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# STATEMENT

by Prof. Ilia Todev, DSc

on the dissertation of Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE  
*"THE BULGARIANS IN THE CZECH-RUSSIAN LITERARY EXCHANGE  
(1830s-1860s)"*,

submitted for awarding the scientific degree *"Doctor of Sciences"*

Scientific field: 2. Humanities

Professional division: 2.2. History and archeology

Scientific specialty: Modern and Contemporary History

Code 05.03.04

Section *"World History and International Relations in Modern and Contemporary Times"*, Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

The dissertation aims to show: "how as a result of the Czech-Russian literary, scientific and book exchange the perception of the Turkic-Tatar nature of the Bulgarians was changed and the view of their Slavic origin was established". In my view, this is an important, interesting and topical issue with an international dimension, which has sufficient potential to generate a higher doctorate. It is an impressive scientific work in terms of both conception and accomplishment. A great deal of research has been carried out so far on the individual components of the topic, but there is a lack of a comprehensive study, of a scientific interdisciplinary synthesis, which Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE undertakes in her dissertation. It is worth mentioning that she not only summarizes at a higher level the research results of other scholars, but supplements them with many specific studies of rich new documentary material (both published and archival).

Another advantage for the topic of the dissertation is the combination of the northern and western vectors in the Bulgarian history in the 19th century. For their national revival the Bulgarians owe a lot to both the Russians and the Czechs. They received considerable assistance from the Northern Empire to restore their culture, their

Church, and their state. However, they chose to follow as an example one of the nations in the Habsburg Empire, which was both highly Europeanized and Slavic par excellence. This is best illustrated by the great cultural invasion of the Czechs (whose most emblematic exponent is Konstantin Irechek) in post-liberation Bulgaria. Thus, the reviewed work makes the topic of the Bulgarian National Revival clearer - both for the Bulgarians, and for foreigners.

It deserves noting the topical dimensions of the Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE's dissertation topic. Today the Bulgarian role in the work of Cyril and Methodius is being disputed (and even overtly denied) by various states; in Bulgaria itself, it has provoked sharp reactions (such as the suggestion for renaming the Cyrillic alphabet into "*Bulgarian alphabet*"). Science, through works such as the reviewed dissertation, must teach us how to find a civilized, wise, and useful solution to questions that are vital to us. Therefore, nowadays the tangible need of a work such as the reviewed one is beyond any doubt.

The chosen methodology is completely relevant to the nature of the study. In her dissertation, Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE applies the deductive and the causal approaches, supplemented in some cases by parallel analysis. She remains true to academic objectivity and creates harmonious proportions, yet at times there is favoring of some personalities (for example, Shafarik), as well as unnecessary details (for example, about the Austrian educational system).

In terms of genre, this is an interdisciplinary study with a strong predominance of history.

The structure of the dissertation work follows the classical model and is well built. It consists of four chapters of approximately equal volume (broken down into multiple paragraphs), plus an introduction, conclusion, and bibliography, contained in 558 standard pages (one page = 1800 characters, including spaces).

Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE's style is accurate, rich and readable - although linguistic roughness is observed here and there. The bibliographic grasp (both with regards to the sources and the research) of the work is impeccable. In terms of volume, temporal and spatial boundaries, the text offers optimal proportions; the same should be said of the general-private historical ratio. Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE is well-informed, she knows the history of the 19th century well and skillfully uses it as a background for her research.

The abstract, (which could have been shorter and without footnotes), correctly reflects the content of the dissertation.

In her abstract Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE presents the scientific contributions (in terms of topics, sources, theoretical outlines, scientific approach, etc.) she claims to have made with her work. In my opinion, they correctly reflect the new knowledge she has created, which in its turn fully covers the requirements in this regard for a higher doctorate. In my view, the most significant contribution of the dissertation is that it reveals how people came to the correct perception of the Bulgarians as a Slavic people with its important creative presence in history.

Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE has a number of scientific publications on the topic of her dissertation, which are listed in the bibliography and at the end of the abstract. They are all at a high scientific level.

**Conclusion:** Although it is not devoid of some minor shortcomings, the dissertation work of Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE is completed at a good professional level. It has all the necessary qualities of a higher doctorate. On these grounds I recommend Teodorichka GOTOVSKA-HENZE to be awarded the scientific degree "Doctor of Historical Sciences" in Professional division: 2.2. History and Archeology; Scientific specialty: Modern and Contemporary History; Code 05.03.04.

28 June 2020, Sofia

Signature: