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Radio, Journalism, Books – TIBERIU IANCU– and Afterwards

Liana IANCU,

“Lucian Blaga” Central University Library

“I got the news on the phone, ‘Your friend, Tibi has passed away,’ ... And then I went out to walk for a while on the banks of the Rhine, convinced that it was going to rain ... And I met Mr. Iancu, as I used to meet him on the banks of the Someş formerly. He looked at me with his eyes yellowed with tobacco but still amazingly alive, and told

me in his soft voice, ‘Radu don’t you mind, there are far bigger troubles in the world than this!’ Then he melted away with a vague gesture, as if apologizing for the trouble. I got stunned. Was he making fun of me?... But Mr. Iancu never mocked at anybody ever. He neither complained nor lamented as we all often do. And then I understood. Again he referred to my troubles, patted my shoulder again and gave me a last encouragement... Mr. Iancu had been an open door all his life. Many took advantage of him. Even by just getting a simple piece of advice... I told myself that from then on whenever I listened to the radio, or read a newspaper, I would always remember Mr. Iancu. At least for a while... But Mr. Iancu has already begun to glide into legend. Someone must take care of that”. Radu Tuculescu, Basel, May 1999.¹

“At only 60 years old, a great journalist and a character of exemplary verticality was called... to the world of shadows. He dedicated his life to the Radio, the love of his life. He supervised the journalistic paths of many generations, not seldom betrayed by those whose way he had protected by sacrificing his own projects”. Constantin Mustață².

The destiny of certain people must be recorded: it is a difficult task that I undertake trying also to have a lucid, objective eye for events, sometimes even giving the floor to better informed voices or more nuanced rememberings.

Tiberiu Iancu Vasile was born in Satu Mare, on 12 October 1938. A stupid childhood accident deprived him of the use of one of his eyes.

Going through the avatars of precocious growing up, he made his living, while a student in Mathematics at the University of Cluj (1955-1958), by writing articles about students’ life, humoristic sketches, satirical serials, reportages, sports chronicles for *Făclia*, *Steaua*, *Sportul*, *Urzica*, he also reported for Cluj Radio Broadcasting Station. For a time he shared his sleeping-place with a scavengers’ family who cleaned the streets during the night shift.

He got a temporary proofreading job at *Făclia* newspaper (1959-1961), then he was hired as chief proofreader at *Tribuna* journal (1963-1966). During this period he published reviews and notes, and he made his literary debut with fiction. For a couple of months (1968) he was the

¹ Informația de Cluj 19/1999.

² Constantin Mustață: “A plecat Tibi Iancu”, (“Tibi Iancu Has Passed Away”) in: *Amintiri pentru Mileniul III*, (Memories for the Third Millenium), Cluj, Editura Leda, 2000, p.6.

editor of the daily *Unirea*. The same year he was hired at the agrarian department of Cluj Radio-TV Broadcasting Station.

He had known Cluj Radio Broadcasting Station almost since its foundation: editor's toil, department secretary (1969-1981), programmes, live programmes, theatre scripts to be broadcast – ideological barriers, truncated truths, censorship – he did as much as was allowed, as much as the others did. At that time Cluj Radio Broadcasting Station was a cultural radio channel. It broadcast 3-7 hours per day. It represented the Transylvanian plurality, a sort of normality failure, being simultaneously a football playground and a stage for folk music, opera, philharmonics, and theatre. Value was also broadcast on this channel (see The Golden Media Library [Fonoteca de aur] with hundreds of musical recordings from the ethnographic- folk Transylvanian area; recordings which belong to the documentary fund: Lucian Blaga, Ion Agârbiceanu, Emil Isac, Iuliu Hațieganu). This was the period when everybody listened to Cluj Radio Broadcasting Station.

During all this period, his interest in Mathematics did not die, as well as that rigour and exigency towards himself which made him burn an unpublished volume of fiction. In 1975 he attended an intensive course in computer science and got a certificate as assistant computer programmer. It was a course necessary for his graduation paper at the Faculty of Journalism (1976). Following his inclinations, he was the coordinating editor of *Display* (1975-1981), a publication of the Laboratory of Informatics in Cluj, where he volunteered. *The Informatics Display*, the publication's almanac was the first Romanian almanac in computer science. Several volumes were published on the occasion of national conferences in computer science and management.

He did not bend in the frosty winter of 1985, which shattered destinies, just when nothing seemed to be shattered anymore. "The local radio broadcasting stations and their almost six hundred employees were sacrificed because of a whim of Cabinet nr. 2¹, the devil's chemist being impressed – negatively – and irritated by the large number of employees at the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company. The staff redundancies had been imperatively and coarsely asked without any idea about the consequences, widening the spiritual gulag."¹ Some employees became human resource workers, cinema administrators, and labour protection

¹ Symbolic denomination for Elena Ceausescu, the wife of Romania's communist dictator (translator's note).

¹ Cornel Udrea, "Hiatus '85". In: *Primăveri hertziene: Radio Cluj 45* (Hertzian Springs: Radio Cluj 45), Cluj, Editura Napoca Star, 1999, p.51.

inspectors or got a job at the “elephants’ cemeteries” – as libraries and museums were called. Destiny decided for Tiberiu Iancu: the department for acquisitions at “Lucian Blaga” Main University Library. He became a librarian at the legal deposit: years of routine work whose professional landmarks he did not have. To this, he added thousands of pages that he read and edited for everyone who needed him in this capacity.

22 December 1989: the Ceaușescu couple ran away. It was the decisive liminal moment to reconnect Cluj Radio Broadcasting Station to the nation. Tiberiu Iancu was among the first to arrive. Almost anonymously, the old team resumed broadcasting at 6 p.m. “On 22 December we did not know what was going to happen and we certainly had no idea if we could make it alive.”² “The team was almost complete. Most of those who had been there before the Station had been disbanded came and stayed from the first day... others did not want to come back anymore. Among the latter I very much regretted Tiberiu Iancu, former department secretary, a high class professional... several months later, when I asked him, in an office of the Station, why he wouldn’t stay, he said: “Because I don’t want to be engaged in politics anymore.”³ Constantin Colhon (*Primăveri herziene/Hertzian Springs*). Circumstances, the times, his age were decisive in his decision to continue to work at the Main University Library until he retired.

Tiberiu Iancu was not distinguished for his zeal to fulfill his load processing publications for the legal deposit. The library hosted his dream born from the great chance to lay hands on everything that was being published in the country: books and miscellanies (brochures, catalogues, posters, advertisements, announcements, etc.); information selected and later sorted out according to the century that had just ended in the intellectual history of Cluj. This gave him the idea of the *Clujeni ai secolului 20*¹ (*Personalities of Cluj in the Twentieth Century*) dictionary, a great and difficult to accomplish project (the lack of data bases), fuelled also by the spiritual “everything is possible, everything is allowed” effervescence that followed 1989. The same effervescence made him write articles and edit local periodicals, such as *Piramida* (The Pyramid), *Gazeta de Cluj-Napoca* (The Gazette of Cluj-Napoca), *Magazinul pompierilor* (The Firemen’s Magazine).

² *We Had Been Afraid*. The programme: “Those who were, those who stayed, 22 December 1996”. In: *Primăveri hertziene 45* (Hertzian Springs), p.56.

³ Constantin Colhon, “Clipa cea repede” (“The Fast Moment”) In: *Primăveri hertziene* (Hertzian Springs), p.53.

¹ Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2000.

As he himself said in a 1994 letter asking for funding from Alin Teodorescu, the chairman of Soros Foundation, "I compiled an encyclopedic dictionary of the 20th century personalities of Cluj; at the beginning by myself, but then realizing that such an enterprise could take up several years' work, I resorted to other contributors – people of quality, established in their profession – who joined me as volunteers, without expecting any reward from any one, each taking over the task of 'covering' one or several areas ... At present, the dictionary includes over 1,500 names, data on their life and activity presented more or less briefly on up to a page and a half in typing, in case of the great personalities. Almost all areas are covered... The fundamental criterion in compiling the dictionary represents the contribution to the scientific, cultural, academic, etc. prestige of Cluj, beyond any prejudices (political, ethnic, religious), strictly mentioning objective, verifiable, controllable data, avoiding hierarchies and subjective commentaries – to the extent that is humanly possible, of course."

Among the contributors there were librarians with higher education, university professors, researchers, editors, journalists, students. Three of them had, in my opinion, the inexplicable stubbornness, the unusual dedication to work and an instinct for value that made possible the materialization of the work into the floppy disks on the table of the Casa Cărții de Știință (The House of the Science Book) Publishing House. They are: **Teodor Mihăilescu** (1909-1998) – a journalist, library sciences specialist, former director of "Lucian Blaga" Main University Library and of the Main Library of the Polytechnic Institute, an amazingly young encyclopedic mind, perfectly adaptable to the work. He scanned the technical sciences and, partly, the exact sciences and supervised the whole with Tiberiu Iancu.

Zoe Buz, Ph.D. in Biology, at that time chef-librarian at the Library of the Biology Faculty, coordinated the information transfer from the manuscripts into the computer memory, permanently keeping in touch with the coordinator of the Dictionary. She mediated the transfer of the dictionary to the Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House after the coordinator's death.

Stelian Mândruț, a researcher, Ph.D. in History, morally supported and accompanied me on the great peregrinations to publishing houses after my husband's death. One cannot overlook the hard work of Gabriela Morărescu (chief-librarian - Faculty of Biology) and Nicoleta Irimuș to put everything on the computer (moreover, as some of the notes were handwritten).

As a result of these remarkable efforts, the book “was ready” and in 1995 it was given to Dacia Publishing House and there was hope that the Soros Foundation would sponsor it. The volume was to contain (existent selections in manuscript), pictures with buildings from the different periods of the history of Cluj, works of art by twentieth-century painters and sculptors of Cluj, as well as an Annex with institutions, societies, and associations of Cluj in the same century.

The manuscript had been lying for three years at the Dacia Publishing House. Studia Publishing House also promised to publish it, but they did not keep their word either.

I quote from the same letter asking for funding that I mentioned above: ”We have approached the local authorities and they have assured us of their entire support. In principle. So much in principle and so certainly that Mayor Funar has already “ordered” the work of another team led by Mr. Bobină, his secretary-in-chief ... Even if unfair, competition neither scares nor bothers us. We believe that one, or two, or several such works might be useful because of their complementarity, together they could give an image of the twentieth-century Cluj much closer to the real one. And also, we do not worry because we know that “their” dictionary shall anyway be affected by their political vision.” The fear of censorship, the more or less fear ... but the real fear. Later on, as we know it, the book was published also with the financial assistance of the Council and the Mayor of Cluj-Napoca without any interventions based on ethnic criteria to alter its content. The same fears made him turn down the offer to work with the “Octavian Goga” County Library, although this collaboration proved to be beneficial when the dictionary reached the Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House.

Upset, he withdrew his manuscript from Dacia Publishing House (1998), but did not abandon his project continuing to work on new descriptions on nearly illegible notes (his eye sight having failed a lot).

He also edited the collection *Primăveri hertziene* (Hertzian Springs) published upon the forty-fifth anniversary of Cluj Radio Broadcasting Studio and he contributed to the first volume of “*Reviste românești de cultură din Transilvania interbelică*”¹.

After his death (30 April 1999) there remained two floppy-disks with the content of the dictionary, a printed “volume” (438 p.) with annotations on the back of some pages and an immense heap of notes – handwritten and typed – some of them were not the same as those on the

¹ (Romanian Cultural Journals from Transylvania during the Interwars Period), Cluj, Presa Universitara Clujeana, 1999.

floppy-disks or were completely new (new names). Many notes were not signed or signed only with initials, as they appeared in the dictionary as well. I had only met some of the contributors: the most hard working ones. I decided to finish his work as much as this was within the range of my powers. I started by arranging the heap of notes in alphabetical order so that they could be compared with the material on the floppy disks, and so I made several files. Meanwhile I discovered the “rescue file” with the information about the editorial committee, the contributors and their workplaces, the areas they had tackled and the initials with which they had signed their entries, in a few cases even phone numbers!

About two weeks later I was contacted by the City Council and by “Octavian Goga” County Library. I felt great responsibility on my shoulders. The same fears that seized my former husband held me at bay, too. So I said “No”, trying to start an “initiative on my own account” against time, and also beginning to realize that the manuscript was in a “rough” stage. After I failed with “Paralela 45” Publishing House, in September 1999 the manuscript was at ”Casa Cărții de Știință” with a first-hand promise to be “taken into consideration”, “weighed”, “evaluated”. Mrs. Irina Petraș was in favor of its publication. I was to contact the old team, explain the situation and “convince” them to resume their work on the dictionary with a new coordinator and strict rules to edit their entries. Two of the members of the editorial committee (Teodor Mihăilescu and Tiberiu Iancu), the most important ones (half of the material had been compiled by them) had passed away. Some were unable to work or had left the city, others had not contributed, but wanted to, and finally about 10 people came the first “work meeting” with Mrs. Irina Petraș – the new coordinator of the dictionary – and Mr. Mircea Trifu – the manager of the publishing house.

Later on, I managed to bring new contributors, who were to edit Mihăilescu’s entries, Mrs. Petraș was to edit Tiberiu Iancu’s. What followed can be read in the Argument of the Dictionary. Within a year the book was in the window of the University Bookshop.

All this time, I felt horribly humiliated. For instance, before my request for funding was turned down (at Mikotronic), for an hour and a half I had been left to wait standing and jostled by those who used a passage gangway.

I felt wronged, sad and very lonely when, my only request formulated in everybody’s presence at the beginning of the first “work meeting” was finally turned down because I did not sign a preliminary contract. I had asked that both persons (Tiberiu Iancu and Irina Petraș) be

considered coordinators and this situation be reflected on the printed cover of the book without any ambiguity. I felt very sad when I found out that in the final stage of the work, when they had to choose between two almost identical entries (probably based on the same source), the newcomer's was preferred. I felt ashamed to find out that without being consulted, I was undeservedly included among the personalities of the city, together with other "work-less" contributors. I felt sad again when, on the gorgeous cover of the dictionary, I caught sight of some of the Cluj personalities' mutilated names.

But despite all these, upon coming out of the gate of the publishing house, my Dictionary copies under my arm, I felt enormously relieved: I had nothing else to do but walk in that drizzling November rain; that and nothing else anymore.

(November 2004)

Emil Pintea (16th December 1944 – 6th January 2004)

- The polyvalence of a destiny-

Adrian GRĂNESCU

"Octavian Goga" County Library

Cluj Napoca

Around the eighties (of the past century) a honorable Romanian criticist (from Bucharest) visiting the city of Cluj as a guest of the Babeş-Bolyai University's Rector (who was one of the most important professors at the Faculty of Lettres), was asked by the latter, with a fake modesty in his voice (which we, his former students were familiarized with, and knew to interpret it as irony):

- "What do you think of Cluj? Provincial? Isn't it? A poor provincial city...!"

- "Provincial?" – Provincial, he responded using the same interrogative tone. "No! Not in the least! On the contrary! It is not provincial (it is a metropolis)! A city with a university that can afford such adjuncts and lecturers (he named the most outstanding, the most famous ones – they all became university professors after 1990 –, publicists, book authors, not promoted because of different stupid bureaucratic and financial reasons in the closing stages of the communist era, and probably, in the opinion of the man from Bucharest,