"I Have Often Walked Down This Street Before...But What Was it Called?": Changes to Street Names in Budapest from the End of Turkish Rule to the Present

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Abstract

My essay examines patterns of meaning in the nomenclature chosen to designate street names of Budapest, Hungary's present-day capital city, over a period of about three hundred years. I attend to the magyarization [1] of Budapest and how street signage reflected the change of Budapest from a German to a Hungarian city. After the changeover to Magyar I continue to address how Budapest street toponymy was consistently utilized to express national identity. As consensus over national identity changed over time, so did its metaphorical expression in Budapest street nomenclature. Examples of these changes include the creation of cults of collective remembrance and personality in the nineteenth century and irredentism in the twentieth century. I also argue that

[1] Magyarization was a political direction to encourage the non-Hungarian nationalities of the Kingdom of Hungary to incorporate more aspects of Magyar culture into their daily lives. It was an attempt to close the gap between the linguistic and the geographic borders of the lands comprising Hungary. Some historiography on this topic includes; Dezső Korbuly, "Nationalitätenfrage und Madjarisierung in Ungarn (1790-1918)," *Österreichische Osthefte* Vol. 13. No. 2 (1971): 152-161 and Josef Clebowczyk, "Die Madjarisierungs- und Germanisierungspolitik im 18.-19. Jahrhundert und um die Jahrhundertwende. Versuch einer Konfrontation," *Acta Poloniae Historica* Vol.30 (1974): 163-186.

Budapest street naming during the socialist period served the purpose of legitimizing the purported domestic origin of the ruling political philosophy. Currently, the erasure and retention of street names from previous regimes is a deliberate policy of symbolic reconciliation of Hungary's past with its present.

Introduction

My essay examines the magyarization of Budapest from being a German to a Hungarian city from the late seventeenth century to the present. I seek to compliment existing articles written in English with information from the case of Budapest street alteration, a neglected topic outside of Hungarian historiography. The street signage of Budapest was transformed several times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a result of wars, revolutions, counter-revolutions, occupations and collapsed governments. My thesis is that street signs serve as evidence of magyarization and consensus over forms of national identity expression.

In the early nineteenth century my focus is on the choices for mostly prosaic non-confrontational street names as a conscious method to make the transition from German to Magyar look as undisruptive and inoffensive as possible. [2] After Hungarians gained greater political

[2] Magyarization has a historiographical association as a highly controversial, process. I am arguing here that its dynamic in relation to street names involved a consciousness that changing the language of street signs from German to Magyar was a radical change for inhabitants. Ultimately the pace of transformation and the replacement street names reflected this awareness.

independence in the second half of the nineteenth century, I stress the usage of street signs as more overt political tools. In particular, I look at street signs as attempted political legitimation of existing regimes. My methodology is that for a given point in time, I try to distill patterns to street sign designations, and then connect these choices to the dominant ideological goals of the government then in power. Some of these patterns included national cults around venerated heroes, personality cults, the expression of irredentist sentiments, and the association of socialism with Hungarian culture.. Finally I end the essay arguing that in the most recent change of regime, in 1989, a conscious decision was made both to excise and to retain street designations. This action was done in an effort to reconcile past and present forms of national identity expression, and to underscore that all but the most controversial regimes that had functioned in Hungary had had some political legitimation that deserved commemoration on the signs of the capital city's landscape.

Street nomenclature alteration and the case study of Budapest

The Streets of Budapest have seen their names changed repeatedly since they were catalogued after the reconquest of Hungary from Turkish rule in the late 17th century.[3] The territory now known as Budapest was then

[3] An example of such a catalogue is *Zaiger über die Vöstung und Wasser Stadt* 1696.*[Guide to the Fortress and Water City]* Source: Klára Vass, *Buda Német utcanevei: A Vár és Újlak utcanevei, 1696-1872 [The German Street Names of*

divided into the Free Royal Cities of Buda and Pest, on opposite sides of the Danube River. According to Ignác Peisner's study of 18th century Budapest, the Turkish wars had devastated the population of the cities so much so that Buda had just 12 138 inhabitants in 1720 while the flatlands of Pest had a sixth of this number, 2 706 residents.[4] At about the same time, Pest boasted of four squares and thirty-nine streets, while across the river in Buda, carriages, animals and people caused traffic on 67 such passageways.[5] In 2004 Mihály Ráday estimated that the Hungarian capital contained 8 079 streets, each with its own individual naming history.[6] The famous Andrássy Street in the city centre leading from Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Street to the Millenium monument, for example, was named Maurer Gasse (Mason Street) in the 1840s, Sugár Street (Boulevard Street) in 1883, Andrássy Street in 1886, Sztálin Street in 1950, Magyar ifúság Street (Hungarian Youth Street) in October 1956, and Népköztársaság Street (People's Republic Street) in 1957. In 1990, the same street was renamed Andrássy Street again, after Gyula Andrássy (1823-1890), a former Austro-Hungarian foreign minister.[7]

Such changes to street names are not unique to Hungary but are common in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which were in the Soviet sphere. Light's

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Buda: The Street Names of the Fortress and the New Settlement, 1696-1872] (Budapest: Ferdinánd Pfeifer, 1929).

[4]Ignác Peisner, *Budapest története a XVIII században* (Budapest 1900), 119.

[5] Lajos Schmall, *Buda-Pest utczái és terei: adatok a Buda-Pesti utczák és terek elnevezéséhez é történetéhez* (Budapest: Budapest Székesfőváros, 1906), 88.

[6] Mihály Ráday ed., *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona* (Kalocsa: Sprinter, 2003),15.

[7] *Ibid.,*70.

focus on street names in Bucharest, Romania after the collapse of communism revealed that "change in political order is frequently accompanied by the redefining of the national past: through the renaming of streets, new narratives of national history and identity are inscribed onto the urban landscape."[8] What is unique to the Budapest landscape is not the fact that subsequent political regimes altered the names of the streets. It is the rapid frequency with which streets had their names changed which is somewhat unique. Working with Light's premise I believe that it is significant to look at the patterns of alterations to Budapest street nomenclature with each change in political direction. Doing so provides valuable insight into the elusive cultural construct of what was "Hungarian" at a given point in time.

"A rose by any other name would still smell as sweet?": The meaning of street name changes in urban spaces

Articles about changes to street toponymy in urban settlements have increased in popularity in recent years. Perhaps it is because authors have realized the usefulness of a long recorded history that they have increased their attention to the renaming of European city streets. Two types of patterns prevail in studies focusing on street nomenclature on the European continent. The first type focuses on explaining the origin of route names in major

[8] Duncan Light, "Street Names in Bucharest, 1900-1997: Exploring the Modern Historical Geographies of Post-Socialist Change," *Journal of Historical Geography* 30 (2004): 155.

urban settlements that eschew frequent change and have prevailed for hundreds of years.[9] The second category looks at European urban networks that have seen a rapid turnover in name allocations, particularly in the twentieth century. The topic of post-Soviet European regimes, particularly parallels between transitions from socialist to republican forms of government have lately intrigued researchers. The literal and symbolic expression of these changes on the walls of urban environments has emerged as an expanding area of research.[10] Berlin has received the most attention in this regard and East Berlin has been the subject of several street name change studies, even before the collapse of communism in Europe in the late twentieth century.[11]

European cities have been the subject of extensive research to explain their names. Authors have devoted attention to the reason for choosing a particular name for a given street. Some authors point out the obvious reason that the primary purpose in assigning a name to a street in an urban setting is to assist navigational orientation.[12] However, there is a need to explain why a linguistic

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[9] John Field, "StreetNames," *The Local Historian*, Vol.16, No.4 (1984), Peter Simbrunner, Peter Simbrunner, *Wiener Straßennamen von A bis Z* (Wien: Ueberreuter, 1987).

[10] Hermine G. De Soto, "(Re)Inventing Berlin: Dialectics of Power, Symbols and Pasts, 1990-1995," *City and Society* (1996) and the aforementioned Light, "Street Names in Bucharest."

[11] Moaz Azaryahu, "Street Names and Political Identity: The Case of East Berlin," *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol.21, No.4 (October 1986), "What is to be Remembered: The Struggle over Street Names in Berlin, 1921-1930," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* XVII (1988) and "Renaming the Past: Changes in 'City Text' in Germany and Austria 1945-1947," *History and Memory* Vol.2 No.2 (1990).

[12] Field, "Street Names,": 195 and Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona* , 25.

association was chosen for a street out of a large data base of alternatives. Georges Augustins argues that urban name allocations are dedications akin to the importance of a christening or integration of the street into a new community of ideas and values.[13] Other authors have seen street names as educational markers instructing people of the locality about a particular set of values, political order, or cultural expression. Faraco and Murphy detected this process in the Andalusian settlement of Almonte, where, during the second republic in 1931, local officials eliminated popular and religious names from street iconography and replaced them with heroes of the republic and noteworthy Spanish artists and intellectuals for a mainly illiterate population.[14] Ferenc Galina saw Budapest's streets serving a similar potential function to educate. He concluded that the "multitude of street signs is a great memoir album, a giant living lexicon that serves to make us remember and teach. The street signs are historical mementos, documents of cultural and city history which tell us of the past, quietly explain the present, and allude to the future."[15]

Other scholars have not seen street naming as serving a baptismal, educational or historical function. In an article on the streets of East Berlin, Maoz Azaryahu remarked that "street names are convenient and popular

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[13] Georges Augustins, "Naming, Dedicating: Street Names and Tradition," *History and Anthropology* Vol.15, No.3 (September 2004): 290-291.
[14] Carlos González Faraco and Michael Dean Murphy, "Street Names and Political Regimes in an Andalusian Town," *Ethnology*, Vol 36, No.2 (Spring 1997): 145.
[15] Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona,* 8-9.

political symbols, a fact not generally recognized." [16] Azaryahu took his idea of the political nature of street naming further, arguing that "street names, which serve as a vehicle for commemorating heroes and glorious events, are a conventional mechanism for inserting the official version of the past into the semiosphere".[17]

What was once an official version of the past reflected in the street signs of a European capital may strike a reader of those same names today as a relic of a dated political agenda. Hartmut Boockmann noted that Soviet occupational politics necessitated that nearly every city in East Germany had to possess a Puskin Street.[18] David Young saw imperialism at work in East End London designations deriving from the nineteenth century and giving reference to Great Britain's then-existing colonial possessions in Pretoria Road, Cairo Road, Adelaide and Dunedin Streets.[19] Similarly, Breandán S. MacAodha found that city street names in Ireland reflected British power in the country until 1921, when the formation of the Irish Free State found expression at street level with bilingual nameplates.[20]

My article analyses the patterns to Budapest street name designation and strives to embed it within this existing historiography on name alterations of urban

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[16] Azaryahu , "Street Names and Political Identity," 581.
[17] Azaryahu , "Renaming the Past," 33.
[18] Hartmut Boockmann, "Alte Straßen, neue Namen," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* Vol.45, No.9 (September 1994): 579.
[19] David Young, "East-End Street Names and British Imperialism," Vol. 22, No.2 (1992): 84.
[20]Breandán S. MacAodha, "The History and Nature of Irish Street Names," *Names* Vol. 37, No.4 (1989): 346.

settlements. Maoz Azaryahu's assertion that street names function as political symbols will be a guiding theme throughout the paper. So too will be the idea that these patterns in political symbols reflect political agendas of Hungarian ruling regimes over time.

Street naming classifications in the history of Budapest

Budapest itself as a name is derived from mixed origins. In part it was formed from a Slavic personal name, and "Buda" draws on the source of a limekiln which was located on Gellért hill.[21] Studies of Budapest's streets are not in agreement about the precise periodisation of naming timeframes for the city. Early writing on the subject usually delineated between two and four separate blocks of time for street naming. Klára Vass saw two street nomenclature phases for Budapest. The first stretched from the late medieval period until the 18th century, when people "spontaneously" named streets. The second block covered everything which followed and the distinction between phases was based on the fact that authorities and town councils decided what streets would be called, not the people. [22] Kálmán Eperjessy agreed with Vass's classification, only adding that the first naming episode may have been even lengthier than Vass assumed, perhaps extending until the early nineteenth century in relation to

[21] Ivan Lind, "Geography and Place Names," in Philip L. Wagner and Marvin W. Mikesell (eds), *Readings in Cultural Geography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 123.
[22] Vass, *Buda Német utcanevei*, 11.

Budapest.[23] Lajos Schmall was the first to suggest a more complex classification for the street naming periods of Budapest's history. He delineated four categories for the creation of new names for this urban settlement: before Turkish rule, during Turkish rule until the reconquest of Buda, from the reconquest until the creation of Budapest in 1873, and from 1873 onwards.[24]

Oddly, although Schmall's periodisation of Budapest's street naming history was more precise than Vass' or Eperjessy's, recent scholarship follows their approach. Árpád Kálnási chose to include all street naming history in Hungary up to 1918 as part of what he termed "the period of natural name allocation."[25] Zoltán Birk agreed with Kálnási's periodisation of two general street-naming episodes for Hungarian cities, only adding the reservation that non-natural street name allocation did predate 1918 in some Hungarian cities other than the capital, as evidenced by naming projects in Esztergom in 1820, in Szeged in 1848, and in Vác in 1888.[26]

The reason both of these writers create such a lengthy time-span for the first phase of street naming in Hungarian cities (c1000-1918) is because they wish to focus on twentieth-century street name changes. Kálnási alone subdivides his second phase of street name

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[23] Kálmán Eperjessy, *Várostörténet az utcanevekben* (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetem, 1937), 3-4.
[24] Schmall, *Buda Pest utczái és terei,* 25.
[25] Árpád Kálnási, "Rendszerváltás-utcanév-változtatás," *Magyar nyelvjárások"A Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem Magyar Nyelvtudományi Tanszéknek Évkönyve* No.32 (1995): 55.
[26]Zoltán Birk, "Az utcanevek és változásaik társadalmi jelentése," *Jel-kép* No. 4 (1996): 59.

designations in Hungarian urban settlements into three further time groupings: from 1918-1945, when the number of streets requiring name allocation increased; from 1945-1989, when names mirroring socialist values were in vogue, and from 1989 to the present, when the socialist inheritance was largely erased from the Hungarian urban environment.[27] Perhaps Miháy Ráday's periodisation of street-naming phases for Budapest is the most comprehensive word thus far on the subject. Combining Schmall's four phases of naming streets in Budapest with a further two from 1945-1989 and from 1989 to today, Ráday partitions the naming timeframe for Budapest's streets into six distinct periods.[28] However, even this categorization does not specifically highlight that Budapest's urban environment was predominately a German linguistic area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and gradually became magyarized in the course of the nineteenth century. This essay seeks to make amends for this omission. These linguistic changes were not only demographically recorded but were also reflected in street toponymy processes, a topic I now turn to.

Ofen and Pest to Pest-Buda: From German street nomenclature to Hungarian?

Streets in the Hungarian twin cities always possessed names, but these names were not recorded on the walls of street intersections. Sources for these names

[27] Kálnási, "Rendszerváltás-utcanév-változtatás," 56-57.
[28] Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 9.

included a famous landmark located on the street, a description of the type or occupation of the people who inhabited the area, or a reference to a famous home-owner or guesthouse located there. As these names were not posted for public view, they were subject to change as the circumstances which led to the donation of the original name gave way to different ones. Regulations by the government to fix street designations began in the late eighteenth century. In Vienna, Maria Theresa (1740-1780)[29] first ordered houses to be officially numbered with a decree dated 10 March 1770, although some official numbering pre-dated the promulgation of the law.[30] Recording street names on physical signs followed on February 4 1782, when Joseph II (1780-1790) ordered the name of each street to be painted on house walls at the point where the passageway began.[31] For Ofen (Buda) and Pest, which was also under the jurisdiction of the Habsburg rulers, Joseph II ordered a similar house numbering, the painting of the names of streets on house walls, and a regulation of the city districts as had taken place in Vienna.[32]

At that time the streets of Ofen and Pest were given names posted in German. For example, one could enter the

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[29] Maria Theresa of Austria ruled the kingdom of Hungary and the other lands hereditary to the House of Habsburg in Central Europe. She was succeeded by her son the Archduke Joseph.

[30] Hertha Wohlrab and Felix Czeike, "Die Wiener Häusernummern und Straentafeln," *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* Vol.27, No.2 (1972): 333.

[31] Roman Uhl, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Straenbenennung in Wien," *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* Vol. 61, No.3 (November 1946): 1.

[32] For opposition to this initiative in Hungary see John Paget, *Hungary and Transylvania, with Remarks on their Condition, Social, Political and Economical*, Volume I (London: John Murray, 1839); reprint, (New York: Arno, 1971), 66-67.

castle district in Ofen through the Wiener Thor or Viennese Gate, which referred to its position at the head of the route leading to Vienna. Then a visitor would be confronted with Wienergassen or Vienna Street. Walking straight ahead a few hundred meters led to Bey der Säulen or By the Pillar, a square with an elaborate stone centerpiece depicting the trinity raised by the citizens of Buda to honour their heavenly delivery from the ravages of the plague.[33] Continuing along one would come to Haubt platz or Main Square, and the way back would either follow along Herren gasse, named to identify the homes of the elite, or going down Böckhen gassen, named to honor one-time home owner Bernhardt Böckh.[34] Such a walk would have been made more pleasant by the fact that Buda commenced its effort to light streets in 1777, whereas Pest followed suit only in 1796.[35] In the castle district at this time the paved roadways and sidewalks would have been somewhat of a luxury.[36]

Later in the nineteenth century, the same walk in the castle district was from Bécsi kapu or Viennese Gate to Fortuna Street, leading to the Szent háromság tér or Trinity Square, and continued along Tarnok Street to Disz tér or Decoration Square. The return was on Úri or Lord Street or Országház Street (Parliament Street) to the Viennese Gate. A casual glance at the Street name equivalents for these roads points to a general pattern. Some alterations from

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[33]Vass, *Buda Német utcanevei,* 71, 60 and 56.
[34] *Ibid.,* 42, 56, 50.
[35] Schmall, *Buda Pest utczái és terei,* 95.
[36] *Gemälde von Pesth und Ofen mit ihren Umgebungen: Ein Wegweiser für Einheimische und Fremde* (Pesth: Georg Kilian jr., 1837), 181.

German to Hungarian street designations were literal transcriptions, like Wiener Thor and Bécsi kapu. Some were translations with poetic license, like Bey der Saulen, altered to Szent háromság tér, and some street names were re-christenings, like Haubt Platz into Disz tér.

The beginning of change from German to Hungarian street signs in nineteenth century Budapest

When did the attempt to erase the German street signs in Budapest begin? In the first half of the nineteenth century the Hungarian language gained greater acceptance as an official governmental language. Government offices in Pest began to post Hungarian pronouncements beside their German counterparts beginning in 1796. City council and judicial records began to be kept in German and Hungarian in 1830 in Pest, and a year later in Buda.[37] The greatest victory for the Magyar language in this period came in 1844 when Hungarian became the most important official language of administration and education.[38]

Interestingly, street sign plaques in Budapest did not have to keep pace with the institutional progress of the Magyar language in Hungary and there may have been various reasons for this discrepancy. Inhabitants of Buda and Pest were often able to thrive using a number of languages in their daily life, including German and

[37] Ráday ed. Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 10.
[38] István György Tóth ed., *A Concise History of Hungary: The History of Hungary from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Budapest: Corvina, 2005), 371.

Hungarian.[39] It would have been possible for many non-German native speakers to pronounce the street names or spontaneously translate them into Hungarian or another language if the context or situation of discourse demanded. This practice would have been aided by the fact that many of the German street names were prosaic, and had simple equivalents, for example in the Hungarian language. In 1817, District I of the Inner City of Pest had Zuckergasse or Sugar Street, Schiffgasse or Ship Street, Kreutzgasse or Cross Street, Seminariumgasse or Seminarium Street and its Wintergasse or Winter Street..[40]

Perhaps the fact that Hungarian was already making steady progress as the language of state made the existence of German street signs relatively uncontroversial in nature for inhabitants of Buda and Pest in the early nineteenth century. A notable exception was Gábor Döbrentei's (1785-1851) unsuccessful 1844 publicity campaign under the title "Remagyarisation in Pest" to alter the German names of Buda's hills to Hungarian ones.[41] The only noteworthy street name changes at this time were Verderbergasse (Rotten Street) which became Church Street in 1844, and Windgasse, which was renamed in honour of Archduke Joseph (1776-1847), who had served as the highest Hungarian government official, as Palatine from 1795 to 1847. Citizens of Pest asked that the road on which they lived no longer be named after the mechanism used to lift

[39] László Sziklay,, "Pest-Buda nemzetiségi képe a Vormärz idején," *Helikon világirodalmi figyelő* Vol. 1 (1982), 62-68.
[40] Lajos Schmall, *Adalékok Budapest Székes főváros történetéhez* (Budapest: Székes Főváros, 1899), 293-294.
[41]Ráday ed., Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 10.

materials out of the dock at the end of the street (die Winde), but Nádor Street (Palatine Street) in honor of his service to Hungary. Their request was granted in 1847.[42] The retention of these prosaic street names in both German and Hungarian may also have served another function. Since magyarization was a controversial political direction in nineteenth century Hungary, non-offensive street namings may have served to lessen anxiety among those who were threatened by the change to Magyar.

The next significant change in the alteration of Budapest Street names came during the revolution of 1848 and the subsequent Hungarian war for independence from Habsburg rule from 1848 to 1849. The already mentioned Haubt Platz in the Castle district was renamed István Square after the new Palatine of Hungary, Archduke István (1817-1867). Úri Street in the same area was renamed Batthyány Street in honour of the Hungarian Prime Minister during the 1848 revolution: Lajos Batthyány (1807-1849). Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894), the most important leader during the 1848 Hungarian revolution, also received a street named after him in the same district. Further revolutionary renamings included Barátság Sikátor or Fraternity Alley, Igazság tér or Justice Square, Nemzeti tér or National Square, Egyezség tér or Unity Square and István Street. Unfortunately the precise location of these streets is no longer known[43] These names were chosen in 1848-1849 instead of other ones because they conveyed

[42] Schmall, *Buda Pest utczái és terei.,* 47 and *Népszabadság* (Budapest), 5 December 1998.
[43] Schmall, *Buda Pest utczái és terei,* 63 and Eperjessy, *Várostörténet*, 20.

the ideals of the revolution. Since 1789 these ideals had remained liberty, equality and fraternity. The innovation to switch from street nomenclature emphasizing description to commemoration of personages also reflected French precedents,[44] and signified the ultimately unrealized hope that people such as Batthyány, Kossuth and Palatine István would lead the revolution to a successful conclusion, and justice and unity would prevail. The fate of these alterations to the names of Buda and Pest's streets followed the fortunes of the revolution itself. With Hungarian defeat in 1849, Royal Representative József Havas (1796-1878) was entrusted with the responsibility of erasing the symbolic legacy of the 1848 revolution from the street designations of the twin cities and restoring former street names to their pride of place.

Accelerated Magyarization of Budapest street signage: Late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries

The defeat of the Hungarian revolution and war of independence from 1848 to 1849 restored Habsburg rule over Hungary. The pre-1848 political order regained its legitimacy and the reassertion of the status quo found its expression in new street names in Buda and Pest. King Franz Joseph (1848-1916) and his wife Elizabeth (1837-1898) both had squares named after them by the Pest City Council in 1858.[45] Squares were also named after generals who had supported Austria in 1848-1849 like Josip Jelačić,

[44] Uhl, "Geschichte der Straenbenennung ," *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* :13.
[45]Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 10.

(1801-1859) Ludwig von Haynau, (1786-1853) and Heinrich Hentzi, (1785-1849).[46] While residents of the cities who had sympathized with revolutionary principles may not have been pleased to see such personages commemorated on street signs, they must have been able to draw some comfort from their bilingual nature. Until the 1870s, Buda and Pest contained streets labeled in both the German and Hungarian languages.[47]

The Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867 altered the linguistic balance of power in the twin cities and served to benefit Hungarian speakers. Paragraph 10 of the law of 1870 passed the right to name streets to the Capital Communal Works Council (hereafter the Council).[48] With the unification of Buda, Pest and Óbuda to form Budapest in 1873, German street signs disappeared from the environment of the Hungarian capital between 1872 and 1875.[49]

In 1873 the Council had about 542 streets and 76 squares in Budapest at its discretion.[50] Translation and transcription were the preferred methods for rendering German street names into Hungarian, most likely in order to make the transition to magyarization as efficient and

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[46] Eperjessy, *Várostörténet,* 20.
[47]Schmall, *Buda Pest utczái és terei* ,107 and Vass, *Buda Német utcanevei* 28.
[48] Vass, *Buda Német utcanevei,* 28.
[49] Vass, *Buda Német utcanevei* 28 and Schmall, *Buda Pest utczái és terei,* 107. In other parts of the Habsburg empire not inhabited by predominately German speakers, the process of removal of bilingual German and non-German street signs happened later. For example, in Prague bilingual Czech-German street signs were replaced with unilingual Czech ones in 1892. Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006), 1.
[50]Schmall, *Buda Pest utczái és terei,* 88.

harmless in appearance as possible. There were however terrible mistakes make, and these errors became the stuff of urban legend. The famous example of Karpfenstein Street is a case in point. Named in 1817 for the seventeenth-century judge János Kristóf Karpfenstein[51], the Council decided to transcribe the name literally into Magyar as Carp Stone Street. This naming was as nonsensical in Hungarian as the English translation implies. It is little wonder that Carp Stone Street was cause for humour until its name was permanently altered in 1945.[52]

The French practice of commemorating personalities begun in 1848-1849 in Budapest became a more pronounced practice. Since street sign magyarization was well underway, it became necessary to express Hungarian national identity in other ways than by the simple use of the Hungarian language. Thus personality cults became the new tendency in street nomenclature at this time. Ferenc Deák (1803-1876) was the first person officially honoured in this manner when a square and street were named after him for his role in bringing about the Austro-Hungarian compromise.[53] These cults of personality were also often simultaneously cults of commemoration - as the people whose lives symbolized the highest level of Hungarian achievement were dead. One need only look to the number of streets in the capital named after Lajos Kossuth, Ferenc Rákóczi (1676-1735) and the executed

[51] The street may also have been named for Ferenc or János Karpfenstein, both from the 18th century.
[52] *Népszabadság* (Budapest), 5 December 1998.
[53]Schmall, *Buda Pest utczái és terei,*64.

generals of the 1848-1849 Hungarian war of independence, often referred to collectively as the "martyrs of Arad" after their place of execution.[54]

What mattered at this time was the number of street signs that an individual received, with quantity expressing level of importance to Hungarian cultural identity. Lajos Kossuth, the former Governor of Hungary during the war of independence, had four squares and eleven streets named after him in several districts.[55] Kossuth had to live the rest of his life after 1849 in exile for his role in leading the Hungarian revolution until his death in 1894. By having many of the capital city's streets named after him, Kossuth became omnipresent in the capital in a manner in which he was unable to be after 1849. Since Kossuth was a political exile, naming streets after him served as a type of silent protest of the policies of the Austrian administration in Hungary, a type of thumbing one's nose at the government.

Like Kossuth, Ferenc Rákóczi had led an unsuccessful uprising against Habsburg rule in Hungary. He tried to prevent a Habsburg takeover of the kingdom after the expulsion of the Turks. He too spent the remaining years of his life in exile and had squares named after him in districts IV, VIII and XXI. Roads named in his honour appeared in two districts and ten streets bearing his name surfaced in the capital city.[56]

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[54]Eperjessy, *Várostörténet,* 21.
[55]Tamás Gömbös, Tamás Gömbös, *Akikrl Budapesten utcát neveztek el* (Budapest: Heraldika, 1997), 265-266.
[56] *Ibid.,* 373.

A clearer expression of using street signs to reflect national commemorative cults were designations honouring the memory of the thirteen military officials executed for treason on October 6th 1849. They were executed for leading Hungarian soldiers against Habsburg armies in the 1848 to 1849 independence war. Lajos Aulich (b.1793) had five streets named after him in several districts before 1908 and in the 1920s. Ernő Kiss's (b. 1799) name was put on four streets in several districts between 1900 and the decade beginning in 1910. Vilmos Lazár (b1815) gained designations in districts XX and IV between 1910 and 1914. Baron Ernő Pöltenberg's (b1913) name was given to streets in districts XX and XV between 1910 and 1931.

The other Arad generals and military leaders who had their names incorporated into Budapest's street sign nomenclature included Count Károly Vécsey (b1807, three streets), János Damjanich (b1804, nine streets), Károly Knézich (b.1808, four streets) Count Károly Leiningen-Westerburg (b1819, one street), József Schweidel (b1796, two streets) and Ignác Török (b.1795, three streets). Ariszid Dessewffy (b.1802) received commemorations in districts IV, XX and XV and József Nagysándor (b.1804) in five districts. Of the Arad thirteen only György Láhner (b.1804) did not receive a street named after him by the early twentieth century. He was honoured belatedly in this manner only in 1991.[57] Thus Hungarian nationalism was celebrated from street signs in Budapest which paid tribute

[57] *Ibid.,* 29, 252, 286, 366, 483, 99, 258, 288, 392, 464, 106, 332 and 283.

to leading personages in Hungarian history. Not only the names themselves but their frequency helped support a commemorative cult built around men such as Kossuth, Rákóczi and the military leaders of Arad. In this age to be men, to have lead an unsuccessful revolutionary uprising, and exile or death because of this failure were the honorable attributes of heroic national virtue worthy of commemoration.[58]

Sign designations and national commemorative practices between World Wars 1 and 2

During the First World War Budapest city officials helped to justify Hungarian participation in the conflict and the country's military alliances by rechristening some streets in the capital. Districts V and VI received Kaiser Wilhelm Streets in 1914 after Wilhem von Hohenzollern (1859-1941), then Emperor of Germany.[59] The Square before the Western Train Station became Berlin Square and this gesture pleased the Germans sufficiently to reciprocate with a Berlin square named Budapester Platz. For a short time the Múzeum Boulevard was Mehmed-szultán or Sultan Mohammed Road, and Custom House Boulevard became Bulgarian Emperor Ferdinand Road. All of these street

[58] On heroism as a masculine concept in Hungarian history see Karin Liebhart and Béla Rásky, "Helden und Heldinnen in nationalen Mythen und historischen Erzählungen Österreichs und Ungarns," *L'Homme* Vol.12 No.2 (2001).
[59] Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 86, 494.

changes were reversed when the fortunes of war turned against Austria-Hungary and the conflict was lost.[60]

After the First World War, the writer Gyula Krúdy (1878-1933), the historian Andor Szakács (1877-1942), and city historian Elek Magyar (1875-1947) were asked to rename Budapest's streets. As was the case during the First World War the government attempted to use Budapest's street landscape to legitimize its authority between 1918 and 1919, when Hungary became a Soviet Republic under Béla Kun (1886-1838). Dezső Bokányi, Mór Preusz, Zoltán Zigány, Lajos Biró, Gyula Krúdy, and Zsigmond Móricz were on the committee to rename Budapest's street signs. The collapse of the Hungarian Socialist Republic abruptly ended their work.[61] In 1919 Hungary went from being a left-leaning Socialist Republic to the other end of the political spectrum as Miklós Horthy (1868-1957) assumed control over a conservative fascist regime. The Horthy government hastened to do what Béla Kun had only accomplished fleetingly: imprint its value system on the Hungarian capital using the symbolism of the street landscape. In the 1930s rechristening Budapest streets and naming new ones assumed such proportions that the "fever for change" became cause for derision. László Szabó wrote ironically that he awaited Distinguished Counsellor Elemér Ödön Friesentheiler Street, or one honouring Assistant Clerk Szevér Szvietovszklavszki.[62]

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[60] Vitéz Oroszpataki and Vilmos Schranz, *Budapest Székesfőváros egyesülésének jubileuma 50 év* (Budapest: Leó Szeredai, 1923), 138.
[61] Béla Puruczki, Petronella Fancsali and Mrs. Tamás Novák *Az utcák őrzik emléküket* (Budapest: Ervin Szabó könyvtár, 1963), 4.
[62] *Népszabadság* (Budapest), 5 December 1998.

Streets naming was used to commemorate "famous" or "important" Hungarians both in Budapest and in other Hungarian settlements.[63] These differed from previous cults because they centred on living personages and hence were intended to justify their positions of power. The most significant of these was the reverence for Mikós Horthy which involved various Budapest landmarks being named after him. These included a fortress walk, a bridge, a boulevard, two squares, thirteen roads and three streets in various districts in the capital in the inter-war period.[64] The Horthy national cult was expressed so thoroughly with street commemoration that his wife Mrs. Mikós Horthy (1881-1959) and eldest son István Horthy (1904-1942) also had their names given to streets based only on their association with Horthy.[65] While previous cults of national commemoration had made use of dead people for political opposition purposes and to define Hungarian values, the Horthy cult made use of a living individual in order to justify the existing ruler.

It was not only Horthy himself but his regime that needed to be symbolically justified and Budapest street names were used for this purpose. A strong ideological emphasis of the Horthy regime was the use of irredentism to generate popular loyalty towards the government. Trianon, the punitive treaty that established the terms of

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[63] For example in the districts of Fehérgyarmat, Nyirbátor, Mátészalka and Cseger in the 1930's, according to Kálnási, "Rendszerváltás-utcanév-változtatás," 56.
[64] Ráday ed., Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 60,84, 86,96,121, 132,179,185,202,224,356, 391,450,451,452,466, 495, 530.
[65] *Ibid.,*168, 523, 132, 343.

peace between Hungary and the Allies at the end of World War 1 had forced Hungary to relinquish half of its pre-war population and three quarters of its geographical territory. The politics of the Horthy regime put forth the notion that these peace terms were unjust, and Budapest street names in the 1930s and 1940s reflected this political direction. What Hungary relinquished in reality was symbolically reclaimed in Budapest names. Irredentism influenced much of Budapest's new street nomenclature as the hills, rivers, counties and cities of the "lost territories" began to show up in street names.[66]

Several examples of irredentist names began to appear in these decades on the street signs of Budapest. Four Trencsén Streets were named after a place in the former Trencsén County in what is today Trenčin, Slovakia.[67] Gömör Street served to remember an area in North Hungary which lost territory to Slovakia and had its remainder as part of Borsod,-Abaúj-Zemplén County in Hungary.[68] Tatárhágó Street recalled a mountain in Csik County that is presently a part of Romania under the name Strîmtaorea Trtaria.[69] Zimony Street and Zimonyi Street reflected the Hungarian name for a place in Szerém County that is known today as Zemun in Croatia.[70] Surrendered Transylvania was particularly re-appropriated as a part of Hungary in Budapest street naming of the interwar period. Transylvania streets appeared on the landscape in three

[66]Eperjessy, *Várostörténet*, 22.
[67] Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 508-509.
[68] *Ibid.,* 202.
[69] *Ibid,* 491.
[70] *Ibid,* 552.

places.[71] Kolozsvár, a large city known today as Cluj-Napoca in Romania also received a copious number of street names in several districts.[72]

Many of these streets still bear these names today. They have their counterparts in other places like Bucharest, Romania, which takes pride in the Greater Romania formed after World War 1, with the union of Transylvania, Bucovina, Bassarabia and the Banat to form the Romanian state.[73] In the Hungarian capital these names mirrored irredentist sentiments in the 1930s and 1940s due to the context of their appearance on the streets of Budapest after the rivers, mountains, territories, counties and cities they described had been lost to neighboring countries. These street designations also attempted to legitimize the use of irredentism by Horthy's government, with its inscription on Budapest street signs conveying the seeming permanence of a controversial political direction.

Street nomenclature alterations in the Socialist era

Before his death in exile in the United States, the renowned Hungarian composer Béla Bartók stipulated that no public place should be named after him in his former homeland as long as squares and streets were named after Adoph Hitler.[74] In 1938, the year Bartók revised his will, a square was named in recognition of the German leader in

[71] *Ibid.*, 164.
[72] *Ibid.,* 293.
[73] Light, "Street Names in Bucharest," 165.
[74] Nándor Dreisziger, *Hungarians from Ancient times to 1956: Biographical and Historical Essays* (Legas Toronto: Legas, 2007), 43.

district VI of Budapest.[75] Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) fared somewhat better with today's Oktogon Square bearing his name in Budapest and streets in three districts.[76] When the leaders of the Socialist regime assumed control of Hungary after the loss of the Second World War they were eager to fulfill Bartók's stipulations, but for reasons of their own. It became important to remove the names of their military opponents from Budapest's streets and to replace them with outstanding cultural figures, including people such as Bartók. Miklós Horthy, Hitler, and Mussolini were taken off of the Hungarian capital's street nomenclature.

During Hungarian socialism the Capital Committee Administrative Department was tasked with Budapest street renaming.[77] Its ideological mandate was not only to remove the names of people from disgraced regimes from Hungarian streets, but also to establish the legitimacy of the new socialist regime. People commemorated with street designations during this time often earned the distinction through efforts in social democratic, communist, anti-fascist or socialist organizations, writings or movements. Famous communists like Lenin (1870-1924) and Stalin (1878-1953) had a large number of streets honouring them in Budapest between 1945 and 1989. Lenin had two boulevards, a square, a road, two streets and two paths.[78] At the height of his cult of personality Budapest had a

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[75]Jen Kolozs, *Akikrl Budapest utcáit elnevezték. Adatok a fváros történetéhez* (Budapest, 1943), 49.
[76] Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 359.
[77] Puruczki, Fancsali and Novák *Az utcák rzik emléküket*,5.
[78] *Ibid.,* 88.

bridge, five squares, two roads and a path reminding people of Stalin's contribution to Hungarian history. Imbedding Lenin and Stalin among thousands of other street signs paying tribute to famous Magyars served the function of reminding Budapesters in their everyday interactions in the capital city that these two communist leaders were in effect Magyar by association. [79]

Another pattern to street nomenclature design under socialism was a strong tendency to honor Hungarians who had held pronounced left-wing beliefs, or who had fought against Fascism. Socialists such as Miklós Cservenka (1871-1920), an iron worker and political campaigner, Lajos Gosztonyi (d.1945), a Communist party member and newspaper editor and Éva Kállai (1917-1957), a member of the Hungarian Communist Party and strike organizer, were all officially recognized for their activism and for having been killed for being socialists.[80] István Pataky (1914-1944), Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky (1886-1944) and Barnabás Pesti (1920-1944) were all recognized for having led an unsuccessful coup against Hungary's fascist regime and for their capture and execution as a result.[81] As the example of Éva Kállai demonstrates, the socialist period of street naming in Budapest presented the opportunity for more women to be recognized as worthy of commemoration, aside from certain saints and high aristocratic figures, in defiance of a pronounced tendency

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[79] *Ibid.,* 484.
[80] Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona* , 128 261,Puruczki, Fancsali and Novák *Az utcák rzik emléküket*, 52 .
[81]Ráday ed., *Budapest utcanévlexikona*, 395, 399,86.

towards patriarchal emphasis in Budapest street toponymy. The names of Stalin and Lenin and of Magyar socialist icons on Budapest street nomenclature presented the fiction that the Communist government was not imposed from Eastern Europe but instead had genuine, domestic, grass-roots underpinnings.

Post-Communist naming legacies in contemporary Budapest

It is tempting to assume that when the Hungarian Communist regime was dissolved in 1989, people and the government would have been eager to erase the heritage of the defunct political order. However, a more nuanced, selective form of erasure, renaming, and non-alteration of existing street names followed. Between 1989 and 1997, Budapest had 950 street names changed, with 400 being re-christened with a name that they had held in the course of history.[82] A guiding principle became that of non-duplication: if a person, a group of people or a Budapest district council petitioned to have a socialist street name removed, it was not allowed to receive an existing Budapest street name unless it had historically once borne that name.[83]

Interestingly, with the institution of liberal democracy and republican government in 1989, Budapest street nomenclature deriving from social democratic and communist epochs could have been expunged from the

[82] *Ibid., 15*
[83] *Ibid.*, 12.

landscape. Yet the choice was make to leave a select number of streets bearing these names unaltered. While Cservenka Street was renamed to Csakó Street in 1954 and Kállai Street went back to Alföld Street in 1991, Lajos Gosztonyi Street still bears his name today.[84] The socialist and communist figures who suffered for their political beliefs and perished in concentration camps during World War 2 have been particularly non-controversial post-1989. György Goldmann (1904-1945), a sculptor and member of the Communist party, Ernő Németi (1911-1944), organizer of the workers' movement and Communist party member, and Pál Kuróczy (1895-1944), a butcher by profession and socialist organizer, continue to possess streets remembering their sacrifices.[85] The facts that they faced political persecution and endured deportation and death in Dachau compensated for any need to de-legitimize the socialist legacy. This selective and incomplete erasure of the socialist legacy from Budapest suggests that now instead of using street signage to legitimize a government in power or its policies, reconciliation with the past characterizes name allocation imperatives. Many regimes had ruled Hungary, and they had had some legitimacy in their time. The retention of their pieces in Budapest street sign toponymy suggests that past and present expressions of Hungarian cultural identity are all part of a cohesive national history worthy of commemoration and respect.

[84] *Ibid.*, 128,64, 201.
[85] *Ibid.,* 200, 102, 311-312.

Conclusion

According to Dolores Hayden, the association of a memory with a particular part of a city happens "where in complex ways people's experiences of the urban landscape intertwine the sense of place and politics of space".[86] The combination of Budapest's capital as a showpiece for the essence of Hungarian culture and the politics associated with allocating names for streets recall centuries of historical discourses and national memories. These include the campaign to change Budapest from a German city to a Hungarian one. The changeover to Hungarian street names was deemed to be of special significance in accomplishing this goal, as was creating commemorative cults centering on particular individuals. In the twentieth century, the relative instability of political regimes made street signage part of a campaign to establish the legimacy of successive governments. Cults of personality and national grievance written on Budapest street walls were both used to these ends. Street naming in Budapest under socialism put examples of famous left-leaning foreign and domestic political leaders and campaigners and anti-fascists before the eyes of the Hungarian public in an effort to validate the domestic credibility of the guiding political ideology. Finally, in the post-socialist phase the selective erasure and retention of names from the previous eras served to create a dual metaphor of continuity and break from the past, and functioned as a reminder that a complete de-legitimization

[86] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place, Urban Landscapes in Public History* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1989), 43.

of the previous political orders was not entirely possible or desirable.

This essay has sought to add to historical knowledge by uniting the idea that street signs function as political symbols with the concept that patterns in naming reflect dominant ideologies of regimes over time. Since Hungarian street naming both implicitly and explicitly reject the prevailing practice of numeric or purely neutral and descriptive street nomenclature,[87] I think that this tendency in toponymy will continue, and that layers of inscription and meaning detailed in this essay will continue to be simultaneously present on the street nomenclature of the Hungarian capital.

[87]Zoltán Birk, "Az utcanevek és változásaik,": 66 and Péter László, "A változtatás felelőssége. Utcaneveink a rendszerváltozás óta," *Szeged* Vol.12 No.3 (2000):31.

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