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HOLODOMOR: REPORTS ABOUT THE ESCAPE ACROSS THE SOVIET-ROMANIAN BORDER IN THE GERMAN- LANGUAGE PRESS OF THE EARLY 1930S

Abstract: *This article explores the response of the German-language press to the events related to illegal crossings of the Romanian-Soviet border in the early 1930s, the number of which significantly increased due to the Holodomor and repressions in the Ukrainian SSR. The study aims to analyze the coverage of these events in German-language media, the influence of such publications on shaping public opinion regarding Soviet policy in Ukraine, and to confirm the thesis about the awareness of European governments of the real situation in the USSR. During the study, periodical publications from the 1920s and 1930s printed in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Luxembourg, and Liechtenstein were processed. The novelty of the research is the discovery of the accounts of eyewitnesses and participants of escapes across the Romanian-Soviet border, who managed to reach the right bank of the Dniester. Moreover, little-known facts about the consideration of the issue of crossing this border by refugees at the League of Nations level were revealed, and for the first time, literary works of German-speaking authors dedicated to the events of the Holodomor and the attempts of Ukrainians to escape from famine and persecution were analyzed.*

The conclusion of the study highlights the high potential of the German-language press of the early 1930s as a previously underexplored source of knowledge about the history of the Holodomor. The newspapers quite thoroughly covered the problem of illegal crossing the border to escape from hunger and repression in the USSR. Most of the materials on these topics were published throughout February-April 1932. The narratives within these reports illustrate the scenes of tragedy and despair, documenting harrowing encounters with Bolshevik military forces and the orchestrated targeting of fleeing civilians

by border guards. Complemented by firsthand testimonials from survivors, these accounts provide information about socio-economic circumstances and underlying motivations precipitating their exodus from Ukraine. Moreover, the newspapers critically assessed Soviet propaganda narratives, exposing the discreet contrast between the purported prosperity within the USSR and the harsh realities endured by Ukrainian peasants under Soviet governance.

In addition, we can assume that these publications were impactful, since some writers even presumably built the storylines of their literary works based on such materials. One of these books was the novel „Thanks to You, I Found My Homeland” written by Klothilde von Stegmann. Her text was partially published in the newspapers during the early 1930s, and one of the fragments at the beginning of the novel contained an episode about the escapes across the Soviet-Romanian border. However, in the post-war edition of the book, this fragment was deleted for unknown reasons. Finally, the presence of literary texts dedicated to escapes from the USSR indicates that this topic went beyond the professional circle of journalists and diplomats; it was discussed and reflected upon by the wider population.

Key words: *Holodomor, genocide, Soviet-Romanian border, press, German-language press, newspapers, refugees, resistance.*

HOLODOMOR: IZVJEŠTAJI O BJEKSTVU PREKO SOVJETSKO-RUMUNSKJE GRANICE U NJEMAČKOJ ŠTAMPI RANIH 1930-IH

Apstrakt: *Ovaj članak istražuje reakciju njemačke štampe na događaje povezane sa ilegalnim prelazima rumunsko-sovjetske granice u ranim 1930-im godinama, čiji je broj značajno porastao zbog Holodomora i represija u Ukrajinskoj SSR. Cilj studije je analizirati pokrivenost ovih događaja u medijima na njemačkom jeziku, uticaj takvih publikacija na oblikovanje javnog mijenja o sovjetskoj politici u Ukrajini, te potvrditi tezu o svijesti evropskih vlada o stvarnoj situaciji u SSSR-u. Tokom istraživanja obrađene su periodične publikacije iz 1920-ih i 1930-ih štampane u Njemačkoj, Austriji, Švajcarskoj, Čehoslovačkoj, Luksemburgu i Lihtenštajnu. Novina istraživanja je otkriće svjedočanstava očevica i učesnika bjekstva preko rumunsko-sovjetske granice, koji su uspjeli da dođu do desne obale Dnjestra. Takođe, otkriveni su slabo poznati faktori o razmatranju pitanja prelaska ove granice od strane izbjeglica na nivou Lige naroda, a prvi put su analizirana književna djela autora koji govore njemački, posvećena događajima Holodomora i pokušajima Ukrajinaca da pobjegnu od gladi i progonstva.*

Zaključak studije naglašava visoki potencijal njemačke štampe ranih 1930-ih kao ranije nedovoljno istraženog izvora znanja o historiji Holodomora. Novine su temeljno pokrivale problem ilegalnog prelaska granice radi bjekstva od gladi i represije u SSSR-u. Većina materijala na ovu temu objavljena je

tokom februara-aprila 1932. godine. Narativi unutar ovih izvještaja ilustruju scene tragedije i očaja, dokumentujući mučne susrete s boljševičkim vojnim snagama i usmjereno targetiranje bježećih civila od strane graničnih straža. U kombinaciji s ličnim svjedočenjima preživjelih, ovi izvještaji pružaju informacije o socio-ekonomskim okolnostima i osnovnim motivima koji su doveli do njihovog egzodusa iz Ukrajine. Osim toga, novine su kritički ocjenjivale sovjetske narative propagande, razotkrivajući diskretni kontrast između navodne prosperitetnosti unutar SSSR-a i surove stvarnosti s kojom su se suočavali ukrajinski seljaci pod sovjetskom vlašću.

Takođe, možemo pretpostaviti da su ove publikacije imale uticaj, jer su neki pisci čak navodno gradili zaplete svojih književnih djela na osnovu takvih materijala. Jedna od tih knjiga bila je roman „Hvala ti, pronašla sam svoju domovinu“ autorke Klothilde von Stegmann. Njen tekst djelimično je objavljen u novinama tokom ranih 1930-ih, a jedan od fragmenata na početku romana sadržavao je epizodu o bjekstvima preko sovjetsko-rumunske granice. Međutim, u poslijeratnom izdanju knjige, ovaj fragment je izbrisan iz nepoznatih razloga. Na kraju, prisustvo književnih tekstova posvećenih bjekstvu iz SSSR-a ukazuje na to da je ova tema nadmašila profesionalni krug novinara i diplomata; o njoj se raspravljalo i razmišljalo među širom populacijom.

Ključne riječi: *Holodomor, genocid, sovjetsko-rumunska granica, štampa, njemačka štampa, novine, izbjeglice, otpor.*

Introduction

During 1932–1933, fleeing abroad from Ukraine, which was gripped by mass famine, became a method of rescue from death, albeit very risky. Those who managed to find themselves on the territory of Romania or Poland carried valuable information about the real situation in the USSR. Thanks to the press, this information about the fugitives spread quite quickly. Ukrainian emigration organizations also contributed to its dissemination, collecting data about the artificial famine and attempting to raise awareness of the world community about it.

Research into the history of illegal crossings of the Soviet-Russian border in the interwar period was carried out by the Romanian historian A.-M. Mironov¹. The escapes from the USSR through the Romanian border in the early 1930s were examined by A. Bisciani². In turn, A. Guzun noted that in the absence of Romanian diplomatic representation in the USSR, refugees who

¹ Alexandru-Murad Mironov, *And Quiet Flows the Dniester. Life and Death on the Romanian-Soviet border, 1918–1940. Arhivele Totalitarismului*, 2011, 3–4, 32–58.

² Alberto Basciani, *From Collectivization to the Great Famine: Eyewitness Statements on the Holodomor by Refugees from the Ukrainian SSR, 1930–1933, Holodomor Studies*, 2011, 1–2. 1–27.

crossed the border with Romania were an important source of information for the Romanian government³.

S. Humennyi⁴ and R. Kotsan⁵ researched the history of the Soviet border during the Holodomor. Meanwhile, Y. Papuga examined the issue of assistance to refugees who managed to cross the Soviet-Polish border during the Holodomor⁶. The international legal aspects of the functioning of the Romanian-Soviet border in the interwar period were studied by V. Makarchuk and N. Rudy⁷. T. Boryak analyzed the source base from Romanian archives and Romanian historiography on escapes from the USSR to Romania during the years of the Holodomor⁸.

It is important to note that during the interwar period, there was a territorial conflict between the USSR and Romania over Bessarabia, which was part of the Russian Empire before its dissolution and was included in Romania by legislative decisions of its Council in 1918⁹. The USSR did not recognize

³ Vadim Guzun, Documentele diplomatice române ca sursă pentru studierea celei de a doua mari foamete sovietice [Romanian Diplomatic Documents as a Source for Researching the Second Great Soviet Famine], *Enciclopedica. Revista de istorie a științei și studii enciclopedice – Encyclopedica. History of science magazine and encyclopedic studies*, 2013, 2(5), 38.

⁴ Serhii Humennyi, *Nelehal'ni mihratsiini protsesy na pol's'ko-radians'komu kordonu (v administratyvnykh mezhakh USRR/URSR) u 1921–1939 rr.* [The illegal migration processes on the Polish-Soviet border (within the administrative boundaries of Ukrainian SSR) in 1921–1939], Kyiv, 2021; Serhii Humennyi, *Nelehal'ni mihratsii na kordonu mizh Respublikoiu Pol'shcha ta USRR naperedodni ta pid chas Holodomoru 1932–1933 rr.* [The Illegal Migration on the Border Between the Poland and the Ukrainian SSR]. *Visnyk Kyivs'koho natsional'noho universytetu imeni Tarasa Shevchenka. Istoriiia. – Bulletin of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. History*, 2019, (1) 140, 18–23.

⁵ Roman Kotsan, *Formuvannia ta funktsionuvannia radians'ko-pol's'koho kordonu u 1921–1939 rokakh* [Formation and functioning of the Soviet-Polish border in 1921–1939], Chernivtsi, 2019; Roman Kotsan, *Porushennia rezhymu radians'ko-pol's'koho kordonu ta borot'ba z nym u mizhvoiennyi period (1921–1939 roky)* [Violation of the Soviet-Polish border and the struggle against it within the interwar period (1921-1939)]. *Istoryko-politychni problemy suchasnoho svitu: Zbirnyk naukovykh statei* [Modern Historical and Political Issues: Journal in Historical & Political Sciences], 2019, 39, 68–78.

⁶ Yaroslav Papuha, *Zakhidna Ukraina i Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv: Moral'no-politychna i material'na dopomoha postrazhdalym* [Western Ukraine and the Holodomor of 1932–1933: Moral-political and material assistance to the victims], Astrolabiia, Lviv, 2008.

⁷ Volodymyr Makarchuk, Nazarii Rudyi, *Skhidni kordony mizhvoiennoi Rumunii (1918–1940 rr.): aspekty mizhnarodnoho prava* [Eastern borders of inter-war Romania (1918–1940): aspects of international law]. *Naukovyi visnyk Lvivs'koho derzhavnoho universytetu vnutrishnikh sprav. Seriiia yurydychna* [Scientific bulletin of the Lviv State University of Internal Affairs. Legal series], 2013, 2, 23–34.

⁸ Tetiana Boryak, *Usna istoriia u dzherel'nii bazi studii Holodomoru: istoriia formuvannia ta informatsiinyi potentsial korpusu svidchen'* [Oral history as a Source for Holodomor Studies: Formation of Eyewitness Testimony Collections and their Informative Value], TOV “Yurka Lyubchenko”, Kyiv, 2024.

⁹ Oleksandr Kryknitskyi O. Viis'kova operatsiia Chervonoii armii z aneksiiei Pivnichnoi Bukovyny i Bessarabii (cherven' – lypen' 1940 r) [Military operation of the Red Army on the annexation of Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia (June – July 1940)]. *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* [Ukrainian historical magazine], 2019, 1, 144.

the borders of Romania, so conflicts on the border were frequent in the 1920s¹⁰. From the late 1920s, the Soviet-Romanian relations normalized, and diplomatic relations were established between the countries on June 9, 1934¹¹. However, the Soviet side de jure did not recognize Bessarabia and Khotynschyna as part of Romania¹², which was reflected on official maps¹³.

The German-language press in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Luxembourg, and Liechtenstein disseminated articles on the history of escapes from the USSR. In particular, these materials were published in German newspapers *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Vorwärts*, *Der Grafschafter*, *Bergische Post*, *Der Bote vom Geising und Müglitztal-Zeitung*, *Sächsische Volkszeitung*, Swiss newspapers *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, *Walliser Volksfreund*, *Walliser Bote*, *Der Bund*, *Geschäftsblatt für den oberen Teil des Kantons Bern*, Austrian newspapers *Freiheit*, *Salzburger Kirchenblatt*, *Tiroler Anzeiger*, *Welt Blatt*, *Vorarlberger Volksblatt*, *Kärntner Volkszeitung und Heimatblatt*, Luxembourgish newspapers *Obermosel Zeitung* and *Luxemburger Wort*, and Liechtenstein newspapers *Liechtensteiner Volksblatt* and *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten*, as well as Czechoslovak newspaper *Sozialdemokrat*¹⁴.

Early mentions of the situation on the Soviet-Romanian border

As early as the 1920s, German-language newspapers wrote about the situation on the Soviet-Romanian border. They mentioned border clashes initiated by Bolsheviks¹⁵ and attempts of Soviet agents to enter Romania¹⁶, criminal gangs crossing the Romanian border from the left bank of the

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 145

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² Volodymyr Makarchuk, Nazarii Rudyi, Skhidni kordony mizhvoiennoi Rumunii (1918–1940 rr): aspekty mizhnarodnoho prava [Eastern borders of inter-war Romania (1918–1940): aspects of international law]. *Naukovyi visnyk Lvivs'koho derzhavnoho universytetu vnutrishnikh sprav. Serii yurydychna* [Scientific bulletin of the Lviv State University of Internal Affairs. Legal series], 2013, 2, 30.

¹³ For example: Nikolay Meshcheryakov (Ed), *Malaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya* [Small Soviet Encyclopedia], 09: Tugendbund — Shvernik, Malaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya OGIZ RSFSR, Moscow 1931, map between pages 200–201.

¹⁴ The printed organ of the German Social Democratic Workers' Party in the Czechoslovak Republic (Deutsche sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik) was one of the leading parties in the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia.

¹⁵ “Von der russisch-rumänischen Grenze” [From the Russian-Romanian border], *Salzburger Volksblatt*, Salzburg, 8 Mai 1922, 2; “Bandenüderfall in der Dobrujscha” [Gang Attack in Dobruja], *Wiener Allgemeiner Zeitung*, Wien, 7 Juli 1927, 10; “Bolschewikenüberfall auf Bessarabien” [Bolshevik Raid on Bessarabia], *Tages-Post*, Linz, 10 Juli 1927, 2.

¹⁶ “Ein Zwischenfall an der bessarabischen Grenze” [An Incident at the Bessarabian Border], *Reichspost*, Wien, 26 Mai 1926, 3.

Dniester¹⁷, smuggling across the border, and anti-Soviet uprisings near the border¹⁸. Quite often, these reports were based on rumors and did not contain specific facts. For example, in January 1928, the Austrian *Freie Stimmen* wrote, „In northern Bessarabia, on the 22nd and 23rd of this month, cannon shots were heard from the Russian side. It is assumed that the military revolt had to be suppressed by artillery. The population fled to the Russian-Romanian border, and some managed to cross the Dniester into Romanian territory. However, detailed news is lacking”¹⁹.

In some articles, refugees attempting to enter Romania during uprisings were also mentioned. Researcher A. Matveyev notes that from the end of 1929 to the beginning of 1930, in three districts of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) located near the Soviet-Romanian border—Tulchyn, Vinnytsia, and Mohyliv-Podilskyi—81 armed uprisings were recorded, involving 243 villages²⁰.

In 1930, the Austrian *Freiheit* reported on machine gun shootings of local residents in Tiraspol²¹, after which the inhabitants of the left bank of the Dniester asked Romanian border guards to let them cross the river by boats, but the Romanians did not allow this²². However, the information in this article is presented in general terms, without much detail.

Growing interest to the topic of illegal escape from the USSR

The German-language newspapers published the majority of their materials about escapes over the period from February to April 1932. For example, on February 25, 1932, the correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung* from Bucharest reported about an event on the Soviet-Romanian border that

¹⁷ The article suggests that such actions were probably supported by the Soviet authorities. “Räuberrunwesen in Bessarabien” [Banditry in Bessarabia], *Erlafthal-Bote*, Scheibs, 29 April 1923, 2–3.

¹⁸ “Revolution in der Ukraine?” [Revolution in Ukraine?], *Klagenfurter Zeitung*, Klagenfurter, 11 August 1926, 4; “Antibolschewistische Bewegung in der Ukraine” [Anti-Bolshevik Movement in Ukraine], *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, Wien, 26 April 1929, 2.

¹⁹ “Militärrevolte in der Ukraine” [Military revolt in Ukraine], *Freie Stimmen*, Klagenfurt, 26 Januar 1928, 1.

²⁰ Andrii Matveyev, Opir selian Podillia i Pivdenno-skhidnoi Volyni kolektyvizatsii: dokumenty svidchat' [Resistance of the peasants of Podillia and South-Eastern Volyn to collectivization: documents testify]. *Visnyk Natsional'noho universytetu “Lvivs'ka politekhnika” Derzhava ta armiiia* [Bulletin of the National University Lviv Polytechnic. The state and the army], 2003, 493, 86.

²¹ The capital of the Autonomous Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic (AMSSR) from 1929 was Tiraspol. [Source: Yaroslava Vermenych, Moldavska ARSR [Moldavian ASSR], *Entsyklopediia istorii Ukrainy* [Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine], 7: Mi-O, “Naukova Dumka” Publishing House, Kyiv 2010, 26.

²² “Sowjettruppen schießen auf das Volk” [Soviet troops shoot at the people], *Freiheit!*, Wien, 19 April 1930, 8.

had occurred the day before, „On the Dniester, a serious border incident occurred. Sixty Romanian farmers residing in Ukraine attempted to cross the frozen Dniester tonight because living conditions in Ukraine had become unbearable for them. However, the Russian border guards suddenly open gunfire on them. Forty men remained dead or seriously wounded on the ice. The remaining twenty managed to reach the Romanian bank. Most of them are also more or less seriously wounded”²³.

The Liechtenstein newspaper *Liechtensteiner Volksblatt* also reported on escapes from the USSR in February 1932, „During the night from Wednesday to Thursday, ten people managed to escape from Soviet Russia to Romanian territory across the Dniester. They are mostly Moldovan peasants, and almost all of them are injured. According to their accounts, there were originally sixty people attempting to cross the border. However, they were surprised by the border guards, who immediately opened fire and killed forty men”²⁴.

The Berlin-based *Vorwärts* also reported on the problem of mass crossings of the Romanian-Soviet border, „In February alone [1932—Aut], 342 Russian²⁵ refugees were counted, more than a hundred of whom reached the Romanian side wounded”²⁶. This article also described the indifferent attitude of border guards and authorities to these events. In particular, the author noted that bodies were left on the Dniester and no one collected them²⁷. The publication also mentioned that the situation on the border had escalated, „In the nocturnal aftermath, the border resembles a war front: floodlights sweep across the riverbed and the banks, flares are launched at the slightest noise, any suspicious individual is showered with bullets without warning. While only individuals or small groups attempt to cross over from Romania, border crossings from Ukraine have become a regular occurrence”²⁸.

A similar story was described in the Czechoslovak media outlet *Sozialdemokrat* on March 17. In the article „Horror on the Dniester”, a group of 60 escapees was mentioned, of which only twenty managed to cross the Dniester on the ice²⁹. Among other things, the authors cited the reasons for the escapes, the first of which was the mentioned collectivization, but the material also indicated that those leaving the USSR included „soldiers deserting with weapons in hand, workers, and intellectuals”³⁰.

²³ „Die Flüchtlinge am Dnjestr erschossen” [The refugees at the Dniester were shot], *Kölnische Zeitung*, Köln, 25 Februar 1932, 3.

²⁴ „Vierzig russische Bauern erschossen” [Forty Russian peasants were shot dead], *Liechtensteiner Volksblatt*, Schaan, 1 March 1932, 3.

²⁵ The German press often referred to citizens of the USSR as “Russians”.

²⁶ „Grausiges Schauspiel am Dnjestrfluß” [A gruesome spectacle at the Dniester River], *Vorwärts*, Berlin, 15 March 1932, 2.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ „Schrecken am Dnjestr” [Horror at the Dniester], *Sozialdemokrat*, Prag, 17 March 1932, 4.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

The article also mentioned a tragic incident, which, according to the newspaper, occurred on March 4, 1932, „... at 5 o'clock in the evening, from the Romanian bank, a sleigh was seen swiftly rode from the Soviet-Ukrainian village of Parkany towards Bessarabia. In the middle of the Dniester, on the ice, the refugees were intercepted by the Bolshevik border guards. A man and his wife were killed, a horse severely wounded. Three boys who were in the sleigh reached the Bessarabian bank. The sleigh remained stranded in the middle of the river. The escaped boys report that four small children are in the sleigh. Here, one can hear the desperate crying and screaming of the unfortunate children. By the time this letter reaches you, the small innocent victims of the Red Terror will have frozen to death. The frost here is at minus 17 degrees, accompanied by a north wind”³¹. A similar incident with sleds on the Dniester at around the same time was also described by the Austrian *Kärntner Volkszeitung und Heimatblatt*³².

In the article in the Czechoslovak newspaper mentioned above, it was emphasized that among all regions of the USSR, the situation was the worst in Ukraine. It was stated, „The Ukrainian peasantry, forcibly amalgamated into collective farms, sees no other way out of their plight than fleeing abroad. What is happening now in Ukrainian villages? The farmers of the collective farms had to deliver the grain to the Soviet state, and now they have nothing to eat”³³. Czech journalists also referred to the *Izvestiya*, one of the central newspapers of the USSR. Critically analyzing its materials, the article on refugees cited facts to support the thesis about the terrible situation in the USSR. The article concludes with a rather meaningful and accurate conclusion, „Famine, fear of deportation to Northern Russia, fear of Bolshevik terrorism—all of this forces the peaceful population of Soviet Ukraine to leave their country. But at the border, death awaits the victims of Bolshevik policy”³⁴.

International reaction to the crisis as reflected in the German-language press

The German *Kölnische Zeitung*³⁵ and *Der Grafschafter*³⁶, as well as the Liechtenstein *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten*³⁷, described a bloody incident on the border, during which 40 out of 60 people attempting to escape to Romania were

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² „Der blutige Grenzfluß” [The Bloody Border River], *Kärntner Volkszeitung und Heimatblatt*, Kärntner, 9 March 1932, 4.

³³ „Schrecken am Dnjestr”, *Sozialdemokrat*, 17 March 1932, 4.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ „Die Flüchtlinge am Dnjestr erschossen”, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 3.

³⁶ „Vom Elend in den Tod” [From misery to death], *Der Grafschafter*, Moers, 26 Februar 1932, 3.

³⁷ „Flucht aus Sowjetrußland” [Escape from Soviet Russia], *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten*, Vaduz, 1 March 1932, 4.

killed. In the next issue, the Liechtenstein newspaper reported that this incident led to discussions about the situation on the border at the highest level in Romania, „In the Romanian Chamber, a member of the government party demanded that the government takes steps regarding the shooting of 40 Romanians who were allegedly gunned down by Soviet-Russian border guards while attempting to flee from Ukraine to Romanian territory. Deputy Singer urged the Romanian Foreign Ministry to take action to end the conditions prevailing at the Russian-Romanian border, which he described as a veritable slaughterhouse for humans where new blood is shed daily. Interior Minister Argetojanu responded on behalf of the government, stating that the incidents at the Soviet-Russian border involved actions by Soviet authorities against their citizens, and therefore the Romanian government could not intervene.”³⁸.

A.-M. Mironov found statistics compiled by Romanian authorities—though these data are fragmentary and reflect the situation only in certain sections of the border. For example, in Orhei county 51 people who managed to cross the Dniester to the right bank were recorded from March 1 to 15, 1932³⁹. Official documents also record that among the escapees, there was a Soviet border guard⁴⁰. In Cetatea-Alba County (modern-day Odesa Oblast, Ukraine), from June 8 to 21, 1932, 33 escapees from the USSR were recorded⁴¹, and in Tighina County, 38 refugees were recorded for June 1932⁴². Overall, the researcher notes that the data from Romanian archives on this issue are quite fragmentary, so they cannot be trusted 100%. Nevertheless, based on them, one can trace the trend: from 1935, escapes from the USSR to Romania almost ceased, and instead, cases of desertion by Romanian soldiers who tried to get to the Soviet Union were recorded⁴³.

Publications about the „state of siege” in the two-kilometer zone of the left (Soviet) bank of the Dniester River appeared in Swiss newspapers *Der Bund*⁴⁴ and *Neue Züricher Zeitung*⁴⁵. In their articles, the reporters referred⁴⁶ to *Curentul*—popular Romanian newspaper of the interwar period. Declarations of the state of the siege were associated with „disturbances among the population of Ukraine”⁴⁷. Like similar articles about escapes across the Dniester, these

³⁸ “Die ‘Menschenschlächtere’ an der russisch-rumänischen Grenze” [The “Massacre” at the Russian-Romanian Border], *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten*, Vaduz, 3 March 1932, 3.

³⁹ A.-M. Mironov, *And Quiet Flows*, AT, 35.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ “Belagerungszustand am Dnjestr” [Siege state at the Dniester], *Der Bund*, Bern, 21 March 1932, 2.

⁴⁵ “Rumänien. Aus dem russischen Grenzgebiet” [Romania. From the Russian border area], *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, Zürich, 21 March 1932, 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*; “Bauern-Aufstand in der Ukraine” [Peasant uprising in Ukraine], *Der Bund*, Bern, 27 March 1932, 7.

⁴⁷ “Rumänien. Aus dem russischen Grenzgebiet”, *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 2.

materials reported on shootings on the Dniester due to escape attempts. For example, on March 21, 1932, the newspaper reported that three refugees were killed and two seriously injured⁴⁸, and on March 22, there was a new report of another bloody incident: „Several groups of peasants from the Moldavian region and Ukraine, who wanted to cross the river to reach Romania, were intercepted by border guards. Ten peasants were killed, and others were seriously injured”⁴⁹.

Statistics on escapes to Romania for February-March 1932 were also provided by the *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten*. „As reported, a survey conducted by the Romanian authorities has revealed that Russian border guards have shot over a thousand people in the last five weeks, namely 750 men, 212 women, and 41 children, all of whom were people attempting to flee from „exemplary” (!) Russia to Romania⁵⁰”. As we can see, with such examples, journalists cast doubt on Soviet propaganda about the happy life in the USSR.

In late March—early April 1932, based on surveys of refugees who managed to reach Romania across the Dniester, newspapers reported on the resistance of Ukrainian peasants to the Soviet policy on the left bank of the Dniester⁵¹. During this period, there were also brief notes about escapes from the USSR⁵².

In March 1932, the German *Bergische Post* presented (based on material from one of the largest French publications *Le Matin*) the theses of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Litvinov on complete disarmament, voiced at the Geneva Conferences on arms reduction and limitation, as absolutely unrealistic. Despite this, the newspaper noted that these words of the Soviet diplomat received applause from the crowd in Geneva. *Bergische Post* quoted an article from the French newspaper: „... the events in Ukraine demonstrated that Soviet Russia could not disarm. As the massacres of Ukrainians continued, the bodies of fleeing farmers piled up on the Russian bank of the Dniester, while on the Romanian side, the few who managed to escape had to watch helplessly as the bloody massacre unfolded”⁵³. Continuing the thought that the regime in the USSR is held only by force, the newspaper noted: „Just imagine what would happen to Soviet Russia if it removed the iron

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ „Neue Grenzzwischenfälle” [New border incidents], *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, Zürich, 22 March 1932, 2.

⁵⁰ „In fünf Wochen tausend Menschen erschossen!” [A thousand people shot in five weeks!], *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten*, Vaduz, 30 March 1932, 2.

⁵¹ „Bauernaufstand in der Ukraine” [Peasant uprising in Ukraine], *Luxemburger Wort*, Luxemburg, 28 March 1932, 2.

⁵² „Neue Grenzzwischenfälle”, *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 2; „Bauern-Aufstand in der Ukraine” [Peasant uprising in Ukraine], *Der Bund*, Bern, 27 March 1932, 7; „Aufstand der verzweifelten Bauern” [Rebellion of desperate farmers], *Walliser Bote*, Wallis, 2 April 1932, 2.

⁵³ „Rußland und die Abrüstung” [Russia and disarmament], *Bergische Post*, Solingen, 24 March 1932, 3.

ring that now surrounds its borders. The Soviet government would fall immediately”⁵⁴.

German-language newspapers also wrote about the still understudied issue of discussing the problems of the Romanian-Soviet border in the League of Nations. Information about the Romanian initiative to involve this international body in solving the refugee problem was presented by German-language newspapers from March 1932 onwards. The Berlin *Vorwärts* reported, „The residents of the Bessarabian Greuzdorfska Palanka have been observing a truly horrifying spectacle for two weeks: the bodies of a great massacre of refugees are still scattered on the ice. None of the parties wishes to remove and bury them”⁵⁵. According to the report of the German newspaper, the Romanian government saw the solution to the problem in involving the League of Nations in resolving border issues, „Meanwhile, the Romanian government has ordered the documentation of the results of the crime. The photographs will be sent to the League of Nations”⁵⁶.

On March 28, 1932, the *Luxemburger Wort* informed about a statement by Romanian Prime Minister Nicolae Iorga about the intention of his country's government to send a memorandum on mass killings on the Dniester to the League of Nations⁵⁷. In contrast, the *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten* reported that this issue was raised at the meeting of the League of Nations International Association in Brussels, „During a meeting of the International Association for the League of Nations in Brussels, the Romanian delegation raised the issue of bloody incidents on the Dniester, where farmers attempting to flee to Bessarabia were killed by Soviet Russian border guards. The Romanian delegate proposed that the chairman of the association take steps to protest against these events at the League of Nations. Furthermore, the delegate demanded that the League of Nations take care of the fate of the refugees, to whom the Romanian government could neither provide help nor protection from its resources”⁵⁸.

In April 1932, the Austrian newspaper *Vorarlberger Volksblatt* reported on the speech of former Romanian Minister of Justice Valeriu Popa before the inter-parliamentary group with a report on the situation on the Dniester, adding a note about the importance of these facts despite the „political reasons” of Romanian representatives, „At the Dniester border, events have unfolded that are so terrible that they fill the entire population with horror. For about two months, Russian families living in the so-called Moldavian Republic of the Soviet Union have sought refuge on Romanian territory. They were not driven

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ „Grausiges Schauspiel am Dnjestrfluß” [Gross and terrible spectacle on the Dniester river], *Vorwärts*, 15 March 1932? 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ „Die Jagd auf Flüchtlinge im Dnjestr” [The hunt for refugees at the Dniester], *Luxemburger Wort*, Luxemburg, 28 March 1932, 2.

⁵⁸ „In fünf Wochen tausend Menschen erschossen!”, *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten*, 2.

to this tragic emigration by political reasons, but by hunger and the fear of deportation to Siberia. These poor refugees have been literally massacred by the Russian authorities. The cruelty of these almost daily executions exceeds all civilized human imagination. Those who were killed instantly by the first blow or bullet may still be considered fortunate, because most others were left fatally wounded, left without any help in the middle of winter, becoming prey to wild animals. This appalling spectacle has deeply disturbed the entire Bessarabian population and especially the Romanian residents along the banks of the Dniester; they often had to witness the cruel executions of their closest relatives without being able to intervene. The Inter-Parliamentary Union has always prided itself on defending the ideals of humanity and civilization; it must also denounce these atrocities and raise its voice to put an end to these terrible incidents on the banks of the Dniester, which have been a shame for civilization for two months. As a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as a former Minister of Justice and Chamber President... I address the Executive Committee of the Union with an urgent and heartfelt appeal on behalf of the victims who fall every day at the Romanian-Russian border, and I ask them to address this sad issue as quickly as possible”⁵⁹.

Other mentions of illegal crossings of the border

In April 1932, the *Liechtensteiner Volksblatt*, citing the British journalist „M. Geo”, published a poignant story about a child who was smuggled to the Romanian bank of the Dniester River, while his brothers were killed during the escape attempt: „One of these children”, as recounted by M. Geo, „was found on the ice of the frozen river, approximately one meter away from the body of his shot mother. The little one lay like dead in the hospital bed for two days, now it has somewhat recovered, but still says „cold, cold” to itself and cries for the mother.”⁶⁰ The overall theme of the article suggests that all escapees from the USSR were undernourished, hence emotionally reacting to white bread in Romania. Another emotional story in the article is about a father who tried to smuggle his young child and wife to the Romanian bank of the Dniester using a barrel. However, Soviet border guards shot at this barrel, so only the father and the elder son managed to successfully cross to the Romanian side of the Dniester and survive⁶¹.

With such stories, journalists once again highlighted the deceitfulness of Soviet propaganda, noting that these events were happening against the backdrop of preparations for the celebration of the anniversary of the Bolshevik

⁵⁹ “Die Schreckenerrschaft der Sowjets an der rumänischen Grenze” [The reign of terror by the Soviets at the Romanian border], *Vorarlberger Volksblatt*, Vorarlberg, 23 April 1932, 14.

⁶⁰ “Bei den Flüchtlingen am Dnjestr” [Among the refugees at the Dniester], *Liechtensteiner Volksblatt*, Schaan, 7 April 1932, 2.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

revolution of 1917, „A significant prelude to the fifteenth anniversary of the Soviet system, which is supposed to be celebrated this summer in Russian cities with truly barbaric pomp”⁶². The authors also recounted rumors about Stalin's serious illness, which, according to journalists' observations, were well received by the peasants—although the article does not specify which side of the border the peasants belonged to, Soviet or Romanian.

The Czechoslovak newspaper *Sozialdemokrat* on May 5 also wrote about escapes to Romania but added new details, including data on the number of escapees and specific settlements they came from, „According to official Romanian statistics, 1055 refugees from Soviet Ukraine crossed the Romanian border on the Dniester during the first three months of this year. Among them were 315 men, 234 women, and 506 children: 283 boys and 223 girls”⁶³. The authors noted that this was a small part of those who attempted to cross the border, as the rest were shot by border guards. To confirm these words, the journalists cited stories of unsuccessful crossings, „On the night of February 6th, five men and one woman were fired upon by Bolshevik military forces while on the ice. The woman, named Kalyna Damian, was killed, while the men managed to reach the Romanian shore. The body of the woman remained on the ice for several days and became prey for scavenging birds”⁶⁴.

Furthermore, in the same article, the events in the „*Olanesti forest*” on February 23, 1932, are mentioned. We can assume that they may refer to the village of *Olănești* in the *Ștefan Vodă* district of modern Moldova, located near the villages of Troițcoe and Yas'kiv, which are a part of today's Odesa region of Ukraine. In 1932, the border between the USSR and Romania ran near these settlements, and the area there was wooded and swampy. According to the newspaper, out of 115 people who attempted to cross the border here to reach Bessarabia, only 41 managed to do so, and most of them were wounded.

Additionally, this article mentions another case of punishment for people who tried to escape to Romania, „On the night of March 21st to 22nd, all the residents of the Ukrainian border village Skutari⁶⁵ were shot by Bolshevik soldiers on suspicion of intending to cross the Romanian border. Gunfire and the desperate cries of the dying could be heard from the Romanian shore for three hours”⁶⁶.

The number of such stories indicates that attempts to cross the border were systematic. In particular, the above-mentioned publication indicates that on April 18, 1932, a group of 45 people managed to reach Romania⁶⁷. The newspaper quotes several individuals from this group, including 13-year-old

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ “Schrecken am Dnjestr” [Horror at the Dniester], *Sozialdemokrat*, Prag, 5 Mai 1932, 4.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ We were unable to identify a populated place with the specified name in the vicinity of the border between Romania and the USSR during the interwar period.

⁶⁶ “Schrecken am Dnjestr”, *Sozialdemokrat*, 5 Mai 1932, 4.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

Volodymyr Gryztyuva from the village of Nezavertailivka⁶⁸, Ivan Myroshnychenko from the village of Selydivka in Donetsk region⁶⁹, 33-year-old Elezar Pavlichenko (the place of origin is not specified), 18-year-old Vasyl Lyashevsky from the village of Tykhonivka in Kaniv district⁷⁰, Teodor Horodnyk from Chornobyl⁷¹, Ivan Hrytsak from the village of Kopylivka near Mohyliv⁷², and Shalom Brik, a 69-year-old worker from Odesa. All the people whose comments were published in the newspaper said that they fled because of the deportation of their relatives, lack of food, and fear that the situation would worsen.

German newspapers *Sächsische Volkszeitung* and *Der Bote vom Geising und Müglitztal-Zeitung*⁷³ on May 23, 1932, provided identical notes about escapes across the Dniester: „On the Dniester, the border river between Russian Ukraine and Romanian Bessarabia, twelve Ukrainians wanted to flee in a boat from Russian territory to Romanian. During the crossing, the Russian border guards noticed the escape attempt and shot behind the boat. The passengers were killed, and three were seriously injured”⁷⁴.

In June 1932, the *Liechtensteiner Volksblatt* briefly reported on the killing of five people who attempted to cross the border by Soviet border guards⁷⁵, while the Swiss *Walliser Volksfreund* reported on 8 killed and 10 wounded refugees who tried to cross the Soviet-Romanian border via the Dniester⁷⁶.

In December 1932, the *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten* drew attention⁷⁷ to the recent decrease in the number of reports on escapes from the USSR in German newspapers. The reason for this, according to the newspaper, was not a reduction in the number of such escapes, but the commonplace nature of these events. The newspaper also presented an adventurous story of one of the Romanian smugglers to captivate readers.

In March 1933, the Luxembourg newspaper *Obermosel Zeitung* directly linked escapes from the USSR to Romania with the policies of the Bolsheviks

⁶⁸ The modern village is located in the Slobodzeya district of Moldova. As of 1932, it was a part of the Autonomous Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic (AMSSR), which was a constituent part of the USSR.

⁶⁹ The modern city of Selydove is located in the Pokrovsk district of Donetsk oblast.

⁷⁰ The settlement named “Tykhonivka” located in the Kaniv area could not be identified.

⁷¹ The current city in the northern part of the Kyiv region, within the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, is Prypiat.

⁷² The settlement could not be identified.

⁷³ “Auf der Flucht aus Rußland erschossen” [Shot while fleeing from Russia], *Der Bote vom Geising und Müglitztal-Zeitung*, Altenberg, 23 Mai 1932, 2.

⁷⁴ “Auf der Flucht aus Rußland erschossen” [Shot while fleeing from Russia], *Sächsische Zeitung*, Dresden, 23 Mai 1932, 3.

⁷⁵ “Auf der Flucht erschossen” [Shot while fleeing], *Liechtensteiner Volksblatt*, Schaan, 4 Juni 1932, 8.

⁷⁶ “Flucht aus Rußland” [Escape from Russia], *Walliser Volksfreund*, Wallis, 14 Juni 1932, 3.

⁷⁷ “Menschenschmuggel an der russischen Grenze” [Human smuggling at the Russian border], *Liechtensteiner Nachrichten*, Vaduz, 20 December 1932, 4.

in Ukraine, mocking Soviet propaganda in the headline: „A New Mass Escape from the Soviet Paradise”⁷⁸.

The Salzburg church newspaper *Salzburger Kirchenblatt* discussed the issue of escapes from the USSR to Romania as a factor influencing the Romanian Orthodox clergy, „Nothing is more suitable for breaking the certain Orthodox fanaticism than contemplating the great misery in which the once mighty Orthodox Christianity of Russia finds itself. The bloodbath on the banks of the Dniester and other atrocities committed by the Bolsheviks against the poor refugees from Ukraine is the best school for some opponents of the truth—The 70-year-old retired parish dean from Chisinau (Kishinev) in Bessarabia, Jeremie Cecan, decided to perform a truly heroic act; he openly proposes: The Orthodox Church of Romania must unite with Rome!”⁷⁹.

In August 1933, *Neuer Züricher Zeitung* reported that the issue of illegal crossings of the Soviet-Romanian border was raised during the activity of the Romanian-Soviet commission in one of the cities of Bessarabia. The journalists concluded, „... the bitter hardship increasingly tempts the peasant population of Ukraine to attempt the forbidden crossing into Romania. The Russian border authorities on the left bank of the Dniester seek to prevent these refugees from completing their intended actions, and shootings have become a daily occurrence here”⁸⁰.

Later, in October 1933, the *Luxemburger Wort* reported on constant gunfire sounds at the Romanian-Soviet border, „Reports from Bucharest indicate that residents of the Romanian bank of the Dniester are disturbed by the constant gunfire on the Russian bank”⁸¹.

Literary works on escape from famine published in newspapers

An example of the theme of escaping across the border from the Soviet Union to Eastern European countries being quite well-known in the German-language environment is the presence of artistic works addressing this theme. Specifically, Klothilde von Stegmann's novel *Thanks to You, I Found My*

⁷⁸ „Neue Massenflucht aus dem Sowjetparadies” [A new mass escape from the Soviet paradise], *Obermosel Zeitung*, Luxemburg, 30 March 1933, 3.

⁷⁹ „Kirchliche Gegenwart” [Church today], *Salzburger Kirchenblatt*, Salzburg, 15 Juni 1933, 6.

⁸⁰ „Rumänien und Rußland” [Romania and Russia], *Neuer Züricher Zeitung*, Zürich, 8 August 1933, 2.

⁸¹ „Die Hungersnot in Rußland” [Hunger in Russia], *Luxemburger Wort*, Luxemburger, 25 October 1933, 1.

*Homeland*⁸² and Mary Krüger's short story „On the Border River”, published in the Bern *Geschäftsblatt für den oberen Teil des Kantons Bern*⁸³.

Austrian newspapers *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*⁸⁴ and *Tiroler Anzeiger*⁸⁵ published excerpts from Klothilde von Stegmann's novel *Thanks to You, I Found My Homeland* in the mid-1930s, which unfolded on the Soviet-Romanian border in the 1930s: „From Ukraine, they attempted to escape, ten, a hundred, a thousand. Across to Romania. No red could be as cruel as here in Russia. So the Russian rulers forbade the peasants and townsfolk from emigrating. And when they fled in droves across the border, defying the bullets of the border guards—for what did they have to lose after all—then the rulers resorted to the last resort. One day, entire regiments of the Red Army appeared with shovels, picks, flamethrowers, and guns. They began to plow the earth, cut down the fruit trees, and clear out the bushes that had at least provided a few berries and rose hips in the summer. In a few days, a belt of desolation and death was drawn between Ukraine and the land of salvation. No dog could cross this zone unseen. Naked, the land lay under the machine guns of the guards. And as a border flows the Dniester”⁸⁶.

However, in the complete text of the novel, which was published in Düsseldorf after the Second World War⁸⁷, there are no excerpts at the beginning of the text about escapes across the Soviet-Romanian border and mentions of the Dniester and the Black Sea, and Romania is replaced by Yugoslavia, which led to a geographical inconsistency in the fragment of the text: „The shores of the river, bordering Yugoslavia, were flooded. The water rose high, yellow and foamy, rolled along the new border of Russia”⁸⁸. Further along in the text, the local residents are called „Romanians”⁸⁹, and there are mentions of hunger⁹⁰ and refugees: „The only problem is what to do with the refugees? Earlier, they arrived in packs, and now only daring loners”⁹¹.

This may indicate that only the beginning of the novel, dedicated to escapes across the Dniester, was changed during the preparation of the book for publication, while in the rest of the text, where mentions of this story were

⁸² “Klothilde von Stegmann. Durch dich fand ich die Heimat” [Klothilde von Stegmann. Thanks to You, I Found My Homeland], *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, Wien, 11 November 1933, 11; “Klothilde von Stegmann. Durch dich fand ich die Heimat” [Klothilde von Stegmann. Thanks to You, I Found My Homeland], *Tiroler Anzeiger*, Innsbruck, 14 Februar 1935, 5–6.

⁸³ “Am Grenzfluß” [At the border river], *Geschäftsblatt für den oberen Teil des Kantons Bern*, Bern, 23 Juni 1934, 3–4.

⁸⁴ “Klothilde von Stegmann. Durch dich fand ich die Heimat”, *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, 11.

⁸⁵ “Klothilde von Stegmann. Durch dich fand ich die Heimat”, *Tiroler Anzeiger*, 5–6.

⁸⁶ “Klothilde von Stegmann. Durch dich fand ich die Heimat”, *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, 11.

⁸⁷ The year of publication is not indicated in book. Klothilde von Stegmann, *Durch dich fand ich die Heimat* [*Thanks to You, I Found My Homeland*], August Bach-Verlag, Düsseldorf, [year not indicated].

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, 8.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, 13.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 33.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, 14.

fragmentary and understandable in the context of the original version of the novel, they were not removed.

In the short story „On the Border River”, Mary Krüger depicts a challenging situation unfolding on the border between the USSR and Poland and Romania. The author describes the journey of the border guard Polikarp Platonovich, who travels by train from Siberia to the western border of the USSR and encounters hungry people along the way, „The commotion in the carriage behind him snapped him out of his reverie. He stood up and looked over the wooden partition. A woman had fainted. ‘She’s from Kusminka’, said her neighbor. No further explanation was needed. Kusminka was in the famine zone. In the typhus-plague zone. Everyone distanced themselves from the woman who had fainted. No one reached out to help. Polykarp shifted uncomfortably in his corner. ‘Like flies’, he thought, „people are dying, and no one lifts a hand. Why does God allow this?”⁹²—the protagonist’s experiences are cited in the story.

Furthermore, the author constantly inserts into the character’s thoughts dreams of a plentiful life beyond the borders of the USSR, „Polykarp suddenly felt an idea of unspeakable glory tightens his throat. Could it be possible, in the end—from here... across, into that world where people have their food—to cross over?”⁹³. The story also mentions another place where there was plenty of food—Moscow: „Polykarp had no doubts. He had spoken with foreign workers in Moscow, the factory was next to the barracks; oh, they were friendly people, no, they didn’t beat anyone, they had enough to feed, a few more or less mouths didn’t matter to them!”⁹⁴.

The author portrays grim figures of hungry people attempting to cross the border: „A gray shadow fell over the hill. Horrible figures with death’s heads, swollen bodies, swollen limbs, silently slid down the hillside, slithering soundlessly through the grass of the paths, without a blade stirring, crawling ever closer and closer with devilishly contorted faces...”⁹⁵. The story of the literary character Polikarp Platonovich depicted in the narrative ends tragically for him—hungry people kill the border guard with a blow of a stick.

Consequently, German-language newspapers extensively addressed and analyzed the phenomenon of escapes across the Soviet-Romanian border during the early 1930s. The publications on this subject often exhibited a pronounced emotional tone. Moreover, the emergence of literary works during the 1930s that depicted escapes across the Dniester, based on the press materials, serves as additional evidence of the societal discourse surrounding this topic.

⁹² „Am Grenzfluß”, *Geschäftsblatt für den oberen Teil des Kantons Bern*, 3–4.

⁹³ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

Summary

The German-language press of the early 1930s quite thoroughly highlighted the problem of crossing the Soviet-Romanian border as a way to escape from hunger and repression in the USSR. Most of the materials on the topics mentioned above were published in February-April 1932. in a range of German, Austrian, Swiss, Luxembourgish, Liechtenstein, and Czech publications

Many of these publications are based on the reports sourced directly from correspondents stationed in Romania, content of the Soviet press, and reprinted materials sourced from various outlets, including Romanian publications. Moreover, the German-language press notably delves into the presentation of this issue within the framework of the League of Nations in 1932, contextualizing it within the broader landscape of international relations.

The articles of the German-language press about the situation on the Soviet-Romanian border were very emotional, as evidenced by their titles: „Bloody Massacre”, „Shame of Civilization”, „Horror on the Dniester”.

Moreover, we can assume that some writers built the storylines of their literary works based on such materials. The presence of literary texts dedicated to escapes from the USSR indicates that this topic went beyond the professional circle of journalists and diplomats; it was discussed and reflected upon by the population. At the same time, in the post-war edition of Klothilde von Stegmann's book *Thanks to You, I Found My Homeland*, the fragment about escapes across the Soviet-Romanian border at the beginning of the novel was deleted for unknown reasons.

Zaključak

Njemačka štampa ranih 1930-ih temeljito je isticala problem prelaska sovjetsko-rumunske granice kao način bjekstva od gladi i represije u SSSR-u. Većina materijala na ovu temu objavljena je između februara i aprila 1932. godine u raznim njemačkim, austrijskim, švajcarskim, luksemburškim, lihtenštajnskim i češkim publikacijama.

Mnogi od ovih članaka zasnivali su se na izvještajima direktno izvještača stacioniranih u Rumuniji, sadržaju sovjetske štampe i reprintanim materijalima iz različitih izvora, uključujući rumunske publikacije. Pored toga, njemačka štampa posebno se bavila predstavljanjem ovog pitanja u okviru Lige naroda 1932. godine, kontekstualizujući ga u širem okviru međunarodnih odnosa.

Članci njemačke štampe o situaciji na sovjetsko-rumunskoj granici bili su veoma emotivni, što se može videti iz njihovih naslova: „Krvava Pobjeda“, „Sramota Civilizacije“, „Horor na Dnjestru“.

Takođe, možemo pretpostaviti da su neki pisci gradili zaplete svojih književnih djela na osnovu ovih materijala. Prisutnost književnih tekstova posvećenih bjekstvu iz SSSR-a ukazuje na to da je ova tema nadmašila profesionalni krug novinara i diplomata; o njoj se raspravljalo i razmišljalo među širim stanovništvom. Istovremeno, u poslijeratnom izdanju knjige Klothilde von Stegmann „Hvala ti, pronašla sam svoju domovinu“, fragment o bjekstvima preko sovjetsko-rumunske granice na početku romana je izbrisan iz nepoznatih razloga.

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