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History, Ideology and Collective Memory

Reconstructing the Identities of Timişoara by Means of Monographies and Street Names during the Communist Regime (1947-1989)

Vasile DOCEA
Political Science Department
West University Timişoara
email: docea.vasile@polsci.uvt.ro

Abstract. The first theme of this paper is the relationship between collective memory and the construction of identity. Starting from the case study of street names in Timişoara, I looked at how urban identity is constructed by means of collective memory, and how collective memory is an expression of identity.

The second theme envisaged is ideological control. Starting from the successive changes in the streets' name, I investigated the manner in which the construction of identity is influenced by ideology. The street names of Timişoara were changed in several waves: firstly, after 1918, when the Banat was included in the Romanian state, when Hungarian or German street names were turned into Romanian ones; secondly, upon the installation of the communist regime, when the ideological influence became a form of direct control, with streets being given names from the communist "mythology"; thirdly, in the 1970s and the 1980s, during national-communism, when native names were preferred. Finally, the collapse of the communist regime in 1989 brought about a new wave of street names, when every reminder of the communist period was removed.

Keywords: identity, collective memory, ideological control, urban place names

Prologue

No one can argue that journalists have become a permanent presence in our lives. They do influential things, they initiate and conclude, analyse and

develop, predict and prescribe. They hold the ultimate truth, absolute justice and many more. They are omnipresent. Paraphrasing a Romanian proverb which says that one can hardly get rid of a disease or a marriage, we can argue that one can never get rid of journalists.

Like many everyday details, this study is also inspired by an incident involving journalists. A few months ago two local columnists carried out a survey about the name of a street in Timişoara, well known to everybody as "Filipescu Street". Though not an important avenue or meeting point, the street is placed in the central area and works as a secondary connection between two busy boulevards. It is, thus, well known at least to motorists. The two journalists had found two different address tags on the No. 10 building. The former read "Nicu Filipescu Street", while the latter read "Leonte Filipescu Street". Two names for the same street – two mysteries to decipher.

The journalists called two persons and asked them what they knew about the names on the two tags. The criteria for choosing the two subjects were quite obscure. They didn't contact the experts in the field, but rather local VIPs. It happened that I was picked as one of the subjects, the other being a colleague from the Faculty of Economics, both of us working for the West University. The question took me by surprise. I was able to identify, on the telephone, only one of the names, that of Nicu Filipescu, who, to the best of my knowledge, was a Romanian politician at the end of the 19th century, one of the leaders of the Conservatory Party and, a few years later, mayor of Bucharest. I couldn't pinpoint the other character. However, my colleague from the Faculty of Economics was able to inform the journalists that Leonte Filipescu "was a member of the Romanian socialist movement", while being completely ignorant of Nicu Filipescu's biography. Our selective individual memory has preserved the information the other has forgotten (or has never been aware of). "Filipescu Street" in Timişoara meant one thing to me and a completely different one to my colleague.

I was thus prompted to investigate how the name of the street had changed in time. In the interwar period the street was called "Louis Barthou". This name appears on the 1936 city map[1]. The street was named in honour of the former French foreign secretary, Jean-Louis Barthou, assassinated in Marseille two years earlier, together with King Alexander I of Yugoslavia. The name escaped the Stalinist 1950s but was helpless under the nationalistic siege of the 1970s, when it became "Leonte Filipescu Street"[2].

[1] Planul oraşului Timişoara. 1936. Cu datele oficiale ale Serviciului tehnic al oraşului, design by D. Dumitrache, lithography by Kheil & Baumstark, Timişoara.

[2] Oraşul Timişoara. Ghidul străzilor. 1980, Institutul Poligrafic Banat, Timişoara.

This historical figure has as much in common with the city of Timişoara as J.-L. Barthou. Leonte Filipescu (1895-1922) was born in Bârlad, Moldova. At the end of World War I he became a prominent representative of the Bolshevik wing of the Romanian socialist movement. Accused of espionage, he was arrested and died in prison. Consequently, he turned into a martyr in the communists' pantheon. Being a local hero, unlike most of the communist activists in the interwar period, he was rediscovered by Ceauşescu's propaganda system during the years of national communism. Thus, the name of a minor Bolshevik agent became an encyclopedic entry[3] and a street name in many Romanian towns.

After the fall of communism, the new authorities gave up the street name that was too suggestive of totalitarian practices. But, in order to spare the citizens of Timişoara – who had already got accustomed to the abbreviated "Filipescu Street"– from a radical transformation, the local administration preserved the surname and changed only the first name, picking that of the Conservatory leader Nicu Filipescu. This is how the former "Leonte Filipescu Street" became "Nicu Filipescu Street". The owners of the No. 10 building put up an address tag with the new name without giving up the old one. I am sure they meant to capitalize on how choosy collective memory is.

The Theme

The present study is the result of interdisciplinary research at the crossroads of history, theory of history and cultural anthropology. My aim is to study a certain segment of collective memory, related to the space of Timişoara. The segments envisaged are those represented by the city's historical monographies and the successive names given to streets and other public places.

The historical monographies are one of the ways in which collective memory becomes manifest. In this particular case they correspond to the "explanations" a city receives, explanations which, for the communist period, are under strict ideological control. I am basically interested in the way in which the *ideological filter* resizes each and every time the nature of the information and explanations contained by monographies and the manner in which the same filter reshapes the public space, giving certain names to streets.

In what concerns the streets, I will, on the one hand, look at how place names change from one period to another and why. On the other hand, I will endeavour to explain why certain streets or public places preserve their old

[3]For example, Mic dicţionar enciclopedic, the 3rd revised edition, Editura ştiinţifică şi enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 453.

names in the collective memory, even if officially (in terms of administration measures) they have been replaced.

Therefore, the theme of this study is the construction and reconstruction of the identity of Timişoara by means of collective memory, which is expressed in historical monographies and street names.

Exploring the Histories of the City

1. Insights into the past and the construction of multiple identities

The analysis of the historiographical component of the identity discourse of Timişoara implies a survey of the studies that aim at reconstructing – partially or totally – the past of the city. I refer to those authors who adopt a certain type of discourse – the historical jargon – which entails using certain research methods and specific explanatory strategies. Although it belongs in its turn to the imaginary, like literature and fine arts, the historical work is different from them in the sense that it seeks to reconstruct "reality" – a past, consumed reality. In this it is similar to memoirs – yet another expression of identity –, but on the other hand it differs from those by striving to make a more rigorous reconstruction based on methods deemed by historians as "scientific", i.e. secure, and on the other hand, it goes deeper into the past, where individual memory has no access.

What a historian can say about Timişoara is, for example, the fact that it has always had a tolerant past, that there were no major conflicts between various ethnic and religious communities. To make himself credible, the historian will extract from the past those instances which can prove the harmony of the area, will talk about the fairly good economic evolution, the efficient institutions and the cultural life of the city. But the same historian can argue that the city didn't have a tolerant past, which he will prove by selecting past conflicts and capitalizing on various kinds of persecution. Which of the two images is accurate? Neither, of course, as there is no such thing as a true historical image. Then, which of the two is more credible? Both, as each of them can be supported by a sufficient number of historical arguments.

The various ethnic and religious communities of Timişoara made up their own images of the past. Each of them had their own historians, who imagined the past so as to come up with arguments supporting the image the group wanted to have at a given moment. Resorting to the past is, thus, a way to

account for present aims. The legitimized content of historical discourse is given by its very circumstantial nature.

2. The ideological confiscation of the past: Romanian historiography during the communist regime

The monographies prior to the communist period also have an overt ideological component. The freedom of ideological choice was absolute before the installation of communism: some historians embraced conservative values, others were liberal. The situation changed dramatically after 1947.

For the communist historians, the ideological pressure was immense. It manifested itself directly and brutally all over the country. During the entire period (1947-1989), a complete propaganda apparatus made up of party "academies", "schools" and "boards" of hierarchical structures of secretaries and executives took pains to annul the autonomy of research. Historians were forced to become mere propaganda instruments of the regime.

The mechanisms of this subjection varied from the publication of ideological texts in "scientific" journals to the imprisonment of those who were reluctant to the model. In his analysis of *Politics and History*, Vlad Georgescu mentions among other examples the publication – in the major historical journal of the 1950s, "Studies" – of texts that explained in detail the ideas emitted by the communist party (then called the Romanian Workers' Party) for the consumption of the "historians' front". In 1952, for example, following a congress of the Romanian Workers' Party, the role of the historian and of his discipline was explained in radical terms: "the historical science is part of the ideological battle front of party". (Georgescu 1991: 19) The historians' mission was that of narrating the past according to a simple framework and the political aims of the day. (Boia 1999: 82-101)

The 1950s were the years of "Russolatry" (Georgescu 1991: 31), a worshipping attitude towards Russia, especially its Soviet counterpart. The official propaganda considered the Soviet Union Romania's greatest friend and, sometimes, protector. Russolatry was obviously present among historians, too. One of the ideological historians of the period, General Zaharia wrote in 1955 about the Romanian people having been "liberated" by the Soviet Union, labelling the Eastern neighbour with a term common to all workers' assemblies – "a rampart of peace and socialism", whose mission was that of protecting the entire world from the "cannibalistic plans of the aggressive imperialistic states and their accomplices". (Georgescu 1991: 41) The entire history was reinter-

preted then so as to comply with the communist, internationalist, pro-Soviet ideological notions.

The 1960s, conversely, with their more relaxed ideology, stood, in the view of the same Vlad Georgescu, for a reinterpretation of the newly reinterpreted historical truth! (Georgescu 1991:51) It envisaged the issue of the Russian-Romanian relations, but more timidly, the comment focusing almost exclusively on the moves of the communist party. The public debate was avoided, what can also be noticed in the manner in which Karl Marx's comments on the Romanians were edited and published in 1964. The anti-Russian opinions, so common in Marx's writings, were not mentioned at all by the historians who signed the introductory study. (Marx 1964) They felt protected by the authority of the founder of the received ideology, the only thinker who was allowed to state that at a given moment in the past the Russians had been the Romanians' enemies.

But soon a new reinterpretation of the past occurred. The 1970s and the 1980s witnessed an intensification of the nationalistic character of the official Romanian ideology. The internationalist communism had proved to be an economic failure and a social aberration. Something had to be made up to save the totalitarian regime and to re-legitimize Nicolae Ceauşescu's dictatorship. Thus, the national communist formula was adopted, which had already been applied elsewhere, not just in the Soviet Union, but also in Albania, China and North Korea. (Boia 1999: 90-101) In fact, the latest variant of Ceauşescu's nationalistic discourse was not invented. Katherine Verdery points out that it had been there forever, moreover, that it had been competing permanently with other types of discourse specific to totalitarianism. What happened in the 1970s and the 1980s was an enforcement of the nationalistic discourse, which started to dominate all the others, including the Marxist one. (Verdery 1994: 102-115)

In the nationalistic atmosphere of the 1970s and the 1980s several authors were "rediscovered", whose texts, written and published mostly in the interwar period, had been marginalized or even banned. This measure should not be surprising. It was frequently employed by the communist party leadership. Not only at that time, but also during other stages of the communist regime the leadership of the only party would stipulate which were the accepted works and which were the forbidden ones, just as they decided when an author should pass from one category to the other. (Mihalache 2003: 78) Full volumes are published in this period by Gheorghe Brătianu (who, as a matter of fact, died in a communist prison), Nicolae Iorga, Vasile Pârvan, A. D. Xenopol, etc. Their works, varied in terms of theme, point of view and method, share only

the nationalist devotion characteristic of the authors' age. It is this devotion that brings them back to life and is expected to legitimize the new formula of national-communism.

3. Rewriting the history of the city: themes and figures

The installation of the communist regime causes a gap in the historiography of Timişoara. The authors of monographies and historical studies of the interwar period – some of them still active in the early 1940s – are silenced. There are various reasons for this, all having to do, though, with the mutations in the social and political context. Nicolae Ilieşiu, for instance, the author of the above-mentioned monography, who announced his intention to continue research and publish a monography of the entire Banat region, was prohibited. He ran a series of local political newspapers in the 1930s and the 1940s, which for the communist regime after 1947 was an unpardonable guilt. He was unable to publish again until his death in 1963. Nicolae Ivan, the author of a monography published in 1936 (Ivan 1936) also stopped publishing. The same happened to Traian Liviu Birăescu, author of a series of volumes on the history of Timişoara and the Banat in the Middle Ages[4]. Other authors, active historiographers before 1946, chose to leave Romania. Aurel Bugariu, who published a very useful bibliography in 1943, (Bugariu 1943) was a POW on the Western front and chose to remain in Germany (where he wrote and translated literature under the pen name Nicolae Novac). The German and Hungarian interwar authors disappeared as a result of the war and the persecutions that followed. In short, the historiographic gap was caused by the death of some and the silencing of the others. The ground was prepared thus for the rewriting of the history and for the birth of a new generation, more willing to make ideological amends, more obedient to the newly installed communist regime.

Nevertheless, rewriting history was not a sudden phenomenon. In the 1950s there were no historical or monographic studies about Timişoara which isolated the local historiography from that of Bucharest, Cluj or Iaşi. The reasons for this absence are numerous. I shall mention only two of them, which I consider to be the most important. Firstly, during the interwar period Timişoara didn't have its own historiography school at an academic level. Consequently,

[4]Traian Birăescu, Banatul sub turci. Timişoara, 1934; idem, "Timişoara. Urbanismul şi higiena neamului", in Dacia, Timişoara, 1939, No. 65; idem, "Timişoara de ieri şi de azi", in Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crişana, Timişoara, 1942, No. 1 (January-February) and others.

it wasn't imperative to replace one academic tradition with a new historical interpretation, as it happened in the other great academic centres. On the other hand, at the beginning of the communist period there was no University in Timişoara with its own history department. That was founded only in the 1960s.

It was, thus, during the 1960s that the rewriting of the city's history began, in the communist regime's attempt to resize the collective memory. Out of the 66 historical studies and monographies published until 1989, 25 (37.8%) have a strong ideological component and focus on themes specific to communist historiography: the installation of the communist regime, the history of the working class and of the communist movement, the industrialization, the collectivization of agriculture, etc. Nothing new is offered, the motifs are the same in all the historiography of the time, as recommended by the communist propaganda apparatus.

One of the most popular historiographic themes with the communist propaganda revolves around an event that took place at the end of World War II, in September 1944, shortly after Romania turned against Germany and started to fight on the side of the Soviet Union, when several military units around Timişoara were defending the city against the German troops which were moving back westwards. The coup and the military uprising in August 1944 were transformed by the communist propaganda into archetypal founding gestures of the new regime. The communist historiography considered August 1944 the beginning of the installation of communism in Romania. The communists' involvement in the coup was exaggerated by the propaganda in order to legitimize the new regime. The historiography of Timişoara tried to connect the past of the city to these events and hence, associate it with the very installation of the communist regime in Romania. With this in mind, many studies were published[5] in which the military event of September 1944 was overrated, the communists being presented as the leaders of the soldiers who defended the city.

Another theme "encouraged" by the entire Romanian historiography was that of the tradition of the working class movement. The communist party

[5] Alexandru Galgoczy, "Timişoara, pe locurile unde s-a desfăşurat insurecţia armată, august 1944", in Analele Institutului de istorie a Partidului de pe lângă C.C. al P.C.R., Bucureşti, vol. 10, 1964, No. 4, p. 158-163; Dumitru Popescu, La porţile Timişoarei. Septembrie 1944. Bucureşti, Editura Militară, 1968; Sorin Berghian, "Un moment însemnat din istoria poporului român – apărarea Timişoarei, septembrie 1944", in Studii de istorie a Banatului, Timişoara, vol. 11, 1985, p. 195-200; Oancea, Maria, "Participarea oamenilor muncii alături de armata română la apărarea Timişoarei – septembrie 1944", in Studii de istorie a Banatului, Timişoara, vol. 11, 1985, p. 191-194.

needed more legitimacy and one way to achieve it was by promoting the notion that the entire party or at least some of its prominent members took part in the most prominent events or made the most fortunate, patriotic and advanced decisions. This tendency is present in the local historiography as well, latent during the entire communist period, more conspicuous in several pseudo-scientific articles[6]. Another strategy was that of confiscating the history of all social movements, as well as the history of various professions and social strata (especially the poor ones). The life of 18th century craftsmen in Timişoara is studied so as to justify their revolt against the urban patricians (Bardos 1961). The strikes of the printers or of the railroad workers are recurrent subjects for the communist historians[7].

The texts about the industrial tradition of Timişoara belong to the same politically ordained ideological historiography. Communism was – theoretically – the ideology of the "working class", itself a product of industrialization. In other words, if there were no industry, there would be no "working class", this so-called avant-garde of the communism. And it would be quite hard to talk about communism without a working class. That is why, also in the case of the historiography of Timişoara, historians were urged to write about the development of various industrial institutions in the city[8].

Among the measures taken to consolidate the totalitarian regime was the so-called "nationalization of the main industrial sectors", which was, in fact, the seizure of all factories and of most properties in the agricultural sector, as well as of a great number of residences. This happened in June 1948. At first, the communist regime didn't need the historians to legitimize the

[6]Traian Bunescu, "Activitatea comitetelor cetăţeneşti din Timişoara, decembrie 1944-mai 1945", in Studii de istorie a Banatului, Timişoara, vol. 4, 1976, p. 121 134; Wiliam Marin, "Aspecte ale activităţii revoluţionare desfăşurate de organizaţiile U.T.C. din Timişoara în anii 1922-1944", in Studii de istorie a Banatului, Timişoara, vol. 4, 1976, p.74-91.

[7]Traian Bunescu, and Gheorghe Radulovici, "Din lupta muncitorilor tipografi din Timişoara împotriva exploatării capitaliste, 1851-1947", in Tibiscus, Timişoara, vol. 2, 1972, p. 131-139; Gheorghe Radulovici, "Cu privire la organizarea şi lupta muncitorilor tipografi din Timişoara în perioada 1851-1918", in Studii de filosofie şi socialism ştiinţific, Timişoara, vol. 2, 1975, p. 361-374; Gheorghe Oancea, "Greva muncitorilor feroviari din Timişoara din aprilie 1904"", in Studii de istorie a Banatului, Timişoara, vol. 4, 1976, p. 58-73; Gheorghe Ruja, "Cadre didactice şi studenţi timişoreni în lupta antifascistă din România 1933-1940", in Studii de istorie a Banatului, Timişoara, vol. 11, 1985, p. 135-160.

[8](no author) Fabrica de ţigarete Timişoara. Monografie. 1848-1973, Timişoara, 1973; Vasile Zaberca, Gheorghe Ruja, "Premiere ale industriei bănăţene în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea", în Anuarul Muzeului tehnic prof. dr. ing. A. Leonida, Bucureşti, 1975, p. 173-180; (no author), Scurtă monografie a întreprinderii "Tehnometal" Timişoara, 1879-1979, Timişoara, 1982.

seizure. Later on, when the industrial production of these nationalized factories dropped constantly, reaching the verge of bankruptcy, in the context of a collapsed economy, the communist regime felt the need to justify the 1948 "nationalization" by propagandistic means. The more disastrous the economic situation grew, the more enthusiastic were the apparatchiks about the process of nationalization, which had actually caused the failure. In Timişoara the historians of the regime celebrated various anniversaries related to the large-scale seizure, trying to prove it had had the "people's support"[9].

The monographies of Timişoara or of the Banat published during the communist period are pervaded by the obsession to capitalize on the differences between the past and the present[10]. Almost everything in the past had been bad, poor, ugly, harmful, or, at best, mediocre. The present, in exchange, was the sum of all qualities. The myth of progress appears in these monographies to justify the totalitarian regime, which is responsible for all the positive changes, and of course, to hide the real nature of the regime.

The Street Names

1. The successive waves of street name changes

The researcher interested in the evolution of the city of Timişoara, in its streets and – in this case – in the street names must resort to the city maps. Such maps are still available: the oldest ones, prior to World War I, at the State Archives in Timişoara and in the Banat Museum, the newer ones in the city libraries, in the archives of the City Council and in private collections[11].

[9] Vasile Dudaş, "Adeziunea clasei muncitoare din Timişoara la înfăptuirea actului istoric al naţionalizării principalelor mijloace de producţie", in vol. Actul naţionalizării în Banat, Reşiţa, 1978, p. 53-58; Gheorghe Ruja, "Aspecte ale naţionalizării principalelor mijloace de producţie în judeţul Timiş", in vol. Actul naţionalizării în Banat, Reşiţa, 1978, p. 45-52.

[10] (no author), Regiunea Banat în două decenii de măreţe înfăptuiri 1944-1964, Timişoara, 1964; N. Oprean, Timişoara contemporană, Timişoara, 1969; Ştefan Pascu et al., Timişoara 700. Pagini din trecut şi de azi, Timişoara, 1969; Al. Zănescu, I. Martin, Timişoara ieri şi azi, Timişoara, 1969.

[11] Without offering an exhaustive enumeration of the city maps, I will mention here only those I used directly in this research project:

Timişoara. Planul oraşului cu numirile noi ale străzilor. Made by Major Thoma Darabas after the city's techical department plan. Design and lithography by I. Pregler, Timişoara (1923); Planul municipiului Timişoara. 1936. Conform datelor oficiale ale Serviciului Tehnic Municipal, design by D. Dumitrache, lithography by Kheil & Baumstark, Timişoara; Municipiul Timişoara. Ghidul străzilor. 1980, Intreprinderea Poligrafică Banat, Timişoara; Îndrumătorul prin Timişoara, cu noua denumire a străzilor, pieţelor, podurilor şi parcurilor,

There is little systematic research on street names. Some studies, though, are worth mentioning, such as those by Irina Stănculescu about the street names in Bucharest[12]. Though no reference is made to Timişoara, they can provide a good comparative perspective, thus broadening the horizon. For the street names in Timişoara the necessary data are provided by two comparative charts. One of them was published by Octavian Leşcu in 2001[13]. But it only comprises the successive names, up to the present moment, of streets extant in the year 1900. The other one was made by the City Council of Timişoara and posted on its website[14]. It contains all current streets, but the identification of the streets' previous names goes back in time only to 1936.

The change of street names in Timişoara occurred in several waves. When I use the term wave, I do not have in mind, of course, attributing or changing names accidentally or occasionally. The waves are in direct connection with the socio-political contexts and their alteration. In the 20th century the first wave of changes took place immediately after 1919, when the city received Romanian administration. The second wave occurred in the late 1940s, after the installation of the communist totalitarian system. The third wave followed in the 1970s, when the official ideology became that of national-communism. Last but not least, the fourth wave took place in the mid 1990s, after the collapse of the communist system.

2. The Romanian transformation

Between 1867 and 1918 – the period of the Austro-Hungarian dualism – the streets of Timişoara had German and Hungarian names. Many were the names of great personalities in the history of Hungary or Transylvania[15]. The streets in this period are a public procession of kings and noblemen (Attila utca,

1949; Ghidul oraşului Timişoara şi planul oraşului, 1959; Ghidul oraşului Timişoara, cu indicatorul alfabetic al străzilor, 1966; Municipiul Timişoara. Ghidul străzilor, 1980; Timişoara. Ghidul străzilor, 1991; Hegedus Abel, Timişoara, Cartographia, The Collection of Romanian city maps, Budapest (2001).

[12]Irina Stănculescu, "Schimbarea reperelor memoriei colective. Bucureşti, secolul XX", in Buletinul Laboratorului "Psihologia câmpului social", Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" Iaşi, No. 4/1999, Editura Polirom, p. 55-73; idem, "Apariţia şi evoluţia denumirilor de străzi din Bucureşti", in Bucureşti. Materiale de istorie şi muzeografie, vol. XIV, Muzeul municipiului Bucureşti, 2000, p. 137-185.

[13]Octavian Leşcu, Ghidul oraşului Timişoara de-a lungul timpului 1900-2000, Timişoara, 2001, p. 20-63

[14]At: www.primariatm.ro

[15]The information about street names presented in what follows resulted from the comparative analysis of the data found in the sources quoted in footnotes 61-64.

Árpád utca, Báthory utca, Hunyady tér, Korvin Mátyás utca, Széchényi utca, Zápolya utca, Rákóczy utca, Losonczy tér), of ministers (Andrássy utca, Teleky utca, Deák utca), of Hungarian leaders and generals of the 1848 Revolution (Kossuth Lajos tér, Klapka sor, Bem utca), of cultural and literary figures (Petőfi utca, Jókai Mór utca). Even the leader of a Transylvanian uprising of about 1514, Dózsa György, who had been executed in Timişoara, lent his name to a street and a square in the city. Many other streets – not as many as the Hungarian ones – had names evoking the city's Austrian past: names of Habsburg emperors and royalties (Elisabeth Gasse, Franz Josef Gasse, Josef Platz, Karl Gasse, Maria Theresia Gasse, Rudolf Gasse), names of Austrian generals and governors of the city of Timişoara (Prinz Eugen Plaz, Mercy Gasse, Koronini Platz), or city mayors (Preyer Gasse) and cultural figures (Lenau Gasse).

At the end of World War I, after the abolition of the dual monarchy, the Banat was occupied by the Serbian army. The peace treaties of Paris-Versailles, though, decided that the Eastern part of the Banat, Timişoara included, should belong to Romania. In August 1919, the Romanian troops marched into Timişoara, followed by the new administration. Romania joined the war in 1916 against Austria-Hungary and Germany. When the war was over, the official attitude of the Romanian state towards the former enemies was far from friendly. This was also perceived in Timişoara, where the new local government soon did away with all the official street names and public places which reminded of the old times.

Until 1921, all the streets in Timişoara were given Romanian names. The new names were chosen from fields of Romanian history and culture, often names of personalities or heroes who had nothing to do with the city's own history. The central area of the city (which contained the largest number of Habsburg emperors' names), came to host World War I generals or fighters in the older Romanian-Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878: General Praporgescu Street (former Báthory utca), General Dragalina Street (former Deák utca), General Grigorescu Street (former Franz Josef Gasse), General I. Odobescu Street (former Maria Theresia Gasse), General Traian Doda Street (former Prajkói utca), etc. The locations of World War I battlefields where the Romanian army had been victorious, also became popular: Mărăşeşti Street (former Elisabeth Gasse), Mărăşti Square (former Josef Platz), Oituz Square (former Nádor tér), etc. Streets were named also after the members of the royal family. The former Park Strasse is named Queen Mary Boulevard after the very popular wife of King Ferdinand I. Another street, the former Hunyady ut, becomes Carol I Boulevard.

The streets or public places with neutral names are not spared either. The former Rekascher Strasse (the street that connected Timişoara with the settlement Recaş, a famous local wining town about 25 km away from the city) became Calea Dorobanţilor in 1921. "Dorobanţi" was the name of the Romanian infantry in the second half of the 19th century. Dorobanţi units made history during the Independence War of 1877-1878, but none of these things had much to do with the past of Timişoara.

Some streets receive the names of Moldavian or Wallachian medieval princes: Ştefan cel Mare Street (former Bad Gasse), Petru Rareş Street (former Klein Platz), D. Cantemir Street (former Karl Gasse), Ţepeş Vodă Square (former Lenau Platz), Mihai Viteazul Boulevard (former Bischof Gasse). It is worth mentioning here that none of these figures had anything to do with the history of the city. Many other streets are given the names of Romanian cultural figures: George Coşbuc Street (former Petőfi utca), Gheorghe Lazăr Street (former Serben Gasse), Coriolan Brediceanu Street (former Széchényi utca), Eminescu Street (former Siebenburger Gasse), Ion Creangă Street (former Nussblater Gasse), Barbu Delavrancea Street (former Tauben Gasse), Moise Nicoară Street (former Bad Gasse), Caragiale Street (former Jókai Mór utca), Eliade Rădulescu Street (former Emmaus Gasse).

Some names remained unchanged: Griselini Street, Huniade Square (at a certain moment named Iancu de Hunedoara Square), Paul Chinezul Street (Kinizsi Gasse in the Austro-Hungarian period), Matei Corvin Street. But this is very little in contrast with everything that is changed. Keeping in mind that many of the new names had no connection with the history of the city, I may conclude that the gap between street names and the collective memory was huge.

3. The Stalinist transformation

A new gap, no less dramatic, was about to occur at the end of World War II. Hardly had three decades elapsed since the Romanian administration's "nationalization" of street names and public places when another change took place. The time was too short for the population to get familiar with the great amount of names which, for many, were totally irrelevant. But this time the change was not national, but ideological. The communist administration would cleanse all the names which were unsuitable to the new ideology, the communist, Soviet-Stalinist one.

The classics of Marxism could not be omitted from the new list of street names. Starting from 1947 such street names as Karl Marx Street (former

Fortress Street) and Friedrich Engels Street (former Mercy Street) appeared. The two names were, in fact, omnipresent all around Romania, being employed for streets in the central areas of the cities. This observation is also valid for all the other East and Central European countries in the communist bloc.

The late 1940s were characterized by a massive Russianization of street names. The sources of these names were varied. They belonged to Russian cultural and scientific figures (writers, philosophers, biologists, musicians, etc.), who were, of course, leftist: Lermontov Square (former Ţepeş Vodă Square), Modest Musorgski Street (former Titu Maiorescu Street), Visarion Belinski Street (former Şaguna Street), Tchernyshevski Square (former Mitropolite Şuluţiu Square), Turgheniev Street (former Rev. Dragomir Street), Maxim Gorki Street (former Nistru Street), Pushkin Street (former General Moşoiu Street), Timireazev Street (new street).

Dates from the history of the USSR are added to this massive phenomenon: 7 November Street (former Bonaaz Street), 12 April 1961 Street[16] (former 3 August Street), The Stalingrad Heroes' Boulevard (former Tache Ionescu Boulevard), Stalingrad Street (former Martyr Ioan Ciordaş Street). The name of several Soviet political and military personalities complete the process: Malinovski Street (former Dimitrie Sturdza Street), Marshall F. I. Tolbuhin Square (former General Dragalina Square), Kalinin Street (former Alsacia Street), Vyshinski Street (new street).

The paradigm of renaming the streets by the new communist authorities includes the names of several leaders of the communist and socialist movement. Some are foreign, and thus new street names are created: Georgyi Dimitrov Street (former Eugeniu de Savoya Street) and Marshall Tito Square (former Alexandru Lahovary Square). The name of the Yugoslavian leader was started to be used in 1948, but lasted only for a year because of the deterioration of the Romanian-Yugoslav relations. Thus, in 1949, Marshall Tito Square became Nicolae Bălcescu Square. The new patron of the street was a 19^{th} century politician and radical ideologist, an important member of the European Masonry. Although the Stalinist communists condemned and persecuted masonry ever since they reached power positions, they were, in a curious way, still willing to rehabilitate a few such members from the past, appropriating them.

Other communist leaders who lent their names to streets were of Romanian origin. A few died in the interwar period or during the war and were considered heroes of the new political regime. Including them in the list of street names,

[16]The date of the first human cosmic flight, performed by I. Gagarin.

the regime was trying to make an inventory of communist martyrs. The list, which acquired almost mythical implications, included: Vasile Roaită Square (former St. George, then for a while I. C. Brătianu Square), Bela Brainer Street (former Rev. Trăilă Street), Ştefan Plăvăţ Boulevard (former Regent Buzdugan Street), Ştefan Stâncă-Street (former Chevalier Martini Street), Ocsko Terezia Street (former Homer Street).

High communist officials also gave their names to streets: Iosif Rangheţ Street (former Preyer Street), Alexandru Drăghici Street (new street in 1946), which would then become Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol Street (1956).

Finally, several street names refer to important dates in the history of the communist party and regime: 23 August Boulevard (former Queen Mary Boulevard), 1 May Street (former St. John Street), 6 March Boulevard (former Carol I Boulevard), Griviţa Roşie Street (former Domniţa Bălaşa Street), etc.

4. The native transformation under the pressure of national communism

Less than two decades later, a new political change took place. The 1960s witnessed a reconsideration of communist Romania's attitude towards Moscow. The transformation was gradual, from a discreet attempt to nationalize political decisions in the early 1960s (Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's last years of leadership) to an open declaration of defiance towards Moscow, with communist leader Ceauşescu criticizing the military invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of the Warsaw Treaty states in 1968.

The political shift can also be observed in the new street names. Those of foreign communist leaders are given up: Georgyi Dimitrov Street, for example, becomes Ceahlău Street in the early 1960s. Similarly, the names of Russian or Soviet cultural figures disappear: Lermontov Square becomes Doiceşti Square, also in the early 1960s. Tchernyshevski Square becomes Vârful cu Dor Square in 1966, Maxim Gorki Street becomes Tuşnad Street, Pushkin Street becomes Pescarilor (Fishermen's) Street, Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol Street becomes Galaţi Street. On this occasion, the names of some personalities are not replaced by their Romanian counterparts. Despite the relative autonomy from Moscow, the Romanian communists didn't dare defy the Soviet Union by replacing their heroes. In Timişoara the Russian names are thus replaced by names of mountains, towns, or professions.

Dates and events from the history of Russia and the USSR are also given up: Stalingrad Street becomes Garibaldi Street already in the late 1950s together with Malinovski Street, which becomes Gheorghe Crosnev Street

(then, from 1964 on, Mangalia Street), The Stalingrad Heroes' Boulevard becomes Tipografilor (Printers') Street in 1964 (Leontin Sălăjan Boulevard in 1966), Kalinin Street regains its former name, Alsacia Street, Pavel Kisselef Street becomes Cocorilor (Cranes') Street, Vyshinski Street becomes Cerbului (Stag's) Street.

The communist nationalism also manifested itself in erasing the names of old Romanian communist activists of foreign origin (Jewish or Hungarian). Being martyrs didn't save their place among street names. Bela Breiner and Teresia Ocsko Streets are baptized, in the mid 1960s, with names of flowers: Lalelelor (Tulips') and Narciselor (Daffodils') respectively. National communism wished new green grass to grow onto the old internationalist mythology.

Conclusions

The fall of the communist regime brings a new change to the social-political, economic and cultural context. This novel age witnesses a series of mutations both at the level of the historiography of Timişoara and in the street names. The local university opens a history department, which expands the area of study and trains new researchers. A theme that becomes very popular with the historians of Timişoara is that of the Revolution of December 1989, research supported by the publication of documents, reconstructions and interpretations[17]. Older preoccupations are renewed in connection with the history of the city in a traditional positivistic-descriptive manner[18], but new studies,

[17](no editor), Timişoara 16 – 22 decembrie. Timişoara, Editura Facla, 1990; Miodrag Milin (ed.), Timişoara 1 – 21 decembrie '89, Timişoara, 1990; idem (ed.), Timişoara în revoluţie şi după, Timişoara, Editura Marineasa, 1997; idem (ed.), Timişoara în arhivele "Europei Libere", 17-20 decembrie 1989, Bucureşti, Fundaţia Academia Civică, 1999; Marius Mioc, Revoluţia din Timişoara aşa cum a fost şi falsificatorii istoriei revoluţiei: mărturiile răniţilor, arestaţilor, rudelor şi prietenilor celor decedaţi în revoluţie; încercările de falsificare a istoriei revoluţiei de către Ion Iliescu, Ion Cristoiu, Sergiu Nicolaescu..., Timişoara, Sidonia, 1999; M. Milin (ed.), Procesul de la Timişoara, vol. I-VI, Bucureşti, Fundaţia Academia Civică, 2004-2008. From 2007 on, a periodical entitled "Memorial 1989. Buletin ştiinţific şi de informare" appears, edited by the Timişoara Revolution Memorial.

[18]For example: Costin Feneşan, "Domeniul Cetăţii Timişoara până în 1552", in Revista istorică, Bucureşti, New Series, 1997, no. 7-8; Marica V. Guy, "Timişoara în secolul al XVIII-lea", in Analele Banatului. Artă, Timişoara, New Series, vol. 3, 1998; Jancsó Arpád, Istoricul podurilor din Timişoara, Timişoara, Editura Mirton, 2001; Ioan Munteanu, "Presa din Timişoara, 1771-1918", in Studii de istorie a Banatului, Timişoara, New Series, vol. 9 (23), 2001; Ioan Munteanu, Rodica Munteanu, Timişoara. Monografie. Timişoara: Editura Mirton, 2002, etc.

based on oral history[19], are also promoted. Another field of scrutiny is that of the history of anti-communist underground groups[20]. Apart from the cognitive, historical motivation, this perspective also has a recovering purpose, which is sometimes explicitly stated, sometimes only implied: the communist historiography overrated the working class' movements and completely ignored the communists' opposition, so it was high time the historians revealed the latter category's contribution. The researchers are no longer limited by the political establishment. They have gained the freedom to deal with themes and topics which are interesting for the community. Thus, the relationship between the historian and the collective memory starts to be regulated.

The same thing happened to street names. Between 1990 and 1993 almost all names reminding somehow of the communist regime disappeared. The city's streets were given back their former kings and members of the royal family, the figures who had contributed to its history (Eugene of Savoy, Florimond de Mercy, Johann Nepomuk Preyer, etc.). Romanian as well as international writers and artists are also revived. The names of a few dozens of victims of the Revolution of December 1989 have joined the prestigious gallery of names, and so have various events related to this historic moment, which shows that the Revolution is already deeply rooted in the collective memory.

To conclude with, one may argue that, when it comes to the city of Timişoara at least, the connection between the collective memory, the local historiography and the street names is far from simple. It cannot be explained only by means of identity or linear, mechanical conditioning. The three categories overlap, sometimes more deeply, sometimes more superficially, according to the social-political context. In some such cases both the local historiography and the street names can be regarded as explicit forms of collective memory: the historians write about subjects which are relevant to the community, while the streets and the public places bear the names of figures, events, or locations stored in the collective memory. This applies to the period before 1918 and to that after 1989, and only partially to the interwar period. On other occa-

[19]Smaranda Vultur, Antonia Komlosi, Memorie şi diversitate culturală, Timişoara 1900 - 1945/Mémoire et diversité culturelle, Timişoara 1900-1945, Iaşi, Polirom, 2001; Smaranda Vultur (ed.), Germanii din Banat prin povestirile lor, Bucureşti, Paideia, 2000; idem (ed.), Memoria salvată. Evreii din Banat, ieri şi azi, Iaşi, Polirom, 2002; Mihaela Sitariu, Oaza de libertate. Timişoara, 30 octombrie 1956, Iaşi, Polirom, 2004 etc.

[20]Mihaela Sitariu, Rezistenţa anticomunistă. Timişoara 1956, Bucureşti, Editura Sofia, 1998; C. Muţiu et al., "Mişcările studenţeşti anticomuniste din octombrie 1956 din Timişoara", in Analele Sighet, Bucureşti, vol. 8, 2000; Ioan Munteanu, "Manifestaţia anticomunistă a studenţilor de la Timişoara din octombrie 1956. Semnificaţia politică naţională", in Analele Sighet, Bucureşti, vol. 8, 2000, p. 635-655.

sions there may be a total schism between the collective memory, on the one hand, and the local historiography and the street names, on the other, as it happened in the communist period. A partial schism was witnessed during the interwar period.

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