The National Language and History Revival Movement in SSR Moldova at the Time of the Perestroika

Abstract

As some of those involved in the movement for the revival of the national dignity during the late 1980s are still active on the political arena, a complete and unbiased analysis of the phenomenon is impossible. Only those who had been successful in the 1990s were to be recognized as public figures later on and were to be also included in historical accounts, whereas everybody else was ignored and forgotten. This article explores the profiles of those humanities and sciences professionals who, as part of a diverse group of advocates, initiated and contributed in earnest to the revival of national identity in SSR Moldova. It all started in the early days of Perestroika, on the 10th of May 1987, when the Sovetskaya Moldavia newspaper published an article by Leonid Bulmaga and Ion Țurcanu. They were asking for a revision of some rarely or never mentioned periods of the

1 Perestroika was a movement that attempted to reform the political and economic systems in the Soviet Union. In an attempt to end a period of stagnation, these reforms were intimated in 1986 by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (cspu), Mikhail Gorbachev around the political reform strategy called glasnost, a concept which translates as transparency.


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SSR Moldova history as well as the rewriting and publication of a national handbook of history. Except for some reactions in July 1987, there was no follow-up to this initiative. Only in September 1988 a group of sixty-six intellectuals signed a letter of appeal for the revival of the Moldovan language, which is identical to the Romanian language. Very few of them were to draw any material profit from the disintegration of the USSR, which was to occur after a few years. Most of them faded into anonymity after 1991. One of them is Vlad Pohilă, a linguist with high professional and moral standards. In 1989 he had edited and published the first issues of the “Glasul” [The Voice] newspaper, which used Latin characters instead of the Russian alphabet imposed by USSR during World War Two. This article focuses on the extended group of advocates to which Vlad Pohilă belonged, a movement whose mission was to reinstate the Moldovan language and to recuperate those periods in national history which had been ignored in the post-war period.

**Keywords**

SSR Moldova, Perestroika, activism, idealism, Moldovan language, national history

**Short introduction to the movement and its historiography**

The generally accepted historical discourse is sourced from the texts written by the winners. However, this mindset is based on stereotypical thinking and erroneous conventions, and the famous *Vae victis*² aphorism vouches for this. Whenever the historiographers are allowed unrestricted access to original documents, they come

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² Although it looks like the Romans addressed this to the conquered populations, Titus Livius specifies that the Romans were the ones trying to negotiate the terms of an armistice at a time of crisis, in 390 BC, when Rome was besieged: “In this situation, the arrogant Gaelic prince threw his sword in mockery over the weights [which were to be returned as gold], and uttered these painful words to the Roman ears: “Woe to the vanquished!” (Livius, T (1959) *De la Fundarea Romei* [The History of Rome], București, Editura Științifică, p. 595).
in contact with various sources. Their research is thereby based on a whole spectrum of ideological points of view, some of them contradictory in discourse and expected outcome. An exclusivist perspective on history is characteristic only for those totalitarian regimes that take control of society during or after a conflict that had changed the social fabric of a nation.

There were some turning points towards normality in what the historiography of the Republic of Moldova is concerned. The first one occurred just before the Unification with the Kingdom of Romania, between 1917 and 1918. Equally important was the period between 1989 and 1991, a time when the Proclamation of Independence was being drafted and the international diplomatic recognition was being prepared, events that took place between the 25th of December 1991 and the 2nd of March 1992. There is no consensus on the recent history of the Republic of Moldova and no generally accepted discourse has been agreed upon. This fact prevents any scientific attempt from correctly analyzing the documents and compromises the impartiality of the research altogether. The present article is an introduction to the 1987–1991 pivotal moment and an attempt to highlight especially the contribution of some participants to those events that do not mentioned in the contemporary historical accounts because of their limited presence in mass media and their absence from the political arena. The documentation used to this purpose are: an article published in the “Sovetskaya Moldavia” [Soviet Moldova] newspaper at May 10th, 1987, a letter signed by sixty-six intellectuals in September 1988 and the first issue of the “Glasul” newspaper, which had been edited by the linguist Vlad Pohilă and made use of Romanian characters after a long period of Russian characters supremacy.

A general introduction to the national language and history revival movement requires an assessment of the role played by the Popular Front of Moldova in the 1990s political arena. This political party was mentioned by the historians from Kishinev as the one which initiated disobedience against the soviet state authorities, thereby placing itself in opposition to the Communist Party. However, the fact that most of the advocates of the national language and history revival were active between 1989 and 1991 but were not listed as party members by 1993 raises legitimate questions on the integrity of this
movement. The numerous schisms within the Popular Front and the forced exclusions that happened after June 1990 were caused by the lack of sincerity and the allegiance to other interests than those officially stated. An example of this is Gheorghe Ghimpu, who was excluded from the Popular Front during its Second Congress. He was an advocate of the national rebirth movement that had begun in 1989. This movement represents a real “revolution in historiography” (Enciu, 2011), but the absence of diaries or other autobiographical writings published by those who were directly involved in this campaign results in the availability of an only one-sided account. Impartiality in the scientific research is impossible, as only the perspective of the political leaders is available, whereas the founders of the movement who either left or were excluded from the party provide no account of what happened in the early years of the revival movement.

First on the list of the political leaders published his memoirs is, in chronological order, Grigore Eremei. A former General Secretary of the Comunist Party of SSR Moldova, he published Fața nevăzută a puterii [The Unseen Face of Power] in 2003. However, the most voluminous of these autobiographical writings is a 2007 book, in six volumes, totaling more than four thousand pages, published by the another former Secretary of the Communist Party. Mircea Snegur was to also become the President of the Republic of Moldova between 1990 and 1997. The next president was P. Lucinschi, in office until 2001, and he also published a book of historical recollections titled Moldova și moldovenii: de ce țara noastră e mereu la răscruce (încercare de răspuns la întrebare) [Moldova and the Moldovans: Why Our Country Is Always at the Crossroads (an Attempt to Answer the Question)]. Last in this series of personal confessions is a book written by Vladimir Voronin, a former Minister for Internal Affairs in 1989 and the third president, in office between 2001 and 2009. The title of his work is Видится мне многое с высоты годов... [I see things from the height of elderliness].

From the other side of the barricade, as mentioned, the availability of autobiographical texts is much poorer in comparison. The memoirs of Gheorghe Ghimpu, a dissident in the 1970s, were published in 2002. Unfortunately, Conștiința națională la români moldoveni [National Consciousness of the Moldovan Romanians]
is only a discourse on national identity without any detailed references to the role of the Popular Front of ssr Moldova. Another disturbing absence is that of an account of Gheorghe Ghimpu’s own political position during the turning-point year 1990, when he alone initiated a campaign for the decommunization of the Moldovan society. Furthermore, the leaders of the Popular Front at the time of his ostracism are not even mentioned in his memoirs. Even the mass media affiliated to the Popular Front was to mount an attack on Gheorghe Ghimpu based on the fact that he avoided to mention any of these important topics. Another unsatisfactory source of information coming from the opposition to the communists is a book published in 2008 by the Christian-Democratic People’s Party.³ As this information, some of which are annexed to this article, were not sourced from official archives, but are internal documents of one political party concerning the activity of a different political party, the authenticity of this source is questionable. A supplementary source of doubt on this issue is the fact that the Christian-Democratic People’s Party was a breakaway faction of the Popular Front.⁴

### The 1987 Article on the Desideratum for a Paradigm Change in Historical Studies

On May 10th, 1987, an article called “Znat’ i pomnit’” [Знать и Помнить…, To know and to remember] was published in “Sovetskaya Moldavia” [Socialist Moldova], the most important newspaper of ssr Moldova at the time. The authors were historians Leonid Bulmaga and Ion Țurcanu. The former was an employee of the Institute of Historical Studies, the ssr Moldova Academy of Sciences, whereas the latter was working at the Ion Creangă Institute of

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³ The Christian-Democratic People’s Party was led by president Iurie Roșca, and occupied seats in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova from 27 February 1994 until 5 April 2009. He never attempted to come back to the political arena after that.

Pedagogy. Although there was a Romanian newspaper, “Moldova Socialistă” [Socialist Moldova], which was published in Romanian language using Russian characters and written by a different team of journalists, Leonid Bulmaga and Ion Țurcanu decided to reach the Moldovan public via the newspaper written in the Russian language, motivating their choice by inability of the high-ranking communist leaders to read Romanian language. In the 1980s, most of the USSR republics were using only Russian as official language. Among them, Moldova was an exception: the Russian language was the only official language. However, only the Russian language was used in official communiques, internal documents and correspondence. As the result, the choice of a Russian language periodical resulted in a limited distribution among the readers from the rural communities, where the Romanian language was preferred. As far as the ideas in this article were to be carried through, the authors themselves avoided any reference to the article when they had the opportunity, in a work that was meant to offer an overview of the Moldovan historiography (Enciu, 2011), and only a later overview of the Moldovan historiography barely mentions it (Burlacu, 2017).  

The article authored by Leonid Bulmaga and Ion Țurcanu focused on the incompetence of the Moldovan historians at the time: their writings had no impact on the society at large, there was no historical journal available for the history teachers in schools and some topics such as the events of 1918, the interbellum, the events of 1930 and in general the World War Two were all treated from a limited perspective. Although absent from the article, the other events that should have been mentioned were the hunger years, the deportations and the forced collectivization. Two decades later, Leonid Bulmaga reminisced the publication of that article as follows:

The high-ranking officials could not care less. They did not mind how the Moldovan historians treated them as long as the remarks did

5 During a private conversation with the author of the present article, the historian Leonid Bulmaga remembered that he liaised with a “Sovetskaya Moldavia” journalist in order to prepare the publication of the “To Know and to Remember” article. Apart from another recollection of an authorial dispute, he refused to give any substantial information regarding the 1987 article.
not go beyond certain limits... The turning points in the history of our nations were treated in an apparently scientific manner, looked upon as bygone events located in the abyss of times. In reality the historical periods, the turning points in the history of our nation are rich in ideological potential, are educationally valuable as our present situation is linked via thousands of invisible wires with the historical periods and the turning points in the history of our nation (Bulmaga, 2008, p. 145).

The Kishinev historians ceased to make any reference to the article after 2000 and even now any debate on it is avoided. There are many possible reasons for this avoidance, one of which weighing more than the others. The Institute for History Studies in Kishinev merged with the Communist Party History Institute and many members of the Executive Board were former Communist Party officials in the 1980s. The dream of Leonid Bulmaga never turned in reality and the handbook of history for the use of teachers was never published\(^6\).

In 1987, the “Sovetskaya Moldavia” newspaper published a collection of articles that were meant to give a reply to the Leonid Bulmaga and Ion Țurcanu text. Among them, one was signed by the Institute of History Adjunct General Manager, Demir Dragnev\(^7\). Although one of the main ideas of the article written by Bulmaga and Țurcanu was the need to fill the blanks of national history left as such by the official historiography, none of the historians that participated in the debate sustained their initiative. An explanation of such a behavior would be the influence of the communist party members who were trying to keep in control all aspects of the historical discourse. By August 1988, when nobody was mentioning anything about this public debate opened in the spirit of the Perestroika, the Communist Party Institute of History and the most important newspapers in Moldova organized a colloquium. It was an opportunity for dialogue between the journalists and the Communist party historians and

\(^6\) In October 2005, during a private conversation with the author of this article, Leonid Bulmaga specified that the history handbooks should be written by young people.

\(^7\) In office until 1991 and General Manager of the Institute of History between 1996 and 2005.
topics that had never before been opened were brought to attention: the abuses committed during the collectivization, the historical events from 1940, even criticism toward Bodiul, a former Secretary General, even the hunger of 1946–1947:

The law was seriously breached during the distribution of food aid to the population. The lack of operational control led to various abuses committed by the representatives of the state. Without doubt, there were some inherent difficulties at the time: scarcely any means of transport was available, the roads were blocked by snow, the temperature went too low. On the other side, there was no empathy towards the hardships that the peasants were going through. It was solely the fault of the Chisinau leadership that the food aid intended for the Leova county in 1946 reached its destination in February 1937. Meanwhile, the same county was being criticized for lagging behind in bread contributions to the state. Another such case is the unfortunate hoarding of food aids in the county centers where they would be kept for a long time and distributed with great delays. Many such cases were discovered and revealed to be assessed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova. Unfortunately, there were many such cases... (Sovetskaya Moldavia, 4 August 1988).

What was denied to the historians at the Academy of Sciences was allowed to the communist party historians. A short while after that, in September 1988, when a group of 66 intellectuals gathered signatures for the reinstatement of the national language, identical to the Romanian language, none of the communist party historians signed the document. They were too active again a while later, initiating the “revolt” in historiography that occurred during the 1989–1991 period (Enciu, 2011). Only two historians would support the Letter of the 66 and sign the document: Leonid Bulmaga and Ion Țurcanu.

The Letter of the 66

On September 17th, 1988, the “Învățământul public” [Public Education] newspaper published a text titled “Open Letter” which was signed by sixty-six intellectuals. The language spoken in Moldova was compared
to the Austrian German and to the Spanish language spoken in Latin America. The letter was written by Vlad Pohilă and Emil Mândâcanu, but there was a third contributor, Viorel Ciubotaru, who did not sign it. After 1991, most of the 66 signatories were to become researchers, artists, writers or journalists. The letter was republished in other newspapers and generated a wave reaction. Hundreds of letters were sent to the newspapers in reply. One of the reasons for such an enthusiastic response from the Romanian language speakers was that all of the 66 signatories were Moldovan intellectuals.

In 2022, this letter was analyzed by Viorel Pâslaru from Dayton University, USA, arguing that this letter was a unique occurrence in the context of the democratic changes happening in Moldova:

What made the “Letter” different in comparison with the other articles [published in the same series] is that it does not initiate a debate between researchers. It is the first text aimed at the political leadership. The letter challenges the key issues imposed by means of official political narrative, touching geopolitics and asking for a scientific evaluation of those apothegms issued by the leading class, which were never followed by action.

(...) the “Învățământul public” [Public Education] newspaper, which published the “Letter” did not find grounds for adding a disclaimer, which would have lessened the anger of the party members towards the journalists. The press that rejects any form of scrutiny from the political power bears the hallmark of a free press. Taking this path, the “Învățământul Public” newspaper spearheaded the free press movement as early as the days of Soviet supremacy (Pâslaru, 2022, p. 359).

Not far from the entrance to the second building of the National Library of the Republic of Moldova, a memorial plaque was unveiled in September 2021. I stepped by a year after and read the names of the sixty-six signatories. That encounter motivated me to write the present article, generously hosted by the “Trimarium” journal. Many of those chiseled in stone have already been forgotten. One of them, the late Pavel Balmuș was, in my personal recollection, a humble and tenacious researcher focused on the works of the Romanian writer B.P. Hașdeu. We used to meet often in the reading rooms of the
library and he seemed as perfectly integrated to the world of literature. Another signatory was the Vlad Pohilă (1953–2020), a linguist who had signed one the guides that eased the transition from the Russian alphabet to Romanian. He had been unofficially recognized in Kishinev as the best Romanian language editor. A text written by him for the “Glasul” [The Voice] newspaper was added to the annexes. From 2006 he was to collaborate with the National History Museum of Moldova. His colleagues remember him as follows:

[…] an intellectual aristocrat, a writer whose biography is reduced to humility and simplicity, a visionary who opened our eyes on what writing and speaking in Romanian really means, who taught us how to read and organize information, how to think and express ourselves freely. He used to have an inexhaustible urge to educate the others, he used to generously share everything he believed in, who did not hesitate to exhaust himself for the others. He had a special ability to raise self confidence. Next to him one was always motivated to harmonize along the Romanian language melodic line. He was among the very few who knew how to share the best of himself with discretion and wisdom (Cornețchi, 2020, p. 413).

The historian Valeriu Pasat attempted to bring to the attention of the state authorities the fact that the signatories of the Letter of the 66 deserve some kind of state recognition. Meanwhile, some of them had already passed away. His proposal was never answered by the authorities. In his last letter to the President of the Republic of Moldova dated June 28th, 2021, Valeriu Pasat was justifying his request as follows:

The entire society should be reminded of these events. Those advocates for the righteous cause of the national language and culture should receive state awards and decorations by presidential decree. Thereby, they would be recognized as models of good service to the country and of love for the national heritage and their model would be followed by the new generation towards the preservation of the historical truth and the upkeeping of a social consciousness (Pasat, Președintelui Republicii Moldova Doamnei..., Facebook).
Although, after the Independence, the President had awarded different medals to businessmen, politicians, general managers, ambassadors and representatives of foreign governments. The amount of these medals steeply climbed especially after 2009 but the request to recognize in the same way the contribution of the sixty-six fell on deaf ears, although their impact on society was, possibly, equally significant. It appears that the work of these artists, researchers, writers and journalists will be recognized in time only by the works of the Moldovan researchers.

“Glasul”, the first newspaper printed using Latin characters and its role in the transition to the Latin writing system (1989)

Aside from the the signing of the Letter of the Sixty-Six, Vlad Pohilă contributed in an overwhelming manner to the publication of the “Glasul” [The Voice] newspaper, the first one that was written in Romanian using Latin characters. The first issue was so successful in Kishinev that three other followed during 1989. The printing of these special editions had been executed in Letonia and financed by the “Dacia” Cultural Society. The first page featured a painting of the Romanian painter Sabin Bălașa representing the Romanian writer Mihai Eminescu represented as the Sirius star. A rather lyrical and pessimistic editorial was signed by Ion Druță, the Moldovan writer, whereas the leading article was the contribution of another Moldovan writer, Leonida Lari. For Ion Druță, the voices of the ancestors “that had been fallen on deaf ears were wailing above the plains and villages of Moldova”. He also noted a specific trait for the inhabitants of the territory situated between the Prut and Nistru rivers:

Somehow I have always believed that the storms that our nation has to weather always end up sinking in the river of forgetfulness without leaving any words of recollection for the descendants. The war, the famine, the recession remain only in the memory of those who lived through them, and all of them are at risk of disappearing from the historiography once the witnesses passed away (Glasul, 15 February 1989, 1).
Leonidei Lari was more pragmatic in her leading article. She was referring to ecology-related topics, which she had debated in other press articles before. Some of her ideas are questionable from the perspective of the so-called political correctness, but they should be understood exclusively in the context of the situation in the Soviet Union at the time:

A society corrupted by the illnesses of the Iron Age because of industrialization, chemical contamination and excessive pollution of the environment, the mixing of races or the disintegration of the ethnic identity also needs a surplus of love and dreams, all synthetized in poetry, songs, paintings, theatrical shows or movies. There is a need of a daily dose of How are you? How are things? How are you doing, my friend?

The “Glasul” newspaper has a responsibility to voice the existence of our contemporaries and of our illustrious ancestors under all their aspects: socio-economic, ethno-psychological, human geography, ecologic, linguistic, cultural and ethic-moral (Glasul, 15 February 1989, 1).

I have included in the annexes a text signed by Iurie Roșca, who was to become a while later the established leader of the political party that resulted from the disintegration of the Popular Front and a member of the Parliament in 1994, 1998, 2001 and 2005. This text already shows signs of his tendency towards polarization and penchant for dissention. The topic of his article was the Declaration of August 1989, which had been submitted to the Central Committee and had resulted in a series of debates in the civil society.

The structural changes brought about by the Latin writing of the Romanian language became unavoidable once the Supreme Soviet of the SSR Moldova passed, on August 31st 1989, some resolutions which stated that the national language, identical with the

8 The “Law on the usage of the spoken language on the territory of the SSR Moldova” stated in Article 1 that “According the the constitution of the SSR Moldova, the official language is the Moldovan language, which is written in Latin characters. As an official language, the Moldovan language is to be used in all political, economic, social and cultural institutions and also is to be used in
Romanian language, was thereafter a thoroughly official language, after four decades of neglect. Although the historians and journalists prefer to stress on conflicts when talking about these legislative turning points (Negru, 2019), the most important decision regarding this issue was the transcript of the primary school handbook from Russian alphabet and its publication at first as a series in the “Moldova Socialistă” newspaper.

A special feature article meant for the senior learners was titled “Let’s read, let’s write in Latin script”, edited by Vitalia Vangheli-Pavlicenco and Vlad Pohilă. The first texts were an introduction to the proper usage of abbreviations such as SSRM, USSR, UNESCO, with a few remarks on history. Another issue of the “Moldova socialistă” newspaper chose to go over some aspects of phonetics, especially the writing and pronunciation of the “ea”, “ia” or “ie” diphthongs.

This undertaking resulted in the publication of the primary school handbook in Latin script. The somehow pathetic and enthusiastic foreword by Spiridon Vangheli was mainly addressed to the parents of primary school children and to their teachers:

The heavens had reserved something for us, but there was no stairway available until our nation built one by consensus. The signatures of those contributors, in their hundreds of thousands, were each a step of the stairway that made made it possible for us to recuperate our hidden Latin alphabet. The entire nation rejoiced when it became conscious of its own prowess.

(…) That might be so, but you seem concerned. Where is the primary school handbook? Here it is, an initiative of the “Moldova Socialistă” newspaper. We know what are the risks: The primary school handbook has been illustrated by Lică Sainciuc and looks like an Easter Egg. Alas, the publishing house allowed only shades of gray to represent colors. These being the circumstances, is there another way to urgently deliver help to the children and teachers? There is not.

interethnic communication across the republic”. (Moldova Socialistă, 3 September 1989).

9 Moldova Socialistă, 12 September 1989.
10 Moldova Socialistă, 15 September 1989.
We guarantee that we have amassed the most valuable ideas in our primary school handbook. It is the temple of our souls.

Another article published in the “Glasul” newspaper that deserves a closer look was Dumitru Matcovschi’s analysis of the elections for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. It was published in 1990 and it should be republished alongside other articles from the 2000s that tackle the turning point events that happened in 1989. Until such project becomes reality, a fragment of this article was added to the Annexes.

**Conclusion**

This study is an introduction to the democratization process and the recuperation of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova, which deserves further in-depth studies. In common practice, the attention of the public is drawn by the political debates, the tumultuous rallies and by violent actions. We attempted to highlight the fact that structural changes are consequences of the involvement and endeavors of those forgotten personalities who decided to avoid the political arena. Although the article of Bulmaga and Țurcanu and the Letter of the Sixty-Six did not trigger any reaction at first, their effete was manifested when the obstacles that an authoritarian political elite placed on the way to the reinstatement of the language and national history were overcome. The publication of the “Glasul” newspaper and the passing of the Law of 31 August 1989, as well as the articles on grammar and the primary school handbook contributed to structural societal changes. Hundreds got involved in a selfless manner, without looking for personal gains or recognition. The names of these personalities appear on the memorial plaque installed at the National Library in Kishinev. But this is minimal repository of what the collective memory should contain, much like the present article, which is only an introductory study. Further in-depth studies are necessary in order to commemorate these forgotten personalities for the benefit of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. Their humbleness drew its origin from the shyness of the Bessarabia peasant.
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Annex 1

The Recuperation of the Concept of Citizenship. Democracy and Its Synonyms (by Iurie Roșca)

The democratic reform movement gradually amassed political power to a degree that nobody could ignore it anymore. It had come into being when the spirit of democracy was spreading its wings across the nation. It was during the 19th Congress of the Communist Party, a seemingly regular gathering of the local representatives, when these ideas were bitterly criticized and anathematized by the conservative press,11 With no possibility to advertise,12 the democratic reform movement was not silent. The voice of the public was clearly heard during rallies that today have become a common occurrence in a place where, traditionally, nothing happens.

Sharing a common objective, a nation regroups its forces and stands firm in front of an imminent danger. The national language

11 This seems a little bit confusing, as all the mass media was, at the time, controlled by the Communist party. Some of the periodicals, such as “Ogoniok” in Moscow, had published some audaciously critical articles. It is not very clear whether the freedom was instated by the glasnost’, or by an internal struggle between communist party factions. A noticeable representative of the “conservative” faction was, for instance, Evgheniy Ligachyov.

12 In the 1980s Communist party jargon, “advertising” referred to having control over periodicals.
and history revival movement was founded by a group of young people who decided to meet at the Classical Writers Alley on a Sunday and ask the passers-by to sign a petition for the Romanian language to become an official language and for the Latin alphabet to be reinstated. This movement went beyond the “A. Mateevici” literary circle and the democratic movement itself, gathering the support throughout the nation and the publication of the Declaration of August 1989. Today it is customary to test of the moral values of somebody by asking whether that person voted for or against the Declaration.

We all see that in our long time humbled Moldova the shameful dictum “No sword cuts off a bowed head” is losing popularity. We are rediscovering the thirst for justice and truth, day by day. Yet it will be difficult to achieve our social ideals unless the democratic front is united, well organized, amassing all the progressive forces in the Republic with one aim in mind, the Reform.

Ovations and slogans, speeches and rallies are not enough for the economic independence of the republic. In other words, the self-management is the key. Without a powerful economy there is no political independence, as Lenin stated in its definition of federalism. Likewise, we cannot talk about the political freedom of a citizen who is not does not have the freedom of action and who is not economically independent. As long as the personal well-being depends on the whims of a securocrat and not on the work accomplished, the concepts of reform and democracy will remain unachievable ideals.

There are tens of thousands of support groups scattered across the republic. Whether they are in institutions, schools, in rural communities or at the Academy, they have read the tentative statutes of the Movement and came to the conclusion that the difference between a worm and a Citizen, a heard and a Nation may be covered only by consensus.

The supporters of the democratic movement are not in for the taking, but they joined the group to give their best, to contribute to the “communal good” that Asachi¹³.

¹³ 19th century Romanian writer.
Therefore, the Movement demands equal political, economic, social and national opportunities for all. The Movement is an obstacle in front of the bureaucratic excesses such as the kidnapping of the consciousness to the distribution of the goods through the social outlets network.\textsuperscript{14}


\section*{Annex 2}

\textit{How to Write Proper Nouns? (I) by Vlad Pohilă}

The reinstatement of the Latin alphabet is a much-awaited chance to write correctly the proper nouns which had been misused for so long by petty clerks and mediocre securocrats.

Therefore, in our identity papers, or in other documents written in our language, we will write Alexandru, Georgeta, Vasile, Ștefan, and not Aleksandr, Jeorjeta (Jorjeta, or even Djordjeta!\textsuperscript{15}), Vasili (or Vasili), Stepan; we will write correctly Ciobanu, Prisăcaru, Ieremia, Tănase, Șchiopu, Munteanu a.s.o., and not all sorts of “orthographic code” such as Ceban, Prisakari, Eremia (or Eremeia), Tanas (Tanasi, Tenasi), Șcheu (Șchepul, Ștepul), Muntian... – and the list may be continued ad infinitum! On maps, street signs or envelopes, we will write Vărvăreuca, Gura Căinari, Sărata Nouă, Grigoriopol and not the “traditional” Varvarovka, Gura-Kainari, Sarata-Nova.

\textsuperscript{14} These were closed circuit outlets to which only the high-ranking communist members had access. Archival documents prove that access to these outlets was also granted to mass-media or art unions executives among others. This restriction was applicable or to free resort tickets for the selected group or to free summer camps offered to their children. Regular citizens did not have access to all these.

\textsuperscript{15} Once the Bolsheviks took over, there was a problem in transcribing the Romanian “ge” and “geo” phonemes. In fact, the writers from Moldova and Wallachia introduced a specific letter in order to reproduce this sound, which was not used in the Slavic languages.
Grigoriopoli and many other erroneous forms, which are difficult to get wrong even using the Latin script!

It is advisable to use only Romanian letters and combinations of letters when writing the Moldovan proper nouns. In other words, we should avoid using the letters k, q, w, y, or combinations using them such as ph, th, ck, a.s.o. The first letter holds the primary role in this distinction: traditionally, it was used exclusively by the Slavic, Germanic and Baltic languages (Kochanowski, Hašek, Markov, Ševcenko, Aeken, Kapsukas). However, if a Moldovan citizen who holds such a name pays allegiance to the Moldovan consciousness, the name would be written with the letter “c” or “ch”: Corolevschi, Melniciuc, Petrenco (not Melniciuk, Korolevski or Korolewsky) a.s.o. When writing with “î”, we will restrict ourselves to using this sign and ignore the “î” that originates from “â” (namely “â”), which, because of its resemblance with “a” and “ă” may generate confusion when translating to the Russian language. Some exceptions must be admitted. For instance, when we decide to respect the etymology: if the grandparents or parents wrote their names Pârvan (Pîrvan), Bezvicony (not Bezviconi) or Mihailovski (not Mihailovschi), the descendants should follow the tradition. In a similar manner, if the parents chose for their children names such as Jeannette, Charles or Dominique (French), Elisabeth or Patrick (English), Beatriz, Mercedes, Carmen (Spanish), Günter, Betty or Willy (German, Spanish or God knows what else!) and insist that these names should be written the same ones as the originals, they should be used in their original form no matter how they are pronounced (hopefully only correctly).

In what the adopted foreign surnames are concerned, there will be no gender differentiation. If the surname Munteanu (or Creangă, Frumusache, a.s.o.) may be used for masculine (Ion), as well as for feminine (Maria), the same applies to Grigoriev, Osadci, Vîrschi... and the masculine (Mihai) or feminine (Ioana). This has happened before (mostly in the case of philologists, artists, scientists): the prose writer Vera Malev, the poet Ludmila Sobieťchi, the actress Ala Menșicov...

We will avoid, in a similar manner, the doubling of consonants in our names with the exception of a case similar to Înneguratu ("the
gloomy one”) and, again, when we want to keep the family heritage names in use or, in extremis, when we stubbornly imitate foreign models. (Honestly speaking, we have no idea what a person called Russu, Iovvu, or Untilla would have to gain from such an excess of “orthographic zeal”, as it has been noticed that doubling the consonants in the name of a person does not affect the person in any way!) This is where we need to add that the writing of our ancestors’ names should not be altered, even when we might think that they include letters or combinations of letters that we might consider faulty, weird or not in agreement with a phonetical writing system, to which we are all accustomed: V. Alecsandri, C. Brâncuși, P. Halippa, B.P. Hasdeu, M. Kogălniceanu, C. Negruzzi, Al. Philippide, A. Russo, Th. Pallady a.s.o.

But we are not the only ones to use proper nouns! There are variously names in the world, and they have to be written correctly, using the Latin script, and pronounced as close to the original language as possible. How will we write them correctly? This is the major argument of those who oppose the revival of the Latin script, it is one of the many scaremongering techniques that are meant to make us lose control and give up the writing system that was used by Alecsandri, Eminescu, Creangă, Hasdeu, Stere, Mateevici... (Romanian writers)


Annex 3

The opinion of D. Matcovschi on the 1990 elections in SSR Moldova.

– The elections have freed the forces of democracy, but they have also unleashed the reactionary forces as well. Some electoral colleges have witnessed violence. What is your opinion on this matter?
– I have no opinion on the matter. Wait, no. They reminded me of the elections held during the memorable times of I.I. Bodiu.16

Why? Because a lot of parliamentarians were, at the time, petty

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16 I.I. Bodiu was a General Secretary of the CC of the CPFM from September 1961 until 1980, when he was unexpectedly called to Moscow. Next in office, until 1989, was Semion Grosul.
local executives who used their position as an opportunity [to make money]. They promised the moon, they distributed piglets, calves, wine, money and so on [just before the elections day]. So, the petty managers have had time enough to give all these goods to the populations in the years and months before the elections. Why didn’t they do it then? Was it because their chiefs would have blocked [such generosity]? It means that this is the traditional way [to win elections] in our part of the world. There is this old saying that goes “give, and it will be given to you”. But something else puzzled me. The Popular Front supported this time some candidates who were not worthy. What happened? Who is dealing the cards there, at the Popular Front? That is why, I think, they are unable to solve the major problems. Many of these parliamentarians are insensitive to the destiny of the republic. What flag? What Latin script? They only see red in front of themselves. They cannot differentiate other colors. This is all very sad, but what can I do? State my opinion.

Glasul, 15 April 1990.

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