



LJUBOMIR BERBEROVIĆ (1933 - 2019)

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On February 12, 2019, our dear professor, colleague and a friend of many years, academician Ljubomir Berberović, passed away in the 86th year of life.

Ljubomir Berberović was born in 1933 in Sarajevo. He studied medicine, biology and philosophy at University of Ljubljana and University of Sarajevo. He graduated with a degree in Biology from Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo in 1958. One year later, he was elected a teaching assistant at the Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. His doctoral dissertation "Microevolution of *Eobania vermiculata* on Central Adriatic Coast and the Islands" was successfully defended at the same faculty in February 1964.

In June 1964 he was awarded a position of assistant professor for the course "Organic evolution". In January 1970 he was awarded the position of associate professor and in June 1975 he was granted tenure as full professor. He lectured in many subject areas such as Genetics, Evolution, Anthropology and other subjects at several faculties within the University of Sarajevo, as well as other universities in the country and abroad. During period 1985-1988 he served as a Rector of the University of Sarajevo. In 1978, he was

awarded an honor of becoming a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ANUBIH), of which he became a full member in 1984. Late academician Berberović authored numerous books, textbooks, scientific, professional and scientific - popular publications and discussions. His opus may be ordered within three main thematic cycles: genetics of human populations, karyology and cytotaxonomy, as well as history and philosophy of natural sciences. The papers about genetic characteristics of Bosnian and Herzegovinian population, in which many phenotypic systems of morphological and biochemical variation of human individuals and groups were studied, represent significant contribution towards the elucidation of many questions in terms of contemporary genetics of recent human populations, such as issue of relationship between the levels of reproductive isolation and evolutionary diversification of population.

As a scientist, he dedicated much attention to studying genetic characteristics and significance of certain evolutionary factors such as random genetic fluctuation (genetic drift). Some of his work in the field of human genetics was

dedicated to the improvement of medical genetics as a whole. Honorable professor Berberović was an advocate and protector of globalism, open-mindedness, and free information flow. He dedicated his last decades to emphasizing the threats to the freedom of scientific thoughts that lurk behind the narrow-minded ideas of ethno- and national groups. Furthermore, he constantly emphasized the futility and irrationality of fearing the new technologies such as genetically modified organisms or nuclear energy, which marked him a herald of progress, placing him many steps ahead of entire generations of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In both his public and private life, the late academician Berberović was very clear regarding the genocide in Srebrenica. His stance was that there is no thin line between what makes such a devastating event “only” a crime and what constitutes a genocide. As a member of Serb Civic Council of B&H, he intellectually opposed the idea of denying the existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign state. He also strongly opposed the idea of “one-nation” state, as well as any justification of tragedies that befell our country and region.

The honorable Berberović was the first president of the Association of Geneticists of B&H in a period from 1979 to 1990, as well as vice president (1979-1980) and president of the Union of Genetic Societies of Yugoslavia (1980-1982). He presided the Second Congress of Geneticists of Yugoslavia held in Vrnjačka Banja 1981, as well as many other scientific congresses. He was an honorary member of newly formed Genetic Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011), and a member of many other scientific associations. He also served as a reviewer and an editor for several reputable journals. Academician Berberović was an honorary member of the editorial board of *Genetics & Applications*, the first scientific journal in the field of genetics published by the University of Sarajevo – Institute for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in B&H.

A faithful friend, and a reputable scientist, Berberović was polyvalent activist and intellectual

presence in many fields of science and society as a whole. He was also a secretary for the Department of Natural and Mathematical sciences, a president of Board for International Relations as well as vice president of ANUBIH itself. Academician Berberović, an honorary member of PEN Center Sarajevo, was recipient of numerous acknowledgments for his scientific, professional and societal work.

ANUBIH and late Berberović had a significant role in initiating macro project known as “Genetic engineering and biotechnology”, especially within the system of funding and implementation of so-called “societal goals” in B&H from 1986-1992. He was also an active member of Consortium for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, later called Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, which gave rise to internationally acknowledged Institute for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology within the University of Sarajevo. He insisted on establishing this Institute even though some contested such idea based on the fact that similar institutes existed in former Yugoslavia. And in doing so, in his distinct manner, he revealed his patriotism which he later corroborated throughout the aggression on his homeland. He shared the destiny of his fellow citizens and actively joined intellectual defense of the idea of Bosnia and Herzegovina as his homeland. His energetic intellect initiated and created significant publications and projects. His passing has left a void in the field of genetics in B&H, as well as at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and INGEB that remain behind. His fellow students and coworkers must carry on his legacy and continue to advance and develop genetic and similar scientific research in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With great sadness and love, we bid him final farewell.

*Institute for Genetic Engineering and
Biotechnology*