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Commemorative Place Names — Their Specificity and Problems

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This paper focuses on the distinctive features of a particular type of geographical name, referred to as commemorative place names: e.g. *Bat'ov*, *Gottwaldov*, *Frunze*, *Leningrad*, or *Stalingrad*. These features are illustrated with primarily Czech toponymic material, presented in comparison to Slovak, Russian, Yugoslav, and Bulgarian place names. Commemorative names display several specific and distinctive features as a consequence of their dependence on political regimes and ideologies. These features include the domination of naming above other onymic functions and the elevation of naming to a symbolic act; instability, manifested in frequent changes and renamings; high ideological value, reflected in the importance of equivalence between the place and its name; and certain difficulties involved in using such place names in everyday communication. These distinctive features could be considered compelling reasons for the establishment of a specific type of geographical name, termed "commemorative place names."

KEYWORDS commemorative place names, Czech place names, Eastern Europe, ideology, renaming, internationalization, nationalization

> When Tomas looked back at the hotel, he noticed that something had in fact changed. What had once been the Grand now bore the name Baikal. He looked at the street sign on the corner of the building: Moscow Square. Then they took a walk (Karenin tagged along on his own, without a leash) through all the streets they had known, and examined all their names: Stalingrad Street, Rostov Street, Novosibirsk Street, Kiev Street, Odessa Street. There was a Tchaikovsky Sanatorium, a Tolstoy Sanatorium, a Rimsky-Korsakov Sanatorium; there was a Hotel Suvorov, a Gorky Cinema, and a Café Pushkin. All the names were taken from Russian geography, from Russian history. [. . .]
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> Hindsight now made that anonymity seem quite dangerous to the country. The street and buildings could no longer return to their original names. As a result, a Czech spa had suddenly metamorphosed into a miniature imaginary Russia, and the past that Tereza had gone there to find had turned out to be confiscated. It would be impossible for them to spend the night." (Kundera, 1999: 161–162)

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Introduction

Place names are not only linguistic signs; they also represent social and historical values. They are created as a result of human's need to name their environment, and they reflect a person's relationship with a particular place. The onomastic model theory, based on a structural approach to proper names and formulated by the Czech linguists Rudolf Šrámek (1972/73; 1999: 22–53) and Jana Pleskalová (1992) identifies four semantic models which cover all possible human relationships with an onymic object. These relationships can be expressed through four basic questions: where/where from? (place names derived from the location of the place and the origin of its inhabitants); who/what? (place names expressing the profession and social status of the inhabitants); what like? (place names expressing the character of the place and its inhabitants); whose? (the ownership of the place and its inhabitants). Each semantic model is associated with a particular group of formal means or structures. For example, in Czech toponymy, for many centuries, possession (ownership) was formally expressed by a large number of suffixes. The most frequent possessive suffixes were *-ov* and *-ín*, e.g. the place name *Petrov* meant "Petr's/Peter's settlement/property," the place name *Zlín* was related to "Zla's settlement/property" (Čornejová, 2009: 79–114; Lutterer, 1969; Lutterer and Šrámek, 1997: 8–35; Šmilauer, 1960; cf. Blanár, 1996: 150).

The system of place names can be studied from multiple points of view. The aim of this article is not to describe the historical development and specificity of toponymy in a particular region or country. Instead, the article focuses on the specific features of a particular group of geographical names, examining their motivations and functions. The subject of the paper is commemoration, commemorative motives, and the geographical names known as commemorative place names — or, more rarely, as honorific names.

In onomastic theory, the term commemorative naming/commemorative name (in German Ehrenmotiv/Ehrenname, Gedenkname, Memorialname; in Russian мемориальный мотив/мемориальное название — memorialniy motiv/memorialnoye nazvaniye, меморатив — memorativ; in Polish motywacja pamiątkowa/nazwa pamiątkowa; in Czech honorifikační, honorifikující motiv/jméno, čestné vlastní jméno, oslavné, dedikační jméno, památkové, honorifikační jméno) refers to a naming motive which originally developed from a possessive motive (Bezlaj, 1983: 174; Podolskaya, 1978: 124; Šmilauer, 1973: 213; cf. Stewart, 1954: 6–7; Štěpán, 1985). The main difference between commemorative naming and the possessive motive lies in the fact that commemorative place names show no genuine possessive relationship with the onymic object (Šrámek, 1999: 49).

There are two reasons why commemorative names do not express real possession. Firstly, commemorative names very often express possession only symbolically. For example, the place names *Gottwaldov*, *Titograd*, and *Stalingrad* do not express the fact that these places were possessed by particular persons, such as the Czechoslovak Communist president Klement *Gottwald*, the Yugoslav Communist leader Josip Broz *Tito* or the Soviet dictator Josif Vissarinovich *Stalin*. The places named after these figures cannot be regarded as their property. The second reason is that commemorative names are frequently based on non-personal phenomena, especially ideological values such as events and important days, nations and places that were considered to

be political allies, e.g. *Playa GDR* (Cuba, "Beach of the German Democratic Republic" — the GDR was the socialist state established in 1949 in the Soviet zone of occupied Germany, which after German reunification in 1990 was incorporated into the Federal Republic of Germany); or the cities of *Sovetsk*, *Oktyabrskiy* (named after the Russian October Bolshevik Revolution of 1917; *oktyabr* means "October" in Russian), and *Pervomaysk* ("May 1 City"). This motivation is particularly common in urbanonymy of Central and Eastern Europe, e.g. in contemporary Prague (Czech Republic) street names such as *náměstí Míru* ("Peace Square"), *Revoluční ulice* ("Revolution Street"), *Angolská ulice* ("Angola Street"), and *8. května* ("May 8 Street"). These geographical names are typical of modern (twentieth-century) toponymy, and they are mainly associated with non-democratic political regimes.

Clearly, a certain level of commemoration is inherent in every possessive geographical name, even though such names may not be openly described as commemorative. However, the expression via place names of the actual possession of places and their inhabitants has become increasingly scarce in modern times. The models and forms of possessive place names have been reappraised and applied to commemorative place names (David, 2011). For instance, the old Russian toponymic possessive suffix *-sk* was reused during the Soviet era, appearing in many place names, e.g. *Leninsk*, *Ulyanovsk*, *Stalinsk*, or *Kirovsk*.

This paper describes the specifics of the commemorative motive in Czech toponymy during the twentieth century, using Czech-language material and comparing it to material from other languages and countries, e.g. the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Slovakia, and Bulgaria.

Commemorative political names played an important role in the toponymies of those countries whose place name systems were affected by politics and ideology in the twentieth century. Writers, linguists, onomasticians, and geographers such as Azaryahu (1996), Buczyński (1997), Bursa (1994), Gill (2005), Ilyin (1993), Peterson (1977), Pospelov (1993), and Sänger (2006) — who concentrated mostly on Soviet and Russian toponymy and place-name systems in Eastern European countries behind the Iron Curtain — collected a rich fund of place names, including information on their development and the reasons behind the changes. The above-listed authors focused on the issue of the relationship between place names and politics, however they largely ignored the onomastic and communicative aspects of this type of geographical name. It is this issue that the present paper aims to highlight. I would like to point out that commemorative place names form a very specific group of geographical names. The general characteristics of commemorative place names are illustrated using material based on the geographical names of settled places — not only towns, cities, and villages, but also streets or squares (urbanonyms).

Naming as the most important role of commemorative names

A commemorative name has a political value; it is connected with a political regime and expresses the ideology of that regime. The Russian authors Mokiyenko and Nikitina used the term "toponymic newspeak" to describe this type of naming (Mokiyenko and Nikitina, 1998; cf. Macura, 2008: 193–209). Their use of the term

broadened George Orwell's original concept of newspeak, presenting place names from an entirely different point of view. Place names were one of the linguistic means used by totalitarian regimes to control people's thinking; this function of commemorative names involves a renaming of reality.

From the point of view of onomastic structural and functional theory, a geographical name has four basic functions: naming, identification, differentiation and localization (Šrámek, 1999: 32). In order for a place name to be considered a fully functional name, all four of these functions must be fulfilled. As far as commemorative names are concerned, the primary function is naming, while the remaining functions are of secondary importance.

Naming is often elevated to a highly important, even sacred act. Paradoxically, we can find most evidence of this in the (supposedly atheistic) former Communist bloc countries. An exemplary instance of such an act of naming appeared in Poland in 1953. A few days after the death of Josif Vissarinovich Stalin, the Polish industrial city *Katowice* was renamed *Stalinogród*. This change was followed by a further act of naming: all the boys born on the same day as Katowice's renaming were given a third name — *Józef* — which was added to their personal name in order to commemorate this "great and sad day." As it is shown by material from the Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Katowicach (Presidium of the Katowice City Authority), this act was intended to create a new reality, a new place and new inhabitants through naming (Woźniczka, 2007: 97). It was also common in the Eastern bloc to create new commemorative place names by holding public competitions to find the name that best expressed the new character of the place. This was particularly frequent in the 1940s and 1950s, and can be illustrated by the Czech place names *Havířov* and *Švermov*, which were invented by the public and chosen in a free competition — even though the ideological correctness of the names was of course strictly controlled by the Communist authorities (David, 2009; 2011: 129, 135).

The other crucial onymic functions, such as identification and differentiation, have become weakened in commemorative place names, and in many cases they are entirely absent. For instance, in the former Soviet Union, there were 45 places named *Leninskoye*, 29 named *Lenino*, and 23 named *Leninskiy* (Murray, 2000: 166; Pospelov, 1993: 12–15). The identification and differentiation of these places are thus weaker than if unique place names had been used.

The basic localizing function of place names was weakened in those commemorative place names that were created by transferring an already existing place name of great social, historical and ideological value. For example, the flood of *Stalingrad*s that appeared (especially in urbanonymy) in many countries all over the world after the Second World War. A further illustrative example is the use of the names of existing cities to name streets in Prague, e.g. *Moskevská* ("Moscow Street"), *Bělehradská* ("Belgrade Street"), *Budapešťská* ("Budapest Street"), and *Varšavská* ("Warsaw Street"). These street names do not give any information about the named places, their location, or the direction of the streets. Their only function was to name a place and emphasize the fact of commemoration.

One more function should be mentioned with regard to the act of naming: the function of mythicization. Political power uses commemorative names in an attempt to usurp the landscape. A new landscape created through names is often described as

a "state/political landscape" (Bassin, 2000a; 2000b; Hájek, 2008: 51–60). This new landscape must be created as soon as a political change occurs. This process is documented by the names of one street in the Czech city of Ostrava. Its name used to be *Třída Dra. Edvarda Beneše* ("Dr Edvard Beneš Avenue", after the second Czechoslovak president); now it is called *Bohumínská třída* ("Bohumín Avenue," i.e. an arterial road leading towards the town of Bohumín). On the eve of March 15 1939, the day on which the Nazis officially launched the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia (presented as an act of protection offered by Germany to the local German population), Ostrava's German community spontaneously renamed the street. The new name was *Strasse des 14. März* ("March 14 Avenue"), to commemorate the fact that the Nazi armies had already begun their takeover of the city. Three years later, this name had to be changed due to its ideological untenability.

The "new" landscape created by commemorative place names is impersonal, cold, onymically sterile, and highly changeable — as suggested by the research into Soviet-era street names presented and subsequently debated at a round table discussion held in Moscow in 1989 ("Imya tvoyevo goroda," 1989: 133). Many writers and poets also reflected this issue in their literary texts, e.g. Milan Kundera (1999: 161–162), Joseph Brodsky (Brodskij, 1998: 8), and Rio Preisner (1997: 311). The creation of a "state landscape" is one of many forms of mythicization. A new political power uses place names to create a new reality, even though this new reality is a purely mythical construct.

The function of mythicization helps political power to create a new myth and adapt history to suit its ideological interpretation. This myth may be a myth of state, or a myth of landscape — whether a "Communist" or "national" landscape. The other function of mythicization is to reinforce the role of this state landscape in the myth of a nation or a state (cf. Azaryahu and Golan, 2001; Saparov, 2003).

A good example of this function is provided by the toponymy of the southern part of the Slovak Republic (a part of former Czechoslovakia). This area had, and still has, a large population of ethnic Hungarians (9.67 percent of Slovakia's population in 2001). After the Second World War, there was a transfer of population: many Hungarians were relocated to areas where Slovaks had previously lived in Hungary, and vice versa. This movement of peoples was followed by changes of place names. About seven hundred place names were changed in 1948. Most of these changes were explained as a return to the "correct" Slovak forms and as part of a process of "standardization," but the largest group of place names affected by the changes were the former Hungarian names of cities and villages (*Vyhláška povereníka vnútra*, 1948). Over seven percent of all changed names can be regarded as new commemorative names. These names can be divided into three groups. The first group includes place names motivated by the names of famous figures in the nineteenth-century Slovak National Revival movement, such as writers, poets, and linguists: *Bernolákovo* (originally *Čeklís*, renamed after Anton *Bernolák*, a priest and linguist), *Hurbanovo* (originally *Stará Ďala*/*Ó-Gyalla*, renamed after Jozef Miloslav *Hurban*, a writer and journalist), *Kolárovo* (originally *Gúta*, renamed after Ján *Kollár*, a poet and a propagator of Pan-Slavism), *Palárikovo* (originally *Slovenský Meder*/*Tót-Megyer*, renamed after Ján *Palárik*, a journalist and dramatist), *Sládkovičovo* (originally *Diosek*, renamed after Andrej *Sládkovič*, a poet), *Šafárikovo* (1948–1990, now *Tornaľa*,

renamed after Pavel Jozef *Šafárik*, a poet and ethnographer), and *Štúrovo* (originally *Parkan*, renamed after Ľudovít *Štúr*, a politician and journalist). The second group includes place names related to the Slovak resistance movement and its heroes during the Second World War, especially connected with the 1944 Slovak National Uprising: *Gabčíkovo* (originally *Beš*/*Bös*, renamed after Jozef *Gabčík*, who carried out the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazi governor of the occupied Czech lands), *Golianovo* (originally *Lapašské Ďarmoty*, renamed after General Ján *Golian*, one of the organizers of the Slovak National Uprising), *Gondovo* (originally *Balvany*/*Šalmoš*, renamed after Daniel *Gonda*, a hero of the Slovak National Uprising) and *Švermovo* (1948–1990, now *Telgárt*, renamed after Jan *Šverma*, a Communist journalist and hero of the Slovak National Uprising). Additionally, the name of a popular Slovak rebel from the turn of the eighteenth century, Juraj *Jánošík*, was used as the motivation for the place name *Jánošíková*. Just six percent of the new commemorative names — the third category — were motivated by the names of other great historical figures: the dukes of Great Moravia, the first Slavic national state, in the ninth century. They are *Svätoplukovo* (originally *Šalgov*), *Mojmírovce* (originally *Urmín*), and *Rastislavice* (originally *Degeš*). These place-name changes not only performed a commemorative function, but also the function of mythicization. They were part of the creation of a modern Slovak state identity based on several sources: the cultural tradition of the nineteenth century, the tradition of Slovak anti-Fascist resistance (which was intended to erase the dark history of the Slovak fascist puppet state in 1939–1945), and the appropriation of the tradition of Great Moravia (cf. Majtán, 1998; Short, 2000).

The commemorative names in the territories of former East Prussia and Crimea, where new Soviet names contributed to the establishment of Soviet power, performed a similar function to that of the commemorative names in Slovakia. They helped the state authorities to create a myth of a Soviet landscape wiped clean of all traces of previous ethnic groups. This can be illustrated by numerous names referring to war and the military, as well as by Soviet names that are typical of today's Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation (Kaliningradskaya oblast, formerly part of East Prussia): *Kaliningrad* (originally *Königsberg*, renamed after Mikhail Ivanovich *Kalinin*, a Soviet revolutionary and politician), *Chapayevo* (originally *Wabbeln*, renamed after Vasiliy Ivanovich *Chapayev*, a Red Army commander), *Sovetsk* (originally *Tilsit*) and *Soldatovo* (originally *Friedrichstahl*; *soldat* means "soldier" in Russian). In Crimea, new Russian place names replaced the original names of villages settled by the Crimean Tatars: *Avrora* (originally *Tatis-Konrat*, renamed after the Russian cruiser *Aurora*, a symbol of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917), *Armeyskoye* (originally *Kuremes*; *armiya* means "army" in Russian), *Pionerskoye* (originally *Calman*; *pioner* means "pioneer" in Russian), and *Turgenevka* (originally *Teberti*, renamed after the Russian writer Ivan Sergeyevich *Turgenev*) (*Crimean Tatar Place Names*; Pospelov, 1993).

The instability of commemorative names

A very important feature of commemorative place names is their instability. When used to designate settlements, the stability of place names is a prerequisite for their

basic function in communication — i.e. to name a place. Commemorative names are connected and influenced by reality outside the relationship between the named geographical objects and their names. For this reason, commemorative names are frequently changed; ideologically "outdated" names are substituted by new place names, very often their original forms, which display no features of commemoration and could be considered neutral. This process can be exemplified by many commemorative place names which were replaced with their original forms after political changes, e.g. *Gorkiy* (1932–1990, now *Nizhniy Novgorod*), *Kuybyshev* (1935–1991, now *Samara*), *Karl-Marx-Stadt* (1953–1990, now *Chemnitz*), and, most famously, *Leningrad* (1924–1991, now *St Petersburg*). A rare example is the case of the Polish city *Katowice*, which was renamed *Stalinogród* after Stalin's death in 1953, only for *Katowice* to be reinstated after Khrushchev's criticism of the Stalin era at the Twentieth Soviet Bolshevik Party Congress in 1956.

Another way of changing a commemorative name is by substituting it with another commemorative name. For example, the Soviet city *Ivashchenkovo* was renamed *Trotsk* (1924, after Lev Davidovich *Trotskiy*, the Bolshevik revolutionary and theorist). Later, when Trotskiy lost Stalin's support, the city was renamed *Chapayevsk* (1929, after Vasiliy Ivanovich *Chapayev*, a Red Army commander).

Whenever an existing commemorative place name is replaced by a new name — whether commemorative or neutral — the new name maintains its connection with the previous name, retaining its ideological and political value. Such a new name can be termed a contraname — kontranázev in Czech (Garčic, 2006: 357; cf. Macura, 1993: 67–69).

When a place name is changed, even though the old name has been erased from the maps, it still lives on in local communication and is frequently maintained as the name of the wider administrative district. For instance, the Czech city of *Zlín* was renamed *Gottwaldov* (1949–1990, after Klement Gottwald, the first Czechoslovak Communist president), yet *Zlín* was still used as the official name of the city centre district. Paradoxically, although the place name *Zlín* was erased from the map, the name continued to be used as a brand name for light aeroplanes produced in the nearby town of Otrokovice throughout the Communist era (David, 2010b: 434–436).

Another reason why a place name may be changed is its misinterpretation. In such cases, a geographical name is considered to be commemorative because it is thought to relate to a previous political regime, and is therefore deemed ideologically unsuitable. Such a place is renamed using a new, ideologically correct place name — despite the fact that the base of the original name actually bore no relationship to ideology or politics. For instance, from the period after the Second World War there are many well-known cases when old Czech names such as *Němčovice*, *Němčice*, or *Mnichov* were replaced with new names. The reason was that these original names were wrongly considered to have been coined from the root *Němec* (meaning "a person of German nationality") or to be related to the Czech form *Mnichov* (an exonym) of the German city *Munich* (*München* in German) — i.e. the city where the Munich Agreement was signed in 1938, enabling Germany's annexation of the border areas of Czechoslovakia. Similar circumstances, based on folk/false etymology, caused the name of the Russian city *Kerensk* to be replaced with *Vadinsk*. Although both names,

Kerensk and *Vadinsk*, were motivated by the names of rivers, the original name *Kerensk* was thought to refer to the prime minister of the Provisional Government Aleksandr Fedorovich *Kerenskiy*, who tried to stop the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The original name of *Stalingrad* — *Tsaritsyn* — was wrongly thought to have been derived from the root *tsaritsa* ("Tsar's daughter"), though it was in fact based on the name of a river — the *Tsaritsa*, a tributary of the Volga. This misinterpretation was the reason why the commemorative name *Stalingrad* (1925–1961) was not replaced with its previous historical name *Tsaritsyn* after the public criticism of the Stalinist cult of personality; the old name was considered to be ideologically unsuitable by the Soviet authorities. Instead, a new name, *Volgograd*, was coined from the name of the *Volga* River — even though the original name *Tsaritsyn* was also based on the name of a river.

Nationalization and internationalization

Nationalization and internationalization form an integral part of commemorative names and their functions. It is essential to distinguish between these two concepts as they are applied in different circumstances. Nationalization is typical of toponymy that is intended to express the national character of a place. It becomes particularly important when a state wants to emphasize its national origin; it is also frequent in regions that have recently been incorporated into the state territory but which have a different ethnic structure from the majority of the territory, as well as after large-scale ethnic cleansing or transfers of population. The nationalization of toponymy is connected with the use of commemorative names because the act of naming is considered to be sacred and ceremonial. This has been exploited in many countries and regions where massive transfers of population have occurred, e.g. in Southern Slovakia (as mentioned above), in the western regions of present-day Poland (which originally belonged to Germany), and in the border areas of Bohemia and Moravia known as Sudety (Sudetenland in German) after the Second World War.

A further example of nationalization in Czech toponymy connected with commemorative names is the addition of the adjective *Český* ("Czech" or "Bohemian") to place names. In naturally coined place names, this adjective expressed the ethnicity or nationality of the inhabitants, their origin or territorial affiliation. However, in more recent Czech toponymy this adjective has taken on a different function. The main reason for the use of the adjective *Český* in more recent times has been its commemorative function; newly devised place names featuring this adjective were intended to convey the fact that the place was under Czech/Czechoslovak state sovereignty — as can be illustrated by the names of the towns *Český Těšín* and *České Velenice*. In 1920, the town of *Cieszyn*, situated on the border between Czechoslovakia and Poland, was divided into two parts: the Czechoslovak part on the left bank of the Olza River, and the Polish part, with the historic town centre, on the right bank. The adjective *Český* was added to the Czech version of the town's name, *Těšín*, to designate the Czech part — which had a strategic railway station. This attribute was justified neither ethnically — because Czechs constituted only around thirty percent of the population, nor territorially — because the town is situated in Silesia, not Bohemia. Today's town of *České Velenice*, situated on the border between

Czechoslovakia and Austria, was created in 1921 from three villages named *Dolní Velenice*, *Česká Cejle*, and *Josefsko*. Among the names that were proposed after 1918 were *Masarykov* or *Masarykova Vitoraz* ("Masaryk's Vitoraz," Weitra in German; this is the name of a region that was divided between Czechoslovakia and Austria after the First World War). These names were intended to remind people the role of Tomáš Garrigue *Masaryk*, the first Czechoslovak president, in the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918.

In both these cases, reasons of administration and prestige played major roles. The towns of *Český Těšín* and *České Velenice* were major railway junctions on the borders with Poland and Austria respectively. The application of the commemorative attribute *Český* was understandable given the tense relationship between newly formed Czechoslovakia and its neighbors Poland and Austria.

More recent examples can be found in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The original attributes *Bosanski*/*Bosanska* ("Bosnian") in place names such as *Bosanski Brod* or *Bosanska Kostajnica* were replaced by *Srpski*/*Srpska* ("Serbian"), e.g. *Srpski Brod*, *Srpska Kostajnica* (Brozović Rončević, 2003; Feldman, 2005). Changes of attributes in place names were an iconic feature of the disintegration of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into newly independent national states.

Internationalization in commemorative naming is typical of situations in which one nation or state controls others, and where the place name systems of its satellites reflect this status. All toponymies of former satellites of the Soviet Union were affected by Stalin's cult of personality in the 1940s and 1950s. With the exception of the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, Stalin's name was used for city names in all national toponymies of the Eastern bloc. Names included *Stalinogród* (Poland, 1953–1956, now *Katowice*), *Sztálinváros* (Hungary, 1952–1961, now *Dunaújváros*), *Stalinstadt* (German Democratic Republic, 1953–1961, now *Eisenhüttenstadt*), *Oraşul Stalin* (Romania, 1950–1960, now *Braşov*), *Stalin* (Bulgaria, 1949–1956, now *Varna*), and *Qytet Stalin* (Albania, 1949–1990, now *Kuçova*). The former Yugoslavia had its own Communist dictator, Josip Broz *Tito*, with his own cult of personality which also found its expression in the naming of places. Tito's name appeared in place names in every republic and autonomous province of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, e.g. *Titograd* (Montenegro, 1946–1992, now *Podgoritsa*), *Titovo Uzhitse* (Serbia, 1946–1992, now *Uzhitse*), *Titovo Velenje* (Slovenia, 1981–1991, now *Velenje*), and *Titova Korenitsa* (Croatia, 1946–1996) (Bornemann, 2004: 153; Brozović Rončević, 2009: 122–123). This "ideological exchange" of place names functioned across the borders of all countries in the Communist bloc, as can be demonstrated not only by the "Stalin" place names but also by city names such as *Gottvald* (Ukraine, 1976–1990, now *Zmiyev,* named after the Czechoslovak Communist leader Klement *Gottwald*) and *Dimitrovgrad* (Serbia, 1947–now; Russia, 1972–now; named after the Bulgarian Communist leader Georgi *Dimitrov*). However, one particularly important feature of the "mutual exchange" of ideological place names should be emphasized. The influence was solely thematic; only the motivation bases of these place names were affected, while their linguistic forms were in accordance with the forms and structures typical of the local language — as in the place names motivated by the name *Stalin*, mentioned above.

The specificity of the Czechoslovak place-name system lies in the long-established tradition of Czech onomastic culture, which did not enable the use of commemorative

naming to such an extent as was common in Russia, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavia (David, 2008a; 2011: 74–82). There is also an absence of references to tsars, dukes, and emperors dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; such names are typical of the Russian, Bulgarian, and Serbian onomastic traditions. There are only a few examples of commemorative names created in Czechoslovakia during the period 1945–1989, e.g. *Havlíčkův Brod* (the former name *Německý Brod*, "German ford," was changed in 1945); *Gottwaldov* (1949–1990, now *Zlín*); *Švermov* (a new town created by the administrative merging of several villages in 1949); *Havířov* (a new town established as a model socialist city in 1955; *havíř* in Czech means "coal miner" — a profession that was celebrated by Communist ideology). However, Stalin's cult of personality found its expression in many unrealized proposals for place names, e.g. *Stalinův Brod* (now *Havlíčkův Brod*), *Stalinov* (now *Havířov*, *Letohrad*, *Švermov*), *Stalinovice* (now *Havířov*). The only actual place-name change motivated by the name *Stalin* was that of the highest mountain in the former Czechoslovakia, in the High Tatra Mountains: its name was changed to *Stalinův štít* (1949–1959, "Stalin's Peak," now *Gerlachovský štít*). The specificity of most post-Second World War renamings in Czechoslovakia is due to the fact that the new names were applied to new entities — including those new entities created administratively by merging several existing communities (David, 2008a). This fact distinguishes the Czech place-name system from the toponymies of other countries formerly located behind the Iron Curtain, especially the Soviet Union, where new commemorative place names were frequently given to towns and cities without any change in their administrative status.

The equivalence between the motivation of a place name and the named object

My research on commemorative geographical names has shown that the relationship between the value of a place name's motivation and the value of the named onymic object (i.e. place) is more important than in naturally created toponymy. Commemorative place names reflect a relationship of equivalence between a place and its name. It is not possible to use a commemorative name — a name of high social, historical, or political value — for just any place. Commemorative naming is generally applied to established places of great importance, such as cities, urban locations (streets and squares), or natural objects such as fields, woods, ponds, and rivers (cf. David, 2010a; Horsman, 2006). This is understandable. Settled places, especially large cities with a high density of population, make an easy target for political agitation. And politically or ideologically motivated place names are one means of political persuasion. This phenomenon can be referred to as "object selection"; it will now be illustrated using the example of street names.

During the twentieth century, the centers of Czech cities were repeatedly inundated with commemorative names. However, my research has shown that three typical town/city centre names dating back to the Middle Ages have survived to the present day: they are *Úzká* ("Narrow Street"), *Příčná* ("Cross Street"), and *Krátká* ("Short Street"). These names describe the respective streets very accurately, revealing that they are not sufficiently impressive to be given commemorative names (David, 2010a: 132; cf. Nekula, 2008; Tarpley and Christian, 1995).

There are only two additional groups of natural places, namely mountains and lakes or reservoirs, that can be regarded as suitable for naming after famous, ideologically preferred persons, important events or ideological values, e.g. *Pik Lenina* ("Lenin's Peak," Kyrgyzstan, 1928–2006, now *Qullai Abuali ibni Sino*), *Pik Pobeda* ("Victory Peak," Kyrgyzstan), *Titov Vrv* ("Tito's Peak," Macedonia) and *Georgi Dimitrov* (Bulgaria, a reservoir).

A bizarre and comic example of popular local efforts to copy state authorities and their usage of commemorative place names can be seen in a group of names designating fields in the Olomouc region (Moravia, Czech Republic). Some fields and meadows are named after the American president Woodrow *Wilson* (*Wilsonova louka*, "Wilson's meadow"), while others are named after the founders of the Czechoslovak Republic Tomáš Garrigue *Masaryk* and Milan Rastislav *Štefánik* (*Masarykovo pole*, "Masaryk's field"; *Štefanikovo*, "Štefánik's field") and the Czech medieval church reformer Jan *Hus* (*Husovo*, "Hus' field"). These names appeared after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, however their life was very short and they have never been used in everyday communication.

Commemorative names and problems connected with their usage in communication

Commemorative place names represent a specific group of geographical names that originated as a result of social and ideological demand. At the moment of their creation, there was no need to localize the place or to create a functional place name as a means of orientation within a landscape. The main and most important reason for their existence is to name a place and express the fact that it is controlled by a particular political power.

It has been mentioned above that instability, or volatility, is a typical feature of commemorative names. This presents serious problems for the usage of such names in everyday communication with respect to their basic onymic functions — the localization and identification of a particular place. Three examples from Soviet toponymy can be mentioned as an illustration of this problem. Although *Leningrad* changed its name to *Saint Petersburg*, and the city of *Sverdlovsk* regained its historical name *Yekaterinburg* (both in 1991), the regions controlled from these two cities are still named *Leningradskaya oblast* and *Sverdlovskaya oblast*. The third example concerns the city of *Kalevala*; this name is remarkable as it was created by a converse process. The region in northern Russia originally named *Ukhtinskiy rayon* was renamed *Kalevalskiy* after the epic poem *Kalevala* in 1935, while the regional capital, *Ukhta*, was not renamed *Kalevala* until 1963.

A similar case can be seen with the renaming of the town *Otrokovice* (Moravia, Czech Republic) to *Baťov* in 1939. This change was implemented during the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia. During the occupation, every place had to have a German equivalent of its original Czech name, and the German name was used first, preceding the Czech name. The original Czech place name *Otrokovice* was replaced with *Baťov* (1939–1946, now *Otrokovice*), named after the family of Tomáš *Baťa*, a Czech entrepreneur who built up an empire of shoe factories based in the local region. However, the German version of the name was based on the original form of the Czech name, simply adapted into German as *Otrokowitz* (David, 2010b: 431–432).

The problem of volatility in commemorative place names can be clearly seen if we focus on the context of their communicative usage. For example, this volatility may cause discrepancies between phrases containing the previous place name and those containing the new name. This can be seen in phrases such as the *St Petersburg Paradox* (a probability theory) and Nikolay Vasilyevich Gogol's *Petersburg Tales*, in contrast to the *Siege of Leningrad*. Although all three terms include a reference to the same city — the same geographical object — they are based on two different names, *St Petersburg* and *Leningrad*. Other examples of illogicality can be seen in sentences such as like "Kant's birthplace was *Kaliningrad*" (originally *Königsberg*) and "the Russian Tsar Peter the Great founded *Leningrad*" (originally *St Petersburg*). Should we prefer *Sverdlovsk* to *Yekaterinburg* and the German place names *Karl-Marx-Stadt* to *Chemnitz*? In such cases, one could be under the false impression that the two different names refer to two different onymic objects, with no relationship between them. If the commemorative name substitutes an original name that has been in use for centuries, this act disrupts the relationship between the place name and the particular onymic object. The result is a situation in which two formally, functionally, semantically and qualitatively different names refer to one object, with each of the names appearing in a different referential context. For instance, talking about the Soviet writer Maxim *Gorkiy*, we should respect the fact that his birthplace was *Nizhniy Novgorod*, not *Gorkiy*; the Czech Hussite leader Jan *Žižka* did not die near the village *Žižkovo Pole* ("Žižka's field"), as the place was originally known as *Šenfeld* (from the German word *Schönfeld*); and the Czech journalist and politician Karel *Havlíček* Borovský was not connected with the town of *Havlíčkův Brod* ("Havlíček's ford"), but with *Německý Brod* ("German ford") (David, 2008b: 90–94; 2011: 57–58).

An example of a commemorative place name that was unsuitable for use in everyday communication was the city name of *Frunze*. This was a name for the capital of Kyrgyzstan; it replaced the former name *Pishkek* in the period from 1926 to 1991 (now *Bishkek*). The city was renamed after its native Mikhail Vasilevich *Frunze*, a Soviet politician and military leader. The city was renamed *Frunze* even though the Kyrgyz language does not contain the consonant *f* and it rarely starts a word with a group of consonants. In the case of the place name *Frunze*, its real (but non-Kyrgyz) pronunciation was [purundze] or [boronso] (Ilyin, 1993: 640; Pospelov, 1993: 116; cf. Moldokasimtegin, 1996: 117–118).

The other obstacle to using a commemorative name in daily communication is its form. There are a large number of long names — especially street names and the names of Soviet collective farms — that are used colloquially in their shortened forms. These are names whose function was to commemorate politically important events, organizations and anniversaries (Flodrová, 1994: 205; Timofeyev, 1988). They include a proposal for the name of a square, *náměstí 100. výročí založení deníku Rovnost* ("Square of the 100th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Daily Newspaper Rovnost," Brno, Czech Republic), as well as other existing names such as *nábřeží Svazu protifašistických bojovníků* ("Waterfront of the Union of Antifascist Fighters") and *ulice Československých legií* ("Street of the Czechoslovak Legions," Ostrava, Czech Republic), which are referred to informal communication by their shortened forms *Nábřeží* and *Legií*.

It is important to emphasize one more typical feature of commemorative place names that is important from the viewpoint of communicative use. Place names represent a specific and individual group of proper names. In the Slavic languages, there are several specific formal linguistic means thanks to which place names can be defined as a separate category among proper names. The difference between place and personal names may become blurred if the language does not use such specific forms or morphemes. In such cases, the form of a place name and a personal name are identical, which may become a source of misunderstanding: e.g. *Dimitrov*, *Kirov*, *Stalin*, *Polkovnik Zlatev*, or *Lev Tolstoy* (Murray, 2000: 17). In Slavic languages with weakened declension, such as Bulgarian or Russian, there is a "zero" suffix — in contrast to Czech, Slovak, and Polish with their wide repertoire of toponymic formants, cf. place names as *Petrov*, *Petrovice*, *Petrovičky*, *Petrůvky*, or *Petřín*, all based on the personal name *Petr*/*Peter*.

Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to emphasize the most obvious and distinctive features of one particular category of place names — the names of settled places such as towns, cities, villages, and streets — which can be referred to as commemorative place names. I have focused on their distinctive features, such as the domination of naming over other onymic functions, instability manifesting itself in frequent renamings, the equivalence between a place name and the named geographical object, and problems of their usage in communication. These distinctive features can be considered compelling reasons for the delineation of a special type of geographical names, which could be labeled commemorative (or possibly honorific) place names.

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