

the sea. An arm of the same sound extended northwestward into the Mierching Lake depression.

The west coast of the peninsula in the vicinity of Lefroy Bay differed only slightly from its present configuration. A comparatively narrow coastal belt was submerged and arms of the sea extended a few miles up the valleys of the main west-flowing rivers. Rae Isthmus and the north shore of Repulse Bay were submerged and a broad strait, 20 miles wide, connected the present Committee Bay and Repulse Bay.

Table 1 gives the precise location and criteria used in the determination of the postglacial marine limit at thirteen places in southern Melville Peninsula.

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¹Sim, Victor W. 1960. Maximum postglacial marine submergence in northern Melville Peninsula. *Arctic* 13:178-93.

²Burns, C. A., and A. E. Wilson, 1952. Geological notes on localities in James Bay, Hudson Bay and Foxe Basin visited during an exploration cruise, 1949; including lists of collected fossils. *Geol. Surv. Can. Pap.* 52-25, 17 pp.

³Mathiassen, Therkel. 1933. Contributions to the geography of Baffin Land and Melville Peninsula. Fifth Thule Exped., 1921-24, Rept. Vol. 1, No. 3, 102 pp.

⁴Bird, J. B. 1953. Southampton Island. Geographical Branch, Mem. 1, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 84 pp.

CHUKOTSK OR CHUKCHI: SOME THOUGHTS ON THE TRANSPOSITION OF SOVIET GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Whether G. E. Moore, the great common-sense philosopher of our time, was right in reviving and defending the old philosophic contention that purely external relations do not exist may seem beside the point to the man of this pragmatic age, but surely every one will agree that the problems presented by relations generally admit much less of superficial blanket solutions than we are apt to believe, faced as we are with growing numbers of increasingly com-

plicated situations in every field of endeavour. To some cartographers and gazetteer writers the transposition of Russian geographical names into English may seem a subject well suited for an arbitrary rule of thumb; but is it? Let us consider an example.

In the remote northeast corner of Asia there is a projection of land of the kind that is commonly classed as a peninsula. The co-ordinates, according to Gazetteer No. 42, United States Board of Geographical Names, are 66°00'N. and 174°00'W. In common practice, however, it would be cumbersome to refer to the homeland of the Chukchi as "Peninsula 66°00'N. and 174°00'W." no matter how exact the description or how bleak the country may be. Obviously, we must have a proper name, a designation less artificial, mathematical, and abstract than that provided by the generic name and geographical co-ordinates, but it must also be geographically informative and linguistically sound, i.e., etymologically correct and as far as possible short and euphonic. Obviously the generic part of the name, in this case "Peninsula", should be intelligible to the general public, without requiring consultation of a foreign language dictionary.

However, Gazetteer No. 42 and the U.S. government maps present as the "approved" version *Chukotskiy Poluostrov*. Now, a Russian-speaking person familiar with the Latin alphabet, or an English-speaking person knowing Russian, would immediately know that an expedition to Chukotskiy Poluostrov would not be an expedition to the moon, but for that matter neither would be dismayed if the original Cyrillic alphabet had been used. On the other hand, the reader who has not had the benefit of training in the Russian language is in no way enlightened by the word *Poluostrov*, nor has he any way of knowing that the jaw-breaking *Chukotskiy* is merely the Russian adjectival form of Chukchi, the name of the tribe inhabiting the region.

The reason for the current trend towards indiscriminate transliteration of Soviet geographical names is not far to

seek. It is the simplest way to avoid the problems of adaptation, and at the same time enables all those who may now have a need to know the Russian version of the names to avoid learning the 32 letters of the Cyrillic alphabet — at the price of a minor distortion and some uncertainty in spelling and pronunciation. By the same token it is also the crudest manner of transposition. It literally deprives the English language of a galaxy of geographical names for a vast and increasingly important part of the earth. It is a way of dodging an issue instead of facing it.

The obvious conclusion is that the gap in English map making ought to be filled, rather than that readers of geographical literature should be required to accept such bilingual combinations as "Reka Yana is formed by the confluence of Reka Dugalakh and Reka Sartang, which take their origin in the Verkhoyskiy Khrebet; it flows to the Yanskiy Zaliv in the More Laptevykh, one of the outlying seas of the Severnyy Ledovityy Okean". Transliteration has its uses, but it must not be expected to solve all problems. The differences of rendering due to choice of transliteration system are, of course, a separate issue and cannot be dealt with here.

There have been a few attempts, some ill-advised and others very sound but not systematic, to anglicize Russian geographical names.

The peninsula mentioned above has on occasion been referred to as Chukotski Peninsula, after the pattern of Polish surnames, which is rather like having an "Eskimson Point" instead of Eskimo Point. At other times the name has been truncated to Chukotsk Peninsula, which would suggest that it is named after a town of Chukotsk, which does not even exist (cf. "Eskiville", "Eskiton Point"). As a further illustration of the confusion, note the following variants from Webster's Geographical Dictionary (Merriam Co., 1960): Chuckchee (Chukchi) Sea, Chukot National District, Chukotski (Chukot) Peninsula, Chukotskoe More. Now, since English regularly applies tribal names in uninflected form to geographical features

(Lake Huron, Mohawk River) there can be no conceivable reason for not following the same principle here and using the linguistically correct forms Chukchi Peninsula, Chukchi Sea, Cape Chukchi, etc. For these are exact English counterparts to the Russian Chukotskiy Poluostrov, Chukotskoe More, Chukotskiy Mys. It is surely a black mark against the earth sciences that as yet there is no authoritative large-scale map of Eurasia on which students can readily locate places and features without recourse to inflected Russian language forms. Nevertheless, unless some appropriate action is taken now, there is real danger that the present trend, based primarily on rather narrow military strategic considerations, will prevail, leaving students of geography in future a heritage of unnecessarily obscure and difficult forms.

In preparing the translation of a Russian journal¹ the authors tried to transpose Soviet geographical names on the basis of sound linguistic principles. Before making a decision good precedents in English cartography were sought. The transposition pattern that has evolved in our practice, with some examples of its application, may be of interest to all who have to deal with Soviet geographical names in English.

Our primary contention is quite simple: wherever the aims of clear geographical identification will permit, established and linguistically correct anglicized names and derivatives in their shortest form should be preferred over transliterated Russian forms.

Thus we write Ural Mountains and not Ural'skie Gory or Ural'skie Mountains; Moscow Oblast and not Moskovskaya Oblast' or Moskva Oblast, but also not Moscow Region, retaining the Russian name for the Soviet administrative unit (as also Raion, Krai, Okrug) to avoid any confusion; Archangel and not Arkhangel'sk; Chita Oblast not Chitinskaya Oblast, especially since this adjectival form can hardly be located on any map, whereas the city of Chita (not Chitinsk), which is the administrative centre of the Oblast, appears on practically every map; also Krasnoyarsk Krai, etc. On the other hand we write

Primorskii Krai and do not use Maritime Territory or Primorsk Krai, since the first would not be sufficiently precise, whereas the second would suggest a non-existent town of "Primorsk".

Where the name of a feature consists of two parts the first of which is an adjective expressing a geographical position the adjective is best left in Russian, both for reasons of clarity and in order not to make the English version of proper names too much unlike the Russian. Thus it is Verkhnyaya Tunguska River, rather than Upper Tunguska River, Severnaya Dvina River, rather than Northern Dvina River, etc. These are relatively straightforward examples.

A special problem arises in connection with the various derivatives of "Yana", the name of one of the larger rivers of Siberia. An important town on the upper reaches of this river is quite naturally called *Verkhoyansk* (the prefix "verkho-" or "verkhne-" means upper) and here a straight transliteration is the only possible solution. *Verkhoyanskiy Khrebet*, however, is something else again. This name means "the range at the headwaters of the Yana River". "Verkhoyansk Range" might be objected to on the grounds that it associates the area unjustifiably with the town. However, since "Verkhoyansk Range" is well established in English and the town of Verkhoyansk (unlike "Chukotsk") does exist and is situated in the same general area, it can perhaps be accepted, especially as other conceivable alternatives (*Verkhoyana*, *Verkhoyan*) are also unsatisfactory.

Another special problem arises out of Russian names denoting undefined general areas, such as Zabaikal'e, Primor'e, Verkhoyan'e, and others. Here it is possible to use descriptive phrases in English: Transbaikal region, Primorskii Krai region, Verkhoyansk region or Verkhoyansk Mountain region (these do not coincide). A still better way of dealing with such names might be to accept them in English in their transliterated form but with a definite article. Thus *the Zabaikal'e*, etc. (cf. *the Côte d'azur*).

The question of non-Russian geographical names within the territory of the USSR has been dealt with by Uustalu². Where these names were originally written in the Latin alphabet a strange distortion often results from double transliteration. In such instances the original spelling is definitely preferable: Cesis (not Tsesis), Haljala (not Khalyala), Haapsalu (not Khaapsalu), Vilnius (not Vil'no), etc.

Names that have been derived from other languages using the Cyrillic alphabet and are relatively well-known in western cartography in their original form might be better rendered closer to the original, especially where the original is more readily adaptable to English. For example Bila Tserkva ("White Church" in Ukrainian), which in Russian is Belaya Tserkov', Kharkov (or Kharkiv, but not Khar'kov), etc.

On the other hand, if the name derives from a native tribal dialect there would be little advantage in trying to re-establish the original form. In such cases the Russian version can be accepted (Val'karai Island; Lake El'gytkhyn; the settlements Susuman, Omsukchan, etc.).

Clearly it is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules that are applicable in all conceivable instances. The point is that linguistic as well as geographical considerations, and wherever possible the convenience of readers, should govern the choice of an "approved" form for any name in this area. The trend towards universal transliteration should not be allowed to prevail merely because it represents the easy way out for the authorities.

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¹Problemy Severa, Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Issues I-III, 1958-9. (Problems of the North, National Research Council, Ottawa, Canada. Issues I-III, 1960-1).

²Uustalu Evald. 1956. Double transliteration of geographical names. *Am. Slavic and East European Rev.* 15:244-6.