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LITERATURE IN SERVICE OF THE NATION: HOW "POBRATIMSTVO" WAS CREATED

Abstract: At the intersection of the two tumultuous centuries, in 1900 a poetry collection titled "Pobratimstvo" ("Blood Brotherhood") was published in Belgrade. The collection was aimed at the fraternization of the brothers of the same blood, sons of the same mother, parts of the same people, sharing the same language and glorious past – the fraternization of Orthodox Christians and Muslims, alienated by the faith which had led them in different spiritual directions, as believed by the intellectual elite of the time. This noble goal went down a rocky road, it encountered turbulent circumstances, and the publication of the collection did not signify the end of the road where the pen and the sword would join forces several times to reach the final, never accomplished unity. The paper presents this very road, as well as the historical and political circumstances leading to the creation of such poetry collection.

Keywords: "Pobratimstvo", literature, Serbs of Muslim faith, national identity, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The year 1878 was decisive for the hilly Balkans, especially for its part that was nearing the long-awaited freedom, after almost a century of struggles for national liberation and unification. At the Congress of Berlin, the Principality of Serbia was granted the long-desired independence and international recognition. However, even though the final liberation was won, the ultimate unification was not achieved. Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was during the entire period of the Serbian national awakening both historically and traditionally considered a Serbian land, was occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the same year. The non-achievement of the desired integration of the South Slavic area into a single state gave rise to apathy in the Serbian society and disappointment with such turn of events. The desired unification with the medieval Serbian lands across the Drina river was not achieved, and since Austria took over the land, it also intended to take over its population.

However, the population proved to be resilient, not only towards the Austro-Hungarian attempts, but towards other aspiring neighbours as well.

At the time, the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was ethnically homogenous, although religiously deeply divided into three confessional groups dominated by Orthodox Christians and Muslims, followed by “Latins”, members of the Catholic minority. As already at the time the Orthodox and Catholic populations were led by their mother countries down the natural currents towards their Serbian and Croatian national spring, the initial Austrian idea about belonging to the single “Bosnian/Bosniak” geographic-political nation proved to be infeasible for this part of the population at the very start. Thus, the Muslim element remained to be manipulated with in regard to national identity. However, even though the national feeling was non-existent among the Muslim population, and therefore susceptible to shaping, the unwavering Islam stood between them and the nation.¹

¹ There is voluminous literature about the relations between Islam and the nation, nationalism and nation states, created both in “the East” and “the West”. Even though almost every history of Islam inevitably touches on this issue, we will list those works and authors who dealt with this topic in the narrow sense: H. Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East*, New York 1929; E. I. J. Rosentall, *Islam in the Modern National State*, Cambridge 1965; H. Аширов, *Ислам и нации*, Москва 1975; J. P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation States*, Cambridge 1986; P. J. Vatikiotis, *Islam and the State*, London 1987; A. M. Naqavi, *Islam and Nationalism*, Tehran 1988; B. Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and Nation State*, London 1997; R. W. Hefner, P. Horvatic, *Islam in an Era of Nation states*, Honolulu 1997; A. al-Ahsan, *Ummah or Nation: Identity Crisis in Contemporary Muslim Society*, Leicester 1992 (Bosnian edition: A. al-Ahsan, *Ummet ili nacija? Kriza identiteta u savremenom muslimanskom društvu*, transl. N. Pašić-Alijagić, Sarajevo 2004). Essentially, a vast majority of authors believe that the greatest gap between Islam and the nation lies in the fact that Islam naturally implies religiosity, while secularism lies at the core of the nation. The nation state in the European sense is based on the territory, which is contrary to the Islamic theory of the nation state according to which the state is the area, and the nation are the people, i.e. the ummah, the community determined by religious affiliation, i.e. the community of believers. Thus, unlike the nation as a national community, the ummah is an international community based on universal principles. These universal principles rest on the common faith, i.e. religious beliefs, thoughts and ideals of all members of the given religion, regardless of their ethnic or territorial determination, while the main principles of the nation and nationalism are predetermined by the place of birth, language and race, based on which loyalty to the community is formed. This brings the Muslim society in the position to choose between the loyalty to the ummah, as the community of all believers, and the nation state as a secular community based on the ethnic principle. It is believed that this causes confusion among Muslims as to where their loyalty should be placed, and it is precisely the issue of loyalty that represents the clashing point of the nation and the ummah. For Islam, there is no dilemma. The community based on the race, language and territory is unacceptable and is compared to the tribalism of pre-Islamic Arabia, the so-called period of ignorance or *ġāhiliyya*, which apart from being ignorant of the idea of one God was – according to Islamic view – the period of overall barbarism.

Although the 19th century was the time when nations and national movements rose across Christian Europe, South Slavic Muslims, although undoubtedly part of the European society, were spiritually and traditionally oriented towards Islam and the Ottoman Empire with which belonging to Islam was fully equated.² For centuries discouraged from ethnic ideals, they fought for religious ideals embraced during the long presence of the Ottoman Empire in this region and still gazed longingly towards the declining Turkey, aware that eventually even the Sultan turned his back on them. Left to the "infidel" Austrian administration after 1878, feeling abandoned, desperate and apathetic, they remained resembling a foreign body in their own milieu, a relic of the past unwilling to move on. Soon they started to divide among themselves into rare supporters of the new authorities, mostly members of the rich and distinguished Muslims who pragmatically adapted to the new circumstances, and those far more numerous who claimed they would not leave their houses until the "Švaba" left Bosnia.

Amid the overall commotion caused by the entry of the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, the genuine struggle for national identity of the South Slavic Muslims ensued. The Serbs tried to attract them to the Serbian national idea, believing that, based on the common origin and language, this population belonged to the Serbian people, which was "by historical destiny sidelined from their own national vertical".³ A similar view was held by the Croatian national propaganda towards the Muslims, while Austria-Hungary launched the propaganda of the famous "Bosniak" national identity which, from today's point of view, left far-reaching consequences in this region.

It was on these Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina that Serbia placed the highest expectations in terms of nationality, considering Bosnia and Herzegovina historically and traditionally a Serbian land, and its population a part of the Serbian national being, regardless of religious affiliation. Moreover, the Serbian political and intellectual elite clearly voiced its position that without unity with the Muslims, there would be no strong and stable nation states in the Balkans. That is why high stakes were placed on the question of the national affiliation of Muslims. On the other hand, since any kind of political activity from Serbia aimed at the Muslims was obstructed because of the new Austro-Hungarian authorities and their ambitions regarding the national identity of Muslims in Bosnia, the Serbian elite strove to appeal to the Muslim population primarily through cultural activity. The most important in this regard were Serbian literature and literary magazines through which the Serbian national thought and idea were spread.

Serbian writers, as contemporaries of such social climate, direct participants and not only onlookers, thus became the best advocates of the national ideas on the eve

² In this region, Islam was called the "Turkish faith" and Islamisation was known as "Turkisation", not only colloquially, but in official documents of that time as well. Accordingly, the Muslims living in the South Slavic area, although being of Slavic origin and speaking a Slavic language, were called the "Turks", which in the Western public often led to misconceptions about the existence of a larger number of ethnic Turks in these areas.

³ С. Тутњевић, *Национална свијест и књижевност муслимана*, Београд 2004, 92.

of creation of the new, joint state, which, as distant as it was perceived at the time, was nevertheless a historical inevitability. On the other hand, unlike literature, politics had a much less artistic and much more pragmatic view of the historical scene, and therefore endeavoured to utilize the existing literary orientalism for the purpose of raising the Serbian and later Yugoslav national spirit with as many self-proclaimed orientlists as possible. Consequently, due to the lack of political means, the outreach to the Muslim population living in the areas where Islamic cultural and civilizational tradition was very strong and the national feeling was still identified with religious affiliation, was mainly delegated to literature, which, as it seemed at the time, was not entirely without success.

Primarily, in order to achieve this goal of Serbian writers which, though not pre-mediated, came naturally to them, it was important to let go of Turkophobia which was unsurprisingly present in the Serbian literature of the first half and even middle of the 19th century, during the period of liberation from Ottoman rule. What was at one point of Serbian romanticism – as displayed in the works of Vuk and Njegoš in the first half of the 19th century or Zmaj and Đura Jakšić in the 1860s and 1870s – constructive and historically inevitable, by the end of 19th century it was considered unnecessary and even harmful, which is why Turkophobia, as stated by Ivan Šop, in the poetry of the late 19th and early 20th century was deemed a belated romantic work of inexperienced, inferior poets.⁴ This was also discussed by the very contemporaries of the events, such as Nikola Šumonja, who wrote the work *Muhamedanstvo i naša književnost* (*Mohammedanism and Our Literature*), published in 1887, where he emphasised the need for a change in the literary direction, in keeping with the current socio-political events: “Such manner of writing reached its peak during the Bosnian-Herzegovian Uprising, Serbo-Turkish War, Montenegrin-Turkish War, as well as Russo-Turkish War. There was a plenty of material: it was sufficient to invent a horrendous event, to bring before the reader’s eyes several battalions of Turks with blood-shot eyes, holding scimitars and long guns, fire a number of shots, kill several mothers and innocent children – of course all on paper, present a dungeon or gallows – and you had a wonderful poem, story or whatever you wished, depicting the life of the oppressed rayah”.⁵ Deeming this phase of Serbian literature justified and necessary given the then struggle for the liberation from the five-century long slavery, Šumonja further asserted that this had to end, in accordance with the new policy of unity and national co-existence: “Let nobody assume that I endeavour to write an apotheosis of Mohammedanism and clear it from its deeds and misdeeds. I only intend to briefly point out a great fault of ours that was somewhat reasonable before, but should be shunned today. It is high time we left behind the senseless attack on the Mohammedans, because for the sake of a few bombastic phrases, poems and stories it is not worth finding fault with an entire

⁴ I. Šop, *Istok u srpskoj književnosti, šest pisaca – šest viđenja*, Beograd 1982, 91.

⁵ Н. Шумоња, *Мухамеданство и наша књижевност*, Стражилово, бр. 21 (Нови Сад, 21. мај 1887) 334–335.

segment of our people... Our people, indeed, as Mohammedans in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the blood of our blood, a leaf of our tree, sons of an ancient, one common mother. For the sake of unison, for the sake of brotherhood and friendship with them, we should refrain from any insults, mockery and ridicule of their holies".⁶ This work by Nikola Šumonja not only strongly echoed among Serbian writers, whose poetry now more rarely included attributes such as "beasts", "butchers" etc., but represented the best testimony that the evolution of Serbian literature ran in parallel with the socio-political developments, which has always been a historical inevitability particularly in the Balkans. Moreover, many Serbian writers of that time were not only cultural, but also diplomatic and political representatives of their country, and politics has always looked on the current events with much less artistic disposition.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that the brotherly stance of unity towards the South Slavic Muslims did not yield positive results immediately. The reasons for the first Muslim authors to distance themselves from the Serbian or Croatian national idea lay partly in the pressure exerted by the Austro-Hungarian authorities, and by the Muslim community, but also in the fact that many Muslim writers refused to accept arbitrary nationalistic interpretation of their literary cooperation in Serbian and Croatian magazines, which these magazines often resorted to, causing a counter-effect in a large number of cases. From the launching of the Serbian literary magazine "Bosanska vila" in 1885 in Sarajevo, until 1892, when a three-year interruption in the literary cooperation of the Muslims with this magazine began, its pages displayed a multitude of literary works written by Muslim authors. The magazine often imprudently labelled this cooperation as the authors' identification with the national colours advocated by the magazine, without paying much attention to the literary background of this cooperation, which, in a number of cases, caused an opposite effect to what was desired, leading Muslim writers to turn to Croatian papers first, and subsequently to "Bošnjak". A vast array of Muslim authors who collaborated with "Bosanska vila" included Mustafa Hilmi Muhibić, the first Muslim contributor to this Serbian magazine, as particularly emphasised by the editors,⁷ Sulejman Solonjanin, who was welcomed by the magazine with the desire that others follow in his footsteps,⁸ Salih Kazazović, whose involvement was greeted with similar words,⁹ as well as Riza-beg Kapetanović, who was introduced as a son "of the well-known Serbian author Mehmed-beg Kapetanović".¹⁰ Nevertheless, the most famous instance was the cooperation between "Bosanska vila" and the young Savfet-beg Bašagić, who

⁶ *Ibidem*, 335.

⁷ The editorial note below the text of Mustafa Hilmi Muhibić, *Нуман и Нејума*, Босанска вила, бр. 13 (Сарајево, 1. јул 1886) 197.

⁸ The editorial note below the text of Sulejman Solonjanin, *Фоча*, Босанска вила, бр. 9 (1. мај 1888) 143.

⁹ The editorial note below the poem of Salih Kazazović, *Угају*, Босанска вила, бр. 6 (31. март 1891) 197.

¹⁰ The editorial note below the poem of Riza-beg Kapetanović, *У осами*, Босанска вила, бр. 10 (31. мај 1890) 149.

later became one of the most vivid examples of the literary and national indecisiveness among the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bašagić published his first verses in “Bosanska vila”, which was greeted by the magazine’s editor, Nikola Kašiković, with more than an affirmative comment, as he also enclosed a letter of Bašagić where this young poet declared himself as a Mohammedan Serb.¹¹ Bašagić soon publicly renounced this letter and there was even a rumour that the letter was written by Ljubo Mirković, a student of the fifth grade of Gymnasium, who initially urged Bašagić to send his poems to the magazine. In any case, Bašagić no longer cooperated with “Bosanska vila” and many years later, Nikola Kašiković complained to Hamdija Kreševljaković that he had inappropriately deterred young Savfet-beg Bašagić from “Bosanska vila”.¹² Soon afterwards, the magazine “Bošnjak” was launched and attracted the majority of the first generation of Muslim contributors of “Bosanska vila” and other Serbian magazines, while young Bašagić went through all stages of national identification, eventually declaring himself as a Croat.

That was how the political and literary action aimed at gaining the support of the Muslims for the Serbian national thought ended, somewhat unsuccessfully, even though many of these authors acknowledged that their creative development was largely influenced by the Serbian literature of that time. Nevertheless, the love of Serbian literature still did not imply the love of the Serbian nation, which was starkly visible only with the second generation of young Muslims, who did not remember the Turkish rule and harboured not only honest, but to a certain extent fanatic affection towards the Serbian thought and literature, remaining, without a shred of wavering, utterly loyal to the Serbian national idea. After the failure of this idea among their grandfathers and fathers, the new generation of the Muslim youth embraced Serbian literature and its authors as the source of their main inspiration and vigour and as role models for their identification with the Serbian national ideology. Skerlić’s youth was awakening, more particularly, those young people who, as Skerlić put it, “displayed fortunate affinity to pull away from the narrow-minded confessional and a national policy pursued by older Muslim generations and adapt to modern ideas and modern life”.¹³ Borivoje Jevtić, one of the editors of the paper “Srpska omladina”, which was circulated in Sarajevo and owned by Smailaga Ćemalović, president of the Municipality of Mostar and a renowned Serb Muslim, wrote on the eve of the First Balkan War that “the vigorous national spirit of the youth will not bear medieval

¹¹ “I have heard that you gladly receive poems from Mohammedan Serbs. I am also one of them, and may the first sounds of my gusle made of maple be heard in our “Bosanska vila”. From now on, if God wills and good fortune allows, I will be a diligent contributor to your esteemed paper, not only with poems, but also with other writings that I might be able to produce”, the editorial note below the text: *Бег Башагић с Невесиња равна*, Родољупке, Босанска вила, бр. 19–20 (новембар 1890) 290.

¹² M. Rizvić, *Bosansko-muslimanska književnost u doba preporoda 1887–1918*, Sarajevo 1990, 66.

¹³ J. Скерлић, *Нови омладински листови и наш нови нараштај*, Српски књижевни гласник, књ. 30, св. 3, (Београд 1913) 217.

restraints, let alone be indifferent to the political events happening in the country, which later also took place in Balkan states. This brought about encouragement and hope; and at the same time, it created a gap – a very clear one today, between the Austrian pedagogues on the mission to stifle the national spirit, and the youth caught up in the current of the general national rising...”¹⁴ Indeed, it was an accurate depiction of the developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the start of the 20th century. Austrian efforts to create the “Bosniak” nation began to fade away, particularly after the departure of Kállay, and the ideology of “Bosniak identity” was not only abandoned, but even received a negative undertone. On the other hand, this is the period characterised by the advocacy for the Yugoslav nation, mainly led by youth movements in the entire South Slavic region. “Mlada Hrvatska”, “Mlada Bosna”, “Mlada Dalmacija” were born on this wave, while General Oskar Potiorek gave them the historically most accurate name – “Jungslawen”, according to their main feature – efforts aimed at creating the Yugoslav state.¹⁵ In 1901, the Bosnian police defined the youth as a phenomenon it had not dealt with before: “The term ‘Serbian or Mohammedan youth’ is to denote young members of high or middle classes examining and discussing political issues, and belonging to the opposition”.¹⁶ With regard to the Muslim youth, in a confidential report written by Miroslav Pobrić from Sarajevo dated 20 February 1905, it is stated that “Serbophil Muslim parties gather all the youth from Stolac, Mostar and Trebinje under the leadership of H. S. Alajbegović, A. Rizvanbegović and Šehović brothers”.¹⁷ This youth matured on Skerlić’s studies *Omladina i njena književnost (Youth and Its Literature)*, *Srpska književnost u 18. veku (Serbian Literature in the 18th Century)*, but also on youth magazines such as “Zora”, “Bosanska vila”, “Bratstvo”, “Otađbina”, “Carigradski glasnik”, “Brankovo kolo”, “Srbobran”, “Sarajevska omladina” and others. Furthermore, this period was characterized by a multitude of these and similar literary magazines which, together with various cultural and singing ensembles, and sports associations, influenced the public opinion in the entire Yugoslav area. The leading magazine was “Srpski književni glasnik” whose every issue was “absorbed by the entire literary youth composed of patriotic dreamers”,¹⁸ as noted by Miroslav Krleža. Many of these magazines, treated as literary and not political publications, were supported by the Serbian government, both verbally and financially, fully achieving political-literary cooperation in addressing the national question, which had begun to reap the first benefits from the beginning of the century. Contributors to these magazines included Mehmed Zildžić, Hadži Hamid Svrzo and other members of the Serbian Muslim youth, including the leaders of the movement, Osman Đikić and S. Avdo Karabegović, closely followed by

¹⁴ П. Слијепчевић, *Млада Босна. Напор Босне и Херцеговине за ослобођење и уједињење*, Сарајево 1929, 186

¹⁵ М. Екмечић, *Стварање Југославије 1790–1918*, II, Београд 1989, 525.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 524.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 545.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 488.

Omer-beg Sulejmanpašić Skopljak and Avdo Karabegović Hasanbegov. This Muslim youth, who mostly received their education in gymnasiums and teacher training schools in Serbia, emphasized the language as the predominant element of the national identification. In general, during the Romantic era, when the theories about the nation in the modern sense were developed, this was one of the generally recognized positions that the Muslims of Serbian, Croatian, and afterwards, Yugoslav orientation adopted as the most important evidence of unity of all three peoples in terms of nation and origin. Unlike the previous generation of Muslims – who, even though aware of the common language and Slavic origin shared with the Serbs and Croats, in accordance with the ideas of the “Bosniaks” as an autochthonous national element, endeavoured to impose the “Bosnian” language as another dividing element of singularity – the Muslims of the new generation highlighted the language as the main unifying factor and an irrefutable proof of the existence of one nation with three faiths.

The Serbian efforts to oppose the Austro-Hungarian authorities and get closer to the Bosnian-Herzegovian Muslims in the joint struggle for the Serbian national identity received the first significant literary recognition in 1900 in the form of the poetry collection titled “Pobratimstvo” (“Blood Brotherhood”). The collection was signed by the three most eminent representatives of those who called themselves the Serbs of Muslim faith – Osman Đikić, S. Avdo Karabegović and Omer-beg Sulejmanpašić Skopljak. In a way, the collection represented the pinnacle of their hitherto work on the “nationalisation” of the Muslims through cooperation with Serbian papers. Although the collection was dominated by patriotic poems dedicated to Serbdom (*Pozdrav domovini* (*Salute to the Homeland*), *Srpska vila* (*Serbian Fairy*), *Pred osvit* (*On the Eve of the Dawn*), *Crnoj Gori* (*To Montenegro*), *Dušmanima* (*To Foes*), *Srpsstvu* (*To the Serbhood*), there were also many poems dedicated to Serbian writers who both artistically and nationally influenced these young Muslim poets (*Branku* (*To Branko*), *Zmaj J. Jovanoviću* (*To Zmaj J. Jovanović*), *Vuku St. Karadžiću* (*To Vuk St. Karadžić*).

The collection was, expectedly, unanimously welcomed by critics who recognized its indisputable literary-historical and political significance: “The Serbhood is their ideal, motto, hope, vigour, connection, blood brotherhood, even more so and more zealously as it does not hide behind any faith, but takes pride in the fact that it can exist independently and is willing to embrace and accept its brothers of other faiths” wrote Milan Savić in 1901 in “Letopis Matice srpske”.¹⁹ A review of the collection published in “Zora” was written by Atanasije Šola who, characterizing the authors as poets of moderate talent in writing patriotic poetry, which in his opinion was also rather significant and satisfying, nevertheless added that their verses exuded “the sameness of feelings and objects provoking those feelings, in the same manner in all three of them. Of all objects that aroused most sounds from their lyre, the main – and since these poets are young, rapt and unspoiled people – the most natural to them,

¹⁹ М. Савић, *Побратимство. Пјесме Омер-бега Сулејман Пашића, Османа А. Ђикића и С. А. Карабеговића*, *Летопис Матице српске*, књ. 208, св. 4 (1901) 98.

is the love towards their homeland and their people”.²⁰ In keeping with the national policy of developing unity, Šola further added that each of these poets sang “to the unity of his people deeming it the only hope for a better future”, as he painfully realised that many mistakes, though perhaps inadvertent, were made in the past, and that these unintentional errors of forefathers “separated brothers of the same blood...”²¹ Thus, the Serbian literary criticism unanimously welcomed this collection, primarily underscoring its patriotic character, which was in line with the general tendency of supporting young Muslim poets inclined to the Serbian idea. The crown of the collection, its most popular and, from the perspective of the historical and political moment, the most significant poem was by all means *Himna Srba muslimana* (*The Hymn of Serb Muslims*) written by Osman Đikić.

Osman Đikić thus became the symbol of Serb Muslims and the piedmont of their gathering in the struggle for the Serbian national thought and idea. He published his first poem in the Mostar paper “Zora”, owing to Svetozar Ćorović, who then sent his poems to “Bosanska vila” and “Brankovo kolo”, introducing young Osman to the Mostar literary circle as its youngest member. On the other hand, although he enjoyed sympathies and favour among the Serbian literary and even political circles, due to the Austrian pressures provoked by his open demonstration of the Serbian national orientation, he was first expelled from the fifth grade of the Mostar Gymnasium and was then forced to leave his birth town of Mostar, joining the Istanbul emigration in the Turkish capital.²² He finished Gymnasium in Istanbul and his cooperation with “Carigradski glasnik” began at the same time, as well as with the Serbian political circles, which is why already in 1900 he came to Belgrade to the Academy of Trade. During his three-year stay in Belgrade, he published, apart from *Pobratimstvo*, the poetry collection *Muslimanskoj mladeži* (*To the Muslim Youth*) in 1902, and a collection of love poems *Ašiklije* (*Lovers*) in 1903. From 1901 to 1902, he also worked as an assistant to the proofreader of “Srpske novine” earning a negligible annual pay of 360 dinars, which somewhat eased his stay in the Serbian capital.²³ After finishing school, he returned from Belgrade to Bosnia, which to a certain extent marked a turning point of Đikić’s gradual orientation from the literary to political-national engagement. Having actively joined the Muslim movement for religious and

²⁰ У.(редник), *Побратимство. Пјесме Омер-бега Сулејман Пашића Скопљака, Османа А. Ђикића и С. А. Карабеговића*, Зора, бр. XII (Мостар, 1. децембар 1900) 428.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² In 1898 the district governor in Mostar informed the Government in Sarajevo about the activities of the Serbian art ensemble “Gusle” aimed at attracting the Muslims and Muslim high-school students, and enclosed the list of 35 names of persons who attended the last theatre performance. At the top of the list was Osman Đikić, as the youngest but, as it was noted, “the most prolific and most articulate member”. (Ј. Лешић, foreword to the book: О. Ђикић, *Сабрана дјела*, прир. Ј. Лешић, Сарајево 1971, 12).

²³ Архив Србије, Министарство просвете – Просветно одељење, 1902-XIV-54, министар просвете и црквених послова П. Маринковић – управи Државне штампарије, 28. фебруара/12. марта 1901, у Београду.

educational autonomy, he regrettably recognized the inevitable departure from his poetry: "The string in my fiddle has snapped long ago. The idealistic and carefree poetry has been replaced by realistic, disquieting prose assigned to me by a son's duty to his suffering Homeland. And I became – which you already know – a journalist; and as such, I cannot – at least not here – even contemplate verses..."²⁴ Such position of Đikić fully reflected the time when the belles-lettres gradually retreated before actions. After the establishment of joint Muslim-Serbian cooperation around the movement for religious and educational autonomy, the attitudes of Muslim poets of Serbian orientation were observed in the Muslim milieu much more favourably, which facilitated Đikić's national work.²⁵ In 1906, he launched the political paper "Bosansko-hercegovački glasnik" together with Omer-beg Sulejmanpašić, entering not only the religious-educational, but also the political field of action, utilising his sharp pen. He did the same the following year when he started to write for "Musavat", founded and edited by Smail-aga Ćemalović, another eminent citizen of Mostar.²⁶ Ćemalović himself emphasized his great relief when Osman took the editor's position saying that Đikić used to be able to write an entire issue by himself, though that was a double-edged sword since given Đikić's political views he publicly voiced in the paper, the paper was often under censorship.²⁷ Nevertheless, he was most active as the secretary and later the editor of the magazine "Gajret", the gazette of the eponymous Muslim educational-cultural society established in 1903. The society itself was established with the primary humanitarian purpose to support the education of poor Muslims and generally contribute to the educational and cultural advancement of

²⁴ O. A. Бикић, писмо Душану М. Шијачком поводом смрти С. Авде Карабеговића, Авдина споменица, приредио Д. М. Шијачки, Београд 1909, 26.

²⁵ Cooperation of the Serbian and Muslim movements for religious-educational autonomy was epitomized in the personality of the lawyer from Novi Sad, Emil Gavril, who enjoyed immense trust of the Muslim leadership with whom he kept close ties. Gavril, who advocated the position of one people with three faiths, believed that an honest policy had to be pursued especially towards Muslims in terms of attracting and winning them over: "Although passive until now, they are and will be very important in our homeland. With them we will be able to achieve our main objective, without them or against them, it will not be possible. We must prove to them that we are one and the same; that we share common interests and that we must unite in our struggle against the third party. We must particularly preserve their religious sensitivity, without imposing on them the Serbian name, as in their lack of knowledge they would understand it differently. We could only alienate them in that way. When they emancipate from their faith to such an extent and if their education goes in this direction, they will reach this conclusion by themselves." (For more information about the activity and cooperation of Emil Gavril with the Muslim autonomous movement, see: T. Kraljačić, *Prilog proučavanju veza dr Emila Gavril sa političkim pokretima u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine XXVIII–XXX (Sarajevo 1979) 167–188).

²⁶ The paper "Musavat" was launched as a result of the Serbian-Muslim cooperation in the struggle for religious and educational autonomy, and became the official gazette of the Muslim People's Organisation (*Ibidem*, 186).

²⁷ С. Ћемаловић, *Осман Бикић*, Гажрет, Сарајево 1924, 6.

the Muslim society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the first several years of the society and the paper, which was founded five years later, a predominantly Muslim national spirit was cherished, and even though the new Austro-Hungarian policy, after relinquishing “Bosniakhood”, advocated the affiliation of the Muslims to the Catholic element, “Gajret” was not particularly nationally and politically oriented and mainly supported integral Yugoslavhood, directing its activities primarily to the cultural-educational domain. At the same time when he started to edit “Gajret”, he also began editing “Samouprava”, the gazette of the Muslim Democratic Party which he founded in 1910 together with Smail-aga Ćemalović and Husein Ćišić, thus also officially entering the political sphere. As it was the case with the entire national propaganda work performed during the last decades of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th century first through literature and subsequently as a socio-political, and eventually military action for the national liberation and unification, so did Đikić begin his mission with poetry to replace it afterwards with other forms of cultural, national and political engagement. He did not take the gun as he died very young – on the eve of the First Balkan War, although in 1912 many of his Muslim comrades in his literary and cultural work went to the battlefield by the rivers of Pčinja, Lab, Ibar and Vardar. The entire third issue of “Sarajevska omladina” was dedicated to prematurely deceased Osman Đikić who, according to Jovan Skerlić, “more clearly than any Bosnian-Herzegovian Muslim felt the need for progress – contrary to the cheap opportunist policy of the elderly who felt closer to the Indian Muslims, Algerian Arabs and Asian Kurds than the Serbs and Croats of the same blood, people of their own race, their own language, with whom they have always lived together and must always live”.²⁸

On the other hand, S. Avdo Karabegović spent most of his life in Serbia where he was constantly in contact with contemporary Serbian writers and developments of Serbian literature, which made a particular impact on him, inducing him to identify, even more strongly than Đikić, with the Serbian national ideology and Serbia as the piedmont of liberation and unification of South Slavic peoples. Favoured and well-received by Serbian literary circles, he gained great publicity for his patriotic poetry which reached its main expression, as was the case with the poetry of Đikić and Sulejmanpašić, in the collection of poems “Pobratimstvo”. It was particularly his poem *Srpstvu (To the Serbhood)* that voiced this position towards the unity and brotherly love, considering all three confessional elements as constituents of the single, Serbian people. Like Osman Đikić, S. Avdo Karabegović also dedicated many of his verses to Serbian writers of that time such as Aleksa Šantić, Janko Veselinović, Stevan Sremac and others. Most data about the life and work, and primarily thoughts of S. Avdo Karabegović can be found in the tribute published after his death, where his friends and acquaintances recounted their memories of this significant Serbian poet, describing his personal, public and literary life.²⁹ Thus, we

²⁸ J. Skerlić, *op. cit.*, 217.

²⁹ A detailed biography of poet S. Avdo Karabegović, completed with archive material, was also published by Dejan Pavić in 2009: Д. Павић, *Биографија Авде Карабеговића Србина (1878–1908)*, Мали Зворник 2009.

learn that on one occasion, when asked by the Serbian poet Milorad M. Petrović what “S” at the beginning of his name stood for, Avdo replied – the “Serb”.³⁰ It was precisely due to such depth of his national conviction that Karabegović enjoyed immense trust of his friends in Serbia. However, as it was often the case at the time, as a favourite in Serbia he was under suspicion in Bosnia and Herzegovina, not only among his Muslims, but among the Austrian authorities as well. While he was once crossing the border and going to Zemun to pay a private visit, he was seized by the Austrian police and taken to Pest to serve a three-year military service, although as a high-school student he had the right to serve for only one year. Not only was Karabegović denied this right, but after his three-year service ended, it was extended for another year. The Austrian authorities believed that this would make him sink into oblivion among his literary and political friends, and that his literary and national engagement, by which he was already popular, would be quite neutralised. Karabegović was finally liberated owing to the efforts of Aćim Čumić, who personally went to Pest to intervene, and after a short stay in the Teacher Training School in Pakrac, he returned to Aleksinac where he finished his education in 1905.³¹ In the same year, he was appointed a teacher of Muslim children in Mali Zvornik, but being enfeebled and of frail health after this unfortunate episode in his life, he died three years later.

The third poet from the group of authors behind the poetry collection “Pobratimstvo”, Omer-beg Sulejmanpašić Skopljak, who also often signed as Despotović, contributed to the collection with nine poems.³² He was considered the least skilled poet of the three, but also an ardent national and political activist like Osman Đikić, with whom he edited the paper *Bosansko-hercegovački glasnik, list za politiku, ekonomiju i književnost i za interese muslimana u BiH* in Sarajevo. With his

³⁰ M. М. Петровић, *Авдин потпис*, Авдина споменица, Београд 1909, 50.

³¹ Aćim Čumić was a unique figure of Serbian history, particularly significant in terms of the Orthodox–Muslim rapprochement, an agenda he was devoted to until the end of his life. He was a lawyer, judge, law professor at the Great School, later a member of the Serbian Learned Society and an honorary member of the Serbian Royal Academy, but also briefly the Minister of Interior and President of the Government of the Principality of Serbia. He was known to be temperamental, sharp-tongued and exceptionally intelligent, favourite among his students who regularly rose to his defence. In 1878, he was arrested by the liberal Government for alleged participation in the Topola Rebellion, after which he was sentenced to death. This sentence was changed to ten years of captivity. After the Progressive Party came to power in 1880, he was released from prison, after which he refused to return to politics, even though he was offered to do so. Nevertheless, he continued his work as a fervent activist in the cultural and national field, and was well-known as a patron and protector of many young people, especially Muslims inclined to the Serbian national idea. (For more information about Aćim Čumić, see: J. Милановић, *Аћим Чумић: 1836–1901*, Београд 2007.)

³² *Našemu Halifi* (To Our Kahlifah); *Srpstvu* (To the Serbhood); *Želja* (Wish); *Leti pjesmo!...* (Fly away, the Song!); *Njoj* (To Her); *Prva čaša* (The First Glass); *Pjesnikova molitva* (Poet’s Prayer); *Carigradskom glasniku* (To the Messenger of Constantinople) and *Ustajte braćo!...* (Rise, Brothers!).

poetry and various ethnographic articles, Sulejmanpašić was a contributor to numerous Serbian magazines from the very beginning. An example of his particular dedication to the Serbian-Muslim cooperation in the field of folklore was illustrated in *Bosanska vila* as his note to the epic poem *Ženidba Čejvanagić-Meho* (*Wedding of Čejvanagić-Meho*). Describing the poem as “a Serbian national Mohammedan poem from Bugojno”, Omer-beg listed numerous examples from epic folk poetry in order to present to the readers the unison of the folk spirit and tradition, and encourage everyone, regardless of their faith, to collect examples of folk wisdom, whether in the spirit of Muslim or Orthodox faith.³³ Nonetheless, the striking Serbian orientation of Omer-beg Sulejmanpašić was particularly displeasing and irritating to the conservative Muslim community, primarily given that he originated from higher ranks of the Muslim nobility.³⁴

The process of national awakening that in the 19th century, keeping up with the European developments, engulfed the entire Balkan region and all its peoples, helping them in their struggle for liberation from centuries-long Ottoman domination, led to a single goal – the creation of nation states with their own political and cultural identity and integrity. The only ones who were unwilling to participate in the process of their own national determination were the Muslims of Slavic origin, who believed that their political and cultural identity was already accomplished, identifying it entirely with the Ottoman Empire and Islamic religion. Nevertheless, the new times brought new social rules and norms that had to be adhered to, which was most difficult particularly for the Slavic Muslims living predominately in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As national determination according to religious affiliation, unknown to then European theories on race and nation, began to take root in the Slavic South, the “nationalisation” of Muslims on the ethnic and linguistic grounds was instigated, in line with the modern European concept of national identification. The idea was to make Muslims identify themselves on the national basis, maintaining their Islamic faith, which they adopted subsequently. Thus, being younger than the ethnic origin, faith could not be considered the primary grounds for identification, at least such was a widely held view. The problem arose when, disregarding the deep-rootedness of Islam, for which belonging to a nation of the European type was practically unknown and essentially irrelevant, several national options were imposed on this part of the Slavic population. In the situation where, as vividly illustrated by Pero Slijepčević, “the land was carved up by machinations of Austria... and where the Serbs and Croats were fighting every day over whom the Muslims belonged to and whose Bosnia was”,³⁵ the choice between the Serbian, Croatian and “Bosniak” national determination led to

³³ Омер бег Сулејманпашић, *Женидба Ћејванагић Мехе*, Босанска вила, бр. 22 (30. новембар 1898) 341.

³⁴ Omer-beg Sulejmanpašić was a descendant of Belgrade vizier Sulejman Paša Skopljak. For more details about his biographical data and literary work see: Омер-бег Сулејманпашић-Деспотовић, *Српству*, прир. Ј. Бајић, Београд 2001.

³⁵ П. Слијепчевић, *op. cit.*, 186.

deep divisions and stratification of this part of the population, as well as a particular national-religious paradox embodied in the “Turkish” faith and “Muslim” nation. Since during the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina the nationalisation of Muslims was predominately a cultural and national project, it yielded, as already noted, its most convincing results in those very fields. Stojan Novaković spoke as a politician about the unification through culture, referring to the Serbian spirit that had been through entire history led primarily by “the book, poem and story” and which had lived “in faith, in the book and in the language”.³⁶ In that sense, Serbian literature also strove to act in a unifying manner and to develop with Muslims, limited by their religious identity, the Serbian national feeling. On the other hand, Muslims who did accept it responded with patriotic verses imbued with historical and epic tradition of the Serbian people. Vladimir Ćorović wrote at the time about the Muslim youth as those who first felt the success of the Serbian literary unity without differences in faith, who relinquished prejudices of their milieu and entered the Serbian lines “willing to brotherly endure whatever may arise”.³⁷ If the political and historical context is disregarded and one focuses exclusively on the literary work, those were only two sides of the same medal. Muslim poets singing to the Serbhood were also considered Serbian poets and their works were considered the achievements of Serbian literature. This was not a vanquishing attempt to spread Serbian nationalism, but on the contrary, it was a natural literary framework at the time, especially bearing in mind that, if according to then theories about the nation, nationality related to faith was unacceptable, for literary theory faith as the determination of national literature was even more inconceivable. Muslim literature, just like the Muslim nation, was created by political means and there was no room for those who did not agree with such politics. This was another reason for treating the Muslims as the authors of Serbian or Croatian literature, depending on which national colour they sided with in their literary work. In truth, with the emergence of the Yugoslav national, as well as literary ideology, the affiliation of Muslims with the Serbian or Croatian side was somewhat relativised, and even though at first sight it was more acceptable, it did not bring much good to the Muslim authors. It is a shameful fact that during the “Yugoslav” period(s), the Muslims writing at the time of the Serbian national awakening were literally banished from the history of Serbian literature even though, regardless of their actual literary achievements, they wrote prose and poetry, published and were subject to the Serbian literary criticism. They were revitalised only at the time of the latest national divisions. This is certainly another evidence of how the political moment influenced the literary work which, especially in these regions, often exceeded the literary fashion of the time. These influences were particularly strong during the unstable and uncertain political and historical periods, which was certainly the case with the 19th century in this region.

³⁶ С. Новаковић, *Уједињујмо се културом*, Срђ, бр 1–5 (Дубровник, 31. јануар 1908) 1.

³⁷ В. Ћоровић, *Муслимани у новијој српској књижевности*, Преглед, бр. 9–12 (Сарајево, 1. април 1913) 445, 450.

The awakening of nations and nation states required all available means to achieve the most fortunate final result as possible, and since the scope of political means was often limited, that role was most often left to the cultural and literary engagement. This engagement was carried out through literary works and literary magazines that strove to raise awareness about the joint historical destiny, language, origin and tradition, which all together, being older than religious affiliation, should have been the starting point for the future national determination. At any rate, literature has always been one of the most important elements of the national identity of every nation, naturally making it inseparable from the state and national ideology, which is primarily related to politics. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Serbian literature of the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century regarded itself not as an invader or an extended arm of the political power, but primarily as the unifying force of the divided parts of the same nation.

Jovana Šaljić Ratković

**LETTERATURA AL SERVIZIO DELLA NAZIONE:
COME SI FORMO' IL "GEMELLAGGIO"?**

Riassunto

Il risveglio delle nazioni, dell'identità nazionale, della coscienza e dell'unificazione, che ha luogo nel lungo XIX secolo di storia europea, si riflette inevitabilmente nella penisola balcanica, dove l'appartenenza nazionale acquisisce una nuova dimensione. La popolazione cristiana dei Balcani accettò volentieri la nuova forma di orgogliosa appartenenza che si diffondeva dall'Europa dell'Illuminismo, tuttavia, grazie alla lunga permanenza dell'Impero ottomano musulmano, in quest'area abitavano non solo cristiani ma anche società musulmane dello spazio europeo, sballottate tra origine e valori europei e tradizioni islamiche profondamente radicate. Una di queste società erano appunto i musulmani di origine, lingua e costumi slavi, che, con il ritiro del dominio ottomano dai Balcani nel XIX e all'inizio del XX secolo, si trovarono nel dilemma tra Occidente od Oriente, tra nazione o fede. Tentando di indurli a una decisione, i giovani Stati balcanici, compreso il Principato di Serbia, aderirono a un progetto culturale, politico e sociale generale noto come "nazionalizzazione dei musulmani", considerando questa popolazione parte della propria nazione essendo legata da una lingua ed origine etnica comune. Tuttavia, poiché a quel tempo le attività politiche da parte serba erano state impediti in Bosnia-Erzegovina, la parte serba concentrò la sua azione nei confronti dei musulmani principalmente attraverso la cultura, in particolare la letteratura e le riviste letterarie. Questo approccio diede risultati solo a partire dalla seconda generazione di musulmani che non ricordava l'amministrazione turca e che aveva iniziato a separare l'identità religiosa da quella nazionale. I giovani musulmani istruiti della Bosnia-Erzegovina avanzarono verso tale direzione, esprimendosi principalmente attraverso la poesia patriottica, ma anche attraverso altre forme letterarie. Il culmine di questa cooperazione politico-letteraria fu la raccolta di poesie "Gemellaggio", pubblicata a Belgrado nel 1900, nata dalla penna di tre giovani musulmani che si definivano serbi di fede musulmana.

Parole chiave: Gemellaggio, letteratura, musulmani serbi, identità nazionale, Bosnia ed Erzegovina.

Јована Шаљић Ратковић

**КЊИЖЕВНОСТ У СЛУЖБИ НАЦИЈЕ:
КАКО ЈЕ НАСТАЛО „ПОБРАТИМСТВО“**

Резиме

Буђење нација, националног идентитета, свести и уједињења које се смешта у дуги 19. век историје Европе, неминовно се одразило и на њено Балканско полуострво на којем је национална припадност добила и једну нову димензију. Хришћанско становништво Балкана радо је прихватило нови облик узвишене припадности који се ширио из просвећене Европе, међутим, захваљујући дугом боравку муслиманског Османског царства на овом подручју, на њему нису живели само хришћани већ и муслиманска друштва европског простора, растргнута између сопственог европског порекла и вредности и дубоко укоренење исламске традиције. Једно од таквих друштава су нарочито били и муслимани словенског порекла, језика и обичаја, који су се повлачењем османске управе са балканског подручја у 19. и почетком 20. века, нашли у дилеми Запад или Исток, нација или вера. Настојећи да их наведу на одлуку, младе националне државе Балкана међу којима и Кнежевина Србија, приступиле су општем културном, политичком и социјалном пројекту познатом под називом „национализација муслимана“, сматрајући ово становништво делом сопственог националног бића повезаног заједничким језиком и етничким пореклом. Ипак, како су у Босни и Херцеговини политичке активности из правца Србије биле у то време онемогућене, српска страна је свој пробој према муслиманима вршила превасходно путем културе, нарочито књижевности и књижевних часописа. Овакав приступ дао је резултате тек код друге генерације муслимана која није памтила турску управу и која је почела да раздваја верски од националног идентитета. У томе је предњачила образована муслиманска омладина из Босне и Херцеговине изражавајући се пре свега кроз родољубиву поезију али и друге књижевне облике. Врхунац овакве политичко-књижевне сарадње представљала је збирка песама „Побратимство“ објављена у Београду 1900. године која је настала из пера тројице младих муслимана који су себе називали Србима муслиманске вере.

Кључне речи: Побратимство, књижевност, Срби муслимани, национални идентитет, Босна и Херцеговина.

