

POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Petra Knížová
Název bakalářské práce: Queen Victoria and the Great Famine in Ireland
Vedoucí bakalářské práce: Mgr. Renata Janktová, MA, PhD.
Oponent bakalářské práce: PhDr. Christopher Koy, MA, PhD.

I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění:

1. Cíl práce byl stanoven a naplněn v souladu s tématem
- ~~2. Cíl práce byl naplněn s drobnými nedostatky~~
- ~~3. Cíl práce byl adekvátní, ale jen částečně naplněný~~
4. Stanovený cíl nebyl naplněn

II. Struktura práce:

1. Logická, jasná a přehledná
- ~~2. Přiměřená~~
- ~~3. Uspokojivá~~
4. Nevhodná

III. Práce s literaturou:

1. Výborná: zvoleny a použity vhodné prameny v patřičném rozsahu
- ~~2. Velmi dobrá práce s adekvátními prameny v patřičném rozsahu~~
- ~~3. Průměrná práce s literaturou~~
4. Slabá, chybá nebo nedostačující

IV. Formální stránka:

1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům
- ~~2. Obsahuje drobné formální chyby~~
- ~~3. Nesplňuje některé zásadní požadavky~~
4. Nesplňuje většinu stanovených požadavků

VI. Jazyková úroveň práce:

1. Výborná
- ~~2. Velmi dobrá~~
- ~~3. Dobrá~~
4. Podprůměrná

VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu:

- ~~1. Velmi vysoká~~
2. Vysoká
- ~~3. Střední~~
4. Nízká

Vyjádření vedoucího bakalářské práce:

This bachelor paper discusses Queen Victoria's position and actions related to one of the most critical moments in Anglo-Irish relations, the Great Famine of 1847-52. The opening part of the thesis introduces Queen Victoria and some important aspects of both her private and public lives. It also includes an outline of her predecessors on the throne, and selected events and "achievements" marking their reigns. This part feels fairly lengthy as it contains some unnecessary and, on occasions, imbalanced detail, especially on private lives and affairs, that is of little relevance for the present enquiry. Narrowing the focus on Queen Victoria's relation to Ireland, Ms Knížová explains its troubled nature while seeking explanation mainly in the private domain, referring to Victoria's youth experience with John Conroy and to the Irish involvement in assassination attempts targeting the Queen and her family. The Queen's attitude was, nevertheless, markedly consistent with the wide-spread English contempt for the Irish and the prevailing image of the nation as a culturally inferior, unintelligent, and violent people. Ms Knížová mentions the important role of religious differences (Roman Catholic vs. Protestant) in the Queen's relationship to Ireland (p.21), and in the English-Irish relations (pp.25-26). She explains the significance of Penal Laws that sustained the oppression of Catholics in Ireland, some of which was eased by the Relief Acts of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. What is perhaps not emphasized enough is the fact that religious repression went hand in hand with economic oppression, so most of the population who were hit the hardest by the crisis, i.e. the poorest masses of peasants and small tenants who were entirely dependent on potato crops (p. 26), were Catholic. When delineating the government interventions, distinction is made between the initial Robert Peel cabinet and their efforts to mitigate the effects of the crisis, and the subsequent John Russell administration, whose disastrously inadequate response was informed and advocated by the capitalist *laissez-faire* doctrine, formulated by Adam Smith, and readily adapted by Thomas Malthus. The Famine is interpreted mainly as a humanitarian crisis caused by a disastrous combination of adverse natural conditions and historical, economic, and socio-demographic factors, including cultural and religious prejudice, long-term neglect and oppression, severe governmental mismanagement, and also local opportunism as in the case of evictions. When examining Queen Victoria's response to the crisis, Ms Knížová argues that the monarch's options were limited to indirect appeals to her government, charitable deeds and standing as a role model. The Queen apparently failed to act appropriately in all these respects: (out of ignorance, lack of interest, or malice?) she condoned her government's inadequate actions (p.39), showed too little interest in the situation overall (limited diary and correspondence references, pp. 38-39), and made too meagre a donation, which significantly hampered successive relief efforts (p. 31). The most fitting occasion where she could have made local impact was her first visit to Ireland in 1849, described in a separate subchapter. However, being turned into an ostentatious royal pageant with Victoria shielded from any signs of the famine, it fell short of creating any lasting bond between the Queen and the country, and bring practical help to starving inhabitants. Victoria's lack of sympathy but also her ignorance and prejudice are demonstrated using quotes from her correspondence and diaries, which would profit from deeper analysis and commentary.

The thesis is written in excellent English with occasional inaccuracies (e.g. articles, prepositions). Ms Knížová has demonstrated very good research and referencing skills. I must commend her active engagement with the topic and independent work.

Práce splňuje základní požadavky kladené na tento typ prací, a proto ji doporučuji k ústní obhajobě.

Navrhovaná známka: výborně

Otázky k obhajobě:

1. When comparing British response to the great famines in India with the Irish Famine, do you see any similarities in the English/British attitude to the respective nations from cultural and socio-cultural point of view?
2. How do you interpret the apparent scarcity of references to the Famine in Queen Victoria's writings?

Podpis vedoucího bakalářské práce:.....



Datum: 12. 5. 2022

*nehodící se škrtněte