

BOSNIAK - HÜSEYİN AVNİ BAŞMAN REFORMER OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN MODERN DAY TURKEY

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Excerpt

This compilation represents the life, educational work, reformational activity and creative works of one of the most renowned Turkish educators from the earliest period of its creation and modernization. The story focuses on a Bosniak, born in Travnik, known as Bašimanović, who still remains mostly unknown in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A special focus is on the work of Hüseyin Avni Başman, where he presents the philosophical and pedagogical thought of John Devey, with which he animated the representatives of Ministry of Education, and with it also the legendary president of Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal-Pasha Atatürk, form a special comitee for the reforming of the system of education and educational system. Avni Başman had the lead role in the process of reforming the system, especially the educational system. We wanted to give contribution to the legendary form of Hüseyin Avni Başmanwe, and furthermore, give contributions to the Bosniak nationals history of pedagogy, while giving proper respect to his national and scientific affiliation with the Republic of Turkey.

Hüseyin Avni Başman (Born Bašimamović from Travnik)

Ejup Bašimamović, like many other Bosniaks, lived a peaceful and lavish life in a vizier town - Travnik. He was, for that time period, educated and influential. But-as there always is a ‘But!’ in Bosnia, he was a witness of the great decay of the Ottoman Empire and he felt the concequences of the reforms as a result of the Port. He was a witness to the revolt led by Husein captain Gradašćević and could see the disharmony and the disagreements between the Bosnian beys: Gradašćević,

Rizvanbegović, Čengiđ. He also felt the revolts of the people: In Posavina, Herzegovina, Krajina... However, in Bosnia, he didn’t witness the involment of the great forces, nor did he witness the bosnian-herzeg revolt known by the name of „Nevesinjska puška”. He didn’t see the anexation of BiH after the Congress of Berlin of 1878. He felt dark clouds gathering over Bosnia, Herzegovina and Balkans as a whole and moved to Istanbul, searching for peace and safety for his family.



*EJUP SABRI (Bašimamvoić from Travnik - at old age)
(The source from the family album)*

He found what he was looking for in Istanbul; a safe job, privileges of the renowned bey, and peace, even though all of the weaknesses of the great empire broke over the back of that city. He chose to reside in the prestigious neighbourhood

known as Çarşambe. Soon thereafter, he married Aişe Genime, and started a family.

In that same home, on the 11th of March 1887, Husein was born, named after grandfather Avni, after greatgrandfathers Bašimamović - Bašman. (Erdogan, O., 2014: 21). Ejup-bey decided to pursue high levels of education for his son. That's why, upon graduating primary school, he enrolled him at, what was then, the most prestigious Vefa gymnasium (form of high school) in Istanbul¹. Upon graduating from the gymnasium, Husni once again chose the best. This time, it was law at the newly formed, most renowned and prestigious Darulfunun in Istanbul². He graduated in 1910, at only 23 years old. (Erdogan, O., 2015: 22)

During this time, the Ottoman Empire began to crack at the seams. Balkan was very volatile, as well as all the other fronts: North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Near East, basically all countries that were close to Russia...

Certified lawyer, Hüseyin Avni Başman, got his first service: he was put as a clerk at the Office for telegraph control. At that time, in 1911, he was chosen as a counselor to the prince. 'My father was not only extremely handsome, but also wise. He realized that as a counselor, he was prone to get into a lot of trouble. The princess was interested in him, and he knew that that was highly dangerous on the royal court. That's why he was looking for the easiest way to escape it all'.³

From the start of the 1913/14 school year, he decided to dedicate himself to working in education. He got a job as a geography teacher at one of the most famous schools - Daruŝŝafak⁴, and was soon promoted to the position of the assistant principal. After those first steps in the making of his socio-political and educational career, a series of moves from one place to another and the spread-

ing of cultural, educational, and pedagogical influences in: Bursa, Maraş, and Antalia followed.



*Hüseyin Avni Başman(1887 - 1965)
(The source from the family album)*

In each of those places, whether he was teaching geography, or English language, or performing a function as the assistant principal, Basman left an un-erasable trail in the social environment as a highly trained and educated man.

While he was a teacher and an assistant principal of a school in Anadolía, at a point when the Great War was still raging (1918), Husein A. Basman met a teacher by the name of Umma Gulsum (Bediz) and soon after married her. In that little town on the warm shore, two of his daughters were born: Cevza (1919) and Ferda (1921).

The name of Husein A. Basman soon became famous, and he became more and more sought after. He was offered many different jobs and functions. That is what, in 1922, led him to the chief position at the Department for education in the city of Denizli. That same year he was offered the same job in Eskişehir, in the center of Anadolía. However, he couldn't take the job as the Director of the Depart-

1 Vefa Lisesi, one of the most accomplished gymnasiums in Istanbul and Turkey, founded in 1872.

2 Darulfunun is reformed in 1900. After founding the Republic of Turkey in 1924, it continued operation under the same name until January 8th, 1933 when the modern Istanbul University was formed (According: Ihsanoglu, E.: "Darulfunun Tarihcesine Giriş (I),

3 We visited the son of Husein A. Basman, Mehmet A. Basman in Ankara on December 25th, 2012. We had numerous meetings that followed. Every conversation was very interesting to us, and took him to a trip down the memory lane, to the stories of his father. (See: Kačapor, S., (2014), Bosniaks - loyal residents of Turkey, Istanbul – Sarajevo, p.224 – 228).

4 Daruŝŝafaka lisesi, founded with the resources of the foundation founded by its namesake, Daruŝŝafak, in 1863.

ment for education in Eskişehir, because in that moment the deciding battles were being fought for the defence of that very city against the Greek forces.

Those were the years of a terrifying war in what is now modern day Turkey. The great Ottoman Empire crumbled down to the lowest size, modern day Turkey, and that territory was attacked from all sides. There was also the danger of that territory further splitting and dividing. „Greece was promised Smirna (modern day Izmir), and a part of western Andolia, Italy was supposed to get what is now Adana, and France alongside Syria was supposed to get Kilikija. In the eastern part of modern day Turkey, where the cities Kars, Ardahan and Erzurum, a country named Armenia was supposed to be created. South and east of the river Euphrates is where an autonomous Kurd region was to be formed”. (Sekulin, M., 2015: 43)

Those plans weren't realized thanks to the visionary resistance, of the already famous winner in the Canakale battle - Mustafa Kemal-pasha. In 1919, he was a leader of a military revolt, in which he soon got a political character. In all territory liberation actions Mustafa Kemal-pasha achieved absolute victories. That's how, in 1923, from the ashes of the once great Ottoman Empire, modern day Republic of Turkey was born.⁵

Instead of work in Eskişehir, Başman accepted a job offer from Kajseri, and then also from Samsun. In Samsun, he accepted a position of a warden at an orphanage. Orphans were everywhere. War and destruction rendered many kids orphaned, and Hüseyin Avni Başman with his humanitarianism, in the best way fit that position.

Like Pestalozzi (Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Pestaloci, 1746-1827, more in: Kaçapor, S., 2003: 148-159), in Stanz, Switzerland, after Napoleonic destructions, Hüseyin A. Başman started working with orphaned kids in Samsun.

In this period, the first works of Hüseyin Avni Başman were created. He wrote in old, Arabic script used at the time of Ottoman Empire. Many newspaper articles in magazines and newspapers, and his translation of a book written by Reuben Post Halleck „Psychology and psychic culture“ surfaced

in 1923. (Halleck, Reuben Post, 1859-1936, available at: <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>). The translation of this book was printed for the second time by the Ministry of Education in 1924. Then followed the book by S.V. Washburn titled „Advanced educational systems in Europe and the world.“, and the book of the American philosopher John Dewey, „*School and the child*“ (1924, publisher unknown, publication in old Ottoman script) soon followed.

This work, as per usual, became soon after recognized. A new country was being formed, and highly educated and advanced men were in short demand. Hüseyin Avni Başman was transferred to Ministry of Education in Ankara, on February 20th, 1923. At that Ministry, after a short period of time, he became the chief of the Department of Statistics, and in 1924. he also became chief inspector for foster homes, and in 1925- deputy of the Minister of High School Education (Erdogan, O., 2015 : 26).

While working at the Ministry of Education, Başman distinguished himself with his precision, responsibility, high education and refined culture, knowledge of foreign languages, and especially creative ideas. He advocated the full reform of education, focusing primarily on the school system. In that period he published the translation of another John Dewey book, „*School and society*“, Turkey Ministry of Education edition, (1925), Amire press-room, Istanbul, in old Ottoman script. (The same book named „Okul ve Toplum“), was published by the Publishing House „Pegam Academy“ in 2008, Türkiye bibliografyasi, 2009).

Dewey's scripts (translated) have raised interests in stakeholders which are most responsible for the system of education. The Minister of Education then informed the President, Mustafa Kemal Pasha about this. Thus, Başman become one of the most influential political factors for the formation of a special commission that would make reforms- in cooperation with the most famous American reformer of system of education and the school system, John Dewey⁶. John Dewey ar-

⁵ Modern day Turkey was established with the agreement that was signed on July 24th, 1923 in Lausanne. But only October 20th 1923, was the Republic formally announced by Kemal Ataturk.

⁶ John Dewey (1859-1952) was the most prominent philosopher and pedagogue in the USA, and a university professor in Michigan, Minnesota, Chicago, and New York. As a government councillor and deputy for education, he was in many countries across the world: China, Japan, Turkey, Mexico and the Soviet Union. (Zlebnik, L., 1970:206) In education, Dewey begins with individual experience of each child and he sees education as adaptation to life (Kaçapor, S., 2003:245). Several of his works have been translated into B/C/S languages

rived in Turkey as a US envoy, on the personal invitation of the President, Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Huseyin Avni Basman was his first collaborator and mainstay in the work of reforming the Turkish education system. It did not happen by chance; as Huseyin Avni Basman spoke, read and wrote in English very well. He was familiar with the former way of life and teaching of John Dewey. He also spoke French, Arabic, and German. The presence of John Dewey echoed throughout Turkey. It was one of the clearest indications that the President of the new Republic of Turkey wanted to take big steps to modernization of all forms of life in his country and leave the Ottoman model permanently⁷.

During the formation of the Committee for the implementation of reforms, the Minister of Education, Mustafa Necati, addressed to the public:

„For an institution of education to be established on the scientific basis and the needs of the country and the necessities of modern civilization and system of education to be organized, it was necessary to make cooperation with the most competent personalities, and establish such an organization together with them. As it was stated in John Dewey’s report, only such a committee, with long polemizing, can prepare the main teaching and educational measures and programs that will not be affected by changes.

Of people in the Ministry of Education. The draft law that was approved when they formed a ministry and which was sent to the Grand National Assembly is a special article of this Committee and the Board ...“ (Özalp, RA 1974: 38 to: Erdogan, O., 2015: 29).

On November 1st 1925, in his opening speech delivered at the National Assembly of Turkey, Ataturk thus described this new direction: „... Gentlemen! In education, we strive for a system that corresponds to the practical necessities of life and that takes into account the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves. It is necessary to carefully and seriously implement this tested system ...“ (Ataturk reports, speeches - I, p. 334, according to: Erdogan, O., 2015: 29).

7 The agreement was signed on July 24th, 1923 in Lausanne, i.e. with the changing of the earlier achieved agreement of Sevres, modern Republic of Turkey was established. On October 29 1923, Mustafa Kemal pasha Ataturk proclaimed the Republic.

Hüseyin Avni Başmanwas, fully satisfied with determination and dynamism in the creation of the new Republic of Turkey, led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, later called “Ata-Türk” (Father of the Turks) -Atatürk. In particular, he supported the political and social reforms, limiting the activity of religious organizations, the introduction of new European letters - Latin alphabet, calendar reform, language and spelling. Western orientation suited him because he knew the literature, culture and the various scientific disciplines in many countries of Europe and America. Apart from this, he saw a strong possibility of a radical reform of the system of education and, in particular, the school system at all levels.

Hüseyin Avni Başmanhas, in two terms, for almost eight years (1926-1928. And 1929-1933), dealt with reforming the organization of the education system of the Republic of Turkey. First, he actively participated on John Dewey’s team, and later in the most competent committee of the Ministry of Education. With his views and proposals he made a rather big contribution to the creation of structures of the newly-reformed National Education System of the Republic of Turkey. He became famous to the overall cultural and educational public of the Republic of Turkey. During this period, he translated the third book of John Dewey: *Democracy and Education* (1928, Ministry of Education, State Printing House, Istanbul, last Basman book on the old Ottoman script)⁸. In the preface to this work, Basman generally presented Deweyovu philosophy and his view on which the Turkish education system should be based. “The education should be seen as a social thing - no educational issue is not unrelated to the society” (Doc. Dr. Levent Bayraktar, by: Erdogan, O., 2015: 32).

John Dewey appraised the reforms in education system of Turkey which were, in those years, carried out under the leadership of President of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, as a „miracle“ and added: „Turkey, as a developing country, has set the standard policy for the development of mass education“ (Wolf, Gaza, Journal of American Studies of Turkey, of the Yearbook for 1966, according to Erdogan, O., 2015: 33).

8 The book by John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* was translated into Turkish by M. Salih Otaran: Dewey, J., (1996) *Demokrasi ve eğitim* (çev. M. Salih Otaran). İstanbul: Başarı Yayıncılık.

At the conclusion of his report on the stay and work in Turkey, which was published in the United States, Dewey said that Atatürk reduced illiteracy rate to 90%. Furthermore, in 1920, he reduced it to 40% in short period of 6-10 months. He also said that the education reform went step by step, which led to the „United Education“, „Reform of the letter“ and „Adult Education“. He also added that this is the entire educational verve spawned „enlightenment Anatolia“, which is of greater importance than the French Revolution of 1789 (Ibid. The last part of the report: J. Dewey in connection with the „Education of Turkey“).

The success of the reform of the education and the school system provided an opportunity for Hussein A. Basman to express himself in politics. His guidelines were completely clear, because he closely monitored in all the measures undertaken by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In educational terms, he continued the mission with Dewey. Upon completion of the Committee's work on education reform, Basman was appointed secretary of Chairman of the Committee on Reform of the University, in 1933.

During this period, after the successful completion of the reform of universities, Basman was sent on a study trip to perform educational mission in Berlin, and soon after that, Paris.

After the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1938), Basman did not at all leave the course of his activity. Since 1939, Basman has exercised the office of the Inspector General at the Ministry of Education, and has worked as editor of the Encyclopedia of Islam together with Adnan Adıvar. At the same time, he was actively involved in writing articles for numerous newspapers and magazines, trying to influence the masses and make sure that the idea of a new state and a new order get through to every resident in Turkey.

A brief period, after 1948, Basman found himself at the head Academy of Fine Arts. Then, like John Dewey, he had several trips to France, Germany, the Soviet Union and Denmark. From these trips, as well as his stays in Berlin and Paris, Basman has brought new experiences which he tried to incorporate into his country, particularly their most effective systems of education (According to Dewey, J. (2012).

The Democratic Party has expressed growing interest in including this high intellectual in its ranks. However, he stood aside narrow party affil-

iation, even if the idea of democracy was familiar to him. On the contrary, all his texts radiated ideas of democracy and the possibilities of its full realization. As a result, in 1950, the Democratic Party elected him as independent deputy in elective bodies in the city of Izmir. Thus, Huseyin Avni Basman „in a big way“, entered the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Prime Minister Adnan Menderes⁹ appointed Hussein Avni Basman as Minister of Education in the first session of the Government. The big events that have marked the history of the Republic of Turkey in the period of this government had a strong impact on Basman. He increasingly wanted to distance himself from politics. He held the last high office in the founding assembly, which was formed in 1961. Basman entered this office as a member of the Committee of National Council, so he had a significant role in the preparation of the Constitution of 1961.

During his work as a teacher, deputy principal of the school, *especially* during his work in the Ministry of Education, Huseyin Avni Basman almost without interruption published works: translations, papers, articles ... These were the texts that dealt with education, culture, science, Islamic traditions and politics. The attention of a wide readership was attracted by his translations of verses from the Koran, because they were written in truly clean Turkish. Hüseyin A. Başmanis author of several books in Turkish and English.

Hüseyin Avni Başman lost his wife Umm Gülüm hanum in 1963. After two years, he died on 19 March 1965 at the age of 78 and was buried in the cemetery modern Istanbul “Zincirlikuyu Asri Mezarlığı” (Erdoğan, O., 2015: 299). In his honor, in Uskudar (Istanbul), an elementary school is named, “Huseyin Avni - İlköğretim Okulu” (ibid, 299).

Analysis of certain works by Hüseyin Avni Başman

Within the text “Youth organization” (the text is published in the *Hayat* journal, edition 1-2, in

⁹ Adnan Menderes was democratically elected as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey in 1950. He distinguished himself in his work and was very successful in many areas of government activity. However, in the military coup in 1960, he was overthrown and executed by hanging, after a hasty trial.

December 1926, pages 17 and 18), Başman highlights the ingenuity of those intellects, which were most often, lonely or/and persecuted, because their visionary ideas were in contrast to already accepted sociable patterns. However, it was confirmed that they were not selfish, thus committing all their hard work to social milieu and even humanity as a whole. In that group he included: Buddha, Moses, Socrates, Muhammed, Giordano Bruno, Galileo Galilei, Christopher Columbus, Nicolaus Copernicus, Jan Hus, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk etc. In contradiction to those people stand those who cannot consider themselves a part of the society. They want power and even supremacy doing various “devil” actions, by any means necessary. According to Başman, that group of people consists of “the one who burned down the Temple of Artemis¹⁰ (also called Temple of Diana). Further, with regards to Turkish history, in that group he included the most explicit examples like “Ottoman Sultans who arrived after Bayezid I. People of that caliber are those who love no one except himself or herself, who only think as individuals and who don’t measure value of ideas with the scale of society; their conscious is agitated. The highest degree of this state is dementedness and men separated from the society usually belong to this group. The more people in this group exist in society, the more society’s structure weakens. The counterparts of that group are those individuals in the strongest societies who are in conformity with the society and are united with it. That’s the first token of educational significance. The more society provides sociable and functional education to the youngsters (starting very early), the more they can rely on their future.” (Erdogan, O 2015:37).

Family and school are noteworthy factors while preparing young people for active life in society. “For that kind of education, classes in school and discipline rules are inadequate. Without a doubt, young people need to be prepared for the future, however apart from that; there is a social significance and a role of the current part of life. If ignored, youth will only be supplied with theories, and the thing they need isn’t plain information, but

life experience and dynamic knowledge as well. Subsequently, schools in democratic countries, that don’t wish to create the group of “lonely people”, guide their students to acquire social life.” (Erdogan, O 2015: 37).

The concept that is an efficient utility of adapting an individual within the society is not coercion to the unchangeable social pattern, but a harmony of an individual and society’s direction and that is unification. There isn’t any necessity for people of shallow understanding and molded spirits who constituted Turkish society for centuries. New generations will mature within national spirit and different life circumstances, and they will pour their life energy into this great nation (“Two types of people” - all further statements are according to Erdogan, 2015, a text published in the journal *Life*, number 4, 23rd April, 1926, page 8).

Başman used each and every opportunity to point out certain models of working, and especially moral bringing up. One of those texts is “Little work – big words” (Erdogan O 2015 - the text published in *Hayat* journal, number 9, 27th January, 1927, page 1), where he consistently and with high principle called attention that there aren’t “small” tasks. Accuracy and exactness while executing small-scale tasks and obligations lead to “great, distinguished results”.

Başman was an eminent soldier for language clarity preservation. His text “Our language, our greeting” (Erdogan O 2015, the text published in the *Hayat* journal, number 11, 10th February, 1927, page 1), could even be applied today to the Bosnian people milieu, and also to the people of their surroundings: “We truly behave badly to the language of our nation. We use foreign, unsuitable words, both in writing and speaking, with an utmost insignificance and that one’s blood freezes. Ninety percent of foreign words that are forcefully inserted into our language for the last few years have no use except of jabbering.

What would one language analyst write about the usage of foreign words in Bosnian language? Başman gave numerous examples of learning French phrases and other languages, like English, or maladjusted usage of international expressions of Latin origin. Our Bosnian language has been attacked in the full sense of the word. Apart from the endeavors of some “streams” to return the ter-

¹⁰ According to the legend, Herostrat madly wanted to have his name written in history by any means, and thus in 356 B.C, he burned down the biggest temple in the world.

minology used in the Ottoman period, trend of the usage of English expressions is so great, that soon, Bosnian language will become a distorted dialect of English language.

Başman advocated that Turkish people talk in Turkish, to greet one another in Turkish and to use Turkish terms in all areas of living.

“...We need people who are not getting bored. One of the reasons for the West’s superiority in different areas of life areas is because-they have more people of their own kind...We have to approximate this issue’s significance to new generations in education. Many habits, that can be applied as a cure for boredom, could be acquired in youth, only that cure costs a lot, both the nerves and the body and its effect is questionable” (“People who are not bored”, the text published in *Hayat* journal, number 13, 24th February, 1927, page 1).

Başman wanted to broaden the concept of patriotism to philanthropy. His thoughts about that phenomena of human morality, expressed in the text “To the people” (the text is published in *Hayat* journal, number 25, 19th May, 1927, page 1), were substantiated with the text of American poet James Russell Lowell¹¹ in the song “Homeland” - “Where’er a human heart doth wear Joy’s myrtle-wreath or sorrow’s gyves, Where’er a human spirit strives after a life more true and fair, There is the true man’s birthplace grand, His is a world-wide fatherland” His discussion about this aspect of moral upbringing and education, Başman wraps up with a message: “Youth, direct yourself to the people and for the people.”

Başman, with equal passion, frequently returned to the problem of moral upbringing, as well as to the problem of preserving the native language. The collection of texts dealing with this issue include: “Entity for measuring moral” (the text published in *Hayat* journal, number 66, 1st March, 1928, page 13), “How I taught a foreigner Turkish language in a month” (the text published in the journal *Tan*, 17th January, 1941), “About language culture and grammar” (the text published in the journal *Tan*, 29th January, 1941), “High school in a foreign language - I” (the text published in a journal *Akis*, number 29, 27th November, 1954, pages

11-12), “High school in a foreign language - II” (the text published in a journal *Akis*, number 30, 4th December, 1954, page 14-15), “Enquiring for language issues” (the text published in the journal *Akis*, number 53, 14th May, 1955, page 24-25), “Discipline of progress and moral” (the text published in the journal *Akis*, number 55, 28th May, 1955, pages 6-7) etc.

Observing the life path and pedagogic work of Hüseyin Avni Başman, we got acquainted with the ways of school reforming in newly formed Republic of Turkey, as well as history of coming into existence and development of Istanbul University (Look up: “How old is Istanbul University?”, Erdogan, O 2015: 249-252).

In almost all articles, implicitly or at least tangentially, Başman coped with education. In satirical and political articles, many educational messages appear. Moreover, in translations from foreign languages, texts are chosen with highlighted educational notes- even when he chose verses from Qur’an, he always determined for those referring to the rightful education.

Many political parties desired a writer, a reformer, a bearer of immense ideas, Hüseyin Avni Başman. Those pretensions, after forming the Government of Adnan Menderes, were especially expressed by Democratic Party. Başman couldn’t reconcile with writing “eulogies” for any party whatsoever. He just couldn’t, as he pointed out himself...”to write for something white to be black or for something black to be white”. That was the reason he quit writing for the journal *Akis*.

The last years of his life, he spent writing for “his own pleasure”. That’s how his poems arose, many of which he never published.

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¹¹ James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) was an American romantic poet, critic, editor and a diplomat (prim S.K.)

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