

LAZĂR ȘĂINEANU - VICTIM OF NATIONALISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE ROMANIAN SPACE AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

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Abstract: Lazar Șăineanu, born in Romania but of Jewish ethnicity, has a laborious activity in Romania in the field of philology and folkloric and ethnographic research in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He is appreciated by Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, whose assistant is at The University of Bucharest briefly because he has no nationality Romanian. The work highlights the scientific work of Lazar Șăineanu and his efforts to obtain Romanian citizenship in order to continue scientific work at the University.

Keywords: education, nationalism, anti-Semitism, grounding, dictionary

MOTO "My soul feels no bitterness against the Romanian nation, for it cannot and must not be held responsible for the undignified conduct of a few lost politicians"

LAZĂR ȘĂINEANU, A Philological career, autobiographical testimony, 1885÷1901

Who remembers Lazar Șăineanu? Students who learned from *the Universal Dictionary of the Romanian language* appeared in 1896¹ and republished seven times until 1934, a dictionary that was used by students until after World War II, are no longer among us.

Why so much bitter weather was just this dictionary? Certainly because there was no Romanian scientist who could imagine such a work, and he Lazar Șăineanu considered a "stranger" to his guild colleagues and many politicians of the time, succeeded, a stranger who wrote a Dictionary of the Romanian language.

My students today would say... that's really weird.

Therefore, who was Lazar Șăineanu?

Born in Ploiești on April 23, 1859, the son of Moisi Schein, he attended primary and secondary school in Ploiești at the "St. Peter and Pavel" Gymnasium, and then the "Matei Basarab" High School in Bucharest.

In 1880 we found the young Lazarus publishing in the newspaper "Fraternity"; this mention is very important to demonstrate how the young man at the time thought. He published a brochure dedicated to Moses Mendelssohn, his life and work, was one of the first monographs for a Jewish theorism: this 80-page brochure had an interesting motto: "Adopt language and aspirations: "Adopt language and aspirations the people in whose midst you live"²

The ideas of the young Lazarus were those of a grounded man, especially since he was very clear in his early writings: "The Jews have contracted a debt of gratitude to this country, in the soil of which the ashes of their parents have been lying for centuries. It should never be

¹ Florin Petrescu, History of jews. The Holocaust, Didactic Publishing House And Pedagogical Bucharest 2005, p. 155

² Cf. George , I'm Voicu, Radiography of an expatriary: lazarus case Șăineanu - The New, Notebooks Institute For study of the Holocaust in Romania" Elie Wiesel", no 1(3), Bucharest 2008, p. 7

forgotten that our homeland has long been the asylum of all persecuted people because of religion." It can be clearly observed that the speech is one of clear belonging to the Romanian people, but this man will not have the Romanian citizenship he wanted very much, especially since 1880 is after the revision of Article 7 of the Constitution that gave great hopes to several Romanian Jews.³

In 1881 we found him a student at the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest where he watches with great interest the courses of Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, Alexandru Odobescu and Titu Maiorescu.

Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu becomes his disciple; together they will have a beautiful collaboration, especially when politicians of the time allow it.

Thus, in 1883 Lazar Șăineanu published in Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu's magazine, "Trajan's Column", *Some specimens of popular etymology Romanian*. This is also the year Lazar Șăineanu Romanizes his name and becomes Șăineanu out of a desire to be part of this people in the midst of which he was born.⁴

His teacher and disciple Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu chooses beautiful words of praise when Lazar Șăineanu published his bachelor's thesis in 1887, *Trial on the semaseology of Romanian language*. Thus, Lazar Șăineanu is appointed one of the disciples of the great man of culture alongside Tocilescu and Bianu; this work will be awarded with the Hillel prize worth 5000 lei gold. This money will be used to continue his studies in France and Germany, especially since in 1889 he will receive his Doctorate in Leipzig.

Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu greatly appreciates the work of Lazar Șăineanu and appoints him a substitute teacher at the Faculty of Letters, but is not paid because he has no Romanian citizenship and a "stranger" cannot "take advantage of the state's own". Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu supports him with all his might because some say: "Although Hasdeu is a Romanian in all the power of the word, with an infiltration of foreign blood, it would seem, however, that he inherited from grandma evree a character of the race "these things were said a little later by George Călinescu who cannot refrain from these claims, perhaps that was the spirit of the time...⁵

Why did a personality like Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu support Lazar Șăineanu? Only from the solidarity of a distant origin?

Certainly not! The support came from the seriousness and professionalism of Lazar Șăineanu.

In these conditions without means of survival, Lazar Șăineanu asked the Ministry of Public Instruction for a remunerated replacement in pre-university education where he encounters another obstacle due to the lack of Romanian citizenship.

His former teacher Alexandru Odobescu supports him, and thus will take up the post of Romanian language and literature teacher at "Gheorghe Lazăr" High School.

But then, as in the following days, politicians in charge of the institutions have other thoughts: the chair of "Gheorghe Lazăr" High School had to be occupied by another person, i.e. V.D. Peacock; Lazar Șăineanu will be transferred apparently favorably to the Faculty of Letters. This is where the great ordeal of Lazar Șăineanu is triggered.

University professors and students will oppose this appointment on the grounds of "foreign" status or as would be said in the 21st century: "we do not sell our country":

"A stranger of the being of our nation will not be able to evade in the mind and heart of the new generation the image of our learned past for the future. How will he feel and

³ Ibid., p. 9

⁴ George Voicu, op. cit., p. 11

⁵ George Călinescu, *History of Romanian Literature. From its roots to the present day*, the Publishing House Semne, Bucharest 2003, p. 330

recognize that the pulsations of the historical life of the Romanians, when his heart does not beat like the whole Romanian people, when he has nothing in common with his aspirations." (Letter of university professors – November 1890).⁶

That situation could only be removed by obtaining citizenship.

And so begins the long road of grounding, a journey through which he will realize that friendships are rare, and the words given can be broken, that even the first man in the state, the King is not listened to because his political powers cannot overcome a crowd "lost politicians" or common sense and political education does not abuse its power.

In 1891, Lazar Șăineanu's negative grounding report totaled 79 white balls and 2 black balls.

In 1893 another request went to the Chamber. King Charles I gives him all the support of this man of letters and intervenes with Prime Minister Lascăr Catargiu.

The outcome is favourable to 76 votes in favour and 20 votes against.⁷

But what good, because the request has to go back to the Senate. In April 1895 in the Senate everything was complicated because he spoke V.A. The ear that scandalizes itself; it emphasizes the idea of a foreigner who cannot education to the younger generation, speaks of bringing "Ullyse's horse into troy fortress", complains to the jury at the time of awarding a foreigner of the prize of 5000 lei gold, accuses them of lack of Patriotism. With such a plea, the application for citizenship is rejected by 12 votes in favour and 61 votes against.⁸

In this situation Spiru Haret, the great Haret also withdraws his pre-university education classes and is again without livelihoods.

In all this political uproar when the principle of I.C. Brătianu and Mihail Kogălniceanu is implemented that citizenship will be granted "on a case-by-case basis", when politicians interpret this principle according to everyone's case, Lazar Șăineanu scientific and public activity more and more:

Relationship son of grammar and logic, with a quick look at the parts of the word, General Linguistics Study, 1891

Romanian fairy tales, comparative study, 1895.

History of Romanian philology, with a retrospective view of the last decades 1870 1895 Critical studies, 2nd edition, 1895

Universal Dictionary of the Romanian Language, 1896

Oriental influence on Romanian language and culture, volumes 1-3, 1900

Lazar Șăineanu is further criticized by V.A. Urechia and Urechia - the son because V.A. Urechia wanted everything for him including The Chair of Șăineanu and thus hid all attacks under the so-called patriotism or from a "literary banditry in our country", as Noted by Lazar Șăineanu.

And yet for Lazar Șăineanu there was no other way to obtain professional peace of mind except by obtaining citizenship; Perhaps following the example of Constantin Dobrogeanu - Gherea, he will be baptized orthodox Christian in the church of the Sinaia monastery, the godfather of baptism being Take Ionescu.

"Constantin Dobrogeanu Gherea unable to have many Jews contemplate ideas. His only concern is the change of social order", again another guild colleague displays⁹ his anti-Semitic attitude, George Călinescu, when he published his monumental work in 1941 in the spirit of World War II. But nevertheless also as a result of constantin dobrogeanu gherea's baptism, he obtains citizenship quite easily.

⁶ Cf. George Voicu, op. cit., p. 15

⁷ Ibid., p. 22

⁸ Ibid., p. 26

⁹ George Călinescu, op. Cit., p. 484

Things for Lazar Șăineanu are not so simple, nor does baptism help him.

In 1899 he obtained the senate's vote for grounding; but joy lasts only one day because the decision has been constitutionally reinterpreted and the request sent to the Chamber; is rejected, and her department at the Faculty of Letters dissolved and removed from the budget by his godfather, Take Ionescu, Minister of Finance who promised to help him, but did not intervene favourably at all.

In these circumstances in 1901 Lazar Șăineanu made the decision to leave the country, to expatriate himself and why would he remain in Romania? He had tired of writing requests for property, his works were vehemently attacked and disbanded, commented negatively, his university chair was disbanded and even this decision to leave Romania was commented negatively. How he can afford to leave Romania that raised him and educated him, etc., etc., etc.

Why would he stay in Romania? What other reasons would he have?

He was considered a stranger if he remained an ungrateful and a traitor if he left.

What he could have done to prove that he is a good Roman citizen: he romanianized his name, he became an Orthodox Christian, he took a scientific activity to the romanian language. How many Romanian citizens have done all these things? Few or maybe none of these things.

Shortly before he left for Paris the great Nicolae Iorga negatively commented on Șăineanu's works, neither the Dictionary is good nor the language Romanian Șăineanu does not master it well, but neither to face Șăineanu to determine who mastered better the Romanian does not want, on the grounds that it is not relevant and no other Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian language exists to make a comparison. And then surely Lazar Șăineanu is entitled not to answer iorga's Romanian when they meet in Paris.

There were Jews from the same guild who were recognized by the merits of colleagues after a while, so happened with Tiktin for example, but for Lazar Șăineanu this did not happen even though his Explanatory Dictionary was published until his death in Paris in 1934, seven times; seven re-edits that did not interest his guild colleagues; schoolchildren and not only were excited, they needed such a work, unique in their time.

In 1978, the work of Lazar Șăineanu was published in *Romania*. The preface signed by Ovidiu Bârlea sounded like "Lazar Șăineanu formed at Hașdeu's school and followed him in embracing the field of comparative philology according to the two main branches, linguistics and ethnopsychological, i.e. folklore according to the terminology of today." It was the recognition of a merit; maybe yes or maybe the language market at the time needed such a work.¹⁰

But the Lăzăriștii do not die and the works of Lazar Șăineanu are published after 1990; thus, in *2012 Ielele or evil fairies*, at Saeculum I.O., 2012. The preface signed by I. Opreșan stated: "Lazar Șăineanu imposed a new standard of Romanian folklore from the late 19th century, equalling, through his work, the European level and even moving forward it"¹¹

Therefore, the values of culture find their place deserved in national and universal cultural heritage, but what a pity this happened so late.

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¹⁰ Lather Șăineanu - The NewBaRomanian smele, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest 1978, p. 5

¹¹ Lazarus Șăineanu - The New, ievil fairies, Saeculum I. O., 2012 Publishing House, p. 8

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