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## **OMER LUTFI PASHA IN BOSNIA**

**Apstrakt:** Omer Lutfi-paša rođen je 1806. godine u Janja Gori u Hrvatskoj. Njegovi su roditelji bili pravoslavni kršćani. Međutim, prešao je na islam kada je pobjegao u Bosnu. Nakon toga pridružio se osmanskoj vojsci. Omer Lutfi-paša razbio je nekoliko pobuna i bio zapovjednik mnogih ratova diljem Osmanskog carstva. Bio je zapovjednik u Libanonu (1842.), Albaniji (1843.), Kurdistanu (1846.), Bosni (1850.), Crnoj Gori (1852. i 1862.), Olteniti (1853.), Slistri i Bukureštu (1854.), Krimu (1855.) i Bagdadu (1857-1859). Ovaj članak razmatra podatke iz dokumenata Osmanskog arhiva koji se odnose na njegove aktivnosti u Bosni i Hercegovini. Osobito ćemo se osvrnuti na aktivnosti Omer-paše - na reforme, jer je poznato da je slomio otpor osmanskim reformama u Bosni.

**Ključne riječi:** Omer Lutfi-paša Latas, Bosna, Osmansko carstvo, reforme

**Abstract:** Omer Lutfi Pasha was born in 1806 in Janja Gora in Croatia. His parents were Orthodox Christians. However, he converted to Islam when he fled to Bosnia. After then he joined the Ottoman army. Omer Lutfi Pasha crushed several rebellions and was a commander of many wars throughout the Ottoman Empire. He was commander in Lebanon (1842), Albania (1843), Kurdistan (1846), Bosnia (1850), Montenegro (1852 and 1862), Oltenita (1853), Slistra and Bucharest (1854), Crimea (1855) and Baghdad (1857-1859). This article examines the data from the Ottoman Archives documents related to his activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, we will refer to the activities of Omer Pasha on reforms, as it is known that he crushed the resistance in Bosnia to the Ottoman reforms.

**Keywords:** Omer Lutfi Pasha Latas, Bosnia, Ottoman Empire, reforms

## Omer Lutfi Pasha's Life

Omer Lutfi Pasha was born in 1806 in Janja Gora village in Croatia. His mother was Polish, while his father was of Serbian origin. His real name was Michel Lattas. Michel Lattas finished his primary education while shepherding. During his primary education, his ability in mathematics and art attracted his teachers' attention and for this reason they sent Lattas to the military academy in Zadar.<sup>1</sup>

The arrestment of his father, who was a quartermaster sergeant, under the accusation of bribery was an important milestone in Lattas's life. He was convinced that he could not advance in Austrian army under these circumstances and he took refuge in the Ottoman Empire by escaping in 1826.<sup>2</sup> He began to work as an animal caretaker with Filipovic family in Glamoc. Lattas went to Banjaluka and started to work for Ali Aga Bojic. In the meanwhile, he began to learn Ottoman Turkish. He became as Muslim with the influence of Ali Aga and got the name Omer. With the reference of Banjaluka commander, he began to teach Vidin's Pasha's children art and mathematics. Here, he attracted the attention of Vidin's Pasha and with his reference he was assigned to the newly opened military school as a teacher with the rank of lieutenant.<sup>3</sup>

Omer Lutfi, who succeeded in attracting the attention of Sultan Mahmud II, taught sultan's son Abdulmecid and subsequently worked as *Serasker*<sup>4</sup> district governor and translator. As a result of the regulations in the army in 1843, he was suspended from the army.<sup>5</sup>

He was reassigned by Sultan Abdulmecid with a rank of Colonel and sent to Walachia and Moldovia.<sup>6</sup> Soon after, he was assigned in reforming Albania, Kurdistan, Syria and Egypt.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Mirgöl Eren Giffe, *Osmanlı Hizmetkarı Galip Ali Paşa Rızvanbegovic-Stocevic*, Babil Yayınları, Ankara, 2005, 114.

<sup>2</sup> "Serdâr-ı Ekrem Merhûm Ömer Lütfi Paşa'nın Terceme-i Hâlî", *Basiret Gazetesi*, Year 1288, 15.

<sup>3</sup> H. Mirgöl Eren Giffe, *ibid*, 114.

<sup>4</sup> Supreme commander

<sup>5</sup> Abdullah Saydam, "Ömer Lütfi Paşa (1806-1871)", *TDVİA*, 75.

<sup>6</sup> A. Saydam, "ibid", *TDVİA*, 75.

<sup>7</sup> H. Mirgöl Eren Giffe, *ibid.*, 115.

In 1848, he became the Marshall of Rumelian army. He was assigned to suppress the riot in Bosnia and he came to Bosnia in 1850 and started working.<sup>8</sup> He joined the Crimean War which started at the end of 1853 and became the Crimean Chief Commander in 1854.

In 1857, he was assigned as the commander of Iraqi and Hejaz armies and as Baghdad governor. With Sultan Abdllaziz becoming the emperor, he became Rumelia Marshall again. Later, he was assigned as *Serasker* district governor. In 1865, he became the commander of armies in Rumelia and he became Cretan Chief Commander in 1867 His success against the guerrilla tactic in wars with Montenegro was influential in Omer Lutfi Pasha's being assigned in suppressing the riot in Crete.<sup>9</sup> He became Seraskier district governor for the second time in substitution for *Serasker* Namık Pasha. In 1869, he became Hass Marshall and this was his last assignment.

He died in Istanbul Eyup on 18 April, 1871 and was buried in Eyup Sultan imaret garden.<sup>10</sup>

## Omer Lutfi Pasha's Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Omer Lutfi Pasha escaped from Austria in 1826 and came to Ottoman land in Bosnia as a refugee. After 23 years he was sent to Bosnian land in which he was once a refugee by the emperor to conduct reforms. As in other places, Omer Lutfi Pasha attracted attention in Bosnian land with his cruelty. He caused the massacre of a great number of Bosnians irrespective of religion and with this aspect he took his place in Bosnian history.<sup>11</sup> Omer Lutfi Pasha's thoughts about Bosnians and his hatred for them caused him to suppress the riots in a blood way and his punishments to be severe. He expressed his hatred for Bosnians in his writing to an Ottoman guard in Belgrade as follows: "Give my regards to my

<sup>8</sup> Zafer Gölen, *Tanzimat Dönemi Bosna İsyancıları (1839-1878)*, Alter Yayınları, Ankara, 2009, p.88; Z. Gölen, "1852-1853 Karadağ askeri Harekatı ve Sonuçları", *History Studies*, Vol: 1/1, 2009, 222.

<sup>9</sup> A. Saydam, "ibid", *TDVİA*, 76.

<sup>10</sup> *Basiret Gazetesi*, Year 1288, 18.

<sup>11</sup> H. Mirgül Eren Giffe, *ibid*, 115.

dear friend Hafız Pasha and tell him to avoid eating fish kept at Sava for a while because the fish are fed with the Bosnian flesh I spilled in the river in Doboj." Omer Lutfi Pasha believed that it was a must to hit the heads of Bosnians to have them do something.<sup>12</sup>

Pasha, who was never accepted by Bosnians and whose atrocity was not forgotten, tried to hide what he did from Sultan Abdulaziz, but he wasn't successful. With the warnings of Hayrettin Pasha, whose post in Bosnia ended, Omer Lutfi Pasha was relieved of duty. However, the destruction that occurred in Bosnia as a result of his practices caused a damage which was impossible to heal and prepared the end of Ottoman sovereignty in Bosnia.<sup>13</sup> It can be said that Omer Lutfi Pasha's harsh attitude was effective in the expansion of a small riot that started in 1849.<sup>14</sup>

The supporters of Omer Lutfi Pasha, who was not supported at all by Bosnians, were Muratd troop consisting of Jews, Serbians and Armenians, masters of Montenegrin Knez Bogdan Zimonjic, Austrian embassy in Cetnikler and Travnik and the ambassadors of 5 countries in İstanbul. Thus, Pasha, who did not get support from Bosnians and who oppressed the people regardless of their religion, targeted Herzegovina vizier Ali Pasha Rizvanbegovic because Rizvanbegovic was both strong and supported by the people. In addition, Ali Pasha was in very good terms with Montenegrin Prince Petar II. The local people who were fed up with Omer Lutfi Pasha's oppression broke out riots all the time. Omer Lutfi Pasha wanted to be the sole leader in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For this reason, he wanted to get rid of Ali Pasha Rizvanbegovic and therefore wanted the support of Knez Bogdan, however, could not succeed since he was not supported by the people.<sup>15</sup>

Omer Lutfi Pasha is known in the Bosnian history as the cruelest ruler. He showed his cruelty to people by having many workers killed while entering Visegrad gateway and proceeding to Sarajevo. These roads were very damaged and dangerous at the same time. As was the tradition, Omer Lutfi Pasha settled

<sup>12</sup> Z. Gölen, *Tanzimat Dönemi*, 48.

<sup>13</sup> H. Mirgül Eren Giffe, *ibid*, 115-116.

<sup>14</sup> *Vak'a-nüvis Ahmed Lütfi Efendi Tarihi*, C. IX, p.42; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezakir* 13-20, 48.

<sup>15</sup> H. Mirgül Eren Giffe, *ibid*, 116.

in a public building on Gorica hill in Sarajevo. It is a known fact that he threatened his servant for tripping while serving the proprietors who were invited to his mansion or that he massacred the people in places he passed with Murtag troop for no reason. When he first arrived in Bosnia, he forced Mujaga Teleagic and 4 aristocrats from Sarajevo who did not think like him to immigrate to Anatolia and to leave their confiscated their property by fettering them.<sup>16</sup>

Another family influenced by the oppression of Lattas Pasha in the first days was Cengic. Lattas Pasha settled in Cengic mansion and tried to intimidate the people of Sarajevo. Although Cengic mansion had architecture Sarajevo people were proud of, Lattas Pasha placed soldiers here and forbid the people from approaching this place for two years.<sup>17</sup> This at the same time meant the province center to move from Travnik to Sarajevo. After Sarajevo became the center, Omer Lutfi Pasha who constituted a temporary state assembly and called for the people not to oppose Tanzimat.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, although he tried to collect taxes directly instead of farming contracts, he couldn't succeed.<sup>19</sup>

Later, Omer Lutfi Pasha went to Pusovina region, which was the origin of uneasiness and listened to people. He dismissed the deputies they did not want and they were uncomfortable with and dismissed some of the managers. Following these developments, the people of Prijedor stated that they would comply with the rules of Tanzimat. The people of Tuzla thanked Omer Lutfi Pasha who went to Tuzla later. However, it was understood later that the people of Prijedor and Tuzla behaved like this since they were afraid of the soldiers with Pasha<sup>20</sup> because riots started in Tuzla on 5 October 1850, in Mostar on 16 October 1850, and in Zvornik on 22 October 1850.<sup>21</sup>

The only name Lattas Pasha refrained from in this region was Ali Pasha Rizvanbegovic who had a special place in the Ottoman Empire. Omer Lutfi Pasha, who thought Ali Pasha was an obstacle for him to reach his goals in Bosnia tried to discredit Ali Pasha before Ottoman Empire. He started riots

<sup>16</sup> H. Mirgöl Eren Giffe, *ibid*, 118.

<sup>17</sup> H. Mirgöl Eren Giffe, *ibid*, 119.

<sup>18</sup> Z. Gölen, *Tanzimat Dönemi*, 90.

<sup>19</sup> A. Saydam, "ibid", *TDVİA*, 76.

<sup>20</sup> Z. Gölen, *Tanzimat Dönemi*, 90.

<sup>21</sup> Z. Gölen, *Tanzimat Dönemi*, 91.

in Montenegro and Herzegovina and reported to İstanbul that the riots were supported by Ali Pasha.<sup>22</sup>

Omer Lutfi Pasha left Bosnia and Herzegovina by leaving them to the mercy of Austrians he cooperated with for two years to disrupt the unity. Lattas Pasha who left Sarajevo was assigned as Serdar-ı Ekrem in 1852 Ottoman-Russia war<sup>23</sup>, and was assigned as Chief Commander in 1854 Crimean War. He was dismissed with the reason that he was late in defending Kars Castle, became Iraqi and Hejaz commander in 1857 and was assigned as Baghdad governor.

He was dismissed again in 1859<sup>24</sup> and with the crowning of Abdulaziz in 1861, he was assigned as Rumelian General Commander in 1861 and became Bosnia-Herzegovina supervisor. In 1862, he entered Cettinje with an army of 50 thousand and suppressed the Montenegrin riot.<sup>25</sup> During this time, he did not refrain from oppressing Muslim Bosnians.<sup>26</sup>

## Summary

Omer Lutfi Pasha was assigned to suppress the riot in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Ottoman Empire, years later (1850), after going there as a refugee in 1826. Although the primary reason for the riot in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the result of the reactions to Tanzimat, the fact that Omer Lutfi Pasha resorted to violence to suppress the riot resulted in the spread of what started as a small riot to a large area in a short time. As a result of a Bosnian enmity the reason of which we do not know, Omer Lutfi Pasha performed serious massacres in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Omer Lutfi Pasha's resorting to violence at the same time caused Bosnia and Herzegovina to leave the Ottoman sovereignty.

<sup>22</sup> H. Mirgöl Eren Giffe, *ibid*, 120.

<sup>23</sup> M. Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, C. IV, 323.

<sup>24</sup> *Basiret Gazetesi*, Year 1288, 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Basiret Gazetesi*, Year 1288, 16-17; Mehmed Süreyya, *ibid*, C. IV, 323.

<sup>26</sup> H. Mirgöl Eren Giffe, *ibid*, 121.

## OMER LUTFI-PAŠA U BOSNI

### Zaključak

Omer Lutfi-paša bio je zadužen za suzbijanje nereda u Bosni i Hercegovini od strane Osmanskog carstva, godinama kasnije (1850.), nakon što je tamo otišao kao izbjeglica 1826. godine. Iako je glavni razlog za nered u Bosni i Hercegovini bio rezultat reakcija na Tanzimat, činjenica da je Omer Lutfi-paša pribjegao nasilju kako bi potisnuo nered, rezultiralo je širenjem onoga što je počelo kao mala pobuna, na veliko područje u kratko vrijeme. Kao rezultat bosanskog neprijateljstva čiji razlog ne znamo, Omer Lutfi-paša izvršio je ozbiljna pogubljenja u Bosni i Hercegovini. Pribjegavanje Omer Lutfi-paše nasilju istodobno je dovelo do toga da je Bosna i Hercegovina napustila osmanski suverenitet.



Serdâr-i Ekrem Omer Pasha in 1861.

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# **4**

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