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Local Self-Government in the Municipalities of Serbia and Bulgaria After the 1878 Congress of Berlin

Abstract

According to the Berlin Treaty (1878), the Principality of Serbia became an independent state with an enlarged teritory (Nish, Vranje, Pirot, Toplica). Bulgaria was devided into two legal-political units: the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia. The Principality of Bulgaria gained a status of a vasal state under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire while Eastern Rumelia obtained a status of a province without political autonomy, under complete power of the Sultan. In 1888 a new liberal-democratic Constitution was passed in Serbia. According to this Constitution, two important laws were adopted too: Law on Municipalities of 1889 and Law on Counties and Districts of 1890. They established an important level of self-government in municipalities, districts and counties. A special process of the establishment of the first state and local government was carried out in the Principality of Bulgaria by the Russian temporary government. In 1879 the first Bulgarian – Trnovo Constitution was passed. Afterwards, several important laws were also adopted. Regarding Eastern Rumelia, an international Committee made a Statute for this province being confirmed by the Sultan. The Statute provided for both institutions of the central and local authorities, based on the principal of the bureaucratic centralism. In 1885 Eastern Rumelia proclaimed the unification with the Principality of Bulgaria. After that, two important laws regarding local self-government were adopted: Law on Town Municipalities and Law on Village Municipalities, both od 1886.

Keywords: Serbia, Bulgaria, Eastern Rumelia, local self-government, municipality.

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Introduction

In their modern history, Serbia and Bulgaria had different results in the development of the idea and political institution of local self-government on the pattern of that in Western Europe especially after the Congress of Berlin in 1878. This process took place in the dramatic period for Europe and the Balkans marked by intense rivalry between Great Powers, the demise of the Ottoman Empire, and the rise of national conciousness and the consequent uprisings of the Balkan nations against the Ottoman rule. These upheavals disturbed the tranquility of the so-called Bismarck Europe, that is to say the system of international relations arranged by the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck at the Berlin Peace Congress of 1878 (See: Kennan 1979; Roberts 2001; Lowe 2005; Ković 2007).

Due to the Berlin Treaty, Serbia became an independent state with a considerably enlarged territory.[2] She obtained the districts of Niš, Vranje, Pirot and Toplica. These areas were known as the New Areas.[3] It took five years (1877–1882) to establish state administration and local government in these newly-liberated areas and integrate them fully into the legal system of pre-war Serbia (See Svirčević 2011: 144–164).

On the other hand, Bulgaria remained a part of Rađevina Ottoman Empire and divided in two legal-political units: 1) the Principality of Bulgaria which was completely autonomous but still a vassal state and 2) East Rumelia, a special administrative unit without political autonomy and under the direct rule of the Supreme Porte, with a governor appointed by the Great Powers – the signatories of the Berlin Treaty – and approved by the Sultan (Mazower 2003: 100; Ković 2007: 342-344).

The existing studies have jumped to conclusion that Serbia and Bulgaria were commited to building a system of local administration (self-government) on the pattern of that existant in West European democratic countries. Both countries adopted the general idea but accommodated its application to their own social environment and local customs. The results were particularly visible in municipal self-govern-

2 Before the Turco-Serbian wars of 1876-78, the Principality of Serbia was under the Ottoman suzerainty and consisted of the Pashalik of Belgrade and the areas attached to it on the basis of the Sultan's decree (hatti-sherif) of 1833: Ključ, Krajina, Crna Reka, Gurgusovac, Banja, Svrljig, Aleksinac, Ražanj, Paraćin, Kruševac, Jadar, Radjevina, a small part of the region known as Stari Vlah, and the Nahiye of Novi Pazar. See Bataković 2013: 61–62.

3 Serbia's territory considerably expanded and the population increased by 299.640 (See: Milićević 1884: xvi).

ment whereas in district (in case of Serbia) and county self-government there was no much progress. For that reason, this paper focuses only on the structure of municipal self-government in the two Balkan countries.

The Municipal Local Self-Government in Serbia 1878–1893

2.1 General political circumstances in Serbia after the Congress of Berlin

After the Serbo-Turkish wars (1876–1878) and the international recognition of Serbia at the Congress of Berlin, the Regent Constitution of 1869 was still in effect stipulating a limited legislative power of the National Assembly and preserving the dominance of the executive and bureaucracy over other constitutional factors (Svirčević 2010a: 112-117; Radojević 2010; Bataković 2013: 186-191). Law on County Prefectural System and District Prefect Office of 1839 also established the state administration, district and county government according to the principle of bureaucratic centralization (Устроение окружны началничества... 1840: 78-83). Its distinctive feature was the subordination of district and county prefects to the central authority – Council of Ministers and Minister of Interior in particular. They were reduced to mere police agents deprived of any freedom of action. Thus, district and county prefects became rigid administrators who behaved arrogantly towards the people. The local administration was no more than a reflection of the central government's functions.

The municipal government was based on the relatively liberal Law on Municipalities of 1875 (Закон о изменама и допунама... 1878: 52-33), passed by the Ljubomir Kaljević government.[4] This Law established

4 Ljubomir Kaljević (1841–1907) was a politician, diplomat, academician and Prime Minister of Serbia. He studied law sciences in Heidelberg and Paris. Upon his return to Serbia, he published newspapers Serbia 1867–1870. It was the only newspaper opposing the regime of Prince Mihailo Obrenović (1860–1868) which voiced the opinion of liberal intelligentsia. Kaljević became a member of parliament for the first time in 1871. He began to publish the political newspapers Budućnost (Future) in 1873. He also served as Minister of Finance from 25 November 1874 to 20 January 1875. Later he was a head of the Ministry of Finance and was one of the founders of the Serbian Progressive Party in 1881. As a supporter of the House of Karađorđević, Kaljević became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the first cabinet formed after the 1903 coup d'etat(da izbegnemo objasnjavanje

a limited degree of self-government in municipalities. The people voted for a mayor in their municipalities. Nevertheless, this self-government was abolished at the beginning of the Serbo-Turkish war in 1877. After the war the municipal self-government was not restored.

Serbian policy underwent radical changes in 1881. That year the first modern political parties were formed which would mark the political development of Serbia in the following period. The appearance of the first organized political parties in Serbia was a consequence of several important historical factors: 1) the Regent Constitution established a basis for the participation of broader range of ordinary people in political life of Serbia, although there was no ministerial responsibility and parliamentary democracy (Dragnich 1994: 43);[5] 2) after the tragic death of Prince Mihailo Obrenović in 1868, the country was led by the Regency on behalf of the under aged Prince Milan, the only remaining descendent of the Obrenović dynasty; the main role in the Regency was played by Jovan Ristić (the two other members were Milivoje Petrović Blaznavac and Jovan Gavrilović) – the founder of the Liberal Party and one of the most skilful and respected diplomats; 3) the multi-party political scene was emulated by young Serbians who had graduated in Western Europe where they had acquired their knowledge of modern political parties, and finally; 4) the Serbian society reached the level of maturity necessary for party struggles and political competition.

The first organized political parties were the People's Radical Party, Progressive Party and Liberal Party. The Radicals led by Nikola Pašić were certainly the most formidable party with the very distinct political ideology and practical activity. The major tenets of their ideology were constitutional reform, introduction of parliamentarianism, self-government in local municipalities and districts, fully-fledged democracy, including the freedom of the press, association and public assembly, and a national program. Their ideological tenets may be inferred from their political programs, constitutional drafts, and numerous writings and articles (Stokes 1990; Protić 2007: 173). The mouthpiece of the Radicals was their renowned newspapers, Самоуправа (Self-Government).

o starom i novom kalendaru – majski prevrat u junu) and the assassination of King Alexandar Obrenović, and he remained in office until 21 September 1903.

5 Dragnich claimed that the Regent Constitution had introduced such a political system which had brought about parliamentary democracy. The author of this article, however, refuted such view in his article (Svirčević 2010: 205-218) and argued that it was the Deputy Constitution that had raised the question of ministerial responsibility and parliamentary democracy and did not establish them through its regulations.

From the very beginning, the Radicals were a highly combatant party, ready for a revolutionary change of the system of government. According to their program of 1881, they propounded that the state existed for the sake of the peasants, and not bureaucracy, but the latter abused the state authorities and turned the peasants into slaves (Milošević 1928). Instead, the first task of bureaucracy should have been to improve the life of common people. Therefore, the peasants had to join the People's Radical Party in its fight against the abuses of bureaucracy. Such agitation awakened the political consciousness of the peasant masses which gradually played a more active role in the political struggle. The peasants were not a passive and inarticulate mass anymore to be treated by county and district chiefs as they pleased. They embraced certain political principles and were willing to resolutely resist the government, and even the King, if they thought their rights were infringed on as evidenced by the famous Timok Rebellion in the fall of 1883.This rebellion was a popular uprising rather than the struggle between the King and the Radicals.[6]

Two documents, the constitutional proposal of 1883 and the Constitution of 1888, were particularly revealing as to the Radicals' view of the constitutional question.

The guiding principle of the proposal drawn up in July 1883 was the people's sovereignty (Milošević 1928: 108-128; Popović 1991: 54; Prodanović 1938: 203-205; Jovičić 1993: 487-494; Bataković 2013: 218). The people should be the sole source of power expressing their sovereign will through a national representative body – the National Assembly. The Assembly should be elected by secret ballot. General male suffrage was required. The National Assembly as the supreme legislative authority was envisaged to be at the top of the state pyramid. According to the proposal, the Assembly could take two forms: Regular and Grand. The jurisdiction of the Grand National Assembly was defined by the Constitution - it was supposed to be convened for the purpose of making a constitutional change. All legislative prerogatives were assigned to the Assembly. The sovereign was required to approve any law, but even if he refused to do so the Assembly could pass the same law

6 The Timok Rebellion of 1883 actually began as a small local radical revolt in the eastern Serbia, but it soon turned into an open war between the people and King Milan Obrenović. The rebellion was quelled by the army and the leadership of the People's Radical Party was accused of committing crimes against the state and King. For the Program of the People's Radical Party of Serbia of 1881 see: Krestić and Ljušić 1991: 101-106.

in its next session. A council of ministers acted as a mere instrument of the Assembly. In that way, the Radicals' proposal envisaged a system of government that strictly subordinated the executive branch to the legislature. The territory of the state was to be divided into districts and municipalities, all of which should enjoy an adequate level of local self-government. The proposal envisaged the so-called Convent system, an almighty National Assembly (Jovanović 1939: 43). The role of a sovereign was largely neglected. Basically, the project resembled a republic with the monarch at its head.

The system of local self-government as conceived by the Radicals was based on the division of the country into municipalities and districts, and the municipality was seen as a basic political and economic unit. Each municipality had the right to elect two representatives in District Assembly. The envisaged districts were quite large, with about 10,000 taxpayers each, and governed by three bodies: the District Assembly (the elective supreme decision-making body in a district), the District Control Committee (the executive organ of the Assembly), and the District Administrative Organ (with administrative and judicial responsibilities). All executive and administrative offices were elective and the officeholders were responsible to the respective District Assembly. The activities of a District Assembly included all educational, judicial, administrative, financial, statistical, technical, economic, and religious matters in a district (Nikić 1927: 242). In 1883, Aranđel-Raša Milošević, another distinguished leader of the People's Radical Party and a member of its Central Board, wrote a booklet – District Organization according to the Principle of Self-Government and Elective Rights – thoroughly explaining the concept and system of local autonomy (Svirčević 2009: 187-195; Svirčević 2011: 347-356).

2.2. Constitutional Development and Local Self-Government in Serbia, 1878–1893

The New Areas incorporated in Serbia after the victorious Serbo-Turkish Wars of 1876-1878 were administratively divided into four districts - Niš, Pirot, Toplica and Vranje. The establishment of the state administration and local government as well as complete incorporation into the legal system of pre-war Serbia took five years (1877–1882). It was a complex process ridden with many difficulties. The intention

was to bring stability to a backward feudal region marked by a volatile political situation, specific population allocation in these areas, high population density, intense migratory movements, ethnic and religious tensions, and a very low level of economic development. Thus, the establishment of the state administration and local government in the New Areas was a three-fold process which included 1) legal organization of new local institutions, 2) the regulation of agrarian relations, and 3) the colonization of New Areas. However, the new state administration in the New Areas was not autonomous of the central government (Svirčević 2011a: 144-145).

It should be noted that political conditions in the territory of postwar Serbia, were much more favourable to the development of a municipal self-government than before 1878. Serbia was able to maintain balance more successfully between the interests of Great Powers, particularly between Russia and Austro-Hungary, and to apply herself to the development of her own statehood and national culture. In 1884, the rigid and very conservative Law on Municipalities was passed. It established a strict centralization in the state administration. Municipalities did not possess any kind of autonomy (Закон о изменама и допунама... 1884: 167-195). This took place after the Timok Rebellion when King Milan Obrenović wanted to restore his undermined authority. However, after the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885–1886 and the Serbian defeat, King Milan decided to carry out radical changes in the constitutional system.[7]

The liberal-democratic Constitution of 1888, based on the Belgian Constitution of 1831 and a corner stone of Serbian democracy, was a great triumph of the People's Radical Party. Legal work on the Constitution had largely been done by Radical intellectuals, and therefore it expressed Radicals' ideas, although it was agreed upon by all three po-

7 In 1885, Bulgaria and the semi-autonomous Ottoman province of Eastern Rumelia declared their unification in the city of Plovdiv. The unification took place against the will of the Great Powers, including Russia. The Austro-Hungarian Empire which had been expanding its influence in the Balkans was particularly opposed to this act. Serbia also feared her position in the Balkans would be diminished. In addition, Serbia's ruler Milan Obrenović resented the fact that Serbian opposition leaders like Nikola Pašić had found asylum in Bulgaria after the supression of the Timok Rebellion. After the declaration of the unification massive protests broke out in Greece which feared the creation of a greater Bulgarian state in the Balkans and the government was called to declare war on Bulgaria. Serbia offered Greece a joint military action against Bulgaria but Greece rejected. King Milan declared war on Bulgaria on 14 November [2 November] 1885. The Serbian army was defeated at the battle of Slivnitsa on 16–19 November 1885.

litical parties. Its most significant feature was a system of parliamentary democracy. Its major characteristics may be summed up as follows:

- Guarantee of political and civil rights expressed through a multiparty system;
- Free elections (universal male suffrage) and a unicameral parliament (National Assembly);
- Dual right of legislative initiative shared between the Assembly and the King;
- The National Assembly's control over the government (inter pellations, interrogations, hearings);
- Ministerial responsibility (political and criminal);
- Right of the National Assembly to pass the budget, and;
- Administrative organization of the country according to the principle of local self-government (Popović 1991: 170; Bataković 2013: 226-231).

The Constitution of 1888 showed that the Radicals' concept had fully matured; the Radicals were capable of defining their ideas, finally accepting the principle of division of power expressed/exercised through parliamentary democracy. A number of laws were adopted on the basis of this Constitution. Two of them regulated the organization of the self-government at local level: Law on Municipalities of 1889 and Law on Counties and Districts of 1890.

2.3. Law on Municipalities of 1889

This Law (Закон о општинама 1889) was passed in the National Assembly thanks to the Government led by Radical Sava Grujić. This Law did not precisely demarcate/separate the original duties/prerogatives of municipal self-government and state duties transferred to municipalities by the central government. This confused situation could complicate the practical action of the Law. That raised an important question what did the autonomy of municipalities consist of. Researching this issue, Slobodan Jovanović[8] pointed out that for the Radicals the

8 Slobodan Jovanović (1869–1958), was born in Novi Sad, Austro-Hungary (today in Vojvodina, north part of Serbia). His father was the Serbian politician Vladimir Jovanović. He was famous Serbian scholar, historian, lawyer, literary critic, sociologist, professor and dean of the Law School in Belgrade, rector of the Belgrade University, president

term self-government was equivalent to no more than electiveness of local authorities. The extent of the autonomy of local authorities was not deemed that important (Jovanović 1991: 32). There could only be an assumption, more or less secure, municipal institutions – Mayor, Municipal Court, Municipal Council and Municipal Assembly (Article 11) – completely independent of tasks that belonged to the scope of self-government and did not receive any instructions for their work of the central state government. In respect to the exercise of the transferred business scope - the municipality had the status of a mere branch of central government bodies, without autonomy in decision-making. Separation from each other, however, it was not easy to do.

The Municipal Assembly was the most significant municipal institution according to the Law on Municipalities. It was something of a local representative body. It consisted of all male adult citizens who resided in a respective municipality and paid tax amounting to no less than 15 dinars per year. Officers and soldiers did not have the right to vote. The competence of the Municipal Assembly was regulated in Article 12. This body elected and revoked all municipal officers: the mayor, his assistant (kmet), members of the Municipal Council and the special municipal representative for the County Assembly (special organ). The Municipal Assembly was also authorized to pass decisions about the municipal tax – up to 40% of the state tax. This body also made decisions about the debt of municipality, the buying and selling of municipal real estate.

The next important municipal institution was the Municipal Court. It consisted of the mayor with the executive authorities, his assistant (kmet) and several servants (Article 26). (Article 32). President of the Municipal Court, assistants and servants could be appointed by those members of the municipality who were eligible to be a member of the Municipal Council. According to Article 23, the Municipal Court executed judicial, police, and administrative duties. The legislature considered it necessary to separate police from administrative authorities, although police authority was nothing but a part of state administration.

of the Serbian Cultural Club, president of the Yugoslav royla government in London 1942–1943. After the World War Two, the communist government sentenced him on „imprisement with hard labor and for a period of twenty years, the loss of individual political and civil rights for a period of ten years, confiscation of all assets and the loss of citizenship." In 2007 Slobodan Jovanović was rehabilitated by the decision of the County Court in Belgrade and the judgment sentencing him to imprisonment and loss of honor was declared null and void.

As a body of judicial authority, the Municipal Court performed negligible judicial function. It tried in both civil and criminal disputes of minor importance. For that reason, these trials were not transferred to the regular civil courts (Articles 16–17).

As police authority, a municipal court had a number of important duties: taking care of personal safety and property of citizens, environment protection, control over the real estate of municipality and various measures that served the merchants, maintaining bridges, roads, river banks, controlling all shops in the municipality (inns, butcher shops, bakeries, furriers etc.), removing all "immoral manners", taking care of persons under tutelage, seeing that children were sent to school, taking care of the health of people and livestock in the municipality, compiling a list of foreigners, making sure there were no beggars and idlers in the municipality etc. (Article 36).

However, the Municipal Court was also authorized to cooperate with the Municipal Council in passing the municipal budget which would then be confirmed by the County Council. A decision passed by the County Council was obligatory for the Municipal Council (Article 40).

Apart from this, each member of the Municipal Court had his own official duties. Thus, the competence of the president of the Municipal Court (Mayor) included: employing and discharge of municipal officials, receiving and opening letters, storage and usage the municipal seal, signing all municipal laws, imposing disciplinary penalties etc. (Article 49).

The third important municipal institution was the Municipal Council. Its size depended on the size of municipalities, i.e. the number of municipal voters. This institution was controlled by the Municipal Court. The law stipulates that: 1) in municipalities with up to 200 taxpayers, Municipal Council had 10 members; 2) in municipalities with more than 200 and less than 500 taxpayers, the Municipal Council had 16 members; 3) Belgrade Municipal Council consisted of 32 members (Article 53). Members of the Municipal Council may be elected by all citizens who were eligible to vote at the Municipal Assembly (Article 58).

The President of a Municipal Court was also the president of a Municipal Council (Article 54). His main function was reduced to the control of the Municipal Court, but he also performed some other duties.

The Municipal Council controlled the work of the Municipal Court (Article 68). It performed the following duties: 1) creating, modifying and establishing a municipal budget, reviewing of the municipal accounts and examining whether all the expenses were incurred according to the law; 2) authorizing the Municipal Court, in extraordinary circumstances, to perform all duties without the consent of the Municipal Council; 3) issuing merit solutions in all cases which would be referred for consideration in the municipality; 4) accepting resignations of the president of the Municipal Court, and Mayors, including their assistants (Article 69).

The Municipal Council made valid decisions only if 2/3 of its members were present during the session (Article 75). In the repeated voting, an absolute majority of votes was required to reach a decision (Article 77).

All municipal institutions were under legal and political control of the County Council and the central government (Article 80).

When Municipal Assembly or Council decided on state requirements relating to the county, district or state, an official appointed by the competent national authorities could attend such meeting (Article 81). Any decision of municipal authorities could be overruled by a supervisory authority, if found to be inconsistent with the law regardless of the character of municipal competence (Article 83). Also, the supervisory authority (Permanent District Council) may have inspected the register and accounts of the Municipal Court at any time (Article 85). Municipal Assembly, Court and Council could appeal against the decisions of a supervisory authority to the State Council which would then have the last word (Article 83).

As we can see, the central government was authorized to act against the municipal authorities when necessary – fines, removal from office, and other similar administrative measures. However, the central government did not act independently: it proposed the measures to be undertaken, but the State Council had to approve. Therefore, the central government could do nothing against municipal authorities – it could only litigate with the State Council (Jovanović 1991: 33). Given that the municipal budget was approved by the County Council rather than Minister of Finance, it could be safely said that the state's control over the municipality was very limited.

Commenting on this Law, Slobodan Jovanović presented the basic characteristics as follows: 1) small municipalities with mayors who

could always be replaced by Municipal Assembly; 2) municipalities were more under the supervision of the Permanent County Council than that of the state police (Ibid.).

Passing of the Law on Municipalities of 1889 represented a major step forward in the emancipation of local institutions from the central government. This Law was a launching pad in breaking up political dependence of local authorities from the central government. This process represented a unique mode of modernization and shaping political institutions on the basis of modern political ideas, very popular in Serbia at that time. Of course, there were many problems, abuses and inconsistencies in the implementation of the Law. The old, conservative habits of pre-modern era and client manners were still deeply rooted. They hindered the consistent implementation of the Law, in particular those provisions which enshrined the electiveness of municipal authorities and their essential autonomy. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the Law on Municipalities of 1889 introduced a limited municipal self-government. This legal act gave the Municipal Assembly the right to appoint municipal institutions and deprived the central government of the right to interfere. However, it did not grant full financial autonomy to municipal institutions, and that was its major fault. Overall, this Law was a significant improvement on the previous laws on municipalities and their legal structure.

It should be noted that the Law on Counties and Districts of 1890 (Закон о уређењу округа и срезова 1891), also established a limited form of self-government in districts and counties. Despite of that, this legal act also made a big step forward in the organization of the county and district local government.

These laws on local self-government were in effect until the first coup ďetat by King Alexander Obrenović in 1893, when the Regent contitution and all the relevant laws, including those on local government, returned in effect. After the May Coup in 1903, when King Alexander and his wife Queen Draga were assassinated by their officers, a new era emerged in the constitutional history of modern Serbia. The Constitution of 1888 was back in effect, this time known as the Constitution of 1903, and all other laws that had been passed on the basis of this liberal-democratic Constitution (Svirčević 2010a: 125-130). In addition, a new law on the structure and legal status of municipalities was passed in the National Assembly. It was more liberal than the Law on Municipalities of 1889.

3. The Municipal Self-Government in Bulgaria, 1878–1886.

3.1. The Russian temporary government – the origins of the Bulgarian statehood after the Congress of Berlin

Bulgaria had somewhat different historical experience than Serbia. After the Berlin Congress, she was divided in two political units – the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia. According to Article 7 of the Berlin Treaty, Tsarist Russia had an international mandate to establish the first domestic government in the Principality of Bulgaria. Russia had already established a provisional government in Bulgaria which was supposed to organize the state institutions and local authorities during the period of nine months. This provisional government went through two phases: 1) during the first phase, prior to the Berlin Congress the head of the provisional government was Count Vladimir Cherkasky; 2) during the deliberations in Berlin, Cherkasky died and was succeeded by Count Alexander Dondukov-Korsakow.

The foundation for the first Bulgarian administration was laid by Count Vladimir Cherkasky (1824–1878) – an experienced Russian diplomat and governor, who had gained substantial administrative experience while implementing political and economic reforms in Russia in 1861 and then in Poland in 1864. He issued the Note of the Future Tasks of the Civil Administration in Bulgaria, which contained guidelines for Russian foreign policy towards the Balkans, including the establishment of the Bulgarian civil government in the Bulgarian areas liberated from the Turks. This document was addressed to the Minister of the Russian Army, General D. A. Miljutin, and the Russian Emperor, Alexander II (Токушев 2004: 28-29).

Accepting this acting upon this Note, the Russian court proclaimed the establishment of the special Office with the aim of organizing civil administration in Bulgaria. Chief of General Staff of the Russian Army, General F. L. Geyden, suggested that the Office should perform the following tasks; 1) collection of statistical and historical data; 2) the gradual building of local administration in the liberated counties; 3) supplying the local population with food and other necessities; 4) setting up judicial authorities; 5) inclusion of the loyal civil servants of Bulgarian origin in the new administration; 6) assisting the Orthodox Church and ensuring freedom of religion for all citizens, including Muslims;

7) collecting taxes (Токушев 2004: 29). Russian Emperor accepted this proposal.

Finally, the decision to establish the Office of the Civil Administration within the General Command of the Russian Army in the occupied Bulgarian lands was issued on 16 November 1877. The Emperor also issued special Instructions with the twin-aims of legal nature: on one hand, they were something of a statute containing the basic principles on which to regulate the internal organization of the Office; on the other, they spelled out guidelines for the functioning of the Office in the nation-building actions. Count Vladimir Cherkasky, the first head of the Office and his subordinates worked for nearly six months (November – April 1877) to set up administrative institutions in Bulgaria.[9] Nearly six months (November 1877 – April 1877) Count Cherkasky explored the rich archives of the Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of the Army, talked to Russian scholars and politicians, and studied all the available scholarly literature. Also, he spent lots of time in discussions with the representatives of the Bulgarian emigrants from Romania and Russia hoping to recruit the necessary personnel for the future Bulgarian administration (Трифонов 2000: 8).

A bit later, the Office of Civil Administration issued three temporary legal acts which regulated the structure and jurisdiction of the first local authorities. These were: Project on Main Principles of Civil Administration in Sançaks and Counties (kazas) and Towns in Bulgarian lands (Проект за главните основания на гражданското управление в санджаците и окръзите и градовете в България) of 7 July 1877, Project on Temporary Rules for Governing Councils in Counties and Towns of Bulgaria (Проект за времнни правила за управнителните съвети в окръзите и градовете в Булгария) of 8 August 1877, and Instructions of the same year.

According to these legal documents, the provisional administrative division of the country completely coincided with the Ottoman administrative division - the old Turkish names were replaced by new domestic names: guberniya instead of sançak and county instead of kaza. The first guberniya was formed in the liberated Svishtov. Later,

9 The members of the Office from Russia were: general D. G. Anuchin, an assistant of Count Cherkasky, colonel N. L. Sobolev, lawyer S. I. Lukyanov, P. Neklyudov and Count S. V. Shakovsky. The members from Bulgaria were: Nayden Gerov, Marin Drinov, Todor Burmov and Hristo Stoyanov. It is interesting that the Serbian lawyer, Valtazar Bogišić, was also a member of the Office (Токушев 2004: 29–30).

the following new guberniyas were formed: Russe, Tulchen, Vidin, Trnovo, Sofia, Plovdiv and Sliven. These areas included 56 counties. These administrative-territorial units (guberniyas and counties) included centralized local organs, which was subordinated to the Office of Civil Administration.

Count Cherkasky's death on 19 February 1877 ended the provisional Russian (occupying) government in the Bulgarian lands that was marked by the formation of the first Bulgarian legal-political institutions. Prince Alexander Dondukov-Korsakov (1820–1893) was appointed the new head of the Office of Civil Administration. He was supposed to end the Russian mission in Bulgaria. His main task was to establish institutions of the central government and prepare the necessary conditions for adoption of the first Bulgarian constitution. The mission of General Pavel Kiselyev (1788–1872) who had had a similar task in the Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia several decades earlier, served as a model for Dondukov-Korsakov (Jelavich 1984: 368). As soon as Dondukov-Korsakov arrived in Bulgaria, he formed the central government which included: 1) department of interior, 2) department of finance and control, 3) judiciary department, 4) department of education, church and religious activities, 5) department of military affairs, 6) department of post, telegraph, roads and other traffic operations; 7) Office of diplomacy and foreign affairs. Its seat was in Plovdiv (Манолова 2003: 102).

During the mandate of Dondukov-Korsakov the Congress of Berlin was held. After the signing of the Berlin Peace Treaty and the subsequent division of Bulgarian lands into the autonomous Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, some significant political decisions were made. The capital of the Principality of Bulgaria was moved from Veliko Trnovo to Sofia in order to be closer to Macedonia which had always been treated by Bulgarians as their ethnic land. In keeping with this, the government was also moved from Plovdiv to the new Bulgarian capital.

Meanwhile Dondukov-Korsakov continued with his mission. By the end of his term, he had formed the Bulgarian army, completed the formation of the judiciary and police services, strengthened institutions of local government, and laid the foundation for the development of educational and health facilities (Трифонов 2000: 12, 40-48).

3.2. Legal and constitutional development of the Principality of Bulgaria

When the temporary Russian mission ended, the Bulgarian Constituent Assembly met in the capital of the medieval Bulgarian state – Veliko Trnovo - on 10 February 1879.[10] After two months of debating a number of parliamentary constitutional projects and intense political struggle between the opposing parties, the first Bulgarian constitution was adopted on 16 April 1879. It was actually created by both Bulgarian liberals led by Dragan Tsankov (1828–1911) and Petko Slaveykov (1827–1895) and Russian advisors. It is known as Trnovo Constitution (Петров и Петрова 2000: 294–309). It established the separation of powers as the main principle of the organization of the state. The Trnovo Constitution paid particular attention to the regulation of the legal status and competence of central authorities – the monarch (Prince), National Assembly, Council of Ministers, and the constitutional rights of Bulgarian citizens. The Constitution did not regulate the legal status and competence of other institutions, including local government.

According to the Trnovo Constitution, the Principality of Bulgaria was constituted as a hereditary and constitutional monarchy with the people's representative body (Article 4). The most important state institution was a Prince. His function was three-fold. First, he acted as a head of the state, as the holder of legislative power which he shared with the National Assembly and as a chief of executive power, which he shared with his cabinet/council of ministers.

Legislative power was exercised by the National Assembly (Bulgarian: Народно Собрание). The Assembly could be regular and great (Article 85).

Regular National Assembly performed dealt with the ordinary and financial legislation. It passed all laws and a budget and finally, all other general legal laws. The legislative body was also authorized to control the work of the Council of Ministers and, if necessary, to raise the question of ministerial responsibility (Article 105). Also, the National Assembly could raise any political question with the ministers (Article 108), and receive petitions and complaints about the work of certain departments of the government (Articles 106). In both cases, the ministers were required to answer parliamentary questions and complaints of citizens (Articles 105 and 106).

10 On number and categories of representatives see in deatils in: Андреев 1993: 44.

Great National Assembly was twice the size of the regular one (Article 144). It met only in the special cases stipulated by the Constitution: to approve any change affecting the national territory, to amend the Constitution, or elect a new prince. As soon as it resolved the issue, the Grand National Assembly was dissolved (Articles 141, 142, 143 and 144).

The ministers had executive power, together with Prince (Article 149). They were gathered at the Council of Ministers headed by president (Prime Minister). Each minister was the head of the department of state government. According to Article 160 of the Constitution, there were six ministries: 1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 2) Ministry of Interior Affairs; 3) Ministry of National Education; 4) Ministry of Finance; 5) Ministry of Justice; 6) Ministry of the Army (Article 160). The ministers were subordinate to the monarch and the National Assembly (Article 153). They were politically responsible to these constitutional factors that could revoke them at any time.

There was only one constitutional stipulation pertaining to local government. Article 3 stipulated the administrative-territorial division of the country into counties, districts and municipalities. The same article stipulated the organization of municipalities based on the principle of self-government. More detailed elaboration of this provision is left to the legislature.

After the adoption of the Trnovo Constitution, the National Assembly's task was to elect the first Bulgarian Prince and pass the necessary political laws stemming from the constitutional norms.

The former was done the next day after the proclamation of the Constitution on 17 April 1879. Given the provision of Article 3 of the Berlin Treaty, which stipulated that the Bulgarian Prince must not be a member of the dynasty of any of the Great Powers which had participated at the Congress of Berlin, the Russian government proposed Alexander Battenberg (1857–1893), German Prince of the noble Hesse lineage.[11]

Typical of the early stages of nation-building process marked by the fear for the preservation of the hard gained freedom and of descend into anarchy, the supreme political power resorted to centralization of local institutions in order to consolidate and strengthen the fledgling state apparatus. In the 1879-1885 period, several important laws were passed in Bulgaria which established a rigid centralization of local in-

11 On personality of Alexander Batenberg see in details: Koh [n.d.].

stitutions. They were the following laws: Provisional Regulations for Town and Village Municipalities of 1879 (Привремениы правила за общинското градско и селско управление; Държавенъ вестникъ No. 4), Law on County and District Prefects (Законът за окръжните управители и околийските началници; Държавенъ вестникъ No. 116), Law on Municipalities and Town Government, (Законът за общинитъ и за градското управление; Държавенъ вестникъ No. 117) and Law on County Councils (Законът за окръжнитъ съвъти; Държавенъ вестникъ No. 118); the latter three were all passed in 1882. The 1879 law was of key importance because it established a rigid bureaucratic centralism in the state administration - county and district authorities presented a mere outpost of the central government. County and district prefects carried out obediently every decision of the government and the Minister of Interior in particular; in turn, they were in a complete control over the local, and especially municipal institutions as stipulated by the Law on Municipalities and Municipal Government. The situation did not even change after the passing of the Law on County Councils. This Law also established the system of centralized state administration not giving the County Council an opportunity to discuss political issues of great importance to the county.

As discussed above, the Trnovo Constitution established the principle of ministerial responsibility. It was an important step forward in the development of the modern constitutionality in the new Balkan state. Nevertheless, Bulgaria's system of government was burdened with many difficulties and shortcomings, especially at the time of the formation of the first government led by conservative Todor Burmov[12] in 1879 until the fall of the government, led by liberal Stefan Stambolov in 1894.[13] In

12 Todor Burmov (1834–1906) was a leader of Bulgarian Conservative Party and the first Prime Minster of the Principality of Bulgaria. Burmov was a graduate of the Theological Academy in Kiev and subsequently worked as a teacher in Gabrovo and as a newspaper editor. He was a close associate of Prince and therefore chosen as the Prime Minister on 17 July 1879 despite the relatively weak position of the Conservatives. Burmov's regime was mostly concerned with the stabilization of the country, including placing and other areas of Muslim insurgency under martial law. His government was a failure due to the lack of support for the Conservatives in the Assembly; he was removed from the office that same year. Burmov remained a leading political figure after his brief spell as Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance in the Leonid Sobolev and Archbishop Kliment Turnovsky governments. Having returned to journalism, Burmov left the Conservatives and became a member of Dragan Tsankov's Progressive Liberal Party (See in details: Crampton 2007: 102–103).

13 Stefan Stambolov (1854–1895) was a Bulgarian politician who served as Prime Minster and Regent. He is considered one of the most important and popular Founders of Modern Bulgaria, and sometimes referred to as "the Bulgarian Bismarck". Stambolov was a nationalist; as a politician, he strengthened/contributed to Bulgarian diplomacy, economy and the general political power of the state. He confronted Prince Ferdinand

can be seen many legal and political phenomena in this period, which led to gross violations of the government system. Four events were of special importance: the establishment of the full authorities Regime (Режим на пълномощтият) – the short-time suspension of the 1881 Constitution; the coup d'état of the pro-Russian officers that led to the overthrow of Prince from the Bulgarian throne in 1886; Prime Minister Stefan Stambolov's tendency to assume the absolute power in 1887; the terror of the Liberal's and National Liberal Party's regime (the so-called Circassian Regime, 1899–1903) (Манолова 2003).

The relations between the constitutional factors were also dependent on Great Power's policies, especially that of Russia. Many members of the Council of Ministers, the National Assembly, the army, civil administration and political parties were a Russian subject. Therefore, the parliamentary system in Bulgaria had a distinctive character informed by local political culture derived from the Ottoman political legacy and the Great Powers' endeavors to secure their imperial interests in the Balkans.

3.3. Legal development of East Rumelia and its unification with the Principality of Bulgaria in 1885

In accordance with Article 13 of the Berlin Treaty, the province of Eastern Rumelia was formed southwards of the Balkan mountain; it had a full administrative autonomy but remained under the formal suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultan. Eastern Rumelia soon had her own constitutive act which guarded her autonomous rights and laid foundation for legal and political institutions. This act had all the qualities of a proper constitution. However, from the standpoint of legal form - this act existed within the legal system of the Ottoman Empire - it was not a true constitution because it regulated the internal order and of a non-sovereign administrative unit. Therefore, this document was rather a statute.

and blocked his schemes to usurp additional authority. The public came to dislike him as he took increasingly drastic measures against his enemies/political opponents. He survived an assassination attempt unharmed, and then responded by having many people imprisoned and treated brutally. By 1894 the prolonged stress had taken its toll and Stambolov resigned to Ferdinand's great satisfaction. Stambolov was assassinated by political immigrants from Macedonia in 1895 (See: Трифинов 2000: 60–65).

The international Committee consisting of the representatives of all the Great Powers which deliberated at the Congress of Berlin (Russia, Germany, France, Austro-Hungary, Italy, Great Britain) produced the Organic Statute for East Rumelia confirmed also by the Sultan. The Committee began its work in Istanbul on 30 September 1878, but later moved to Philipopolis (Plovdiv), the capital of the new Ottoman administrative unit under the international protection.

The Organic Statute for Eastern Rumelia proclaimed many important constitutional rights of citizens and also regulated the legal status, competence and relationship between the political institutions in the Province: General Governor, Administrative Council (Directorate) and the Assembly (Йочев [n.d.]: 32-48).

The head of Eastern Rumelia was the General Governor – a Christian appointed by the Sultan for a period of five years with the approval of the European powers, the signatories of the Berlin Treaty (Article 7). He was the highest representative of the sultan in the Province (Article 44). He possessed executive power and shared legislative authorities.

It fell to General Governor to ensure that the Constitution was respected and the Province's laws implemented (Article 51). He appointed the members of the Administrative Council (Directorate), Supreme Court, county prefects and other officials with the consent of the Sultan (Article 7). The Governor was the commander of the police and gendarmerie and, if necessary, he could request the deployment of the Ottoman Army (in accordance with Article 14 of the Berlin Treaty).

As for his legislative power, the General Governor took part in the preparation of Province's laws according to the procedure stipulated by the Statute. He had the right to present his legislative drafts and the province budget to the Province Assembly. After the legislative proposal had been voted for at the Assembly, the governor had to formally approve it. He did so in the name of the Sultan (Article 54). The first General Governor of Eastern Rumelia was Aleko (Alexander) Bogoridi-Pasha.[14]

The Administrative Council represented a kind of government, a collegial executive body composed of six directors (and hence was also called Directorate), which had the status of a head of state government.

14 Aleko Bogoridi-Pasha (1823–1910) was born in Kotel. He came from the very respectable Fanar family. His father was a governor of the island of Samos after the Adrianople Peace of 1829. Bogoridi was educated in Paris. He worked in the Turkish diplomatic service serving as the Sultan's representative in Vienna. He was appointed the General Governor of East Rumelia on 15 May 1879 (See: Трифонов 2000: 35).

The Directorate assisted the General Governor in his work; in fact, its function was reduced to the execution of Governor's decisions. The Administrative Council thus had a special position in the legal and political system of Eastern Rumelia.

The Organic Statute for Eastern Rumelia also established the Province Assembly with the limited legislative power.[15]

According to Article 248 of the Organic Statute, Eastern Rumelia had the following judicial institutions: 1) peasant courts in the municipalities without district prefects; 2) district courts; 3) county courts; 4) the Supreme Court (Article 248).

Eastern Rumelia was administratively divided in six counties (departments) and 28 districts (Article 108). The main towns of the counties were: Plovdiv, Tatar-Pazarcik, Haskovo, Eski Zagora, Sliven and Burgas (Art. 109). The districts were divided in urban and rural municipalities which had their own local institutions (Article 111). No county could have more than six and less than four districts (Article 110). Districts were divided in town and village municipalities with their own local institutions (Article 111). These provisions were supposed to be further developed by the legislature.

On 6 September 1885, a detachment of militiamen entered Plovdiv, ousted General Governor, Gabriel Pasha-Krstevich, and proclaimed the unification of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria. The provisional government, which was immediately formed, appealed to Prince Alexander Battenberg, to come to Plovdiv and accept the act of union. The National Assembly Speaker, Stefan Stambolov, told the Prince that he was going to choose between going to Plovdiv and returning to Darmstadt. Prince Battenberg had nowhere to go so he proceeded to Plovdiv and confirmed the act of unification.[16] The whole legal system of the Principality of Bulgaria, including the Trnovo Constitution and the laws on local self-government, was extended to East Rumelia. This was how the modern Bulgaria came to being in 1885.

15 On the number and categories of representatives and authoritis of the Assembly, see in details in: Articles 68, 69, 90, 91, 96, 99 and 101 of the Organic Statue for Eastern Rumelia, Йочев [n.d.].

16 The Serbian King Milan Obrenović was outraged. His view was clear and simple: the unification of Bulgaria clashed with Serbian national interests as that country became a dangerous rival, and might absorb Macedonia; Serbia demanded from the Great Powers to maintain the validity of the Treaty of Berlin and restore the situation that had existed before the coup - the status quo ante; otherwise, Serbia was prepared to protect the balance of power in the Balkans by force of arms.

Following the unification, the centralism in the state administration grew weaker. The need for the establishment of municipal self-government became apparent next year; this was the way forward to effectively deal with many local problems neglected by the central government. In 1886, at the time of the liberal government two laws were passed that introduced some limited forms of municipal self-government - Law on Town Municipalities and Law on Village Municipalities.

4. Law on Town Municipalities and Law on Village Municipalities of 1886

These laws established a form of limited self-government in Bulgarian towns and villages. They represented a big step forward regarding the legal-political status and structure of town and village municipalities. These laws stipulated the main authorities and duties regarding the functioning of the town and village self-government in Bulgaria. The local institutions were entrusted with the workings of municipal self-government, including communal, educational and health-sanitarian facilities.

4.1. Law on Town Municipalities of 1886

According to Article 2 of this Law (Петров-Петрова 2000a: 339–345), the Municipal Town was a legal entity obliged to protect its own interests and take care about its self-government. Every town had two institutions, Municpal Council and Municipal Government.

The Municipal Council was an executive body. Its members were elected by all the citizens residing in a respective town. Article 24 stipulated the necessary conditions for the active right to vote.

The Law laid down the conditions for the membership in this body: 1) a candidate must have resided in the respective town for at least two years,(ovo je receno u pethodnoj recenici) 2) a candidate must have been at least 30 years old, 3) a candidate must have been literate, and 4) a candidate must have possessed a real estate in the town or must have been a craftsman (Article 29).

The number of councillors depended on the number of inhabitants in the respective town. In a town with a population of up to? 15,000

people, the Municipal Council included 12 members. The term of a Municipal Council lasted three years (Article 19).

After the municipal elections, the elected councillors assumed their office which was confirmed by the special Prince's decree. They could be revoked in the same way (Article 22). Dekretom? County Prefect was authorized to convene the councillors in order to elect the mayor and his assistants.

Municipal Council could issue three kinds of municipal decrees depending on their importance and form: 1) municipal decrees carried out by the mayor without confirmation/approval of the state authorities, 2) municipal decrees confirmed/approved by state authorities and 3) municipal decrees which came into effect by Prince's decree.

If Municipal Council broke a law, it was dissolved by County Committee (Article 41). The latter body could dissolve Municipal Council on request of the Minister of Interior Affairs.

Municipal Government was something of an executive institution. It consisted of a Mayor and his assistants. The Mayor's term lasted three years, but he could be recalled by the Municipal Council's decision (Article 33). Mayor worked as the representative and executive organ of a Municipal Council. He represented the town before the state government and other municipalities. He also executed state laws and the Municipal Council's decrees (Article 87). The Law on Town Municipalities clearly defined the mayor's duties as follows: 1) to convene the Municipal Council and prepare its sessions; 2) to administer town real estate, especially town roads, bridges, streets, monuments etc; 3) to financially support schools, hospitals and churches; 4) to hold public books (Article 88).

Finally, the Law on Town Municipalities of 1886 paid particular attention to town budget to ensure that all the expenses were met. In accordance with that, no state institution did have the right to work upon the increase of expenditures of the town municipalities. In this way, both Municipal Council and Mayor were protected from the political influence/interference of the central government. However, the state institutions could often interfere with the work of Municipal Council through the agency of county prefects and central government. Pominjanje centralne vlade je ovde u kontradikciji sa prethodnom recenicom. Nevertheless, the Law singularly contributed to developing municipal self-government in the Principality of Bulgaria. But

this Law was not the only one: it was coupled by the Law on Village Municipalites of 1886.

4.2. Law on Village Municipalities of 1886

The Law on Village Municipalities (Петров-Петрова 2000a: 345-350) of 1886 had the same structure like the Law on Town Municipalities, although its provisions were adjusted to village life.

According to this Law, a village municipality was any geographic village or cottage-settlement with 100 or more houses and had its own government (Article 1). A village municipality had the status of a legal entity and was named after the respective village or cottage. Villages with less than 100 cottages had to be annexed to a neighbouring village.

The most important institutions of a village municipality were Municipal Council, Municipal Government, Municipal Court, Mayor and his assistants in "formation" municipalities. There was also a special Municipal Office for administrative duties.

The Municipal Council in villages had the same authorities like that in towns. was an executive body. The Law detailed the conditions for the exercise of the active and passive right to vote. They were in harmony with the provisions enumerated in the Law on Town Municipalities. Unlike that in the town Municipal Council, the village Municipal Council's term lasted two years.

Mayor was the most important figure in a Municipal Government. He acted as a representative and executive organ of the Municipal Goverment of the respective village. Village Mayor was appointed in the same way as his counterpart in town municipalities. He was charged with carrying out the decisions of Municipal Council and state administration. His term lasted two years and he could be recalled.

Mayor represented his village municipality before the central government and other villages. The Law on Village Municipalities listed the duties performed by Mayor: 1) convening the Municipal Council, 2) maintaing streets, roads, bridges, etc. in a good condition, 3) collecting village taxes, 4) preparing the village budget, 5) taking measures to prevent infections and epidemics and 5) granting permissions for coffee-houses, inns and other buildings (Article 65).

Village municipalties had their own Municipal Office for administrative matters. This Office was responsible for its work to the Mayor and Municipal Council (Articles 78, 79, 84, 85).

Finally, village municipalities had their own budgets. They were autonomous in compiling the list of income and outcome, although the state institutions could interfere with financial matters according to the government's policy.

Together with the Law of Town Municipalities, this Law went a long way to advancing the local self-government in Bulgaria. The two laws stipulated a free election of mayors and municipal councils in towns and villages without the intervention of state administration. This promoted the democratic legitimacy of local institutions within the legal-political system of Bulgaria. However, these municipal instiutions operated within the framework of centralized districts and counties. Strict centralization of municipality administration was especially pronounced during the personal regime of Stefan Stambolov (1887–1894). Nevertheless, the laws were a major contribution to the development of local self-government in Bulgaria in the second half of the 19th century.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that both Serbia and Bulgaria showed a serious tendency to build a system of local self-government on the pattern of West European model. Both countries adopted West European ideas and political institutions but adopted them to their social surroundings and mentality of their peoples. The results were rather impressive despite many political, economic and social difficulties, especially in municipal self-government.

As an internationally recognized state, Serbia was in a better position to maintain the balance between the interests of Great Powers, particularly those of Russia and Austro-Hungary, and simultaneously dedicated herself to the development of her statehood and national culture. On the other hand, Bulgaria was in the early stage of nation-building which was heavily influenced by the Russian court.

However, Bulgaria did not lag behind Serbia. The development of Bulgarian statehood (in the Principality of Bulgaria under the control of Russia and in Eastern Rumelia under the administration of a Christian governor) along with the boosting of local self-government was

similar to that in the regions acquired by Serbia on the basis of the Berlin Treaty – the counties of Nis, Pirot, Vranje and Toplica.

The creation of local administration based on the principle of self-government was a gradual process riddled with numerous political and economic difficulties, party struggles and disagreements.

A liberal democratic constitution was established in Serbia in 1888, then into law – more than any other previous law – brought Serbia closer to the West European model of a genuine local self-government. This was also the case with the Law on Municipalities of 1889. Its exceptional importance lay in the fact that it provided the municipal assembly (a local representative body) with the right to appoint municipal institutions and deprived the central government of the right to interfere

The situation in Bulgaria was completely different. Since this country had just been formed, it was only natural that the central government kept a firm grip on local institutions. Thus, after the adoption of the Trnovo Constitution in 1879, Bulgarian political leaders directed their efforts to formation of the legislative, executive and judicial power in order to consolidate the just created state.

After the unification of Bulgaria in 1885 and the initial consolidation of her government, the centralism in the state administration grew weaker. The need for municipal self-government became evident as soon as next year - numerous local problems seemed to have been ignored by the central authorities. To remedy this, the Law on Town Municipalities and Law on Village Municipalities were introduced in 1886 establishing a limited self-government.

However, as far as the extent and permanence of self-government were concerned, Serbia certainly achieved more than Bulgaria, partly because the former had more political experience at the time.

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