

TIRON ALBANI'S MEMOIRS – A GENUINE NARRATIVE HISTORICAL SOURCE DISTORTED BY THE COMMUNIST CENSORSHIP

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Abstract The article aims to relaunch in the scientific circuit Tiron Albani's memoirs, from which only an abridged and censored fragment was published on the occasion of the semi-centennial of the Union. Preserved in a typewritten form at the "Octavian Goga" County Library, the manuscript is a unique memorialistic work and a valuable documentary source, especially for the history of the Transylvanian Romanian social democratic movement from its beginnings as a section of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary to the interwar period, as it was seen by one of its leaders. In addition to the description of the manuscript, the article focuses on the intervention of the communist censorship in the fragment related to the Great Union published in 1968.

Keywords: Tiron Albani, memoirs, Great Union, Romanian Social Democratic movement, communist censorship

Tiron Albani (1887 Gârbova de Sus – 1976 Oradea), a journalist and a member of the Social Democratic Party who was very active within the Central Romanian National Council published two books about the Union in anniversary years with political significance in the historiography of the year 1918.

The first text, *Twenty years from the Union*, published in 1938, was conceived with the declared purpose of preserving the memory of a generation because "although only two decades have passed since the great events that have brought us to Romania, many facts of great importance have gone into the field of forgetting, together with people who have been partakers of them..."¹ As a tribute to the monarch's cult of personality, on the guard page of the book, King Carol II is presented as "the one who has consolidated United Romania".

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¹ Tiron Albani, *Douăzeci de ani dela Unire. Monografie comemorativă a Unirii*, Vol. 1, *Cum s-a făcut Unirea* (Oradea: Institutul de Arte Grafice, 1938), 5.

The work includes, besides the pages written by Tiron Albani, studies and testimonies from twenty representatives of the Union generation, such as Nicolae Iorga, Ioan Lupaș, Ion Clopoțel, Ion Flueraș and Eugeniu Speranția.

It is well-known that the book was censored after the first print, because it included a reference to a manifesto of solidarity with the Hungarian Crown, signed in 1917, among others, by Romania's Patriarch Bishop Miron Cristea, but it is less known that the volume was subjected to censorship even before entering the print, by eliminating three chapters in which Tiron Albani presented the participation of the inhabitants of his village, Gârbova de Sus, to the Great National Assembly, as well as the preference of the social democrats for a republican regime. These texts, kept in typewritten form, were published in an anastatic edition in 2012, unfortunately in a small print run.²

If until 1945, the Union of 1918 "was to the public opinion and politics, the cornerstone of the Romanian national edifice"³, afterwards followed a period when proletarian internationalism considered national political acts of 1918 as taboo subjects, according to the directives formulated by the prolektult historian Mihail Roller, and the collaboration of the Transylvanian social democrats with the representatives of the Romanian National Party as an act of betrayal of the proletarian cause.⁴ The historiographic recovery of the events of 1918 began gradually after 1957, when nationalism was subjected to the service of communism, and fully bloomed in 1968, the year in which the Union, with its national ideological substratum, reached a journalist peak.⁵ The leaders of the Romanian section of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary were treated differently: the rightist social democrats, Ion Flueraș⁶ and Iosif

² Tiron Albani, *Cum s-a făcut Unirea. Articole suprimate de cenzură din monografia 20 de ani de la Unire de Tiron Albani*, edition and forward by Istina Sima (Alba-Iulia: Printing Press Aeternitas, 2012). More details in: Mihai-Octavian Groza, "Un corpus documentar cenzurat din monografia Douăzeci de ani de la Unire de Tiron Albani (1938)", in Doru Sinaci, Emil Arbore (coordinators), *Administrație românească arădeană. Studii și comunicări din Banat-Crișana*, XI (Arad: "Vasile Goldiș" University Press, 2016), 315-349.

³ Valer Moga, "Unirea de la 1918 în istoriografia anilor 1945-1967", in Valer Moga, Sorin Arhire (coordinators), *Anul 1918 în Transilvania și Europa Central-Estică, Contribuții bibliografice și istoriografice*, (Cluj-Napoca: Printing Press Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2007), 49.

⁴ Ibid., 62.

⁵ Valer Moga, "Anul 1918: un traseu istoriografic de nouă decenii", in Valer Moga, Sorin Arhire (coordinators), *Anul 1918 în Transilvania și Europa Central-Estică, Contribuții bibliografice și istoriografice*, 7-20.

⁶ Ion Flueraș (1882-1953) – one of the most important leaders of the social-democratic movement in Transylvania. Member of the Romanian National Council, he was part of the Ruling Council as head of the Social Security and Hygiene Resort. In 1948 he was arrested and after four years of detention, in 1952 he was sentenced to 15 years of heavy prison. He died in Gherla Prison in 1953.

Jumanca⁷, who were condemned by the communists ever since the establishment of Comintern in 1919, were accused in 1964 of a capitulatory attitude towards the bourgeoisie, while Enea Grapini⁸ and Tiron Albani, who during the interwar period did not play a role in great politics and who did not suffer from communist persecution, were praised for the fact that in 1918 they had militated for a republican Romania.⁹

In the context of an ideological relaxation, Tiron Albani's memoirs were published with a preface signed by Miron Constantinescu, a historian who offered political guarantee. The volume, however, contains only a fragment, drastically purged, from the memoirs gathered by Tiron Albani under the title *Oppressive Times*. The manuscript is mentioned in several papers dedicated to Tiron Albani, but there is only a succinct presentation of it made by historian Gheorghe Bodea in 1993, in an article stating that the manuscript was given to him by the author.¹⁰

This manuscript of 317 typewritten pages, with cuttings and handwritten corrections belonging to Tiron Albani, was donated by the historian Gheorghe Bodea along with a part of his archive, to the "Octavian Goga" County Library in 1999.

Attached to the manuscript in the historian's archive was saved an offer made by Tiron Albani to the Scientific Publishing House, the History department, with the proposal that the preface should be written by Gheorghe Bodea. Appreciating that the document was matching the semicentennial of the Union, the publishing house decided to print the fragment related to the events of October – December 1918, processed and censored.

After reading the manuscript, we conclude that Tiron Albani had begun to write his memoirs during the Retreat (on page 45, the author notes: "I am writing these memoirs by oil lamp as the war threw us back fifty years") and he resumed later, probably in the 1960s. On the title page of the manuscript he marked the year 1966.

The memoirs have an uneven narrative style, although his experience of a journalist is obvious. The texts relating to the events of 1918 have been repeatedly re-written in order to be published, which, to some extent, is natural in the making of a book. The published version concentrates the text, making many cuts and redraftings, some necessary, others imposed by censorship. We will return to these aspects in the presentation of the manuscript.

The general tone of the memoirs is colloquial, unobtrusive, even uninhibited. Next to pages of pure literature, we find long fragments of romantic biography, irrelevant to the

⁷ Iosif Jumanca (1893-1949) – leader of the social-democratic movement in Transylvania, member of the Romanian National Council, he was elected in the Ruling Council responsible of the Industry Resort. He died in Jilava Prison in 1949.

⁸ Enea Grapini (1893-1980) – engineer, member of Romanian National Council from the part of the social-democrats. After the Union he returned to his profession.

⁹ Mihai-Octavian Groza, Diana-Maria Dăian, "The Political Action of the Transylvanian Social-Democrats from the Autumn and the Winter of the Year 1918 as Reflected in the Romanian (1919-2016)", in *Astra Sabiensis*, no 3 (2017), 241.

¹⁰ Gheorghe Bodea, "Tiron Albani (1887-1976)" in *Românul*, new series, 10 (Oct. 1993), 1.

reader, or less plausible. Memoirs, however, by nature, are built around the author. The literary criterion and the historical objectivity are therefore secondary, and it's the subjective reality which gives life and colour of the era. Being a leader of the Transylvanian social democratic movement, actively involved in the achievement of the Union, considered by Keith Hitchins "one of the few theorists that the movement has had"¹¹, Tiron Albani's perspective is all the more important for the nuanced understanding of the era.

Given that we are dealing with an unpublished manuscript, this study aims to provide a detailed presentation of it, insisting on Tiron Albani's biography and his version of the events he attended. The memoirs cover the period between birth, 1887 and 1932, providing previously unknown information about Tiron Albani's childhood and youth, and clarifying many episodes of his activity as a social-democratic militant.

Tiron Albani was born on 2 March 1887, in the village of Gârbova de Sus, an Orthodox Romanian village¹² belonging to Aiud – "the town called 'the Navel of the World' (maybe because in the centre lived proud lords, landowners or clerks), because Aiud was a county residence and housed the Bethlen college, a chauvinist nursery; it was surrounded by many vineyards that gave a famous wine rivaling with Tokay. Romanians from the outskirts were wearing white trousers with their shirt out."¹³

The house where he was born was built by his grandfather, Vasile Popa, an imperial soldier, who after twelve years of military service, settled in Gârbova de Sus, on the outskirts, where "the poverty seemed to be more pronounced, although the whole village lived in a painful misery." After his grandfather's early death, his wife, Mădălina of Cristea, went to Aiud at the midwife school, leaving her daughter, Justina, in the care of her relatives. Justina was only 16 years old when she married to Amos Albani, the son of Greek-Catholic priest, Sebastian, from Gârbovița. About Amos Albani we found out from the text that he started school in Blaj but that he did not graduated, in contrast to his brothers who became wealthy officials: Chirion was a notary in Cârna, and Nicolae was a teacher in Sâmbăta de Jos.

Justina Albani died when she was only 23 years old, leaving three orphans: Paraschiva, Maria and Tiron. After the death of his wife, Amos Albani remarried with Florica from Părău, who gave birth to four girls.

Poverty has aggravated his father's tuberculosis who died when Tiron was only six years old. The elder sister, Paraschiva, had been taken by one of the uncles when her father still lived, and Tiron and Mary came to the care of Grandma Mădălina, the midwife of Aiud who

¹¹ Keith Hitchins, *Conștiință și acțiune politică la românii din Transilvania (1868-1918)*, vol. 2 (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1992), 147.

¹² At the 1880 census, Gârbova de Sus numbered 132 houses and had a population of 656 inhabitants, of which 648 were Orthodox and 8 Israelites. See: *The Census in Transylvania 1880* (Bucharest: Printing Press Staff, 1997), 4.

¹³ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, "Octavian Goga" County Library Cluj, Compartment for Special Collections, Knowledge and Local Memory, Manuscripts, Gheorghe Bodea Sub-fund, mss. 483, 26.

remarried a drunken and violent man. Forced by circumstances, the grandmother found them shelter at their relatives, who use them as servants without any sympathy.

The only bright childhood memory was the trip to Budapest, where the authorities of Aiud sent him and his sister to a anti-rabies treatment after being bitten by a dog. "The doctors were careful with us, they talked nicely to us and they were comforting us, but unfortunately I didn't understand what they were saying. I was very surprised that nobody was beating us there, nor did they scold us."¹⁴

However, on the return home, the same sad orphans' fate was expecting them. After two disrupted years of school (he went to school four months a year - in winter), he was withdrawn to be sent to work, although the teacher Aurel Popa praised him: "It's a shame, this child learns well!"¹⁵ However, Tiron Albani's case is frequently encountered in Transylvania at the end of the 19th century; the percentage of those who could write and read in 1900 was only 36.6%.¹⁶

At the age of 10, his uncle Chirion, the notary in Cârna, takes him in and enrolls him at the Elementary State School¹⁷ in Vințul de Jos: "Although I told them I had attended two classes at the Romanian school in Aiud, they enrolled me in the first class, because they pretended I didn't know Hungarian. I felt ashamed for this demotion / I was ten years old / but I had nothing to do "¹⁸. At the end-of-year exam he came in second and the teacher gave him a letter of praise.

Life in uncle's house was as miserable as at the other masters, so that the two brothers who "also had the ambition of not being exploited and mocked, for his father was our grandfather, we came from the same seed"¹⁹ summoned up their courage and ran away back to Aiud, to their grandmother.

At the village school, the teacher was Vasile Maxa, an Orthodox priest, who "was rarely seen at school, was more interested in getting rich, and when he came to school he beaten the children who were noted on the blackboard."²⁰ The priest advised grandma

¹⁴ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 7

¹⁵ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶ *The Census in Transylvania 1880* (Bucharest: Printing Press Staff, 1997), 614.

¹⁷ Education in Transylvania was organized on the basis of the *Law of Education* of 1868 which provided for compulsory primary education for all Hungarians aged 6 to 15 and the freedom of education in the sense that parents could send their children to any school they wanted. Primary schools could be established and supported by confessions, the state, political communities and private societies, and the language of teaching was set up by school supporters. Since 1879 the compulsory teaching of Hungarian has been introduced in confessional schools. See: Onisifor Ghibu, *The Life and the Organization of the Church and School in Transylvania and Hungary* (Bucharest: Printing Press Institutul de Artă Grafică "Nicolae Stroila", 1915), 106.

¹⁸ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 17

¹⁹ Ibid., 21.

²⁰ Ibid., 23.

Mădălina to get the boy out of school and find him a place to work. It was the last time when Tiron Albani attended school.

For two years he served at a railroad clerk, Sofron Boanca. "I envied the workers in the field or on the railroad who were resting at night and didn't start the work until sunrise; at noon they ate as much as they needed, and nobody beat them to work over their powers."²¹

Tiron Albani's pages about his persecuted childhood remind us of the autobiographical novel *My apprenticeship* by congener writer Panait Istrati. Like Panait Istrati, Tiron Albani tried to find his rescue in books. Once meeting his grandmother Mădălina at the fair in Aiud, at his request, she bought him the *Passion of Jesus the Savior*. "I returned home happily having a book to read. [...] In the morning I had to graze the cattle, so I was given the occasion to read about the Lord's Passion. As I was immersed in the reading, I didn't notice that the master came. He grabbed me, ripped my book, tossed it into pieces, and threw it into the pond, and then said beating me, "Is this why I give you food and clothes so that you become a pope?" "God damn you etc." I wept bitterly. In that incident I saw the tragedy of my whole life. Was I crying after school? Was I crying the sorrow of my fate? I didn't even know."²²

Two years later, the service contract of Grandma Mădălina and railroad clerk Boanca ended and he was taken over by another railroad clerk, Ion Maior, from Mihalț and Cistei, where he was treated more humanly, but received "just as little food as before"²³.

At the age of 16, he tried to find a job, but he was refused everywhere, not having attended school nor having the money to pay for his apprenticeship.

He remembered uncle Nicolae, who was a schoolteacher at the Elementary State School with seven classes in Sâmbăta de Jos and who had taken his elder sister, Paraschiva. Because he is too old for the third grade, his uncle suggested him to learn gardening. Even though he was not allowed in the classroom, Tiron Albani was eager to enriching his knowledge: "In the spring time classes were held with the windows open. I was sneaking by the window and listening to the lessons. (...) I was very interested in the names of cities, countries, rivers and seas / it was geography class. But I couldn't do it at all when it was math and algebra. History I began to understand and I liked it, although some parts of it left me puzzled. One day I entered the school's attic where I found many books which had been given to reform. I took some of them and studied them in secrecy".²⁴

Leaving his uncle house, he went to Brașov with the intention of going to Romania where he found out he could learn a trade, because "there no one asked you for school or money."²⁵

²¹ Ibid., 25

²² Ibid., 26.

²³ Ibid., 30.

²⁴ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 34.

²⁵ Ibid., 32.

The first attempt to reach Romania by Predeal failed, and the gendarmes escorted him, along with other captured fugitives, back to Brasov, where he was held in custody for three days, after which he was released. In fact, the authorities were not very interested in stopping the emigration of the non-Hungarian population. Before the First World War there was a permanent flow of Romanians from Transylvania to the Old Kingdom.²⁶ A shepherd from the village of Șirnia showed him the road to Romania, over the mountains, from the Dâmbovicioarei Cave to Câmpulung, wishing him: "God be with you, but take care and do not make our Transylvania ashamed of your behaviour."²⁷

In Câmpulung he met a Swabian from Caracal, Fritz Cordas, who proposed him to enter as an apprentice in his carpentry workshop. There Albani learned the craft from the other workers, working 13 hours a day.

With the carpenter's certificate obtained from the Craftsmen Corporation in his pocket, he went to Bucharest at the International Exhibition in 1906 dedicated to the 40th anniversary of Carol I and 25 years since the proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania. From here, the adventure took him to Craiova.

Here he found work in a carpentry workshop and enrolled as a private student at "Carol I" High School. Most of the students were part of the Anti-Semitic League²⁸ and Tiron Albani joined them: "They had hacked me into their service to sell the newspaper with the same name. We were shouting in the street "Anti-Semitic League"! and we were selling the newspaper with 10 bani. They also sent me through the county with a bicycle dressed like a peasant."²⁹

The year 1907 found him in Craiova, where, after the harsh suppression of the Peasants' revolt, he was arrested along with several colleagues for the distribution of "green" manifests through the villages.

Together with his friend Mișu Becheanu he managed to escape the police arrest and clandestinely passed the Danube in Bulgaria, where there was a large Romanian community.³⁰

In Vidin they found work at the Petroff carpentry factory, where they were approached to join a trade union. "They gave us a few brochures in Romanian, among which I noticed *Christianity and Democracy* by Dem. Dobrescu, *Socialism and the Working Class* by Karl

²⁶ Between 1899 and 1913, a number of 102.378 Romanian Transylvanians have emigrated to the Kingdom of Romania. See: *The Union between Transylvania and Romania. 1 December 1918* (Bucharest: Printing Press Institute for Historical and Social-Political Studies, 1972), 291.

²⁷ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 41

²⁸ After 1880, Anti-Semitism became a social and political phenomenon in Romania. In 1895, the "Anti-Semitic Alliance", led by a high school teacher, Nae Dumitrescu and the "Antisemitic League" established by A. C. Cuza and Nicolae Iorga grew rapidly and local organizations appeared in almost all the cities of the country. See: Carol Iancu, *Romanian Jews (1866-1919). From Exclusion to Emancipation* (Bucharest: Printing Press Hasefer, 1996), 252-260.

²⁹ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 67

³⁰ See: Emil Țîrcomnicu, "Românii din nordul Bulgariei – considerente istorice, sociologice și etnografice", in *Philologica Jassyensia*, VI, No. 2 (12), 2010, 255-265.

Marx and *Utopian Socialism* by Fourier. [...] In the evening, when we arrived home, Mișu used to read and I listened to him, we were just like two children charmed by fairy tales."³¹

From Vidin they went to Budapest, where they came in contact with the Romanian socialists, which were operating under the aegis of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt - MSZDP), established in 1893.

The Hungarian party had good reasons to take the foreign workers under their wing because they represented an important percentage of the total industrial labor force. According to the 1900 census, about 43% of the industrial workers spoke another language than Hungarian. The interest of the party in Romanian workers culminated with the establishment of a Romanian journal, *Adevărul*³², the responsibility of organizing the Romanian socialists being passed on to its editors. The ideology trained by the Romanian socialists in Budapest was a simplified and eclectic form of socialism, the socialist leaders being workers and not intellectuals.

The official establishment of the Romanian section of MSZDP took place at the Congress of December 25-26, 1905, held in Lugoj. Throughout the following ten years the Romanian section established local branches in Transylvania, but in its existence the section remained small and with little influence in the course of events.³³

In Budapest, Tiron Albani also met the union workers expelled from Romania following the 1907 Peasants' revolt: Iosif Ciser, George Boeru, Jean Kalber, Ion Steflea and Leonard Paukerow. Their presence in Budapest sparked a rush among the Romanian workers, some of which "had almost forgotten Romanian language." "Leonard lectured about Eminescu and Baudelaire, Ciser lectured about C. Dobrogeanu Gherea, Robert Owen and Fourier. The poems of Neculița, Eminescu and Coșbuc were declamated. The Romanian section of MSZDU had turned into a free university."³⁴

In the spring of 1908, when he found out that the Romanian government had amnestyed all those involved in the 1907 Revolt, Tiron Albani and his friend Mișu Becheanu returned to Craiova, crossing the border again at Bran – Dâmbovicioara – Câmpulung.

³¹ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 64.

³² *Adevărul*, the officious of the Romanian section of MSZDU, appeared in Budapest monthly (August 16, 1903-20 April 1912) weekly (May 1, 1912-9 August 1914, October 8, 1917-1 December 1918), then in Sibiu (December 2, 1918-20, 1926), the editors-in chief being: Aurel Cristea (1903-1911), Ion Flueraș (1911, 1917, 1919-1926), Tiron Albani (1913, 1919). The journal aimed to popularize among the Romanian workers in Transylvania and Hungary the ideas of socialism, to contribute to the spread of culture among the masses. See: Ioana Nistor, "Adevărul (Adeverul). Glasul Poporului. O tribună românească pentru unirea tuturor românilor", in *95 de ani de la Marea Unire* (Arad: University Press "Vasile Goldiș"), 2013.

³³ Keith Hitchins, *Conștiință și acțiune politică la românii din Transilvania, vol 2, (1868-1918)*, 140-143.

³⁴ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 65

In Romania, following the "betrayal of the generous"³⁵, the socialist movement acquired a pronounced working class character. The new leaders of the workers' movement (I.C. Frimu, Alecu Constantinescu, Cristian Racovski, Mihail Bujor) focused on the organization of trade unions and on the fight against corporations.³⁶

In Craiova, Tiron Albani joined the union led by Ion Duicu and participated –with the excitement of an autodidact – at the conferences held every Thursday and Sunday in the Syndicate Hall on Kogălniceanu Street.

He was exalted by Ștefan Gheorghiu "who was an excellent orator and a deep thinker. He was loved by the public as a renowned drama artist. He spoke of Rousseau's "social contract", of Voltaire's philosophy, and of the utopian socialism of Saint Simon, Fourier, and Robert Owen."³⁷

Ștefan Gheorghiu and Mișu Ionescu organized a Socialist Education seminar in Craiova, and the best students were sent to the cities of Oltenia to organize local trade unions.

Tiron Albani was sent to Slatina, where, with the help of his old friend from Caracal's carpentry workshop, Nicolae Vasiliu, he set up the carpenters' union. He succeeded by leading a strike to reduce the number of working hours from 12 to 10. Being dismissed from the workshop, he hired himself at the Roux Timber Factory. There the exploitation was even more pronounced than at the small business owners, the modest wages being mutilated by all sorts of taxes. He wrote an article for *România Muncitoare*³⁸, which echoed among the workers and for which Roux's patron reported him to the police. As a result, he was arrested and beaten until he lost consciousness.

In the spring of 1909 he went to Bucharest "eager to meet the capital of the Kingdom of Romania and to complete my culture, the limits of which I had begun to realize."³⁹

Here he participates at the cultural and ideological activity of the "România Muncitoare" Movement, which "was not only a socialist club, but also a free university of real science and culture based on Marxist theory, on the principle of historical materialism".⁴⁰

Among the speakers, he was particularly impressed by I. C. Frimu ("If Frimu had lived in France or Germany, he would have been compared to Jean Jaures or August Bebel."⁴¹), Dimitrie Marinescu and N. Cocea. "My heart was growing with joy, I felt that my cultural

³⁵ The Social Democratic Party of the Workers in Romania, established in 1893, will be dissolved in 1899, when the intellectuals left the party for the National Liberal Party.

³⁶ Nicolae Jurcă, *Istoria social-democrației din România* (Bucharest: Scientific Printing Press, 1994), 57.

³⁷ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 68.

³⁸ "România muncitoare" was the newspaper of the socialist circle with the same name, set up by I.C. Frimu in 1901. It appeared weekly from 1 January 1902 until 19 June 1902, when for financial reasons it ceased to appear. In 1905, in the conditions of the resurgence of the social-democratic movement, the newspaper reappeared on 5 March as the second series. see: Nicolae Jurcă, 54-58.

³⁹ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 74.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁴¹ Ibid., 76.

horizon was widening as I began to understand things deeper and more thoroughly. I was longing to know more. As I did not have a routine or a system to acquire knowledge that I should have acquired a long time ago, I was reading everything that fell into my hand. However, I warmed my soul at the fire of these ideas that inflamed the spirits of "România Muncitoare" circle, I was participating with body and soul at all their actions, at all the cultural and combat manifestations held in the centre of Bucharest."⁴²

Dimitrie Marinescu, who from a printing worker had become an editor, took him under his direction and showed him how to make a report and how to write an article.

He fell in love with the hosts' daughter, Adriana, whom he was meditating on geography, but the girl's parents ended the love story, forbidding them to meet again.

Broken-hearted, he left Bucharest intending to go to Budapest. He stopped in Braşov, where he was welcomed with friendship in the socialist circle, which included Gheorghe Grădinaru, Victor Brăţfăleanu and Carol Bartha.

He participated in the VIth Congress of the Romanian section of the MSZDP as a delegate from the newly re-founded Romanian Social Democratic Party.⁴³ The Congress took place in Sibiu (and not in Braşov, as Tiron Albani mistakenly remembers) on September 25-26, 1910.⁴⁴ The participation in the congress was reduced (58 delegates, besides those from Bucharest and Budapest), due to the lack of funds and the repressive policy of the Khuen-Héderváry government. The congress was chaired by Teodor Onişor (Blaj), Iosif Ilie (Zlatna), Pompei Geza-Bănăţeanul (Lugoj). "The congressmen highlighted the double exploitation of the Romanian workers in Transylvania: as Romanians and as workers," wrote Albani.⁴⁵

Being in the proximity of his village, he visited Gârbova de Sus, proudly aware of the exceptional turn that his destiny had made in the eleven years since he left home: "Going into the village I appeared like an exotic flower among thorns. People, former neighbours, were embracing me and were amazed. I left the village hungry, naked and helpless and I came back dressed like a gentleman, speaking rightly, expressing wise thoughts. They knew of only three other young men who had left the village and came back as gentlemen: Dumitru Popa, Ştefan Cotbară and Ioan Popa / the first son of the pope, the second son of the cantor / now the teacher / the third was also a pope and a teacher. Their parents had kept them in school with sacrifices. But nobody had helped me with anything: I left a servant and came back gentleman."⁴⁶

His success was due primarily to his strong personality and his eagerness to learn, but also to the Romanian social-democrat circle, which carried out an intense action for the

⁴² Ibid., 77.

⁴³ The congress for the reconstruction of the Social-Democratic Party of Romania was held on 31 January, 1 and 2 February in Bucharest. See: *Documente din istoria mişcării muncitoreşti din România : 1910-1915* (Bucharest: Political Printing Press, 1968), 11-42.

⁴⁴ *Documente din istoria mişcării muncitoreşti din România : 1910-1915*, 192-200.

⁴⁵ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 102.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 103.

instruction its members, which in the vast majority were non-educated workers. "If I had succeeded, it is due to the moral support received from the socialists Nicolae Vasiliu, Ștefan Gheorghiu, Mișu Ionescu, I. C. Frimu, Dimitrie Marinescu. Without their help I would have become a loser. These great men have discovered in me the glimpse of a spark which they have laboured to transform into light. It is not their fault that they only partially succeeded."⁴⁷

He made his debut as an orator at a socialist meeting in Blaj, at Teodor Onișor's invitation, with little success "talking about the exploitation of agricultural workers and the need to organize them. But here, the agricultural workers were small business owners and they were not interested in the unions".⁴⁸

Invited to speak at a meeting in Orăștie, he criticized the Romanian members of the Hungarian Chamber, "who do not defend the peasants exploited by the Hungarian feudalists."⁴⁹ For the Romanian socialists, the Romanian National Party was no different from any other bourgeois party, being considered, as Keith Hitchins notes, "a competitor in the effort of gaining the trust of the working masses, especially the craftsmen from the small towns of Transylvania and the peasantry."⁵⁰

In 1911, he went to Budapest, where the union hired him at a factory of school desks. He gains success as a unionist and earned a 10% wage increase for workers. Noted by the MSZDU Central Committee he was named librarian of the Romanian section.

Because the library was poor, he made an appeal to *România Muncitoare* journal whose correspondent he was, to send them Romanian books. As a result he received from Bucharest a donation of about one hundred books.

He enrolled in the Free University, supported by the Socialist Circle "Galileo Galilei"⁵¹, which he attended for three years.

On 4 March 1912, he took part in the general strike for the universal vote in Budapest and was arrested. Following the intervention of the Journalists' Union he was released the next day.

In May 1912 he was elected secretary of the Romanian section of MSZDU. Thinking back he considered that he was not prepared for such a task: "I accepted this, because I did not realize that my very early experience did not allow me to lead a party organization of over 300 members."⁵²

⁴⁷ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 29.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 106.

⁵⁰ Keith Hitchins, *Conștiință și acțiune politică la românii din Transilvania, vol 2, (1868-1918)*, 158.

⁵¹ The Socialist Circle "Galileo Galilei" (1908-1919), the most significant student association in Hungary, was created by young free-thinking atheists who held conferences and seminars under the motto "to teach and to learn". see: Péter Tibor Csunderlik, *The history and reception history of the Galilei Circle (1908-1919)*, <http://doktori.btk.elte.hu/hist/csunderlikpeter/thesis.pdf>, accessed on 21 August, 2018.

⁵² Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 115.

In January 1913, following the resignation of Leonard Paukerow, he was hired by the MSZDU as editor at *Adevărul*. The volume of published memoirs, after the two introductory pages, begins with this episode (which in the manuscript is more detailed and rendered in the form of dialogue, as is a large part of the memoirs). It was the moment when Tiron Albani, the self-taught carpenter, became a full journalist: "And I said goodbye to the line and sawmill, and I got engaged to my pen."⁵³

On 26 October 1913, the 8th Congress of the Romanian section of MSZDU took place in Arad.⁵⁴ In a first version of the manuscript, afterwards censored, Tiron Albani writes: "The Congress did not have the right echo, nor was the report made by me of high quality. It was devoid of that heat, of that rich content it needed. The few anaemic considerations and figures did not have the gift to determine any animosity among the members. [...] The delegates were pleased to criticize the work of the Central Committee and ask for it to be moved to Arad and to disentangle the black clouds that threatened the people of the Austro-Hungarian Empire because of the challenges the governments faced in the foreign policy and in the internal one. The congress ended in a grim atmosphere of gloomy feelings."⁵⁵

In 1914, he had a lawsuit filed for libel by the prefect of Sălaj County, Török Aladár, and was sentenced to three months in prison. The Assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand found him in prison in Vác, "a prison of gentlemen," where he worked at a mechanic repair shop and where he learned how to drive.

During this time he was replaced as editor-in-chief of *Adevărul* by Iosif Jumanca, who refused to give him back his place when he returned. However, due to the outburst of the war, the newspaper was suspended by Military Command.

He was enrolled and after a brief instruction in Cluj, he was sent to the front line "with new a uniform, flowers to the cap and forced songs"⁵⁶. He became corporal and fought against the Russians in Galicia, but he got ill and after his hospitalization he remained as a driver at "the Ambulance of the capital".

Behind the front line people lived frantically: "The moral had been indexed. Life behind the front line had turned into "heaven" comparing it with hell of the war. [...] There was no purgatory between "hell" and "heaven", you fall right from one to the other. Was this a way of winning the war? So it seemed, since no action has been taken to combat the corruption. Money came easy and so it was spent."⁵⁷

In 1916, his three-year-old boy dies from chicken pox and at the funeral without a priest the speech was held by Ion Flueraş who felt in love with Tiron Albani's sister-in-law, Elena Meszaros, with whom he would marry. But about his marriage, Tiron Albani tells us only that he was made out of duty.

⁵³ Ibid., 118.

⁵⁴ See: *Documente din istoria mişcării muncitoreşti din România: 1910-1915*, 518-526.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 128.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 146.

Because the war was prolonging everlasting, the discontents of both the soldiers and of those working behind the front line were increasingly threatening. In order to calm down the spirits, the military command set up mediation commissions using interpreters "because the exploited ones spoke in different languages." Tiron Albani was sent to the Csepel munitions factory where "four to five thousand Romanian workers were gathered from different corners of the country."⁵⁸

In the context of the acute economic and social crisis in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, but also under the influence of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the Romanian section of MSZDU resumed its activity in April 1917.

The paragraph in the published volume on the position of the Central Committee on the national issue - "It became a certainty for us that the Romanian socialists will have to be at the head of the Romanian people of Transylvania, who will claim their national liberation"⁵⁹ – is much more nuanced in the manuscript, but it does not diminish the merit of the Social Democrats, who abandoned the socialist internationalism for a national ideal. "If there is no social revolution and only national struggle, will the workers have to stay still, as the struggle will only be limited for the national liberation? There was a big problem that has been raised from the beginning. However, the Romanian socialists will have to be at the head of the Romanian people of Transylvania, who will claim their national liberation, whether the Hungarian socialist comrades agreed or not. The situation will be complicated by the fact that the Transylvanian people were not formed only by the Romanians, and thus, the Hungarian socialists, who will then rule Hungary, will not give up so easily the territory so rich in minerals and products of the Transylvanian soil. Vital interests were opposed, which made impossible a good understanding between the socialists. The Central Committee of MSZDU has not yet addressed this issue. Perhaps they themselves didn't believe the Austro-Hungarian Empire would collapse so soon. Under such conditions, the propaganda proceeded just as before, and the Romanian socialists were cautious so they were not suspected of iredentism."⁶⁰

Tiron Albani makes some interesting comments on the ethnic structure of the workers behind the front line: "the war provided enough material for propaganda, requiring trained soldiers on the fronts, who were replaced in factories with untrained ones. They were the target of the Socialist propaganda, and things went great. In general, the workers sent to the front were of different nations, while those brought in factories were more Romanians."⁶¹

The Romanian socialists used folk parties and celebrations, which were tolerated by the regime as ways to discharge the population's discontent, for entering the ranks of the workers. Funds were collected from registration fees and subscriptions for re-editing newspaper *Adevărul*. The first issue appeared in October 1917 and was distributed free of

⁵⁸ Ibid., 151.

⁵⁹ Tiron Albani, *Memorii. Din contribuția clasei muncitoare la desăvârșirea statului național român unitar. 1 decembrie 1918* (Bucurest: Scientific Printinf Press, 1969), 31-32.

⁶⁰ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 154-155.

⁶¹ Ibid., 155.

charge.⁶² The newspaper reached a print run of 18,000 copies, and Albani writes that "more was required but could not be printed out of paperlessness".⁶³

The Russian revolution of 1917 had a strong echo among workers in Transylvania and Hungary, writes Albani, and *Adevărul* published a "Hymn to the Revolution", which he says was strongly censored.

On 8 January 1918, President Woodrow Wilson outlined the *Fourteen Points statement of principles for peace*, "whose proposals will be published in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in the autumn of 1918 under the pressure of events and of the military failures on its fronts"⁶⁴. The reference to this document is missing in the published volume, the principle of self-determination being attributed by the communists to Lenin.

In the context of the internal issues with which the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was dealing, the socialists intensified their propaganda. In the winter of 1918 Tiron Albani along with Iosif Jumanca went as an "agitator" among the miners from Reșița, Bocșa, Dognecea and Ocna de Fier, then in May, he was sent to Anina, Reșița and Timișoara.

In May 1918, the Ninth Congress took place, during which the Central Committee was reorganized and the empty places left by those who were still on the front line were filled in with new names: Eng. Enea Grapini, Iosif Renoiu, Bazil Surdu and Teodor Moga.

Everywhere in Transylvania and Banat the Romanians shared the same desire: to unite with the Kingdom of Romania, and the Romanian socialists understood that achieving the national ideal was the priority of the moment, without discarding their social ideals. "As a result, the Central Committee of the Romanian section of MSZDU puts this issue at the forefront, discusses all the possibilities and concludes that the union must be carried out by all people, without distinction."⁶⁵ In this spirit, the Socialists initiated a collaboration with the National Party: "On September 25, the Central Committee examines the events of the near-collapse of the empire and seeks to join all forces of the Romanian people. Thus, comes the question of a collaboration with the Romanian nationalists."⁶⁶ Enea Grapini was commissioned to liaise with the representatives of the National Party. The meeting was held at the Jägerhorn Hotel in early October, "where the Socialists' proposal to form a Romanian national council in parity in order to organize the struggle to safeguard the interests and rights of the Romanian people, was discussed. In a few days, our deputy informed us of the favourable outcome of the meeting and of the actions that the Romanian National Party intended to take in the Hungarian Parliament."⁶⁷ At the October 18 meeting of the Parliament in Budapest, Alexandru Vaida-

⁶² *Presa muncitorească și socialistă din România, volumul al treilea (1917-1921), partea I (septembrie 1917 – iunie v1919)* (Bucharest: Political Printing Press, 1971), 29.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁶⁴ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 158.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁶⁷ Tiron Albani, *Memorii. Din contribuția clasei muncitoare la desăvârșirea statului național român unitar. 1 decembrie 1918*, 43.

Voevod read the *Declaration of Independence* that pleaded for the right to self-determination of the Romanian people in Transylvania.

MSZDU convened an extraordinary congress to settle which would be the position of the socialists towards the Austro-Hungarian political situation after the loss of the war. At the congress, that took place in Budapest on October 13, 1918, the Slovak, Serbian, Croatian and Romanian delegates claimed self-determination. Under those circumstances, the Central Committee of the Romanian socialists decided at the October 30 meeting "to go further in the treaties with the leadership of the Romanian National Party of Transylvania in order to establish the Romanian National Council".⁶⁸

The meeting took place at the Jägerhorn Hotel on October 31 and the discussions ended with the setting up of the Central Romanian National Council (CNRC) in parity: Ion Flueraș, Iosif Jumanca, Enea Grapini, Iosif Renoiu, Tiron Albani and Bazil Surdu – from the social democrats, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Dr. Ștefan Cicio-Pop, Prof. Vasile Goldiș, Dr. Teodor Mihali, Dr. Aurel Lazar and Dr. Aurel Vlad - from the National Party.

At the beginning of November, the CNRC moves to Arad, headed by Ștefan Cicio-Pop and "becoming a genuine provisional government".⁶⁹

It was decided that three of the members of each party would remain in Arad (Ștefan Cicio-Pop, Vasile Goldiș, Aurel Lazăr - from the "nationalists", and Ion Flueraș, Iosif Jumanca, Enea Grapini – from the social democrats), while the others were charged with organizing the participation of the Romanians at the Great Assembly in Alba Iulia, an important role having been played by the social democrats in the industrial areas of Transylvania and Banat.⁷⁰ Tiron Albani was in charge of organizing miners and workers in the Jiu Valley.

The collaboration between the two parties, according to Albani, has demanded a greater sacrifice from the part of the Romanian social democrats than from the part of the "nationalists". Unlike the latter, who had only bonds of political opportunity with the Hungarian leaders, the Romanian socialists broke up with the mother party. The theme of separation from the old comrades (reasons, arguments, mutual reproaches) returns as a leitmotif in the text, because "It is not easy to leave comrades with whom you fought for decades and to ally with the bourgeois who could not be honest when they said they would always fight for national and social liberation."⁷¹

While the Hungarian socialists accused them of betrayal, Albani considers that the representatives of the National Party tried to diminish their merits: "They tried to erase with a sponge all that happened from the spring of 1917 to December 1, and to imply that the

⁶⁸ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 181.

⁶⁹ Ioan Bolovan, Marius Eppel. *1 decembrie 1918. Contribuția social-democraților la unirea Transilvaniei cu România* (Cluj-Napoca: Printing Press Eikon, 2008), 22-23.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 22-23.

⁷¹ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 188.

Romanian National Party did everything and with a magic wand they gathered 100,000 people in Alba Iulia."⁷²

There are two chapters missing from the volume of published memoirs, probably censored not to disturb ethnic sensitivities: *Of the activity of the national guards*⁷³, in which Tiron Albani speaks about the battles led by the national guards to release the railway stations through which the Romanian delegates traveled to Alba Iulia with the mercenaries organized by the Hungarians landlords and *At the tomb of Ion Arion*, a panegyric for one of the victims of those mercenaries, Ion Arion of Aghireș, shot at Teiuș and buried in Alba Iulia on December 2⁷⁴.

On the afternoon of the 30th of November, an enlarged Romanian National Council met in the Hall of the Military Club in Cetate for the preparation of the Great National Assembly.

"The presidential chair was occupied by Dr. Iuliu Maniu, Dr. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod stood on the right and Ion Flueraș on the left. Besides Prof. Vasile Goldiș there were Dr. Gheorghe Crișan, the Secretary of the Council and the historian Silviu Dragomir.

Vasile Goldiș read the draft of the Resolution, which was to be read the next day in front of the National Assembly in order to be voted. Divergences arose from the very first point where the union with the Kingdom of Romania was decreed. At the insistence of the social democrats, the word "kingdom" was deleted and only Romania remained: "The kingdom may pass, Romania is eternal".⁷⁵

The meeting with stormy talks extended until 2 o'clock in the night, and although Tiron Albani admits that some of their points were approved⁷⁶, he understood that from the next day when the National Council would submit its mandate to the Great National Council, the provisional Parliament of autonomous Transylvania, the nationalists would take the initiative from the hands of the socialists "who had done the hard work until it arrived here."⁷⁷

Even though Tiron Albani, as a socialist leader, tends to exaggerate the role of the Romanian social democrats in the events of October – December of 1918, their merit in initiating the talks on the establishment of the Central Romanian National Council and the organization of the National Assembly of Alba Iulia is a recognized historical fact.

On December 1, 1918, Tiron Albani was at the presidium in the Military Casino Hall. "I will never forget the solemnity of that moment. It seemed to us that we were parts of the great tribunal of the impartial history, having the mission to do justice."⁷⁸ Gheorghe Pop de

⁷² Ibid., 195.

⁷³ Ibid., 217-221

⁷⁴ Ibid., 245-249.

⁷⁵ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 224.

⁷⁶ Two paragraphs of the third article are decisively due to the socialists, specifically the 5th paragraph ("radical agrarian reform") and 6th one ("the industrial workers will be granted the same rights and privileges that are in force in the most advanced western industrial states"). See: Nicolae Jurcă, 94.

⁷⁷ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 225.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 234.

Băsești declared the National Assembly open. The speeches were holden by Ștefan Cicio Pop, Iuliu Maniu, Iosif Jumanca⁷⁹ and Vasile Goldiș. The resolution "was fully approved, each point being received by shattering ovations".⁸⁰

Enthusiasm spread out of the Casino on the Field of Horea, where "immediately there were dozens of stands raised and at every tribune speakers read and interpreted the Resolution that had been voted. And the people approved it enthusiastically, happy that on that historic day of December 1 a great dream that they had had for so many centuries was fulfilled."⁸¹

The Great Romanian National Council was established by the election of 150 members, 35 of which being socialists.

On the second day, December 2, the 150 deputies met in the Court Hall and the Ruling Council, which would govern Transylvania until the Constituent Assembly, was voted. Iuliu Maniu was elected president of the Ruling Council, and two of the fifteen ministers were socialists: Ion Flueraș (Social Security) and Iosif Jumanca (Industry).

Tiron Albani was sent to Budapest with the task of moving the *Adevărul* journal to Sibiu. After Ion Flueraș's resignation, Tiron Albani became the editor-in-chief of the journal which changed its name to the *Tribuna Socialistă* at the request of the Bucharest journal.

He was co-opted in the Great Council at a meeting held on July 30, 1919, in Sibiu, but resigned shortly as a protest against Romania's participation in the "destruction of the Hungarian People's Republic."⁸²

He moved to Cluj together with the *Tribuna socialistă* newspaper, which would change its name in *Dezrobirea*,

The post-war economic crisis primarily affected the workers. Their situation was even worse in Transylvania, where „foreign capitalists replaced for the most part the German and Austrian capital. Of course, they had come in conspiracy with the Romanians who were after gain, after greedy enrichment. They had tried hard to freeze the salaries while the prices were rising like mushrooms after rain”⁸³.

⁷⁹ Tiron Albani recovers in the manuscript his contribution to Joseph Jumanca's speech. See: Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 232-233.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 236.

⁸¹ Ibid., 236.

⁸² The Hungarian Soviet Republic or the Republic of Councils in Hungary (March 21 - August 6, 1919) was established as a result of the failure of Count Mihály Károlyi government to organize the Hungarian state after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The communist regime under Béla Kuhn's lead lasted only four months, until the intervention of the Romanian army. About the position of the Romanian socialists towards the Hungarian Republic of Councils see: Keith Hitchins, *Mit și realitate în istoriografia românească* (Bucharest: Encyclopedic Printing Press, 1997), 210-211.

⁸³ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 261.

At the conference of the socialists and the Regional Trade Union Commission convened in Cluj, it was decided to declare a general strike on October 20, 1920. "I also risked a naive question: is the strike well prepared? The question was left unanswered."⁸⁴

The first day of the general strike in Cluj was impressive: "It was like a celebration day. Everything had ceased, everything was numb."⁸⁵ It was hoped that the government would enter into negotiations with the leaders of the strike after 24 hours, but that did not happen. Instead the Averescu government took harsh reprisals against the strikers. "In a courtyard the arrested workers were hit with gum sticks so they would not sit down. Two nights and one day they were tortured this way. It was a woe to the one who fell from his feet."⁸⁶

Four days later the strike was defeated, which, according to Albani, led to the division of the labour movement. Indeed, although in the years 1919-1920 the social-democratic movement in Romania was in a continuous ascendance, it was undermined by ideological embarrassment, and this situation became apparent after the defeat of the general strike. Within the Socialist Party, there was a rightist current, especially in Transylvania, inspired by the tradition of German and Austrian social democracy, a centrist current dominant in the Old Kingdom, and a communist, extreme left current, whose sympathizer Tiron Albani was, who gained ground after the events in Russia.⁸⁷

In autumn of 1920, a delegation of the Socialist Party was sent to Russia with the limited mandate to be informed about the Soviet realities and the conditions of the affiliation to the Third International. Upon returning to the country, the two Transylvanians who participated in the delegation, Ion Flueraş and Dr. Eugen Rozvan, stopped in Cluj, where they presented their reports from divergent positions. Ion Flueraş argued that "the system organized under the first successes of the October Revolution in Soviet Russia is not the best for the achievement of social justice, that there have been outrageous abuses and injustice"⁸⁸, while for Dr. Eugen Rozvan "the road indicated by Lenin is the true one that leads to the liberation of the working class and to the realization of the socialist-communist society. [...] Whoever does not want to go this way is not a true socialist, not a Marxist."⁸⁹ Discussions in this session and in another of the Regional Committee will degenerate into scandal for which Tiron Albani accused Flueraş and Jumanca, the relations between them being loaded with animosities.

In February 1921, after the socialist newspapers in Cluj, *Dezrobirea* and *Küzledem* were abolished, Tiron Albani went to Brasov, where he edited the *Dreptatea* journal.

He attended the Congress on May 8, 1921, as a journalist from *Dreptatea*. As the topic is a delicate one, Albani writes diplomatically: "About the historic congress it has already been

⁸⁴ Ibid., 263.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 264.

⁸⁶ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 267.

⁸⁷ Nicolae Jurcă, 116 -122.

⁸⁸ Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 267

⁸⁹ Ibid.

written and spoken so much that for my memoirs remained little to be noted."⁹⁰ He only quotes the speech of the President Mihail Cruceanu and an episode about the reaction of the delegates to the congress when the conditions for affiliation to the Third Internationals – the 21 (18 in the manuscript) extremely harsh conditions that subordinated the Romanian Party to the Comintern, contrary to the national interests - were presented to the congress: "One condition would have been enough. Let's be serious, comrades! A voice was heard. And enthusiasm was tangled with humor."⁹¹ Although as a journalist he did not have the right to vote, his option was firmly in favour of the establishment of the Communist Party and the affiliation to the Third International.

On the third day of the congress, after the establishment of the Communist Party of Romania had already been voted, but before the delegates adopted the program and status of the new party, the police entered the hall of the congress and some of the participants, including Tiron Albani, were arrested. After several weeks of detention, he was released through the intervention of Emanuel Socor, director of the *Adevărul* and *Dimineața* newspapers, whose correspondent Albani was.

After the fall of the Averescu government, thinking that the atmosphere has become more relaxed, Tiron Albani, along with another comrade, went to Cluj where he summoned the local committees of the trade unions to "give them some clarification." The secret police services, Siguranța, arrested him, but he was promptly released by the intervention of Octavian Goga, who appreciated Albani's talent as a journalist, not being interested in his political orientation, and who proposed him to take over the *Tribuna* newspaper in Oradea. Thereupon in January 1922 Tiron Albani became the editor of the daily newspaper, working "not only the whole day, but also the night". After six months, for financial reasons, *Tribuna* became a weekly journal.

In 1923 he was elected the secretary of the Unitary Unions in Oradea, which he led "without great shakes" until May 1, 1924, when he organized a Labour Day celebration, and he was again arrested by the Siguranța. He was dismissed from *Tribuna*, and even replaced in the trade union, being suggested that "in the interest of the union movement and yours, you have to rest"⁹².

In 1926 he was involved in the electoral campaign, supporting Mihail Sadoveanu, who was running for the Agrarian Party. The campaign was successful and Sadoveanu was elected deputy of Bihor.

Being a spoken-up journalist, strongly involved in the social and political life, Albani has permanently been harassed by the secret police. He was arrested along with other communist and trade union workers even in December 1927, when serious vandalism occurred

⁹⁰ Ibid., 279

⁹¹ Ibid., 280.

⁹² Tiron Albani, *Vremi apăsătoare*, 294.

in Oradea provoked by nationalist students gathered at a congress with a clearly anti-Semitic agenda⁹³.

In the last chapter of the manuscript, Tiron Albani writes about his involvement in conceiving a protest against the condemnation and execution of the Hungarian communists Sallai Imre and Fürst Sándor in Budapest in 1932. The manifesto, clandestinely introduced in Hungary was distributed in over 10,000 specimens in Budapest.

The manuscript ends abruptly, in the last paragraph, Tiron Albani explaining how he has managed to get rid of the Horthyst vengeance after the Vienna Dictate, retreating in September 1940 from Oradea to Arad, and then in 1944 in Gurahonț and Baia de Criș.

Even if the memoirs stop prematurely, if we were to refer only to the fact that since 1934, Tiron Albani, in the prolongation of his journalistic activity, has become a writer⁹⁴, the manuscript gives us a series of new data about the biography of the author - whose documentary value must obviously be checked by consulting other sources - and outlines the moral portrait and psychosocial profile of a representative of the Transylvanian social democratic movement of the early twentieth century, animated by strong patriotic feelings, "a fighter for the working class and for the Union between Transylvania and Romania"⁹⁵, as he described himself.

How relevant may be the memoirs of a veteran of the Union written in the 1960s, half a century after the historical events and under a totalitarian regime? We consider that the answer lies on the one hand in the historical importance of the author who was a protagonist of the events of 1918, his comments having an authenticity one can easily perceive in the nuanced observations and contextual approaches that only a personal experience can provide, and on the other hand in the fact that the comparison between the manuscript and the print version allows us to understand how the communist censorship functioned in the 1960s.

Being part of the "happy and heroic generation that was chosen by destiny as an instrument for a great accomplishment," as Vasile Goldiș said, Tiron Albani has written his memoirs from an inner impulse to leave us his testimony of the historical events in which he played an active role from his position of a social democrat leader.

⁹³ See: Lucian Nastașă-Kovacs, *Pogromul itinerant sau decembrie antisemit- Oradea, 1927* (Bucharest: Printing Press Curtea Veche, 2014).

⁹⁴ In the 1930s and 1940s, Tiron Albani published several historical and literary works, of which we mention: *Craiul munților: dramă istorică în 4 acte și 13 tablouri* – 1934, *Leul de la Șişești: de ce s-a prăbușit monarhia austro-ungară* – 1936; *Douăzeci de ani de la Unire, volum I* – 1938, *Atlantida* – 1945. See: *Dicționarul general al literaturii române. A/B* (Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic, 2004), 67-68.

⁹⁵ Gheorghe Cardaș ed., *Documente literare, vol I, Studii și documente* (Bucharest: Minerva Printing Press, 1971), 410.