

Notes and Queries

Are there discernible patterns among the many changes in personal and place names? Shortening, euphony, euphemy, and spelling simplification account for some; others are occasioned by changes in the political climate of the world about them. A collection and analysis of changed names would make an interesting article; carefully done, it could reveal a great deal about politics and people as well as about names.

The generation of students that was caught out when *Christiania* became *Oslo* and *Helsingfors* *Helsinki*, or had just mastered the spelling of *Constantinople* only to have it changed to *Istanbul*, may view with some sympathy the problems of students and cartographers apropos the recent rash of changes in geographic names from several places.

For example, at the end of October, the *New York Times* reported that British government sources had disclosed an intention to change the name of the *Falkland Island* dependencies to *British Antarctica*, beginning in 1962. This change may not be greeted with enthusiasm in Argentina or Chile, since both these countries also claim the territory, and the new name seems pointedly designed to strengthen the British claim.

Most publicized, of course, are the recent Russian changes, effected in an effort to emphasize the official degradation of both Stalin and Molotov. (The procedure is reminiscent somehow of the cutting off of the stripes and the buttons from the uniform of Kipling's *Danny Deever* before he was hanged.) Since the battle fought at Stalingrad was one of the most important ones in World War II, the new name for the city — *Volgograd* — may well take a while to catch on. The familiarity of the river name, *Volga*, may help; perhaps that familiarity is itself due to the musical boatman. Quite possibly, however, unless Russian geography is more intensively studied hereabouts, *Stalingrad* and *Volgograd* will emerge as two entities in the mind of the average American. Today's college sophomores reading *Crime and Punishment* usually seem surprised to learn that *St. Petersburg* is the same city as Leningrad; both names are familiar to them, but the equation is not. Mr. *Molotov*,

whose name is firmly fixed to a highly unpotable cocktail, has witnessed the return of the city of Molotov to its former name of Perm; this would never have done for Stalingrad, since its earlier name was *Tsaritsyn*.

Another recently restored older name is *Santo Domingo*, the name of the capital city of the Dominican republic from the sixteenth century until 1936 when it became *Ciudad Trujillo* for the greater glory of dictator Rafael Trujillo. Trujillo was assassinated in May, 1961, and the end of November 1961 saw the expulsion of his heirs from the island and the restoration of the traditional name, *Santo Domingo*, to its capital city. *Sic semper tyrannis?*

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On October 12, 1961, Professor E. Wallace McMullen officially represented the *ANS* as a delegate to the inauguration of Dr. Robert Fisher Oxnam as the eighth President of Drew University. Oxford University, which dates from 1133, was the oldest institution represented on this occasion. Of the learned groups whose delegates attended the service the *ANS* and the American Studies Association shared the honor of being the youngest, having been founded in the same year.

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On April 27, 1962, Professor T. M. Pearce gave the Eighth Annual Research Lecture at the University of New Mexico. His topic was "The Lure of Names." Locally this lecture is considered the crowning glory of one's teaching and scholastic career. Five or six hundred people attended, both "town and gown," and the honor carried with it a stipend of \$300. That is a fair price for an onomastic speech!

Ed.