

140 years since the Unification – about the strength to be united

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Date: 06.09.2025 Issue: 9/2025



In 1878, after nearly five centuries under foreign rule, Bulgaria reappeared on the political map of Europe. The Treaty of San Stefano created hope for the restoration of a unified and strong Bulgarian state. However, only a few months later, the decisions of the Great Powers taken at the Congress of Berlin redrew the borders and tore apart the Bulgarian lands. The Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia were divided, despite their common language, culture, and history.

Thus began a new era in Bulgarian history – the struggle for national unification. It became a mission for many public figures, politicians, and revolutionaries who believed that the division was unjust and a temporary stage on the path to complete freedom.

In 1885, in Plovdiv, this dream began to turn into reality. At the head of the BTCPC in Plovdiv stood Zahari Stoyanov, who developed vigorous activities and, with the assistance of Kosta Panitsa, Dimitar Rizov, Petar Zografski, Ivan Stoyanovich, Georgi Stranski, Prodan Tishkov-Chardafon, and many other advocates of the cause, succeeded in creating an appropriate socio-political disposition among the population that the moment for the unification of the two Bulgarias had come. A key role was also played by the consent of the Bulgarian ruler – Prince Alexander Battenberg – to the forthcoming act. The people were ready – the moment had come.

On the night of 5 to 6 September, the Plovdiv militia, led by Major Danail Nikolaev and supported by armed detachments, deposed the Governor-General of Eastern Rumelia – Gavril Krastevich. On 8 September, Prince Alexander I Battenberg officially accepted the Unification, thereby affirming it as a state act.

The reaction was not long in coming – only weeks later Serbia declared war. The young Bulgarian army, commanded mainly by captains and lacking sufficient combat training, demonstrated exceptional heroism. They carried out a rapid march to Slivnitsa and achieved a remarkable victory, with which they defended the Unification not only politically, but also by force of arms.

Thus 6 September 1885 remains in history as the day on which the Bulgarian people showed that when they are united, they can determine their own destiny. The Unification is not merely a geopolitical change – it is an expression of the strength, will, and maturity of a nation ready to fight for justice.