

BOOK REVIEW

Marius ȘPECHEA
Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania

THE MOST RECENT COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE TRANSNISTRIAN ISSUE: "THE ARMED CONFLICT OF THE DNIESTER. THREE DECADES LATER", BY PETER LANG PUBLISHING GROUP

Abstract:	<p><i>The publication of the international volume dedicated to the conflict on the Dniester, "The Armed Conflict of the Dniester. Three Decades Later", published by the prestigious Peter Lang Publishing Group in the series "South-East European History" represents the crowning of a sustained effort of almost three years from several editors and researchers from Romania, the United States of America, Germany, Turkey and the Republic of Moldova coordinated as volume editor by Professor Eugen Străuțiu.</i></p> <p><i>The current context of regional and international security makes studying and deeply understanding the dynamics of the Transnistrian settlement an asset for anyone who wants to understand the overall picture of our geopolitical region.</i></p>
Keywords:	Transnistrian conflict; Republic of Moldova; frozen conflicts; National Identity; Armed Conflict; Geopolitics
Contact details of the authors:	E-mail: marius.spechea@ulbsibiu.ro
Institutional affiliation of the authors:	Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
Institutions address:	550324-Sibiu, Calea Dumbrăvii nr. 34 Tel./ Fax: 0040/269/422169

The international volume *The Armed Conflict of the Dniester. Three Decades Later* was published as a part of the "South-East European History" series of the Peter Lang Publishing Group¹⁰³⁸. The volume includes the work of well-known researchers in analyzing international conflicts and especially those in the former Soviet space. As volume editor the editorial policy was coordinated by Professor Eugen Străuțiu from Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (Romania), who provided impressive expertise on the dynamics of the Transnistrian settlement, being the founder and director for almost ten years of the Laboratory for Analysis of the Transnistrian Conflict¹⁰³⁹. Throughout this period, he developed particularly useful analysis tools for constructive solutions to the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. The general policy of LACT systematically favored solutions through negotiation, providing the theoretical framework and academic events that focused on constructive, peaceful energies. Among the projects carried out by LACT and coordinated by Professor Eugen Străuțiu, we mention the project "The Transnistrian Files – solutions for the development of the societies on both sides of the Dniester River",¹⁰⁴⁰ carried out between 2014 -2016 and the scientific volume edited at that time, being particularly relevant¹⁰⁴¹. Among other analytical

¹⁰³⁸ <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1319009> (15.11.2023)

¹⁰³⁹ <https://centers.ulbsibiu.ro/ccsprise/lact/> (15.11.2023)

¹⁰⁴⁰ <https://centers.ulbsibiu.ro/ccsprise/lact/dezvoltarea-ca-solutie-a-reconcilierii-conflictului-transnistrean/> (11/15/2023)

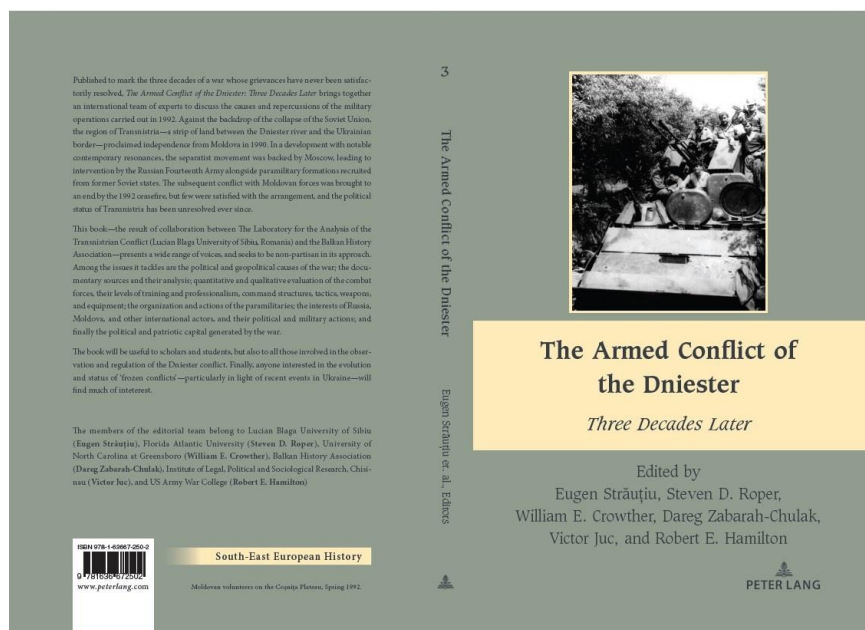
¹⁰⁴¹ Eugen Străuțiu, *The Transnistrian Conflict Files*, TehnoMedia, Sibiu 2017

contributions related to the Transnistrian theme, we mention the author's volume *Transnistrian Bibliography* (2019), and those in collaboration *A comparative analysis of the development on the two banks of the Dniestr*¹⁰⁴² (2015) and *Options of political parties in the Republic of Moldova in the Transnistrian problem*¹⁰⁴³ (2017).¹⁰⁴⁴

The Armed Conflict of the Dniester. Three Decades Later represents the result of a collaboration between the Transnistrian Conflict Analysis Laboratory¹⁰⁴⁵ and The Balkan History Association.

The members of the editorial team belong to Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu - Eugen Străuțiu, Florida Atlantic University - Steven D. Roper, University of North Carolina at Greensboro - William E. Crowther, Balkan History Association - Dareg Zabarrah-Chulak, Institute of Legal, Political and Sociological Research, Chisinau - Victor Juc, and US Army War College - Robert E. Hamilton¹⁰⁴⁶.

A list of so many names relevant for research in the field of international relations and security is a recommendation on the academic value of the volume and its great usefulness for increasing knowledge and promoting solutions - especially in the current international context, where expertise on the Transnistrian segment can be particularly relevant and useful to universities, public opinion and politicians. This volume comes at an opportune moment of maximum international interest to the security situation in Eastern Europe and especially in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, the pro-European path of the Republic of Moldova being conditioned by finding a quick and peaceful solution to the unregulated conflict on the Dniester. The multidimensional approaches and complex perspectives presented by the authors answer substantiated many questions that arise in the context of the efforts for the conflict.



¹⁰⁴² Eugen Străuțiu, *Transnistrian Bibliography*, TechnoMedia, Sibiu, 2019

¹⁰⁴³ Eugen Străuțiu, Vasile Tabără, *A Comparative Analysis of the Development on the two Banks of the Dniestr*, TechoMedia, Sibiu, 2015

¹⁰⁴⁴ Eugen Străuțiu, Nicoleta Munteanu, Marius Șpechea, *Opțiunile partidelor politice din Republica Moldova în problema transnistreană*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2017

¹⁰⁴⁵ <https://centers.ulbsibiu.ro/ccsprise/lact/> (15.11.2023)

¹⁰⁴⁶ <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1319009> (15.11.2023)

For example, we focus on Nicoleta Annemarie Munteanu's contribution, with a chapter dedicated to *War Memorials Published in Chisinau: Between Documentary Value and Patriotic Manifesto*¹⁰⁴⁷. The study analyzes and problematizes aspects related to the objectivity and subjectivity of the historical memory of the Transnistrian conflict and the role of this memory in settling or aggravating tense situations. These aspects of memory seem increasingly important in shaping the collective imaginary and political discourse, with the obvious purpose of legitimation and motivation. In a period increasingly marked by deepfake and propaganda, understanding some mechanisms of memoir discourse becomes indispensable for rational and analytical thinking necessary to correctly reconstruct the big picture.

*The 1992 Dniester Armed Conflict: An Analytical Approach to the Politico-Military Events from the Perspective of the Involved Parties*¹⁰⁴⁸ is the remarkable contribution of the youngest member of the research team, Mihai Melintei. The chapter is basically a practice of Galtung's "triangle method" on the Transnistrian conflict, thus offering a multidimensional perspective on the parties involved in the conflict and their interests, to contribute to shaping efficient ways of dialogue, but also red lines in the settlement process.

The other authors provide us with research entitled *Support for Moldova's Territorial Integrity in the Transnistrian Region from 1989 to 1992* (Keith Harrington), *Armed Stage in the Moldovan-Pridnestrovian Conflict: Causes and Political Consequences* (Anatoliy Dirun), *Fighting for What and Whom? The Non-Resident Volunteers During the Armed Conflict in Pridnestrovie* (Dareg Zabarrah-Chulak), *The Russian Federation's Approach to the Unresolved Dniester Conflict and Its Implications for the Security and Foreign Policy of the Republic of Moldova* (Ana Jovic-Lazic), *Moldova and Transnistria's Bargaining Strategies Towards Russia: Deciphering Bargaining Codes in Asymmetric Relationships* (Maximilian Ohle), *Russian Involvement in the Transnistrian War: A Prototype of Russian Modern "Hybrid Warfare"?* (Tarik Solmaz) și *Revisiting Moldova's Transnistria Dispute Amid Severing EU-Russia Ties* (Kamala Valyieva).

All nine chapters of the volume, totaling 254 pages, represent not only a consistent analytical effort, but a true geopolitical and multidimensional journey in understanding the Transnistrian conflict file, but also the contemporary world with its sometimes latent or frozen challenges.

The volume *The Armed Conflict of the Dniester Three Decades Later* remains remarkable, as it is well pointed out in the introduction, by the originality of the approach and methodology for structuring the research; the coherence of the analytical approach; the diversity of methodologies and perspectives on the topic; the usefulness of the analytical approach that comes not only with answers but as any serious research does, raises new questions and new perspectives on the topic, perspectives that will be the subject of future research and concerns.

Bibliography

1. Străuțiu, Eugen, *The Transnistrian Conflict Files*, TehnoMedia, Sibiu 2017
2. Străuțiu, Eugen, *Transnistrian Bibliography*, TechnoMedia, Sibiu, 2019
3. Străuțiu, Eugen; Tabără, Vasile, *A Comparative Analysis of the Development on the two Banks of the Dniestr*, TechoMedia, Sibiu, 2015
4. Străuțiu, Eugen; Munteanu, Nicoleta; Șpechea, Marius, *Opțiunile partidelor politice din Republica Moldova în problema transnistreană*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2017
5. Străuțiu, Eugen (Volume editor), *The Armed Conflict of the Dniester Three Decades Later*, Peter Lang Publishing Group, Lausanne-Berlin-Bruxelles-Chennai-New York-Oxford, 2023

¹⁰⁴⁷ Eugen Străuțiu (Volume editor) *The Armed Conflict of the Dniester. Three Decades Later*, Peter Lang Publishing Group, Lausanne-Berlin-Bruxelles-Chennai-New York-Oxford, 2023, pp. 115-142

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 21-40

6. <https://www.peterlang.com/document/>
7. <https://centers.ulbsibiu.ro/ccsprise/>