

1989 – Annus Mirabilis for the Moldavian SSR

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Abstract

The study synthesizes the most important events and transformations that marked Moldovan society in 1989 and its future developments. The study's primary aim is to highlight the most important events from 1989 that led the Moldovan society towards obtaining the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova. At the same time, the study also shows the current knowledge of the 1989 developments to draw new research perspectives. Thus, in chronological order, the most critical social, cultural, and political events that have had long-term effects on Moldovan society are reviewed. The article analyzes the national emancipation movement's emergence, activity, and counter-movements to maintain the Soviet regime. The 1989 events in the Moldavian SSR resulted from Gorbachev's reforms (glasnost, perestroika) and the "revolutions" in the socialist states that succeeded in bringing down the communist regimes. Starting with cultural demands and rights (the language and alphabet), people had reached economic and political demands (economic autonomy, sovereignty, independence). The emergence of alternative political forces to the Communist Party, their official registration, the legalization of their meetings, and public manifestations led to the consolidation of the critical mass opposed to the Communist regime. Changing the language legislation, returning to the Latin alphabet, and condemning the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact are just some of the successes of 1989 that impacted the following years, resulting, eventually, in the Declaration of Sovereignty of 1990 and the Declaration of Independence of 1991.

Keywords: Moldavian SSR, USSR, Chișinău, political changes, national movement, 1989

Introduction

1989 played an essential role in world history, in general, and in the history of Europe, in particular. By the beginning of the 1980s, the communist system had reached its ethical exhaustion. Although Mikhail Gorbachev, the initiator of the reformist trend, hoped for the revival of socialism, the crisis became systemic, thus unsolvable. The political changes in Hungary and Poland in 1989, which led to the abolition of the political monopoly of a single party, set the tone and the pace of the subsequent changes in other socialist states, to a large extent. Significant political changes and even revolutions in 1989 directly reacted to the situation created in most states of the socialist camp. Discussing the situation in Romania in 1989, Vladimir Tismăneanu applies a less common characterization –



“a (successful) attempt to usurp revolutionary power,” which shows the specificity of the political transformations in this country compared to the other socialist states. Tismăneanu asserts that the greatest significance of the 1989 revolutions was to cause the collapse of the communist regimes, which ultimately led to the creation of their destiny by the people of the USSR.¹

For most of the socialist states in Europe, 1989 was the year of the demolition of communism, while for China, it meant consolidating the power of a single party through the massive suppression of the student demonstration on Tiananmen Square. In 1989, although several events encouraged the national emancipation movement in the USSR, there was also firm repression leading to human victims in Baku, Tbilisi, Vilnius, Alma-Ata, and Riga. Thus, 1989 became known as an *annus mirabilis*, because crucial transformations took place in the European states, leading to the collapse of communist regimes and the end of the Cold War.² A “collapse or twilight of Leninism” occurred in 1989, as the founding myths of the communist ideology were destroyed.³ As Leszek Kolakowski states, “Communism represented the supremacy of the lie”. In this context, Tismăneanu writes that “We can separate ourselves from the Leninist legacy at the mental level only if we renounce this culture of lies and duplicity.”⁴ Although, at the level of statements, this ideology was proclaimed to be a saving one, creating a new society, etc., in reality, communism was based on dictatorship. Communist regimes were, in their radical phase, genocidal or exterminating regimes, a mythocracy and a hierocracy, which eventually became one of the pathologies of the twentieth century. The closed society built by the communist regime could not be sustainable.

Given the character of the events that deeply impacted the world three decades ago, it is high time to review the most consequential episodes of 1989. The year 1989 is important from several perspectives: from China’s perspective, focusing on the student demonstration in the central square of Beijing – Tiananmen, from the perspective of the events in Poland, when *Solidarność* won the elections and formed the first democratic government, or, conversely, the initiative of the “Charter 77” members and the beginnings of changes in Prague, the events in Budapest, the collapse of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 (the Wall of Shame), etc.

¹ Victor Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2009).

² Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflecții asupra revoluției din Europa* (București: Humanitas, 1993); Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Revoluțiile din 1989. Între trecut și viitor* (Iași: Polirom, 1999); Sorin Antohi, Vladimir Tismăneanu (eds), *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and Their Aftermath* (New York and Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000); Stelian Tănase, *Istoria căderii regimurilor comuniste. Miracolul revoluției*, 2nd ed. (București: Humanitas, 2009).

³ Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Despre 1989: Naufragiul utopiei* (București: Humanitas, 2009).

⁴ Tismăneanu, *Despre 1989...*

These changes directly echoed in the USSR, including in the Moldavian SSR, which had already undergone transformations caused by Gorbachev's perestroika, launched in 1985. The first demands of the people in Chişinău were not of an economic, social, or political order; they concerned culture and identity, with people demanding the restoration of the right to their mother tongue and the Latin alphabet, with "freedom" as a watchword. Many photos of those times show people holding placards with the word "freedom." People wanted to talk and act freely without fearing being pursued. In other words, they wanted to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The most offensive fact for the citizens of the Union's republics was that they could not speak and write correctly in their native languages. That is why the first demands of the Chişinău protest movements concerned the language and the alphabet, which marked the whole year.⁵

As a result of the decision of 1987 to withdraw the troops from Afghanistan, the last Soviet troops left this country in 1989, after a ten-year war during which more than 14,000 Soviet soldiers had been killed, and huge sums of money had been wasted. The official announcement on February 15, 1989, that the last Soviet military had left Afghanistan had a positive impact on Soviet society. However, in 1989, bloodshed occurred in Tbilisi, Baku, Vilnius, Alma-Ata, and Riga. On April 9, 1989, manifestations of civil disobedience resulted in fourteen deaths in Tbilisi, and those of January 13, 1991, in Vilnius resulted in thirteen deaths. However, the bloodiest crackdown against civilians who wanted freedom occurred in Baku between November 17 and December 5, 1988. The situation was solved with the help of the army and the intervention of tanks in the central square of Baku.

In January 1989, the organization "Memorial" was established in Moscow, bringing together the most influential personalities of the dissident movement in the USSR. The Soviet authorities refused to register the association. In December 1989, at Sakharov's funeral, Mikhail Gorbachev asked Elena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov's widow, whether he could do anything for her. "Register Memorial," she replied. As there was no proper legislation, "Memorial" was initially registered as a sports association. The founder of the "Memorial" association, the academician Sakharov, advocated the defence of human rights, encouraged the collection of information on repression in the USSR, and demanded concrete steps towards opening the Soviet archives. The association has published the names of over 2.5 million victims of communist terror on the Internet, out of a total number estimated at between 11 and 15 million.

The year 1989 directly impacted the USSR and hastened the dismantling of the Soviet empire. Thus, 1989 meant the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification

⁵ Klaus Heitmann, "Probleme der moldauischen Sprache in der Ära Gorbačev". *Süd-Ost-Europa. Zeitschrift für Gegenwartforschung* 38, (1989): 28–53.



of Germany, the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact, the collapse of communism in Europe, and the end of the Cold War. 1989 meant also the beginning of the dismemberment of some states, the advancement of the European integration process, the expansion of NATO, and the outbreak of new ethnic and military conflicts. In other words, 1989 meant a break between the past and the future, or between “the world before and after 1989.”⁶

Several studies discuss the events of 1989 in the Moldavian SSR in the context of the effects of the *perestroika* reforms, the national emancipation movement that was gaining momentum in Chisinau, and the perspective of the opponents of these transformations.⁷ Although access to the archives has been liberalized in the last decades in Moldova, the publication of relevant collections of documents regarding the events of 1989 is relatively underdeveloped. In this sense, we highlight the contributions of historians M. Cernencu, A. Galben, and Gh. Rusnac. M. Adauge, I. Cașu, and I. Șarov published volumes of documents that contribute to researching the period of 1988-1991.⁸ The memoirs of some politicians of those times, such as Grigore Eremei, Mircea Snegur, Petru Lucinschi, Ion Costăș,

⁶ Jean-Marie Le Breton, *Sfârșitul lui Ceaușescu. Istoria unei revoluții* (București: Cavallioti, 1997); Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Decembrie 1989 – Deconstrucția unei revoluții* (Iași: Polirom, 2004); Peter Siani-Davies, *Revoluția română din decembrie 1989* (București: Humanitas, 2006), (trad. Cristina Mac); Bogdan Murgescu (coord.), *Revoluția română din 1989. Istorie și memorie* (Iași: Polirom, 2007); Apostol Stan, *Revoluția română văzută din stradă: decembrie 1989 – iunie 1990* (București: Curtea Veche, 2007); Andrei Codrescu, *Gaura din steag* (București: Curtea Veche, 2008).

⁷ Lora Bucătaru (red. alc.), *Istoricul an 1989* (Chișinău: Universitas, 1991); П.М. Шорников, *Покушение на статус: Этнополитические процессы в Молдавии в годы кризиса (1988-1996)*, Издание 2-е, переработанное и дополненное (Кишинев: Кишиневская община россиян, 1997); Gheorghe E. Cojocaru, *1989 la Est de Prut* (Chișinău: Prut Internațional, 2001); Igor Cașu, „Die Republik Moldau 1985-1991 – von der Perestroika zur Unabhängigkeit”, Klaus Bochmann, Vasile Dumbrava, Dietmar Müller, Victoria Reinhardt (Hg.), *Die Republik Moldau. Ein Handbuch* (Leipzig: Moldova-Institut-Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsverlag GmbH, 2012), 109-117; Igor Cașu, „Mișcarea de eliberare națională în RSSM, 1989-1991: Unele contribuții”, *Tyragetia*, vol. VII (XXII), nr. 2 (2021): 291-303; D. СІМРОЕȘU, S. MUSTEAȚĂ, *BASARABIA LA UN SECOL DE LA MAREA UNIRE. O istorie politică a Republicii Moldova (1991-2018)* (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2018); S. Musteață, „De la restructurarea URSS la independență RSSM (1985–1991)”, Liliana Corobca (editor), *Panorama comunismului în Moldova Sovietică. Context, surse, interpretări*, (Iași: Polirom, 2019), 235–247; Elena Negru, “Bătălia pentru limbă și alfabet din RSSM în anul 1989”, *Revista de istorie a Moldovei*, No. 3-4 (119-120), (2019): 114-135.

⁸ Mihai Cernencu, Andrei Galben, Gheorghe Rusnac, *Republica Moldova: istoria politică (1988–2000). Documente și materiale*, vol. II (Chișinău: USM, 2000); Mihai Adauge (alc.), *Partidul Popular Creștin Democrat. Documente și Materiale*, vol. 1 (1988-1994) (Chișinău: Tipografia Prag-3, 2008); Igor Cașu, Igor Șarov, *Republica Moldova de la Perestroikă la independență, 1989–1991. Documente secrete din arhiva CC al PCM* (Chișinău: Cartdidact, 2011).

Nadejda Brânzan, and others, play a special role in the analysis of the events of 1989 in Moldova.⁹

Building on the existing literature, this study provides a synthesis and analyzes the most significant events and transformations that had an impact on Moldovan society in 1989 and its future developments. The study highlights the landmark events in 1989 that led to the Republic of Moldova's sovereignty and independence. The paper will also summarize the current knowledge of the 1989 events and developments, from which we could draw new research perspectives.

Preliminaries

After the April 1985 Plenary of the CC of the CPSU, the USSR's models of internal and external development changed. The period between 1985 and 1989 is thus considered the beginning of the democratic movement in Moldova, which was possible thanks to the new policy promoted by Gorbachev, the so-called "restructuring" or *perestroika*, in Russian, and freedom of speech, *glasnost*.¹⁰ During 1989–1991, the USSR was engulfed by a profound political crisis, largely due to national emancipation movements throughout the USSR. Most Union republics opted for sovereignty, and the Baltic countries demanded their independence from the beginning. 1988 was a year in which the effects of *perestroika* were felt in Chișinău as well. At the beginning of 1988, during the 7th Plenary Meeting of the CC of the CPM, the necessity of introducing political and economic reforms was discussed. This reformist trend was reflected in the theses of November 1988: "Let's affirm restructuring with concrete acts!"¹¹ These theses were elaborated in the style of communist ideology and were criticized even by some communists.

On the sidelines of the turmoil inside the Communist Party, civil society gradually mobilized itself to support Gorbachev's initiatives. On June 3, 1988, in Chișinău, the Democratic Movement for the Support of Restructuring (DMSR) was set up, with intellectuals at its head. Judging by the DMSR's program, approved on August 24, 1988, it appeared that the movement supported the democratization of society by introducing more freedoms, such as the transition of the Moldavian SSR to self-management, the introduction of the MSSR citizenship,

⁹ Grigore Eremei, *Fața nevăzută a puterii* (Chișinău: Editura Litera, 2003); Mircea Snegur, *Labirintul destinului. Memorii*, vol. 1: *Calea spre „Olimp”* (Chișinău: Fundația Draghiștea, 2007); Petru Lucinschi, *Moldova și moldovenii. De ce țara noastră este mereu la răscruce? (încercare de răspuns la întrebare)* (Chișinău: Editura Cartea Moldovei, 2007); Ion Costăș, *Transnistria 1989-1992. Cronica unui război „nedeclarat”* (București: Editura RAO, 2012); Nadejda Brânzan, *La cumpăna dintre milenii* (Chișinău: Editura Pontos, 2018).

¹⁰ Musteață, „De la restructurarea URSS la independența RSSM...”, 235–247.

¹¹ Cașu, Șarov, *Republica Moldova de la Perestroikă la independență...*, 25.



the improvement of development conditions for the Moldovan culture, the re-establishment of the social functions of the Moldovan language, etc.¹²

On the 1st and 2nd March 1988, at the plenary meeting of the Management Committee of the Writers' Union of the USSR, the writer Nil Ghilevici proposed to decree the language of the people that gave its name to each national republic to be the state language in the respective territory. In Chişinău, Valentin Mândăcanu took the initiative to support that proposal in the article "Veşmântul fiinţei noastre" (The Raiment of Our Being).¹³ On March 25, 1988, a commemorative plaque was unveiled, and a commemorative meeting was held in honour of the poet Alexei Mateevici near the house at no. 33 Livezilor Street in Chişinău, where he lived during his last years. On March 26, 1988, a conference dedicated to the centenary of the poet Alexei Mateevici's birth was held, followed by a festive evening. Radio and Television skipped the live broadcast in which the actor Victor Ciutac read Mateevici's article "What we need" and the end of the concert, when the chorus of Radioteleviziune performed the song "Limba noastră" (Our Language), and the 800 spectators rose in applause.¹⁴

The Alexei Mateevici Cenacle, led by Anatol Şalaru, whose meetings were allowed in the area of Komsomol Lake, played a crucial role in promoting democratic ideas and national rebirth. One of the first meetings of the Cenacle was held on January 15, 1988, near the bust of Mihai Eminescu on the Classics' alley of the Public Garden in Chişinău.¹⁵ On June 3, 1988, the Democratic Movement, headed by intellectuals, was set up to support the *perestroika*. It gradually became a national emancipation movement for the Moldavian SSR's inhabitants.

On October 31, 1988, the Conference of Romanian Linguists in the USSR took place in Chişinău. It recommended decreeing the national language of the MSSR to be the state language and recognizing the unity of the languages used in the MSSR and Romania. Although the Communist Party of Moldavia, headed by Simion Grossu, opted for Moldovan-Russian bilingualism in the MSSR, the interdepartmental Commission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR for studying the history and problems of the development of the Moldovan language was forced to accept the decision of the Conference and to recommend the decreeing of the "Moldovan language" as the state language.¹⁶ According to the 1989 census, there were 4,335,000 people in the Moldavian SSR, 64.47% of whom were Moldovans, 13.85% Ukrainians, and 12.97% Russians.¹⁷

¹² Caşu, Şarov, *Republica Moldova de la Perestroikă la independenţă...*, 27. Cernencu, Galben, Rusnac, *Republica Moldova: istoria politică (1988–2000)...*, 6.

¹³ Valentin Mândăcanu, "Veşmântul fiinţei noastre", *Nistru* 4 (1988).

¹⁴ Cojocaru, *1989 la Est de Prut...*, 31–32.

¹⁵ Caşu, „Mişcarea de eliberare naţională...”, 292.

¹⁶ Heitmann, *Probleme der moldauischen Sprache...*, 28–53.

¹⁷ https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demografia_Republicii_Moldova (accessed on 20.02.2023).

1989 – Language, Alphabet, Tricolor

As a result of the discussions that started in 1988, the whole of the next year, starting from January 1989, was marked by debates centered around the Romanian language.¹⁸ On January 22, 1989, the Alexei Mateevici Cenacle organized an unauthorized rally on Lenin Street in Chişinău, which the CC Bureau of the CPM qualified as a manifestation of mob violence, extremism, and nationalism. On January 25, 1989, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR adopted a Decision regarding the elaboration of the draft law on the functioning of languages on the territory of the Republic. On the same day, the Decree on the use of the state language of the Lithuanian SSR was adopted in Vilnius, which encouraged the movement for the national language in Chişinău. As an experiment, the weekly *Literatura și Arta* and the works of some classics of national literature – Mihai Eminescu, Vasile Alecsandri, Alexandru Donici, etc. – were published in the Latin alphabet.

During February 1989 (on the 12th, 19th, and 26th), several informal street meetings were held in Chişinău, and on February 23, between 15,000 and 25,000 people chanted in front of the CPM Central Committee: “We want our language and our alphabet!”, “Stop the migration!”, “Give us our history!”, “Down with the mafia!”, “Down with the bureaucracy!”, “We have lost confidence!”, “Long live Gorbachev!” The protesters also demanded the release of Iurie Țurcanu, who had been arrested while picketing the *Casa învățământului* (House of Education). For the first time, the protesters organized a march on Lenin Street, from the CPM CC to the Academy of Sciences. The law enforcement bodies described the participants as “criminals and people without culture.”¹⁹

On March 3, 1989, during the General Assembly of the Writers’ Union, Vladimir Beșleagă proposed three draft decrees:

1. Regarding the annulment of the MSSR decisions from 1940 on the prohibition of the Latin alphabet;
2. Regarding the Moldovan language as a state (official) language;
3. Regarding the economic independence of the MSSR, in connection with the Republic’s transition to self-financing and self-management.

After the publication of the draft laws on the state language elaborated by the Writers’ Union (March 16, 1989) and by the Institute of Language and Literature (April 24, 1989), on May 13, 1989, the General Assembly of the Academy of Sciences voted for decreeing the Moldovan language as the state language in the MSSR and for the return to the Latin alphabet. On March 8, the women of Chişinău

¹⁸ Negru, “Bătălia pentru limbă și alfabet...”, 114-115.

¹⁹ Igor Cașu, *Cronologia URSS 1989*, 16.03.2011, Radio Free Europe

<http://www.europalibera.org/content/article/2339682.html> (accessed 19.02.2023).



organized a rally and a parade on Lenin Street, demanding the adoption of the decree regarding the state language and a return to the Latin alphabet, democratic elections, and an end to misinformation through the official press. Subsequently, on March 12, the Democratic Movement in Support of Restructuring organized an unauthorized meeting in front of the CC of the CPM after the latter had rejected their request to organize a meeting at the Summer Theater.

On March 12, 1989, the Romanian (red-yellow-blue) tricolor flag was raised for the first time; after that, it was present at all public events. Later on, similar meetings were organized in Bălți and Cahul. On March 13, 1989, the first issue of *Glusul* appeared as the first newspaper in the Latin script published in the Moldavian SSR, founded by Ion Druță, printed in Riga by the association “Dacia,” with a print run of 60,000 copies, and then secretly brought to Chișinău. On March 19, 1989, the largest rally yet was organized at the Summer Theater, attended by tens of thousands of people. Over seven hours, a meeting of the Alexei Mateevici Cenacle initiated a dialogue between the CPM leadership (S. Grossu, A. Mocanu, I. Kalin, V. Pshenichnikov) and the Democratic Movement in Support of Restructuring. Through the newspaper *Sovetskaia Moldaviia*, the ATEM news agency spread the rumor that the Alexei Mateevici Cenacle was calling for violence and intended to obtain weapons from the Baltic republics. The writers demanded the annulment of the decisions of the Soviet authorities to introduce the Cyrillic alphabet and the linguistic norms that distorted the Romanian language.

On March 31, 1989, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR decided to publish the draft laws “On the status of the state language in the MSSR” and “On the functioning of the languages spoken on the territory of the MSSR.” The content of the proposed legislation was not what protesters had expected. Thus, on April 9, the Democratic Movement in Support of Restructuring organized a new rally, during which over 25,000 citizens voted for the draft law on the state language proposed by the Writers’ Union, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the official proposals, which were viewed as examples of political and legal incompetence. The protesters also demanded the release of the citizens I. Vărtosu, S. Popa, and F. Calistru, who had been arrested for participating in the street protests.²⁰

The election campaign for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dominated the first months of 1989. The elections took place on March 26. For the first time, citizens whose visions differed from the ideology of the Communist Party were

²⁰ Rezoluția mitingului organizat de Mișcarea Democratică pentru Susținerea Restructurării consacrat problemelor limbii de stat și grafiei latine. Aduage, *Partidul Popular Creștin Democrat...*, 57-58.

able to enter the electoral competition. Thus, the elections brought a new elite to the fore. Among the deputies from the MSSR, a series of personalities from the cultural circles in Chişinău were elected – Ion Druţă, Grigore Vieru, Dumitru Matcovschi, Mihai Cimpoi, Ion C. Ciobanu, Eugeniu Doga, Mihail Munteanu, Gheorghe Chidirim, Anton Grăjdireu, Ion Hadarcă, Gheorghe Rusu, Nicolae Dabija, and Veniamin Apostol – a group whose voice was heard both in Chişinău and in Moscow.²¹ On May 17, 1989, on his way to Chişinău Airport, Dumitru Matcovschi, a people's deputy of the USSR and the editor-in-chief of *Nistru* magazine, who had won the election in the constituency where his opponent was the KGB head of Chişinău, was seriously injured in an accident. A group of deputies from Chişinău addressed an official inquiry to Aleksandr Sukharev, the prosecutor general of the USSR, demanding an urgent clarification of the case. There was much discussion and speculation about the incident, but its causes were never elucidated.²²

On May 25, 1989, the First Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR began its work in Moscow, including the delegation comprising fifty deputies from the MSSR. During his speech at the Congress, Ion Druţă asked Moscow to stop sending staff from the center and to promote decent people from Chişinău into core functions. Mihai Cimpoi proposed elaborating a resolution on national issues, including nationality and the functioning of national languages. Leonida Lari proposed canceling the restricted border area with Romania and raising the issue of open borders between socialist countries. Solidarity with the Moldovan deputies was demonstrated by those from the Baltic and Caucasian republics, facing similar problems.²³ At this Congress, Andrei Sakharov launched the idea of abolishing the CPSU's monopoly of power, which was taken up by Mikhail Gorbachev only in February 1990. The Moldovan deputies had the exceptional courage to declare, in 1989, that the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was a crime against humanity. They called on the Soviet Parliament to set up a committee to discuss its impact. In 1989, in Chişinău, the newspaper *Literatura și Artă* published, for the first time, the additional secret protocol to the Pact, which those in power had not wished to be known, and which had long been considered a myth. After it was published and its existence confirmed, it was clear that Europe had been divided between Germany and the USSR in 1939. Indeed, even today, attempts are made to argue that it was fake, as the treaty was only a friendly agreement between the two states. Some forces in Moscow still do not recognize the existence of secret agreements between Germany and the USSR. Moldovan deputies asked Pimen,

²¹ Adauge, *Partidul Popular Creştin Democrat...*, 57-58.

²² Brînzan, *La cumpăna dintre milenii...*, 515.

²³ Cojocaru, *1989 la Est de Prut...*, 104-108.



the patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, to withdraw Metropolitan Serapion, who had disgraced the Moldovan Church by his actions at the head of the Chişinău Diocese, and to appoint in his place a clergyman who knew the language of the majority of the parishioners, the history of the people, and the spiritual needs of the population.

During the demonstration of May 1, 1989, informal groups with tricolor flags, slogans, and non-traditional “Labour Day” placards emerged for the first time, demanding “Sovereignty!”, “Power – to the Soviets, the land – to the peasants!”, “Freedom to the political prisoners!”, “Down with the mafia!”, etc.²⁴ Simion Grossu, the Party’s first secretary, mentioned in his report at the Plenary meeting of the CC of the CPM on May 11, 1989, that the issue of decreeing the Moldovan language as the state language should be resolved without affecting the interests and needs of the other ethnic groups in the MSSR. On May 19, 1989, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR published the draft law “On the transition of the Moldovan language to the Latin alphabet.”

On May 20, 1989, the founding Congress of the People’s Front of Moldova (PFM) took place, convened by the Initiative Group of the Democratic Movement to Support Restructuring.²⁵ Representatives from thirty districts participated in the Congress. Several resolutions were adopted, including: “On the Sovereignty of the MSSR”, “On the national symbols”, etc. The Congress ended with an appeal of the PFM “To the citizens of the republic”. The appeal stated that the purpose of the PFM was not to get political and state power in the Republic, but to achieve the economic, social, and cultural sovereignty of the MSSR as an equal state within the USSR, to organize and involve the masses to secure the actual exercise of the will of the people and the creation of the necessary conditions to promote democratic freedoms.

At the same time, the “Interfront” initiative was launched in the Moldavian SSR, in explicit opposition to the People’s Front of Moldova. It was later transformed into the “Unity-Edinstvo Movement”, whose primary purpose was to strengthen the friendship and brotherhood between the people of the MSSR and those of the entire Soviet Union. The leaders of “Interfront” declared that they would not allow anyone to “deposit the red flag at the museum – that flag, under which the revolution took place, under which our fathers and grandparents fought during the civil war and, during the years of the great patriotic war, for the defence of the country”.

²⁴ Cojocaru, 1989 *la Est de Prut...*, 89–90.

²⁵ Caşu, Şarov, *Republica Moldova de la Perestroikă la independenţă...*, 27. Aduage, *Partidul Popular Creştin Democrat...*, 61-86.

The spring of 1989 ended on a rather hot note. On May 31, 1989, a group of citizens declared the first hunger strike in front of Stephen the Great's monument, in protest against the arrest of several people during the demonstrations of March 12, 1989.

The Hot Summer of 1989

Even though the Central Committee of the CPM was putting up hurdles and barriers, even though it was beginning to criticize public gatherings as provocative acts, even though it was trying to ban some of them, more and more people started to converge and, from several tens of participants, initially, the protests involved several tens of thousands of people in the summer of 1989. On June 4, 1989, the first authorized meeting of the Popular Front took place in the Victory Square in Chişinău, during which the participants filled the square with tricolor flags. The Open Letter of the PFM addressed to the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR highlighted that "the statehood of the Moldovan people and the sovereignty of the republic are incomplete without the state language."²⁶ On June 15, 1989, the first issue printed in the Latin alphabet of the weekly *Literatura și Arta* appeared, under the editorship of the writer Nicolae Dabija. The largest print run of any publication in the MSSR was recorded: 250,000 copies. This newspaper played a special role in the national emancipation movement.

On June 18, the Congress of the Association of Historians of Moldova was convened. It was attended by 467 delegates from all districts of the Republic, who pleaded for an unbiased history and the liquidation of the monopoly over the study of history, but also for the introduction of pluralism of ideas and opinions and the rejection of dogmatism (Address of the delegates to the Congress to the citizens of the Republic).²⁷ Professor Alexandru Moşanu was elected president of the association; he would later become the chairman of Parliament. Historians, writers, and other categories of intellectuals played a central role in the national emancipation movement. Starting from 2011, June 18 has been officially celebrated in the Republic of Moldova as the professional day of historians.

On June 25, 1989, a new meeting, organized by the PFM, took place in Chişinău, gathering more than 50,000 participants, during which an appeal was made to the Supreme Soviet and the CC of the CPM, demanding that December 2 be declared Independence Day for the Moldovan people between the Prut and the Dniester. This date commemorated the formation of the Democratic Republic of Moldova on December 2, 1917. On June 28, a protest rally against the occupation of Bessarabia by the USSR (June 28, 1940) was organized in Chişinău

²⁶ Cojocaru, *1989 la Est de Prut...*, 109.

²⁷ „O nouă asociație. Într-un ceas bun!”, *Literatura și Arta*, 23 iunie 1989.



for the first time. Thus, supporters of the People's Front of Moldova prevented the organization of a meeting dedicated to "liberating Bessarabia from the Romanian landowners' yoke and its reunion with the Soviet homeland." The CC of the CPM condemned the PFM's actions and deemed them politically harmful.

In July 1989, the book *Let's Read, Let's Write in Latin Letters* by Vlad Pohilă appeared at Lumina Publishing House (at the initiative of Chiril Vaculovschi). The first print run of 100,000 copies was sold for 10 kopecks per copy. The total circulation was 1,105,000 copies. The first book in the Latin alphabet was published by Prof. Ion Berghia, *Returning to the Latin Alphabet*, Chişinău, 1989, followed by the volume by Teo Chiriac, *Salon 33*, Chişinău, Literatura Artistică, 1989, in September. In December, *Anul 1989* by Leonida Lari was published. Thus, 1989 marked the beginning of the use of the Latin alphabet in print within the Moldavian SSR.

On July 29, 1989, the CC plenary meeting of the CPM recommended Mircea Snegur as president of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR, and he was elected instead of Alexandru Mocanu. On July 30, 1989, Snegur participated in the meeting at the Summer Theater, organized by the PFM, where he pleaded for the officialization of the Moldovan language and the return to the Latin alphabet. On August 2, 1989, the PFM published its *Declaration on the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact*, condemning the annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR in 1940. The PFM demanded from the Soviet government the following:

1. to recognize the inclusion of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina into the USSR as an annexation;
2. to return the territories illegally included in the Ukrainian SSR (the former districts of Ismail, Bolgrad, Cetatea Albă, and Hotin) to the MSSR.

On August 22, 1989, the conclusions of the Commission of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR for the study of the German-Soviet treaties of 1939 and their consequences were published in Vilnius. These conclusions declared the treaties illegal and null. At the same time, they proclaimed as illegal the Declaration of the Lithuanian People's Party of July 21, 1940, regarding the accession of Lithuania to the USSR, together with the law of August 3, 1940, regarding the acceptance of Lithuania into the USSR. On August 23, 1989, the three Baltic countries joined in a human chain of solidarity, thus protesting against the Soviet annexations of 1939–1940. Meanwhile, in Chişinău, on August 23, 1989, the PFM organized a meeting dedicated to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Still, the organizers refrained from categorical assessments until the session of the Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR closed. On August 24, 1989, the CC of the CPM organized a meeting to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the liberation of the Republic

from the fascist occupiers, following the Iași-Chișinău operation. On August 25, 1989, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR “On the provisional rules of registration of public associations” was adopted, allowing for the legal activity of non-governmental organizations.

The first Great National Assembly (August 27, 1989) took place at the end of the summer. Over 700,000 people attended it. It requested the decreeing of the Romanian language as the state language and the transition to the Latin alphabet. The slogan of the day was “Language! Alphabet!” The resolution “Despre pământ (About land)” was also adopted at the Assembly. Finally, Ion Ungureanu read the concluding resolution of the Great National Assembly of August 27, 1989, “Concerning state sovereignty and our right to the future.”²⁸ On August 31, 1989, a series of legal acts were adopted, including the Law on the status of the state language of the Moldavian SSR, the Law on the return of the state language of the MSSR to the Latin alphabet, and the Law on the functioning of the languages spoken on the MSSR’s territory. At the same time, it was decided that August 31, 1989, should be declared a national holiday, named “Our Language”. The Romanian language based on the Latin alphabet, which had been replaced in 1944 by the Soviets with the Cyrillic script, became the state language in the Moldavian SSR, preserving the designation “the Moldovan language, of Romance origin and structure.”²⁹

These events led to the emergence of legally organized political movements in 1989. The first four social-political movements were registered in Chișinău. These later transformed into political parties. The Popular Front was legally registered then, too. Precisely in this context, there was a growing pro-Russian opposition, wishing to preserve the Soviet Union and boosted by threats from Moscow. Mircea Snegur, later elected the first president, mentioned in his memoirs that the Chișinău authorities were told very clearly: if you do not want to sign the Union Treaty, instead of one Republic, you would have three. This is what happened. On May 21, 1989, the first Congress of the Gagauz Halkî People’s Movement was held in Comrat, attended by 523 delegates from the localities in the south of the Republic inhabited by the Gagauz people. The Congress set up a commission to elaborate a detailed concept of Gagauz autonomy.

In that specific context, a separatist movement in Transnistria emerged. On 11th August 1989, the United Council of Labor Groups (Ob’edinennyi Sovet Trudovykh Kollektivov – OSTK) was set up in Tiraspol. On August 16, 1989, it organized a preventive strike against the draft laws regarding the status of the

²⁸ Gheorghe Cojocaru, “Marea Adunare Națională ca expresie supremă a aspirațiilor populare spre emancipare etnopolitică”, *Cugetul* 3, (2000): 63–72; Adaye, *Partidul Popular Creștin Democrat...*, 103-109.

²⁹ Negru, “Bătălia pentru limbă și alfabet...”, 124-127.



Moldovan language and the transition to the Latin alphabet. This strike later turned into a general political strike of the factories in Chişinău, Bălţi, Tiraspol, Rîbniţa, Bender, Grigoriopol, Dubăsari, and Comrat. Shortly after that, the OSTK decided to create a Tiraspol separatist district.³⁰ On August 18, 1989, the *Soiuz Trudovykh Kollektivov Trudiashchikhsia* was founded in the hall of the *Mezon* plant. It opposed the introduction of Moldovan as the state language and demanded that Russian become the second state language. V. Nikulin, the *Mezon* plant's director, stated, "We must live well, have everything, and feel at home in any locality of the Soviet Union."³¹ On August 19, 1990, the leaders in Comrat declared the establishment of the SSR of Gagauzia. On September 2, 1990, the Moldavian Transdniestrian Soviet Socialist Republic was proclaimed. These secessionist movements aimed to prevent the Chişinău leadership from rejecting Moscow's control over the MSSR, especially since one of the largest armed units of the Soviet Union, the 14th Army, was garrisoned in Tiraspol. The remnants of the latter remain in Tiraspol even today. Therefore, the consequences of the Soviet regime are still felt in the present.

The Fall of 1989, Hotter than the Summer

Starting on September 1, 1989, at the Faculty of History of the Ion Creangă Pedagogical Institute, the course on the history of the CPSU was canceled for the first time and replaced with a new course, *The History of the Romanians of the East*. But these changes along national (Romanian) lines were not to the liking of the leaders of the Communist Party, the heads of the Union enterprises, or the pro-Russian population. On September 3, the Edinstvo Movement organized a protest meeting in Chişinău against the Law on the State Language, launching strikes that involved around 200 workgroups, with approximately 200,000 employees. On September 13, 1989, during the 13th Extraordinary Session of the Tiraspol City Soviet, the idea of creating an autonomous republic within the MSSR was launched. Moldovan, Russian, and Ukrainian were declared institutional official languages in that area.

At the beginning of September 1989, the Moldavian SSR was visited by the members of a special commission of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, who commented on the subject of language policy, accepting the idea of returning to the Latin alphabet, but also emphasizing the need to preserve the privileges of Russian speakers.³² On September 30, the 15th Plenary meeting of the CC of the CPM was held, during which Simion Grossu described the Great National

³⁰ Coşaş, *Transnistria 1989-1992...*, 29.

³¹ Cojocaru, *1989 la Est de Prut...*, 122.

³² Caşu, Şarov, *Republica Moldova de la Perestroikă la independenţă...*, 29–30.

Assembly as being subordinated to group interests and criticized the materials produced by some scholars who purportedly promoted the distortion of the historical truth and launched hypotheses and conclusions not confirmed by facts. He referred, in particular, to the years 1812, 1918, and 1940. At the same time, the leader of the Moldovan communists acknowledged that the CPM had made some mistakes when decreeing the Moldovan language as a state language.

On October 8, 1989, a new meeting organized by the PFM took place. It discussed the draft law regarding the elections of the people's deputies of the MSSR. This draft law was found to be undemocratic. At the same time, the participants at the meeting assessed the events in the south of the Republic as a consequence of the intensification of the activity of anti-perestroika and chauvinistic forces, which, to preserve the neo-Stalinist regime, were stirring up national enmity in the Republic. On October 22, 1989, during a new unauthorized meeting of the PFM, the protesters demanded the legal registration of this political movement. Thus, on October 26, 1989, the MSSR Government registered the first four political-cultural organizations: The People's Front of Moldova (leader I. Hadârcă); The Unity-Edinstvo Movement (A. Lisețki); Gagauz Halkı (S. Bulgac) and the Vozrozhdenie Bulgarian Cultural and Social Association (I. Zabunov). On October 28, 1989, the Green Movement (Green Action) was created, with the writer Gheorghe Malarciuc at its head. Although the Communist Party remained the only legal party, according to the constitution of the USSR, in several Union republics the process of legalizing alternative and opposition political movements had begun. However, the first officially registered political party in the Republic of Moldova was the Social Democratic Party, created on May 13, 1990, which initially had three co-chairs: Alexandru Coselev, Oazu Nantoi, and Ion Negură.³³

The leadership of the Baltic republics, Georgia, and Armenia canceled the traditional military parade on November 7, 1989, while the Chișinău authorities decided to organize the parade honoring the Bolshevik revolution, according to the Soviet tradition. On the morning of November 7, 1989, approximately 100 people came out with candles in front of the tanks preparing for the military parade. A detachment of the police forces attacked them. The CPM leadership left the central stand when the People's Front of Moldova column reached Victory Square.³⁴ In 1989, I was a first-year student in history, and I remember the events in Chișinău very well. I participated in many public activities. On November 7, 1989, people dared to go out in front of the tanks and stopped them, for the first time, in Chișinău. In fact, since then, Soviet tanks have not passed through

³³ Igor Cașu, "Gorbaciov propunea anularea rolului conducător al PCUS în februarie 1990", <http://www.europalibera.org/content/article/2299780.html> (accessed on 21.02.2020).

³⁴ Cojocaru, *1989 la Est de Prut...*, 188–189.



Victory Square (today Great National Assembly Square) in Chişinău. Therefore, these achievements and events had a profound impact on Moldovan society.

People came up with flowers in front of the military column. The soldiers embraced the people and stopped. So, for the first time, the leadership of the Communist Party fled from the central square in Chişinău. It was a sign that society was changing, that people wanted another leadership and something different. It was also a sign that the totalitarian regime, which had held millions of people in awe, had failed. These events greatly impacted the younger generation, who were not afraid to go in front of the tanks. I am not speaking ironically: maybe we did not realize the danger, since tragic events occurred in Baku and Tbilisi, resulting in human casualties, when the tanks crushed people.

On November 9, 1989, the same issue of the weekly *Literatura și Artă* in which the additional secret protocol of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939, was published, demanded the resignation of the top leadership of the MSSR. On November 10, 1989, a meeting of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers was held, to which the PFM leaders were invited to discuss the decision regarding the events of November 7, 1989. In the meantime, several young people who had tried to protest in front of the Ministry of Internal Affairs against the actions of the police on November 7, 1989, were arrested. The arrests caused a spontaneous protest in front of the Ministry, with people chanting: “Release the arrested!” They were also attacked and beaten by police. By 6 p.m., more than 1,000 people had gathered in front of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Traffic on the central street was blocked. 200–300 policemen came out of the Ministry building and attacked the crowd. A group of deputies (N. Dabija, A. Grăjdieru, L. Lari, G. Vieru, P. Buburuz) and the PFM leaders (I. Roşca, Gh. Ghimpu, M. Ghimpu, V. Matei) came to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They insisted that Vladimir Voronin, the interior minister, order the troops to withdraw.

Those arrested were released under the pressure of the street. While the column was moving towards Victory Square, the police forces started firing blank rounds from the Ministry building. Automatic weapons fire was heard, inciting the crowd to violent actions. The protesters began to throw stones at the Ministry building. By 11 p.m., about 5,000–6,000 people had gathered in Victory Square, demanding the resignation of S. Grossu, V. Pshenichnikov, I. Kalin, and V. Semionov. As a result of the events of 7th and 10th November 1989, the prosecution and the dissolution of the PFM were attempted, but the authorities did not dare to apply this plan. During a press conference held on November 12, 1989, it was revealed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs that, on the night of November 10, ten military planes had landed at Chişinău Airport, with over 2,000 troops from the special forces of the USSR on board, under the command

of Lieutenant General Vladimir Dubeniuk, who declared that he had come to Chişinău at the request of the leadership of the Republic.

On November 12, 1989, the Second Extraordinary Congress of the Gagauz people adopted the Declaration on the creation of the Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic of Gagauzia within the MSSR. The main goals of the SSARG were ostensibly to secure the economic independence of the region, to assert the power of the people – i.e., to create conditions for the free development of all nationalities and social strata, to revive the Gagauz state (sic!), and to restore the national customs and culture. The presence of Victor Puşcaş at the Congress and his urging to adopt a moderate stance had no effect. At the end of 1989, the secessionist projects on the left bank of the Dniester and in the southern part of the MSSR, which were directly supported by Moscow, entered their decisive stage.³⁵

In November 1989, the Communist Party of Moldavia published its allegedly reformist theses on *Restructuring by concrete acts*. On November 16, 1989, Petru Lucinschi, originally from the MSSR, was recalled from Tajikistan and appointed as the first secretary of the CC of the CPM. This attempt to reform and change the CPM leadership did not have the expected effects. Simion Grossu, the former first secretary of the CPM, was sent to the USSR Embassy in Mexico as an agricultural adviser. P. Lucinschi, in his memoirs, describes the state of Moldovan society at the time of his taking over the leadership of the CPM:

„I came to Chisinau on November 16, 1989. From the very beginning, I made it my goal to improve the situation. Two days after my election as first secretary of the Party, I demanded that the “Dzerjinski” division, stationed in the area of the railway station (it was estimated that the demonstrators could occupy it), be withdrawn from Moldova. I spoke with Gorbachev and assured him that I was in charge of the situation. On Sunday, when a rally was announced in the square, I went to TVM, and for two or three hours, I answered the many questions asked live by the viewers. Little by little, we, the leadership of the Republic, went out into the streets to talk to the people, and we started to attend the rallies. In this way, I understood better the unstoppable process of street demands, which focused on three issues – language, alphabet, social injustice...”³⁶

Mircea Snegur confirms in his memoirs the essential problems of Moldovan society but highlights “the sacred problems of the nation, related to language, alphabet, history.” Snegur believes that „these problems had been smoldering continuously for half a century, but the communist regime always extinguished them,” and only the policy promoted by Gorbachev allowed people to demand their national rights.³⁷

³⁵ Cojocaru, *1989 la Est de Prut...*, 183.

³⁶ Lucinschi, *Moldova și moldovenii...*, 286.

³⁷ Snegur, *Labirintul destinului. Memorii*, vol. 1 ..., 393.



The End of 1989

The end of 1989, like the whole year, witnessed a series of important events, some of which have had a lasting impact on the region and the world. At the beginning of December 1989, at the Malta Summit, the Soviet and American heads of state, Mikhail Gorbachev and George H.W. Bush, declared the end of the Cold War.³⁸ At the end of the year (December 24, 1989), at the Second Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR, Aleksandr Iakovlev gave a speech regarding the political and legal assessment of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and the additional secret protocol. Nevertheless, the references to the occupation of Bessarabia by the USSR disappeared from the final draft of the commission's decision.

The month of December radically changed the destiny of Romania. The uprising against the Ceaușescu regime, which started on December 16 in Timișoara, echoed throughout the country (Sibiu, Brașov, Craiova, Cluj). On December 21, 1989, protest demonstrations in Bucharest began, followed by clashes with law enforcement troops. The National Television was attacked by the protesters, who thus managed to broadcast the events in Bucharest throughout the country live. On December 22, 1989, the Council of the National Salvation Front took over state power. Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu fled from Bucharest but were apprehended in Târgoviște, where they were tried and executed on December 25, 1989. This is how the communist dictatorship in Romania ended. In the context of the situation in Romania, on December 22, 1989, the CC of the Communist Party of Moldavia and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR published a statement expressing their solidarity with “the just struggle of the Romanian people against the totalitarian regime” in the newspaper *Moldova socialistă*. This was a somewhat unexpected statement coming from the representatives of a regime bearing the same name.

On December 30, 1989, at a large meeting devoted to the condemnation of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the idea of the union of Bessarabia with Romania was aired publicly for the first time. During the second half of 1989, the slogans of a historical and cultural nature were gradually replaced by social issues and economic demands, e.g., the autonomous management of the economy by the state authorities.

Conclusions

During 1989, numerous public meetings (rallies, demonstrations, the Great National Assembly) were organized. They led to the awakening of the national consciousness of the citizens of the Moldavian SSR, culminating in the

³⁸ Robert Service, *The End of the Cold War, 1985–1991* (London: Macmillan, 2015).

proclamation of sovereignty (1990) and independence (1991).³⁹ Thus, what happened in 1989 strengthened the spirit of the growing national movement. In 1987, people would still express their thoughts with a certain dose of fear; in 1988, articles began to be published, and the first meetings were organized; in 1989, this freedom of speech and public meetings truly erupted. For the first time, in 1989, people began to display the tricolor during public demonstrations and to state openly that the tricolor was the Moldovans' true flag. In 1989, although the Soviet Union still existed, people were finally allowed to cross the Prut to visit each other. People could go to Romania for the first time and see their relatives after decades of isolation. Petru Lucinschi asserted that "at the beginning of 1990, the situation in Chişinău worsened due to the events in Romania. The December 1989 revolution quickly crossed the Prut, along with its anti-communist spirit. In this new conjuncture, the Flower bridges were not only allowed; they made people from both sides of the Prut meet by all possible means."⁴⁰

For the first time, young Bessarabians could study in Romania. Some colleagues from Chişinău, for example, continued their studies, after 1990, in Iaşi, Cluj-Napoca, or Bucharest. The Romanian state granted scholarships for 1,125 young people from the USSR, including 87 scholarships for young people from Northern Bukovina and 43 scholarships for young people from the region of Odesa. Since 1991, their number has gradually increased, so thousands of young people from Moldova are studying in Romania yearly. The Prut has thus become more of a symbolic boundary, but the barbed wire was only physically removed from the border in 2010, which meant that the political regime in Chişinău continued to fear Romania. Some people still believe that "Bucharest is the epicenter of evil," especially in the separatist region, where Romania is a convenient scapegoat. Thus, after so many transformations, the year 1989 could be considered an *annus mirabilis* for the Moldavian SSR, the year of the "permanent revolution,"⁴¹ because it laid the foundations of the national emancipation movement that later led to the 1990 declaration of sovereignty of the MSSR.

Today, 1989 is viewed as the year of revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, crucial events that changed millions of destinies. The events of 1989 laid the foundations of contemporary democratic societies by removing the totalitarian communist regimes. The totalitarian system had exhausted itself; it had nothing

³⁹ "Declarația de suveranitate a Republicii Sovietice Socialiste Moldova", Nr.148-XII din 23.06.90, *Vesti*, Nr. 8/192 (1990); P. Sandulachi, V. Darie (coordonatori), *Parlamentul Independenței* (Chişinău: S.N., 2010), 432 p.; Sergiu Musteață, "1991: A Chronology of Moldova's Independence", *Euxeinos* 15/16 (2014): 92–103.

⁴⁰ Lucinschi, *Moldova și moldovenii...*, 287.

⁴¹ See Chapter 2: "1989 – Anul „revoluției permanente”, Coștaș, *Transnistria 1989-1992...*, 20-35.



more to offer the people, and it had a lot of cracks that ultimately brought about an incurable crisis. Unfortunately, not all the lessons of 1989 have been learned. For this reason, several political parties in post-totalitarian societies, affected by nostalgia, still harbor and support pro-Russian positions.

Rezumat

Articolul oferă o privire de sinteză asupra celor mai importante evenimente și transformări care au marcat societatea moldovenească pe parcursul anului 1989, dar și evoluțiile sale ulterioare. Principalul scop al acestui studiu este să evidențieze cele mai importante evenimente din anul 1989, care au orientat societatea moldovenească în direcția obținerii suveranității și independenței Republicii Moldova. În același timp, articolul sintetizează, de asemenea, actualul stadiu al cunoașterii privind evoluțiile și evenimentele din anul 1989, în vederea elaborării unor noi perspective de cercetare. Astfel, în articol se examinează, în ordine cronologică, cele mai semnificative evenimente sociale, culturale și politice care au avut efecte de durată, pe termen lung, asupra societății moldovenești. Articolul analizează apariția și activitatea mișcării de emancipare națională, precum și dinamica mișcărilor care i se opuneau, pledând pentru menținerea regimului sovietic. Evenimentele din anul 1989 din RSS Moldovenească au fost un rezultat al reformelor lui Gorbaciov (glasnost, perestroika), dar și al „revoluțiilor” din celelalte state socialiste, care au reușit să doboare regimurile comuniste est-europene. Începând de la formularea unor cerințe legate de sfera culturală și anumite drepturi culturale (limbă, alfabet), mișcările de masă au formulat și revendicări de ordin economic și politic (autonomie economică, suveranitate, independență). Apariția și cristalizarea unor forțe politice alternative Partidului Comunist, înregistrarea lor oficială, legalizarea întrunirilor acestora, ca și manifestațiile publice de masă au dus la consolidarea unei mase critice a populației, care se opunea regimului comunist. Schimbarea legislației lingvistice, revenirea la alfabetul latin și condamnarea Pactului Molotov-Ribbentrop și a efectelor sale sunt doar câteva dintre succesele anului 1989 care au avut un impact direct în următorii ani, rezultând, până la urmă, în adoptarea Declarației de Suveranitate în 1990 și a Declarației de Independență, în august 1991.

Cuvinte-cheie: RSS Moldovenească, URSS, Chișinău, schimbări politice, mișcare națională, 1989

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