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Archimandrite Methodii Koussev and the Defence of the Bulgarian National Cause before Europe in 1876

(Summary)

The April Uprising was the brightest expression of the striving of the Bulgarians of the National Revival period to reject Ottoman domination and win national independence. To a large extent it would have remained an event with limited repercussions and significance had it not been displayed in a sufficiently active and impressive manner- before the European public. On the basis of some newly discovered documents this study follows up the emergence in the country and the realization of the initiative for foreign policy defense of the cause of liberation. One of the personalities at the center of this activity was the coadjutor of the Plovdiv Bishopric, Archimandrite Methodii Koussev. He was one of the first to sense the demand of the historic moment and to succeed in organizing the collection of information about the Turkish atrocities. Risking his life, he succeeded in carrying to Constantinople the collected information and with the aid of the Bulgarians in the capital of the Empire and of the teachers of Robert College in making it known to the European public. His contacts with the members of the revolutionary organization and his position at the Exarchate made possible the blending of legitimate with underground activity which ensured the successful completion of the mission. The wide repercussions of the April Uprising in Britain, Russia and the other European countries only confirmed that the undertaken foreign policy initiative was timely and extremely necessary. In the late summer and autumn of 1876 Archimandrite M. Koussev worked actively to supply with information the diplomatic mission of D. Tsankov and M.

Balabanov to the European cabinets, and in defense of the Bulgarian cause before the Ambassadors' Conference in Constantinople. In all the documents, written by him in this period, strongly transpired the unfailing desire not only to reject foreign domination but also to preserve the entirety and indivisibility of the Bulgarian nation.