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### **Potential International Academic Collaboration Based on the Study of Russian-speaking Diaspora**

Modern Russian-speaking communities (diasporas) are among the world's largest and active ones, the number of which we have only the approximate information on (for example, there is above 1 million living in the USA, 1.2 million living in Germany, up to 500 thousand in France, 120 thousand in Italy, 78 thousand in Finland, etc.). Over the past 10–15 years we have been observing the growing interest in such social units expressed by the majority of countries, establishments and scientific research. Studies devoted to Russians and Russian speakers (who are even bigger in number) undertaken within different areas of human and social science in our view are of fragmented character. Yet there is no specific area of science like, for instance Russian studies, which would research social, political, economical and cultural processes taking place in Russia, for example Davis Center for Russia and Eurasian Studies in Cambridge or Department of East European Studies in Charles University.

However, each Russian community, as a social unit, has its own structure and expresses collective attitude to events happening in the world and the native land, goes through its own processes. In our opinion, both in Russia and beyond, there is no understanding of the structure of Russian-speaking communities beyond the former Soviet Union, collaboration occurring in its inside and outside, process it goes through, its collective identity and historical memory. Certainly, there is a specific process of diaspora forming in every country, however, we still are dealing with immigrants from the USSR, Russia or from countries the former USSR. Thus, humanities have to face many interesting, yet difficult questions. For instance, whether Russian-speaking diasporas beyond the former Soviet Union do belong to the so-called "Russian World" or have they already become some kind of the independent formation which is linked to the homeland only through a common tongue?

Suslov [Суслов 2017] gave a description of the construction of the Russian diaspora (yet he pointed out that there is neither "Russian" nor "diaspora" in their pure forms) and divided it into three groups: 1) ethnic Russians living abroad, 2) former Non-Russian citizens of the Soviet Union, 3) global Russians, who, unlike the first group, are not so dependent on Russian policy. Morozov [Морозов 2009] asked who does Russia consider to be its compatriot: is it ethnic Russians or any Russian native speaker of the Slavic nation, or is it refers to people loyal to the Russian Federation? What does the political identity of the Russians consist of?

In our opinion, the appropriate answers to these and some other questions could be found only through the close cooperation between Russian and international scientists. As it

is known, William I. Thomas was able to accomplish his famous research of "The Polish Peasant in Europe and America" only due to involvement of a Polish scientist Florian Znaniecki.

A scientific and educational project of "Czech Russians and the Crossroads of the Modern and Contemporary History: Biographic Interviews"<sup>1</sup> was introduced at the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University in April 2020. The project has won a grant from the SVV of Charles University and is planned to be implemented within three years. The project will result in a book of 50 interviews with introductory articles written by researchers.

In our opinion, its emergence and implementation became possible, only because of the interest in this topic expressed by native Russian-speaking Ph.D students supported by Czech scientists. As part of the project, both personal biographies of Russians in the Czech Republic and their vision of key issues in Czech-Russian history will be recorded, namely:

- 1) Czechoslovak legionnaires in Russia (1914 – 1918) and Russian emigration in Czechoslovakia (since 1921);
- 2) Liberation of Czechoslovakia and Prague in 1944-1945;
- 3) The invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops in 1968;
- 4) Velvet Revolution (1989) and the collapse of the USSR.

Similar research could be carried out in many countries with a large number of Russian-speaking residents. In addition, in this regard the Harvard Project of 1948 comes to mind – a large study of Russian-speaking people who find themselves after World War II in the American zone of influence.

We assume that founding of a scientific platform for the study of Russian-speaking diasporas can become one of the areas which scientists whose native language is Russian, with the involvement of local scientists, can cooperate in.

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<sup>1</sup> Project website in Russian: <https://cestirusove.fhs.cuni.cz/CRR-1.html> (date of the application 9.9.2020)