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IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR BOŽIDAR CERVIĆ (1947-2018)*

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It is a great honour for me to commemorate our friend and colleague, Professor Božidar Cerović, widely addressed informally as Cera, who left us prematurely in September 2018 after a long illness that he fought with courage and determination. The commemoration of our friend Cera is an honour but also quite a responsibility, for he was a brilliant speaker whose eloquence and wit are difficult to match.

Cera was a remarkable scholar, a devoted friend, and an active member of the European Association for Comparative Economic Studies (EACES). He graduated from the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Economics in 1970, where he also got his Master's Degree and PhD. He became a research assistant as early as 1971, working with one of the most eminent professors of those times, Miladin Korać and later became a Full Professor at the Faculty. He taught various courses during his long career, including Political Economy, Microeconomic Analysis, Theory of Production and, more recently, Principles of Economics and Economics of Transition. Cera was Editor-in-Chief of *Economic Annals* from 2012-2018 (issues 194-218) to which he dedicated much time and effort.

Cera's scientific contributions include a wide range of publications: 10 monographs, 14 edited books, and some 100 articles published in national and international journals. His first book, *The Economics of Self-Managers (Ekonomija samoupravljača)*, was published in 1982 in Serbo-Croatian and was dedicated to the Yugoslav system of self-management. It included a valuable discussion of Benjamin Ward's and Jaroslav Vanek's theory of the labour-managed firm, at a time when relatively little was known about these theories in Yugoslavia. After 1989 his later books and articles focused primarily on various topics related

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to Transition in Eastern Europe – privatisation, macroeconomic stabilisation, economic growth, restructuring, corporate governance, institutional reform, industrial policy, globalisation, and effects of the global economic crisis – in reference to both Yugoslavia (later Serbia) and Central and Eastern Europe.

The volume *Privatization in Serbia*, edited by Cera and published in 2006, contained papers presented at an EACES workshop in Belgrade and was one of the first comprehensive studies in English devoted to the topic. Another two books edited by Cerović and myself were on topical issues: *Western Balkans' Accession to the European Union: Political and Economic Challenges*, a collection of papers presented at a conference organized by the European University Institute in Montecatini Terme (Italy) and published in 2010 and *Controversies of Economic Development during Transition: Serbia and the Western Balkans*, published in Serbian in 2011.

However, Cerović's most outstanding publication is his voluminous (681 pages) monograph *Transition: Visions and Outcomes (Tranzicija: zamisli i ostvarenja)*, published in 2012, a collection of his most important papers on transition written from the late 1980s until 2012. In the book's 26 Chapters, he wanted to confront the initial vision of transition with the actual outcomes in order to illustrate how many concepts suggested during the early transition discussions had in fact not been realised. The first 12 chapters deal with the main conceptual issues of the transition to a market economy formulated in the 1990s, including key definitions and early debates about the transformational recession, macroeconomic stabilisation, privatisation, sequencing of reforms, and institutional reform. The second part contains 14 chapters on the actual outcomes of transition, including growth performance, privatisation results, and unexpected surprises, nine chapters of which deal specifically with Serbia. Given its extensive coverage of the most important issues of transition, the volume will be invaluable to scholars and future generations of Serbian students studying systemic changes in Eastern Europe.

Professor Cerović held many prestigious positions during his long career. At the University of Belgrade he was Dean of the Faculty of Economics, a member of the University Council, Head of the PhD. Studies Committee, Chair of the Council for Social Sciences and Humanities, and a member of the Senate. For many years he was the President of the Scientific Society of Economists of Serbia, which he was particularly proud of, and a member of the Serbian Academy of Economic Sciences. He was a member of a number of international networks and associations, including EACES and the Association of Southeast European

Economic Universities (ASECU). As President of ASECU, Cera delivered his last keynote speech at the ASECU Conference in Nitra (Slovakia) in May 2018. He was also on the editorial boards of a number of prestigious academic journals, including *Croatian Economic Survey*, *Ekonomska misao*, *Ekonomske ideje i praksa*, *Transition Studies Review*, and *the Journal of Contemporary Economic and Business Issues*. Cera also received an important French decoration: he was *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques*.

As many of us will remember, Cera was a very active member of EACES. He served on the Executive Committee for two terms during 2004–2010. He organised the 9th bi-annual EACES conference in September 2004 in Belgrade and several EACES workshops, including those in Belgrade and Miločer, Montenegro. Cera maintained an active presence in the Association until his very last days. Although his illness prevented him from attending, he co-authored a paper with Jasna Atanasijević and myself, *The Serbian economy ten years after the global economic crisis*, which was presented at the 16th EACES Conference in Warsaw and at the Economic Annals/EACES Workshop on “The Economics of Transition in South East Europe” at the Faculty of Economics in Belgrade, both held in September 2019. A revised version of the paper is published in this issue of *Economics Annals*.

Cera left behind much more than his valuable scientific work. Many of you will remember his wonderful hospitality at the 9th bi-annual EACES conference in Belgrade in September 2004 and on various other occasions. As organiser of these events, Cera took care not only of the scientific part of the conferences and of publishing a book of the proceedings, but also of all possible details, from unforgettable meals with several dozen different dishes to live music and boat rides.

He was an intellectual of a special kind: he had a critical mind and was truly dedicated to his work, but he also had great knowledge in many fields that extend far beyond economics. Cera was very active in one of the most important Serbian soccer teams, Red Star, where he held important positions for many years, the last as Vice-President of the Executive Board. His interest in sports led him to write articles about controversial issues related to the privatisation of sports clubs. Cera knew how to enjoy life and had an irrepressible *joie de vivre*, especially when it came to music, delicious food and drink, art, and travelling to exotic places.

Cera was an extremely generous person – with his time, his commitment to teaching, his care for younger colleagues and students, his comments on other

people's work, and his hospitality – but he was also profoundly honest – a rare quality nowadays – consistent in his views, and a great defender of those values he regarded as important. He will be greatly missed by all of us for a very long time.

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