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## THE TRIALS OF BOSNIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE DURING THE TANZIMAT PERIOD

### *Tanzimat Dönemi'nde Boşnakların Osmanlı Devleti'yle İmtihanı*

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**Abstract:** This article examines the disputes that emerged between the Ottoman Empire and the Bosnian Muslims in the Tanzimat period and presents that the disputes were caused by the loss of special status enjoyed by the Bosnian Muslims in general and Bosnian landlords in particular. Ottoman efforts to strengthen the central authority through Tanzimat reforms weakened the local landlords and paved the road toward losing Muslim control in Bosnia.

**Key Words:** Tanzimat Period, Bosnian history, Bosnians, Ottoman Empire

**Özet:** Bu çalışma Tanzimat Dönemi'nde Osmanlı Devleti ile Bosna Müslümanları arasında baş gösteren anlaşmazlıkları inceleyerek bu anlaşmazlıkların ana sebebinin özelde Bosnalı ayanların genelde Müslümanların özel statülerini kaybetmeleri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tanzimat reformları yoluyla merkezî yönetimi güçlendirme çabası ile bölgede hâkim olan ayanların gücünü azaltması bölgede Müslüman hâkimiyetinin kaybedilmesine giden süreci hazırlanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tanzimat Dönemi, Bosna tarihi, Boşnaklar, Osmanlı Devleti

### Introduction

Today, a person examining any visual material regarding the nineteenth-century Bosnian social structure sees a haughty man sipping his coffee and smoking his long pipe sitting on a cushion in some corner and another man trying to respectfully tell him or pay him something. This portrait, at first glance, is nothing but a concrete status of stereotypical orientalist image but it also contains some facts. It is obvious that there are two parties in the portrait. Who are they? Where does the state stand between these two groups?

A casual reader observes that the state and the local people in Bosnia are in constant conflict. A more curious reader can furthermore contemplate over the fact that the Bosnians are Muslims and the reasons why they are in conflict with the state. However the latter reader may have difficulties in understanding the overall picture. A more in depth research reveals that several religion-based groups inhabit Bosnia and the Muslims, in other words Bosnians, are the ones at the top of social structure having most of the privileges. Now the picture is slowly illuminated. The man sitting on the cushions is the Muslim squire and the man trying to pay him is the non-Muslim farmer, named *kmet*, working in his fields. Judging by the expression on the squire's face, he is understood to be reckless and self-indulgent.<sup>1</sup> At this point, one should start questioning. What disturbed the Muslims who were already on top of the pyramid having such power and glory, so that they chose weapons instead of comfort and peace? Or what did the

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<sup>1</sup> Georgina Mary Muir Mackenzie-Adeline Paulina Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*, Bell end Daldy, London 1867, p. 350.

state do so that they defied the state in expense of their lives? Or why did the state respond so harshly? What has changed? The answers to these questions are not some scenes from a movie like “*The Last Samurai*”<sup>2</sup> but the truth itself. This paper explains the causes and course of events leading to the disturbances in Bosnia between 1839 and 1856.

### Lose the Head Rather Than a Stone?

When did the conflict begin? The roots of the conflict go back to the middle of eighteenth century. Up until this date, the Bosnians were the most reputable subjects for their Ottoman rulers. After Bosnia Governor Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha decisively defeated Austria at nearby Banja Luka in 1737 during the 1736-39 Ottoman-Austria War, the reputability of the Bosniaks rose to the highest levels.<sup>3</sup> However, the long-lasting war environment led to chaos by breaking public in Bosnia order and taxes were increased. The Muslims protesting this situation launched a major rebellion in 1747 which took a decade to suppress. The rebellion continuing between 1747 and 1757 has changed the attitude of the headquarters towards the region.<sup>4</sup> Bosniaks were approached with suspicion. The failure to obtain desired degree of support from Bosnia during 1768-1774 Ottoman-Russia War reinforced this idea. It is possible to observe the initial traces of the negative thoughts in the following dates. When Venice was shared by Austria and France with Campo Formio Treaty in 1797, the Ottoman foreign affairs was alarmed thinking that Bosnia was at stake. Reisülküttap<sup>5</sup> Raşid Efendi makes this very grave accusation about the attitude of Bosnians in case of an attack from Austrian Emperor:<sup>6</sup>

*The residents of Bosnia are quiet and Muslim people. However since they are neighbors with Austria, they share the same traditions. And furthermore, because the Bosnians feel themselves surrounded by Austrians, if the Austrian Emperor promises to grant them some privileges, the Bosnian people, with the excuse of not wanting to leave their home and children, would take sides with Austria in case of a war, not preferring to lose the head rather than a stone as they used to do.”*

Though, Raşid says “This is what Austrians think not what I tell”. In fact, during these times Bosnians were focused on disposing the threat one way or another. But no matter what, the words explicitly revealed the changing image of Bosniaks in Istanbul. As voiced by Raşid, the Bosnians may not have been the loyal subjects of the state running from battle to battle anymore.<sup>7</sup> The only issue Raşid was right about was the unwillingness of Bosniaks to perform military service outside their borders. They had serious concerns about who would protect their wives and children in case they left their country. The country was open to Austrian attacks since 1699 and during the 1790s an unanticipated Montenegro danger had emerged. The Serbians were added to this threat list during the 1800s. These last two elements had committed themselves in a brutal war against Muslims.

The Kuchuk Kaynardza Treaty of 1774 between the Ottoman and Russian empires changed the worldview of Bosniaks. Once Muslim-dominated Crimea was lost to Russia, the

<sup>2</sup> The Last Samurai is a movie about the problems caused by the change in military and administrative system in Japan in an attempt to modernization as was the case in the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century. The film is directed by Edward Zwick in 2003 with leading actors Tom Cruise, Ken Watanabe and Shin Koyamada. [http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son\\_Samuray](http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_Samuray) (Last accessed: 5 October 2015)

<sup>3</sup> Bosnavî Omer Efendi, *Ahvâl-i Gazavât-ı Der-diyâr-ı Bosna Tarihi*, İstanbul 1154.

<sup>4</sup> Avdo Suçeska, “Bosna Eyaletinde Tekalif-i Şakka”, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Issue: 12, İstanbul 1982, p. 761.

<sup>5</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>6</sup> “Reisülküttap Raşid Efendi’nin Mora’ya Dair Kaleme Aldığı Layihanın Suretidir”, 2 Receb 1212/21 December 1797, *Sultan Selim-i Sâlis Devrine Aid Muhâberât-ı Siyâsiyye*, İstanbul University Library Turkish Manuscript number: 886, vr. 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> 1.553 Bosnian spahis participated in Prut War against Peter the Great. See, Barbara Jelavich, *History of The Balkans*, Volume: I, Cambridge, New York 1999, p. 88; Hakan Yıldız, *Haydi Osmanlı Seferi! Prut Seferinde Organizasyon ve Lojistik*, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul 2006, p. 39, 128, 152. During 1723–1727 Ottoman-Persian War 5.200 Bosnian participated, only 500 of whom were able to return back. See, Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Volume: I, p. 90.

Bosniaks began to believe that it was their turn. During the following hundred years, it is possible to see the traces of this concern in every step of Bosniaks. Believing that they could not live under the rule of an “*Infidel*” country, they tried to maintain the status quo via deep conservatism.<sup>8</sup> This was more important for them than “*living*”. The consecutive wars during the eighteenth century and the Ottoman Empire’s continuous loss of lands further fueled the fears of the Bosniaks.<sup>9</sup> Rumors, most of which were the products of Cold War, were striking both as a reflection of truth and as agents deteriorating their spirits. For example, in 1783 the rumor that Russia has offered to give Bosnia and Serbia to Austria in exchange for Crimea and Ozi was spread.<sup>10</sup> In 1784, Austrian Emperor Josef II has explicitly wanted some strongholds in the Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina borders. In August, the Austrian papers have even published that Ottomans were considering these wishes. It is not difficult to guess the impact of this news in Bosnia.<sup>11</sup>

### At the Dawn of the Tanzimat

The reforms deepened the worries in Bosnia, since there was likelihood that they would lose their privileges in “*the precious of the universe*” at the end. Even during the conquest the local people were treated with privileges. The old feudal privileges were preserved along with Islamization. Therefore, the Bosnians considered the concessions as a gift for Islamization, moreover they have identified these with Islam. By the nineteenth century, dealing with concessions almost meant dealing with Islam. They were initially granted the privilege of conserving their former lands. They were also exempt from many taxes in exchange of military service. In short, all kinds of power and prosperity were in favor of the Muslims. Due to the wars of eighteenth century, the janissaries and spahi<sup>12</sup> were added to this group. Many janissaries and sipahi of the lost territories were employed in Bosnia. These people, contrary to expectations, were welcomed by the public, most of them settling as the grooms of local squires and landowners. In particular the janissaries, as in other parts of the state, have monopolized dozens of businesses especially coffeehouses. They have infiltrated the Muslim community as artisans or craftsmen and became one of them. Sarajevo became a city of janissaries. French writer Fossés, who has made a journey to Bosnia during 1807-1808, writes that although 78,000 people were registered in the *Ocak (Quarter)*, 16,000 were actually performing their work, whereas others, being traders, artisans and craftsmen, were benefiting from the privileges of becoming janissary.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of this process, at the beginning of eighteenth century, the state had three main opposition groups; Muslims (trader, squire, captain, local bureaucracy, etc), janissaries and sipahi and all these groups were merged together. Therefore an action against any group triggered reaction in other groups, causing the state to fail in implementing any policy on these communities. This situation was also true for strong local dynasties.<sup>14</sup> These families with

<sup>8</sup> B.O.A., HAT, 26/1262-E, *Notizie Del Mondo Gazetesi*, 3 August 1784, nr: 62; pp. 526-527.

<sup>9</sup> They were right to be afraid. Because after second siege Vienna (1683) Austrian Commander-in-Chief Prince Eugene proceeded to unprotected Sarajevo and burned down the city together with its 120 mosques on 17 October 1697. In 1688, the mobs sent by Austria killed half of the people in Banja Luka in two days and destroyed the city. When Austrians retreated, a burned and ruined Bosnia was left behind. See, Zafer Gölen, “Osmanlı Yurdu Olan Bosna Hersek’te XIX. Yüzyıldaki Siyasî Olaylar”, *Belleten*, Volume: LXXIV, Issue: 270, Ankara 2010, pp. 423-425.

<sup>10</sup> B.O.A., HAT, 18/799, 29 Zilhicce 1197/25 November 1783.

<sup>11</sup> Evans thinks that the Bosnian conservatism is caused by being caught in the middle of “*infidels and others (İstanbul)*”. See, Arthur John Evans, *Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina on Foot during the Insurrection August and September 1875 with an Historical Review of Bosnia and A Glimpse at the Croats, Slavonians, and the Ancient Republic of Ragusa*, Longmans, Green, And Co., London 1876, p. 180.

<sup>12</sup> Cavalryman.

<sup>13</sup> M. Amédée Chaumette-des-Fossés, *Voyage en Bosnie Dans Les Années 1807 et 1808*, Paris 1822, p. 114.

<sup>14</sup> The most famous dynasty families in XIX. century were Kulenovic, Stoçevic, Rızvanbegovic, Fidahic, Dadic, Gavrankapetonovic, Gradasevic and Firdus.

origins dating back to middle ages<sup>15</sup> were relatives as well as rivals. For example, Ali Pasha Rızvanbegovic of Herzegovina, was married to the daughter of Ali Pasha from Tepelena, Refifa Hanım.<sup>16</sup>

When Bosnian Governor Silahtar Ali Pasha moved to connect Bosnia to the headquarters in 1813, the two parties have come to a definitive crossroads. After this date “we=state” and “them=Bosnians” emerged as two sides. The balance extending from the past was everything which could not be allowed to deteriorate. For example, even where the governor would reside was a serious problem. In fact, the first clash resulted from this issue. As soon as Pasha arrived in Bosnia, he declared that he would stay in Travnik for six months and another six months in Sarajevo. He did not stay in Sarajevo for three days and proceeded to central province Travnik, as was customary. Bosnian Muslim chiefs and captains have perceived this development as an attack against them and defied Ali Pasha. Thereupon, Pasha was forced to move his troops consisting of Albanian and Turks to Sarajevo. The opposition was silenced temporarily but the swords were not to rest in sheaths for long time.<sup>17</sup>

Low intensity conflicts became a hurricane after the removal of Janissary Ocak, Hearth, and did not subside until 1852. With Ahmet Cevat Eren’s words, “*Nowhere in the Empire, the hatred and opposition against the removal of Janissary Ocak and the establishment of new military organization was as harsh and permanent as in Bosnia.*”<sup>18</sup> The reaction was so harsh that in a month “*bandit of the Palace*” was mentioned in official records. After the rebellion, the former “*gallant warriors*” of Bosnia became associated with negative adjectives such as “*Bosnian people are rebellious and mischief*”<sup>19</sup> The chaos could not, in any way, be suppressed. The 1828-29 Ottoman-Russian War added to the current problems in Bosnia. The fact that some places would be abandoned to Serbia as a result of Edirne Treaty outraged Bosnian Muslims thoroughly. Eventually, Hüsein Gradascovic<sup>20</sup>, the Captain of Gradacac, who did not have an important position among other squires, began to emerge as the leader of the opposition. Mahmud Pasha from Zvornik, Mahmud Captain from Tuzla, Emin Beg, the deputy lieutenant-governor<sup>21</sup> of Sarajevo, and Memiş Agha, the deputy lieutenant-governor of Srebrenica formed a union lead by Hüsein Captain. This union wanted the withdrawal of janissaries in Bosnia to be demolished and the administration of Bosnia to be left to Bosnians. Initially the motion bore the marks of deep concerns about their future and was definitely not against the Ottoman rule. Forasmuch, the lands abandoned to Serbia and the stories full of blood and tears told by thousands of immigrants surviving the massacres in Greece showed them that the fears were not theoretical but real. When news was heard in Bosnia, they caused great panic and terror among the public. The extent of how they were horrified by the developments surrounding them and the need to do something can be clearly seen in their declaration. In this declaration they stated that Bosnia was surrounded by enemies in all sides, the Serbians were secretly setting Muslims against each other and they would try to invade Bosnia at the first imminent opportunity, the Christians in Bosnia could certainly not be relied therefore it was every Bosniak’s duty to respond to the enemy, it was not lawful that the Muslims would stay idle in such distressed times. Initially, Istanbul seemed to understand these concerns. Captain

<sup>15</sup> A reflection of this matter can be seen in the novel *Sevdalinka* by Ayşe Kulin. See, Ayşe Kulin, *Sevdalinka*, Remzi Kitabevi, 2nd edition İstanbul 1999, pp. 232-292.

<sup>16</sup> H. Mirgöl Eren Griffie, *Osmanlı'nın Hizmetkari. Galip Ali Paşa Rızvanbegovic-Stocevic*, Babil Yayın Dağıtım, Ankara 2005, pp. 156-157, 214.

<sup>17</sup> For detailed information see, Zafer Gölen, *Tanzimat Dönemi Bosna İsyancıları (1839-1878)*, Alter, Ankara 2009, pp. 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> Eren, *Bosna-Hersek*, pp. 71-74.

<sup>19</sup> B.O.A, *HAT*, 426/21862-J, 30 Zilkade 1241/17 July 1826.

<sup>20</sup> The Bosniaks living in Bosnia name him as the Dragon of Bosnia (*Dragon of Bosnia-Zmaj od Bosne*) and respect him endlessly. According to Bosniak historians he is the first founder of independent Bosnia. See, Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo. A Biography*, University of Michigan Press, 2006, p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Deputy lieutenant-governor, and local collector of taxes and tithes.

Hüsein was sent advisors and asked to stop his activities. But soon, the motion in Bosnia elevated to demanding autonomy. Predictably, Istanbul did not accept any item in this declaration. Thereupon the rebels resorted to force and on 22 May 1831 the period of armed conflict began.<sup>22</sup>

The attempt of Captain Hüsein was a stillborn child because reputable people like Ali Pasha Rızvanbegovic, Smail Cengic, Captain of Stolac, and Hasan Beg, the deputy lieutenant-governor of Lubin were opposing to Captain Hüsein as the leader of Bosnian captains. Moreover some captains believed that opposing the state would serve the purposes of Serb Knez Milos. Captain Hüsein initially won some success; he even defeated an Ottoman army under the command of Grand Vizier. However, he could not elude the ultimate end and was defeated repeatedly in the spring of 1832. What is more important than this rebellion is the loss of credibility of Bosniaks in the eyes of Istanbul and the Sultan because of the rebellion.<sup>23</sup> After the rebellion, the state granted a general amnesty trying to win the hearts of Bosniaks again.<sup>24</sup> But it is difficult to say that they got a response.

### Tanzimat Period (1839-1856)

When the public was informed about the Tanzimat, conflicts and mayhem was dominant in Bosnia. The parties may not even remember why they were in conflict; nonetheless, the conflict was in action for years. Mehmet Vecihi Pasha, the governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina during Tanzimat, was not in good standing with the Bosnian Muslims. Vecihi Pasha, who was assigned as the governor on 23 October 1835, managed the ordered recruitment business by force, in retaliation dozens of petitions were sent to Porte for his removal. However, Sultan Mahmud, having negative opinions about the Bosnian squires, ignored these petitions. Bosnian squires, upon failing to obtain the desired support from Istanbul, took action to take the Pasha down, but they failed and scattered. After the rebellion, first the manor distribution method was ended and then the captainship was removed. With this removal Bosnia was once more dragged into chaos.

When Tanzimat was announced, Vecihi Pasha was busy with the problems caused by the removal of captains. In this tense environment, even the mention of the Tanzimat word was enough to disrupt the morale of the Bosnians. Because the new edict was a candidate to claim everything they called “*mine*”. Equality in all aspects, which could be considered as the spirit of the edict, was not an approach that the Bosnians would accept. The document was quite a shock for the Muslims. Because all of the applications making them feel special in the eyes of the state up until then would be vanished and the concept of equality in all areas was emphasized. Opportunist “*Ocaklılar*” (Janisaries from the quarters) reentered the scene. Vecihi Pasha, who was present in the region for a long time, perceived the problem and immediately asked for help from the headquarters. Dilatoriness of Istanbul and the hesitant attitude of the Pasha caused the problem to grow further.

A slow but sneaky rebellion was planned and put into action in 1840. At first, both Muslims and non-Muslims sent dozens of petitions that they were being mistreated by the Pasha to Porte and Great Powers’ consulates. Then they have managed to open an investigation about the Pasha with the initiative of Austria. Afraid of the pressure on himself, Pasha could only watch the events and eventually a rebellion against the Tanzimat started. Ahmed Münib Efendi, the leader of the rebellion claimed to have been wronged in a land dispute with Cennetizâde Osman Beg. However, when the identities of the rebel leaders are considered, it is understood

<sup>22</sup> For detailed information on the issue see, Gölen, *Bosna İsyanları*, pp. 8-12.

<sup>23</sup> Fatma Sel Turhan has listed the negative expressions used about Bosniaks during the rebellion in detail. Even only this list is enough to explain the loss of credibility of Bosnian people in the eyes of the state. See, Fatma Sel Turhan, *Eski Düzen Adına. Osmanlı Bosna’sında İsyan (1826-1836)*, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul 2013, pp. 196-200.

<sup>24</sup> For detailed information on the issue see, Gölen, *Bosna İsyanları*, pp. 12-14.

that this rebellion, similar to other rebellions after 1826, was a showdown against the abolition of janissaries. As a matter of fact, with the statement “*members of the old Janissary Ocağ were working and talking together in order to initiate a rebellion in Bosnia Province*”, Vecihi Pasha tells that the rebellion against the Tanzimat is in fact a janissary setup.<sup>25</sup> Rebellion ringleaders such as Madenli İbrahim, Sahanizâde Mehmed Alemdar, İslinç Hacı Mustafa Bayraktar, Çizmeçi Kırkbeş Hacı Ahmed, Bakkal Tabutcu Mustafa, Kubizâde Terzi Hacı Abdullah, Demirci Kemerli Abdullah, Demirci Hacı Smail Ağa, Sancakdar Duhancı Gotik Mehmed, Bayraktar Terzi Osman, Mella Terzi Mehmed Alemdar, Malukanoğlu Bakkal Salih, Mevliçoğlu Gazaz Mehmed, Şeyhoğlu Celeb Uzun İbrahim, Bikadoğlu Kazancı Abdullah were members of old Janissary Ocağ. 15,000 rebels met with Pasha’s forces in Vitez near Travnik, however they could not succeed and dispersed. But the dispersion of the rebels did not bring peace. Most of the rebels, who were captured and deported out of Bosnia, were pardoned soon after and came back to Bosnia and started to prepare for a larger organization. Besides, the missives regarding the above mentioned names state that these people have previously engaged in many anti-government clashes. It may be regarded as quite strange to allow these people, who have repeatedly defied the state, to return their homes on humanitarian grounds.<sup>26</sup> However, this attitude is closely related with the style of Ottoman rule. Until the Tanzimat, the Ottoman rule has always assumed that the citizens are innocent and always sought the crime in bureaucracy. However, as it is seen, this approach has made the state to pay heavy prices, at least in Bosnia.

With the rebellion, an investigation about Vecihi Pasha was conducted and he was dismissed. However even this dismissal was not enough to calm the Bosniaks and the implementation of Tanzimat in Bosnia was postponed to a later date. Moreover, mischief foci have continued to provoke the public inciting their fears. During this process, it is difficult to argue that the Bosniak elite have understood the state that the government was in. Because with every rebellion, the Muslims have lost more power while Serbia, Montenegro, Austria (Croatia), which were looking for opportunities to grow, have gained power. They had difficulties understanding that the state forcibly accepted some applications as a result of international failures. Not only were they unable to comprehend the developments in time, but also they abused the innocent or ignorant masses because of small interests. For example, while Mustafa and Fazıl Pashas, the mütesellims of Gradçaniça, Derbend and Maglay, have spread false news such as “*Austria and Serbians will attack on the Tuzla neighbourhood*” causing the people to become armed, people such as Ahmet Beg, the mütesellim of Tesne, and his niece Emin Beg, Imam Hafız Ahmed, Sadıkoğlu Mullah Murad, Mullah Sadullah have stirred up trouble with gossip such as “*Four-hour distance beyond the Sava water will be released to Austrians*”. In fact, their main concerns were maintaining their privileges and eliminating their rivals using the public, rather than the concern over their nation and homeland.<sup>27</sup>

The main showdown during Tanzimat took place after 1847. In 1847 Mehmed Tahir Pasha was sent to Bosnia to implement Tanzimat. First and foremost, he met with the parties. When he was not able to soften the relations, he resorted to tough measures. However, reciprocal opposition has reached a critical stage. At the beginning of January of 1848, Bosnia Army Commander Brigadier Ali Pasha sent a report to the headquarters regarding his serious concerns about the future of Muslims. According to this report, Tahir Pasha has collected all the prominent people (*vüçûh-ı muteberân*), all qadis and muftis and insulted them saying “*I will expel all of you out of the province, you are all traitors, you cannot be trusted*”. As he puts, “*Entire population in the Bosnia province was ready for the rebellion waiting for the slightest gun burst. Nobody trusts anybody. Everybody is worried about his own circumstance in case of*

<sup>25</sup> B.O.A., *İ.M.V.L.*, 21/326, Lef: 51, 7 Safer 1257/31 March 1841.

<sup>26</sup> Zafer Gölen, “Bosna Valisi Mehmed Vecihi Paşa’nın Muhakemesi”, *Bellekten*, Volume: LXXVI, Issue: 277, Ankara 2012, pp. 864-875.

<sup>27</sup> Zafer Gölen, *Tanzîmât Dönemi Bosna Hersek*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2010, pp. 73-74.

a rebellion. The royal family is offended by the state's trade-related regulations and expects the rebellion to break any time", everybody was in expectation. The Muslims, on the other hand, were in deep worry thinking that "This governor will surrender us to people and grant autonomy to the Christians as in Serbia. God may marvel our end." Ali Pasha predicted a major rebellion to break as soon as the winter ends. But the Porte did not consider the report. According to them, the report was penned hastily due to Ali Pasha's ignorance of the provincial affairs. In fact, his observations fully reflected the mood of the Bosnians at the time. He was, in a sense, saying that "King is naked" Time would prove Ali Pasha was right.<sup>28</sup>

In such a tense environment, the government declared that Tanzimat will be implemented on 15 March 1849. In the order sent to Tahir Pasha regarding the subject, it is emphasized that the Tanzimat Edict had two concerns namely financial and people's rights, and although the financial issues could not be applied due to the critical situation in Bosnia, there was no reason not to implement the principle of equal rights in terms of the protection of life, property and honor. The Sultan, without Muslim and Christian discrimination, clearly stated "It is unthinkable to consider that my Muslim and Christian subjects in Bosnia would be deprived of the rights offered to all of my other subjects. The thought of the strong crushing the weak because the region is exempt from Tanzimat is unacceptable to me." at the beginning of the text.<sup>29</sup> How this phrase would be interpreted by Bosniak elite is quite clear. According to them, the sultan has equated them with non-Muslims, ignored Islam which should have been protected and moreover he has neglected them.

The personal concerns of influential Ali Rızvanbegovic, the Pasha of Herzegovina about his own future should be added to Bosniaks' worries about their future. Ali took sides with the state in the struggle against Hüsein Pasha in 1831 and was rewarded by a detached Herzegovina sanjak. He has made powerful friends in Istanbul in short time and ruled Herzegovina as he wished. In the public opinion, he represented the power of Ottomans, protection against Montenegro, peace and stability. He was both well-liked and feared. Ali Pasha knew that if the Tanzimat was applied, he would not hold on to Herzegovina and lose his twenty-year reign which he was able to protect under any circumstance. So, he was against Tanzimat more than anyone else. However, since he adopted the motto not to be at fault with respect to Istanbul, he began to provoke the public via his men rather than explicitly saying "I am against the Tanzimat". At the same time, he told the governor that he was ready to support the implementation of Tanzimat. He even expressed that he would not hesitate to fight the rebels themselves aiming to create the idea of "I am also under threat."<sup>30</sup>

A great rebellion broke in 1849 in simmering Bosnia. When the forces in Bosnia proved to be insufficient, the state made its biggest mistake in the century. The harshest and most brutal pasha, Omer Lütfi Pasha, was sent to Bosnia with extraordinary powers. Pasha, in the name of defeating the so-called rebels, also destroyed the entire social structure in Bosnia. A Muslim convert Murad Efendi like Omer Lütfi Pasha witnessed the events and stated that

*"In the year of 1851, Serdar Omer Pasha has struck the last blow to the Bosnian feudals and after this date Bosnia and Herzegovina became Ottoman Empire's provinces. However, at the same time it became a region exposed to the Serbians and Montenegrans to spread and a target in Russian politics. Because, as was the case in abolition of janissaries, while the diseased blood was intended to be cleared in Bosnia, fresh water of life has also flowed out."*<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> B.O.A., *İ.DH.*, 166/8782, Lef:2, 3 Safer 1264/10 January 1848; Lef: 1, 3 Rebiülevvel 1264/8 February 1848.

<sup>29</sup> B.O.A., *İ.MVL.*, 149/4239, Lef:1, Evasıt-ı Rebiülevvel 1265/6-15 March 1849.

<sup>30</sup> B.O.A., *İ.DH.*, 222/13192, Lef: 3, 9 Zilhicce 1266/16 October 1850.

<sup>31</sup> Murad Efendi, *Türkiye Manzaraları*, Kitap Yayinevi, Translated by Alev Sunata Kırım, İstanbul 2007, pp. 125.

Not only Murad Efendi, but also two key figures of the last period of Ottoman Empire, Ahmed Cevdet Pasha and Chronicler Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, agree that the appointment was wrong.<sup>32</sup>

Omer Pasha hated the Bosniaks so much that in a report he sent to Istanbul, he said “*Since Bosniaks are too cheeky folks, unless the two-year tax which they did not pay is taken by beating their heads, showing them the power of Ottomans which is speaking to them in the language they would understand, they would not renounce rebellion...*”<sup>33</sup> Pasha had serious prejudices about Bosniaks as can be understood from the expression “rebellion is their character”. He considered disobedience as their nature, moreover he talked about them as “creatures and believed that they should be battered in the head to make them do something. Omer Pasha was aware of what he wrote. Because he used the expression “*Bosniak*” to directly identify the rebels. In a report he sent to Istanbul in November 1850, he uses the expression *Bosniak* six times side by side with negative characterizations such as “*vermin, voidable*”.<sup>34</sup> The hatred of Omer Pasha is also reflected in the work *Tebsiratü'l-eşkiyâ* which is most probably penned by an officer commissioned by himself. The work, from the very beginning, is written with the opinion showing the Bosniaks as criminals.<sup>35</sup>

Safvet-Beg Başağaç, the founder of Bosniak historiography, writes that the military action of Omer Lütfi Pasha “put an end to Bosniak freedom and energy”.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Austrian Foreign Minister Andrassy claims in response to Ottoman Empire’s protests regarding the invasion of Bosnia Herzegovina by Austria that the acts of Austrian army are nothing compared to the deeds of Omer Lütfi Pasha during the suppression of the revolt in 1849.<sup>37</sup> The acts of Omer Pasha have even been subjected to a conversation between Ivo Andrić and Tito. Andrić has told Tito about Omer Pasha that “*The Turks themselves have demolished feudalism in Bosnia. Omer Pasha Latas has put the knife to the Latas squires... Omer Pasha is said to have been a very interesting and strange man. Although he is a marshall, the Bosnian squires do not consider him as a Muslim. Apparently, he is destroying the squires with a great pleasure.*”<sup>38</sup>

The 1849 rebellion is a real public uprising in which almost entire Muslim population have participated in. In fact, Omer Pasha states in a report sent to headquarters that if a serious investigation is conducted in Bosnia, it would prove very difficult to find a person not involved in the rebellion among the Bosniaks.<sup>39</sup> 1849 rebellion is the last major resistance in Bosniaks’ attempt to preserve and sustain their superior positions in the province. They have acted with the idea of all-or-nothing and eventually lost everything. Ali Pasha is claimed to say in a meeting with the squires before the rebellion that

*“Omer Lütfi Pasha, together with his apostate battalion<sup>40</sup>, would show no mercy, they have come to break the Bosnian Muslims, Sultan is duped by surrounding officers, religion and monarch dependent*

<sup>32</sup> Vak’a-nüvis Ahmed Lütfi Efendi Tarihi, Published: M. Münir Aktepe, Volume: IX, İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, İstanbul 1984, p. 42; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 13–20*, Published by Cavid Baysun, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1991, p. 48.

<sup>33</sup> B.O.A., *İ.DH.*, 230/13808, Lef: 8, 21 Rebiülahir 1267/23 February 1851.

<sup>34</sup> B.O.A., *İ.DH.*, 224/13334, 11 Muharrem 1267/16 November 1850.

<sup>35</sup> Abdi, *Tebsiratü'l-eşkiyâ*, Basiret Matbaası, İstanbul 1289.

<sup>36</sup> Robin Okey, *Taming Balkan Nationalism the Habsburg ‘Civilizing Mission’ in Bosnia, 1878–1914*, Oxford University Press, New York 2007, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Mehmet Süleymanpaşic, “Avusturya İşgal Ordularının Bosna ve Hersek’te Örfi Divanları”, *Varlık*, Year: 8, Volume: XI, Issue: 183, Ankara 1941, p. 355.

<sup>38</sup> Fahri Kaya, “Tito ile Andrić Arasında Türklerle İlgili Bir Konuşma”, *Sesler-Aylık Toplumsal Sanat Dergisi*, Year: XXIV, Issue: 222, Usküp Ocak 1988, s. 84.

<sup>39</sup> B.O.A., *İ.DH.*, 235/14218, Lef:4, 17 Receb 1267/18 May 1851.

<sup>40</sup> The Ottoman Empire has settled some of Hungarian and Polish refugees in Şumnu. These people have converted to Muslim not to be sent back. 2 battalions were formed by these people, most of which were seasoned soldiers, and ere put under the ommand of Omer Lütfi Pasha. Omer Lütfi Pasha was accompanied by 400 Hungrians when he

*Bosniaks must put an end to this course, Omer Pasha and the army, most of which is managed by Hungarian renegades, should by all means be stopped, otherwise in 30 years Bosnia would not belong to Bosniaks.”<sup>41</sup>*

Ali Pasha understood the period better than Captain Hüsein. He was even a better diplomat. But how did he find the courage in himself to defy the state? Moreover, how could he consider that he would beat the army of the state? The answer is simpler than the question. Firstly, he had nothing to lose since the Tanzimat would already deprive him of his privileges. Second reason was his overconfidence. He was so sure of himself that he is claimed to say “*The capital of Ottoman Empire is Istanbul and it is ruled by the Sultan. The capital of Herzegovina, the capital of you, is Mostar and it is ruled by me*” in a meeting.<sup>42</sup> There is in fact some truth in his words. Because, the entire Bosnia was gathered under his leadership during the rebellion.

After the rebellion, Ali Pasha died suspiciously. The general perception is that Omer Pasha had him killed. Most of the squires were sent into exile outside Bosnia. A socially and administratively devastated land was left. Muslims had lost their hopes for the future. Hasan Agha from Mostar expresses the mood of Bosniaks in 1858 such as

*“The only reason for the catastrophe in Bosnia is the fact that Turkish Pashas have forgotten that Bosnian sipahi are the swords of Islam. What great men have been born in this land? Great Köprülü and other Grand Viziers Hüsrev and Recep, the savior of the Empire Murad Pasha and then Mehmed Sokollu were all sons of Bosnia. Nevertheless, they sacrifice us. Now the raya is plotting with Muscovite, Serbians and Montenegrins. How may they help the Sultan in Istanbul when they cannot even help themselves? Is it expected from a dog with removed teeth to guard the flock against wolves?”<sup>43</sup>*

There is an apparent expostulation, frustration and truth in these words. Because Omer Pasha indeed impoverished them incomparably to the past. From this date on, the rule of the Muslims in Bosnia would come to an end while especially the rise of the Orthodoxes would begin. The years-long conflict has mutually weakened the energy and power of both sides making Bosnia vulnerable to foreign intervention.

### Discussion

The nineteenth century is known as the reform century for the Ottoman Empire. During this century, a tremendous effort has been spent to keep pace with the changing world in the region stretching from Tripoli to Caucasus. Bosnia Herzegovina is one of the places most affected by the contentious and complex nature of change. Because starting right after the conquest, Bosniaks have been granted with privileges since they have accepted Islam. Old feudals have become new Muslim landlords and the social life continued as before. When Bosnia became an “*end province*” after Karlowitz, privileged position of Bosnia was further consolidated. By XIX century, squires, janissaries and captains who were semi-independent arrogant soldiers defying the orders of Istanbul were ruling almost entire Bosnia. With the reign of Mahmud II, the fate of Bosnia, as the fate of the state, started to change. When Mahmud II took action to establish the central government he planned, an inevitable conflict with Bosnian squires emerged. The conflict is further exacerbated with the abolition of the janissaries. Istanbul was surprised by the strong response given by Bosniaks in the face of these events and the events could be hardly taken under control. However, the Bosniaks who had no intention to succumb to Istanbul continued the rebellion shortly after, this time led by Captain Hüsein. So, almost twenty-year long “*state-squire*” strife has been seeded.

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went to Bosnia. Andric dramatically tells, in his work Omer Pasha, the situation of the apostate batallion. See, Ivo Andric, *Omer Paşa*, Translated by Ali Berktaş, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, pp. 34-41.

<sup>41</sup> Gölen, *Bosna İsyanları*, pp. 439.

<sup>42</sup> Griffe, *Osmanlı'nın Hizmetkari*, p. 186; Charles Yriarte, *Bosnie et Herzégovine Souvenirs de Voyage Pendant L'insurrection*, E. Plon et C. Imprimeurs, Paris 1876, p. 232.

<sup>43</sup> Murad Efendi, *Türkiye Manzaraları*, p. 132.

Bosnia has entered a new era with the proclamation of Tanzimat. Customs and traditions carried on for hundreds of years have been disregarded by Tanzimat and all sections were declared legally equal just with an edict. Moreover, it was even not questioned whether applying the principle of equality was feasible or not at the time of the declaration. Each and very reform was perceived as in favor of non-Muslims. All this while, the government failed to express itself to the public and the Bosniaks never questioned the “*why and how*” of the orders sent from Istanbul and defied every order without even trying to understand. During the Tanzimat period, two opposing sides have emerged; one being the “*reformist state*” and the other being the “*conservative squires*” who perceived every reform as an attack against their privileges. After this, a battle with no winners has started. This battle has weakened the state and Bosnian Muslims in the region while facilitating the expansionist objectives of Austria, Serbia, Montenegro and Russia over Bosnia.

When the uprising of non-Muslim masses in 1857 showed Sultan Abdülaziz the cost of the conflict, he granted the Bosniaks with the desired privileges. In return, Bosniaks have quietly accepted the renovations demanded by the government. The most solid example of the softening between the parties occurs when the second edition of “*Tebşiratü'l-eşkiyâ*” was published. The work which was well liked in 1850s due to the conjuncture was not allowed to be republished after twenty years on the grounds that the Bosniaks would be offended. However, the alliance set up this late was not enough to salvage Bosnia. Non-muslim masses acting with the motto “*Bosnia belongs to us*” after the 1850s have achieved their goals with 1878 Berlin Treaty and Bosnia was forcibly ripped apart from the Ottoman Empire.

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