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DICTIONARY OF RUSSIAN CONVENTIONAL NAMES FOR  
GEOGRAPHICAL ENTITIES OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES\*

Paper presented by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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A regular work is carried on in the USSR on the normalization of spelling of foreign geographical names. To achieve this aim rules for rendering geographical names from different foreign languages into Russian are elaborated and introduced for common use as compulsory ones. Such rules provide for necessary unification and stability of name spelling in official documents, maps and other publications. At the same time the rules set and solve the problem of reproducing the original sounding of a foreign name as exactly as possible taking into account the differences in phonetic, grammar and graphic systems of the donor-language and Russian.

Nevertheless there is a rather large group of conventional place-names in Russian like in all other languages, i.e. the names that are rendered with certain deviations from the rules. The forms of such deviations may be different: from one letter to complete lexical substitution. For example, the US capital Washington is spelled in Russian ВАШИНГТОН though it sounds like УОШИНГТОН; the French Chatillon is conventionally spelled ШАТИЛЬОН instead of regular ШАТИЙОН ; we use Большая Фатра in lieu of Велька-Фатра for the Czech Vel'ka Fatra; the Russian for the Austrian Hohe Tauern is ВЫСОКИЙ Тауэрн but not Хоэ-Тауэрн ; on Russian map one can find Огненная Земля for Spanish Tierra del Fuego (Argentina), etc.

Up to now lists of conventional names were published only in the instructions for Russian rendering of geographical names developed for each particular country or for a group of countries united by a common language. A single list of conventional names on a world-wide basis has not been compiled so far though a

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practical necessity for it is extremely pressing. The "Dictionary of Russian conventional names for geographical entities of foreign countries" that is under work in the USSR is intended to fill up this gap.

There is no need to explain that existence of such names impedes the identification of features when using geographic maps, tourist guides, scientific and popular literature, it causes misunderstanding when establishing personal contacts and leads to confusion when studying foreign languages: why do we use the "wrong" names if we could speak the "right" way? It is not a mere coincidence that the Second UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names held in London, 1972, paid a special attention to conventional names and adopted a recommendation to reduce their number to a minimum.

On the other hand it is because of their many years' or sometimes even many centuries' existence in the language that such names are called "conventional". They entered the active Russian vocabulary where produced derivatives ( Шотландия - шотландцы; Париж - парижане ) and even fixed word combinations ( Рим - римское право, Римский папа; Китай - китайская стена, китайская грамота ) ; they were repeatedly used in V.I.Lenin's works, in the Russian classic literature (L.Tolstoy, F.Dostoyevsky and others) as well as in translations of foreign classic writers.

The compilation of the Dictionary of conventional names is aimed at providing of a single systemized (if not exhaustive, then optimum) collection of conventional names of foreign geographic features, that will enable us, on the basis of their investigation, to proceed to reduction of their number and to substitution of national forms for them.

The analysis of the list compiled permitted (1) to clear out the main i.e. the most widely represented linguistic forms of conventional names and (2) to define which kinds of geographic features more often have conventional names.

By the linguistic forms regardless of their origin the following main types of conventional names may be distinguished:

(1) The names that took root in Russian in obsolete or sometimes just wrong rendering forms: Гамбург instead of Камбург (German Hamburg), Париж instead of Пари (French Paris), Рим instead of Рома (Italian Roma), Эдинбург instead of Эдинборо (English Edinburgh).

(2) The names entirely different from their national equivalents: о.Гаити (Spanish Española), Касабланка (Arabic Ed Dār el Beidā'), прол. Дарданеллы (Turkish Çanakkale Boğazı), Албания (Albanian Shqipëri), Финляндия (Finnish Suomi), Египет (Arabic Miṣr).

(3) The names formed by adding Russian adjectives derived from the name of a locality: Вандейская равнина (French La Plaine), Тосканская Маремма (Italian Maremma), Северо-Шотландское нагорье (English Northern Highlands).

(4) The completely or partially translated names: Скалистые горы (English Rocky Mountains), Большое Невольничье озеро (English Great Slave Lake), Берег Слоновой Кости (French Côte d'Ivoire), Верхняя Луара (French Haute Loire), Венский Лес (German Wienerwald), Западный Азербайджан (Persian Āzarbayjān-e Gharbī), Венгерская Народная Республика (Hungarian Magyar Népköztársaság), Соединенные Штаты Америки (English United States of America).

(5) The names with Russian noun endings: -ия, -а/-я, -ы/-и attached to original roots: Исландия (Islandic Island); Моравия (Czech Morava), Луара, Сена (French Loire, Seine), Вандея (French Vandée), Анды (Spanish Andes, plural), Альпы (Italian Alpi, French Alpes, German Alpen, plural), Гималаи (Hindi Himalay).

(6) The names expressed by Russian nouns in genitive: о-ва Кука (English - Cook Islands), прол. Дрейка (English Drake Passage).

(7) The names with Russian adjective suffixes and endings -ов/-ово, -ский/-ская/-ское attached to original roots: Бассов пролив (English Bass Strait), Арафурское море (Indonesian Laut Arafuru), Балеарские острова (Spanish Islas Baleares), Сулинское гирло (Romanian Brațul Sulina).

(8) Linguistically mixed forms: Северо-Фризские острова (German Nordfriesische Inseln), Гудзонов пролив (English Hudson Strait), Коринфский залив (Greek Kólpos Korinthiakós).

The analysis of the conventional names in response to the features they are applied to demonstrated that the conventional names comprise:

- the names of almost all countries of the world where the short forms have in Russian the ending -ия and the long (official) forms are usually translated due to their big informative load: Объединенное Королевство Великобритании и Северной Ирландии (English United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Социалистическая Республика Вьетнам (Vietnamese Công Hòa Xã Hội Chủ Nghĩa Việt Nam), Испанское государство (Spanish Estado Español);

- the names of many capital and port cities, large economic, historical and cultural centers: Париж (French Paris), Калькутта (Hindi Kalikātā), Каир (Arabic El Qāhirah), Марсель (French Marseille), Турин (Italian Torino);

- the names of historical and geographical regions as well as administrative units: Золотой Берег (English Gold Coast), Поморье (Polish Pomorze), Приморская Шаранта (French Charente Maritime), Нижняя Австрия (German Niederösterreich);

- the names of seas, big gulfs, important straits and channels: Японское море (Japanese Nihon Kai, Korean Tonghae), Бискайский залив (Spanish Golfo de Vizcaya or Mar Cantábrico, French Golfe de Gascogne), Суэцкий канал (Arabic Qanāt es Suweis);

- the names of individual outstanding physical-geographical features: rivers, mountains, islands, lakes, waterfalls etc.: Темза (English Thames River), Эльба (German Elbe), Сена (French Seine), Арденны (French Ardennes), Бразильское плоскогорье (Portuguese Planalto Brasileiro), Тивериадское озеро (Hebrew Yam Kinneret, Arabic Buḥairat Tabariyah);

- the names of historical and archeological memorials: Ангкор (Khmer Angko); Геркуланум (Italian Ercolano), Колизей (Italian Coloseo), Карфаген (Arabic Qarṭajannah);

- the names of individual large economic enterprises: Высотная Асуанская плотина (Arabic Sadd el 'Alī).

Some conventional names form larger or smaller "families": the conventional form of the key element entails the Russification of other elements attended to it. For example, the Russian rendered form of АЛЬПИ gives origin to numerous names of their parts, local forms of which belong to different languages:

АЛЬПГОЙСКИЕ АЛЬПЫ (German Allgäuer Alpen), Лигурийские Альпы (Italian Alpi Liguri), Грайские Альпы (French Alpes Graies) and others; the name Силезия (Polish Śląsk, Czech Slezsko, German Schlesien) is the core of the "family" comprising Верхнесилезский бассейн (Polish Zagłębie Górnośląskie), Нижнесилезские бору (Polish Dolnośląskie Bory) and others; the Russian form Дунай entails the translation of differential attributes in the names of its parts: Малый Дунай (Hungarian Kis-Duna, Czech Mali Duna), Шорокшарский Дунай (Czech Šorokšari Duna) and the like. It is rather difficult if not impossible to collect all forms of this kind, therefore the derivative names are not included in the Dictionary and the key-names are marked with asterisks.

A comparatively complete list of conventional names compiled by us permits to properly evaluate the significance and the degree of conventionality of each of them and to supply recommendations on possible exclusion of some of them from the category of conventional names.

The stable tradition of employment of names of countries and their capitals, historical regions, large ocean features (seas, gulfs, straits), largest orographic features, bio-geographic communities as well as of major rivers is unquestionable. As a rule they are either a combination of a foreign root with Russian suffixes and endings or a complete or partial translation.

But there is another group of conventional names that should be treated in a different way. These are the names that neither are widely known nor have a stable tradition of employment, though they occur on maps and in literature. Many of them appeared due to the lack of linguistic knowledge or wrong transcription. In this case we have grounds to refuse the tradition and to substitute the correct and modern forms for the wrong, outdated ones. For example, we have managed without notable loss to replace the form Лос-Анжелос by a correct

Лос-Анджелес (Los Angeles, USA). The name Балканские горы disappeared from our maps and was replaced by Стара-Планина (Bulgaria); the name Халл is already substituting for the conventional Гулль (Hall, UK). It seems possible to give up some translated names and first of all to refuse translation of differential attributes such as great-little, high-low, Northern-Southern in the names of small features: instead of Большая Фани and Малая Фани to use Фани-и-Мад and Фани-и-Вогель (Fani i Madh, Fani i Vogel, Albania); instead of Высокий and Низкий Есеник to use Груби-Есеник and Низки-Есеник (HrubýJeseník, Nízký Jeseník, Czechoslovakia), and the like.

Rather a numerous group is composed of names expressed by nouns in genitive case or possessive ajectives: о-ва Кука (English - Cook Islands), прол. Дрейка (English Drake Passage), Тасманово море (English Tasman Sea), Магелланов пролив (Spanish Estrecho de Magallanes). All of them are Russian forms derived from foreign personal names introduced into Russian: Кук, Тасман, Дрейк, Магеллан (Cook, Tasman, Drake, Magallanes). The names of this kind can hardly be considered as conventional ones though in future such forms should be avoided.

There is one more category of geographical feature names that can hardly be considered as conventional ones though they vary from language to language. These are the names of features located beyond a national jurisdiction or covering the territory of several countries, e.g. Атлантический океан, Средиземное море, Черное море, Азия, Америка, Европа, Перуанская впадина, Центральноамериканский желоб and alike. Such names have no and can not have any national form, each language has its own name forms for them which represent either phonetic variations (Asia, Europe in different languages) or grammar



variations (АТЛАНТИЧЕСКИЙ ОКЕАН - Atlantic Ocean - océano Atlántico, etc.) or lexical variations of the same name ТИХИЙ ОКЕАН - Pacific Ocean - Stiller - Ozean, etc.).

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The material in the Dictionary is presented in 5 columns. Conventional Russian names ordered alphabetically appear in the first column. If the conventional form coincides with one or more national forms of the name it is explained by a parenthetical indication of the language (languages), e.g. Карпаты (гр. и польск.). The second column contains designation of the kind of the feature in mnemonic codes. The third one - the national (one or several) name form with indication of the source language. The names of Cyrillic or Roman writing countries are reproduced in original script; the names of other countries are reproduced in official or most widespread Romanization. The names of physical features are usually accompanied by corresponding generic terms and the specific part of the name is underlined. Generics for the administrative units are placed after the toponyms and separated by comma. The fourth column incorporates Russian normalized names that should be used in absence or instead of the conventional one. The geographical term is not repeated in this case. The fifth column is meant for indication of the territory or water body where the named feature is located.

In the preface to the Dictionary we apply to all the readers to inform us on their opinion on whether it is possible to refuse certain names that are regarded now as conventional ones and if so what particular names could be changed.

Annex: Samples of the Dictionary pages.