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Gazetteers:

(a) National gazetteers

ON THE CONTENT OF THE NATIONAL LISTS OF NAMES\*

Paper presented by the German Democratic Republic

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The national lists of the geographical names of all countries are an important basis for the international standardization of geographical names. In recommendation E of resolution 4 of the first United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1/ the Conference had expressed the view that such lists would be desirable and should be published. The national lists of geographical names available so far differ very much in their character.

The following are some ideas on how to prepare national lists of geographical names as exemplified by the German Democratic Republic on the basis of the above resolution.

A national list of geographical names is intended to contribute to a correct spelling and pronunciation of geographical names in all spheres of the social life of a country. Geographical names cover the names of all natural and man-made objects situated in the territory of the country concerned. They include the names of the territorial administrative units (counties, districts, towns, municipal districts, communities and associations of communities), settlements (towns, communities, subdistricts, residential areas), places of production in industry, agriculture, food-stuffs economy, and forestry, the establishments of motor traffic, railways, inland and sea navigation, as well as of air traffic, the cultural, educational and health institutions, sport and recreational facilities etc., provided they occupy a given territory and have been given a name. The number of physical-geographical names is also quite large, i.e. the names of landscapes, relief, hydrography, ground vegetation etc. In this rather broad meaning the geographical names also include the microtoponyms, the so-called field names and names of village holdings which are usually entered on real-estate maps and other large-scale maps. An important aspect of the treatment of geographical names is to be seen in the process of systematically changing the natural environment, which also has an influence on geographical names. The German Democratic Republic has witnessed revolutionary changes in the field of agriculture. The year 1960 meant the end of a development which led to the full introduction of the co-operative system in agriculture. At present the production of plant and animal products is gradually being changed on the principle of industrialized production, and a systematic transition to industrialized production methods with the greatest benefit for the whole of society is going on. Studies indicate that property-oriented thinking no longer plays any important role in field names and names of village holdings and that, in connexion with large agricultural areas, new names are being coined on the basis of practical work under production relations which are undergoing steady development. This is the reason why a national book of names should be drawn up in such a way that it will be a guideline not only for the correct use of existing geographical names but also for the correct and purposeful coining of new names.

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1/ United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Geneva, 4-22 September 1967, vol. I, Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.I.9), chap. III.

In the introduction to the actual list of names the treasury of geographical names should be characterized in a brief but concise way before providing a short background description of the size and history of the country, past and present. The results already obtained in philological research work on this treasury of names should also be mentioned.

After the representation of existing regulations concerning the use of the previous geographical names and the coining of new geographical names, the rules for the spelling of geographical names are to be elucidated in detail. Furthermore, information should be included on the number of names listed, the main headings and reference headings, the alphabetization, the phonetic transcription, the grammatical characterization of the names, the description of the objects, and the abbreviations used.

The number of geographical names to be listed depends on the scale of the map. Given a scale of 1:200,000, the number of names entered should amount to about 25,000 in the case of the German Democratic Republic, i.e. 18,000 settlement names and 7,000 other geographical names. It is recommended, on the basis of resolution 35 of the second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, <sup>2/</sup> that a selective list of names should first be prepared. First of all such a selective list can be compiled in less time and secondly it will provide valuable experience for the preparation of a complete list of names.

Problems regarding the spelling of geographical names in the German Democratic Republic lie in the fact that those names reflect marked traces of long-standing spelling habits, orthographic peculiarities of former times, which contradict today's orthographic rules, and which differ markedly from the spelling of the other words of the current language concerned. The valid German orthography of today, for instance, which was established in the beginning of this century, is by no means fully homogeneous, but the spelling of the geographical names of the German Democratic Republic is even more heterogeneous in terms of orthography. Besides, half of all the geographical names in the German Democratic Republic are of non-German origin, and trace back to Slavic forms which were subject to various changes in the individual German dialects. Typical endings of place names in the German Democratic Republic are -in, -ow, -itz. A national list of names has to face such problems and must ensure that the names, wherever they are used, will be entered, printed, written and pronounced uniformly. The national list of names must indicate how to apply in practice the rules for the spelling of the geographical names of the country concerned. This requirement does not rule out the inclusion (for instance in brackets) of standardized forms of names which are still widely used; in such cases a special point should be made of noting that they are to be avoided for the reasons given.

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<sup>2/</sup> Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, London, 10-31 May 1972, vol. I, Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2), chap. III.

The syllabification of all names should be indicated, if possible, since this makes the often necessary division into syllables easier. The seventeenth edition of the Grosser Duden (Leipzig 1976) can boast of having indicated the syllabification throughout which has proved to be useful. The grammatical gender and the number are given immediately after the name. The omission of such data in cases of unmistakable categories of names is precisely defined. It is also a very important aspect to enter the article together with the other geographical names when this article is, as a rule, used in context. Many geographical names are very old, so that it is difficult to trace their etymology. This is why, in the case of especially important names, whose morphemes are hard to recognize, particulars are given of the etymology and history, provided the results of research work on place and field names are such as to furnish established data.

After the correct spelling of the names, the correct pronunciation is given, since the pronunciation is also most important.

To explain how geographical names must be pronounced is, in fact, essential. Much attention should also be paid to the correct accentuation of compound words which consist of two or more elements. This accentuation is not governed in all cases by the rules of the appellative vocabulary of our time. For the correct accentuation of the geographical names of the German Democratic Republic certain easy-to-remember rules can be set down, even though there exist some more or less pronounced differences in accentuation in the territory of the German Democratic Republic. The fact that the pronunciation is given for every name makes this list of names particularly valuable for foreign users and for purposes of rendering these names in other languages.

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