amounts and Procedures for Awarding Scholarships in Higher and Secondary Specialized Educational Institutions and on the Exemption of Students from Compulsory Military Service in the Red Army"
13.IV.1944	Decree No. 413 of the CPC of the USSR "On the Military Training of Students in Higher Education Institutions"
10.VI.1944	Decree of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR and CC of PC(b)M "On the Re-evacuation of the Pedagogical Institute from Chișinău and the Moldovan Scientific Research Institute from Buguruslan to the Moldavian SSR"
24.VI.1944	Decree No. 146 of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR "On the Restoration of the Network of Higher and Specialized Secondary Institutions within the People's Commissariat of Education of the Moldavian SSR"
27.VII.1944	Decree No. 159 of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR "On the Restoration of the Agricultural Institute of Chișinău"
19.VIII.1944	Order No. 378 of CUpȘS of the CPC of the USSR "On Measures for the Selection and Study of Teaching Staff of Higher Education Institutions of the Union Republics"
2.XII.1944	Decree of the Central Committee of the Union of Leninist Communist Youth (ULCTS) "On Measures to Improve the Activity of Komsomol Organizations in Higher Education Institutions"
12.XII.1944	Resolution No. 22334-p of the CPC of the USSR "On Tuition Fee Exemption for Children of Officers"
15-16.XII.1944	Decree of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR and Bureau of the CC of PC(b)M "On the Resumption of Activity of the Moldovan State Conservatory, the 10-grade Music School, and the School of Arts"
16.V.1945	Order No. 152 of CUpȘS of the CPC of the USSR "On the Opening of a Teacher Training Institute in Bălți, Moldavian SSR"
24.V.1945	Decree No. 1164 of the CPC of the USSR "On the Organization of Three-Month Courses for Training Lecturers in Marxism-Leninism and Political Economy for Higher Education Institutions"
2.VII.1945	Decree No. 628 of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR and Bureau of the CC of PC(b)M "On the Organization of the State Medical Institute in Chișinău"
9.VII.1945	Decree of the CC of PC(b)US "On Deficiencies in Teaching Marxism-Leninism at the N.G. Chernyshevsky University in Saratov"
27.VII.1945	Decree No. 722 of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR and Bureau of the CC of PC(b)M "On the Organization of Workers' Faculties within Higher Education Institutions of the Moldavian SSR"
17.VIII.1945	Decree No. 792 of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR "On Measures to Restore and Strengthen the M.V. Frunze Agricultural Institute in Chișinău"
7.IX.1945	Order No. 391 of CUpȘS of the CPC of the USSR "On Didactic Norms for Professors of Marxism-Leninism, Political Economy, Philosophy, and History of the USSR"
13.IX.1945	Decree No. 837 of the CPC of the Moldavian SSR "On the Placement of Scientific-Teaching Staff of the Medical Institute in Chișinău"
11.X.1945	Order No. 521 of CUpȘS of the CPC of the USSR "On Exemption from Tuition Fees for Children of Soldiers Who Died on the Frontlines of the Great Patriotic War, as well as Children of Disabled Veterans"
22.X.1945	Order No. 535 of CUpȘS of the CPC of the USSR "On the Organization of the State University of Moldova"

2.VII.1946	Decree No. 644 of the Council of Ministers of the Moldavian SSR "On the Organization of Training Courses for Pedagogical and Teacher Training Institutes under the Ministry of Education of the Moldavian SSR"
14.VIII.1946	Decree of the CC of PC(b)US "On the Magazines 'Zvezda' and 'Leningrad'"
30.XII.1946	Decree No. 1243 of December 30, 1946, of the Council of Ministers of the Moldavian SSR "On Improving the Material and Living Conditions of Students in Higher Education Institutions of the Moldavian SSR"
31.XII.1947	Order No. 1938 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR "On Deficiencies, Mistakes, and Falsifications in the Teaching of Moldovan History at the Pedagogical Institute in Chișinău and Measures to Improve the USSR History Department at This Institute"
5.V.1948	Order of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR "On Measures to Improve Political-Ideological Work at Higher and Specialized Secondary Educational Institutions"
9.VIII.1948	Decree of the CPC of the USSR "On Amending the Procedure for Granting Scholarships to Students in Higher and Specialized Secondary Educational Institutions"
11.IX.1948	Order No. 1323 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR "On the Introduction of Russian Language Teaching in Final Years at National Universities of the Union Republics"
12.XI.1948	Order No. 504 of the Minister of Education of the Moldavian SSR "On Improving the Teaching of Biological Sciences in Schools, Pedagogical Schools, Pedagogical Institutes, and Teacher Training Schools"
29.XI.1948	Order No. 1673 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR "On the Teaching of Foreign Languages and Russian in National Groups at Higher Education Institutions Where Instruction Is Not Conducted in Russian"
14.XII.1948	Decree of the Bureau of the CC of PC(b)M "On Improving the Teaching of Biological Sciences in Schools and Pedagogical Institutions of the Republic"
27.XII.1948	Decree of the CC of PC(b)US "On Implementing the Directives of the Committee for Physical Culture and Sports, the Party, and the Government Regarding the Development of Mass Physical Culture and the Improvement of Soviet Athletes' Skills"
5.I.1949	Order No. 3 of the Ministry of Education of the Moldavian SSR "On Teaching Foreign Languages and Russian in National Groups of Pedagogical and Teacher Training Institutes in the Moldavian SSR"
5.V.1949	Order No. 531 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR "On Improving the Teaching of Biological Sciences in Pedagogical and Teacher Training Institutes"
28.VII.1949	Order No. 962 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR "On Admission and Transfer of Moldovan Students to Higher Education Institutions in Moscow and Leningrad for the 1949-1950 Academic Year"
3.X.1949	Order No. 1277 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR "On Tuition Fee Exemption for Moldovans and Gagauz Studying in Higher and Specialized Secondary Educational Institutions of the Moldavian SSR"
28.III.1950	Decree of the Bureau of the CC of PC(b)M "On the Unsatisfactory State of Intellectual Activity in the Republic and Measures to Improve Intellectual Engagement"
30.III.1950	Order No. 513 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR "On the Methodology of Salary Payment for Employees of the Departments of Marxism-Leninism and Political Economy in Higher Education Institutions"

5.IV.1950	Order of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR “On Improving the Teaching of Social Sciences and Political Education Activities”
3-7.XII.1951	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 Moldovan Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR
1951	Publication of Volume I of the Synthesis “History of Moldova”
21.VI.1954	Order No. 702 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR “On Admission Procedures to Higher Education Institutions”
30.VIII.1954	Decree No. 1863 of the Council of Ministers of the USSR “On the Preferential Right Granted to Certain Categories of Persons for Admission to Part-Time Departments of Higher Education Institutions”
6.VI.1956	Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR “On the Abolition of Tuition Fees in Upper Secondary Schools, Specialized Secondary, and Higher Education Institutions of the USSR”
18.VI.1956	Decree of the CC of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) “On the Teaching of Political Economy, Dialectical Materialism, and CPSU History in Higher Education Institutions”
3.VIII.1956	Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR “On the Procedure for Granting Scholarships to Students of Higher and Specialized Secondary Educational Institutions”
4.X.1958	Decree of the CC of the CPSU “On Deficiencies in Scientific and Atheist Propaganda”
19.X.1956	Order No. 813 of the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR “On State Exams in Social Sciences”
24.XII.1958	Adoption of the Law “On Strengthening the Link Between School and Life and Further Development of the Public Education System in the USSR”
23.I.1959	Decree of the CC of the Communist Party of Moldova (PCM) “On Intensifying Atheist Propaganda in the Republic”
9.IX.1959	Order of the Ministry of Education of the Moldavian SSR “On Introducing Optional Courses ‘Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics’ and ‘Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Ethics’ into the Curricula of Higher Education Institutions”
18.IX.1959	Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR “On the Participation of Industrial Enterprises, State Farms, and Collective Farms in Filling Higher and Specialized Secondary Education Institutions and Training Specialists for Their Enterprises”
8.X.1959	Decree No. 1162 of the CC of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR “On Amendments in the Teaching of History in Schools”
18.II.1960	Instructional Letter of the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education of the USSR “Regarding the Admission to Higher Education Institutions of Persons Delegated by Enterprises, Construction Sites, State Farms, and Collective Farms”
26.IV.1960	Decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova (CC of PCM) “Regarding the Merger of the Pedagogical Institute of Chișinău with the State University of Chișinău”
1.X.1960	Decree No. 419 of the Council of Ministers of the Moldavian SSR “Regarding the Reorganization of the Leadership of Higher and Specialized Secondary Educational Institutions in the Moldavian SSR”
17-31.X.1961	Adoption of the CPSU Program at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU and the “Moral Code of the Builder of Communism”

2.I.1963	Instructional Letter of the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education of the USSR “Regarding the Improvement of Atheist, Moral, and Aesthetic Education of Students in Higher Education Institutions”
18-21.VI.1963	Decree of the Plenary Session of the CC of the CPSU “Regarding the Immediate Tasks of the Party’s Ideological Work”
27.VI.1963	Order No. 214 of the Minister of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education of the USSR “Regarding the Introduction of the Course on Scientific Communism in Higher Education Institutions of the USSR”
5.VII.1963	Decree of the 8th Plenary Session of the CC of the Communist Party of Moldova “Regarding the Results of the June Plenary Session of the CC of the CPSU and the Tasks of the Moldovan Party Organization to Improve Ideological Work”
20.II.1964	Instructional Letter of the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education of the USSR “Regarding the Classification of Social Sciences in Higher Education Institutions and Social Disciplines in Specialized Secondary Education Institutions as Special Disciplines”
19.V.1964	Order No. 164 of the Minister of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education of the USSR “Regarding the Improvement of Russian Language Instruction in Higher and Specialized Secondary Education Institutions in the Union and Autonomous Republics”
18.III.1965	Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR “Regarding the Establishment of Privileges for Certain Categories of Persons for Admission to Higher Education Institutions of the USSR”
27.III.1965	Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR “Regarding the Length of Active Military Service for Soldiers, Sailors, Sergeants, and Officers with Higher Education”
24.VIII.1965	Decree of the CC of the Communist Party of Moldova “Regarding the Development of Mass Physical Education and Preparation for the Spartakiad of the Peoples of the USSR”
21.IX.1965	Decree of the CC of the Communist Party of Moldova “Regarding the State and Improvement of Komsomol and Youth Education in the Republic”
14-15.X.1965	Third Congress of the Writers' Union of the Moldavian SSR
3.XII.1965	Decree of the CC of the Communist Party of Moldova “Regarding Serious Shortcomings in the Preparation and Conduct of the Third Congress of the Writers' Union of Moldova”

ADNOTARE

Liliana Rotaru, inginerie națională și socială *în învățământul superior din RSS Moldovenească*, lucrare de sinteză pentru obținerea titlului de doctor habilitat în istorie (elaborată în baza lucrărilor științifice publicate), specialitatea: 611.02 – Istoria Românilor (pe perioade), Chișinău, 2025

Structura: introducere, 5 capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, adnotare, bibliografie, anexe.

Cuvinte-cheie: regim comunist, RSSM, politică națională, politică socială, politică lingvistică, învățământ superior, inginerie națională, „discriminare pozitivă", rusificare, „moldovenizare", inginerie socială, proletarizare, discriminare socială, intelectualitate, studenți, cadre didactico-științifice, „poporul sovietic", „om sovietic".

Domeniul de studiu: istoria Românilor

Scopul investigației rezidă în fundamentarea unei noi direcții de cercetare în domeniul istoriei naționale prin analiza procesului de transformare a învățământului superior din RSSM într-un mecanism de inginerie națională și socială. **Obiectivele cercetării** sunt: analiza abordărilor istoriografice ale problemei; investigarea modului de transplantare și instrumentalizare a sistemului sovietic de învățământ superior în RSSM; analiza contextului istoric ce a dus la implementarea politicilor naționale și sociale sovietice în școala superioară din RSSM și la transformarea acesteia într-un mecanism de inginerie națională și socială; examinarea instrumentelor de inginerie națională și socială aplicate *în* și *prin* învățământul superior din RSSM; interpretarea politicilor și strategiilor de construcție națională și socială a contingentelor studențești și a corpurilor didactico-științifice, precum și a rezultatelor implementării acestora; evidențierea contradicțiilor politicilor naționale și sociale ale regimului în „școala superioară moldovenească"; examinarea modului de implementare a politicii lingvistice sovietice și a impactului acesteia; analiza formelor, practicilor și eficienței educației comuniste a studenților; evaluarea rezultatelor și consecințelor aplicării instrumentelor de inginerie națională și socială *în* și *prin* învățământul superior din RSSM.

Noutatea științifică și originalitatea acestei cercetări constau în faptul că aceasta reprezintă o primă încercare în istoriografie de a aborda subiectul învățământului superior din RSSM ca mecanism de inginerie națională și socială, precum și de a-l încadra în fenomenul istoric complex al formării „omului nou", conform idealului comunist al dispariției naționalităților și al creării unei identități supraetnice, denumită „poporul sovietic".

Rezultatele științifice principial noi pentru știință și practică obținute, au contribuit la fundamentarea unei noi paradigme explicative privind modul în care a fost transplantat sistemul de învățământ superior de tip sovietic în RSSM. De asemenea, cercetarea a evidențiat transformarea și instrumentalizarea învățământului superior ca mecanism de inginerie națională și socială, în contextul proiectului comunist de (re)modelare etnică și socială într-o republică națională. Aceste rezultate pot explica, într-o mare măsură, concepțiile socio-politice și acțiunile intelectualității, și implicit ale întregii societăți din Republica Moldova, ca moștenitoare a sistemului sovietic.

Valoarea teoretică a investigației rezultă din tratarea unei probleme științifice importante, de actualitate și necercetate în istoriografie, din valorificarea surselor documentare solide, a unei metodologii complexe și a unor concepte moderne pentru analiza modului în care regimul sovietic a transformat și instrumentalizat învățământul superior într-un mecanism sistemic de inginerie națională și socială în RSSM, iar rezultatele teoretice și concluziile formulate, au determinat cristalizarea unei noi direcții științifice.

Valoarea aplicativă a acestei cercetări constă în punerea în circuitul științific a unui vast material factologic, cognitiv și analitic referitor la procesul de „fabricare" și modelare a intelectualității sovietice în RSSM prin inginerie națională și socială, *în* și *prin* educația superioară, în condițiile unui regim totalitar. Acest material poate fi valorificat de autorii lucrărilor de sinteză, de manualele școlare, în practica predării unor cursuri universitare, pentru eficientizarea politicilor de personal și îmbunătățirea calității procesului educațional de către managerii instituțiilor de învățământ superior, precum și pentru elaborarea politicilor naționale, educaționale și culturale de către instituțiile statului.

Implementarea rezultatelor ştiinţifice. Rezultatele investigațiilor noastre științifice au fost implementate printr-o serie de monografii, culegeri de documente, studii și articole, precum și prin contribuții la conferințe naționale și internaționale axate pe tematica respectivă. Aceste rezultate au fost utilizate în elaborarea manualelor, sintezelor, notelor de curs universitare, și a tezelor de licență, masterat și doctorat de către studenți și cercetători din spațiul românesc. De asemenea, au fost valorificate în publicistică pentru a familiariza publicul larg cu abordarea științifică a politicilor regimului comunist *în* și *prin* învățământul superior.

ANNOTATION

Liliana Rotaru, *Social and National Engineering in Higher Education in the Moldavian SSR*, synthesis paper for the title of Doctor of History (prepared on the basis of published scientific works), specialty: 611.02 – History of the Romanians (by periods), Chisinau, 2025

Structure: introduction, 5 chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, annotation, selective bibliography

Keywords: communist regime, MSSR, national policy, social policy, linguistic policy, higher education, national engineering, "positive discrimination", Russification, "Moldovanization", social engineering, social discrimination, intelligentsia, students, teaching and scientific staff, "Soviet people", "Soviet man".

Field of study: History of the Romanians.

Purpose and objectives: The purpose of the research lies in the substantiation of a new research direction in the field of national history by researching the process of transforming higher education in the MSSR into a mechanism of national and social engineering. The key objectives of the research are as follows: to analyze the historiographical approaches to this issue; to investigate how the Soviet-type higher education system was transplanted and instrumentalized in the MSSR; to explore the historical context that facilitated the implementation of Soviet national and social policies in higher education within the MSSR, transforming it into a mechanism of national and social engineering; to examine the national and social engineering instruments used in and through higher education in the MSSR; to interpret the policies and strategies for the national and social construction of student bodies and academic staff, as well as the outcomes of their implementation; to highlight the contradictions in the regime's national and social policies within the "Moldovan" higher education system; to investigate the implementation of Soviet ge policies and their impact, to assess the practices and effectiveness of communist education for students and. to evaluate the results and consequences of applying national and social engineering tools in and through higher education in the MSSR.

The scientific novelty and originality of this research lie in its pioneering approach to the subject of higher education in the MSSR as a mechanism of national and social engineering. This study is the first in historiography to frame this process within the broader historical phenomenon of the formation of the "new man," in line with the communist ideal of erasing national distinctions and creating a supra-ethnic identity, referred to as the "Soviet people."

The results of the research, which are fundamentally new to both science and practice, have contributed to the development of a new explanatory paradigm regarding the transplantation of the Soviet-type higher education system in the MSSR. They shed light on the transformation and instrumentalization of higher education as a mechanism of national and social engineering within the broader communist project of ethnic and social (re)modeling in a national republic. This paradigm offers a deeper understanding of the socio-political ideas and actions of the intelligentsia and, by extension, of Moldovan society as a whole—seen as the successor to the Soviet system.

The theoretical value of the research lies in its examination of a significant and previously unexplored problem in historiography. It draws upon robust documentary sources, a comprehensive methodology, and modern analytical concepts to explore how the Soviet regime transformed and instrumentalized higher education into a systemic mechanism of national and social engineering in the MSSR. The theoretical results and conclusions derived from this investigation have contributed to the development of a new scientific direction.

The applied value of the investigation: consists in putting into scientific circulation a vast factual, cognitive and analytical material with reference to the process of "manufacturing" and modeling of the Soviet intelligentsia in the MSSR through national and social engineering in and through higher education under the conditions of a totalitarian regime. It can serve as a resource for authors of synthesis works and school textbooks, be incorporated into university course curricula; for the efficiency of personnel policies and improvement of the quality of the educational process by managers of higher education institutions. Additionally, it can support the development of national, educational, and cultural policies by state institutions.

Implementation of scientific results. The results of our scientific investigations have been implemented through a series of monographs, collections of documents, studies and articles, contributions to national and international conferences focused on the respective issue, and have been used in the development of textbooks and syntheses, university course notes and high school theses.

Statement of Responsibility

I, the undersigned, hereby declare under my own responsibility that the materials presented in the synthesis paper are the result of my own research and scientific contributions. I fully acknowledge that, should this statement prove otherwise, I shall bear the consequences in accordance with the applicable legal provisions.

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