

**REMEMBERING ALEXANDRU FRODA - AN OUTSTANDING
MATHEMATICIAN AND A NOBLE HUMAN BEING**

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We had the chance to have Alexandru Froda teaching us Algebra, as we were first year students at the Faculty of Mathematics of the University of Bucharest, during the academic year 1950-1951.

From the very first lecture in the Spiru Haret Auditorium, we were struck by his personality, his originality, wit and humor. A handsome, tall man at the age of sixty - which one would hardly guess - with a warm and penetrating expression on his charming face, he lectured to us in his unorthodox way.

We were a small group of less than twenty, fascinated to find out that mathematics could be approached in this surprisingly free manner.

He did not follow fashion in Mathematics. He followed his instincts to reveal beauty and depth. One of us had the chance to be Froda's assistant for his course on the Theory of Sets. This was an unusual course in many ways: centered on problems - some open ones - it had a strong impact on its participants, stimulating imagination and creativity. It is in this course that the late Israel Berstein, our colleague and future Cornell University Professor, impressed us all by his extremely creative mind and by the originality of his thinking. Many years later, Berstein would recall with affection the figure of Alexandru Froda and the strong impact he had on us as mathematician, mentor and wise friend.

Alexandru Froda got his "Doctorat d'État in Paris in 1929, with a jury presided by Émile Borel and having Paul Montel and Arnaud Denjoy as members. The thesis contains striking results - for that time - in the theory of functions of a real variable. His theorem that the set of discontinuities of the first kind and an arbitrary real function of a real variable is countable, was met with disbelief even by outstanding contemporary analysts, astonished by the apparent lack of assumptions.

With the same unorthodox and original approach, he later thought about the axiomatic of Mechanics. For his remarkably new approach, he was invited by Alfred Tarski to give a plenary lecture at the 1960 International Congress for Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Sciences at Stanford University in California.

Dr. Froda had also previously contributed a paper to the Proceedings of the Berkeley Symposium on Axiomatic Method 1957-1958.

We are not competent to comment on these and many other important contributions of A. Froda to transcendental number theory, statistics and actuarial sciences.

More than most of his colleagues, he suffered injustices and hardships due to the political atmosphere of the thirties, the gloomy and oppressive atmosphere of the fifties and up to the end of his life. He got a university chair only in 1947 (at the age of 53!) and afterwards he was never allowed to travel abroad, to attend scientific meetings even when he was invited as a plenary speaker.

He stood with dignity and never gave in to compromise and opportunism.

Personally, we owe to Alexandru Froda a special debt of gratitude. At difficult moments and major decisions in our lives, he was the first person we went to for advise and comfort.

In his unassuming subtle way, he deeply influenced anyone who had the chance to know him.

In our hearts we still feel his enduring influence.