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Activities of the Russian Provisional Administration During the Occupation of Northern Bulgaria in 1877–1879

STRESZCZENIE

Działalność rosyjskiej administracji cywilnej podczas okupacji Bułgarii Północnej w latach 1877–1879

W konsekwencji zakończenia wojny rosyjsko-tureckiej i decyzji kongresu berlińskiego w 1878 r. na północy dzisiejszej Bułgarii ustanowiono „trzecie państwo bułgarskie”, a zamieszkujący je naród wkroczył na ścieżkę dynamicznego rozwoju. Początkowy okres jego istnienia był związany z obecnością na tym terytorium rosyjskich wojsk okupacyjnych i funkcjonowaniem rosyjskiej tymczasowej administracji. Tym sposobem Rosjanie zapewnili sobie silny wpływ na organizację odradzającego się państwa. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie procesu powoływania rosyjskiej tymczasowej administracji, kierunków jej działalności oraz roli Rosjan w nowo powołanych strukturach.

Słowa kluczowe: rosyjska administracja w Bułgarii, Bułgaria, Władimir Aleksandrowicz Czerkasski, Aleksander Michajłowicz Dondukow-Korsakow

ABSTRACT

AS a consequence of the end of the Russo-Turkish War and the decision of the Berlin Congress in 1878, the “Third Bulgarian State” was established in the north of Bulgaria, and the nation inhabiting it entered the path of dynamic development. The initial period of its existence was related to the

presence of Russian occupation troops on its territory and the functioning of the Russian temporary administration. In this way, the Russians secured a strong influence on the organisation of the reborn state. The aim of the article is to present the process of establishment of the Russian temporary civil administration and the role of Russians in the process of creating new state structures.

Keywords: Russian Administration in Bulgaria, Bulgaria, Vladimir Alexandrovich Cherkassky, Alexander Mikhailovich Dondukov-Korsakov

The years 1877–1879 represent one of the most important stages in the history of modern Bulgaria. After almost 500 years of Ottoman rule, the state returned to the political map of Europe, albeit in a severely truncated form, which required that a modern society be organised almost from scratch. The provisional Russian civil administration for Bulgarian lands played an important role in this process.

The article presents the activities of this state in the political-military, administrative, legal and socio-economic dimensions. Due to the decisions of the Berlin Congress (1878), as a result of which the Bulgarian lands were partitioned, these issues are discussed only in relation to the lands of Northern Bulgaria, from which the Bulgarian Principality was formed. However, the activities of the Russians in Eastern Rumelia (an autonomous administrative unit within the Ottoman Empire) are omitted, as they were of a somewhat different nature and conducted in a different political and social reality.

A problem faced by someone approaching the subject of the functioning of the Russian civil authorities in Bulgaria is the question of access to archival material. This is made all the more difficult by the fact that a large part of the files in Bulgaria were irretrievably lost during the bombing of Sofia by the British Air Force in 1944¹. This loss is to some extent compensated by the materials preserved in the Russian archives, the most important of which have been published in print.

Among the collections of files, the first to be mentioned is a four-volume publication published in print at the beginning of the 20th century, prepared by the Russian general, publicist and his-

¹ H. Gandev, *Ruskata pomosht za izgrazhdaneto na Bulgarskata darzhava prez 1877–1879 gg.*, [in:] *Osvobozhdenieto na Bulgaria ot tursko igo 1878–1958. Sbornik statii*, Sofia 1958, p. 309.

torian Nikolay Romanovich Ovsyanyy, containing 75 documents related to the activities of the Russian civil administration in northern and southern Bulgaria². Many valuable materials related to its activities are also contained in other collections published in later years, dedicated to the problems of Bulgarian-Russian relations in the second half of the 19th century³. Among them, a special place is occupied by the publication *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii ot turetskogo iga. Dokumenty v trekh tomakh*, the originator and one of the editors of which was Prof. Sergey Aleksandrovich Nikitin⁴.

Complementing the archival material are monographs, articles and texts included in multi-author monographs. The most important in this group is the three-volume work by Ovsyanyy, who was governor of Kiustendil from February 1878 to April 1879 and was familiar with the issues described in depth. The first two volumes of this work relate directly to the activities carried out in northern Bulgaria⁵. Among the books on the subject, two works by Bulgarian historians are also noteworthy: a 1958 monograph by Goran D. Todorov⁶ and a book published in 2003 by Mariya Georgieva Manolova, in which the author focused on the norm-forming activities of the Russian authorities⁷. Among other

² *Sbornik materialov po grazhdanskomu upravleniyu i okupatsiyi v Bolgarii v 1877–78–79*, ed. N.R. Ovsyanyy, Vyp. 1–4, S.-Peterburg 1906.

³ *Rusia i vazstanovyavaneto na bulgarskata darzhavnost (1878–1885 g.) = Rossiya i vosstanovlenie bolgarskoy gosudarstvenosti (1878–1885 g.)*, eds ot bulgarska strana: B. Buzhashka, G. Markov, G. Chernev, ot ruska strana: V.P. Kozlov, I.O. Garkusha, V.I. Kosik, Sofia 2008.

⁴ *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii ot turetskogo iga. Dokumenty v trekh tomakh*, vol. II (*Bor'ba za natsional'noe osvobozhdenie Bolgarii v period rusko-turetskoy voyny 1877–1878*), eds S.A. Nikitin, V.D. Konobeev, D.K. Kosev, G.D. Todorov, Moskva 1964; vol. III (*Bor'ba Rossii i Bolgarskogo naroda za sozdanie Bolgarskogo gosudarstva 1878–1879*), eds eorundem, Moskva 1967. For a more extensive discussion of the origins of this publication and its contents: S.I. Danchenko, "Osvoboditel' i "pobeditel'". Iz istorii otechestvennoy bolgaristiki, [in:] *Slavyanie i Rossiya: Rossiya, Bolgariya, Balkany. Problemy voyny i mira XVIII–XXI vv. Mify i real'nost*, ed. K.V. Nikiforov, Moskva 2019, pp. 359–385.

⁵ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *Russkoe upravlenie v Bolgarii v 1877–78–79 g.g.*, vol. I (*Zavedyavshiy grazhdanskimi delami pri Glavnokomandovavshem Deystvuyushchey armii d.s.s. knyaz V.A. Cherkasskiy*), S. Peterburg 1906; vol. II (*Rossiyskiy Imperatorskiy Komissar v Bolgaria, general-adytant knyaz A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov*), S. Peterburg 1906.

⁶ G.D. Todorov, *Vremennoto rusko upravlenie v Bulgaria prez 1877–1879*, Sofia 1958.

⁷ M.G. Manolova, *Normotvorcheskata deynost na vremennoto rusko upravlenie v Bulgaria (1877–1879)*, Sofia 2003.

studies, the texts of Bulgarian authors should be noted: Hristo Gandev⁸ and Stanislav Nikolov Boyanov⁹, Russian researchers Sergey Aleksandrovich Nikitin¹⁰, Viktoria Maksimovna Khevrolina¹¹, Marina Mikhailovna Frolova¹² and Anna Viktorovna Plotnikova¹³, and Belarusian author Sergey Sergeevich Aleksandrovich¹⁴. Also important for learning about the early activities of the Russian administration is a series of articles based on personal diaries and archival documents by a member of the Russian civil authorities, General Dmitry Gavrilovich Anuchin¹⁵. Among the materials used were also memoirs and accounts of other people who witnessed the events described¹⁶. All in all, this makes it possible to present

⁸ H. Gandev, *op. cit.*, pp. 308–350.

⁹ S.N. Boyanov, *Vremennoe rossiyskoe pravlenie v Bolgarii v 1877–1878 gg.: Stanovlenie bolgarskoy administratsii*, “Vestnik Bryanskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta” 2020, no. 3, pp. 31–44.

¹⁰ S.A. Nikitin, *Russkoe grazhdanskoe upravlenie v Bolgarii (1877–1879)*, [in:] *Osvobozhdenieto na Bulgaria 1878–1968: Dokladi ot yubileynata nauchna sesya v Sofia (29 II – 1 III 1968)*, Sofia 1970, pp. 27–41.

¹¹ V.M. Khevrolina, *Rossiya i vossozhdanie bolgarskogo gosudarstva*, “Trudy Instituta rossiyskoy istorii RAN” 2012, no. 10, pp. 435–444.

¹² M.M. Frolova, *Russkoe grazhdanskoe upravlenie v Bolgarii i problema bolgarskikh bezhencev v svete stanovleniya bolgarskoy gosudarstvennosti (1877 – 19.02.1878 gg.)*, [in:] *Slavyane i Rossiya. Problemy gosudarstvennosti na Balkanakh (konets XVIII – XXI vv.)*, ed. S.I. Danchenko, Moskva 2020, pp. 106–150.

¹³ A.V. Plotnikova, *Spetsifika vzaimodeystviya rossiyskikh i bolgarskikh politicheskikh elit v protsesse vossozdaniya gosudarstvennosti Bolgarii v kontse XIX v.*, “Upravlencheskoe konsul'tirovanie 2013, no. 5, pp. 136–142.

¹⁴ S.S. Aleksandrovich, *Reformy russkogo grazhdanskogo upravleniya v Bolgarii (yanvar'–may 1878 g.)*, [in:] *Pratsy gistorychnaga fakul'teta BDU*, ed. U.K. Korshuk, Minsk 2010, pp. 157–164.

¹⁵ D.G. Anuchin, *Knyaz Vladimir Aleksandrovich Cherkaskiy, kak ustroitel Bolgarii*, “Russkaya starina” 1888, vol. LIX, no. 7, pp. 179–212; idem, *Knyaz V.A. Cherkaskiy i grazhdanskoe upravlenie v Bolgarii 1877– 1878 gg.*, “Russkaya starina” 1895, vol. LXXXIII, no. 2, pp. 1–34; no. 3, pp. 1–27; no. 4, pp. 43–55; no. 5, pp. 1–36; vol. LXXXIV, no. 8, pp. 41–69; no. 9, pp. 53–104; no. 10, pp. 3–32; no. 11, pp. 47–67; no. 12, pp. 1–50; 1896, vol. LXXXV, no. 1, pp. 55–78; no. 2, pp. 285–313; no. 3, pp. 449–470; no. 5, pp. 225–266; vol. LXXXVI, no. 7, pp. 45–81; no. 8, pp. 231–254.

¹⁶ V.D. Dabizha, *San-Stefano i Konstantinopol' v fevral' 1878 g. Ocherki i zametki knyazya V.D. Dabizha*, “Russkaya starina” 1888, vol. LVIII, no. 5, pp. 481–504; I.S. Ivanov, *Bolgarskoe opalchenie i ego sformirovanie v 1875–1878 gg. Zameti i vospominaniya*, “Russkaya starina” 1889, vol. LXII, no. 4, pp. 135–159; idem, *Bolgarskoe opalchenie v 1876–1878*, “Russkaya starina” 1889, vol. LXVI, no. 4, pp. 413–437; idem, *Iz zametok ob yuzhnoy Bolgarii za vremya okupatsii*

a relatively coherent picture of the activities of the Russian administration and to be tempted to assess them impartially.

Preparatory work for the establishment of the Russian provisional civil administration

Work on the organisation of the civil administration for the Bulgarian lands began in the autumn of 1876 during Russia's preparations for war with the Ottoman Empire. On 16/28 November 1876, the post of "Head of Civil Affairs" was created and the Civil Chancellery was established at the Field Staff of the Danube Army¹⁷. On the same day, a brief, 10-point instruction was also issued outlining the tasks of this office. Among the most important of these were the collection of materials that would be useful in deciding the future of the "Danube lands", and the organisation of the civil administration in the areas freed from the Sultan's troops. Other tasks included monitoring the situation at the rear of the army and ensuring the safety of the civilian population (including Muslims), searching for people who could be useful in the process of establishing local power structures, providing assistance to the Orthodox Church and ensuring the protection of foreigners¹⁸.

On 21 November/3 December 1876, Prince Vladimir Alexandrovich Cherkassky, a moderate liberal, sympathiser of the pan-Slavist movement, one of the implementers of the enfranchisement reform in Russia and the Kingdom of Poland, was appointed head of the Chancellery and at the same time representative of the

eya russkimi voyskami v 1878–1879 gg. i o posleduyushchikh sobytiyakh v Knyazhestve Bolgarskom, "Russkaya starina" 1892, vol. LXXV, no. 9, pp. 665–698; M. Mandzharov, *Spomeni*, Sofia 1968; D. Ganchev, *Spomeni*, V. Tyrnovo 2005; E. Indzhov, *The Temporary Russian Government in the Memories of Evgenye Utin*, "Proceedings of University of Ruse" 2018, vol. LVII, book 6.2., pp. 101–105.

¹⁷ The location of the Chancellery at the headquarters of the Danube Army was negatively received by the military, who often ignored the activities carried out by civilian officials. This was due to the reluctance of the Commander-in-Chief, Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolaevich (the Elder), who believed that the construction of the civil administration should only begin after the end of hostilities. As a conservative, he also viewed some of its actions with displeasure. Cf. N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 25, 27; M.G. Manolova, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–41.

¹⁸ *Kopiya s Vysochayshe utverzhdennoy 16-go noyabrya 1876 goda Instruksii Zavedyvayushchemu grazhdanskimi delami pri Glavnokomanduyushchem Deystvuyushcheyu armieyu*, [in:] N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 161–163.

Russian Red Cross¹⁹. His aides included the former governor of Radom, Lt. Gen. Dmitry Gavrilovich Anuchin²⁰, Maj. Gen. Mikhail Alekseyevich Domontovich²¹, Sergey Ivanovich Lukyanov, who was responsible for legal issues²², and Professor Marin Stoyanov Drinov²³. At the prince's request, 23 Guards officers and 40 officers

¹⁹ G.D. Todorov, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–66; V.M. Khevroolina, *op. cit.*, p. 439. During his stay in Poland, he became known as a “dull despot, doctrinaire and Russifier” – J. Kucharzewski, *Od białego caratu do czerwonego*, vol. V (*Terrorists*), 1st post-war ed., Warszawa 2000, p. 136. His “unsympathetic character” was also mentioned by his close associate General Anuchin (*Knyaz Vladimir...*, p. 182) and by I.S. Ivanov (*Bolgarskoe opalchenie...*, pp. 152–154), as well as by V.D. Dabizha (*op. cit.*, pp. 483–487).

²⁰ Dmitry Gavrilovich Anuchin, born in 1833, educated at the Pavlov Corps of Cadets in St. Petersburg. In 1855, after graduating from the Imperial Military Academy in St. Petersburg, he was seconded to hold various administrative posts. In 1863, he became aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief of the troops in the Kingdom of Poland, General Adjutant Count Fëodor Fëodorovich Berg, and in 1865 took up the post of Governor of Radom. On his return from Bulgaria in 1879, he was appointed governor-general of Eastern Siberia and commander of the East Siberian Military District. In 1885 he became a senator. Died in 1900. Cf. *Voennaya enciklopediya*, ed. V.F. Novicki *et al.*, vol. II, Peterburg 1911, p. 601. For more on this figure, see: A. Górak, K. Latawiec, J. Kozłowski, *Słownik biograficzny gubernatorów i wicegubernatorów w Królestwie Polskim (1867–1918)*, Lublin 2014, pp. 68–72.

²¹ Mikhail Alekseyevich Domontovich, born in 1830. He was educated at the Petrovsk Cadet Corps in Poltava. In 1858 he graduated from the Imperial Military Academy in St. Petersburg and was assigned to the General Staff. In 1864 he was posted to the Caucasus, and in 1873 he took up the post of inspector of the Nikolaev Cavalry School in St. Petersburg. On his return from Bulgaria, he became a supernumerary member of the Military Scientific Committee and chairman of the Historical Commission appointed to compile a history of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. In 1896, he was appointed to the War Council. Died in 1902. Cf. *Voennaya enciklopediya*, ed. K.I. Velichko *et al.*, vol. IX, Peterburg 1912, p. 178.

²² Sergey Ivanovich Lukyanov, born in 1834. He graduated from the Faculty of Law at Moscow University with a doctorate. From 1864, he worked at the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland in Warsaw and, after its abolition, at His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery for the Affairs of the Kingdom of Poland. From 1873, a member of the Consultative Council to the Minister of Justice. On his return from Bulgaria, senator and member of the ruling Senate. From 1882 to 1900 a member of the commission for the elaboration of the Civil Code of the Russian Empire and the commission for the revision of laws in the judicial part. Died in 1905. Cf. A. Murzanov, *Pravitelstvuyushchiy senat (gospoda senat) 22 fevralya 1711 – 22 fevralya 1911. Spisok senatorov*, S.-Peterburg 1911, p. 29.

²³ Marin Stoyanov Drinov, born in 1836, was a native Bulgarian. In 1858 he went to Russia, where he received higher education. From 1865 to 1871 he served

holding prominent positions in the St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev military districts were also sent to work in the chancellery²⁴. After the outbreak of war, they were joined by 19 diplomatic corps staff coming from evacuated consular posts deployed in the Ottoman Empire, seven of whom were of Bulgarian origin²⁵. Bulgarian activists recommended by the Slavic Benevolent Committees operating in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Todor Stoyanov Burmov²⁶ and Nayden Dobrovich Gerov²⁷, also took part in the work of the team, and later Marko Dimitriev Balabanov²⁸,

as tutor to the family of Prince Golitsyn and spent time in Austria and Italy before returning to Russia. In 1872 he was awarded a doctorate, a year later an associate professor, and in 1876 he became professor of Slavic philology at the University of Kharkov. In 1879 he returned to Russia and worked there for the rest of his life. He died in 1906. Cf. R. Detrez, *Historical Dictionary of Bulgaria*, 2nd ed., Lanham–Toronto–Oxford 2006, pp. 153–154. More extensively on this figure: L.V. Gorina, *Profesor Marin Drinov – osnovopolozhnik na bulgarskoto akademichno slavyanoznanie*, Sofia 2009.

²⁴ Cherkassky did not have the best opinion of Russian civilian officials and believed that only officers representing a high moral level could guarantee the proper performance of the tasks entrusted to them. Cf. I.S. Ivanov, *Iz zametok...*, p. 665; N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 29.

²⁵ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 31–32.

²⁶ Todor Stoyanov Burmov, born in 1834, graduated from the Kiev Theological Academy. After returning to his homeland he worked, as a teacher, in Gabrovo. He published texts in the Bulgarian and Russian press and served as editor of several periodicals published in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. From 1867 to 1877 he was employed by the Russian embassy in Constantinople as a translator. From VI to IX 1879, Prime Minister of the first government of the Principality of Bulgaria. Twice Minister of Finance (1883, 1886), member of the Main Court of Cassation and the Council of State. During the rule of Prime Minister Stefan Stambolov (1886–1894) he was arrested three times, after which he resigned from political activity. Died in 1906. Cf. A.A. Ulunyan, *Deyateli bolgarskogo natsional'no-osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniya XVIII–XIX v.*, vol. I (*Biibliograficheskiy slovar' A–K*), Moskva 1996, pp. 63–64 (further literature there).

²⁷ Nayden Dobrovich Gerov, born in 1823. In 1838 he went to Odessa, where he graduated from high school. He accepted Russian citizenship. On his return to Bulgaria he worked as a teacher. From 1857 to 1877 he was Russian vice-consul in Filipopol (now Plovdiv). After 1879 he took up literary works and documented Bulgarian folklore. Died in 1900. Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 97–98 (further literature there).

²⁸ Marko Dimitriev Balabanov, born in 1837, graduated from the Khalki seminary and then law at the University of Paris. In the 1870s he ran a law firm in Constantinople and was editor of several Bulgarian periodicals. From VI to IX 1879 he was minister of justice in the first government of the Bulgarian Principality. President of the 11th National Assembly (1901), then Bulgarian ambassador to Romania and later Greece. Died in 1921. Cf. *ibidem*, p. 34 (further literature there).

Stefan Safov Bobchev²⁹ and others³⁰ took up cooperation with the Committee.

Carrying out the tasks entrusted to them, the members of the Chancellery in a short period of time prepared and published six volumes of *Materials for Bulgarian Studies*, containing information on the political, economic and cultural situation of Bulgarians under Ottoman rule³¹. The information collected, it has to be said, was of quite high quality, although due to the short time for its preparation – not always complete³².

The team led by Prince Cherkassky also drafted a memorandum containing considerations on the settlement of the Bulgarian question after the end of the war. On the issue of the fate of the population living in the eastern part of the Balkan peninsula, the prince believed that the interests of the Bulgarian and Greek peoples should be taken into account, which posed many difficulties. “The Bulgarians”, wrote the author of the memorandum, “are the nation most akin to the Russians in religion, language and origin. This nation is reborn, drawing from Russian culture, deriving science and education from Russia. This is our child, which will never go against us, which will develop in close connection with us. The Greeks – they are the opposite of the Bulgarians, they have long since twisted everything, using religion for know-how, intrigue, harbouring a latent hatred for us and always ready to turn to our enemies to secure Europe’s recognition and, in addition, to look after their own interests. In terms of cunning, intrigues, ability to deceive Europe and look after their own interests, they are more

²⁹ Stefan Safov Bobchev, born in 1853. In 1868, he entered the military medical academy in Constantinople. After the April 1876 uprising, he emigrated to Romania, where he was editor of the newspaper “Stara Planina”. In 1880, he graduated from the Faculty of Law at Moscow University, and upon his return he took up journalism. He was Minister of Enlightenment from 1911 to 1912 and Ambassador of Bulgaria to Russia from 1912 to 1913. Died in 1940. Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 49–50 (further literature there).

³⁰ M. Petrov, *Vremennno rusko upravlenie*, [in:] *Istoria na Bulgaria*, vol. VII (*Vazstanovyavane i utvarzhdavane na bulgarskata darzhava. Nacionalno-osvoboditelni borbi “1878–1903”*), eds H. Hristov, S. Grancharov, E. Stanelova, Sofia 1991, p. 23; D. Tokushev, *Istoria na novobulgarskata darzhava i pravo 1878–1944*, Sofia 2008, p. 30.

³¹ *Dokladnaya zapiska V.A. Cherkasskogo Nikolayu Nikolaevichu (Starshemu) o komandirovaniu chinovnikov russkogo grazhdanskogo upravleniya v Bukharest i Ploeshi dlya sbora statisticheskikh svedeniy o Bolgarii*, Kishinev, 28 aprelya 1877 g., doc. no. 37, [in:] *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii...*, vol. II, p. 57.

³² M.G. Manolova, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–38.

dangerous than the Poles"³³. Hence, if the powers agreed to grant independence to the Balkan peoples, according to the prince, the eastern part of the Balkans should have been divided into two parts so that the larger part (about 4500–4600,000 miles², with a population of 5–5.5 million people, including 4–4.5 million Bulgarians) would have fallen to the Bulgarian principality, while Epirus, the Chalcidian Peninsula, Gallipoli and the surrounding islands would have fallen to Greece. As for the organisation of the Bulgarian state, Prince Cherkassky advocated that it be placed under a Russian protectorate, as had happened previously to the Romanian principalities³⁴. In the event that the European powers did not agree to grant independence to the Balkan peoples, it was necessary to ensure that the local population could elect local authorities, that international control was exercised in the main centres of administration, that taxes were reduced, that personal security was guaranteed and that freedom of religion was ensured³⁵.

On the question of the administrative order of the future Bulgarian state, Cherkassky was convinced that it would be unwise to abolish the Ottoman administrative order. He believed that initially it would be sufficient to replace the Sultan's officials with Russians to eliminate clerical and judicial arbitrariness against the Christian population, and then to fill their positions with Bulgarians³⁶.

Activities of the Russian provisional civil administration during the Russo-Turkish War

On 12/24 April 1877, Russia broke off diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire and declared war on it³⁷. In a manifesto read out on this occasion, Tsar Alexander II, stressing Russia's protector

³³ *Dokladnaya zapiska kn. V.A. Cherkasskago predstavlenaya Voennomu Ministru v g. Ploeshti*, [in:] N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 173–174.

³⁴ On the basis of the peace treaty in Adrianople, the Duchy of Moldavia and Wallachia was administered from 1829 to 1834 by the Russian administration led by General Pavel Dmitriyevich Kiselyov. For more on this subject, see J. Demel, *Historia Rumunii*, 2nd ed., Wrocław 1986, pp. 260–263.

³⁵ *Dokladnaya zapiska kn. V.A. Cherkasskago...*, pp. 165–183.

³⁶ G.D. Todorov, *op. cit.*, pp. 67–68; D. Tokushev, *op. cit.*, p. 30; A.V. Plotnikova, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–137.

³⁷ *Despatch from the Chancellor of the Russian Empire to Tevfik Bey, Charge d' Affaires of Turkey at St. Petersburg announcing the cessation of Diplomatic Relations with Turkey preparatory to War*, St. Petersburg, 24th April 1877, doc. no. 490, [in:] *The Map of Europe by Treaty; Showing the Various Political and*

role towards the followers of the Orthodox Church, declared that he considered it his duty to take the cause of the oppressed Christians into his own hands³⁸. Shortly afterwards, in a proclamation addressed to the Bulgarians, the Tsar promised them to replace Ottoman rule by a “proper administration”, with the participation of the local population³⁹.

This marked the start of increased activity by the Chancellery staff. According to a rescript issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the Danube Army, Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolaevich (the Elder), its activities were now to focus on setting up civil administration in the liberated areas, changing the tax system and setting up judicial authorities⁴⁰.

After the Danube was crossed, on 13/25 July 1877, on the basis of the transitional regulations approved by Grand Duke Nikolay, the first three gubernias were created and their authorities appointed⁴¹. In view of the difficulties caused by the temporary setbacks of the Russian army, the creation of further administrative and police authorities was slow. Nevertheless, by the end of the war (January 1878) there were already eight gubernias, divided into 56 districts. The governors and district heads usually became Russian officers, and the clerical positions were filled by Bulgarians⁴². The latter were in overwhelming numbers graduates of Russian educational institutions. In total, according to a historian of the time, some 150 Russians and 2121 Bulgarians were employed

Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place Since the General Peace of 1814, vol. IV (1875 to 1891), ed. E. Hartslet, London 1891, p. 2590.

³⁸ *Manifesto of the Emperor of Russia announcing War with Turkey*, St. Petersburg 24th April 1877, doc. no. 493, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 2598–2599; F.M. Anderson, A.S. Hershey, *Handbook for the Diplomatic History of Europe, Asia and Africa 1870–1914*, Washington 1918, p. 66.

³⁹ *Bolgare!*, *Vozzvanie Gosudarya Imperatora k bolgaram*, 10 iyunya 1877 g., doc. no. 1, [in:] *Sbornik materialov...*, Vyp. 1, pp. 3–5.

⁴⁰ *Reskript velikia knyaz Nikolay Nikolaevich (Starshi) do knyaz V.A. Cherkaski za predstavente mu prava kato zavezhdashch grazhdanskite dela v upravlениeto na bulgarskite zemi*, Svishtov, [yuli 1877 g.], doc. no. 5, [in:] *Rusia i vazstanovyavaneto...*, pp. 42–44.

⁴¹ *Ob obrazovanii sandzhakov i naznachenii v onye gubernatorov i vice gubernatorov*, bez oboz. vremeni, doc. no. 24, [in:] *Sbornik materialov...*, Vyp. 1, p. 132.

⁴² D. Georgievskiy, *Grazhdanskoe upravlenie v Bolgarii v 1877–1879 gg.*, “Nablyudatel”. *Zhurnal literaturnyy, politicheski i uchenyy* 1882, no. 9 (sentyabr’), pp. 128–129.

in the administration, including 768 appointed and 1353 elected by the local population⁴³. Successive steps were also taken to elect local authorities at lower levels⁴⁴. Thus, Bulgarians were included in the formation of administrative authorities from the beginning⁴⁵, which corresponded with the prince's policy to establish administration at the local level as soon as possible⁴⁶.

One of the most urgent tasks during this period was to ensure the security of the civilian population, to set up armed urban and rural guards⁴⁷, to stem the tide of looting⁴⁸, and to ensure that the needs of the army were met. This problem was considered urgent, as the *chets* created from below to carry out these tasks often committed robberies themselves and in many places escaped the control of the Russian army⁴⁹. To change this, the prince ordered the governors to tighten the criteria for recruiting candidates for the guards, and additional officers were brought in from Russia⁵⁰, who took up the positions of police chiefs and policemen⁵¹.

In carrying out tasks for the benefit of the fighting troops, efforts were made to provide medical care to wounded Russian soldiers and officers and to guarantee the supply of food, furze and means

⁴³ K. Irechek, *Knyazhestvo Bulgaria*, part 1 (*Bulgarska darzhava*), Plovdiv 1899, p. 346.

⁴⁴ D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–126; M.G. Manolova, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–38; S.N. Boyanov, *op. cit.*, p. 41; M.M. Frolova, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁴⁵ Critics of Prince Cherkassky's actions argued that positions in the nascent administration were inaccessible to radical Bulgarian activists, due to the fear that representatives of the "revolutionary party" might not take over the helm of power in the new state in the future. Cf. E. Indzhov, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁴⁶ M.G. Manolova, *op. cit.*, p. 59; A.V. Plotnikova, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁴⁷ *Dokladnaya zapiska V.A. Cherkasskogo Nikolayu Nikolaevichu (Starshemu) o neobkhodimosti vvedeniya voenno-polisteykskoy strazhi v Bolgarii*, Ternovo, 4 iyulya 1877 g., doc. no. 122, [in:] *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii...*, vol. II, pp. 154–156.

⁴⁸ "Plundered were the abandoned Turkish houses (...) Everyone took what he wanted (...) Maybe these plunders and destructions would have ended, but the many murders, carried out aimlessly here and there by fleeing Cherkists, retreating Turkish troops and Muslims caused a desire among Bulgarians for bloody repression" – D.G. Anuchin, *Knyaz V.A. Cherkaskiy...*, "Russkaya starina" 1895, vol. LXXXIV, no. 10, p. 5.

⁴⁹ S.S. Aleksandrovich, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁵⁰ Cherkassky had no confidence in officials imported from Russia and believed that only officers of the Guard represented the appropriate moral level. Cf. I.S. Ivanov, *Iz zametok...*, p. 665.

⁵¹ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 114–115.

of transport. During this time, 21 post offices were also opened for the needs of the army and the civil administration⁵². Postal stations with horses, stables, inns and workshops were set up on the roads, which ensured the efficient transmission of information between districts in northern Bulgaria and later the receipt of mail from Russia bypassing Constantinople and Varna⁵³.

In the summer and autumn of 1877, the Russian civil administration faced a serious challenge from the influx of Bulgarian refugees from southern Bulgaria. Their exodus was caused by the return of Ottoman troops to the Russian-occupied territories in the Rose Valley and the desire to avoid Muslim revenge⁵⁴. According to various estimates, it is assumed that the number of refugees may have ranged from 100⁵⁵ to as many as 200 000 people⁵⁶. This posed a serious problem for local authorities. In order to solve it, guidelines were drawn up on how to organise assistance and shelter for the refugees and 35,000 roubles in gold were set aside, earmarked to provide bread and medicine for the immigrants. The Russian Red Cross and the Slavic Committees in Moscow and St. Petersburg also rushed to provide material assistance to the refugees. Faced with the problems of housing the non-Balkan arrivals⁵⁷, Prince Cherkassky allowed them to occupy houses and farms abandoned by the Muslim population⁵⁸. In adopting this solution, the need to organise the harvest and prepare the land for the next sowing in the fields left unattended was also taken into account⁵⁹. This somewhat improved the position of the refugees, the vast majority of whom nevertheless existed on the poverty line⁶⁰.

⁵² *Zapiska D.G. Anuchina o deyatel'nosti russkogo grazhdanskogo upravleniya v Bolgarii za period s iyunya 1877 g. po fevral' 1878 g.*, San-Stefano, 23 fevralya 1878 g., doc. no. 494, [in:] *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii...*, vol. II, p. 558.

⁵³ D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, p. 129; N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 117.

⁵⁴ M.M. Frolova, *op. cit.*, pp. 112–113.

⁵⁵ K. Irechek, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

⁵⁶ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 56.

⁵⁷ For a more extensive discussion, see D. Ganchev, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–74.

⁵⁸ *Predpisanie V.A. Cherkasskogo V.A. Domontovichu o merakh po okazaniyu pomoshchi bolgarskim bezhentsam*, Ternovo, 24 iyulya 1877 g., doc. no. 165, [in:] *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii...*, vol. II, pp. 195–196.

⁵⁹ *Pis'mo V.A. Cherkasskogo A.A. Niepokoychitskomu o neobkhodimosti uborki urozhaya i o razreshenii bolgaram sbora khleba s poley bezhavshikh turok*, 29 iyunya 1877 g., doc. no. 113, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 146–147.

⁶⁰ D.G. Anuchin, *Knyaz V.A. Cherkaskiy...*, "Russkaya starina" 1896, vol. LXXXV, no. 1, p. 75.

In terms of day-to-day operations, the Russian administration initiated measures to adapt legal regulations to the conditions of the on-going war. For the needs of the local population, the existing Ottoman criminal and civil legislation was retained, only including more Bulgarians in the juries⁶¹. More serious crimes (sabotage, espionage, murder, robbery, rape, *etc.*), however, were taken over by field courts, created one in each governorate. On 9/21 August 1877, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army, Grand Duke Nikolay, approved the provisional regulations normalizing their work⁶². Regarding the preparation of drafts of new legal regulations, a special commission was formed with the participation of Russian lawyers, which drew up a preliminary draft of the principles of organisation of the judiciary and the regulations normalizing its work⁶³.

A process of changes to the tax system was also initiated. The tax paid by Christians in connection with exemption from military service was abolished, and in 1878 a land tax was imposed in place of the tithes⁶⁴. Other taxes and levies were retained, which was the result of Cherkassky's position that deeper financial reforms during the war were impossible. In his view, this was a task for the future government⁶⁵.

In terms of customs policy, the Russian administration initially reinstated Ottoman regulations. However, the needs of war led to a departure from these arrangements. Red Cross transports and those containing humanitarian aid were exempted from import duties, and the export of sheepskins from occupied lands was banned due to the need to provide warm clothing for soldiers. The sale of tobacco to the army was also exempted from excise duties. However, this had the effect of reducing the income of the civil administration compared to before the outbreak of war⁶⁶.

⁶¹ This often caused many problems due to the perceived lack of adequately prepared people to work in the administration and judiciary. Cf. V. Palauzov, *Ocherk russkago grazhdanskago upravleniya po ustroystvu yustitsii v Bolgarii*, "Zhurnal grazhdanskago i ugalovago prava. Izdanie S.-Peterburgskago Yuridicheskago Obshchestva" 1880, kniga 4, iyul-avgust, pp. 59–64.

⁶² *Vremenni pravila za otdelnite voenno-polevi sadilishta v Bulgaria, utvardeni ot velikia knyaz Nikolay Nikolaevich (Starshi)*, Svishtov, 9 avgust 1877 g., doc. no. 9, [in:] *Rusia i vazstanovyavaneto...*, pp. 58–59.

⁶³ V. Palauzov, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–71; N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 118.

⁶⁴ D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, p. 130; N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 63–67; M.M. Frolova, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁶⁵ G.D. Todorov, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁶⁶ S.S. Aleksandrovich, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

In order to improve administration at all levels and to ensure an adequate number of translators, special “practical Russian language courses” were launched in Plovdiv, attended by 40 grantees⁶⁷.

Continuing to collect data on the location of the Bulgarian population, Prince Cherkassky’s team produced an ethnic map of the region, showing the Bulgarian character of Mesa, Thrace and Macedonia. A *Project for the establishment of a central authority in the Bulgarian Principality* was also prepared at the chancellery. It stipulated that the administration should be headed by a tsarist commissar, who would exercise civil and military authority. The governing body until the final organisation of the state was to be the Administrative Council of the Bulgarian Principality, consisting of eight members headed by the commissioner. Representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church were also to be co-opted as members with an advisory vote⁶⁸. In addition, the head of the Chancellery prepared a list of 14 tasks to be handled by the future commissioner⁶⁹.

Activities of the Russian provisional administration after the end of the Russo-Turkish War

The presence of a Russian provisional administration on Bulgarian lands was sanctioned in the peace treaty signed at San Stefano on 19 February/3 March 1878, which ended the Russo-Turkish War. It contained arrangements extremely favourable to Russia and guaranteed the national aspirations of the Bulgarians almost in full. They gained the right to establish a unified and autonomous state – a principality, with a Christian government and a national militia, nominally only dependent on the Sultan. It was to include those provinces of the Empire with a predominantly Bulgarian population. In order to “introduce a new order” on the territory of the newly established state, stretching from the Black Sea in the east to the Macedonian lakes in the west and from the Danube in the north to the Aegean in the south, Russia secured the right to establish the office of a tsarist commissar for these lands for two years. Pending the formation of a “local militia”,

⁶⁷ D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁶⁸ *Proekt uchrezhdeniya upravleniya Knyazhestva Bolgarskago*, [in:] N.R. Ovsiyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 235–239.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 92–94.

Russian occupation troops of no more than 50,000 were to assist him if necessary⁷⁰.

The concluded peace treaty changed the political order in the Balkans and caused the counteraction of the European powers concerned by this act. Its validity in Europe was questioned⁷¹, and soon afterwards, at a congress held from 1/13 June to 1/13 July 1878 in Berlin, representatives of the “concert of European states” (Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Russia and Italy) and the Ottoman Empire, made significant changes to the San Stefano Treaty. These included limiting the area of the Bulgarian state. It was divided into three parts. The lands between the Danube and the Old Planina and the Sofia district became part of the autonomous Bulgarian Principality under the authority of the Sultan⁷². From the south-eastern part of San Stefano Bulgaria, located between the Old Plannina and the Rhodopes, the autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia, which remained politically and militarily dependent on Constantinople, was created⁷³, while Macedonia and parts of Eastern Thrace were returned to the authority of the Sultan⁷⁴. The duration of the Russian occupation troops’ stay in Bulgarian lands was also changed. It was shortened to nine months⁷⁵.

On the basis of the provisions adopted in Berlin, civil authority in the territory of northern Bulgaria was initially to rest in the hands of a provisional government working under the supervision of a Russian commissioner. He was to be assisted in its control by the Ottoman commissioner and the consuls of the signatory states of the treaty, delegated for this purpose⁷⁶. The European powers also decided that “When the organic statute is completed, the people will immediately proceed to elect a prince”⁷⁷.

⁷⁰ Article 6–8, *Preliminary Treaty of Peace between Russia and Turkey*, San Stefano 19 February/3 March 1878, doc. no. 518, [in:] *The Map of Europe...*, p. 2672.

⁷¹ The consolidation of Russian influence in the region and the creation of a large and strong Bulgarian state were jointly opposed by Britain and Austria-Hungary. Cf. W.L. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871–1890*, New York 1964, pp. 130–149.

⁷² Article 1, *Treaty between Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Turkey, for the Settlement of the Affairs of the East*, Berlin 13th July 1878, doc. no. 530, [in:] *The Map of Europe...*, p. 2766.

⁷³ Article 13, *ibidem*, p. 2744.

⁷⁴ Article 22, *ibidem*, p. 2778.

⁷⁵ Article 17, *ibidem*, pp. 2776–2777.

⁷⁶ Article 6, *ibidem*, p. 2770.

⁷⁷ Article 7, *ibidem*.

These decisions caused discontent among the Bulgarian population. The despondency and uncertainty about the way forward was further exacerbated by the sudden death of Cherkassky. At this difficult moment, the leadership of the Chancellery rested in the hands of General Anuchin, who for several months independently supervised the work of this team⁷⁸. On 13/25 June 1878, the Tsar's commissar-adjutant general Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Dondukov-Korsakov arrived at the headquarters of the Russian civil administration in Plovdiv, enthusiastically welcomed by the Bulgarians⁷⁹. His arrival calmed the mood among the local Bulgarian population, triggered by the unfavourable arrangements of the Berlin Congress, and gave a new impetus to the activities of the Russian civil administration.

Dondukov-Korsakov was 58 years old at the time and had a law degree. At the same time, he had a wealth of experience in leading the civil and military administration⁸⁰. Unlike Prince Cherkassky, he was characterised by his calm character, great accessibility and extraordinary simplicity, which immediately won him the sympathy of the Bulgarians⁸¹. His main task was to bring to a conclusion the establishment of the administration, the formation of the army and the convening of the legislative assembly and the passing of the organic statute of the Bulgarian principality⁸². The "general instruction" of the Tsarist government put it as follows: "All your solicitude should be entirely devoted to the revival of independent life in Bulgaria and to the consolidation of its independence as soon as possible, so that when we leave the country it will be able to resist independently any hostile attack"⁸³.

In accordance with the guidelines received in St. Petersburg⁸⁴, an Administrative Council was constituted under the Prince's super-

⁷⁸ I.S. Ivanov, *Iz zametok...*, p. 671.

⁷⁹ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 11.

⁸⁰ Among other things, he was ataman of the Donskoye Army and served as Governor-General of Kiev from 1869 to 1878. Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 1–6.

⁸¹ I.S. Ivanov, *Iz zametok...*, p. 673.

⁸² D. Kosew, *Nowożytna historia Bułgarii*, transl. M. Czyrko, Warszawa 1954, p. 449.

⁸³ Quoted in *ibidem*.

⁸⁴ *Doplnitelna instruktsia na ruskoto ministerstvo na vanshnite raboti do knyaz Aleksandar M. Dondukov-Korsakov o strukturata na saveta na imperatorskia ruski komisar v Balgaria*, S. Peterburg, 15 april 1878 g., doc. no. 19, [in:] *Rusia i vazstanovyavaneto...*, pp. 96–103.

vision, consisting initially of six heads of departments⁸⁵. The work of the Council was headed by Major General Mikhail Domonovich⁸⁶, and included the heads of the following departments: military affairs Major General Vasily Grigorievich Zolotarev⁸⁷, internal affairs Major General Peter Apollonovich Gresser⁸⁸, justice Sergey Lukyanov, finance Konstantin Andreyevich Bukh⁸⁹, public enlightenment Professor Marin Drinov, customs Lev Fëdorovich Tukholka⁹⁰. In addition to them, the exarch and metropolitans of the

⁸⁵ A little later, the head of the foreign affairs branch, established on the basis of the general affairs and diplomatic relations chancellery, was included in the Council. Cf. *Zapoved No 2 knyaz A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov za preobrazuvane na diplomaticheskoto otdelenie na bivshata kantselaria na imperatorskia ruski komisar v otdel vanshnite raboti*, Sofia, 9 yuli 1878 g., doc. no. 25, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 122–123.

⁸⁶ The general left behind the best possible memories in Bulgaria. He won the affection of Bulgarians with his exceptional kindness towards them. Cf. I.S. Ivanov, *Bolgarskoe opalchenie v 1876–1878...*, p. 421.

⁸⁷ Vasily Grigorievich Zolotarev, born in 1836, was educated at the 1st Moscow Cadet Corps. In 1862, he graduated from the Nikolaev General Staff Academy in St. Petersburg and was posted to the Caucasus, where he held various staff positions. In 1863, he took part in the expedition to Khiva. On his return from Bulgaria in 1882, he became head of the Cossack army's General Board. Died in 1891. Cf. *Voennaya enciklopediya*, ed. K.I. Velichko *et al.*, vol. X, Peterburg 1912, p. 544.

⁸⁸ Peter Apollonovich Gresser, born in 1833, educated at the 1st Cadet Corps in St. Petersburg. From 1862 to 1864 senior adjutant on the staff of the grenadier corps, and then official in the Kiev general governorate. From 1871 governor of Volyn. On his return from Bulgaria, in 1880–1882 governor of Kharkiv and then oberpolicmajster in St Petersburg. From 1883 to 1892 mayor of the capital of the Russian Empire. Died in 1892. Cf. *Entsyklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgauza i Efrona*, vol. IXA (*Gravilat–Davenant*), ed. K.K. Arseniev, S.-Peterburg 1893, p. 626.

⁸⁹ Konstantin Andreyevich Bukh, born in 1812. From 1856 head of the state property department in Ufa, from where he was transferred to Samara in 1866 and to St. Petersburg in 1874, where he became a member of the council of the Minister of Finance. In 1876, he was posted to Montenegro as chief representative of the Russian Red Cross. On his return to Russia he was vice-chairman of the St. Petersburg Prison Committee. Died in 1895. Cf. *Biograficheskii slovar. Vyshniye chiny Rossiyskoy imperii (22.10.1721 – 2.03.1917)*, vol. I (A–Z), ed. E.L. Potemkin, Moskva 2017, p. 225. Cf. also N.K. Bukh, *Vospominaniya*. Predislovie Feliks Kon, Moskva 1928.

⁹⁰ Lev Fëdorovich Tukholka, born in 1841. From 1871 he held various posts in the customs administration, including managing the customs chamber in the Radziwill estate. On his return from Bulgaria, he was mayor of Odessa (1882), and later director of a department in the Ministry of Finance. Died in 1899. Cf. *Biograficheskii slovar. Vyshniye chiny Rossiyskoy imperii (22.10.1721 – 2.03.1917)*, vol. III (R–Ya), ed. E.L. Potemkin, Moskva 2017, p. 314.

Bulgarian Orthodox Church were members of the Council. In addition, at the invitation of the Commissioner, other persons could attend the Council meetings⁹¹.

The duties of the heads of the departments were to supervise the department entrusted to them and to monitor the correct implementation of the regulations issued by the commissioner. Each of them was assisted by a Bulgarian assistant, which on the one hand was supposed to prepare future cadres for independent functions in the state administration, and on the other hand facilitated communication with the local population⁹².

In accordance with the instructions received in the first period, the prince devoted much attention to the formation of the Bulgarian army. The decision as to its shape was taken on 7/19 April 1878 at a special meeting organised by the Russian Minister of War, General Dmitry Alekseyevich Milutin. As a result of the arrangements made at that time, a decree was issued defining the provisional principles of the organisation of the armed forces. The Bulgarian army was to have the character of a territorial (militia) army, which was emphasised by its name – the “Territorial Army”, and men aged between 20 and 30 were to be subject to compulsory service in its ranks, regardless of their nationality and religion⁹³.

On 13/25 July 1878, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov issued an order to form the first troops of the Bulgarian Territorial Army, which included the volunteer troops, formed in 1877 on the territory of Romania, the so-called *opalchenie*⁹⁴, which had taken part in the Russo-Turkish War⁹⁵, and the newly formed squads (battalions), batteries and *sotnias*⁹⁶. The necessary rifles, uniforms,

⁹¹ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 43; D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–135; M.G. Manolova, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁹² S.N. Boyanov, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁹³ *Vremenni pravila za sazdavane na Bulgarska Zemska Voyska*, 25 april 1878 g., doc. no. 3, [in:] *Bulgarska voenna istoria. Podbrani izvori i dokumenti*, vol. II, ed. H. Hristov, Sofia 1984, pp. 25–29.

⁹⁴ *Zapoved No. 40 na Glavnokomanduvashitia ruskata Dunavska Armia za formirane na Bulygarskoto opalchenie*, Kishinev, 5 april 1877 g., doc. no. 1, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 23–24.

⁹⁵ For a more extensive discussion of this topic, see *Bulgarskoto opalchenie v Osvoboditelnata vojna 1877–1878 godinni*, Sofia 1935, pp. 15–70.

⁹⁶ *Zapoved No. 1 na Ruskia Imperatorski Komisar v Bulgaria za sazdavane na Bulgarskata Zemska Voyska*, Plovdiv, 13 yuli 1878 g., doc. no. 5, [in:] *Bulgarska voenna...*, pp. 32–33.

cannons, horses and ammunition to arm and equip them were donated by the Russian side⁹⁷.

In late July and early August on Bulgarian soil, conscription was conducted for the first time, as a result of which 20,400 men were drafted into service, three thousands of whom were incorporated into existing battalions, and new units were formed from the remainder⁹⁸. To meet the demand for officer cadres, a military school was launched in Sofia⁹⁹, and a significant number of Bulgarians were sent to Russia for training¹⁰⁰.

As far as administrative activities were concerned, following the end of the war with the Ottoman Empire, steps were taken to establish civilian authorities in areas that had hitherto been under the rule of military authorities. Governorates were established, and gubernatorial, district and village councils were set up. By special decree, 12-member councils were established in each town¹⁰¹.

Using previously prepared drafts, modelled on legal solutions introduced in 1864 in Russia, the judiciary was reformed. The provisional regulations adopted on 28 August/9 September 1878 established, among other things, the institution of courts of appeal, changed the mode of appointment of judges and created the Supreme Court of Cassation¹⁰². Matters relating to the functioning of the penitentiary system¹⁰³ and the police¹⁰⁴ were also put in order.

⁹⁷ *Iz otzhetta na Ruskia Imperatorski Komisar v Bulgaria do voennia ministar v Rusia za deynostta mu po organizatsiyata, vaorazhenieto i snabdyavaneto na Bulgarskata Zemska Voyska*, Plovdiv, 13 yuli 1878 g., doc. no. 8, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 36–43.

⁹⁸ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 122.

⁹⁹ *Zapoved No. 18 na knyaz Dondukov-Korsakov za otkrivane na voenno uchilistche v Sofia*, Sofia, 26 noembri 1878 g., doc. no. 45, [in:] *Rusia i vazstanovyavaneto...*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁰ 90 Bulgarians were sent to the cavalry junkers' school in Elizavetgrad (now Kirovograd), and 42 to the sappers' school in St. Petersburg and the armament school in Tule. Cf. *Iz „Istoricheski ocherk o dejnostta Rusite po ustroystvoto grazhdanskoto upravlenie v Bulgaria 1877–1879 g.“*, [Sankt Peterburg 1878 g.], doc. no. 55, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 195.

¹⁰¹ *Vremennoe polozhenie o gorodskikh sovetakh v Kniazhestve Bolgarii*, 19 sentyabrya 1978 g. doc. no. 30, [in:] *Sbornik materialov...*, Vyp. 1, pp. 179–193.

¹⁰² N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 28–30; D. Tokushev, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–41. For more on the detailed legal arrangements: V. Palauzov, *op. cit.*, pp. 75–93.

¹⁰³ M.G. Manolova, *op. cit.*, pp. 119–120.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 116–117; G.D. Todorov, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

In addition, changes were made to the tax system, the pig tax and the tax lease system were abolished¹⁰⁵. This ensured that the current expenses of the administration were covered and that a reserve fund of more than 14 million francs was created, which remained at the disposal of the Bulgarian authorities after the Russian administration left the country¹⁰⁶.

In order to improve the economic situation, the operation of agricultural funds was re-established¹⁰⁷. Within a short period of time, out of the 33 cash registers that had existed until recently, 15 were put into operation¹⁰⁸. New customs tariffs were also introduced and customs offices were established in the Black Sea ports and on the Danube¹⁰⁹. In January 1879 the statute of the Bulgarian National Bank in Sofia with a capital of 2 million francs was approved and it was given the right to issue securities¹¹⁰.

A socially important process was the “agrarian revolution” and the liquidation of feudal remnants, which had already begun during the hostilities. This process consisted of the expropriation and parcelling out of the large farms remaining in the hands of the Muslims and the takeover by the Bulgarians of the land and farm buildings abandoned by the war refugees¹¹¹. This was done, it must be made clear, in contravention of the provisions guaranteeing legal protection of the property of Muslim refugees contained in both the Treaty of San Stefano¹¹² and the Berlin decisions¹¹³.

Failure to comply with these provisions resulted in interventions by the High Port and European powers. This prompted the Russian occupation authorities to issue a decree on 2/14 August 1878 regulating the recovery of land and property by Muslims. Its implementation, however, encountered a number of proced-

¹⁰⁵ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 30.

¹⁰⁶ D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

¹⁰⁷ *Tsirkular I.S. Ivanova okruzhnym nachalnikam o sozdanii okruzhnykh zemledel'cheskikh kass*, Sliven, 30 sentyabrya 1878 g., doc. no. 151, [in:] *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii...*, vol. III, p. 247.

¹⁰⁸ D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 155–156.

¹¹⁰ *Ustav Bolgarskago narodnago banka*, 25 yanvarya 1879 g., doc. no. 11, [in:] *Sbornik materialov...*, Vyp. 2, pp. 402–411.

¹¹¹ K. Popek, *Musulmanie w Bulgarii 1878–1912*, Kraków 2022, p. 355.

¹¹² Article 11, *Preliminary Treaty...*, p. 2673.

¹¹³ Article 12, *Treaty between...*, p. 2773.

ural problems, causing the issue to be finally resolved only in early 1881, two years after the end of the Russian civil administration¹¹⁴.

Under the direction of the head of the Department of Public Enlightenment, Professor Drinov, the school system was reformed according to Russian models. Compulsory free education for girls and boys and Bulgarian textbooks were introduced. Schools came under one administration and were covered by a unified curriculum. With a view to preparing an adequate number of teachers, two classical gymnasiums were opened in Sofia and Gabrovo, as well as three new real schools and two seminaries. The budget of the occupation authorities also provided 60,000 francs to cover the costs associated with the education of the best-prepared youth abroad¹¹⁵.

The foundations of the health security system were also set in motion. Legal acts temporarily regulating its activities were prepared¹¹⁶, and hospitals were opened in Sofia, Plovdiv, Ruse, Tyrnovo and several other towns. Pharmacies were also opened¹¹⁷.

Exercising direct supervision over the activities of the administration, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov also spared no expense in rebuilding Orthodox churches, monasteries and church schools. On his initiative, many church buildings destroyed during the April uprising of 1876 and the Russo-Turkish War were restored¹¹⁸.

With the Berlin Treaty becoming legally binding on 10/22 October 1878, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov left Plovdiv, which was within the borders of Eastern Rumelia, and moved to Sofia. On the territory of Rumelia and the Adrianopolsky district, the duties of the governor-general were assumed by the commander of IX Corps, Lt. Gen. Arkady Dmitrievich Stolypin¹¹⁹.

In this situation, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a new instruction to the Tsar's Commissar in North Bulgaria, instructing his attention to the following issues: the reorganisation of the

¹¹⁴ For a more extensive discussion of this issue, see K. Popek, *op. cit.*, pp. 357–363.

¹¹⁵ D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, p. 157; N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 25–26.

¹¹⁶ *Pravila ob ustroystve meditsinskoy chasti*, 1 fevralya 1879 g., doc. no. 4, [in:] *Sbornik materialov...*, Vyp. 2, pp. 249–289.

¹¹⁷ M. Petrov, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹¹⁸ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 27–28.

¹¹⁹ D. Georgievskiy, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–145; N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 37–38.

Territorial Army, the preparation of a draft organic statute for the Principality (so that its adoption and the election of a ruler would take place while the Russians were still in power), ensuring the evacuation of Ottoman troops, the organisation of the police and gendarmerie and the supervision of the activities of the local authorities¹²⁰.

At the beginning of 1879, the reorganisation of the Bulgarian Territorial Army was completed. After the separation of nine infantry battalions and two cavalry *sotnias* and their subsequent incorporation into the East Rumelian militia, it now consisted of: 21 infantry battalions, 8 artillery batteries, 4 cavalry *sotnias*, 2 sapper companies and 1 fortress artillery company. This gave a total of around 21,000 soldiers. In view of the shortage of personnel, command posts were filled almost exclusively by Russian officers, of whom there were 394. In addition, there were 135 non-commissioned officers and 2,694 Tsarist soldiers in the ranks of the Bulgarian army¹²¹.

Of particular importance was the drafting of an organic statute. On the basis of the guidelines received and the constitutional solutions adopted in the neighbouring countries (Serbia, Greece and Romania), as well as the opinions collected from 20 prominent Bulgarians, the head of the Justice Department of the Council, Lukyanov, and the head of the gendarmerie, Colonel Yevgeny Osipovich Jankovsky¹²² prepared a document of a moderately conservative nature, containing the basis for the functioning of the future Bulgarian state. In early November 1878 it was sent to St. Petersburg for approval¹²³.

Annotated by the Tsar and Nikolay Karlovich Girs, General Milutin and Prince Alexei Borisovich Lobanov-Rostovsky, the document was analysed by a special commission set up at the Second Department of the Imperial Chancellery, with the participation of Professor of Constitutional Law and Legal History Alexander Dmitrevich Gradovsky. On 27 December 1878/3 January 1879,

¹²⁰ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 42–43.

¹²¹ *Zapiska o deyatelnosti vremennago ruskago upravleniya v Bolgarii*, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 222.

¹²² M.G. Korotkikh, *Istoriya sozdaniya Tyrnovskoy Konstitucii 1879 g. (k 100-letiyu pervoy Bolgarskoy Konstitucii)*, "Pravovedenie" 1979, no. 2, p. 55.

¹²³ N.R. Ovsyanyy, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 53–54.

the draft organic statute was sent back to Bulgaria with the instruction to make amendments to liberalise some provisions¹²⁴. Once these had been made and the text translated into Bulgarian, the statute was brought before the Bulgarian Constituent Assembly¹²⁵.

On 10/22 February 1879, the first session of the Legislative Assembly began in Tyrnovo. It was attended by 221 deputies, of whom 117 were clergy and representatives of the administration and judiciary, 20 were nominated by the commissioner and 88 deputies were elected. Apart from 16 persons, all MPs were Bulgarians¹²⁶.

In his opening remarks, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov emphasised its unique nature and declared that the draft statute prepared by the Russian administration was of a subsidiary nature and that the deputies were free to make changes to its content provided that they did not violate the Berlin Treaty¹²⁷.

After discussing organisational and procedural matters, at its first working session the Assembly elected a 15-member commission to evaluate the draft submitted by the Russian administration and prepare guidelines containing the general principles on which the Bulgarian Constitution was to be based¹²⁸.

On 21 March/1 April 1879, a committee with a majority of conservative politicians completed its work and presented the *Report on the Basic Principles of the Constitution of the Principality of Bulgaria*¹²⁹. It met with criticism from a section of MPs with liberal views. As a result of the vote, the document was rejected and the delegates proceeded with the draft, discussing and voting on

¹²⁴ V.M. Khevrolina, *op. cit.*, pp. 440–441; M.G. Korotkikh, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹²⁵ *Ruski dvuezichen proyekt na Organicheski Ustav za darzhavnoto ustroystvo na Bulgarskoto Knyazhestvo, predstavnen za razglezhdane ot Uchreditelnoto Sabranie*, Fevruari 1879 g., dok. nr. 76, [in:] *Rusia i vazstanovyavaneto...*, pp. 232–246.

¹²⁶ Z. Markova, E. Statelova, *Sociologicheskoprouchvane na sastava na Uchreditelnoto sabranie*, [in:] *Tyrnovskite zakondateli. Nauchni studii, dokladi i saobshthenia, posveteni na 100-godishninata na Uchreditelnoto sabranie i Tyrnovskata konstitucia. Yubileen sbornik*, Sofia 1980, pp. 23–33.

¹²⁷ *Slovoto na Negovo Siyatelstvo Imperatorskia Rossiyskiy Kommisar v Bulgaria, Knyaza Dondukov-Korsakova pri pyrvoto otvaryanie na Nardnoto Sabranie v Tyrnovo na 10-y fevruaria 1879 godina*, [in:] *Protokolite na Uchreditelnoto bulgarsko narodno sabranie v Tyrnovo*, Plovdiv–Sofia–Ruschuk 1879, pp. 5–7.

¹²⁸ *Dnevnik II. Zasedanie na 14 fevruaria 1879*, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 40.

¹²⁹ *Raport na komissiata vyrhu osnovnit nachala na Konstitutsiyata za Bulg. Knyazhestvo*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 7–16.

each article separately¹³⁰. The work was completed on 14/26 April 1879, and on 16/28 April 1879 the Basic Law was voted on in its entirety and signed by all the deputies, as well as Metropolitan Antim I of Vidinsk and Prince Dondukov-Korsakov's plenipotentiary, head of the Council's Justice Department, secret councillor Lukyanov¹³¹. Following these actions, the Legislative Assembly was dissolved¹³².

Under the adopted document, Bulgaria was to be a "hereditary and constitutional monarchy with national representation"¹³³, and the "supreme representative and head of state" was to be the prince¹³⁴. It granted citizens extensive rights that the Tsar's subjects could only dream of. On the question of dependence on the Sultan, it mentioned nothing about the vassal status of the state.

In accordance with the statute passed, the matter of the election of the sovereign on 17/29 April 1879 was dealt with by the Grand National Assembly, which was a continuation of the Legislative Assembly in terms of its composition and number of deputies. The election of the prince was of a purely formal nature. In line with the Tsar's wishes, the 22-year-old nephew of the Russian Tsarina, Lieutenant of the 2nd Regiment of Hessian Dragoons Alexander Joseph von Battenberg, son of the Austrian general Prince Alexander Ludwig von Hessen-Darmstadt from the morganatic wife of Countess Julia Teresa Hauke, daughter of General of the Polish Army and Minister of War of the Kingdom of Poland Jan Maurycy Hauke of the Bosak Coat of Arms¹³⁵, was appointed to the throne. The admixture of Polish blood was of little significance in this case, nevertheless, in later times the Bulgarian ruler's "inappropriate behaviour" was often explained in Berlin and St. Petersburg by his Polishness¹³⁶.

¹³⁰ S. Radev, *Stroitelite na savremenna Bulgaria*, vol. I (*Tsarwaneto na kn. Aleksandra 1879–1886*), 3rd ed. Sofia 1990, pp. 62–63; G.D. Todorov, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹³¹ *Dnevnik XXVII. Zasydanie na 16 aprilia 1879*, [in:] *Protokolite na Uchreditel-noto...*, p. 336.

¹³² *Protokol zakrytia narodnago sabrania v Tyrnove, sozvannago dlya razsmotrenia Organicheskago Ustava*, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 337.

¹³³ Chapter II, Article 4, *Constitution of the Principality of Bulgaria*, Tirnovo 16/28 April 1879, doc. no. 574, [in:] *The Map of Europe...*, p. 2866.

¹³⁴ Part II, Article 5, *ibidem*.

¹³⁵ *Donesenie A.P. Davydova N.K. Girsu ob izbranii bolgarskim knyazem Aleksandra Battenberga*, Ternovo, 17/29 aprelya 1879 g., doc. no. 366, [in:] *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii...*, vol. III, pp. 572–574.

¹³⁶ Z. Klejn, *Bulgaria. Szkice z dziejów najnowszych*, Pułtusk 2005, p. 22.

As soon as he received news of the election, the prince travelled to Russia, where on 2/16 May 1879 a Bulgarian delegation presented him with the deed of election as ruler¹³⁷. After paying courtesy visits to the capitals of European powers and receiving the Sultan's investiture, Prince Battenberg arrived in Varna on 24 June/6 July 1879, where he was given a ceremonial reception. On 26 June/8 July in Tyrnovo, Battenberg took the oath of office and assumed the name of Alexander I¹³⁸. During his stay in the old Bulgarian capital, the prince reviewed the troops of the army and took the oath from them. The revue was officially attended for the last time by the tsarist commissar Prince Dondukov-Korsakov, who left Bulgaria shortly afterwards, thus ending the mission and the activities of the Russian provisional administration¹³⁹. By 6/20 July 1879, the main positions in the civil administration had been transferred into the hands of Bulgarians¹⁴⁰. At the same time, the last troops of the Russian army left Bulgaria. Only a small group of Russian servicemen remained on the territory of the Principality to take care of the command and training of the Bulgarian army troops.

Completion

The Russian provisional civil administration in Bulgaria was established in the areas occupied by Russian troops during the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878). It functioned from June 1877 to June 1879, i.e. during and immediately after the military operations. From a legal point of view, it had the character of an occupation authority, which covered the European part of the Ottoman Empire inhabited mostly by people of Bulgarian origin. Hence, for the Bulgarians, it did not have an oppressive character; on the

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 87–88.

¹³⁸ *Vazvanie na knyaz A. Batenberg za vstapvaneto mu na bulgarskia prestol*, V. Tyrnovo, 27 yuli 1879 g., doc. no. 7, [in:] *Vanshnata politika na Bulgaria. Dokumenti i materialy*, vol. I (1879–1886), eds T. Dobriyanov, T. Bakalov, K. Georgiev, C. Doynova, M. Kovacheva, R. Popov, E. Statelova, Sofia 1978, p. 17.

¹³⁹ On his return to Russia, in 1880, the prince became provisional Governor-General of Kharkiv and took command of the troops of the Kharkiv Military District. A year later he was transferred to the same position in Odessa. From 1882 to 1890 he was head of the civil administration and Commander-in-Chief of troops in the Caucasus. In 1890, he became a member of the Council of State. Died in 1893. Cf. *Voennaya enciklopediya...*, vol. IX, pp. 181–182.

¹⁴⁰ A.V. Plotnikova, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

contrary: hopes for a rapid revival of statehood were linked to its existence. It thus took the form of a “peaceful occupation”, supported by the majority of the local population and regulated by international agreements.

Its main objective was to replace the old Ottoman legal and administrative order with a new one, in which Bulgarians were to become landlords in the inhabited lands. Its activities can be divided into two periods: wartime and post-war. During the first, the activity of the Russian civil administration was largely directed towards providing support to the fighting Tsarist troops, maintaining order at the back of the front and laying the foundations for the construction of the local administration. This period was associated with the activity of officials of the Civil Chancellery at the Field Staff of the Danube Army led by Prince Cherkassky. The second stage was the emergence of the central authorities in the form of the Administrative Council and the adoption of a constitution and the election of a ruler. At the same time, steps were taken during this period to form the Bulgarian army, and efforts to develop state institutions continued, using Russian bureaucratic practices and local models. In an effort to facilitate the development of statehood, preparations were also made for Bulgarians who were to occupy the highest positions in the state in the future. At this time, the central figure in control of the administration of Bulgarian lands (with the exception of East Rumelia) was the tsarist commissar Prince Dondukov-Korsakov.

Organised hastily in the complex political conditions of the time, the Russian civil administration successfully accomplished the tasks set before it. However, in its day-to-day activities, especially in the initial period, it was not able to avoid a lack of coordination and even chaos¹⁴¹. Some officials with a military pedigree had no preparation for administrative work and were not always able to find their way in managing civilian personnel. Nevertheless, overall the administration they led met the expectations of the Bulgarians and the Russian ruling spheres. Thanks to the projects implemented at the time, North Bulgaria managed to avoid anarchy and laid the foundations for the social as well as economic development of the state and equipped it with cadres. It is characteristic of the process of building Bulgarian statehood that it began

¹⁴¹ E. Indzhov, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

with local authorities. Central structures were created later, after the decision to establish the state was announced. The majority of educated and influential Bulgarians, who soon took over the reins of government, managed to gather around the idea of its construction, which is extremely important. An armed force capable of defending the sovereignty of the state and its borders was also created. The greatest achievement in political terms, however, was the drafting and adoption of the Tirnov Constitution, which was one of the most liberal in Europe, and the election of a ruler, Alexander von Battenberg. Thus, northern Bulgaria gained international recognition and became an autonomous state unit.

From Russia's point of view, this was undoubtedly a major success, which was to ensure its privileged position in the Principality of Bulgaria and, it was believed, create a permanent bridgehead from which to extend its influence in this region of Europe. Clearly, the actions of the Russian administration were not altruistic, but this does not detract from its achievements for the development of Bulgarian statehood. It must nevertheless be remembered that the changes were to a large extent introduced arbitrarily and from a position of strength, which discouraged part of the Bulgarian elite, who began to view the actions of the Russians in their country with increasing suspicion and distrust.

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