

# The Compilation of a Dictionary of Russian Personal Names<sup>1</sup>

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IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, Soviet descriptive works on the Russian language have treated in detail the morphology and stress of the general vocabulary.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Russian forms of geographical names have been dealt with in Soviet dictionaries compiled for geographers.<sup>3</sup> However, a guide to the morphology and stress of Russian personal names – given names and family names – is still not available to the student of Russian or to the onomatologist. Having recognized the need for such a guide, the Language Development Section of the United States Office of Education concluded a contract in March, 1962, with the Department of Slavic Languages, University of Pennsylvania, for the compilation of *A Dictionary of Russian Personal Names with a Guide to Stress and Morphology*. This writer is serving as Principal Investigator for the project. The purpose of this paper is to describe briefly the major goals set for the *Dictionary*, some of the problems encountered, and the progress which has been made in its compilation.

We begin with the treatment of the Russian given name. As the initial step, it was necessary to compile a list of the most important Russian first names now in use. This portion of the project has already been completed. No serious problems were encountered,

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<sup>2</sup> See M. Benson, "Soviet Standardization of Russian," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 5 (1961), 263–278.

<sup>3</sup> M. B. Volostnova, *Slovar' russkoj transkripcii geografičeskix nazvanij*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1955 and 1959); M. N. Mel'xeev, *Geografičeskije imena. Toponimičeskij slovar'*. Moscow 1961. The compilation of the following two works on Russian geographical names was begun by Max Vasmer and is continuing at present: *Wörterbuch der russischen Gewässernamen* (Wiesbaden, 1960); *Russisches geographisches Namenbuch* (Mainz, 1961).

since there is a published Soviet list of Russian first names currently used in the U.S.S.R.<sup>4</sup> The next task in regard to first names was to gather the most important expressive forms, most of which are endearing or diminutive, i.e., hypocoristic.<sup>5</sup> Russian is extremely rich in such forms. Almost every commonly used Russian first name has one or several hypocoristica. Foreign readers of Russian literature are often confused when they come across a character who is referred to by two, three, or even more hypocoristic forms. These forms sometimes bear no resemblance whatsoever to each other or to the full form of the name. Some endearing forms, to be sure, are easily recognized as derivations of the full names. Thus, *Glévik* is obviously formed from *Gleb*, as *Véročka* is from *Véra*, and *Galénka* is from *Galína*. However, other hypocoristica cannot be recognized as related to their full names. For example, *Šúra* is a hypocoristic form of *Aleksándr*, *Njúša* denotes *Ánna*, *Dúnja* is really *Evdokíja*, *Grúšen'ka* is *Agraféna*, *Lúša* is *Glikérija*, *Túsja* is *Tat'jána*, *Vóva* is *Vladímir*, *Nólik* is *Ěmmanuíl*, etc. Another confusing phenomenon is the existence of certain expressive forms each of which can refer to more than one full name. Thus, *Ádik* is a hypocoristic form for either *Adám* or *Arkádij*; *Mótja* can be *Matvéj* or *Matrěna*; *Díma* can be *Vadím*, *Vladímir*, or *Dmitrij*; *Ksána* can be *Aleksándra*, *Ksénja*, or *Roksána*; *Lína* can be *Alína*, *Angelína*, *Apollinárija*, *Karolína*, or *Pavlna*; *Nika* can be *Verónika*, *Nikanór*, *Níkita*, *Níkífor*, *Níkon*, *Nikodím*, or *Nikoláj*; *Pólja* can be *Apollinárija*, *Apollón*, *Apollónij*, *Ippolít*, *Pável*, *Pelagéja*, *Polikárp*, or *Polína*; *Sláva* can be *Bolesláv*, *Borisláv*, *Vladisláv*, *Mstisláv*, *Radisláv*, *Rostisláv*, *Svjatosláv*, *Stanisláv*, etc.

An additional difficulty for the non-native of Russia is the fact that in a few instances one Russian form can be either a full name (with its own hypocoristica) or a hypocoristic form (of a full name). For example, *Dóra* can serve as a full name and, as such, has the endearing forms *Dórka*, *Dóročka*, *Dóruška*, etc. On the other hand, *Dóra* can be an expressive form, and as such, can serve the full names

<sup>4</sup> S. F. Levčenko et al., *Slovník vlasnyx imen ljudej (ukrajins'ko-rosijs'kyj i rosijs'ko-ukrajins'kyj)*, 2nd. ed. (Kiev, 1961), pp. 44–74. A new Soviet work on Russian first names by a scholar named Petrovskij has been reported near completion.

<sup>5</sup> For a structural analysis of hypocoristic forms of Russian first names, see Edward Stankiewicz, "The Expression of Affection in Russian Proper Names," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 15 (1957), 196–210.

*Isidóra* and *Mitrodóra*. Similarly, *Zína* can be used as a full name with the hypocoristica *Zínka*, *Zínočka*, or as an expressive form of *Zinaída* or *Zinóviya*.

To help the non-native with the complexities just outlined, the *Dictionary* will provide two alphabetical lists based on material being assembled by several native informants. The first list will consist of two parts – one for masculine names, the other for feminine. In each part, the most common full names will be listed alphabetically; next to each full name will stand its main expressive forms. In the second list, the main expressive forms will be listed in alphabetical order. Next to each expressive form will stand the full name (or names) to which it can refer.

The second section of the *Dictionary* will be devoted to the stress and morphology of Russian family names.<sup>6</sup> It is, of course, the stress that offers the greatest difficulties in pronouncing Russian. The Russian stress is non-restricted, i.e., it may occur on any syllable in a word. Furthermore, it may be mobile – it may shift to different syllables in various declensional forms. A major goal of the *Dictionary* is to show the usual stress or stresses (i.e., variants) in a large number of Russian names, and to indicate those instances where the stress is mobile. For example, the entry *Sóbolev* will mean that, according to the best of our knowledge, most Russians usually pronounce this name with the first syllable stressed. There is no stress shift in the oblique cases. The entry *Xólmov* means that some Russians pronounce *Xólmov*, and others *Xolmóv*, or that some Russians admit either stress as possible. This will be called *variant* stress. The entry *Borodín* (*á*) means that when the name is declined, the stress is always on the ending – throughout the masculine, feminine and plural. The feminine nominative would be *Borodíná* ‘Miss (or Mrs.) Borodin.’ The entry *Kámkín* (*á*) denotes variant stress and a

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<sup>6</sup> Some recent studies devoted to Russian surnames are B. O. Unbegaun, “Les noms de famille du clergé russe,” *Revue des études slaves*, 20 (1942), 41–62; James St. Clair-Sobell and Irina Carlsen, “The Structure of Russian Surnames,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 4 (1959), 42–60; V. K. Čičagov, *Iz istorii russkix iměn, otčestv i familij* (Moscow, 1959); John P. Pauls, “Surnames of Soviet Russian and Other Communist Celebrities,” *Names*, 8 (1960), 220–239; James Forsyth, *A Practical Guide to Russian Stress* (Edinburgh and London, 1963), pp. 111–114; Melvin E. Deatherage, *Soviet Surnames: A Handbook* (Oberammergau, 1962, mimeographed). Mr. Deatherage was kind enough to place at this writer’s disposal two copies of his study.

stress shift to all endings in the pronunciation of those Russians who use *Kamkin*. The entry *Žuk* (á) means that the stress shifts to the oblique case endings when the noun is declined.<sup>7</sup>

In the introduction to the surname part of the *Dictionary*, there will be a descriptive statement concerning the declension of surnames, a summary of general rules regarding their accentuation, and comments on the Russians' pronunciation of foreign names. There will be a special section for the person interested in Russian names who does not know Russian. This section will explain briefly the Russian alphabet and sound system, and, in addition, how to find a name in the *Dictionary* if only the English transliteration is available.

Four problems have arisen in regard to surnames. The first problem that had to be solved was how to select names for the *Dictionary*. The number of Russian family names is infinite. Specific criteria had to be established and applied in order to keep the number of names in the *Dictionary* to a reasonable limit. The criteria had to insure inclusion of those names which would be most important for persons interested in Russian literature and for people interested in the political, cultural, and economic phases of life in the Soviet Union. The following procedure was adopted in the selection of surnames for the *Dictionary*. First, a list of the most important works in Russian literature was drawn up<sup>8</sup> and examined by a group of readers who recorded all polysyllabic Russian surnames occurring in the works. All of these names will go into the *Dictionary*. The second major source of surnames is the *Moscow Telephone Book of 1960*.<sup>9</sup> Here a selection had to be made since this source contains far too many names for inclusion. After considerable deliberation, it was decided to include the following types of surnames: 1. All surnames ending in the most productive Russian surname suffixes *-ov* and *-in*; 2. names ending in the suffixes *-enko*, *-ik*, *-ko*, *-ovič*, *-skij*, etc., if the name occurs at least twice; 3. other names (i. e., names

<sup>7</sup> Such a monosyllabic name would be declined only when referring to a male. The *Dictionary* will include only those monosyllabic surnames which have a mobile stress.

<sup>8</sup> Professors Ralph E. Matlaw of the University of Illinois and Gleb Zekulin of the University of Glasgow were the main advisers in compiling this list. Their collaboration is appreciated sincerely.

<sup>9</sup> *Spisok abonentov moskovskoj gorodskoj telefonnoj seti* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 211 to 847.

that are non-Russian and non-Slavic from the historical viewpoint) if they occur at least three times. The third major source of surnames is the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*.<sup>10</sup> All surnames of Russian and Soviet persons listed in this *Encyclopedia* will be included in the *Dictionary*.

The sources described above have produced a basic inventory of about 25,000 surnames for the *Dictionary*.

The second major problem in treating Russian surnames lies in ascertaining the proper stress. For many Russian surnames, to be sure, this problem is easily solved. These names are always stressed in the same way by any literate Russian. Often such names belong to well-known persons. For example, the names of such famous authors as *Lérmontov*, *Turgénev*, and *Karamzín* are invariably pronounced with the indicated stresses. A large number of other stresses seem firmly standardized on the basis of several rules which will be discussed below.

On the other hand, there are Russian surnames whose stress is not fixed either by wide usage, or by the operation of the general rules. Such names produce most of the variant stresses. The only satisfactory method of treating such names for the *Dictionary* is to obtain the aid of informants familiar with the prevalent stress of surnames in the contemporary Soviet Union. At present, several native informants are engaged in this phase of the project.

The third problem concerning surnames is the formulation of general rules in regard to stress. Actually, the stress of Russian surnames is so complex that no complete set of rules can be devised. On the other hand, an examination of a large number of surnames reveals two major factors, which often determine the stress. The first factor is the type of suffix. Certain suffixes often attract the stress. An illustration of this phenomenon is *-ovskij* and its variant *-evskij*, exemplified by *Buróvskij*, *Dostoévskij*, *Gudóvskij*, *Korsunóvskij*, *Lavróvskij*, *Mogilévskij*, etc. There are, of course, exceptions such as *Odóevskij*, the name of the Russian poet Aleksandr I. (1802–1839) and the novelist Vladimir F. (1804–1869). Other suffixes which attract the stress are *-uk*, *-ovič*, *-ak*, *-un*, *-uckij*, etc. Several of these suffixes have been described in the existing literature, notably Deatherage's study.<sup>11</sup> Additional work on this question is, however,

<sup>10</sup> *Boľšaja sovetskaja ènciklopedija*. 2nd ed., 51 vols. (Moscow, 1949–1958). All surnames are stressed in this encyclopedia beginning with volume 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 50–52.

necessary, and is being carried out for the *Dictionary*. The second important factor is the stress pattern of the noun from which a surname is derived. Since the relationship between the stress of derived surnames and their corresponding nouns has not been adequately described in the extant literature, it has been necessary to investigate this question in some detail during the compilation of the *Dictionary*. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to report the findings completely, several comments will suffice to show what types of information have been obtained.

For example, it is clear that a surname has the same stress as the noun from which it is derived if the latter has a constant stem stress throughout its declension. Examples: *Baránov*–*barán* (genitive – *barána*) ‘ram’; *Bélkin*–*bélka* ‘squirrel’; *Búnin*–*búnja* ‘boastful person’; *Kutúzov*–*kutúz* ‘pillow for weaving’; *Plótnikov*–*plótnik* ‘carpenter’; *Sabúrov*–*sabúr* ‘aloe’; *Vinográdov*–*vinográd* ‘grapes,’ etc.

The complexities arise when a surname comes from a noun which has mobile stress or a constant end stress. For example, the previous literature on this subject, including Kiparskij’s recently published major study of Russian accentuation, indicates that a surname is usually end-stressed if it is derived from a monosyllabic masculine noun which is end-stressed throughout its declension.<sup>12</sup> Stem stress in the name is described as being the exception. The research carried out for the *Dictionary* shows that this observation is not accurate. In fact, in this group of names stem stress and variant stress taken together occur far more frequently than end stress. If we consider seventy-four surnames which are formed from monosyllabic end-stressed nouns listed in the Academy of Sciences *Grammar*,<sup>13</sup> we find the following.

Twenty-six names are usually end-stressed: *Blinóv*–*blin* (genitive – *bliná*) ‘pancake’; *Eršóv*–*ěrš* ‘ruff’ (fish); *Petróv*–*Pětr* ‘Peter’; *Popóv*–*pop* ‘priest’; *Rublěv*–*rubl* ‘rouble’; *Stolbóv*–*stolb* ‘pillar’; *Xlystóv*–*xlyst* ‘whip,’ etc.

<sup>12</sup> Valentin Kiparskij, *Der Wortakzent der russischen Schriftsprache* (Heidelberg, 1962), pp. 264–265; and G. Davydoff and P. Pauliat, *Précis d’accentuation russe* (Paris, 1959), p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> *Grammatika russkogo jazyka* (Moscow, 1960), I, 190–191. The stresses given in this paper were provided by two cultured Soviet informants.

Twenty-five are usually stem-stressed: *Býkov-byk* 'bull'; *D'jákov-d'jak* 'clerk'; *Kótov-kot* 'tomcat'; *Krótov-krot* 'mole'; *Štykov-štyk* 'bayonet'; *Úmov-um* 'intelligence'; *Žúkov-žuk* 'beetle,' etc.<sup>14</sup>

Twenty-three nouns have variant stresses: *Górbóv-gorb* 'hump'; *Gúrtóv-gurt* 'herd'; *Péstóv-pest* 'pestle'; *Súdóv-sud* 'court'; *Xól-móv-xolm* 'hill'; *Žézlóv-žezl* 'wand,' etc.

In several instances, the stem stress or variant stress in a name derived from an end-stressed monosyllabic noun has a historical explanation. Kiparskij has shown that several nouns of this type were, or may have been, stem-stressed in Old Russian.<sup>15</sup> Such nouns were *d'jak*, *gorb*, *kot*, *slon*, *xolm*, *žuk*, etc.

Work on the *Dictionary* has also reached new findings regarding the stress of surnames derived from feminine nouns in stressed *-a* which retain the end stress throughout their declension. Previous descriptions state that in such surnames the end stress is usual.<sup>16</sup> To analyze this pattern, we have taken thirty-nine names which are formed from the completely end-stressed feminine nouns in *-a* listed in the *Academy Grammar*.<sup>17</sup> We find that end stress is decidedly less frequent than stem and variant stress. The data follow.

Nine names are usually end-stressed: *Botvín-botvá* 'plant leaves'; *Golovnín-golovnjá* 'fire-brand'; *Kočergín-kočergá* 'poker' (for stoking); *Kvašnín-kvašnjá* 'kneading trough'; *Lapšín-lapšá* 'noodle-soup'; etc.

Seventeen names are usually stem-stressed: *Búzin-buzá* 'home-made ale'; *Čékin-čeká* 'linchpin'; *Kírkin-kirká* 'pick'; *Kljúkin-kljúká* 'walking stick'; *Kórin-korá* 'bark'; *Zúdin-zudá* 'annoying person.'

Thirteen names have variant stresses: *Bárdín-bardá* 'malt grain'; *Čértín-čertá* 'line'; *Trúxín-truxá* 'rotted wood'; *Xándrin-xandrá* 'blues' (depressed mental state), etc.

The fourth problem regarding surnames is that some Russians insist on a pronunciation of their names which differs from the usual stress. The *Dictionary* can, of course, attempt no large-scale description of such "individual" pronunciations. It must limit itself

<sup>14</sup> It may be noted that all nouns of the type under discussion that end in *-k* (*byk*, *d'jak*, *štyk*, *žuk*, etc.) have stem-stressed derivative surnames.

<sup>15</sup> Op. cit., pp. 70–80, 90–92.

<sup>16</sup> Davydoff and Pauliat, op. cit., p. 44 and Kiparskij, op. cit., p. 265.

<sup>17</sup> 1.198.

to pointing out individual stresses in the names of well-known persons. Here are several examples of individual pronunciations:

1. A. T. Bólotov, author, 1783–1833.<sup>18</sup> (Cf. the normal stress *Bolótov* from *bolóto* ‘swamp.’)
2. K. M. Bykóv, physiologist, 1884.<sup>19</sup> (Cf. the normally used stress *Býkov*, listed earlier in this paper.)
3. S. I. Óžegov, lexicographer.<sup>20</sup> (Cf. the normal *Ožégov* from *ožóg* ‘burn.’)
4. F. N. Švedóv, physicist, 1840–1905.<sup>21</sup> (Cf. the normal *Švédov* from *šved*, genitive *švéda*, ‘Swede.’)

Any discussion of individual pronunciation must include mention of the most frequently encountered Russian surname, *Ivanov*. One would expect the stress of this name to be invariably *Ivánov*. (Cf. *Iván* and its genitive *Ivána*.) In Russia, however, each person named *Ivanov* apparently decides whether he is to be called *Ivánov* or *Ivanóv*. The second variant prevails in the contemporary Soviet Union. Of thirty-six *Ivanovs* listed in the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*,<sup>22</sup> twenty-seven are given as *Ivanóv* and eight as *Ivánov*. For one *Ivanov*, no stress is indicated. The *Dictionary* will list all the *Ivanovs* found in the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* (with initials and dates) and indicate the preferred stress for each.

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<sup>18</sup> See the *Malaja sovetskaja ènciklopedija*, 3rd ed., 10 vols. (Moscow, 1958–1960), 1. 1123. All surnames are stressed in this encyclopedia. See also Kiparskij, *op. cit.*, pp. 264–265.

<sup>19</sup> See *Malaja sovetskaja ènciklopedija*, 2. 67.

<sup>20</sup> See the title page of S. I. Ožegov, *Slovar' russkogo jazyka* (Moscow, 1960).

<sup>21</sup> See the *Bol'shaja sovetskaja ènciklopedija*, 47. 570.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 17. 271–82.