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**NAYDEN GEROV AND DRAGAN TSANKOV IN THE LABYRINTHS
OF THE ISSUES: THE BULGARIAN UNION**

(Summary)

Based on known and newly found documents the author traces the specific actions taken by the Russian diplomacy to abolish the Bulgarian Union in the middle of the 19th century. The main role in this task was assigned to the Russian consular agent in Plovdiv Nayden Gerov. The article highlights the activity of N. Gerov and D. Tsankov and presents their opinions on how to solve the Bulgarian Church Issue showing clearly the difference in the positions of the two prominent figures of the Bulgarian national movement. One of them was a Russian diplomat who was obliged under his official position to follow Russia's policy towards the Bulgarian-Greek religious strife, which coincided with his personal beliefs to solve the Issue within the traditional Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox. The other was a Bulgarian journalist, politician and public figure offering to Bulgarians a union with the Roman Catholic Church as the way out of the tangled religious issue. The author tries to give a reasoned answer to the question which is a major focus of this article: What did the Bulgarian union achieve for the national movement in the mid-19th century and in this sense – was it its well thought out, far-sighted and politically justified „alternative“?