The Place of Russia in Europe and Asia

Edited by Gyula Szvák
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FOREWORD

The Center for Russian Studies of ELTE (Eötvös Loránd University), Budapest, conducted its sixth biennial international Russistics conference in May, 2008. Among the usual feverish activities and meaningful professional concerns we did not even realize that ten years had elapsed since the first one of these meetings. One decade is not a long enough period of time and six conferences are not sufficient activity for us to compliment ourselves. Yet, it is an opportunity to stop for a moment and make an accounting of our path in the hope that this will facilitate the setting of future goals and for maintaining our direction.

This is the reason for our decision to gather a collection from the material of the previous conferences. The editorial principle was the simplest possible. We asked every one of our returning presenters to indicate one of his essays that he considered the best and thematically most appropriate to be included in a volume of essays entitled Russia’s Place in Europe and Asia. The title selected is neither unexpected nor surprising because our previous discussions in some way always circled around this topic and the first two conferences carried a similar title.

As is customary in the case of such collections or volumes, the supportive responses arrived promptly for which we want to extend our thanks to the authors. The translation, however, progressed only slowly. Thanks to the Academician Jurii Sergeevich Pivoravov and to Professor Peter Pastor there is an opportunity for the volume to be published in both the United States and Russia, in the former country in English and in the latter one in Russian. This was a tremendous opportunity but it did make the work more difficult and slowed it down. Fortunately our earlier conference volumes generated a favorable echo in
the professional environment but the projected publication in two languages grants an opportunity for our essays to become available to a wider circle of international Russistics and the universities. It also means a form of recognition of our work for which we are duly grateful.

It does not fill us with over-confidence. The talent of the outstanding representatives of universal Russian studies guarantees the volume’s high level of scholarship but this is in no way the merit of the “Budapest School of Russian Studies.” The name was granted to it by the Academician V. V. Alekseev. We make every effort to be worthy of our highly esteemed colleagues, to promote with our modest means the mutually beneficial meeting of Russian and non-Russian language Russistics, to give young talents an opportunity to rise and to enlarge the pool of professional successors.

We continue our work in the hopes for another decade of cooperation.

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*Gyula Szvák*