

## 137 YEARS SINCE THE APRIL UPRISING

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**ABSTRACT:** THE ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN IN CONNECTION WITH THE CELEBRATION OF THE 137TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE APRIL UPRISING IN BULGARIA. ALTHOUGH UNSUCCESSFUL, IT OPENS THE WAY FOR THE NATIONAL LIBERATION OF THE COUNTRY FROM 500 YEARS OF OTTOMAN SLAVERY. IN THIS ARTICLE ARE INDICATED FUNDAMENTAL DATA ABOUT THE VERY UPRISING AND ITS COURSE.

**KEY WORDS:** OTTOMAN SLAVERY, APRIL UPRISING, NATIONAL LIBERATION, NATIONAL SPIRIT, FREEDOM, NATIONAL HEROES

IN 2013 we celebrated 137 years since the outbreak of the first organized all-Bulgarian uprising against the Sultan's despotism. On April 20, 1876 the Bulgarian people announces total war on the Ottoman Empire. The war continues for too long - whole 37 years, going through many hard trials during tides, but ends with a brilliant military victory, whose 100th anniversary we celebrate properly in 2013. April Uprising marked the beginning of the end of Ottoman domination in Bulgaria. So for us it is a sacred event, so we worship and glorify the heroism and proverbial daring of the April heroes.

THE April Uprising is the first battle in the ongoing war with the huge empire. And this battle, as we know, was absolutely unequal. The ratio of the forces and capabilities between the rebels and the opponent is approximately one to one hundred in favor of the opponent. There is no way with primitive weapons, with paper bullets - firecrackers and cherry dummy balls to hope for a success against a modern armed army. But like any war, the uprising has except military and political dimensions. And in the case of The April Uprising its initiators and managers rely mainly on political effect. Considering carefully the complicated political situation, the leaders of the uprising accept the universal political strategy. She foresees the Bulgarian liberating purpose to cause enough interference of powerful and interested parties on the international arena. I.e. the Great Powers to cause an international diplomatic conference. For the leaders of the uprising was quite clear that it can not achieve victory by force of arms in a direct fight with the Ottoman Empire. But at the same time they understand that only by the force of weapons, although at the cost of military defeat, could create real opportunities and preconditions for realization of the expected political liberation cause. Let us remember the words of the main character of the uprising George Benkovski. Looking from the top "Lisec" of Sredna Gora the burning Bulgarian villages after the uprising, he

exclaimed: "My goal has been achieved! At the heart of the tyrant I opened such a grievous wound from which he can never be healed. And the Russia - let it come! "

**I**N the same spirit evaluates the meaning of the uprising and Todor Kableshkov: "Not in the bullet of the flintlock I hoped, but at the shot who had to reach the ears of Europe, brotherly Russia."

**S**IMILAR is the opinion of Stoyan Zaimov. In a letter to Zahari Stoyanov later he wrote: "The uprising from 1876 was purely Bulgarian work, independent work, purely Bulgarian initiative supported by Bulgarian resources. This does honor to our people ... But that movement was not in the popular available resources, and that it needed a Grandpa Ivana, I suppose that everyone acknowledges. "

**M**OST significant in this regard are the words of Tsanko Dyustabanov afore the investigative authorities after the uprising: "I know very well, he said, that your kingdom is great, you have the power, the army and the weapon in your hands, that we will not prevail upon you with force, but I still know that you are barbarians and tyrants that because of the uprising you will pounce on innocent and peaceful citizens and committing atrocities. Our purpose was not to prevail you with power, but only to challenge you to do the atrocities that you have already done too much and because of that compromise to the whole educated world. And we won ".

**T**HE strategic goal for internationalization of liberation cause stands out most clearly in the behavior and actions of Hristo Botev. Also in his famous call for "desperate revolution" Botev presumably expresses the idea of the need for sacrifice in the name of the desired political dividends. The Bulgarian people must, he says, to pay with blood their freedom. Personally, he has no hesitation. His decision to sacrifice clearly and widely was announced adequately in his poetry. However Botev believes that by itself is not sufficient sacrifice and even meaningless, if it is not done by striking an attractive way so as to cause a broad international public resonance. Only then the sacrifice would achieve the desired political effect. Botev was concerned that unequal bloody battles in the country and the whole Bulgarian drama may remain hidden from the eyes of the European public. So he wants fast, through the pages of his first and last issue of the newspaper "New Bulgaria" on May 6, 1876 to announce to the world that the Bulgarian revolution is a fact. Only after that he proceeded towards the realization of his famous revolutionary action, which plans so that it is surely a shock effect. That the uprising in the country has almost brokenly, do not disturbs him. More importantly, he said, is that it should ended with a dramatic finale to cause the necessary impression in Europe. This objective is subject conceived original operation steamship Radetski, which takes place in carefully prepared script. Before he steps on the steamship Radetski, Botev sent a special contribution in French to reputable newspapers "Journal December Genève" in Switzerland and "La Repubblica Francaise" in France. In it, he notified to the world community for the mission of the rebels, and expresses its confidence that "educated European peoples and governments will reach out the hand of friendship."

**THE** strategic orientation for internationalization of liberation cause is too astute and successful. The strength of the uprising is its international repercussions. Public opinion in almost all European countries respond in different ways - In a spirit of admiration for the struggle of the Bulgarians for freedom, in a spirit of sympathy for the suffering of the victims from the repressions, in a spirit of commitment to the Bulgarian liberation cause. These reactions are dictated by purely human considerations that create the so-called moral factor. Especially a lot contributes in this regard expressed solidarity by numerous world celebrities, among which stand out: L. Tolstoy, F. Dostoevsky, Iv. Turgenev, D. Mendeleev, J. Garibaldi, V. Hugo and many others. The moral factor is called upon to stimulate the public opinion of the European public for urgent political solution to the Bulgarian question.

**THE** moral factor really has great power to influence, but by itself it is not able to do practically nothing, if it is not transformed in any way in political energy. Without such moral transformation the moral factor inevitably weakens with the time and gradually fades. Fortunately, however, the international repercussions of the April uprising across a very favorable political environment that opens up possibilities for its transformation into a political energy. Just at that moment the European political arena underlines some very powerful political subjects. They with relish take advantage of the moral factor caused by the echo of the April Uprising in order to clean their political goals and objectives. Transformation of the international implications of the political uprising in energy occurs mainly in Germany, England and Russia, who play at the time a key role in the outcome of the the Eastern Question. This transformation naturally increases the political impact of the April Uprising.

**IN** Germany, the political subject which rational makes use of the uprising is the German government headed by the Chancellor Prince Bismarck. On May 18, 1876 Bismarck receives a message from the German Consul in Ruse that in Bulgaria is a revolt broke out. The message brings great pleasure to the Reichskanzler, who shares to cronies that for him it was "an unexpected gift from heaven." Why is enjoying Bismarck? Because the Bulgarian uprising offered him a great opportunity to push as soon as possible Russia in so desired by him war against the Ottoman Empire. It is not surprising that he so willingly joined his voice to the European public opinion in support of the Bulgarians. In his famous public speech to the Reichstag from December 5, 1876 Bismarck stated that: "After making the evil things from the Circassians in Bulgaria for the Ottoman Empire has no longer place in Europe." In the following days he asks with great zeal the Russian king to immediately drew his sword.

**THE** political subject in the UK, which also makes use of rational April Uprising was the opposition Liberal Party of William Gladstone. The moral effect of events in Bulgaria offers the English liberals appropriate arguments for campaigning in their struggle for power against the conservative government of Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield, known as an active supporter of the sultan's regime. Under the leadership of the Liberal Party in the UK is carried out active and pro-Bulgarian media campaign, which significantly softens the official position of the British government. In London began to flash the first symptoms an agreement on possible change of the Balkan status quo. In the Ambassadorial conference of Constantinople

in 1876, the official British representative Marquis Salisbury occurs unexpectedly greater tendency for concessions and compromises in discussing the Bulgarian question.

**THE** most concerned political subject of the April uprising in Russia were the Russian Slavophile political groups. Right after the uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer of 1875, they exert pressure on the royal government for active aggressive policy on the Eastern Question. The Bulgarian uprising further enhances their activity. Its response in Russia causes mass movement in support of the Balkan Orthodox Christians. Despite the will and the efforts of the Russian king for a peaceful diplomatic solution to the Balkan crisis, the political circumstances forced him to declare another war on the Ottoman Empire.

**INDUCED** response to the April uprising political activity of the great powers displayed Bulgarian liberation cause of profitable positions as an independent political actor in European international relations. From now on the Bulgarian question is central to the agenda of diplomatic negotiations for urgent solution. Despite its modest military events, the April Uprising in fact achieves successful political goal identified by its initiators and perpetrators. Only two years later the Bulgarian national state finally rises from the ashes of five centuries of oblivion.

**ACCORDING** to the decision of the great powers, however, the majority of Bulgarians remain outside their country. This requires the liberation war to continue in the coming years to complete rout of the Ottoman Empire in 1913. Unfortunately this time the international political situation in Europe is very negative, which is why the Bulgarian people fail to take advantage from the rational-won brilliant military victory.