

**PROF. DR. MUHARREM DRAGOVOJA (PEOPLE'S TEACHER) –
THE FOUNDER OF ALBANIAN GEODESY**

Pal NIKOLLI¹ and Bashkim IDRIZI²

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IN MEMORIAM



On April 26, 2014, Professor Muharrem DRAGOVOJA passed away. He was born in the city of Shkodra on July 11, 1928, in a simple and patriotic family originating from Malësia e Madhe. He completed primary and secondary school in the city of Shkodra, city with cultural traditions. At the age of 16, as a participant in the fight for the liberation of the country, he became an effective member of the IV Kosovo Brigade, while at the end of the war in 1944, at his request, he moved from the Kosovo area to the Shkodra Regional Command. After graduating from high school, he worked for about 15 months as a teacher in the village of Dodç in Malësia e Madhe. In the period November 1948 - July 1953 he completed his higher studies with the grade of "excellent" in the branch of geodetic engineering of the Higher Institute of Geodesy, Aero photography and Cartography in Moscow. After returning to Albania (1953), he was appointed senior geodetic specialist at the sector of Geodesy, Geology, Bridges and Road of the Ministry of Construction. In the period 1953-1954, he contributed to the construction of geodetic networks in the coal region of Kërrabë - Pullumbas and in some facilities of hydropower plants on the river Mat. During the period of work in the above sector, has contributed to the performance of geodetic works in several projects such as geodetic networks for large scale surveys of cities and

¹ **Prof.Dr. Pal NIKOLLI**, pal.nikolli@unitir.edu.al,
Professor of Cartography and GIS/Remote Sensing, department of Geography,
University of Tirana

² **Assoc.Prof.Dr. Bashkim IDRIZI**, bashkim.idrizi@uni-pr.edu,
University of Prishtina, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Geodesy department.
Address: Str. Djon Kenedi, 25-4/20, 1010 Skopje, North Macedonia.
Gsm: + 389 75 712-998 (*Viber and WhatsApp*), + 383 45 341-098.

industrial areas, geodetic networks in some industrial and hydropower plants, etc.

At the beginning of September 1954, he was appointed lecturer and head of the geodesy cabinet at the Faculty of Engineering of the former Polytechnic Institute, founded in 1951. This cabinet covered the subjects of geodesy and topography in the branches of construction, geology and mining of the above faculty. In the academic year 1956 - 1957 the branch of geodesy was opened at the former Higher Polytechnic Institute and in September 1957, with the establishment of the State University of Tirana on the basis of the above institute, prof. Muharremi is appointed head of the Department of Geodesy - Geography established at the Faculty of Engineering of this university. The effective pedagogues of this department were: Muharrem Dragovoja (head of department), Pandi Geço, Ndoc Luli, Vasil Naçe, Ibrahim Meçule and Agim Shehu. In the academic year 1958 - 1959, the branch of geography was attached to the faculty of History and Philology, while the branch of geodesy was joined by the branch of geodesy in mining. In 1960, the branch of geodesy in mining was annexed to the Faculty of Geology - Mining, while the Department of Geodesy remained at the Faculty of Engineering with its head prof. Muharem Dragovoja. In 1964 the branch of Geodesy was closed, so the Department of Geodesy covered only 3 courses in the Faculties of Engineering, Geology - Mining and History - Philology. The Geodesy branch was reopened in 1969 to continue to the present day. For excellent work in leadership of the Department of Geodesy and for the high level of his pedagogical-scientific preparation, prof. Muharrem has been given the title "Docent" since 1971 and later the title "Professor". He was honored with the order "Naim Frashëri", the work order of the third and second class, as well as a series of other medals. With the establishment of the association of Surveyors, Photogrameters and Cartographers of Albania, prof. Muharremi is unanimously elected its "Honorary President". For the highly commendable work, on the proposal of the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Polytechnic University of Tirana, in 1996, the President of the Republic awarded him the high title "Teacher of the People".

Prof. Muharrem headed the Department of Geodesy for about 32 years, from its founding (1956) until 1988. Two years later he retired, and in 1994 he returned to Moscow with his family. He visited Albania several times, until he passed away on May 3, 2014.

Prof. Muharrem Dragovoja gave an extraordinary contribution to the establishment and development of the branch of geodesy, in terms of preparation of plans and curricula of this branch, in the preparation and publication of lectures and texts of geodetic - cartographic subjects, etc. During his teaching-scientific activity he has prepared dozens of books of university and postgraduate level which have been published, reworked and

republished several times (Geodesy, General Geodesy, Polygonometry, Geodetic Interruptions and Analytical Networks, High Geodesy, Manual of Geodesy etc.). He has prepared hundreds of scientific articles published in scientific bulletins of the country and abroad. He has prepared monographs and scientific studies, is a co-author of the encyclopedic dictionary published in our country, etc. It has never been detached from participating in the design and implementation work of the Department of Geodesy in cooperation with the country's institutions. He has participated in the design of geodetic works for the development of works in the Hydropower Plants of Ulza, Shkopet, Bistrica, etc.

He has led the design and implementation of works for the development of geodynamic polygons in some seismic regions of the country, for the study of the Adriatic Sea Shelf, etc.

Thanks to his work, the Department of Geodesy which he led for over 30 years, grew and developed by preparing over 500 surveyors, as well as diplomas and scientific papers. During these years of his leadership, over 20 dissertations were defended in the Department of Geodesy by the members of the department and by foreign specialists of the country. In the same years, the Department of Geodesy has published dozens of textbooks, has held several scientific sessions where numerous references and papers have been held, etc.

Prof. Muharrem Dragovoja is a well-known man in the Albanian academic world up to the international arena with studies and geo-cartographic analyzes materialized as matter (several hundred study pages, documents, etc.); as fields of study (geodesy, cartography, photogrammetry, history of cartography, etc.); as a subject (published, in manuscript, translated, adapted) etc. It is difficult to find a publication or study in the field of geo-cartography (1954 - 1990), which are not related to the name, interest and finally to the contribution of Prof. Muharrem Dragovoja.

Prof. Muharrem was distinguished as the organizer and coordinator of all academic and scientific activities of the branch of Geodesy. He was always noted for his simplicity, sincerity, exemplary correctness and dedication. He will remain in the history of Albanian higher education as one of the most excellent methodologists, who with his model lectures, has left an indelible impression on all students who were fortunate enough to attend his fluent and concise lectures and in high scientific level. We all remember prof. Muharrami, wise and calm and who never got tired of explaining and teaching his students. He never spared to give his help to any specialist in need; we all remember his resounding and pleasant voice in the explanations in the university auditoriums. Wherever he went, wherever he worked, wherever he stayed, he left behind only good impressions, he left behind only friends and

people who loved and respected him. Such figures as Prof. Dragovoja, one of the giants of Albanian geodesy, is by no means forgotten.

Prof. Muharrem Dragovoja with his work and scientific and human personality, will be remembered with a deep sense of gratitude and respect for that precious scientific legacy he left us, for that rare model of human and scientific behavior and communication that few have the privilege to achieve, for that unparalleled commitment to transmit geo-cartographic knowledge to his students and all other specialists. He will long remain in the memory of generations not only as a prominent surveyor and cartographer, but also as a tireless and visionary leader in the field of geo-cartographic studies and the history of Albanian cartography.