

BIOGRAPHY

MELIKA SALIHBEG BOSNAWI
(ex. SALIHBEGOVIC) [i]

was born in Sarajevo, in 1945. She received her primary education and graduated from the Classical Gymnasium in her hometown. She then studied Political Sciences at the Zagreb University, attending in parallel lectures in Philosophy and Comparative Literature. She commenced her post-degree studies in Contemporary Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo, subsequently doing a freelance research, on a French government scholarship, at the University of Nanterre, and Collège de France in Paris. Her one-year scholarship was dedicated to a Master degree thesis titled "Ontology of Modern Art", as well as to getting familiar with the fascinating work of Gaston Bachelard.

Upon her return to Sarajevo, events of public and private nature prevent her from formalising her post-degree studies. Her own catharsis of Gnostic nature soon causes a conflict between her and the then governing political and spiritual system of ex-Yugoslavia, which will have had permanent and far-reaching consequences for her life and work [ii].

"Delayed" studies of Arabic and Persian languages at the Department of Oriental studies at Sarajevo Faculty of Philosophy will also be disrupted by political reasons. Melika was already exposed to extremely serious and continuous political oppression, which resulted in her being fired from her job with the Cultural Educational Association of Bosnia Herzegovina. Her literary-philosophic work was not to be published anymore, and she was shunned away from taking part in public art and intellectual life.

Melika's bibliographic units are scattered throughout the magazines of the former homeland (Yugoslavia). Her membership in the B&H Authors' Association, consequently the Yugoslav AA, ended publicly and shamefully when the Association threw her out the very same night following the day of arrests of a group of Muslim intellectuals, on 23. March 1983 [iii].

Although she was later again admitted back into the Association, she will never again believe its alleged humane and authentic artistic mission, consequently deciding to leave it on her own accord. Wartime founders of the Sarajevo i.e. Bosnian branch of PEN-International Authors' Association had invited her in their membership under some unacceptable conditions, despite the fact that International PEN's office was intensively engaged in her

defence during the political show-mock process aimed against her, as well as during her time in prison; in direct contrast to the then and contemporary engagement of local PEN members.

Ever since the aforementioned date, not only Melika S.B., but also her entire literary work (which had already been omitted from publication), becomes the subject of arrests, prison sentences, exiles, denials etc. Thus, a large part of her work remains unpublished, or is only preserved in some international media. Melika Salihbeg(ović) Bosnawi's literary job started in 1971, when an essay was published in a high ranked magazine called "Izraz". Her steadily progressing literary career, which was also recognised with some awards (for a screenplay, short story etc.), came to a sudden and rude ending with her now publicly expressed spiritual catharsis and metamorphosis in 1979. That year marked the beginning of still prevailing silence and ignorance, likened to two imprisonment, and actually permanent exile from life; most of the time all Sarajevo media passionately partake in this shirk.

Before and after the aforementioned date, in interludes between political persecutions, exiles, wartime years, travelling the globe, compulsory silence, self-chosen and imposed solitude/isolation, Melika S. Bosnawi writes and publishes poetry, novel, narratives, essays, screenplays, translations, interpretations, protests etc., in magazines dedicated to literature and art from Sarajevo, Zagreb, Beograd, Ljubljana... After having lost her previous publisher, "Svjetlost", in Sarajevo, apart from a few instances, when her work was published by "Grafičar", from Tuzla, "Zid" and "Al-Mahdi", from Sarajevo too, and the "Bosnisches Institut Zürich" from Switzerland, Melika S. Bosnawi opted for independent author publishing, authorized by the B&H Ministry for Culture and Sport, on high recommendations from her excellent editors. Melika Salihbeg Bosnawi owns her own international bibliography code.

Recent years of her work were dedicated to research and work on a huge interdisciplinary project themed "One&Oneness Paradigm", crowned with the book (364 pages, in folio) titled Sweet Smell of Gnosis / Miomiris gnoze/ 'Arfu`l- 'Irfān. Considerable international interest in her research has emerged, and it might lead the author back to academic work, and possibly out of the country again. But the world has been radically communised.

Melika Salihbeg Bosnawi's bibliography is the confirmation of the permanent devotion and faithfulness to the grandest theme of her life and work - Ontology.

[i] Salihbegović is Bosnian noble family name comprised of the

Islamic/Arab name Sâlih, and then Old Persian title - beg - for lord and master (adapted to Old Turkish as bey) and Slavic suffix ović, suggesting "descended from". Melika Salihbeg Bosnawi previously published under surname Salihbegović, which was Balkan conversion of an old Bosnian noble family name, original from Hamdanid and post-Hamdanid's Halab. The same conversion was kept throughout communist era until Melika's official taking again the old version - Salihbeg, after her release from political prison, in 1985.

[ii] Melika's political destiny will make a strong mark on the destiny of her son Amir (Ivan) Knezevic (who was an infant when she was arrested, as well as that of her beloved brother Jakub Salihbegovic, who was gravely wounded during the Aggression on B&H, and remained paralysed until his death; he was buried as a Bosnian shaheed/martyr when he died.

[iii] Melika Salihbeg Bosnawi was twice included on the Amnesty International's list of "prisoners of consciousness"; she was under the protection and care of the "Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture" during her time in London; she was included in actions of the International PEN for the liberation of imprisoned authors.

See more at:

<http://www.bosnawi.ba/en/biography-identity-card#sthash.oVz8HJ9B.dpuf>

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