Terminology for designating administrative divisions within Russian territory
Prepared by Bena Shklayanoy (benagen@gmail.com), 28 August 2012

Term in Russian	Abbreviation in Russian	Transliterated Term	Transliterated Abbreviation	English Translation	JewishGen Equivalent	Description
Деревня	Д / Дер	Derevnya	D / Der	Village	Town	Derevnya is a name of a locality with a few dozen single family houses. Originally, the difference between derevnya and selo is the size and the absence of a church in a derevnya. No such difference currently exists.
Город	Г / Г-д	Gorod	G / G-d	City	Town	Large populated area. City may be subdivided into multiple rajon.
Губерния	Губ / г-я	Guberniya	Gub / g-ya		Province	Guberniya (gubernia) was a major administrative subdivision of the Russian Empire usually translated as province. It was preserved for some time upon the collapse of the empire in 1917. Guberniyas were subdivided into uyezds, and further subdivided into volosts. In 1929, this subdivision was replaced by oblast, okrug, and rayon.
Хутор	Хут	Khutor	Khut	Village	Town	Khutor originally was a single-homestead rural settlement. In Cossack-settled lands (today's Ukraine, Kuban, and the lower Don river basin) the word khutor (and also posyolok) was used to describe new settlements (irrespective of the number of homesteads) which had detached themselves from stanitsas. Khutors were practically eliminated during the collectivisation in the USSR in the 1930s.
Край	Кр	Kraj	Kr		Province	Kraj (krai, kray) was a type of an administrative division in the Russian Empire, RSFSR, and remains in modern Russia. Historically, krajs were vast territories located along the periphery of Russia Currently, there is no difference in legal status between the krais and the oblasts.
Местечко	M.	Mestechko	M.		Town	Small town. Shtetl (Yiddish).
Населенны й пункт.	Н.п.	Naselennyj punkt	N.p.		Town	Generic name for any small populated place. Usually used in plural as a collective term for anything not as large as a city: cities and populated places.
Область	Обл	Oblast	Obl		Province	Oblast is one of the administrative divisions within the republics of USSR. It was composed of districts (rayons) and cities/towns that were under its jurisdiction. Some oblasts also included autonomous entities called autonomous okrugs. With a few exceptions, Soviet oblasts were named after their administrative centers.
Округ	Окр	Okrug	Okr		District	Okrug is the most difficult category to describe. It is one of the several types of administrative division for oblasts, some guberniyas in Imperial Russia, and, until 1920s, in Cossack-settled areas where okrug was also referred to as khutor. In the 1920s they also served as the primary unit upon the abolishment of guberniyas and were divided into rayons. In 1930 most of the okrugs were abolished; the remaining were phased away in RSFSR by the end of WWII but were retained in Zakarpatskaya Oblast of Ukrainian SSR in the rayon status. National RSFSR okrugs of Mountain ASSR, north, and Caucasus region were renamed autonomous okrugs. Okrug also describes the administrative divisions of the "federal cities" Moscow and St. Petersburg and some other cities, and military garrisson administrative division (voyennyj okrug).
Район	Р-н	Rayon	R-n		District	Rayon was an administrative division in USSR created in the 1920s to reduce the number of territorial divisions inherited from the Russian Empire By 1929, it replaced the old volost and uyezd. Rayon is also used as an administrative subdivisiion of cities representing the lowest level unit of jurisdiction (See Rayon).
Район	Р-н	Rayon	R-n		n/a	Subdivision of a city. Rayon as a subdivision of volost, uyezd, guberniya (See District).
Село	С	Selo	S	Village	Town	See Derevnya.
Поселение	Пос	Settlement	Pos	Settlement	Town	In addition to Cossack-settled settlements (khutor), settlements were part of political and administrative exile practiced in the Imperial Russia and in USSR. Other terms for this category were: "special settlement" (спецпоселение); "free settlement" (вольное поселение, volnoye poseleniye) peopled by those released before serving their full term; "exile settlements" (ссыльное поселение, ssylnoye poselenie) appplied to places of internal exile after the term was fully-served.

Term in Russian	Abbreviation in Russian	Transliterated Term	Transliterated Abbreviation	English Translation	JewishGen Equivalent	Description
Станица	Ст	Stanitsa	St	Village	Town	Stanitsa is a village inside a Cossack host (army) and its primary administrative unit. The stanitsa system was destroyed after the Russian revolution.
Уезд	У-д	Uyezd	U-d		District	Uyezd (uezd) was an secondary level of administrative division of Russian Empire, and the early RSFSR. In Ukraine, it was known as powiat or povit. Originally it was a group of several volosts formed around the most important cities. In the 1920s most of the uyezds were transformed into rayons (districts). In Ukraine, they were reformed into forty okrugs that were, at that time, the primary-level of administrative division.
Волость	Вол	Volost	Vol		n/a	Volost was a traditional administrative subdivision, part of uyezd. Volosts within a uyezd were subordinated to the uyezd city. Volosts were abolished by the Soviet reform of 1923–1929. Rayons may be roughly called a modern equivalent of both volosts and uyezds. In modern Russia, subdivision into volosts is used in a few oblasts, where volosts are considered subdivisions of rayons.