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RE/NAMING AS COLONIZATION AND IMPERIAL PRACTICE. THE CASE STUDY OF TRANSCARPATHIA OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH – MIDDLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Zmiana nazwy jako praktyka kolonialna i imperialna. Studium przypadku Zakarpacia od połowy XIX do połowy XX wieku

Abstract. Renaming practices have attracted the attention of many scholars of empire and colonialism, who usually interpret them as an act of authority and an instrument of domination. Re/naming often resulted in the appropriation or even destruction of "alien" toponymic space and, at the same time, the formation of the identity of the titular population of the empire through mapping tools that allowed the collective "we" to reach new horizons. Place names are variously expressions of identity, power, location, and culture, linking geography and language at both metaphorical and material, and symbolic and substantiative levels. The paper explores the benefit of tracing the historical renaming policies, as it gives important clues to what successive regimes considered crucial to remember and what needed to be forgotten. The paper explores how the identity of people and places are often held hostage by naming practices. Historical narratives were perennially redrafted on signs and maps throughout history, and Transcarpathia was claimed and reclaimed, moved from one empire to the next, without a single river being diverted or a shovel of dirt being moved.

Keywords: Hungarian Rus; Subcarpathian Rus; Transcarpathia; renamings; oikonyms; street place names; imperial and colonization practices

Streszczenie. Praktyki zmiany nazw przyciągają uwagę wielu badaczy zajmujących się imperializmem i kolonializmem. Zazwyczaj interpretują je oni jako akt władzy i narzędzie dominacji. Zmiana nazw często skutkowała zawłaszczeniem, a nawet zniszczeniem „obcej" przestrzeni toponimicznej, a jednocześnie sprzyjała kształtowaniu tożsamości ludności imperium za pomocą narzędzi kartograficznych, które pozwalały zbiorowości „my" osiągnąć nowe horyzonty. Nazwy miejsc są wyrazem tożsamości, władzy, lokalizacji i kultury, łącząc geografię i język zarówno na poziomie metaforycznym, jak i materialnym, symbolicznym i merytorycznym. Artykuł bada korzyści płynące z prześledzenia historycznych polityk zmiany nazw, ponieważ dostarcza ważnych wskazówek dotyczących tego, co kolejne reżimy uważały za kluczowe do zapamiętania i zapomnienia. Artykuł bada, w jaki sposób tożsamość ludzi i miejsc staje się często zakładnikiem praktyk nazewniczych. W całej historii narracje historyczne były nieustannie przerabiane na znakach i mapach, a Zakarpacie było zajmowane i odzyskiwane, przechodząc z jednego imperium do drugiego, bez zmiany biegu rzeki czy przesunięcia choćby jednej łopaty ziemi.

Słowa kluczowe: Ruś Węgierska; Ruś Podkarpacka; Zakarpacie; zmiany nazw; oikonimy; nazwy ulic; praktyki imperialne i kolonizacyjne

Introduction

Transcarpathia is the westernmost administrative region of Ukraine, bordering Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania. The region is a compelling example of a multicultural borderland, which still marks a distinct cultural boundary between Central and Eastern Europe[1]. In the 20th

[1] I share the opinion of scholars who believe that the cultural border is still clearly visible on the map of Europe (in particular, Gabriela Kiliánová (1994). Central and Western Europe share the cultural commonality of the Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque periods.

century this land often changed state affiliation[2]. The formation of each new government was accompanied by active toponymic transformations that were made to mark the acquired territory and "appropriate" the geographical space of the region. The changes primarily concerned oikonyms (names of settlements) but often affected oronyms (names of any landform), hydronyms (names of rivers) and finally also spreads to street toponyms. Active state practices of renaming became commonplace in the 20th century. However, it should be noted that the roots of these processes can be seen much earlier – in the second half of the nineteenth century. New street names appealed to historical memory, constructed the cultural/symbolic spaces desired by the new authorities, and accordingly, and indirectly, influenced the identities of the local residents in the region: Carpathian Ruthenians (Ukrainians)[3], Hungarians, Slovaks, Romanians, Germans, Jews, etc.

Usually, toponymic renamings were justified by the requirements of the official linguistic, and later historical, policy of the states to which Transcarpathia belonged, as evidenced by some existing studies (Chernychko, Fedynets' 2014; Zan 2022) and my preliminary conclusions based on archival evidence (Leno 2018c; 2019b). As an ad hoc process,

However, Central Europe (or, more precisely, Central and Eastern Europe) simultaneously experienced a different religious and cultural influence, as it became the meeting point of the Western (Roman) and Eastern (Byzantine) waves of Christianisation. This contributed to the development of a very specific and ethnically, religiously, and culturally heterogeneous region, which is different from both Western and Eastern Europe. The territory of modern-day Transcarpathia is an example of that part of Central and Eastern Europe where different religious traditions have overlapped with other borders (economic, political, memorial, etc.).

[2] Kingdom of Hungary (Austro-Hungarian Empire) until 1918, Czechoslovakia (1919-1939), Kingdom of Hungary/Regency (1939-1944), Transcarpathian Ukraine (1944-46), Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (1946-1991), Ukraine – from 1991.

[3] There are several main versions of the ethnic origin of Carpathian/Hungarian Rusyns (or Ruthenians). Some believe that they are a separate Slavic ethnic group, while others claim that they are part of Ukrainians. Rusyns/Ruthenians is an ancient ethnonym of Ukrainians, dating back to the times of medieval Kyivan Rus. This ethnonym was widespread in western Ukraine even in the nineteenth century. Phonetically, the term is similar to the ethnonym Russians, but they are names of two different ethnic groups. The change of the name "Rusyns" to "Ukrainians" is discussed in the monograph by IEvhen Nakonechnyï (2004).

toponymic "appropriation" of the region consequently resulted in local names being regularly ignored or distorted.

This article is primarily an attempt to delve into the problem of name changes, as well as to consider them as a means of influencing the processes of identification of the population in the region in the 20th century, when Transcarpathia was under the rule of Austro-Hungarian empire, Czechoslovakia, Hungarian Kingdome and later the Soviet Union. The main task of my research, therefore, is to review and analyse the changes in oikonyms and street toponyms that occurred in Transcarpathia during the end of the 19th to the middle of the 20th century. The lower chronological boundary begins with the period of active toponymic innovations by the Hungarian Kingdom. The upper boundary is associated with the establishment of the Soviet power, which in 1944-1946 introduced names that, with minor changes, functioned on the territory of the region practically until 2022[4].

Transcarpathia has long attracted researchers of national movements and borderlands scholars, but this region has not often been analysed from a postcolonial perspective. Although there are many works on the history of Central European countries within the framework of postcolonial concepts (Surman 2013: 233), at the same time, criticism of such attempts has spread. In particular, Ewa Domanska warned against the uncritical application of postcolonial theory (2008: 164), and Joseph Feinberg (2024) noted researchers' lack of understanding of the logic of imperial and colonial practices when outlining the concepts of intercultural domination in Eastern Europe.

Attempts to apply a postcolonial approach to the study of Transcarpathia include the studies by Herza (2022a, 2022b), Brown (2016), Holubec

[4] After the USSR collapse in 1991, de-Sovietization of toponymic names took place in Transcarpathia. But it affected only the largest streets and squares. After the Russian occupation of Crimea and its role in establishing of the separatist republics of LPR and DPR in 2014, Ukrainian parliament adopted four so-called "decommunization laws". Their implementation led to the dismantling of many communist-era monuments, but left the names of streets in many cities and villages unchanged. Russia's current full-scale aggression against Ukraine has caused a more radical wave of toponymic changes, as a result of which, since 2022, most street toponyms in the region have been renamed.

(2014), and Schmidt (2018), who focus on the history of the interwar (Czechoslovak) period but neither delve into the earlier period of the Kingdom of Hungary, and nor involve the Soviet period. While Soviet researchers considered the history of the region from an anti-colonial perspective[5], their works are characterized by a tendentious exaggeration of the economic exploitation of the region by the Hungarian and Czechoslovak authorities. These conclusions were, of course, dictated primarily by the ideological requirements of the Soviet period and were not the result of any deep academic analysis. Similar narratives can be traced to some extent in more modern studies: Narysy (1995)[6], Pushkash (2006), Zakarpattia (2010).

This study is informed by the maps of the 19th and 20th centuries, which allow tracing of how official oikonyms changed[7]. These names are also found in Hungarian and Czechoslovak guidebooks. In particular, the "Geographical Dictionary of Hungary" of 1851, which was recently republished (Fyïnesh 2011), contains information about approximately five hundred cities, towns, and villages of the region. In addition to oikonyms, the author mentions some hydronyms and oronyms. The names of cities and villages were of interest to ethnographers of the Carpathian borderland, in particular to Petrov (1911) and Tomashivskyï (1910). These researchers at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries dealt with the problem of the ethnographic boundaries of the Carpathian/Hungarian Ruthenians, Slovaks, Romanians, and Hungarians. Information about Czechoslovak names can be found in interwar publications, in particular the guidebook by IAroslaw Dostal (Dostal 2014), which was recently published in Ukrainian, or the list of names of the toponymic commission

[5] During the Soviet era, virtually all researchers of the pre-Soviet history of Transcarpathia used anti-colonial narratives in their historical, ethnographic, or folklore studies (for example, Shul`ha 1962, Mel`nyk 1970, Il`ko 1973). This was dictated by ideological requirements in the context of the confrontation between the capitalist and socialist worlds. Since they were considered experts, the works of contemporary local historians still uncritically reproduce such theses.

[6] An idea of such works is given by Ernest Gaidel's (2002) critical analysis of the above-mentioned Narysy.

[7] Cadastral and other maps are publicly available on the following resource: https://maps.arcanum.com/en/

as of 1923 (Klima 1923). The latter contains three versions of each settlement's oikonyms: Czech, Hungarian, and local, written in the Cyrillic alphabet. Among the relatively recent ones, it is worth mentioning the fundamental publication by Sebestyén Zsolt (2020), who carefully collected all known historical names of almost every settlement in the region.

A separate source is the materials of the Transcarpathian Regional Archive. It contains information about changes in street toponyms during the Czechoslovak and Soviet periods. These documents make it possible to understand the logic and content of toponymic changes in settlements, and the policy of the state authorities on filling the symbolic space of cities and villages with content. Another type of source, the information from which is used here, is normative documents that regulated the principles of the language policy of the states that included Transcarpathia at the end of the 19th and 20th centuries.

A certain part of the sources used in the article were oral history materials recorded in Transcarpathia over the past 12 years by a team of teachers and students of the Faculty of History of Uzhhorod National University.

Methodology and conceptual framework

The ideas underlying the study of Transcarpathian toponyms lie at the intersection of cultural geography, memory studies, and critical heritage theory. The latter views "… *the act of naming as part of a political, cultural, and social practice*" (cited in Mapara, Siamena 2024: 4). In the context of the aforementioned approaches, naming practices are viewed as a policy of constructing a "… *landscape around certain ideological visions of the past*" (Alderman 2008: 197). The implementation of such a policy is vital for any imperial space and the expansion of control over the physical and human environment. The act of naming in such a configuration usually reflects hegemony and dominance, as a result of which the toponymy of indigenous groups is often marginalized, erased, and sometimes even appropriated (Williamson 2023: 2). The consequences of such a policy are the disruption of the natural connections between

people and their physical environment, which were expressed through the names that existed among indigenous local ethnic groups. In the future, such groups were usually expected to be assimilated and/or marginalized. These statements are similar to the views of representatives championing primordial conceptions of ethnicity, though, there is a connection between the bearer of a certain ethnicity and their "native land": "*The native land is a treasure trove of historical memory and associations…*" (cited in Smit 1994: 19), so any external toponymic and oikonomical renaming would break this connection and, at the same time, form a new geospatial reality that is effectively inhabited in a new way. Accordingly, over time this may lead to the formation of new identities. These acts of imposing new nomenclature upon the local population give us grounds to consider them imperial, even colonial, practices.

Renaming practices in Transcarpathia became widespread in the 19th and especially the 20th century, when the region was under the rule of several states and empires (Habsburg and later Soviet) and at the same time was characterized by peculiar forms of colonial dependence (Shul`ha 1962: 180; Mel`nyk 1970: 120; Il'ko 1973: 74;). Imperialism is usually understood as a set of policies and various practices used to expand power and control, as an ideology and philosophy that drives and gives impetus to colonialism (Saïd 2007). In the case of Transcarpathia, such an interpretation of imperialism can be applied to any stage of its stay in the Habsburg empire or the USSR. However, it is difficult to apply the classical concept of colonialism to the region, which understands it as a military, political and economic situation where a given imperial power extends its control and authority over another people or area. The thesis that colonialism is not just when one country conquers and exerts control over another one; it is also a situation where it claims other resources in the process of dispossessing the original owners (Mapara, Siamena 2024: 2). In particular, in the case of this article, we are talking about historical toponymic names, which can be considered the cultural heritage of local ethnic groups and, accordingly, be a resource that the colonial (to which, with certain clarifications, the Czechoslovak Republic can also be referred) and imperial authorities tried to use for their own purposes. The

consequence of the essentially colonial policy of toponymization was the correction of historical memory and the creation of their own landscape of memory, and at the same time the marginalization and/or erasure of their own toponymic names of local ethnic groups (primarily Ruthenians and Hungarians). This led to the legitimation of the territory, which each old or new government in Transcarpathia tried to implement as soon as possible after the annexation of this land.

Official and Non-Official Names of the Region: Historical Retrospective

Over the past eleven centuries reflected in written documents, the region has changed at least 17 official and semi-official names[8]. This long list demonstrates the lack of subjectivity[9] of the region. In fact, all but one (Карпатська Україна/Carpathian Ukraine) of the names did not reflect the vision of the local population, but were the result of external governance. This is especially noticeable in the twentieth century. The name was changed 11 times, reflecting the will of the official authorities of the countries that controlled Transcarpathia. Most of these names are not very well known to contemporaries.

In English, the most common name for this region is Transcarpathia (Ukr. Закарпаття), which means "the land behind the Carpathians." Another common English name for the region, Subcarpathia, is a literal translation

[8] According to Volodymyr Fenych's calculations, for 1100 years (from the second half of the 9th century till 1946), the territory of Transcarpathia was part of 12 states and was known by the following names: Ruthenian Marka, Upper Hungary, Uzhhorod District, Mukachevo Greek Catholic Diocese, Uzhhorod Ruthenian District, Hungarian Rus, autonomous Ruthenian Kraina, autonomous Ruthenian People's Commissariat - Rus Kraina Province, Territory of the Ruthenians south of the Carpathians or Territory of the South-Carpathian Ruthenians, Subcarpathian Rus, Subcarpathian-Ruthenian Land, autonomous Subcarpathian Rus, autonomous Carpathian Ukraine, Temporary Hungarian Military Administration of Subcarpathia, Regency Administration of the Subcarpathian Territory, People's Council of Transcarpathian Ukraine, and Zakarpattia Oblast (Fenych 2022).

[9] Here I mean that the region (and thus its population) has never been 'historical' in the sense mentioned by Hegel. The region has always been part of another whole, and its population has accepted the names imposed by external governance.

of the Ukrainian Прикарпаття. These two terms represent the two most important interpretations of the region's place in modern European history. Obviously, in this way, the territory of the region can be localized "in front of" or "behind" the Carpathians in terms of a certain political center in the west or east (conventionally, Prague or Budapest or Moscow and Kyiv). Thus, the Hungarian name (Kárpátalja), Czechoslovak name (Subcarpathian Rus) and the modern name (Zakarpattia) have an external origin and do not reflect the locals' perceptions, which are characterized by localizing the place of their residence in the centre of imaginary geographical space.

It should be added that the tourist boom in the interwar and Soviet periods has contributed to the emergence of many unofficial names that have already contributed to the spread of the meme about the "country with hundreds of names". The most famous of them were "Carpathian Babylon", "Silver Land", "Carpathian Davos", "Czech Switzerland", "Africa in the centre of Europe", "Hutsul Country", "Golden Carpathians", etc. Despite the anti-colonial rhetoric of some of them[10], they generally formed a different, exotic, and pastoral image of the Czechoslovak Subcarpathian Rus and Soviet Zakarpattia. Thus, this prompts an analogy with the names of the territories in the large colonial empires (the East Indies, the West Indies, and others) and the visual images of local people, who were described as markedly primitive. Similar practices regarding local names and images of the Transcarpathian population are demonstrated by the authorities of different political states on the territory of Transcarpathia.

[10] First of all, I mean "Africa in the center of Europe," which was used with an ironic critical connotation. This phrase was first used by the Czech writer Ivan Olbracht (real name Kamil Zeman). Olbracht's literary works, as well as the fictional and documentary films to which he was a contributor, are characterized by an anti-colonial character. In particular, the author portrayed the Czechs as colonizers, which is not surprising given his sympathy for left-wing views. These theses were later used by representatives of Soviet historical science, as well as for the purpose of ideological propaganda.

Transcarpathia as a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire (1867-1918)

Hungarians were a state-building, but minority ethnic group in their multinational kingdom. Attempts at assimilating other ethnic groups that took place sporadically even before the era of romanticism did not produce significant results. However, shortly after Herder's prophecy that the Hungarians *"... will disappear some time being assimilated by their more numerous neighbours..."* (cited in Mahochiï 2021: 100) we can observe a systematic and consistent process of Magyarization, which intensified especially after the proclamation of the dualistic Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In 1868, the "XLIV Law on Equality of All Nationalities" was adopted, which declared the kingdom's subjects to be representatives of a single Hungarian nation (ibid.: 86). This law banned national societies and negated the opportunities for the development of national cultures. This was especially painful for the Ruthenians, who made up the majority of the population of Transcarpathia at that time[11]. As a result of the subsequent educational laws, schools that were teaching in national languages were closed in the early twentieth century. *"... The Carpathian Ruthenian seemed doomed to disappear as a separate ethnic group"* (ibid.: 121). A similar trend was expected to impact not only the Carpathian Ruthenians but also other ethnic groups of the kingdom.

The most active processes of Magyarization occurred in the last third of the nineteenth century, but in the field of toponymy they began much earlier. This is traced in the medieval documents of the Kingdom of Hungary in Latin, where a change in the Ruthenian oikonyms can be seen. For example, the first references to the Ruthenian village "Volovoie" in Latin texts are given as "Ökörmező", which is a literal translation of the local Ruthenian name[12]. Such changes were first random, and, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the toponymic maps were full of Ruthenian

[11] On the territory of 4 Comitats, which make up modern Transcarpathia, the official 1910 census recorded 848 428 permanent residents. According to the criterion of a spoken language, 42 % spoke the Ruthenian language, 29 % – Hungarian, 10 % – German, 11 % – Romanian, 5 % – Slovak, and 3 % spoke other languages (Mazurok 2012: 192).

[12] This information was shared with the author by a researcher of the early modern period in Transcarpathia – Mykhaïlo Perun, for which the author is very grateful to him.

names written by Hungarian spelling. Sometimes, these names were supplemented with Hungarian words “haza” (house), “falva/fala” (village), or modifiers “kis” (small), “nagy” (large), “also” (lower), “felső” (upper). For example, the Ruthenian villages of Velykyi Bychkiv and Tereblia were denoted as Nagy Bocsko and Tolaborfalva; the Romanian village of Nyzhnia Apsha – Also-Apsa; the German village Deutsch Mokra – Nemet-Mokra, etc. In the early 1860s, the cadastral maps featured Ruthenian place names written in Cyrillic. After the proclamation of the dualistic monarchy in 1867, they began to be supplemented with the Hungarian equivalents and designations[13].

The traditional Ruthenian phonation of oikonyms, hydronyms, and oronyms was preserved in the first half of the nineteenth century. In particular, the geographical dictionary by Fyïnesh as of the 1850s shows that most of the names are not Hungarian in origin, although they were recorded according to the standards of Hungarian spelling. However, the intention to unify the toponymic space of the country under a single standard led to the systematic renaming of all types of toponyms. This was normalized by Law No. IV as of 1898 “On the Names of Settlements”, according to which a settlement could only have one name (Chernychko, Fedynets’ 2014: 149-150). The governments of Prime Ministers Kálmán Tisza (1889-1890) and Dezső Bánffy (1895-1899) were especially active, yet at the same time, they carried out a campaign of Magyarization of names that had no Hungarian origin (Transcarpathia 2010: 644).

As a result of their activity, toponymic maps of the early twentieth century certify total Magyarization. This concerned not only the Ruthenian but also other local names: German, Slovak, and Romanian. Equally, if in the previous centuries, the literal translation into Hungarian or phonetic Magyarization of local oikonyms was not too common, at the end of the nineteenth century, it became a common practice: Richka (the river) – Kispatak, Chornyi Potik (the Black Stream) – Fekete Patak, Studenoie – Hideg Patak, Lychychovo – Rokamező, etc. Sometimes, in case the

[13] For example: https://maps.arcanum.com/en/map/cadastral/?layers=3%2C4&bbox=2457773.713571259%2C6209146.723238783%2C2509406.9261778956%2C6226536.14717366

equivalent translation was impossible, a new name appeared and thus Pasika (literally – Apiary) became Kishidveg (literally – Small Glass), Skotars'ke (literally – Pastoral) became Kisszolyva (literally – Small Salt), etc. There were other ways of Magyarizing oikonyms, in particular by adding the words mentioned above, as well as some others: telep (settlement), mező (field), szallas (dwelling), and others. Often, when translating the names, the end of the word was replaced: Poroshkovo – Porosko, Cherveniovo – Cserleno, Pryslip – Pereszlo.

In addition to the oikonyms, Magyarization touched local oronyms and hydronyms of pre-Slavonic origin (Popovych 2009: 14). Therefore, the desire to unify the geographical space according to the Hungarian standard concerned even those names that emerged long before the appearance of not only Hungarians but also the Slavs in the Panonian lowlands. As a result of ancient origin, many names could not be translated; in particular, the name of the highest mountain was left unchanged, but with the Hungarian spelling – Hoverla.

The formation of a unified Hungarian system of oikonyms caused dissatisfaction with representatives of national minorities inside the Kingdom and beyond. The most famous is the protest of Galician poets and researchers Ivan Franko, Volodymyr Hnatiuk, Mykhailo Pavlyk, who ascertained the violent assimilation of Hungarian Ruthenians. They noted that on the occasion of celebrating the Millennium[14] in 1896, there were Magyarized the names of the last several dozen Ruthenian settlements (pp. 56-56). They were somewhat mistaken: the renaming lasted until World War I, but even then, they were not finalized (Popovich 2009: 14). Yet Franko and Hnatiuk clearly outlined the consequences of official Hungarian policy: *"...brutal extirpation, spiritual darkness, moral isolation… of Hungarian Ruthenians"* (Franko, Hnatiuk 1895: 59). It is obviously, Hungarian assimilation on the eve of the First World War was quite successful, as there were no loud protests against the Magyarization of school education, including place-name changes,

[14] Millennium is the celebration in 1896 of the thousandth anniversary of the Hungarians' arrival in the Danube Lowland.

among the Transcarpathian population[15]. Researchers of the time, such as Aleksei Petrov, attested to the success of Magyarisation, stating the naturalness of the process of assimilation of Rusyns (Petrov 1911: 95). According to twentieth-century censuses, Ruthenian villages that belonged to Hungarian-dominated comitates and later remained part of Hungary were Magyarized (Leno 2013: 661), unlike those that became part of Czechoslovakia.

Similar processes occurred with other ethnic minorities in the kingdom. The denial of the right to use authentic historical names[16], as well as their replacement with others (imposed from the outside), does not correspond to the logic of imperial practice but is rather an example of colonization. Thus, there occurred negating and de-instrumentalization of the internal "Other". It can also be assumed that the change and distortion of local toponymy influenced the strength of symbolic ties of representatives of a certain ethnicity with their native land. First of all, this applies to representatives of the Ruthenian intelligentsia, who assimilated surprisingly quickly, unlike peasants, who, due to their low level of education, were less intensively assimilated.

It should be noted that Magyarization was not limited to oikonyms. Changes and interventions in the settlements' symbolic space were

[15] The absence of protests among the indigenous population should not be surprising, since at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the processes of forming their national identity were not complete, which was complicated by the development of several competing national orientations.

[16] In studying historical names, the researcher can delve into the distant past, as local oronyms and hydronyms often have an ancient (sometimes pre-written) origin. A study of the place-name context of Zakarpattia by linguist Kostiantyn Tyshchenko leads to the conclusion that local place-names often have Slavic morphology, but at the same time, they include plastic fractals of names with toponymic bases of many ethnolinguistic groups of historical neighbours (Tyshchenko 2008: 13). In borderland conditions, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the more ancient/historical and authentic toponyms, especially in places where mass migration processes such as the Hungarian resettlement or Vlach colonisation took place. The answer to the question of which name is more or less historical/authentic in borderland conditions is a rather complicated issue and is not the subject of this article. I am focusing on the facts when political authorities representing a certain ethnic group change the toponymy in places of compact residence of representatives of other ethnic groups, regardless of their own naming traditions.

observed, examples of which could be observed even before the proclamation of dualism, which established the priority of Hungarian, not imperial, laws in the Kingdom of Hungary. After the "Spring of Nations", which activated the national revival processes of the Slavic population of the kingdom, in the 1850s street signs with Ruthenian names appeared in the cities of the region[17]. But two years later, they were replaced with Hungarian ones (Sova 1937: 294). The short period of national awakening of Ruthenians was the result of the victory of the Viennese court over the Hungarian revolutionaries, followed by a short period of the so-called absolutist regime, which, despite the general trend of Germanization, contributed to the national revival of individual nationalities in Hungary (Sova 1937: 290).

In the next decade already, the main streets of the cities began to be renamed in honour of famous Hungarian figures. For example, in the centre of the largest city of the region – Ungvár (now Uzhhorod) on the map of 1863 there were streets named after politicians of the first half of the 19th century: Ferenc Kazinczy, István Széchenyi, and László Teleki. Over the following decades, the names of Hungarian rulers, politicians, and cultural figures appear in the nomination of streets and squares of other large settlements of the region[18]. In particular, in 1895, the squares and streets of Munkács (now Mukachevo) were called in honour of the legendary King Árpád, the artist Mígaly Munkács, Prince Ferenc Rákóczi, King János Corvinus, etc.

These changes in the settlements' symbolic space went hand in hand with official commemorative events. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, many memorial plaques and obelisks appeared in the region in honour of outstanding events in Hungarian history, as well as one of the seven state monuments to the Hungarian sacred bird – the

[17] Streets and places were named in the «Rusky language», which obviously meant the triumph of the Muscovite national orientation of local Rusyns.

[18] It should be noted that street renaming at the end of the 19th century affected only cities and the largest towns. In most other settlements, there were no streets as such, and villages were divided according to folk toponymy: upper end, lower end, old village, new village, centre, etc. In fact, the total naming of all streets in all settlements took place only during the Soviet era.

Turul (Markovych 2022). Toponymic changes and official commemorations within the settlements aimed to shape Hungarian patriotism and the unity of the Hungarian nation. On the eve of World War I, such events were observed to occur more frequently and with greater intensity in the region[19].

Czechoslovak period (1919 - 1939) in Transcarpathia

World War I led to the collapse of several empires and the formation of many new states. At the end of the war, the political leadership of the Kingdom of Hungary tried to keep Transcarpathia as part of the state. On December 21, 1918, the government of Miklós Károly issued the *"People's Law No. 10 on the Self-Government of the Ruthenian People Living in Hungary"*, as a result of which four comitats[20] dominated by Ruthenians received autonomy and the name "Rus Kraina" (Filip 2021: 19).

However, this decision was belated and, on September 10, 1919, under the Saint-Germain Peace Treaty, the territory of the Hungarian Ruthenians became part of the new state – Czechoslovakia, with the prospect of obtaining autonomy. Czech troops took control of the region even before signing the aforementioned peace treaty. It is significant that one of the first decisions of the military commandant of the largest city of the region, Uzhhorod, Colonel Ciaffi, was to ban the use of Hungarian symbols (Filip 2021: 23). At the same time, Ungvár (literally "A Castle on the River") received a new Slavicized name – Uzhhorod (i.e. "A City on the Uzh River"). This name was not newly coined, because Pavel Šafárik and Andriy Baludianskyi made the first attempts to Slavicize and popularize

[19] More information about such commemorative and patriotic events can be found in a series of publications by Tetiana Literati "Lost Uzhhorod", available at https://prozahid.com/category/uzhhorod/; a series of publications by Mykhailo Markovych, which can be found in his column on the Local history (https://localhistory.org.ua/authors/mikhailo-markovich/), as well as in Iuriĭ Chotar's monograph (2022).

[20] Comitat (latin: comitatus – "society, group, district") or zupa was a historical administrative and territorial unit in the Kingdom of Hungary from the tenth century until 1920.

it at the beginning of the 19th century. There were attempts to spread it during the "Spring of Nations" and the activation of the Pan-Slavic movement, but then the name did not catch on among the broad strata of the local population (Tomashivsky 1910: 201).

In 1920, the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic approved the name, anthem, and coat of arms of the autonomous republic of Subcarpathian Rus. Geographically, the region was located east of the new capital (Prague), that is, "under the Carpathians." This probably explains the new name of the region, which at the same time emphasizes that Rusyns were the dominant part of its population. The inclusion of this ethnonym in the name of the region demonstrated the government's attention to Ruthenians as the majority of the local population, but the promised autonomy was to be expected for the next 20 years.

The new government was notable for its toponymic transformations, the aim of which was to Slavicize geographical names (Kobal` 2008: 10). This process was not always perceived positively, especially in the case of literal translation or attempts to adapt names to Czech-language standards, which violated the historicity of a particular toponym. The Czechoslovak government demonstrated linguistic tolerance, and therefore trilingual signs with the names of settlements in Czech, Hungarian, and Ruthenian were widespread in the region, which often led to linguistic chaos (Chernychko, Fedynets` 2014: 117).

Two stages can be traced in the process of Slavicization of local oikonyms. In the years 1920-29, the names were written in the Czech alphabet, but there were various versions of spelling. One of the attempts at unification was to adhere to the rules of the names' folk phonation/phonetics. This is evidenced by the 1923 publication, which contains lists of Subcarpathian Rus oikonyms. It presented the results of the work of a commission consisting of the chief inspector of the school administration, local politicians, a linguist, a literary scholar, and the author of Ruthenian grammar[21]. They tried to adhere to historical traditions in the names, and in controversial cases, they tracked and selected the most

[21] It consisted of Volodymyr Birchak, Avgustyn Voloshyn, Mykhailo Brashchaiko, Stepan Klochurak, Josef Peszek and Ivan Pankevych.

authentic and archaic variants. This principle was also adhered to when compiling a list of oikonyms of Hungarian, Romanian, or German origin. For some reason, this "populist" approach, which tried to correspond as much as possible to local traditions, did not gain widespread acceptance and application in subsequent years.

Since 1929, the names began to be translated into the Czech language, and their spelling was unified according to the official standards of this language. This is demonstrated by Yaroslav Dostal's guidebook, which was published in 1936. The edition contains two versions of the names of each settlement in the region: the official administrative one in the Czech language and the previous one in the Hungarian language. The Czech names did not always correspond to local naming traditions, but they reflected the Slavic origin of the local Ruthenian population better than the previous Hungarian ones. In general, the Czechoslovak authorities managed to carry out a large-scale Slavicization of oikonyms. After the Vienna Arbitration of 1938, when a part of Subcarpathian Rus was transferred to the Kingdom of Hungary, its officials had to change 176 names (Zakarpattia 2010: 208). The following year, when the Munich Arbitration allowed the Hungarians to occupy another part of the region, several hundred more names had to be Magyarized.

Besides oikonymic changes, the Czech authorities initiated changes in street toponymy as well as the dismantling of Hungarian monuments (Markovych 2022). First of all, they changed names honouring Hungarian historical figures and representatives of Hungarian politics and culture. For example, in Mukachevo, King Arpad Square became Tomáš Masaryk Street, and Lajos Kossuth's name was replaced by that of Olexandr Duhnovych; in the city of Khust, Prince Rákóczi Street became President Masaryk Street, King Báthory Street became Smetana Street, etc. (Filippov 2012: 33-38; Spysky: 1944). Such renaming of streets and monuments dismantling were not total and affected mainly the settlements' largest streets and squares, as well as the main Hungarian monuments, for example, the Turul (a totemic bird of the ancient Hungarians) from Mukachevo Castle (Markovych 2022). In general, the official Czech commemorative policy, compared to the

Hungarian one, was not aggressive, and shaping civic patriotism was not a priority at that time.

The Czechoslovak period of Subcarpathian Rus is difficult to evaluate unambiguously. Researchers note that the official authorities introduced many positive changes in education, promoted the development of culture, and, finally, on the eve of World War II, granted autonomy to the region (Shandor 1992: 199-232). But they also note the exploitative nature of the region management, the export of local resources (Narysy 1995: 150-179), and the tendency to exoticize the population (Brown 2016), which was especially clearly manifested in tourist printed publications and press materials. In addition, there were inherent processes of "quiet" Czechization, which were especially evident in records administration and school education.

The short period of autonomous Subcarpathian Rus (1938-1939) on the eve of World War II was not marked with toponymic transformations by local authorities. Perhaps the only change was that the name Carpathian Ukraine gradually became established in official records. This was the first name authored by local Ruthenians, or rather, their representatives of the Ukrainophile national orientation who received power in the autonomy[22]. This name was used in parallel with the official constitutional name Subcarpathian Rus. In October 1938, representatives of the Russophile movement (opponents of the Ukrainophile national orientation) proposed that the federal Czechoslovakia should be named after the Rusyns, Slovaks, and Czechs: The Czechoslovakian-Carpathian Republic (Boldyzhar 1993: 100). In fact, on the day when its independence was proclaimed, on March 15, 1939, Hungarian troops

[22] In the middle of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, there were several national orientations in the region that competed with each other in shaping the national identity of Carpathian Rusyns. The most influential were: Muscovite (or Russophile), Rusynophile, and Ukrainophile. The latter was the least popular, but on the eve of the Second World War it was able to mobilise the younger generation of Transcarpathian Rusyns of that time. Pavlo Magocsi writes in more detail about Rusyns' search for their national identity in his famous book (Magocsi 2021). A brief analysis of the main directions of the national orientation of Rusyns and their prospects in the interwar period was made by Ernest Gyidel (2007).

began their invasion, which marked the beginning of a new Hungarian period in the life of the region.

Transcarpathia in a Kingdom/Regency of Hungary (1939-1944)

In 1938 and 1939, the Vienna and Munich arbitrations took place, as a result of which Subcarpathian Rus again became part of the Kingdom of Hungary. The official name of the region was similar to the previous one – Karpatalja (Subcarpathia, later the Subcarpathian Regency Commissariat). In comparison with the period of the dual monarchy, the Hungarian Ruthenians were not officially denied the right to their own culture and language, and bilingualism was officially declared in the region.

The new government, similar to the previous one, began with the renaming of oikonyms and street toponyms, intending to return the streets to Hungarian names. For example, in the city of Uzhhorod, which again became Ungvár, the Roškovich embankment was named after the knight Stefan Horthy, and the square of the Czech President Masaryk became the square of the Hungarian regent Miklós Horthy (Filippov 2012: 34). At the same time, there were held commemorative functions, the purpose of which was to perpetuate the events and heroes of Hungarian history – thus, in 1943, a monument to King Janos X Druget appeared in Ungvár on the square named after him, and in Mukachevo, the sacred symbol of Hungarians, the Turul, which was dismantled but preserved by the Czech authorities, was restored.

The renaming affected not only the largest streets and squares in cities but also extended to larger and even smaller villages if there was an enlargement of settlements. Thus, in 1941, the village of Radvanka was annexed to Ungvár, which entailed a change in the names of streets in this new micro-district of the city. These transformations, as in the Czechoslovak period, were not total in nature – neutral names of secondary streets were often left unchanged, being content with a literal translation or a change of Czech spelling to Hungarian.

There was a certain clash that contradicted the announced bilingualism, as well as the autonomy promised by the Hungarians to the Ruthenians.

After all, the above-mentioned law of 1898 was still in force in the kingdom, which stated that "each settlement can have only one official name." To solve the problem, the Prime Minister issued an order according to which the Minister of Home Affairs received the right to approve the names of settlements in two languages (Chernychko, Fedynets 2014: 150). Thus, bilingual signs appeared on the territory of the region: Szerednye – Serednie, Korosmezzo – Yasinia, etc. It seemed that a compromise had been found, but judging by the complaints, many local names were Magyarized.

All toponymic changes proceeded under the slogans of official bilingualism. "Brotherly relations" were declared between Hungarians and Ruthenians, as evidenced by the allocution of Regent Miklós Horthy to the Carpatho-Ruthenian people published in 1939 (Chernychko, Fedynets 2014: 133). This allocution is a kind of ethno-mobilization program document, which proposed to consider previous history in positive tones, and the restoration of Hungarian power as the end of the separation between fraternal peoples. However, even at the official level, relations were not symmetrical, since the role of the 'elder brother' belonged to the Hungarians, the autonomy promised to the Hungarian Ruthenians remained on paper, and the regime of government resembled an occupation. The development of these relations was stopped by the defeat of Germany and Hungary in the war, which marked a new period in the life of the local population – the Soviet period.

The Council of Transcarpathian Ukraine (1944-1946)

The end of World War II and the geopolitical interests of the Soviet Union led to the incorporation of the territory of the Carpathian Ruthenians into this state, which has been the subject of many studies (Mischanyn (2018), Mahochiï (2021), Boldyzhar (1993) etc.). In 1944-1946, the territory was seized by Soviet troops; the Manifesto on the reunification of local Rusyns (Ukrainians) with the Ukrainian SSR and the formation of the state of Transcarpathian Ukraine was proclaimed; the USSR and

Czechoslovakia agreed on new borders, and finally, the region joined the Ukrainian SSR as a regular administrative unit – the Zakarpattia Oblast.

Documents from the State Archives of the Transcarpathian Region (hereinafter referred to as SATR) indicate that during the period of active Soviet-Hungarian fighting in the region in mid-October 1944, the local population did not doubt that after the war the region would be part of the restored Czechoslovakia. However, after the arrival of the Red Army, the First Congress of People's Committees[23] was convened, and on November 26, 1944, it declared a Manifesto on reunification with *"... the Great Mother Soviet Ukraine..."* (Manifest 1944). The local Ruthenians lost their old ethnonym and were officially called Ukrainians. Judging by oral historical sources[24], this change of name did not cause any significant

[23] Archival documents show that after the arrival of the army of "liberators" in October 1944, many local residents expected the restoration of the pre-war status quo (Leno 2018a). However, the Red Army controlled the territory of the region, and therefore the Czech administration was unable to carry out administrative activities. At the same time, there was a large-scale propaganda campaign involving local communists, who quickly convinced Rusyns that their happy future was possible only within the country where they would constitute the titular majority-the Ukrainian SSR. Living in their own country sounded very attractive to the Ruthenian peasants, who had always been a national minority in all the countries that included their territory. Moreover, the Communists promised to confiscate the lands of large landowners in favor of ordinary peasants, and this may have attracted the majority of the population to support the decision to reunite with the Ukrainian SSR. In fact, even during the period of active hostilities on the western borders of the region, the Communists promptly organized the First Congress of People's Committees, which proclaimed the Manifesto of Reunification. These events took place under the control of the Red Army, which gives grounds to doubt democracy and even to question these events' legitimacy. The text of the Manifesto is a kind of ethnic mobilization speech, which reports that for many centuries, the local Ukrainians (Carpathian Ruthenians) lived separated from their common root but did not lose hope for reunion with their fraternal people. More information about the specifics of the signing of the Manifesto and the First Congress of People's Committees can be found in the works of Vasyl Mishchanyn (2018).

[24] I have been conducting oral history research in Zakarpattia and the Romanian and Slovak borderlands for over 20 years. In addition, for the past 12 years, an expedition with the participation of teachers and students of the Uzhhorod National University has been taking place every year. The result of these expeditions was the recording of more than 6 thousand interviews on ethnographic and oral history topics. These materials are stored in the Laboratory of Ethnography, Folklore and Local History of Uzhhorod National University. The results of the expeditionary research, which continue to be

resistance, since the Ruthenians were delighted with the opportunity to become a state-forming people within the Ukrainian SSR[25]. However, this affirms a kind of linguistic crime by the new authorities, who arbitrarily changed the ethnic denomination of almost half a million people.

The following months saw the most extensive and aggressive toponymic transformations in the history of the region. Unlike previous political regimes, the communist authorities were in no hurry to rename oikonyms but first turned their attention to street names. Among the first

carried out today, have not yet been widely disseminated, but some interviews or articles by researchers can be found in the yearbook Ethnica of the Carpathians (Етніка Карпат), which is published based on the results of the expeditions. The memories and stories of old-timers, which are synchronized in different parts of the region, allow us to significantly adjust and sometimes deny the official historical narratives about the interwar period and the events of World War II. In particular, there is no doubt that the organization of the First Congress and the signing of the Manifesto were primarily the result of Red Army directives, not popular initiative. The memoirs of old-timers contain many reflections on the course of the allegedly "voluntary" mobilization of the local population into the army and on the real, not heroized, level of the partisan movement in the region, and many other stories. On the other hand, one cannot deny the fact that Ruthenians, lured by the promises of agitators of a free and happy life in their own country, willingly and en masse signed up to support the Manifesto. However, a few years later, the confiscated land distributed to the peasants was taken away to collective farms, and the freedom and prosperity promised in the Manifesto turned out to be a big deception.

[25] Many oral testimonies from eyewitnesses to the events of World War II show that local Ruthenians did not object to the almost instantaneous change of their usual name to "Ukrainians." A number of factors should be taken into account here: a certain loss of popularity of Russophiles and Muscovites and, at the same time, effective educational work with local youth by representatives of the Ukrainophile movement in the 1930s, promises of happy life in the Ukrainian SSR by propagandists, voluntaristic decisions of the Soviet government, and so on. Despite the influence of many factors, I believe that the change in the name of the local population at the official level should be interpreted negatively. An interesting fact is that among local old-timers, both ethnonyms are used in everyday conversation without opposing them and politicizing the concept of "Rusyn," which is inherent in modern official Ukrainian discourse. Not only in Zakarpattia, but in the Ukrainian villages of the Maramures county of Romania, during my expeditions in 2006-2009, I heard more than once from local residents that they are : "...Ukrainians – Rusin people". In the understanding of ordinary old-timers, these ethnic names are virtually equivalent, just as the traditional ethnonym "Jew" and the Soviet ethnonym "Yevrey" are used. In Zakarpattia, the word "zhyd" does not have a negative connotation, unlike the official Ukrainian discourse inherited from the Soviet era, where this name has a negative connotation.

laws of the People's Council of Transcarpathian Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the PCTU) was the decree "*On the Removal of Hungarian and German Inscriptions from All Public Places*" as of November 29, 1944 (Dekret 1944). Although at that time the Czech administration was officially operating in the region and according to the norms of international law, it belonged to Czechoslovakia, a separate order (Rozporiadzhennia 1944) specified that all Czech inscriptions were also subject to removal. A few weeks later, local authorities were already reporting on the approval of new street toponyms. The materials of the SATR make it possible to analyse these changes based on the five largest cities of Transcarpathian Ukraine: Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Khust, Sevliush (now Vynohradiv), and Berehove.

More than half of the new street names were in honour of Soviet leaders, or revolutionary and military events, as well as representatives of Russian culture. The central and largest squares and streets were named after Stalin, Lenin, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, etc. Sometimes among them were the names of local communists or underground partisans (Borkaniuk, Turianytsia, Lokota, etc.) whose names were given to smaller streets. The other streets would bear the names of Russian poets and writers such as Aleksandr Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Fedor Dostoevsky, Anton Chekhov, Maxim Gorky, etc. Also, many new place names aimed to immortalized the heroic role of the Soviet Red Army. As a result, many streets and squares of Liberation, Heroes, and Partisans emerged. In towns and villages with predominantly Hungarian or German population, such names caused discontent, because for them the Soviet troops were occupiers rather than "liberators." But the communist authorities proactively solved the problem of potential resistance by national minorities, as they began repressions of Hungarians and Germans[26] as early as November

[26] In November 1944, long before the region officially joined the USSr, repressions initiated by the decisions of the fourth Ukrainian front command began (Mishchanyn 2018: 141). This applied to all Hungarian men aged eighteen to fifty (Makara 1995: 649), although there were also cases of repression of younger boys and older men. The situation with the local Germans was even worse, as not only men but also young women were subjected to repression. It is estimated that at least 10,000 out of 25,000 transcarpathian Hungarians died in concentration camps (Leno 2023: 112).

1944 (Zakarpattia 2010: 284-286) completing the ethnic homogenization of the region that had begun during the war.

Although the Manifesto as of November 26, 1944 emphasized the centuries-old aspirations of local Ruthenians to reunite with Soviet Ukraine, Ukrainian street names accounted for less than 8 percent of new names. For some reason, the largest number of these appeared in the city of Berehove, where the majority of the population was ethnic Hungarians[27]. The names comprised the canonical set of cultural heroes of Ukrainian origin that were allowed in Soviet times: poets Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, Lesia Ukrainka, Volodymyr Sosiura, Maksym Ryl`skyi, and others. The Cossack hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi was also included in this core.

Almost 40% of the names were inherited from the previous era, and these were mostly streets of secondary significance : usually outside the city center, as well as small streets that were not used by the Soviet authorities for mass events and demonstrations. They did not contain ideological content undesirable for the new authorities and denoted professions, locations, fauna, etc.: Vuzka, Riznykiv, Akatsieva, Bazarna, Monastyrska, Vokzalna, Nasypna, etc. These names were changed by translation from Hungarian. Thus, Virágok Street became the Street Kvitiv (of Flowers), Nap – the Sunny Street, Nefelejcs – Forget-me-not Street, etc. Approximately one-sixth of the names were related to local geography (Mukachevo Street, Verkhovyna Street, etc.) or reminded of cultural and political figures of past centuries: Baludiansky, Dukhnovych, Venelin, Dovhovych, etc. Even the names of the elite – princes Koriatovych, Laborets, Ferenc II Rákóczi – were preserved. The names of the former connected the Ruthenians with the era of Kyivan Rus, and the third reminded of the anti-Habsburg movement of 1703-1711. This suited the Soviet authorities since the aforementioned movement was interpreted from the perspective of class struggle.

What was new, compared to the previous government, was the attention paid even to village streets, where streets in honour of Soviet leaders

[27] I discuss more about Soviet renaming in Hungarian Berehove and other towns and villages of Transcarpathia in some of my other publications (Leno 2018b; Leno 2018c; Leno 2019b).

also emerged. A separate PCTU Resolution, *"On Naming Streets After the People's Martyrs and People's Heroes"* decreed that war participants be immortalized (Postanova 1945; Zvernennia 1945). In implementing the resolution, village leaders proposed the names of local heroes for immortalization in street names. However, in practice, toponyms primarily immortalized individuals from the Soviet Union, for whom more prestigious places and streets were reserved, while the names of local war participants were given to streets in the villages where they came from.

The new city toponyms reflected the authorities' intention to create a typical Soviet symbolic space in settlements comfortable for Russian speakers. At the same time, it was supposed to contribute to shaping loyalty and respect for Soviet cultural values. The renaming policy involved the displacement of evidence of previous history and individuals from the public space. Facts that reminded of the pre-war multiculturalism of the population were subject to oblivion, with virtually nothing remaining of multiculturalism in the street names. Thanks to the change of place names, the imperial "we" spread faster. The dominance of Russian street names turned the region into a part of the empire without its own cultural identity. Such a toponymic system demonstrated a vivid example of domination over a colonized subject, and street names that reflected examples of Russian culture in the metropolis and reminded of Russian-Soviet heroes were widespread in Transcarpathia until 2022.

In parallel with the toponymic transformations in 1945, the following changes took place in the cities of the region: dismantling old monuments and erecting memorials in honour of communist leaders and soldiers of the Soviet Red Army, implanting communist symbols and revolutionary holidays of the Soviet calendar, destructing architectural monuments of other ethnic groups, and taking other measures to shape the historical memory of the population.

The next year, the first Soviet oikonymic adjustment was carried out in the region, which was officially justified as the restoration of historical names (Ukaz 1946). As a result, many names were replaced with completely different ones, many being significantly edited by translation into literary Ukrainian or Russian. Some oikonyms were Ukrainianized /Russified

in places of compact residence of Hungarians, Romanians, Germans, and Slovaks. For example, the city of Sevliush became Vynohradiv, the village of Nimetska Mokra became Komsomolsk, the Hungarian Tiyglash became Tsehlivka as a result of literal translation, and the Ruthenian village of Andrashovtsi became Andreievka. During the Soviet period, the signs were bilingual – Ukrainian and Russian.

This and other waves of Soviet renaming that occurred in the following decades led to a radical change in local oikonyms[28]. This process was similar to the attempts of the Hungarian authorities to unify names in the late 19th century. These changes ignored local naming traditions and led to the establishment of a Soviet version of the symbolic space. There was no place in it for the names of ethnic minorities or those that reflected the regional specifics of local Ukrainians (former Ruthenians). The consequences of this process are still felt: it was not possible to restore all authentic names even during the years of Ukrainian independence (Zan 2022).

It should be added that the local population still often uses many old oikonyms in their everyday speech. This was likely to be practiced during previous renamings. The situation with street names is completely different. In most settlements (except for cities and large villages), they appeared in the Soviet period and until recently did not cause public discussions, since there were no old (previous) street names that could be restored. Soviet street toponyms of settlements in the Transcarpathian

[28] In 1944-46, the first major wave of Soviet renaming took place, affecting the names of settlements and a large number of streets. In the following decades, there were renamings that gradually eradicated old names or renamed Soviet names that had become "morally obsolete." The new renaming was not as widespread as the first wave and was often implemented by local authorities according to directives from above. The only exceptions were decisions on renaming at the level of the USSR. For example, due to de-Stalinization in the early 1960s, squares and streets named after Stalin disappeared in settlements. Another reason for mass renaming was anniversary events or in honor of prominent people. For example, in 1957 many streets appeared in honor of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution, in 1967 in honor of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution, and after 1961 streets in honor of the first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became popular. On the eve of the collapse of the USSR, there were almost no pre-Soviet names left in the urban and rural street place names of Zakarpattia.

region began to be actively replaced only in recent years, which is associated with the need to erase local traces of the "Russian world"[29].

Conclusions

The renaming policy, which was carried out in the territory of Transcarpathia by various political regimes in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, can in most cases be attributed to imperial as well as colonial practices. The complexity of their differentiation demonstrates the need to substantiate a theoretical approach that can be applied to Transcarpathia, a region that in the 20th century was part of several dissimilar empires (dualist and Soviet) and other states.

The initiative of toponymic changes demonstrated the intention of the authorities to mark the geographical territory inhabited by ethnic minorities with the aim of its "appropriation" and "inscription" and inclusion in the wider, imperial symbolic space. The most common ways of renaming were the adaptation of local names to the spelling of the state-forming people or the method of toponyms' literal translation.

In the case of the Hungarian authorities of the late 19th century, it was also about replacing historical names with others, which in the context of its inherent aggressive nationalism meant the intention to erase the traces of the toponymic presence of local ethnic cultures, to negate the "internal other." The official systematization of the names of settlements, which

[29] Although Soviet names were renamed immediately after the collapse of the USSR, these changes were related to the names or events of the most famous revolutionary leaders (primarily Lenin and the Great October Revolution). Most Soviet street names remained virtually unchanged until 2014. It was only after the full-scale invasion of the Russian army in 2022 that a total process of renaming began. In particular, according to the order of the Transcarpathian Regional Military Administration No. 735 of 18.08.2023, a working group on decommunization and decolonization in the Transcarpathian region was established. It is too early to talk about the results of the commission's work, but according to Vasyl Mishchanyn, a member of the working group, Doctor of Historical Sciences, a lot of Soviet names have been found in the region. A curious case was that in virtually all villages and towns of the region there were streets named after the first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin.

took place during 1898-1912 in historical Hungary and which included the territory of modern Transcarpathia, adhered to the principle that one settlement had one name. This eliminated the homonymy that prevailed among the names of settlements, as the name was chosen in favor of the Hungarian version.

The Soviet authorities, which formally masked themselves with the slogan of restoring Ukrainian historical names, were essentially engaged in the same thing – the destruction of regional features of local toponymy. This concerned not only names of foreign origin but also those used by the Ruthenians, whose traditional ethnonym was also replaced. The latter were provided with a new ethnonym and began to be called Ukrainians. The democratic Czechoslovakian period, especially in comparison to the aforementioned regimes, also demonstrated a tendency to unify the region's place names and partially street names. But at the same time, this was the only period of the region's development when, on the eve of World War II, the name chosen by representatives of Rusyns spread for a short period: Carpathian Ukraine.

Similarly, it is also worth analysing street toponymic changes, which state authorities began to pay attention to at the end of the 19th century, but especially in the 20th century. First of all, this allowed marking the symbolic space of settlements with tokens and names familiar to a certain political power. However, changes in the street names also had a practical aspect since they were used as a symbolic resource for correcting the historical memory and consciousness of the population. In this regard, the Soviet authorities acted most consistently and aggressively, thanks to which the cultural/symbolic landscape of Transcarpathia began to resemble a typical cultural space of the Soviet Union, and already in modern times it testified to the limits of spreading the "Russian world."

Active toponymic changes became an everyday state practice in the 20th century. Since the political regimes in Transcarpathia changed frequently then, it is quite difficult to talk about the consequences of renaming each of them. For a long time, only Soviet oikonyms and especially street toponyms, among which several generations of Transcarpathians grew up, existed without any significant changes. This trend saved street

toponymy from significant changes during the period of Ukrainian independence. Only the Russian full-scale invasion on Ukraine in 2022 caused a rapid and sometimes inconsistent "decolonization" and "de-communization" of the public space of the region and Ukraine in general.

In sum, an excavation of the historical practices of toponymic renaming can serve as evidence of imperial and colonial practices, the study of which opens up the prospect of clarifying and formulating postcolonial approaches in the context of studying the countries of Eastern Europe. In addition, it allows expanding the research by addressing issues related to memory studies. Toponymic changes and the use of renaming practices have not stopped in modern times. It continues today in the use of "the" to relegate a sovereign state territory to the status of something less than its belligerent neighbor. The recent renaming efforts in Ukraine have the intention of overcoming postcolonial belonging and deconstructing the imperial narratives encoded in Soviet "place names." However, the new names are often adopted inconsistently and without taking into account local specifics (in particular, the Hungarian naming tradition in Zakarpattia) and lay the groundwork for future conflicts and, accordingly, new academic interpretations, interpretations, and research.

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