



## THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S PARTY FROM TULCEA COUNTY (1946-1949)

**Abstract:** By using the data provided by the archive documents in the custody of the Tulcea County Directorate of National Archives, this article tries to bring to the fore the evolution and dynamics of the National People's Party in Tulcea County.

The National People's Party was set up in early 1946, because of the transformation of the mass organization, the Union of Patriots, into a political party, and in the first months of 1949 it dissolved itself. This political formation was created by the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) to attract to their side those social categories that mainly avoided joining the RCP. The main goals of National People's Party in Tulcea County were: increasing the number of members, strengthening the Press and Documentation Department, as well as other departments of the organization, improving the collaboration with political formations within the National Democratic Front, organized guidance of peasants to the Ploughmen's Front, reorganization and control of the activity of local organizations, etc.

Therefore, by using research methods as the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the mentioned documentary sources, in this study we want to make a brief foray into the structure and activity of National People's Party in Tulcea County in the period from the establishment of the party to its self-dissolution.

**Keywords:** members, communists, supporters, activity, organization, National People's Party.

In January 1946, in Bucharest, during the General Congress of the Union of Patriots, it was decided to transform the mass organization, the Union of Patriots, into a political party, under the name of National People's Party (NPP)<sup>1</sup>. Its role was to attract the support of those social categories, and especially of the middle class, who did not want to join the Communist Party. Consequently, the county organization of the Union of Patriots of Tulcea accomplished the formalities of

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<sup>1</sup> Biroul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Tulcea (în continuare BJANT), fond Comitetul Județean Tulcea al PMR, dosar 16/1946, f.71.

transformation into a political party, in accordance with the guidelines and instructions received at the General Congress. Thus, after the fulfilment thereof they had to start the registration of new members, while maintaining those members who did not raise political suspicions<sup>2</sup>. While the old organization of the Union of Patriots included 660 members, in National People's Party the number of members increased rapidly, to 1200<sup>3</sup>, motivated by the fact that, according to an address sent to the Central Committee of National People's Party Bucharest, on March 10, 1946, the Steering Committee of Tulcea organization decided to intensify the action of clarification for the public opinion through „written and spoken” propaganda. For this purpose, several hundred posters were printed with the main „ideas” of the party's program, which were distributed in the county. At the same time, slides which included explanations/interpretations regarding the party's program, as well as the urge to register as many members as possible were presented at the *Select* cinema in the locality. For the same purpose, according to the mentioned address, public meetings were to take place in the most important cities in the county, respectively, Tulcea, Babadag, Isaccea and Măcin.<sup>4</sup>

The National People's Party of Romania was led by a Central Committee, which was assisted by an apparatus composed of several sections. The NPP Central Committee had 120 members, among whom we can mention: George Călinescu, Dr. Dumitru Bagdasar, Alexandru Philippide, Andrei Oțetea, etc.<sup>5</sup> Tulcea county organization was led by a committee composed of a president, two vice-presidents, a general secretary and five members.<sup>6</sup>

The documents of the time reveal that since its setting up, in Tulcea County, the National People's Party has been actively involved on the political scene of the county. In this respect, we find out from the party documents that the National People's Party participated in all the meetings and consultations organized within the National Democratic Front<sup>7</sup>, as well as in the meetings of the Political Council<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> BJANT, fond Organizația Județeană Tulcea a Partidului Național Popular, dosar 1/1946, f.2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 1 verso.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, f.1.

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Moisa, *Electoral Practices in a changing World: Study Case of the Patriots' Union Organization. Bihor County Organization (1945-1947)*, în „Analele Banatului”, SN, Arheologie – Istorie, XX, 2012, p. 379.

<sup>6</sup> BJANT, fond Organizația Județeană Tulcea a Partidului Național Popular, dosar 1/1946, f.3.

<sup>7</sup> The National People's Party Tulcea organization had three delegates in the National Democratic Front County Committee, respectively: P. Rotescu, M. Cahu and Gh. Dragomirescu, BJANT, Tulcea County Organization of the National People's Party fund, file 1/1946, tab. 5.

attached to the Prefecture<sup>9</sup>. An example can be found in a report of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP), a report that reveals that the National People's Party organization participated on March 6 in the demonstrations organized by National Democratic Front, which took place in front of Tulcea Prefecture, on the occasion of acknowledgment of the Petru Groza government and of the fulfilment of one year of activity of the Government. The demonstrations were attended, in addition to unionized workers, who wanted to show their gratitude and sympathy for the Government, by representatives of all parties that made up the government. Among those who took the floor were: Nicolae Ceaușescu, on behalf of the RCP (he spoke on behalf of the RCP Central Committee), the prefect of Tulcea County, M. Gioga (on behalf of the National Liberal Party, Gh. Tatarescu), Nistor Dumitru (on behalf of the National Peasants' Party-Anton Alexandrescu), Vintilă Voinea (from the Ploughmen's Front), and from the National People's Party, M. Cahu<sup>10</sup>. The representative of the national-popular organization, M. Cahu<sup>11</sup>, showed his gratitude to the government<sup>12</sup> and described March 6, 1945 as „a day of victory for the people against the reaction led by Maniu and Brătianu”<sup>13</sup>. At the same time, he expressed his determination to contribute even more „with his powers” to the work that had to be done within the National Democratic Front „to support the government”.

Moreover, for this purpose, a motion was signed by which the „manual and intellectual” workers from Tulcea County, integrated in National Democratic Front, declared that they fully support the acts of the „government of wide democratic concentration” and pledged to support it further<sup>14</sup>. Although, in general, the relations between the national-popular organization and the other parties within National Democratic Front were good, the exception was represented by Social Democratic Party delegates, who according to the National People's Party made „too much party exclusivism” and did not show enough

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<sup>8</sup> BJANT, fond Organizația Județeană Tulcea a Partidului Național Popular, dosar 1/1946, f. 1 verso.

<sup>9</sup> In the County Political Council, the NPP had as delegates solicitor P. Rotescu and Capt. N. Grigorescu. (BJANT, Tulcea County Organizations of the National People's Party fund, file 1/1946, tab 5).

<sup>10</sup> BJANT, fond Comitetul Județean Tulcea al PMR, dosar 14/1946, ff. 7-8.

<sup>11</sup> In the archive documents his name also appears as M. Kahu.

<sup>12</sup> BJANT, fond Organizația Județeană Tulcea a Partidului Național Popular, dosar 1/1946, f.1.

<sup>13</sup> BJANT, fond Comitetul Județean Tulcea al PMR, dosar 14/1946, ff. 7-8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, f.8.

loyalty in National Democratic Front<sup>15</sup>. Because of this, according to the archive documents, the National People's Party representatives proposed to the National Democratic Front Central Council to impose a more sincere collaboration on the Social Democratic Party. Also, the party documents reveal that through the propaganda carried out by the historical parties, respectively the National Peasants' Party and the Social Democratic Party, a hostile National People's Party campaign was undertaken<sup>16</sup>.

At the beginning, the national-popular organization from Tulcea County had organizational problems, as it was not able to organize the study commission due to the lack of instructions from Bucharest. In addition to this issue, the organization also faced a lack of funds and means of transport. For this reason, the Centre was asked for a motor vehicle and additional funds<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, the national-popular organization lacked the local press bodies that could have brought the party closer to the population of the county and could, in this way, have entered the villages which could not be reached due to the lack of means of transport. For this reason, the Local Committee of the National Peasants' Party wanted to set up its own newspaper, although there were two other local newspapers, namely the newspaper *Progresul*, which was independent and *Dunărea Socialistă*, which was a body of Social Democratic Party and which, due to „the lack of paper, appeared irregularly”<sup>18</sup>.

From an *activity report* of National Peasants' Party Tulcea, No.114, from March 18, 1946, we find out information related to the local party organizations in the county. In this respect, the mentioned report reveals that the city of Tulcea, county seat, had an organized committee and 400 registered members. In addition, there were four other committees organized in five residence cities in the county (700 registered members). In contrast, in non-residence cities, where there were only 60 registered members, we learn from the above-mentioned report that only one committee was organized. In the rural area, 130 members were registered, with 500 sympathizers. At the same time, five committees were organized in rural areas. The members of the National People's Party from the entire county were divided into the following professional categories: civil and private servants (100 members), freelancers (40 members), craftsmen (35 members), industrialists and merchants (195 members), agricultural owners (30

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<sup>15</sup> BJANT, fond Organizația Județeană Tulcea a Partidului Național Popular, dosar 1/1946, f.1 verso.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 3 verso-4.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 1-4.

members) and other categories (890 members), totaling 1290 members. The same *activity report* also reveals information related to the county organization, an organization the (County) Committee of which had the following members: P. Rotescu (chairman of the Committee, who was a lawyer by profession), Mihail Cahu (vice-president of the Committee, teacher by profession), Gheorghe Dragomirescu (vice-president, a civil servant by profession), Dumitru Dogaru (general secretary, a primary school teacher by profession), I. Vasilian (deputy secretary, a Priest by profession), Isac Hirsch (cashier, a trader by profession), Jean Ivanov (member, a trader by profession), Stere Papadumitru (member, a trader by profession), Ghimpeanu Constantin (member, a doctor by profession), Curatu Gheorghe (member, a civil servant by profession), August Iacobini, (member, a trader by profession), Ion Stratulat (member, a teacher by profession), Vasile Avramescu (member, a teacher by profession), H. Sapușnic (member, a pharmacist by profession), I. Davidov (member, a dentist by profession), Traian Baltag (member, an agricultural owner by profession), I. Melinovici (member, an industrialist by profession), Constantin Apostolato (member, a civil servant by profession), E. Ververi (member, an industrialist by profession), Gh. Simionescu (member, retired), Mihail Codreanu (member, a doctor by profession), Ion Stasuc (member, a priest by profession).<sup>19</sup> The structure of the National People's Party Committee in the county shows that it was formed at that time, from the representatives of the middle classes.

At the same time, from the same report we find out that the county press and documentation department was organized, which was headed by M. Cahu and included three other members. The members of this section organized weekly local meetings. In addition to this department, the financial department and a study meeting were organized, which was led by Professor I. Stratulat (it had four members).<sup>20</sup>

The archive documents reveal that in September 1946 the number of members enrolled in the National People's Party increased to 595 in Tulcea City, and in the rest of the county, to 2392. The „professional structure of the members”, at that time, was as follows: 56 freelancers, 219 industrialists and traders, 104 civil servants and 100 private officials, 28 employers, 1095 farmers, and 1385 from other professional categories<sup>21</sup>. Regarding the organization of the departments, we find out, from an *activity report*, from September, that in the press and documentation department, seven members worked in the department

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 4-5.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, ff.5-6.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, f.17.

committee. This department had no local correspondent for *Națiunea* newspaper, which was the central newspaper of the National People's Party. *Națiunea* newspaper was sent daily to Tulcea (in 200 copies) on behalf of G. Hangiu, who was a depository. The financial department had five members working in the department committee, and the monthly income of the organization was 250000 lei, resulting from the membership fees of the party members. The meetings of this department were held weekly, on Tuesdays<sup>22</sup>. In September, the organized study meetings were established by professions. These were as follows: freelancers, eight members (their meetings were held on Mondays), civil servants and private officials, 11 members (their meetings were held on Mondays), industrialists and traders, seven members (meetings were held on Wednesdays) and craftsmen, seven members. In addition to these sections, the archive documents also reveal information related to the women's department (38 members). It had a seven-member committee, chaired by Florica Cahu, and the meetings took place regularly on Thursdays. The meetings of the youth department (28 members) were also held on Thursday. The youth section had a committee composed of seven members chaired by Eng. Niculescu<sup>23</sup>.

Party documents show that the National People's Party was represented in the Bloc of Democratic Parties (BDP). Within the BDP, the ratio of political forces, in September 1946, was as follows: RCP had 25%, Social Democratic Party, 20%, Ploughmen's Front, 20%, National Liberal Party-Tătărescu, 15%, National People's Party, 15%, and 5% National Peasant Party-Anton Alexandrescu<sup>24</sup>.

In the parliamentary elections of November 19, in Tulcea, List No. 1 of the BDP was declared the winner. It included the following candidates: Florica Bagdasar (National People's Party), Dumitru Olteanu (Romanian Communist Party), Ion Nicolae Drăghici (National Liberal Party-Tătărescu), Stoica Gheorghe (Romanian Communist Party - Secretary of the RCP Constanța Regional), Pascu Ion (Ploughmen's Front), Naumov Iosif (Social Democratic Party), Pascu Ion (Ploughmen's Front)<sup>25</sup>.

Before the parliamentary elections, we learn from the documents of the communist party that Dr. Florica Bagdasar was involved in the campaign to fight the malaria epidemic in Tulcea County, sending medical teams equipped with

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, f.18.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, f.19.

<sup>24</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>25</sup> Constantin Cheramidoglu, *Evoluția Politică a județului Tulcea în anul 1946. Ascensiunea Partidului Comunist*, în „*Istro-Pontica 2*”, 2014, p. 131 ; Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, fond CC al PCR, secția organizatorică, dosar 74/1946, f. 374.

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medicines<sup>26</sup>. On November 30, 1946, Tulcea national-popular organization transmitted to the Central Committee of the NPP Bucharest, *the table with the data regarding the participation of the NPP in the Electoral Campaign, as compared with the other BDP parties*. It follows that the national-popular organization in the campaign had 32 speakers and 14 propagandists (*see attached table*). Therefore, it can be stated that at that time, the NPP activity within the BDP (Block of Democratic Parties) was satisfactory, especially in terms of the teams of speakers who went „to the country on Sunday”<sup>27</sup>.

*Partidul Național Popular.*  
*Org. jud. Tulcea.*

*Tulcea*

*Cu datele referitoare la participarea P.N.P.ului în Campania electorală în comparație cu celelalte partide din B.D.P.*

(B.D.P.)	Intervenții la V. - în B. sau Org. jud.		Vorăbitor	Propagandist	# de activități de educație în satele și comune	Organizații locale	# de prezentări la sate în zilele de vot	# de președinți la sate	alte activități
P.N.P.	3	6	32	14	162	6	2	4	Comitetul de organizare și desfășurare a activității electorale în județul Tulcea (J. Tulcea, V. Brănești) cu scopul de a organiza activitatea electorală în satele și comune.
P.C.R.	4	-	16	24	72	6	11	8	
P.S.A.	1	-	24	16	25	6	7		
F. Reg.	1	-	7	11	24	6	2	4	
P.T.R.	-	-	9	4	9	6	2	2	
P.N.F.	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	

Table with data on the participation of the National People's Party in the Electoral Campaign, as compared to the other BDP parties, BJANT, Tulcea County Organization fund of the National People's Party, file 1/1946, tab 24.

In September 1947, the Congress of the National People's Party from Tulcea County took place. This Congress was attended by representatives of the authorities (the mayor of Tulcea and the prefect of the county) and representatives of friendly organizations in the county. Within the Congress, the old mandate of the committee was submitted and the election bureau was appointed, followed by the election of the new committee, as well as the election of delegates to the General Congress of the party<sup>28</sup>.

From a numerical point of view, the national-popular organization, at the end of 1947, according to the archive documents, had 4860 members, of which 3797 were registered through minutes. For this reason, the main task of the County Committee was to obtain accessions from the rest of the members (3797),

<sup>26</sup> BJANT, fond Comitetul Județean Tulcea al PMR, dosar 16/1946, ff. 51-53.

<sup>27</sup> Marian Cojoc, *Evoluția Dobrogei între anii 1944-1964. Principalele aspecte din economie și societate*, Editura Universității București, 2001, p. 56.

<sup>28</sup> BJANT, fond Organizația Județeană Tulcea a Partidului Național Popular, dosar 2/1947, f.4.



who were registered, as I mentioned, through minutes<sup>29</sup>. In addition to this task, at the beginning of 1948, the County Committee of Tulcea National People's Party organization established the following tasks: checking all members of the National People's Party organization and checking the communal and urban committees, as well as reorganizing small districts and changing the membership cards<sup>30</sup>. To perform these tasks, the County Committee delegated several members to travel on the site. At the same time, to fulfil the mentioned tasks, the County Committee also decided to set up a member verification commission, composed of three persons, respectively Lawyer P. Rotescu, Dr. Maximilian and Dogaru. Also, after the members' verification commission had completed its task, the delegation of two or three members for the thorough reorganization of the small districts<sup>31</sup> where they had been sent was proposed. Thus, the following delegates were sent for the Tulcea district: M. Cahu and Dr. Maximilian, and P. Rotescu and Ioan Șerban were sent to Măcin district. Emil Gheorghiu and S. Adamache were sent to Mahmudia district, and Mihail Siseu and V. Cocias to the Sulina district<sup>32</sup>. Also, P. Rotescu, St. Staub and Dr. Maximilian were also sent as delegates to Babadag district. The following delegates were sent to Regina Maria district: Zaharia Dimitriu and Lawyer Gh. Panaitev, and in Topolog district there were: Gh. Curatu and I. Dogaru<sup>33</sup>. Regarding the number of party members, we find out that 271 members were registered in Tulcea City and 302 members in the county. Therefore, the national-popular organization, according to party documents, at that time, included as members, about 160 farmers (of whom it was not known whether they were ploughmen or not). For this reason, the work plan

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<sup>29</sup> BJANT, fond Organizația Județeană Tulcea a Partidului Național Popular, dosar 3/1948, f. 3-verso.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 2.

<sup>31</sup> From a *model of characterization of Tulcea county organization* we find from the section *issues of organizations, sectors and districts* that in Tulcea county there were the following administrative units : cities: Tulcea, Macin, Sulina, Isaccea and Babadag and *small districts*: Horia, Mahmudia, Topolog, Sulina, Babadag and Macin. According to the mentioned document, the following cities were organized: Tulcea, Babadag, Isaccea and Sulina. Another district that was organized and functioned was the Topolog district. This district included two organizations: one at Topolog, the residence of the district, and another at Târgul Casimcea. Also, the Mahmudia district was organized in January. Instead, the only unorganized district in the county was Horia district. According to Dr. Maximilian, the organized districts had committees and collectives and held committee meetings as well as plenary meetings. In addition to these, two sectors were organized in Tulcea City (I and II). (BJANT, Tulcea County Organization of the National People's Party fund, file 3/1948, tab 29-30).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 1 verso.

of the County Committee had to establish the task of „organized guidance” of the peasants from the National People's Party - towards the Ploughmen's Front<sup>34</sup>.

On January 18, 1949, the Tulcea National Party Organization sent the general report to the Central Committee of the National People's Party, Bucharest. This report shows that the departments of the County Committee did not hold meetings in December 1948, even if in “this month they worked after the old organization of the party”<sup>35</sup>. Instead, special attention was paid to the reorganization of the districts, according to the provisions of the new statute, and on January 6, 1949 the „reorganization” of the county organization was made. Following this process, committees were set up, according to the new status of the organization, in Isaccea, on December 5, 1948, and on December 12, in Babadag and Topolog<sup>36</sup>.

Between December 20, 1948 and January 5, 1949, the activity of the National People's Party organization was suspended. Also, the Popular Democracy Front<sup>37</sup> did not hold meetings in December 1948. Instead, according to the general report, the County Committee Bureau held three meetings in December, meetings in which issues related to the „reactivation of members” were discussed. Regarding the reactivation commissions, we find out from the party documents that they were constituted in number of 9 (made 198 field visits). Thus, two at Tulcea I local organization, two at Tulcea II local organization, one at Babadag, two at Macin, one at Sulina and one at Isaccea<sup>38</sup>.

In January, the NPP members worked in the ARLUS (Romanian Association for Friendship with the Soviet Union) team. Within the ARLUS (in the social, economic, cultural, financial, democratic collectives) eight NPP members were

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 29.

<sup>35</sup> According to the *general report*, the poor activity of the departments of the County Committee was caused by the fact that most of the members were employed or were involved in the census or carried out activities in trade unions. (BJANT, Tulcea County Organization of the National People's Party fund, file 3/1948, tab 5).

<sup>36</sup> On December 5, 1948, Dr. Maximilian, and M. Cahu went to the Isaccea organization, and on December 12, Dr. Maximilian, Zaharia Dimitriu went to Babadag, Măcin and Topolog. However, the organization in Sulina was not reorganized, because in December, the Danube was frozen and therefore the members of the county committee could not travel. (BJANT, Tulcea County Organization of the National People's Party fund, file 3/1948, tab 5-5 verso).

<sup>37</sup> The NPP organization was represented in the PDF by Dr. Maximilian, the president of the county organization. (BJANT, Tulcea County Organization of the National People's Party fund, file 3/1948, tab 6 verso).

<sup>38</sup> BJANT, County Organization of the National People's Party fund, file 4/1949, f. 25.

active, among which Dr. P. Maximilian, N. Vasiliu and Lawyer N. Ivanovici<sup>39</sup>. Also, on January 14, 1949, lawyer N. Ivanovici was appointed as a correspondent for *Națiunea* newspaper<sup>40</sup>.

The work plan for February included the following tasks: checking local organizations; organization of the last district (Horia), as well as trips to the county (within the limits of financial possibilities)<sup>41</sup>. However, according to archival documents, the tasks could not be completed, because at the beginning of February 1949, the Romanian National People's Party dissolved itself, under the conditions of imposing the one-party system.

While in the period 1944-1947, the Romanian Communist Party was forced „to adapt the national front strategy, agreeing to operate within a multiparty political system”, lacking popular support, in 1949, RCP, given that it took over political power, imposed the liquidation of multipartyism<sup>42</sup>.

Finally, from the archive documents we can appreciate that in the studied period, respectively 1946-1949, the main goals of the National People's Party in Tulcea County were: the increase in the number of members, the establishment of organizations in the county, the improvement of collaboration with political parties within NDF (National Democratic Fund), reactivation of members, as well as the reorganization and control of the activity of local organizations.

Therefore, since its inception the NPP in Tulcea County has started an intense campaign to attract new members, and around the November 1946 elections its activity would be focused mainly on the election campaign, by even winning a seat in Parliament of Romania. However, the problems it faced in the county, during its short existence (we shall mention: lack of funds, organizational problems, attacks from other parties in the NDF) have left a negative mark on the party's activity in Tulcea County. Therefore, we can see from the archive documents that the party's activity in Tulcea County, from 1947 until self-dissolution, was characterized by a continuous attempt to reactivation of members, organize and reorganize its organizations in the county.

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<sup>39</sup> The National People's Party organization was represented in the PDF by Dr. Maximilian, the president of the county organization. (BJANT, Tulcea County Organization of the National People's Party fund, file 3/1948, tab 6 verso).

<sup>40</sup> In Tulcea, this newspaper had 158 subscribers, and another 100 copies were distributed through the organization, daily. (BJANT, Tulcea County Organization of the National People's Party fund, file 4/1949, tab 11).

<sup>41</sup> BJANT, fond Organizația Județeană Tulcea a Partidului Național Popular, dosar 4/1949, f. 25.

<sup>42</sup> Comisia Prezidențială pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste în România (Vladimir Tismăneanu, Dorin Dobrințu, Cristian Vasile editori), *Raport Final*, Humanitas, București, 2007, p. 135.