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**THE PHENOMENON OF CHILD KIDNAPPINGS DURING
THE SOVIET-ENGINEERED FAMINE IN 1946-1947 ON THE TERRITORY
OF MOLDAVIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC (MSSR)**

Simion CARP,
PhD, University Professor,
Senior Scientific Researcher, Institute for Scientific Research and Comparative Law,
"Ștefan cel Mare" Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs,
Republic of Moldova
ORCID: 0000-0003-4772-8325

Alexandru PARENIUC,
PhD, Associate Professor,
Chair of Special Investigation Activities and Anti-Corruption,
Faculty of Law, Administration, Order and Public Security,
"Ștefan cel Mare" Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs,
Republic of Moldova
ORCID: 0000-0002-6642-4610

Abstract

The current publication aims to bring back to the public's attention one of the most dramatic pages in recent history, when, according to estimates, approximately 200,000 people lost their lives in the post-war period. An attempt is made to bring to light alarming data and factual situations, likely to demonstrate the trauma that continues to mark entire families, a tragedy that has left deep traces in Moldovan families, transmitted from generation to generation. This dramatic period demonstrates deliberate policies of the Soviet regime, designed to control the population and reduce any form of opposition. At the same time, we tried to cultivate the urge to assume historical truth and preserve collective memory.

Keywords: crime fighting, crimes of communism, cannibalism, deportees, famine, crime investigations, criminal law, prevention, evidence, desecration of corpses, respect for human rights, freedoms and dignity, totalitarian regime, child abduction, repressions, suicide.

**FENOMENUL RĂPIRII COPIILOR ÎN TIMPUL FOAMETEI DIN ANII 1946-1947,
PROVOCATE ARTIFICIAL DE CĂTRE AUTORITĂȚILE SOVIETICE
PE TERITORIUL RSSM**

Abstract

Actuala publicație își propune să readucă în atenția publicului una dintre cele mai dramatice pagini din istoria recentă, când, potrivit estimărilor, aproximativ 200.000 de oameni și-au pierdut viața din perioada postbelică. Se încearcă aducerea în lumină a unor date și situații de fapt alarmante, de natură a demonstra trauma care continuă să marcheze familii întregi, tragedie care a lăsat urme adânci în familiile moldovenilor, transmise din generație în generație. Această perioadă dramatică demonstrează politici deliberate ale regimului sovietic, menite să controleze populația și să reducă orice formă de opoziție. Totodată, am încercat să cultivăm îndemnul la asumarea adevărului istoric și la păstrarea memoriei colective.

Cuvinte-cheie: combaterea criminalității, crimele comunismului, canibalism deportați, foametea, investigații infracțiuni, legea penală, prevenire, probe, profanare de cadavre respectarea drepturilor, libertăților și demnității umane, regimul totalitar, răpirea copiilor, represiuni, suicid.

Introduction. Over three decades have elapsed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but victims of the repressive communist totalitarian regime are still struggling to assert their rights. The existence of these unresolved cases illustrates the complexity of investigating crimes committed under communism and the broad spectrum of difficulties experienced by those persecuted by the Stalinist regime. Paradoxically, against this backdrop, certain nostalgic groups advance the incoherent idea of rebuilding the Soviet Empire, claiming that they allegedly lived better during that period. These propagandistic messages seek to justify the atrocities suffered by our compatriots and to glorify the criminal regime that held the territory of today's Republic of Moldova under military occupation for decades. Praising the Soviet totalitarian regime represents an insult to Bessarabians who were executed or imprisoned on the basis of politically fabricated charges, deported individuals, people deprived of their assets, and those unlawfully interned in psychiatric hospitals, all for resisting the occupation regime. The genocide reached its culmination in the Soviet-organized artificial famine of 1946–1947, during which hundreds of thousands lost their lives, and the survivors endured severe and unimaginable hardships.

Concerning the intentional aspect of the famine, we highlight that it did not arise only from unfavorable natural circumstances, but also from coordinated actions implemented by the Soviet authorities. The extreme level of degradation to which the population was subjected explains concrete examples of people being compelled to adopt desperate survival strategies. People brought to the limit of starvation were pushed into resorting to banned means of survival. The regime subjected the population to extreme conditions, sometimes leading to instances of cannibalism.

Methods and materials applied. The creation of this publication involved the use of theoretical, normative, and empirical data. Taking into account the specific and complex nature of the investigated topic, the present research was made possible through the application of several scientific research methods specific to criminal investigation theory: the logical method, the historical method, comparative analysis, systemic and statistical analysis, etc.

The purpose of the research. Is based on: an in-depth study of criminal, procedural, and special investigative regulations concerning child abduction during the famine, analyzed from historical, theoretical, and practical perspectives, highlighting trends and ideological specifics in this field; the shortcomings and challenges that appeared in the judicial practice of the Republic of Moldova, alongside proposed solutions, demonstrate that this dramatic period evidenced the Soviet regime's deliberate policies designed to control the population and suppress opposition.

Depending on the intended purpose, we aim to achieve the following objectives: a) research on the legal regulation addressing child abduction during the 1946–1947 famine; b) emphasis on famine as a mechanism of political control used to defeat population resistance and impose Soviet ideological doctrine; c) formulation of theoretical and practical solutions indicating that, in addition to natural factors, there was also a deliberate intent to break the resistance of those who rejected the new ideology of the "new man".

Discussion and results obtained. Reviewing the crimes committed by the Soviet totalitarian regime against our compatriots, the political dissident GH. Ghimpu remarked within a scientific forum: "...By means of force and terror, the representatives of the Russian-communist totalitarian occupation regime imposed a communist ideology on the Romanian population of the Republic of Moldova, introducing a foreign culture, history, and language to the native people of Bessarabia; they enforced collectivization, deported hundreds of thousands of citizens, and eliminated those who held liberal and democratic

ideas that were dominant in Bessarabia at the time of its occupation by the USSR (June 28, 1940 and August 24, 1944)" [1, p.53]. Reconstructing the sequence of events, we observe that after taking power in 1944, the new regime subjected individuals with different political views to political repression. Subsequently, in the 1946–1947 drought period, all food reserves were taken from the native population, leading to an unprecedented famine that cost the lives of over two hundred thousand people. Obviously, the party elite, experts invited from Soviet Russia, activists, and other privileged categories were supplied with food rations. Simultaneously, a large part of the population that did not command the confidence of the Soviet authorities was left to starve to death. Repressive institutions arrested individuals who, at the limits of their endurance, protested and showed their disapproval of the communist regime. They were accused of acting aggressively, engaging in conflicts with Soviet authorities, and breaching public order. Certain impoverished peasants who repeatedly requested food for their children were arrested and sentenced for anti-Soviet propaganda. The Soviet authorities were indifferent to the starving locals and, on the contrary, aimed to strip them entirely of willpower, transforming them into docile, depersonalized subjects of the regime. Nevertheless, torture by means of starvation generates multiple detrimental outcomes. Consequently, crimes typical of famine-related crises started to be recorded, such as violence, abduction, theft, robbery, and banditry.

Meanwhile, as the authorities delayed the distribution of food to the population, living conditions deteriorated significantly, leading to crimes including abduction, homicide, cannibalism, desecration of corpses, and suicide. Unfortunately, some individuals suffering from dystrophy were gradually transformed into predators willing to consume even their own kind. Many children were among those victimized by these criminals, who had already lost their human status. This research paper provides information on the phenomenon of child abduction during the 1946–1947 famine.

The investigation involved the study of works by local scholars who described this historical period, with particular attention to eyewitness testimonies. Declassified archival materials were examined and cross-checked with contemporary press sources and history textbooks published by Soviet authors. On the basis of this analysis, the falsification of historical facts by Soviet authors was established, and new pertinent evidence was identified for the investigation of communist crimes. This article presents excerpts from documents indicating that the Soviet authorities deliberately provoked the famine and did not take measures to eliminate factors that encouraged criminality in such crises, including the abduction of children and adults, who were killed by criminals for consumption of their flesh. Many of the abducted and murdered children were under the age of ten. Some became victims of violent attacks, while others were attracted by deceptive promises of food. Unfortunately, some of the perpetrators were people familiar to the victims, frequently their neighbors. Easily falling victim to criminals were orphaned children, those left by their parents, or those without supervision. During the research, cases were found of adults involving children in criminal activities, using them to lure victims. Simultaneously, it was established that crime trends were influenced by the Soviet authorities' hostile and discriminatory approach toward the native population, who were deliberately subjected to devastating living conditions in an attempt to physically eliminate individuals expressing national dignity. By means of the artificially caused famine and the violent actions of Soviet repressive organs, the communist totalitarian regime managed to depersonalize and demoralize part of the local population, bringing them to a level correlated to primitive tribes. Due to dystrophy and mental illnesses, they committed murders and consumed human flesh in order to survive by all means. The above-mentioned facts reveal that totalitarian regimes, seeking to stay in power, use tactics reminiscent of barbaric

tribes.

Referring to the criminogenic situation in countries under such regimes, Iurie Larii states that: "...nothing separates people as sharply as political disagreements. Political interests are, in most cases, linked to the pursuit of power, a process in which political opponents use extremely harsh methods and means" [2, p.120-128].

As previously indicated, one of the methods repeatedly applied by the Soviet authorities to suppress political opponents involved artificially provoking famine. Thus: "In 1920, the Bolshevik organization, which had only recently adopted the official name of the Communist Party, started establishing the policies that would ultimately regulate every aspect of everyday life". They were subjected to "work mobilization", meaning that they were obliged to work where, when, and as instructed by the government. Industrial enterprises were headed by directors appointed by the government. Across rural areas, Red Army troops forcibly confiscated peasants' grain and animals under the threat of arms. Shortages continued to make themselves felt, and virtually everything was rationed — food, clothes, even books and tobacco... Similar to food shortages, access to fuel was severely limited. In order to survive the freezing winter, city residents tore planks from fences and wooden houses to use as firewood. People cut down trees from urban parks and burned their books and household furniture for fuel... Sometimes, the cities looked deserted, like ghost towns. "The houses seemed to be the ruined crypts of forgotten graveyards", wrote a resident of Saint Petersburg. "The inhabitants moved [through the city] in a manner resembling living corpses [...]. Deprivation slowly consumed them, and death macabrely clasped their hearts in its claws" [3, p.268-269].

Any revolt was violently suppressed on the orders of the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. According to Candace Fleming: "The situation had grown so desperate that, in March 1921, thousands of sailors, formerly the Bolsheviks' most ardent supporters, openly rose up against the communist authorities". Disappointed by the treatment of workers and peasants under Lenin's rule, they went into the streets demanding the freedoms the Soviet regime had stripped away: free elections, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, independent unions, and peasants' freedom to cultivate their land for their own benefit.

Lenin refused to allow anyone to challenge the power of the Soviets. Sending the Red Army against the rebellious sailors, he unleashed a bloody attack that raged for several days. When it was over, thousands of sailors were dead, and several hundred more were subsequently executed.

True to his fierce realism, Lenin saw the sailors' uprising as proof of a society in profound illness... However, Lenin died on 21 January 1924, and Stalin quickly seized control of the government. He promptly initiated a "purge", eliminating all former Bolshevik leaders, regardless of allegiance, by exile, execution, or assassination. At this point, Soviet Russia was entirely controlled by a ruthless leader committed to transforming the country into a world power, without consideration for the loss of freedoms or human life" [3, p.269-270].

The population's standard of living had worsened enormously. People continued to die of hunger, while the Soviet authorities concentrated on identifying so-called "enemies of the people", who were blamed for all irregularities: "from an ideological standpoint, it was deemed unacceptable to regard Stalin's administrative and political failures, or those of the Soviet leadership, as causes of the Soviet economy's numerous problems, which resulted from collectivization and the Five-Year Plans. These issues were attributed to large, non-existent conspiracies. In 1937, for example, the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) uncovered an "extremely vicious form of sabotage", entirely fictitious, allegedly carried out by "veterinarians, livestock specialists, and laboratory assistants",

who were said to engage in “bacteriological subversion, infecting cattle, horses, flocks of sheep, and pigs with plague, foot-and-mouth disease, anthrax, brucellosis, anemia, and other infectious diseases”, resulting, according to the NKVD, in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of animals. The Politburo directed all republics and regions of the USSR to conduct three to six trials each involving imaginary conspirators, with the aim of warning the “broad peasant masses” about supposed but nonexistent sabotage activities” [4, p.708-709].

Local authors who have examined life under Soviet rule write that: “The totalitarian past may have achieved its most diabolical experiments on members of society. Alternatively, those who resisted were exterminated, exiled, or sentenced. To enable the implementation of communist doctrine, society was subjected to processes of stigmatization, division, and the collectivization of both private and personal spheres of life. First, private property, which formed part of individuals’ sense of identity, was eliminated, and collective ownership was introduced to serve the interests of the ruling elite. Expropriation was conducted so ferociously that fear of losing private property, including land, turned into a genuine social illness, even affecting children.

Second, an equality of hidden poverty and inequality before the law among citizens. This effectively signified the marginalization of labor as the only criterion of prosperity and its replacement with loyalty and unconditional obedience to doctrinal power. Thus, the brainwashing of the majority of society was achieved and transmitted from one generation to the next, forming a mass mentality. A kind of mentality previously unknown in human societies, defined by the level of alienation of its members, through which the leadership took revenge on those who opposed the established regime” [5, p.207].

Evidently, members of the party and representatives of the Soviet authorities were supplied with food and comfortable housing. It is hardly accidental that the Soviet criminologist N. Struckv refers to Karl Marx when discussing the factors that influence deviant behavior during famine: “Hunger is hunger”, wrote K. Marx, “but the hunger that is appeased with boiled meat eaten with a knife and fork differs from the hunger in which meat is consumed raw, with the hands, nails, and teeth” [6, p.17]. This statement by Karl Marx was deliberately misused by the Stalinist regime, which, drawing on its own experience, repeatedly engineered famine. The Bolshevik leaders realized that the shortest path to shaping human behavior and enforcing loyalty to the regime lay in the use of starvation as a weapon of torture.

During the famine of 1946–1947, the Soviet regime subjected the population to extreme conditions, at times resulting in the consumption of animal carcasses and instances of cannibalism. Reflecting on the impact of the artificially created famine brought about by Soviet power, the author V. Tchalikidze notes that in 1922: “In the Volga region, where famine was devastating the area, criminal groups specializing in cannibalism were operating, composed solely of minors” [7, p.175].

The same author highlights that the Soviet leader: “N. Khrushchev confirmed that, during the 1946–1947 famine, cases of cannibalism were reported in the territory of Ukraine” [7, p.176]. It should be noted that N. Khrushchev was part of the Stalinist regime, which is responsible for artificially causing the famine in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Evidently, the Soviet power also enlisted local activists to take agricultural produce from the population, stripping them of the means to survive. Eyewitness Valentin D. Buts, born in 1931 and a native of the village of Ferapontievca, provides the following testimony: “...At that time, illiterate people were in power, but they were devoted to the Communists. We would say it differently: at that time, the Soviet regime needed obedient people who

would listen and carry out orders, but who showed no concern for the people. It is widely known that none of the local residents respected the chairman of the village soviet, as he lacked the ability to work for the people and was only inclined to report villagers to the militia authorities for punishment. Many diligent and responsible people suffered at that time without having done anything wrong" [8, p.82].

Many residents were expropriated by the Soviet authorities on the grounds that their households had prospered during the period of Romanian administration. Describing her own life, a resident of Avdarma village stated: "Evdochia Chiril Tumba, born in 1936, stated the following: "In 1944, the Soviet authorities mobilized my father, Chiril Vasilevici Tumba... My mother remained at home with six children... In the winter of 1947, our family had fallen into a catastrophic situation. My mother could barely manage to feed six children. At the same time, our aunt was living together with us, along with her six children. In 1946, the Soviet authorities arrested her husband and sentenced him to prison simply for being a "kulak" ... Here should be added that the local authorities excluded us from the list for food provision at the "canteen," and as a result our family of 12 children experienced severe hardship during the famine. The Soviet authorities treated our family in this way, on the grounds that we had enjoyed a better life under Romanian administration" [8, p.120-121].

It is well known that the Kremlin leadership in the post-war period initiated an anti-Romanian campaign in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. According to the author Iurie Larii: "The incitement of national hostilities by many politicians of the former USSR, through political appeals and slogans pushed to absurdity, became a cause of numerous serious crimes, including mass murder, violence, terrorism, and the forcible occupation of foreign territories, and also affected overall criminality, considerably aggravating its situation. Under such conditions, the social life of the population becomes unbearable, and as a consequence, these situations generate not only various criminal and delinquent behaviors, but also mistrust, social tension, fear, and psychological stress among the population" [2, p.122].

Local activists in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic also caused serious problems for the native population, denouncing fellow villagers not out of political beliefs, but in order to receive rewards from the Soviet authorities for their servility. The author Vasile Balan reports on the presence of such individuals during that time in his native village of Cârpești: "The famine of 1946-1947 claimed several times more lives in Cârpești than the war. The attics of the houses and the barns were entirely empty. They were cleared out by the members of the village soviet together with the "agricultural plenipotentiary. When has it ever been seen to collect "supply" during drought? People were deprived of their last piece of bread and their last chance of survival. Were the district and republican authorities not aware of what was happening?

Obviously not. The barns and attics continued to be emptied, which doomed many locals in Cârpești to starvation. The leadership of the union, republic, district, and village, devoted entirely to Bolshevism, likely deliberately organized the famine, believing that starving peasants would join the collective farms. The village soviet is also responsible, particularly the activists S. Bâzu and E. Chiosa, who denounced fellow villagers who attempted to conceal the little they still possessed... Those who refused to deliver the "supply" were beaten, imprisoned by the NKVD, mistreated, tried, and deported as "enemies of the people." ...Hunger and disease left devastation in almost every home. In some households, everyone died. In spring, people consumed reedmace, coltsfoot, knotweed, amaranth, dock, nettles, oak acorns, and grape pomace, or even boiled their own leather footwear. There were no longer any cattle or poultry left in the village. In some cases,

people resorted to eating crows, cats, and dogs. There was also a case of cannibalism...” [9, p.65].

As previously mentioned, children became particularly easy victims of cannibals. Some of those who survived still recall with strong emotion the experiences they endured: “Dmitrii I. Savastin (born 1942) provides the following account: ... The Communist authorities confiscated nearly all of our assets. Due to an acquaintance of my father employed by the village soviet, our family was allowed to retain a cow and a small quantity of grain, which ultimately ensured our survival. I will never forget that during the famine my mother was compelled, perhaps fortunately for our family, to work in the household of a Russian military officer. She spent the whole day cleaning, washing clothes, and performing other household duties for just one loaf of bread. We, the children, waited for her anxiously at home. Every time, she shared the bread only with us children, hardly eating anything herself.

I frequently recall a disturbing incident. In the spring of 1947, my sisters and I went into the fields in search of edible herbs. Suddenly, a man appeared ahead of us and began running toward us with a frightening expression on his face. In fear, we ran away, running beyond our strength to escape him. He was likely one of the cannibals chasing down his prey. At that time, many people found themselves in such a condition. We express gratitude to God for preserving our lives” [8, p.95].

According to Ivan P. Crușca, there is another case involving his elder sister: “My father, Porfirii Ivanovici, was mobilized for work in the city of Perm in 1945. My mother, Parascovia Pavlovna, remained at home with my sister. When the collective farm was formed in our village, my mother, like other villagers, was sent to work in the fields. Under those conditions, she was forced to leave Domnica at home together with her cousin Lena. On each occasion, she instructed them to lock the door and not to open it to anyone. At that time, people said there was a cannibal in our village who was kidnapping children, cut them up, and fed on their flesh. This individual was constantly seeking out houses where children were left alone. On one day in 1947, he came and knocked on the door of our house, where my sisters were. He spoke to them very softly, telling them to open the door because he had brought bread. Cousin Lena, affected by hunger, accepted his words and moved to open the door, while Domnica strongly refused, invoking their mother’s warnings. She was compelled to intervene and stop Lena by force. The situation suddenly changed when that human-faced animal began forcing the door of the house. Fortunately for the sisters, a neighbor, an elderly woman named Calina, observed the situation, raised the alarm by shouting, and the offender left. Following that incident, the mother ceased leaving the children at home and instead brought them with her to the fields where she worked” [8, p.61].

In many cases, the children did not manage to escape. The existence of criminals practicing cannibalism has been noted by several authors. Based on the information published by them, certain characteristics of the psychological profile of these inhuman individuals can be identified. Studying the development of events in the village of Mingir, Hîncești district, the author Iacob Lupanciuc writes: “As in many places across the republic, numerous cases of cannibalism were recorded, and Mingir was not spared from this scourge.

... In the village lived two sisters with the surname Condrovșchii, and in the same neighborhood lived Maria Sărățanu with her 10-year-old son. During the winter of 1946–1947, after heavy snowfall and with the neighborhood situated on a gentle slope, Maria’s child was sledding along the street. At a certain moment, the child disappeared together with the sled. Seeing this, his mother began to search for him in a hurry, but without any success. Following the investigation of several traces and signs, suspicion fell upon

the Condrovshii sisters. Quickly calling on her neighbors, the poor woman, with their help, rushed into the yard of those sisters, where, in a mound of snow by the corner of their house, found the child, but already chopped into pieces to be put in the pot soon. The child's clothes, along with the sled, were found in their house, under a little bed. The Condrovshii sisters were arrested, after which there was no further information about them" [10, p.220-221].

By correlating this information with archival sources, it was found that: "On January 20, 1947, the residents of the village of Mingir, Magurcean Nina Antonovna, born in 1917, and Grunovschi Axenia Antonovna, born in 1925, following a prior agreement, kidnapped the 9-year-old boy Târsină Denis, brought him to their home, where they cut him up and ate the meat. Both of them were arrested" [11].

In the same study, the author Iacob Lupanciuc writes: "Another case of cannibalism, even more extreme, was identified in the case of Andrei Sârbu. At his residence, according to the testimony of several residents of Mingir village, 14 human heads were found. Mihai Bordei, a 14-year-old boy at the time, recalls once encountering this Sârbu, together with Anton Morărașu, carrying a large dog on his back, with its tail dragging along the ground. Stopping in his tracks, this cannibal told the boy to come to his house, saying he would give him food, as he had plenty. Observing with attention and suspicion what he had just witnessed, with that dog on his back and the way he was being sized up, the poor boy ran away and only stopped once he reached home, out of breath" [10, p.221].

Unfortunately, not all children were able to identify the risks associated with exposure to strangers. There were cases when they were taken by women who managed to manipulate them into following them. As a rule, they used the promise of food as a lure. In his work, Iacob Lupanciuc describes a case in which individuals succeeded in saving an abducted child: "Tudor Bordei's wife, Panaghia, later married to Efim Scutelnicu and now over 80 years old, herself testified that her 5-year-old child Sava was abducted by Zinovia Sârbu, the mother of that cannibal. Fortunately, the child was rescued by Trocin Păcală, the husband of Maria Enechescu" [10, p.221].

In one of the strictly secret notes sent to Covali, Secretary of the CC of the CP(b) of the Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic, by the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, Major General Orlov, the following information is included: "The Internal Affairs Department of Bujor district reported that in the village of Mingir, within the same district, the locals Andrei Gavril Sârbu (b. 1920) and his wife Zinaida Ilie Sârbu (b. 1923) are suspected of practicing cannibalism. Human bones and two skulls were uncovered in the basement during searches carried out at their residence. The investigation revealed that toward the end of February, the Sârbu spouses lured an unidentified woman into their home and killed her. The same method was used by both to kill an unknown man on March 10. They used the bodies of the murdered individuals for food... both have been arrested and will be held criminally liable" [11].

Orphans and children abandoned by their families as a result of the famine frequently became the victims. Recalling the events of that period, citizen Cîrlig (Topal) Livia P., born in 1928, stated the following: "Once, in the city of Bender, I witnessed a mother abandon both her children in the marketplace, after which she boarded a train and left. The little boy and girl were taken in by the militia and were probably placed in an orphanage. We cannot bring ourselves to condemn that woman for the act she committed. She undoubtedly realized that at home her children might perish from starvation, while in a children's institution they could survive" [8, p.72].

Due to the large number of children lacking care, Soviet authorities opened a wide network of orphanages. The media of that time published materials in which the situation

of children in these institutions was shown in a favorable light. A relevant example is the article below: "At the children's home in Chițcani village, Bender district, there is a lot of bustles as the rooms in the four new sections are being whitewashed. The boys are setting up tables, chairs, and beds, whereas the girls are sewing the curtains. The orphanage is getting ready to take in another 100 pupils. The director of the institution, Comrade Hodorovskii, assisted by the Komsomol members Turculeț, Filipovici, Baran, and others, is making every effort to ensure comfort and a warm, homelike atmosphere for the newly arrived pupils. Warm clothes, bedding, and hot food three times a day have already been prepared for them" [12, p.3].

In reality, a large number of children in orphanages perished from starvation. The resident of Cioc-Maidan village, citizen Plucci Petr Mihail, born in 1923, testifies that: "an orphanage was opened in the locality. Orphans from the village and surrounding areas were brought together. Each child received 300 grams of bread daily and was provided with three meals a day. Classes were held in the village school building. During the period of famine, two children lost their lives" [8, p.234].

Details concerning the real condition of children in orphanages can be found in archival materials. One of the highly classified notes reports that: "Eight children in terminal condition due to starvation were identified in the children's home in Vorniceni and were hospitalized. It was found that the children's home had not received 80 kg of fats in January, and the children's feeding was carried out in breach of the established norms" [11, page 53].

Frequently, children escaped from these institutions in search of something to eat. Thus: "On 24 March, the Râspopeni District Internal Affairs Division was informed of the disappearance of pupil Maximov from the Oleșcani Children's Home No.1". Following the measures taken, it was established that the resident of the village of Oleșcani, Barbos Elena, born in 1910, previously convicted by the Romanian authorities for theft, and her son Barbos Vasilii Nicolaevici, lured the minor Maximov, born in 1932, into their house, whom they killed by hitting him with an axe. They ate his flesh. During the search of their residence, the garments of pupil Maximov were identified. Both criminals were taken into custody" [11, page 175].

Soviet history manuals glorified the communist regime for the results obtained during 1946–1947. The writers of these materials deliberately avoided reflecting the reality of the horrors endured by the local population during the famine. Information of this kind was reported to the leadership only in strictly secret documents, while the population, even more than five years after the catastrophe, was informed in crude language using Cyrillic letters about the following "achievements" of the Soviet authorities at the time: "It significantly upgraded the material infrastructure of pedagogical establishments, which in turn improved the quality of teacher preparation... In 1946, the 8th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Moldova debated the issue 'Regarding the preparation of the republic's schools for the 1946–1947 academic year,' the first year of the post-war Stalin Five-Year Plan" [13, p.230–231].

It should be noted that the repressive regime used properties taken from the so-called kulaks to establish orphanages and schools. The feeding of pupils and teachers was based on agricultural produce forcibly requisitioned from the population. Soviet propaganda, of course, declared that the local inhabitants were voluntarily supporting the Soviet state: "The population of the republic actively engaged in the construction and repair of schools and classroom facilities, in ensuring fuel supply for schools, and in creating funds for universal education, as well as in setting up boarding schools and hot morning meals" [13, p.231].

Researching archival materials, we find that due to the famine in the region during the reference period, criminal groups specialized in kidnapping children, killing them, consuming and trading human flesh as well as products prepared from human flesh were formed. The leadership of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was notified of the existence of such groups by the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Major General Orlov, who reported that: "On March 14, 1947, information was received that citizen Borșci Agripina Ivanovna, born in 1912, and her brother Nicu Alexei Ivanovici, born in 1910, who live in the suburb of Chișinău, on Sfânta Vinere Street, in the Schinoasa village soviet, having no means of subsistence, consume human flesh daily and sell such flesh. During the investigations, it was found that Borșci and Nicu kill people and consume their meat, and sell some of it to the population... Both suspects were detained" [11, page 167].

There were criminal groups that, after killing their victims, distributed the human flesh for consumption among the group members: "residents of Vădeni village, Soroca district, including Iavorschii N.F., Iavorschaia A.P., Iavorschii F.F., Gulii M.P., Gulii A.I., and Gulii I.A. On March 26, they killed citizen Andries A.F. and consumed his flesh. On April 3 of this year, they kidnapped and killed a 13-year-old boy, Graur Matvei Feodorovici, whose body was dismembered and divided among the group members to be consumed. All of them were arrested and held criminally liable" [11, page 180]. The same note reports that: "Residents of the village of Vantseva, Soroca district, Renitchii Ivan Vasilievich, born in 1926, and Renitchaia Evdochia Ivanovna, born in 1907, both poor peasants, on April 7 kidnapped and killed a little boy from the same village, Mucomol Grigorii Semenovitch, 12 years old, they divided the meat between them and partially consumed it. The two offenders were arrested" [11, page 180].

A case of kidnapping and murder of a minor was discovered even by the meat collection officers. The information note sent to the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic leadership states the following: "On March 19 of the current year, the resident of the village of Unguri, Otaci district, Soroca county, Casico Semen Ivanovici, born in 1896, killed an unknown minor aged 16-17, a beggar who entered his house to ask for something to eat. The body was hidden in the attic of the house to later consume it as food. While the offender was cleaning bloodstains in the yard, he was spotted by the meat procurement officials Zabolotnii and Boico, who came in the exercise of their duties. The offender was arrested" [11, page 175].

It is evident that even during the famine, activists and authorized collectors of food from the population continued their operations. As we mentioned before, we cannot rule out the fact that some criminals also supplied these proxies with human flesh, in order to meet the quotas, set by the Soviet authorities.

Meanwhile, thousands of people were dying from malnutrition-related dystrophy. Mass graves were prepared for the burial of the numerous bodies in the cemeteries of various settlements. Frequently, even people who were still alive were thrown into these pits. Citizen Anghelov Ivan Vladimir, born in 1935, described the ordeals he experienced, stating that in 1946, at the age of 11 and in a critical condition, he was admitted to the hospital in Avdarma: "During that period, my aunt worked in a temporarily established hospital in the village for people affected by dystrophy, located roughly 200-300 meters from the hospital I was in. In a moment of desperation, I made the decision to visit that hospital. It was an old auxiliary building (a barrack) where people severely ill from famine were admitted. When I opened the door, I saw a horrific scene that I still cannot forget to this day. There were people in that place who were on the brink of death, barely able to move and only attempting to whisper something. Most of them were transported from this place to the cemetery. My days were spent here as well... I became unable to move,

yet hearing the conversations near me made me aware that I was still alive. I didn't want to live anymore. One night I heard: "Take him before his aunt gets back!" But fortunately, as if it were God's will, my aunt arrived at that moment, and the grave diggers left me alone. Later I realized that it wouldn't last long... I don't know: "Who made the decision to bury the people who were still alive in a common grave? Obviously, these living beings were thrown into the mass grave by the grave diggers, who received in return their food ration for that day. I would like to see the records kept by those individuals and the doctors who issued death certificates for persons who were still alive" [8, p.107-108].

I. Anghelov further states: "I was not afraid of dying; nevertheless, deep down I wanted to stay as long as possible with my aunt" Several days passed after that incident, but my situation did not improve in any way. Once again, I heard the same voice: "She went home, hurry and take him!" They put me on a ladder serving as a stretcher, laid the body of a girl on me, and carried us out of the room. While the grave diggers were carrying us toward the cemetery, passing by the church, they came across my aunt Maria and informed her that I had died. I still remember her words: "I want to see him for the last time." Approaching the stretcher, she looked at me and, seeing that I had blinked, right away demanded my return to the hospital. Thus, I was saved from death" [8, p.108].

Similar cases took place in other settlements as well. In this regard, author Vasile Balan states that in the village of Cârpești: "Each day, 3-4 people died and were interred in mass graves. Grigore Mocanu, who worked as a gravedigger in those days, shared the following account about that period. The famine of 1946-1947 covered our village in grief and darkness as well. We buried so many people that I can no longer keep count of them... We did not close the grave completely for a few days, until it was filled. But there were cases when even semi-conscious people were thrown into the common grave. I still cannot forget Anica Znacoveanu, a Gypsy woman we found unconscious in the middle of the road. We laid her in the sleigh along with the others, assuming she had died. When we moved to place her in the grave, she suddenly started groaning. Ilie Argint, who at the time led the village soviet and was accompanying us, told us to throw her into the pit too: "She'll die anyway," he said. "So we buried Anica Znacoveanu alive as well. May I be forgiven for this sin", Mr. Grigore concluded, making the sign of the cross [14, p.65-66].

Naturally, this whole ordeal took place under the cover of **Soviet propaganda articles**, which presented a different version of events. As cases of cannibalism were reported in January 1947 across the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, and activists seized the last remaining food from people, Soviet correspondents wrote: "The collective farm had already prepared the seeds and placed them in granaries. The grains are kept in proper storage conditions and protected against rodents. This refers to seeds of wheat, rye, barley, and corn... Every morning, the collective farm employees move out to the planted fields. They use shovels to cut frozen snow into slabs, stacking them to build ridges that will capture the incoming snow. By this method, 120 hectares had already been processed" [15, p.3].

The article "Let's Protect the Orchards" mentions that: "The young viticulture and orchard workers of the Săseni sovkhos in Bravicea district take care of orchards and grapevines". Young people from the state farm wrap the trees' trunks with bulrushes and prepare stakes for the vines. Efrosinia and Elena Cemortan are carrying out 180-200% of their daily required output" [16, p.3].

In reality, many of the settlements praised by propagandists in the press were recording high numbers of people affected by dystrophy, along with a rise in crimes typical of the famine period. As previously stated, in most cases cannibals would lure **children with false promises that they would provide them with food. Given their young age, the**

children could not comprehend the adults' cruel intentions.

A strictly confidential note signed by Major Lavrentiev in February 1947, head of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic of the MIA secretariat, states that: "On February 9, 1947, the resident of the village of Taraclia, Căinari district, Stepu Leonid Ivanovici, born in 1912, lured the little boy Guranda, born in 1935, into his house, killed him in order to eat his flesh. He was arrested and taken away... on February 15, 1947, in the village of Ci-mișlia, Bazatic Maria Savovna, born in 1925, and Bazatic Anna Savovna, born in 1920, lured a 7-year-old girl, Bulat, into their house, killed her, and ate her flesh... The Bazatic sisters were placed under arrest" [11, page 78].

The following note states that: "On February 28, 1947, the inhabitants of the village of Sturzovca, Glodeni district, Balti County, the poor peasants Chilar Anna Stepanovna, Gornan Vasiliu Ivanovici and Galușca Zinaida Ivanovna, lured into their house a 10-year-old boy, Creșciuc Mihail Danilovich, whom they cut up and ate his flesh... Everyone involved was arrested and charged with criminal offenses" [11, page 127].

Many children were declared missing during that period, with no further information about them. Following the investigation, some of the remains were found, while other children were never discovered. According to archival records, the following information has been preserved: "On June 8, 1947, an 11-year-old girl from Voroneț village in Chiperceni district, Vorgan Zinaida Feodorovna, disappeared from the family orchard. Her parents notified the village soviet and expressed suspicion that the peasant women Botnar D.A. and Caciuc A.A. from the same village had abducted and killed her. Following investigations carried out by employees of the Internal Affairs Department of the Chiperceni district, it was found that the girl was indeed kidnapped and killed, and her flesh was consumed by the criminals. It was also established that previously, a 15-year-old orphan girl, Russu Vera Timofeevna, was kidnapped and killed by them, whose flesh was consumed by the criminals, who were joined by the resident of the same village, Lopatinschaia A.G. All of them were arrested and brought before criminal justice proceedings" [11, page 191].

On April 26, 1947, information was received by the OAI section of Olănești district regarding the disappearance of two underage sisters, Agafia Joltîri (10) and Tatiana Joltîri (15), from the village of Purcari in Olănești district. Following the measures taken, it was found that both were killed and their meat consumed by the residents of the same village, Danilescu Olga Constantinovna and Murzac Olga Constantinovna. The offenders were prosecuted under criminal law" [11, page 192].

It should be reiterated that in certain cases, offenders could abduct a child simply by promising him a piece of bread. Confirmation of this comes from the following archival records: "On January 26, an unknown 11-year-old girl came to the house of Grigorii Nichitovici Sharov (b. 1928), a poor inhabitant of Volontirovca village, and asked for some bread. Sharov and Sharov's sister Lyudmila Nikitovna, born in 1926, killed her, dismembered her body, and ate the flesh. Both were arrested and taken away" [11, page 78].

Further information on the same case is provided in the following document, which states that: "In the village of Volontirovca, Bender County, in the house of citizen Sharov Grigorii Nichitovici, born in 1920, a dismembered body of an 11-year-old girl was found, part of which was consumed as food. The investigation determined that Sharov and Sharov's sister Lyudmila Vasilievna lured an 11-year-old girl who was passing by their house into their home by promising her bread and killed her. The identity of the minor has not been established to date. Sharov G.N. and Sharova L.V. have been arrested" [11, page 14].

Upon examining the case, it is noted that the victim has not been identified. It is also hard to determine how many such cases took place and how many children are currently

still regarded as missing.

The research materials indicate that children under the age of 10 were more easily victimized by criminals. In a number of cases, the children were abducted by individuals they were acquainted with. Frequently, they were neighbors, as a matter of fact. In the following, we will present a few examples of this type: "On January 24, 1947, the inhabitants of the village of Mileștii Mici, Chișinău district, Chihai Constantin Alexandrovici, born in 1927, a middle-class peasant, and Andronachi Nadejda Andreevna, born in 1930, lured their neighbors' daughter Petrașcu Parascovia Pavlovna, born in 1940, into the house of the Andronachi village, whom they cut up, dismembered, and consumed. Chihai and Andronachi were arrested by the authorities" [11, page 14].

The reports submitted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic mentioned that the main factor that generated the crimes of murder with the subsequent dismemberment of the corpse to consume the meat was the fact that most of the perpetrators did not have food and were deprived of help from the Soviet authorities during the famine. In this regard, we are involuntarily reminded of the statements of the American sociologist Edward A. Ross: "Human groups are often the final result of social processes." [17, p.171].

As previously mentioned, some offenders were suffering from a severe form of dystrophy. A case was reported in early April 1947 to the leadership of the MIA of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, showing that: "The resident of the village of Ialoveni, Chisinau district, Vasilița Evghenia Petrovna, born in 1917, a peasant, on March 10 kidnapped and cut up an 11-year-old girl, her neighbor Boldurat Feodosia Vasilievna, and consumed her flesh. Vasilița has third-degree dystrophy and has been isolated in a barracks" [11, page 174].

Often, those offenders died shortly after due to the ailments they were suffering from. Thus: "The resident of the village of Sarcova, Rezina district, Orhei county, Lesnic Irina Dmitrievna, born in 1897, on March 27 lured a 5-year-old child who was playing in the road, Morcan Feodor, into the yard of her house, whom she killed by strangulation, dismembered the corpse and partially used it for food. During the investigation at the scene, the other body parts of the murdered boy were found in the attic of the house. A few days following her arrest, Lesnic I.D. died as a result of pneumonia" [11, page 180].

Throughout the reference period, some adults involved children in criminal activities, taking advantage of their precarious situation. One of the strictly secret archival materials states to the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic leadership that: "On January 12, 1947, in the village of Avdarma, Comrat district, citizen Iazadji Nadejda, born in 1907, from a kulak family, with the participation of her daughter Elena, born in 1930, kidnapped and cut up a 7-year-old girl, Grec A.S., dismembered her body and ate it. Both of them were apprehended" [11, page 77].

The following top secret note states that: "Citizen Iahodji Nadezhda Ivanovna, born in 1907, and her daughter Iahodji Elena Ivanovna cut a 7-year-old girl, Gref Alexandra Sergheevna... Both women were arrested and recognized their guilt. No food supplies were received from the state by the Iahodji family" [11, page 8].

Another case was reported on May 26, 1947 as follows: "The residents of the village of Alexandresti, Râșcanii district, Derevensachaia D.N., her daughter Derevenschaia P.G. and her son Derevenschii E.G. killed their fellow villager Brenic Leonid Pavlovici, aged 6, and consumed his flesh. The perpetrators are being prosecuted under criminal law" [11, page 192]. This is followed by the statement that: "On June 28, 1947, at 10 p.m., Maria Feodorovna Miron, born in 1892, resident of Scoreni village in Strășeni district, through her daughter Feodosia Davîdovna Miron, aged 13, lured into the house the little boy Boris

Gheorghievici Miron, who lived next door. They cut him up and ate his flesh. During the investigation search, authorities discovered bones and clothing identified as belonging to Miron Boris Gheorghievici. Maria Feodorovna Miron and her daughter Feodosia Davidovna Miron have been arrested" [11, page 197].

As previously noted, the Soviet authorities made no efforts to assist the population in overcoming these difficulties. On a formal level, meetings were organized and widely reported in the Soviet press. On the pages of "Molodiozh Moldavii," a concise report was published from a meeting dedicated to the fight against drought, stating that: "The gathering was attended by scientists, agricultural specialists, kolkhoz members, and peasants. Comrade Kashnikov, Secretary of the CC of the CP(B) of Moldova, addressed the audience from the tribune on "Measures to combat drought and develop water management in Moldova".

Based on the presentation, participants began active discussions. Professors Dorofeef and Kovarsckii of the Chișinău Agricultural Institute gave significant attention to the proposal on selecting drought-resistant agricultural crops. Other speakers highlighted the role of shelterbelts in agriculture. Comrade Golic, representative of the Central Committee of the CP(B) of Moldova, noted that in many districts insufficient attention is paid to irrigation system development and that the use of drought-resistant crops is progressing very slowly. He also spoke about the need to ensure greater snow retention in the fields and to use water from melting snow to achieve a rich harvest. For outstanding performance in the development of water management in Ceadâr-Lunga, the district received the Red Banner of the CC of the CP(B) of Moldova and the Council of Ministers of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. The meeting participants signed an address to all peasants and collective farmers of the republic, urging them to combat drought and develop water management. With great enthusiasm, the participants signed a greeting addressed to the leader of the people, Comrade Stalin" [18, p.3].

In reality, propagandists together with party leaders sharpened their skills in deception. They published lies in books and newspapers without remorse, while the population was facing a particularly serious situation. To confirm this, we present an excerpt from a top-secret report dispatched in February 1947 to the political leadership of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic on combating dystrophy in Sângera, Chișinău district, stating that: "... For 99 patients with third-degree dystrophy, 25 beds are available in the Sângera hospital and 20 beds in a barrack opened close to the hospital. The facilities are severely overcrowded. Each bed is shared by three to four patients, who remain in their own clothing. There is no bedding or mattresses in either the hospital facility or the barrack. The hospital and the barrack are attended by one doctor, one feldsher, two nurses, nine orderlies, as well as five auxiliary workers. Conditions in both the hospital and the barrack are appalling because there is no firewood for heating. The responsibility is attributed to the chairman of the village soviet, Andrei Afanasievici Cazacu, the secretary Dmitrii Andreevici Brânză, and the hospital doctor, Comrade Voroncihin. The disinfection chamber and bath are functioning poorly and with great difficulty. As a consequence, a large number of patients are infected with pediculosis ... During January and February 1947, 76 deaths were recorded in the locality, including 54 among hospitalized patients. Significant problems are caused by the lack of support from district party secretary Platov and executive chairman Grigorencu to institutions fighting dystrophy.

The situation worsened due to the negligence shown by the chairman of the village soviet and its secretary, who were to have delivered 35 m³ of firewood from the Bender forestry enterprise already in July. Currently, they are going through people's yards looking for firewood to ensure heating for the hospital and barrack and to support the

food supply point” [11, pages 42–43]. A further note indicates that: “On 10 February 1947, 46,343 people affected by dystrophy were identified in Chișinău county, including 17,775 children... Only 5,342 patients from the total are under hospital treatment” [11, page 59].

From the evidence presented, it is clear that both local and central (Kremlin) authorities viewed with indifference the statistics showing daily deaths of thousands of people. In psychological terms, they did not differ from the Russian criminal Vasili Komaroff, who at the start of the 20th century killed and dismembered more than 33 people for material interest. During the investigation, he declared that: “he does not think humans are more important than caterpillars” [19, p.275].

It is obvious that this same mentality was present among the officials of the communist totalitarian regime reestablished in Bessarabia beginning in the summer of 1944. Some eyewitnesses insist that even the fascists in the war years did not behave in this manner. A resident of the village of Avdarma, Tumba Evdochia, testified that not all German soldiers were bad people: “During the summer of 1944, the German troops were withdrawing. One German soldier received orders to burn down the munitions warehouse in the middle of the village. Before setting the depot on fire, he went to an old woman’s house and asked her to notify all the residents of Avdarma to flee the village. The elderly woman pleaded with him not to burn the depot down, but he explained that he would be executed if he disobeyed the order. Due to this German serviceman, many locals saved themselves by evacuating their homes in haste. As a result of the explosion, fragments flew in all directions. Unfortunately, the German soldier did not succeed in fleeing the area and was seized and executed by the Russians” [8, p.119–120].

It should also be emphasized that both Party members and activists targeted locals who claimed they had enjoyed better living conditions under Romanian administration. As a countermeasure, public trials were organized for war criminals, where both Germans and Romanians were brought before the court. Selected excerpts from the records of these proceedings appeared in the press. The Soviet authorities aimed to convince the population that they were living significantly better under Soviet governance. One of the articles published states that a person called “Kuharev”, who had been employed as a medical worker during the occupation, said that... A significant number of people died from infectious diseases in the village of Trușeni in July 1944: “Each dwelling sheltered 5–6 families; on visiting these houses, I had to evacuate 4–5 bodies of people who had died from exanthematous typhus... Throughout a 14-day period, more than 1,000 people in Trușeni died because of typhus” [20, p.6].

Obviously, no one disputed the fact that during the military operations there were cases of infection and death among locals due to infectious diseases; however, the situation during the 1946–1947 famine proved to be much more severe. In a report submitted to the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic leadership at the end of February 1947 by Lieutenant General Tutușkin, it is noted that: “There was a continuous rise in the number of dystrophy cases in Chișinău County by February 20, 1947... On February 10, there were a total of 46,343 people in the county, and by February 20 the number had reached 48,173... Over the course of 20 February days, 1,398 deaths were recorded...” [11, page 51].

Chișinău County included the locality of Trușeni as well, to which the witness referred during the trial of war criminals. Unfortunately, during the famine artificially caused by the Soviet authorities, cases of cannibalism were also recorded in this village. Children were also among the people who fell victim. One of the briefing notes indicates that: “The residents of the village of Trușeni, Chișinău District, Nicolai Anna, Grebencea Alexandra and Grebencea Maria, on June 20, 1947, cut up the 7-year-old orphan girl Boța Maria and ate her flesh. The criminals were subjected to criminal prosecution” [11, page 194].

This reality was typically masked by articles encouraging people to engage more actively in building socialism, arguing that: "All labor teams in Moldova enthusiastically support the initiative of the workers of Leningrad and undertake to work determinedly to accomplish the set five-year plan within four years" [21, p.1].

It is well known that the Gagauz population suffered greatly during the 1946–1947 famine; however, the press at the time described it differently. This is confirmed by an article published in late December 1947 by Soviet correspondent D. Shchukin, in which it is written that the Gagauz were content with their situation and that, for the "first time," they were able to choose their local authorities via "free elections": "...The lights in the village of Carbalia burned throughout the entire night. The majority of the inhabitants of this village are Gagauz. Throughout the year, these people experienced many significant events. That fall, shortly before sowing the fields, the "Andreev" collective farm was formed. The people joined forces during sowing and succeeded in completing the work very rapidly. Subsequently, the fields became covered in snow, which guaranteed the kolkhoz workers a good yield.

At present, the Gagauz are, for the first time, freely electing their representatives to the local Soviets. Among the candidates are fellow villagers — Gagauz people: Iusumbeli G.V., Caraiami D.S., Dermendji D.V. In the fraternal Soviet family of peoples, all laboring people, regardless of ethnic origin, have equal rights to employment and happiness" [22, p.2].

Publications describing the "happiness" of Soviet peoples continued even as the Gagauz, along with other local residents, were violently loaded into cattle wagons in 1949 and deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia, where countless people died under inhuman and degrading conditions.

It is disappointing that even nowadays some writers misrepresent historical truth in their publications. Soviet and post-Soviet historiography attempted to present the economic difficulties solely as a consequence of natural causes, downplaying the impact of political decisions and repressive policies on the aggravation of the 1946–1947 famine crisis. Thus, a number of Russian authors sought, with extraordinary cynicism, to attribute the responsibility for the 1946–1947 famine in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic to the Romanian authorities.

These historical revisionists state that: "As a result of the drought, a dreadful famine occurred in Moldova during 1946–1947. The Romanians are also held responsible, as during their retreat under the advance of the Soviet army, they took away all the seed supplies. Consequently, there was not enough bread for the people, and they were living at the edge of existence. Food aid was sent from Moscow to support the local population, and public kitchens were organized, although this was still insufficient" [23, p.10–11].

Archival materials that have been declassified demonstrate the contrary. According to reports from the force structures, it becomes clear that: "Starting in the summer of 1944, the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was crossed by trains carrying grain, food products, medicines, timber, and other goods, traveling from Romania to Soviet Russia. During the 1946 famine, the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic railway made trains available to the Soviet authorities for transporting bread from Romania to the USSR. In a strictly classified report dated 5 January 1947, sent to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Lieutenant General Tutuşkin, by Major Kornienko, head of the special transport section of the Chişinău railways, it was stated that: "...In accordance with a directive from the Ministry of Transport, in December 1946 we were required to supply wagons for the transport of bread from Romania to the USSR, as well as for returning demobilized Soviet Army personnel to the country...". A further note designated as strictly secret contains the main

tasks established for the Special Transport Section of the Railways in Chișinău for 1946: "To ensure the delivery of bread and other freight from Romania in accordance with the schedules set out in interstate accords". These data indicate that a significant share of Romanian grain, beginning in 1944, was transported via the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic to Soviet Russia, including during 1946–1947, when hundreds of thousands of Bessarabians starved due to the fact that, in the period of drought, the Soviet authorities confiscated their last food supplies, leaving them without any means of survival. It is misleading to state that Moscow did everything possible to prevent famine in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, when in fact it had unleashed a full-scale struggle against the Bessarabians to eliminate any attempt at resistance to the occupiers" [23, p.11].

In order to protect the younger generation of his native village from the danger of historical distortion and from the tendency of some nostalgic feelings to revive the Soviet Empire, Vasile Balan finishes the chapter of his book devoted to the famine with the following lines: "I have enumerated all of this so that future generations may know the anguish experienced by the famine-stricken people of Cârpești. It should be made clear that responsibility for all these disasters falls on the Kremlin leadership, the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic leadership of that period led by former First Secretary of the C.C. of the C.P.(b) of Moldova N.G. Coval and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, together with the party and district authorities of Baimaclia, and especially Ilie Argint, former chairman of the Cârpești village council... Innocent victims of the 1946 famine and of the Soviet occupation regime! They deserve at least some kind of cross raised in their honor!!! Everlasting memory to them!!!" [9, p.66].

Conclusions. The 1946–1947 famine in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was largely intentional and coordinated. It cannot be considered exclusively a natural phenomenon, but must be analyzed in connection with political choices and their long-term effects on human lives. The traumatic experiences endured by the population shaped the attitudes and mindset of future generations, demonstrating that the 1946–1947 famine left enduring marks on society through the emergence of behaviors, survival mechanisms, and resistance patterns that are still reflected in collective memory today.

This message is addressed not only to younger generations, but also to adults who lived under Soviet censorship and restricted access to information. It is widely accepted that the post-Soviet society still faced a shortage of reliable sources documenting the calvary endured by our fellow citizens during the famine of 1946–1947. Officials of the totalitarian communist regime suppressed information indicating that this humanitarian catastrophe had been intentionally engineered in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic and used as a repressive tool against the indigenous population. Evidently, the famine, compounded by the discriminatory restrictions imposed by the Soviet nomenklatura, forced the population to endure severely degrading living conditions. The ongoing crisis among the population caused disturbances in behavior in many local residents, which in turn led to the commission of serious and particularly serious crimes. A number of individuals were detained on charges of cannibalism. Under these circumstances, the authorities did not take steps to prevent this kind of crime, effectively leaving the population on its own, without ensuring safety or safeguarding lives. Simultaneously, no measures were undertaken to prevent the abduction of children, offenses that had escalated during the famine. In this regard, the article serves as a means of restoring historical memory and disseminating information about the genocide attributed to the communist totalitarian regime against the local population through the artificial induction of the 1946–1947 famine in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, a fact that remains indisputable.

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