ONOMA
Journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences

Onoma 60
Journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences

ISSN: 0078-463X; e-ISSN: 1783-1644
Journal homepage: https://onomajournal.org/

Koněvova Street: A case study on the decommunisation and derussification of Czech urbanonymy

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To cite this article: Dvořáková, Žaneta. 2025. *Koněvova Street*: A case study on the decommunisation and derussification of Czech urbanonymy. *Onoma* 60, 69–96. DOI: 10.34158/ONOMA.60/2025/5

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.34158/ONOMA.60/2025/5

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Article history
Received on 27 November 2024.
Final form accepted on 1 April 2025.
Published online on1 December 2025.

***Koněvova Street*: A case study on the decommunisation and derussification of Czech urbanonymy**

Abstract: After the end of World War II, several streets in then Czechoslovakia were named in honour of various Red Army marshals, including I. S. Konev (1897–1973), although this commander was still alive at the time. After the fall of communism in the early 1990s, many street names commemorating the former regime were removed. However, the decommunisation, derussification, and decolonization of the Czech public space were not completely carried out. Although several streets honouring Konev have disappeared, most of them remain on the map of the contemporary Czech Republic. Prague's recent effort to rename street *Koněvova* has sparked a

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society-wide debate about this controversial figure and the need to come to terms with the past. However, the renaming effort has dragged on for many years. The impetus that finally made it possible was the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022.

Keywords: Urbanonymy, street name, renaming, Czech Republic.

La *rue Koněvova* : Une étude de cas sur la décommunisation et la dérussification de l'urbanité tchèque

Résumé : Après la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, plusieurs rues de ce qui était alors la Tchécoslovaquie ont été nommées en l'honneur de divers maréchaux de l'Armée rouge, dont I. S. Konev (1897–1973), bien que ce commandant ait été encore en vie à l'époque. Après la chute du communisme au début des années 1990, de nombreux noms de rues commémorant l'ancien régime ont été supprimés. Cependant, la décommunisation, la dérussification et la décolonisation de l'espace public tchèque n'ont pas été complètement menées à bien. Bien que plusieurs rues honorant Konev aient disparu, la plupart d'entre elles figurent toujours sur la carte de la République tchèque contemporaine. Le récent effort de Prague pour renommer la rue Koněvova a suscité un débat dans toute la société sur cette figure controversée et sur la nécessité d'accepter le passé. Cependant, l'effort de débaptiser la rue a traîné pendant de nombreuses années. C'est le déclenchement de la guerre russo-ukrainienne en 2022 qui a finalement permis d'y parvenir.

Mots-clés : Urbanonymie, nom de rue, renommage, République tchèque.

Die *Koněvova-Straße*: Eine Fallstudie über die Entkommunisierung und Entrussifizierung der tschechischen Urbanonymie

Zusammenfassung: Nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs wurden in der damaligen Tschechoslowakei etliche Straßen zu Ehren von Marschällen der Roten Armee benannt, darunter auch nach I. S. Konev (1897–1973), obwohl dieser Befehlshaber zu dieser Zeit noch lebte. Nach dem Fall des Kommunismus Anfang der 1990er Jahre wurden viele Straßennamen, die an das ehemalige Regime erinnerten, entfernt. Die Entkommunisierung, Entrussifizierung und Entkolonialisierung des tschechischen öffentlichen Raums wurde jedoch nicht vollständig vollzogen. Obwohl mehrere Straßennamen, die an Konev erinnern, verschwunden sind, sind die meisten von ihnen auf der Karte der heutigen Tschechischen Republik noch vorhanden. Die jüngsten Bemühungen Prags, die Koněvova-Straße umzubenennen, haben eine umfassende gesellschaftliche Debatte über diese umstrittene Figur und die Notwendigkeit der Vergangenheitsbewältigung ausgelöst. Die Bemühungen um die Umbenennung haben sich jedoch über viele Jahre hingezogen. Den Anstoß dazu gab schließlich der Ausbruch des russisch-ukrainischen Krieges im Jahr 2022.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Urbanonymie, Straßennamen, Umbenennung, Tschechische Republik.

Onoma 60 (2025), 69–96. DOI: 10.34158/ONOMA.60/2025/5

1. Introduction

In this article, I will focus on the commemorative (honorific) names of public spaces in the territory of the present-day Czech Republic that commemorate the personality of Ivan Stepanovich Konev (1897–1973). Specifically, according to the official RÚIAN codebook in the Czech Republic,[1] we have the following street names: 1 *M. Koněva* (in Jičín), 4 *Maršála Koněva* (in Slavětín, Nymburk, Duchcov, Hostinné[2]), and 10 *Koněvova* (in Mikulov, Havlíčkův Brod, Jirkov, Hodkovice nad Mohelkou, Mladá Boleslav, Ostrava, Turnov, Dubí, Krupka, Ústí nad Labem).

I. S. Konev held the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union. During World War II, he commanded the Red Army troops on the Eastern Front (the 1st Ukrainian Front). Among other things, he participated in the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp and the conquest of Berlin. In the Prague Offensive, his troops liberated northern, central, and eastern Bohemia and reached Prague in May 1945, where intense fighting took place. The current distribution of urbanonyms commemorating I. S. Konev is concentrated in northern, eastern, and central Bohemia, where his units were involved in the fighting (see Figure 1). Thus, these are honorific and commemorative names at the same time. In this respect, the urbanonyms *Koněvova* in Havlíčkův Brod in the Vysočina region (no. 13 on the map, see Figure 1), in Mikulov in South Moravia (no. 14), and in Ostrava in Silesia (no. 15) are different; in these cases, the names are primarily honorific, because I. S. Konev had no relation to these localities (cf. Hrabal 2019).

Immediately after the war, I. S. Konev was perceived by the Czech public as a hero and liberator, an idea presented and supported by the communist regime that seized power in Czechoslovakia in February 1948. As an adored Soviet war hero, I. S. Konev received several awards, statues were erected (e.g., one in Prague), a Soviet warship was named after him, and the Higher Military School in Almaty, Kazakhstan, was named after him, etc. His name can still be found in the urbanonymy of many cities in Russia (Barnaul, Belgorod, Irkutsk, Kirov, Moscow, Novokuznetsk, Omsk, Smolensk, Stary Oskol, Tver, Velsk, Vologda) or Belarus (Rechitsa) (see *Wikipedia* (RU)).

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[1] The current status data is based on more than 85 thousand street names listed in the official street codebook RÚIAN (as of November 20, 2024). It is available online on the website of the Czech Land Surveying and Cadastral Office and is regularly updated and supplemented. I present urban names in the form in which they appear in the codebook.

[2] On the web mapy.cz, the location is listed under the name *Koněvova čtvrť* ['Konev's District'].

Figure 1: Map with the occurrence of urbanonyms referring to I. S. Konev (as of 20 November 2024) (source: mapy.cz)

After the fall of the communist regime in 1989, various facts gradually began to emerge that undermined the heroic myth created around I. S. Konev and began to show him in a different light than the previous government ideology. Today, I. S. Konev is seen as a rather controversial historical figure. On 9 May 1945, he ordered the bombing of many Czech cities, allegedly to stop Germans fleeing to American captivity, which claimed the lives of 1,300 Czech civilians.[3] Immediately after arriving in Prague, units directly under Konev's command began rounding up citizens of Russian origin who had fled to Czechoslovakia to escape the Bolsheviks. Most of them subsequently died in the gulags (for details see, e.g., Fidler 1999; Plavec 2014, etc.). Konev's post-war activities also deserve justified criticism. It is succinctly summarised by the biographical sign that was added to the name of *Koněvova* street in Prague (Figure 2):

> Ivan Stepanovich Konev (1897–1973). One of the most famous Soviet commanders in World War II. Marshal of the Soviet Union, commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front, whose troops were the first to enter Prague on 9 May 1945. In the autumn of 1956, he directed the suppression of the Hungarian uprising by the Soviet army. In 1961, at the time of the so-called Second Berlin Crisis ending with the construction of the Berlin Wall, he headed the Group of Soviet

[3] One of these cities was Mladá Boleslav, where about 450 people died at that time. Paradoxically, street *Koněvova* still exists in Mladá Boleslav. After the fall of communism, 22 streets and squares in Mladá Boleslav were renamed (including, e.g., *Rudé armády* 'Red Army Street'). However, *Koněvova* remained, most likely because it is located on the outskirts of the city (Rygerová 2022: 95).

Troops in Germany. In the spring of 1968, he led a military delegation whose members conducted intelligence reconnaissance in Czechoslovakia before the August invasion by Warsaw Pact troops.

Figure 2: Sign of the street *Koněvova* in Prague accompanied by an explanatory biographical table (Source: Facebook, Praha 3, June 21, 2021)

The question naturally arises whether it is desirable to pay tribute to such a person in urbanonymy. For example, in Ukraine, as part of the decommunization and derussification of the country, all 16 streets of Marshal Konev (*Вулиця Маршала Конєва*) were removed in the cities of Cherkasy, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, Jampil, Korsun-Shevchenkivskyi, Kostipil, Kramatorsk, Kropyvnytskyi, Kryvyi Rih, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Novoukrajinka, Slovyansk, Shepetivka, and Vinnytsia, with the last remaining in Donetsk (see *Wikipedia* (UKR)). Ivan Konev Street (*Strada Ivan Konev*) in the Moldovan city of Bălți has also been renamed; since 2024 it has been named after the Romanian poet *Strada Grigore Vieru* (Bălan 2024). Street *Koněvova* in Prague was renamed in 2023. However, this aroused strong emotions among the Czech public, and the move by the Prague City Hall was considered controversial (cf. Stolle 2022).

The article will focus on the circumstances surrounding the renaming of the street *Koněvova* in Prague. I will also be interested in the reactions of representatives and residents in other municipalities in the Czech Republic where there is a street dedicated to I. S. Konev. I will primarily base my analysis on minutes from meetings of representatives and committees, as well as surveys they commissioned, or various press reports, mainly from 2022.

2. Historical context

2.1. Post-war situation in Czechoslovakia

Immediately after the end of World War II, Czech urbanonyms celebrated J. V. Stalin and also the commanders of the Red Army, including, for example, Marshal G. K. Zhukov (1896–1974),[4] R. J. Malinovsky (1898–1967),[5] P. S. Rybalkov (1894–1948),[6] A. I. Yeremenko (1872–1970)[7] and, last but not least, I. S. Konev (1897–1973).

The first streets named after I. S. Konev appeared in 1945 (e.g., *Maršála Koněva* in Nymburk /Řehounek 2020: 76/ or *Koněvova* in Ostrava /Ostravský uličník/). In Prague, the street was named *Koněvova* in 1946, along with *Žukovova* (from 1946 to1962) and *Rybalkova* (from 1946 to the present), and a little later *Jeremenkova* was added (from 1952 to the present) (cf. Ptáčníková 2021: 97). It must be said that all of these commanders were still alive at that time, and in Prague these urban names were approved after the introduction of the directives from 1946, which, among other things, established the principle: "Names after living persons shall not be used, except quite exceptionally" (cited in Ptáčníková 2021: 25). These naming rules also reflected

> the fact that even the new Commission was unable, in the excited atmosphere after the liberation and restoration of the republic, to face the strong pressure from the public and the political representations of the state and the city to name Prague public spaces after prominent figures of the international anti-fascist coalition and the Czechoslovak domestic and foreign resistance. Despite the efforts to condition such naming on 'lifetime' and 'quite exceptional' merits, Prague already had a group of new street names in early 1947 after personalities and places of the Allied countries, including several names of living political and military figures (*Stalingradská*, *Remešská*, *Eisenhowerova*, *Krále Jiřího VI.* [King George VI.], *Koněvova*, *Rooseveltova*, *Rybalkova*, *Stalinova*, *Titova*, *Žukovova*) (Lašťovková et al. 2022: 24).

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4 Currently, there are 2 streets *Marš. Žukova* in the Czech Republic (in Choceň, Most) and 1 street *Žukovova* (in Ústí nad Labem) named after Marshal G. K. Zhukov (Žukov in Czech transcription).

5 In the Czech Republic we still have 10 streets *Malinovská* (in Duchcov, Hrušovany u Brna, Ivanovice na Hané, Lednice, Miroslav, Olomouc, Rakovník, Slavkov u Brna, Zbraslav, Židlochovice), 1 square *Malinovského náměstí* (in Brno), and 1 boulevard *Tř. Maršála Malinovského* (in Uherské Hradiště) named after Marshal R. J. Malinovsky (Malinovskij in Czech transcription).

6 In the Czech Republic, there is 1 street *Marš. Rybalka* (in Most), 2 streets *Maršála Rybalka* (in Pchery, Veltrusy), and 3 streets *Rybalkova* (in Prague, Jaroměř, Louny) named after Marshal P. S. Rybalkov.

7 At present, there are 8 streets named *Jeremenkova* after Marshal A. I. Yeremenko (Jeremenko in Czech transcription) in the Czech Republic (in Prague, Olomouc, Ostrava, Bohumín, Bílovec, Šumperk, Šenov u Nového Jičína), and 1 *Jeremenkova osada* ('Yeremenko's settlement') (in Ostrava).

This partly followed the interwar practice, which was more benevolent in the matter of naming after living persons (cf. Ptáčníková 2021: 25).

As early as 1947, a detoponymic urbanonymic system began to emerge in Prague district Vršovice, which is probably the most extensive one in Prague today and which was dedicated to commemorating significant battlefields of the Red Army and its victory (e.g., *Sevastopolská*, *Smolenská*, *Rostovská*, *Moskevská*, *Krymská*, *Charkovská*, *Novgorodská*, *Karpatská*, and *Dukelská*) (cf. Ptáčníková 2021: 97). We can perhaps see in this not only thanks and gratitude for the liberation, but also a manifestation of the shift of Czechoslovak policy, which began to be more oriented towards the East as early as 1943, when an agreement was reached between the Czechoslovak president in exile E. Beneš and J. V. Stalin and the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty "on Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Cooperation" was signed.

2.2. Communist Era

As stated, for example, by Palonen (2008: 220): "The city-text functions as a system of representation and an object of political identification. It neither simply carries the ideologies of the holders of power nor mirrors political discourses. As a set of commemorations, it is a 'representation' that aims to establish a world view through the inclusion of certain elements for (an illusion of) internal coherence. Contingent and containing contradictions, it highlights certain aspects and excludes others." After February 1948, when the communists seized power in Czechoslovakia, they began to promote their (or Soviet) narrative and their version of history in street names. The names of the streets worshipped the Red Army and its victories, the commanders, and the fallen (cf. Dvořáková 2025). We see the same approach in other countries of the socialist bloc. See, for example, the analysis of the names of the streets of East Berlin by Azaryahu (1986). The author states in the introduction: "Street names are convenient and popular political symbols, a fact not generally recognized. Street names reflect and manifest a certain political identity – they are indicators of political identity while at the same time being part of it. They also help form a desired political consciousness among the population" (Azaryahu 1986: 581).

Entire urbanonymic systems were created in Czechoslovakia, e.g., in 1952 in Ostrava, 26 streets were named after the fallen defenders of Stalingrad (e.g., *Čujkovova*, *Gerasimova*, *Rodimcevova*, etc.). The last street *Krasnoarmejců* ['Red Army Soldiers'] is located here (the others were renamed after the revolution in 1990s). Smaller, more varied in motivation, but ideologically uniform, is the urbanonymic system in Havlíčkův Brod, in the district of family houses Vysočany (see Figure 3), where we find only one deanthronymic street, namely the one dedicated to I. S. Konev (*Koněvova*). In its neighbourhood, there are honorific urbanonyms motivated by the names of places associated with the battlefields

of World War II on the Eastern Front, where Czechoslovak soldiers distinguished themselves (*Sokolovská*, *Dukelská*, *Jaselská*). Another street, *Buzulucká*, was named after the Russian city of Buzuluk, where the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps was formed in 1943 under the command of General Ludvík Svoboda and from where it was sent to the Eastern Front. Street *SNP* commemorates the Slovak National Uprising, and *Partyzánská* ('Partisan') honours the resistance. And this whole system is framed by the street called *Mírová* ('Peace').

Figure 3: Urbanonymic system in Havlíčkův Brod (source: mapy.cz)

Changes in the urbanonymy of the Eastern Bloc countries were brought about by the death of J. V. Stalin (1953), or rather the subsequent criticism of Stalin's personality cult, which was voiced by N. S. Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956. J. V. Stalin began to be removed from the public sphere, and a debate arose regarding honorific/commemorative names. "In 1960, as a response to criticism of the cult of personality, law no. 36/1960 (Zákon č. 36/1960 Sb.) and the following regulation no. 97/1961 (Vyhláška č. 97/1961 Sb.) established a clear rule not to name streets after living persons. […] From that time on, naming places after important persons was prohibited during their lifetimes – however, with certain exceptions, such as names of Soviet astronauts"[8] (David & Davidová Glogarová 2021: 259–260). At the

[8] For toponyms bearing the names of living persons, see, e.g., Martínek (2017). In Karviná, for example, there is still a street named after the cosmonaut V. Tereshkova, who is not only still alive but also very active in the Russian Duma, where she is a deputy for Putin's

same time, the Prague council decided that: "As far as public spaces in Prague named after living persons are concerned, these are *Koněvova*, *Jeremenkova* and *Žukovova*. Street *Žukovova* will be renamed, but the names of streets *Koněvova* and *Jeremenkova* will be retained, as the renaming should certainly not concern the names of living commanders of the Soviet army liberating Czechoslovakia" (quoted by Ptáčníková 2021: 27).[9]

One street honouring I. S. Konev, however, disappeared in the communist period, along with the whole city! It was *Tř. marš. Koněva* ('Marshal Konev Boulevard') in the old Most which had to give way to lignite mining in the 1960s.[10]

2.3. The situation after the fall of communism

After the Velvet Revolution and the fall of communism (1989), urban names ideologically burdened by the former regime began to be removed from public space. The need to symbolically push communist ideology and personalities associated with it out of the public sphere and replace them with new symbols and meanings, or to return to the pre-war democratic tradition, is not only seen in the former Czechoslovakia. It was part of the decommunization process that took place throughout the Eastern Bloc (cf., e.g., Light 2004; Palonen 2008; Basik 2023, etc.).

Among other names, several streets honouring the figure of I. S. Konev were renamed, namely *Koněvova* in Brno (> *Vídeňská*) in 1990 (Internetová encyklopedie města Brna), *Koněvova třída* ('Konev Boulevard') in Varnsdorf (> *Legií*) in 1991 (Anonymous 1991), and *Koněvova* in Cheb (> *Dragounská*) (Anonymous 2021), as well as *Koněvova* in Kladno (> *Vrapická*) (Vykouk 2007: 227).[11] Streets *Koněvova* in Nový Bor, Hradec Králové, Teplice, and Dvůr Králové nad Labem were also renamed, as was *Třída maršála Koněva* ('Marshal Konev Boulevard') in Litvínov, etc. Others, however, remained.

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party. However, the Karviná City Hall has expressed its intention to keep the street name. Since street names are fully within the competence of local city councils, it is not possible to order such a change, even though the name is contrary to the current law (Januszek 2023).

9 At present, the same rules, given by the Act on Municipalities, apply: "Streets or other public spaces shall not be named by identical names, nor by the names of living public figures" (*Zákon č. 128/2000 Sb.*, § 29, par.1) and the special Act on the Capital City of Prague: "Streets or other public spaces shall not be named after living public figures" (*Zákon č. 131/2000 SB.*, § 13, par. 3).

10 See the old map of the city Most: https://mapy.mesto-most.cz/app/stary-most-v-nas/ (accessed 2024-11-20).

11 There is also a steelworks in Kladno, renamed in 1946 to Huť Koněv ('Steelworks Konev'). Its operation was stopped in 1976. In 2010, Kladno councillors discussed the naming of two streets in the vicinity of this industrial complex. "The company operating in these areas originally proposed the name *Koněvská* after the former steelworks. The communist councillors changed the name to *Koněvova*, after the name of Soviet Marshal Konev." However, the proposal was not accepted, and *Koněvova* did not return to Kladno urbanonymy (Brožovský 2010).

The renaming of the streets in the early 1990s was very likely motivated primarily by the desire to get rid of Konev as one of the personalities associated with the Soviet Union, so it was probably not about him specifically and the evaluation of his actions, as these were not yet generally known at the time. As late as the mid-1990s, Knappová (1996: 156) stated that:

> […] there is still political and social ambiguity in attitudes towards certain phenomena, historical events or personalities, i.e., there is a lack of official historical evaluation. For example, there is confusion over how to evaluate the figure of Jan Šverma, the personalities of certain generals, important battles (at Dukla, etc.), there are doubts about whether the peace movement is still a positive phenomenon, etc. There are also efforts to retain some names as historical monuments of the time.

It must be said that the process of decommunisation of urbanonymy in the former Eastern Bloc countries has not been complete. In Hungary, for example, the Hungarian Patriots Association has drawn up a list of almost 700 more street names related to communism that they believe should be changed in 2019.[12] In Poland, a law was passed in 2016 that outright bans such urban names.[13] At that time "lawmakers estimated that approximately 1,000 street names across the country would fall into remit of the new law prohibiting the propagation of communism or other totalitarian regimes through the names of buildings, objects and other public facilities" (Belavusau & Wójcik 2018). Ochman (2025: 9) even gives a number of 1200–1400 names. The list of streets to be renamed was compiled by the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej). A similar law has been in force since 2015 in Ukraine,[14] where a massive renaming of public spaces is underway, aimed not only at decommunisation but also at the derussification of Ukrainian space. Under the influence of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the Law on the Prohibition of Promoting Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes and their Ideologies was adopted in Lithuania in 2022, and The Lithuanian Genocide and Resistance Research Centre (Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras) has commented on the changes in street names (Ochman 2025: 2). While in these countries there has been a mass renaming

[12] See: https://antikommunizmus.hu/kommunista-utcanevek-jegyzeke (accessed 2024-11-20).

[13] The Polish Act: Dz.U. 2016 pos. 744, ustava z dnia 1 kwietnia 2016 r. o zakazenie propaganie kommunizmunimu or innego ustromi totalitariannego przez imena budowli, obiektów i urządzeń użyteczności publicznej [Journal of Laws 2016, item 744, Act of 1 April 2016 on the prohibition of the propagation of communism or other totalitarian regimes through the name of public buildings, facilities and equipment], https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu20160000744 (accessed 2024-11-20).

[14] The Ukrainian Act: Про засудження комуністичного та націонал-соціалістичного (нацистського) тоталітарних режимів в Україні та заборону пропаганди їхньої символіки, 2015, № 26, ст. 219 [On the condemnation of communist and national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and the prohibition of propaganda of their symbols, 2015, No. 26, p. 219], https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/%20317-19#Text (accessed 2024-11-20).

as a result of the adoption of such acts, comparable, for example, to the post-war degermanisation in our country,[15] it is a sad fact that even after more than 35 years after the fall of communism we do not have an act in the Czech Republic that would prohibit the names of persons and organizations associated with the communist totalitarian regime or names that glorify it in any way in urbanonymy[16] and there are still many ideological names from the communist period in Czech urbanonymy.[17] Apart from I. S. Konev and other Soviet marshals, let me mention, for example, street names commemorating planned economy (7 streets *Dvouletky*,[18] 1 *1. pětiletky*, 1 *II. pětiletky*, 1 *Pětiletky*),[19] honouring various communist organisations such as, e.g., Pioneer movement (1 square *Pionýrů*, 1 street *Pionýrka*, 33 streets *Pionýrská*, 50 streets *Pionýrů*), Czechoslovak Youth Union (3 streets *Svazácká*), Union for Cooperation with the Army (2 streets *Svazarmovská*), or urbanonyms commemorating even armed repressive forces of the regime – the border guard (10 street *Pohraniční stráže* and 1 *Pohraničníků*).

Depotonymic urbanonyms referring to places in the former Soviet Union have a special status. These too can be seen as a means of colonizing our space. Nevertheless, after the fall of communism, they have not been removed for the most part.

In general, it can be observed that the post-revolutionary renaming mainly concerned street names in large cities, and within them, their centres; thus, the names that were most exposed were changed (David & Mácha 2014: 149; cf. Light 2004: 166–167).

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15 Slovakia also adopted a similar Act No. 338/2020 Coll. In practice, however, it is somewhat toothless, because at the same time it applies that: "The existing regulations shall apply to the name of a street or other public space pursuant to § 2b(3) determined by 30 November 2020." It cannot therefore be applied reciprocally to the renaming of existing streets.

16 Czech Act No. 198/1993 Coll. on the Illegality of the Communist Regime and on Resistance against it does not address such issues.

17 Cf., e.g., the act adopted after the establishment of Czechoslovakia (1918) – Act No. 266/1920 Coll. of 14. Section 7 declares: "Existing street and public place names which cannot be reconciled with the history and external relations of the Czechoslovak nation, in particular those which commemorate persons who have expressed hostile sentiments against the Czechoslovak nation or associated nations, or which commemorate events of an anti-state nature, shall not be permitted. The municipalities shall, within one month of the date on which this Act comes into force, remove the objectionable name, obliterate the external sign without a trace, and notify the new name to the superior national committee."

18 The Two-Year Economic Plan (*dvouletka* in Czech) was an economic plan for the recovery and reconstruction of Czechoslovakia in 1947–1948 after World War II. The five-year plan (*pětiletka* in Czech) was an economic plan of a centrally planned economy for a five-year period, first introduced in the Soviet Union and then used in other Eastern Bloc countries.

19 Cf. the statement of the Prague Topographic Commission: "The Commission rejects the suggestion of Mr. Roman Vytejček to consider renaming streets *Dvouletka* and *Brigádníků* because although these are names created in a politically unfortunate time, they are not offensive in themselves and acceptably fulfil the function of a historical memento and also have a function of localization. The Department will inform the writer" (Zápis..., September 21, 2021).

3. Renaming of street *Koněvova* in Prague

In Prague, the renaming of *Koněvova* was preceded by a "fight" over the Konev's monument (cf. Pauknerová & Gibas 2021). In 1980, a bronze statue of the Marshal by sculptor Z. Krybus was erected in Prague in Bubeneč District. In 2015, the Prague 6 City Council decided to place an additional information table in Czech, English, and Russian on the base of the statue (Ludvík 2017). However, it took another three years before the final version of the text was created in cooperation with the Military Historical Institute:

> Marshal Ivan Stepanovich Konev commanded the 1st Ukrainian Front, whose troops were deployed in the final attack on Berlin and liberated northern, central and eastern Bohemia, and were the first to enter Prague on May 9, 1945. In the autumn of 1956, he directed the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising by the Soviet army, and as commander of the Soviet Army Group in Berlin in 1961, he participated in solving the so-called second Berlin crisis by building the Berlin Wall. In 1968, he personally sponsored an intelligence survey before the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.

This plaque was unveiled symbolically on the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops. The statue repeatedly became the target of several vandal attacks and was therefore covered with scaffolding for some time until it was finally removed and moved to the depository on 3 April 2020. The removal of the statue was strongly opposed by the Russian side and the local communists. It was also at this time that the efforts of the Prague 3 City Hall to remove the name of the street *Koněvova* began (see Figure 4).

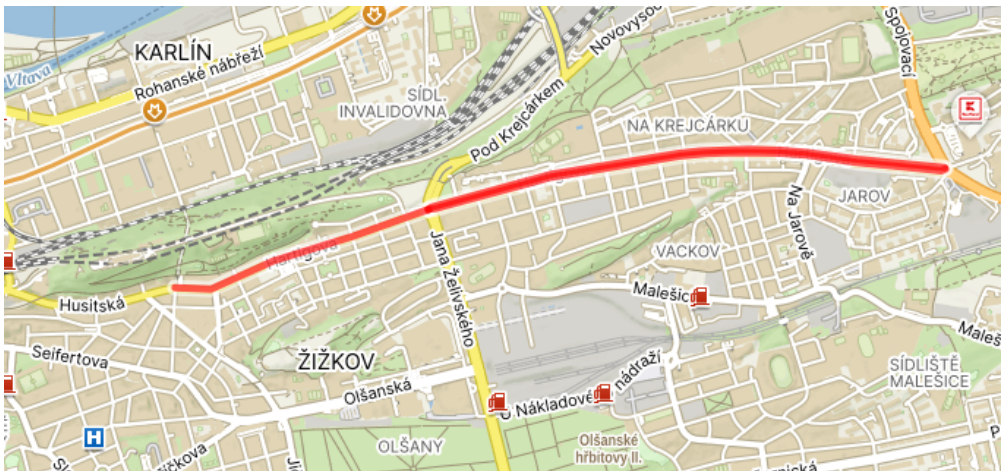

Figure 4: Location of formerly *Koněvova*, currently *Hartigova* in Prague (source: mapy.cz)

An advisory body of the Prague City Council is the Topographic Commission composed of various experts. In September 2019, the Commission discussed

J. Vicherek's proposal for renaming the street and "unanimously decided to postpone the discussion on renaming *Koněvova* until the Prague 3 City Council, which is also dealing with the issue, takes a position on the matter" (Zápis..., September 18, 2019) and at the following meeting "The Commission took the position that it would not support the proposal to rename *Koněvova* Street" (Zápis..., November 13, 2019). The Topographic Commission then reiterated its negative opinion in June 2021 (Zápis..., June 6, 2021). In neither case, however, I do not find any specific justification for this position in the minutes. Probably, several facts played a role – *Koněvova* is the longest street in Žižkov District (it is about 3.4 km long), there are over seven thousand addresses, and almost five thousand residents over 15 years of age (who would have to have their ID documents changed) have their permanent residence there.[20] The Prague 3 City Council responded to this decision by having at least an information table placed under the street name sign, illuminating the activities of I. S. Konev (see Figure 3). This text was based on the text that had been added to the monument to Konev that had already been removed at that time (Svoboda 2021).

In addition to the efforts of the Prague 3 City Hall to rename the street, several civic initiatives, i.e., efforts to change it in a "bottom-up" direction, have also emerged. One petition began collecting signatures in September 2019. It criticized the personality of I. S. Konev and proposed: "Russia can also be interpreted in the Czech Republic through other symbols and personalities, for example, through Russian literature, poetry, or science. Why can't a street that was called *Poděbradova* before the Communist coup be named after Bulgakov, Pushkin, or Solzhenitsyn?"[21] Another petition was created in 2020, demanding that Koněvova Street be renamed *Marie Terezie* ['Maria Theresa'].[22] The justification stated, among other things, that "the original imperial road, built during her reign as part of the Prague – Kolín –

[20] Cf. Appendix to the explanatory report No. 5, which is part of the Resolution of the Council of the Capital City of Prague No. 1297 of 19. 6. 2023.

[21] Petition is available here: https://e-petice.cz/petitions/petice-za-prejmenovani-konevovy-ulice-na-zizkove.html (accessed 2024-11-20).

[22] Cf.: "The Chairwoman pointed out that there was information in the press about a petition signed by about a thousand citizens, requesting the renaming of Koněvova to the street 'Marie Terezie'. The Commission takes note of the information. In a short discussion, it was recalled that about seven thousand residents live on the street. The petition did not reach the department or the Commission" (Zápis…, June 10, 2020). Let me recall that in the past *Koněvova* also bore other names. "This road is documented as early as the 13th century and in earlier times served to connect Prague with Moravia and Austria. It was called the *Haberská cesta* ['Road to Habry'], later *Říšská* or *Císařská silnice* ['Imperial Road'], and in the 19th century *Vídeňská silnice* ['Road to Vienna'] or also the *Jihlavská erární silnice* ['Jihlava Revenue Road']." Until 1875 it was *Vídeňská*, in the years 1875–1974 *Poděbradova*, during the Nazi occupation (1940–1945) *Brněnská*/*Brünner Straße*, and after the war, it was briefly called *Poděbradova* again (Lašťovková et al. 2022: 273).

Čáslav – Jihlava – Znojmo – Vienna connection, ran along this route." The petition was signed by 1,399 people.[23] On the other hand, a group called "Let's Save Koněvka" was created on Facebook in 2020 to defend the street name *Koněvova* and came up with its own petition against the change.[24] Later in 2022, there was a petition proposing to name the street after the popular fictional Czech genius Jára Cimrman.[25] However, none of these petitions had any real impact, and all remained only on paper.

The real turning point came with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. In the heated atmosphere at that time, the position of the Topographic Commission changed, stating at its March meeting:

> The Chairwoman introduces the proposals to rename the street *Koněvova* by saying that this is not the first time we have encountered such proposals, but it is a completely different situation than in previous cases. In the discussion, the Commission is inclined to the view that *Koněvova* should be renamed. Ing. Peterka points out that on this occasion, a practical problem should be solved at the same time, namely that *Koněvova* is too long (from *Tachovské náměstí* to *Spojovací*) and should therefore be divided. Ing. Šíma agrees and proposes an alternative, i.e., to extend *Husitská* to *Jana Želivského* and rename the eastern part as *Žižkovská* or *Jarovská*. The Commission discussed various possible names to be used in this case but agreed that the city district would be approached. At the end of the discussion, everyone voted in favour of renaming *Koněvova*, with the proviso that the district would be contacted before the proposal was submitted to the Prague City Council. (Zápis..., March 23, 2022)

Let me add that at the same meeting, members of the Topographic Commission approved renaming part of the street *Korunovační*, where the Russian embassy is located, to *Ukrajinských hrdinů* ['Ukrainian Heroes'] and naming the nearby bridge after Vitaliy Skakun (cf. Dvořáková 2023). However, they spoke out against renaming *Ruská* ['Russian'][26] and *Moskevská* ['Moscow'], or other detoponymic street names referring to Russia or the former Soviet Union.[27]

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[23] Petition is available here: https://www.petice.com/pejmenovani_praske_konvovy_ulice_jmenem_marie_terezie (accessed 2024-11-20).

[24] Petition is available here: https://www.facebook.com/zachranmekonevku (accessed 2024-11-20). Note also the use of the non-standardized form of the name *Koněvka* for *Koněvova* street, which expresses an emotional relationship to the name and the place.

[25] Petition is available here: https://www.petice.com/kdy_u_pejmenovani_konvovy_ulice_tak_na_cimrmanovu (accessed 2024-11-20).

[26] "The Chairperson called for a discussion on the proposal to rename *Ruská*. The discussants were in favour of keeping the name, or at least not rushing to support the proposal to rename it. The history of the name, dating back to before World War I, was recalled. The discussion expressed the opinion that Ukrainian names should be included in the Prague topography. During the final vote, all those present spoke against the proposal to rename *Ruská* Street" (Zápis…, March 23, 2022).

[27] "At the beginning of the discussion on the proposal to rename *Moskevská* and other streets that mainly bear geographical names, Ing. Peterka provided brief information on the

One of the members of the Commission, V. Ledvinka, then said in an interview:

> The Topographic Commission defended Konev for a long time because he had the reputation of being the liberator of Prague and an honorary citizen of the city. Only when information about Konev's role in subsequent periods after World War II was brought to light did the renaming begin to take on a more realistic form. However, the decisive factor for its implementation was the change in the atmosphere after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, when the mood towards Russia, at least in Prague, changed radically. We also had to face the tendency to erase and rename everything that is Russian and smells of Russia. The Commission had a lot of work to explain that, for example, the Urals or Moscow have nothing to do with what the dictator Putin is doing, and that names of this kind are not responsible for anything. But Konev is a historical figure, and the assessment of his work is such that if a proposal comes from Prague 3 City Council, the Topographic Commission will probably support it. Although we also considered other options, for example, to divide the long street Koněvova. (Kroa 2022)

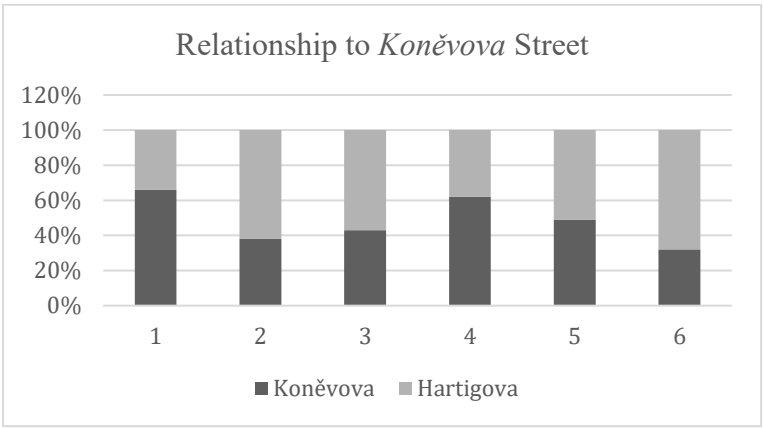
At the following meeting, the Topographic Commission "takes note of the statement of the Prague 3 City Council and other entities on the intention to rename *Koněvova* in Žižkov District" (Zápis…, May 18, 2022), and a month later "it was stated that the City Council supported the proposal to rename *Koněvova* to *Hartigova*. The proposal was adopted by seven votes" (Zápis…, June 22, 2022; see also Zápis…, September 23, 2022).

Why *Hartigova*? Karel Hartig (1833–1905) was a Czech builder, a fervent patriot, and the founder of Žižkov, a new Prague district, of which he became the first mayor. He was a great promoter of the Hussite movement. He not only promoted the name Žižkov itself, but also the naming of streets and areas after Hussite fighters and preachers. Although K. Hartig was responsible for the names of many Žižkov streets, none have yet been named after him. The area of the street Koněvova is closely connected to his life – on the site of today's Ohrada intersection, there was the Pražačka estate, owned by the Stome family, into which he married in 1865. At that time, he drew up a regulatory plan for the area and houses according to Hartig's designs began to

development of a group of names related to the former Soviet Union. At the end of 1989, there were about sixty of them, at the beginning of the nineties their number was about fifty, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of the once Soviet names became non-Russian, mostly geographical names, such as: *Arménská*, *Kazašská*, *Bajkonurská*, *Kirgizská*, *Uzbecká,* and others. The remaining forty or so names are related to Russia and are mostly geographical names such as *Amurská*, *Altajská, Bajkalská*, and others. In the discussion that followed, the prevailing opinion was that these names should not be removed. This was also the conclusion of the discussion on the proposal to rename *Moskevská* and other geographical names" (Zápis…, March 23, 2022). Cf. also later: "The Commission does not support the proposal of Mrs. Kate Ryna to rename all public spaces named after Russian motifs, whether they are poets, writers, scientists, etc." (Zápis..., September 18, 2024).

be built in the places of former homesteads and fields. This laid the foundations for Žižkov as a new Prague suburb. K. Hartig is therefore a personality who has a close relationship with the given location and who significantly contributed to its establishment and development (cf. Městská část Praha 3).

In May and June 2022, the Prague 3 City Hall conducted two surveys – one only among residents and entrepreneurs from *Koněvova* Street (A), the other for the wider public (B) (see Černý 2022; Městská část Praha 3). Almost three quarters of the residents and business owners did not participate in the A survey; of the 4,983 residents of *Koněvova* street aged 15+ who were contacted, only 944 (26%) responded, and of the 508 entrepreneurs in *Koněvova* street, 42 (16%) responded. 2,273 respondents took part in the B survey. In survey A, an overwhelming majority opposed the renaming. The most frequently cited reasons for opposing the renaming were the fear of changing the documents (39%) or "other reasons" (40%), e.g., that it is financially demanding, unnecessary, populist, rewriting history, etc., while 20% of the opponents chose the option "Konev is a personality who deserves his own street in Prague." The second survey B among the general public, on the other hand, showed that the vast majority of voters would like the street to be renamed. The results were also evaluated according to the age of the respondents and their relationship to the street *Koněvova* (see Figure 5).



1. Living in *Koněvova* and having a permanent residence here
2. Living in *Koněvova* but not having a permanent residence here
3. Not living in *Koněvova* but having a permanent residence here
4. Doing business in *Koněvova*
5. Working in *Koněvova*
6. Other relationship to *Koněvova*

Figure 5: Results of the vote on renaming street *Koněvova* to *Hartigova* in Prague (2022) (source: Černý 2022: 8)

The results show that the lowest support for the renaming is among residents of the street who permanently reside there, both in survey A (29%) and in survey

B (34%). On the contrary, according to survey B, the highest support for the renaming (68%) is among those who have no direct relationship to *Koněvova*, and among those who live on the street but do not have a permanent residence there (62%). In terms of age, in survey A, the greatest support for renaming was among respondents aged 30–49 (30–39: 44%; 40–49: 42%), in survey B, support for renaming was highest among younger people (72% for the 18–30 category), gradually decreasing with increasing age to 54% for the 61 and over category (for details, see Černý 2022; Městská část Praha 3). It should also be noted that the representatives of Prague 3 voted on the intention to renaming even before this survey was conducted, by resolution No. 249 of 6 April 2022.

An unofficial poll was then launched on his Facebook profile by Zdeněk Hřib, the mayor of the Capital City of Prague at the time (23 June 2022), the question was: "Do you agree with renaming *Koněvova* to *Hartigova*, after the name of the first mayor of Žižkov?" Voting was to be done using emoticons – a heart for "yes" (2,017 votes), a laughing smiley for "no" (856 votes). In addition, the post received 319 "likes" and over 900 comments were collected under it. In them, respondents expressed opinions that had accompanied the entire case from the beginning and are not typical only for the case of *Koněvova*, but also for other discussions regarding the renaming of streets in the Czech Republic (cf. Mácha 2023). The most common arguments against changing the name were pragmatic, mainly concerns about problems for residents of the street associated with the need to exchange documents, financial costs for entrepreneurs who have their headquarters here, the overall administrative and financial burden for the city, while the money could, according to respondents, be used more usefully. The effort for change was considered unnecessary populism, and according to respondents, politicians were solving nonsense instead of substantial problems, such as Prague transport, etc., while "change will not help anyone." There were also occasional concerns about the possibility of worsening orientation in the city. While some were bothered by "erasing Konev from history," others pointed out that most people had no idea who the street was named after. For some respondents, "the name of the street is a triviality," while others expressed a very strong emotional attachment to it, e.g., "Nooooo!!! I was born on *Koněvka* and lived there for 28 years. I can't imagine a different name for the street. And what about my parents, who still live there..." Supporters of the renaming then argued primarily about the symbolic value of street names, saying that "streets should not be named after war criminals, after people with a past that is not worthy of any honours," and used the changes in urban names after World War II as an example, e.g., "I definitely agree, we don't have streets *Heydrichova* or *Goebbelsova* in Prague either." They also expressed their belief that "It should have been done a long time ago." Conciliatory voices suggested placing explanatory signs and "let everyone form their own opinion about who Konev was." The opinion was also repeatedly expressed that the decision on the name

should primarily be made by the people who live there, e.g., "The people of Žižkov have to decide that.", "I would hold a referendum among the locals."

These observations can be compared with the research of Ochman (2025) who analysed surveys on the renaming of streets burdened with communist ideology, which were filled out by residents of Warsaw (2017), Łódź (2018), and Katowice (2017). The Polish situation was specific in that the renaming was mandatory by law. These surveys show that the majority of respondents rejected the renaming. The Polish opponents of the renaming used the same arguments that we could have heard in the Czech surveys – concerns about the complicated exchange of documents, the expenditure of considerable financial resources while the municipality could have used the money differently and better, etc. Here, two opposing views on urbanonyms as bearers of an honorific function collide. On the one hand, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, which prepared the materials for the changes, "expected that once people become aware of the actual biographies of the commemorated officials, they would be willing to accept the street renaming. The belief was that, by and large, people pay attention to street names and value their commemorative significance. And if they do not, they should be educated accordingly" (Ochman 2025: 10). On the other hand, there is the view of ordinary residents of these streets, who use their names daily and for whom street names often become empty signifiers and use them simply as spatial identifiers (cf. Rose-Redwood & Alderman & Azaryahu 2017: 8). According to Ochman, the fact that people naturally create an emotional relationship with the space in which they live, they have it associated with memories, and an intervention in the name of "their" street is then an intervention in their space, thus disrupting their identity. This can then explain why citizens may agree with renaming in general, but at the same time "most respondents rejected the renaming of their own street" (Ochman 2025: 8–9).

The final green light for the proposal was given by the councillors of the Capital City of Prague on 19 June 2023 (effective from 1 October 2023). The street now bears the name *Hartigova*. From an onomastic point of view, one honorific urbanonym was replaced by another.

A kind of epilogue and imaginary full stop to the renaming event that lasted several years was the auction, in which old signs *Koněvova* were sold, the proceeds of which went to charity (Víchová 2023).

However, the life of the Prague street *Koněvova* does not end there. It will certainly be interesting to verify after some time how much the new name *Hartigova* has really taken root among Prague residents and how common it will continue to be to hear about *Koněvka* in informal communication, because as Light & Young (2014: 676) point out: "placing a new toponym within the urban landscape through its inscription on buildings and street name plates and its incorporation into maps is not enough to assure that it will be adopted by the public and absorbed into the practices of everyday life. Instead 'old' toponyms can prove

to be surprisingly resilient, despite their ideological unacceptability."[28] The main reason is according to these authors that people are simply used to a certain name (Light & Young 2014: 679–682). This is also the opinion of some of the respondents, which was repeated in the above-mentioned discussion on Facebook, e.g., "People are used to Koněvka." or "It will still be called Koněvka."

4. Approach in other municipalities

A new impulse that started a public discussion about the necessity of decolonizing our space and getting rid of Russian/Soviet/communist urbanonyms was the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022 (see, e.g., Hlaváček 2022). However, renaming efforts often meet resistance from the local population, which is not ideologically motivated, but rather pragmatic.[29] The reluctance of local municipal councils to take a step that might be unpopular, might be seen as controversial, and might lose their political points with the electorate is also evident. When asked by journalists whether they, like Prague, were considering renaming street *Koněvova* in their cities, the interviewed mayors responded mostly in a negative way (Štěpán & Kramlová 2022):

- "When we asked people, everyone said what a load of crap. Let's leave it as it is," says the mayor of Dubí.
- "I doubt the municipality would have agreed to this unless there was some extreme pressure," says a spokesperson for Mladá Boleslav.
- "It's a complication for the citizens, they would have to deal with a complicated exchange of ID cards. But if there was such a demand, we would certainly discuss it," says the deputy mayor of Mikulov.
- "We don't foresee renaming the street. We have other problems now," says the mayor of Turnov.

The efforts of civic activists were also unsuccessful. In Mikulov, a survey was created in 2023 to rename the street *Koněvova* and return it to its original name, *Dolní kamenný řádek*, but it only received 74 signatures.[30] In Nymburk, the councillors refused to consider the proposal to rename street *Maršála*

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[28] For example, on the websites of some companies doing business on the former *Koněvova*, both names are listed, for example, the Unilabs point is located on the street "Hartigova (former Koněvova)" (https://www.unilabs.cz/cs/odberova-mista/praha/A024), the toner store can be found at the address "Hartigova (Koněvova)" (https://www.tisknulevne.cz/kontakty/prodejny/praha-3-konevova) and a development company offers a project "between Hartigova (formerly Koněvova) and Roháčova" (https://www.vivus.cz/zizkov/cz/) (accessed 2024-11-20). They realize that renaming entails a weakening of the identification and localization function and they need their customers to find them.

[29] Cf. the research of Mácha (2023), who analysed the debates on renaming *Moskevská* and *Ruská* in Česká Lípa. Cf also Dvořáková (2023).

[30] Petition is available here: https://portal.gov.cz/e-petice/478-petice-za-prejmenovani-mikulovske-konevovy-ulice (accessed 2024-11-20).

Koněva at all because it was submitted anonymously (Mach 2022). In Jičín and Ústí nad Labem, the councillors responded to the proposals by organizing a survey among residents (see Figures 6 and 7).

> After the start of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the city of Jičín received written suggestions from citizens demanding new names for some streets. The most frequent were the streets *Ruská* ['Russian'] and *M. Koněva*. These suggestions were discussed by the City Council in March 2022. The outcome was that the local citizens and businesses had to decide on any changes. It would be a change of address, which would bring administrative obligations and financial costs for companies. On this basis, a survey was announced, which took place only in the streets *Ruská* and *M. Koněva*. Every resident of these streets over the age of 18 received an envelope with a poll card. Businesses with a registered office or business premises on these streets received the ballot in their data box, and those without it were sent the ballot by post. The main poll question was "Would you like to change the name of street *Ruská* / *M. Koněva*?" When counting the completed poll votes, it was checked that the votes were indeed from residents. 111 poll ballots were distributed on M. Konev Street, of which 54 were cast in the poll. The participation rate in the poll is therefore 48.6%. A total of 39 voters did not want the change, 14 wanted the change, and 1 ballot was invalid. There were 237 ballots distributed on *Ruská*, of which 98 were cast. This is a turnout of 41.4%. A total of 92 respondents did not want the change, 6 did. No ballot was invalid. The survey was conducted between 25 April and 13 May. (Jireš 2022)

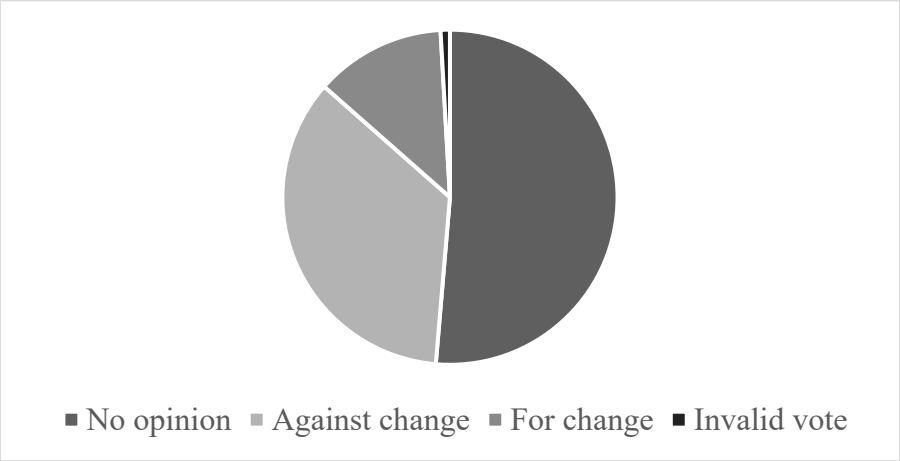

Figure 6: Results of the vote on renaming street *M. Koněva* in Jičín (2022)

The voting in Ústí nad Labem was similar: "People who live in streets *Koněvova* and *Žukovova*, or have businesses or establishments located there, could fill out a survey – according to Secretary Miloš Studenovský, 92 negative responses were returned and 9 positive ones. 20 of the 34 present councillors were against the renaming of these streets" (Hauptvogelová 2022). The course of this poll was subsequently criticized, for example by Krsek (2022).

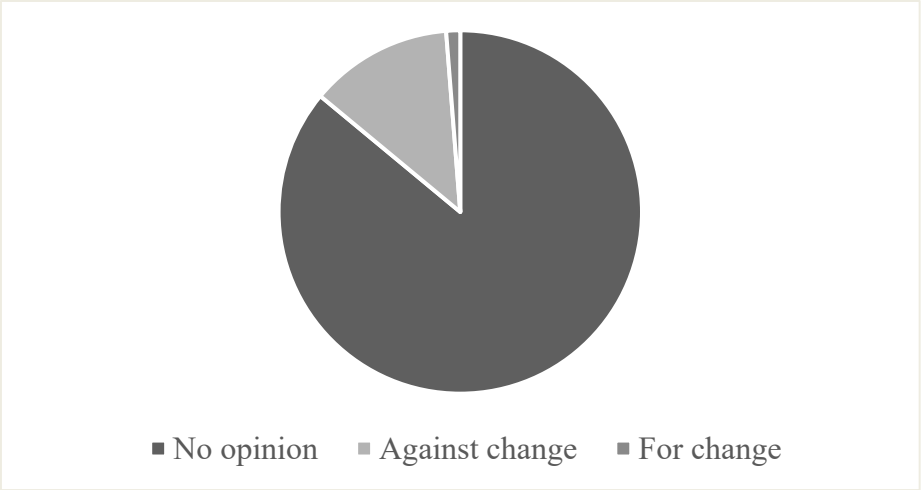

Figure 7: Results of the vote to rename *Maršála Koněva* Street in Ústí nad Labem (2022)

Unfortunately, we lack the necessary sociological data for these polls to help us uncover the motivations behind the choice.[31] Especially the age, education, and political orientation of the voters seem to be relevant. An important factor that could have influenced the outcome of the vote would have been the previous public discussion on the renaming, some form of education about I. S. Konev, etc. As far as I know, the city councils in Jičín and Ústí have not held such a discussion with their citizens. I dare to express the opinion that the city councils then use the results of such a poll not only as an argument but also as a kind of alibi so that they do not have to proceed with the change. As regards the number of people willing to take part in the survey, it is also a question of how to approach this result. Were the opponents of renaming more motivated to take part in the poll? Do so many people really care so little about what the street they live on is called? In my view, therefore, the charts in Figures 6 and 7 alone are of little explanatory value. At the same time, however, such results open up other research questions that we do not yet know the answers to and that would be worth focusing on in the future. First of all, we should analyse the attitudes of ordinary residents in more depth and verify the conclusions of Hendrich (2023), who conducted a survey among residents living on the streets *Pohraniční stráže* ('Border Guard'). He concluded that

[31] As noted by Creţan & Matthews (2016: 101), who examined the renaming of streets after the martyrs of the 1989 revolution in the Romanian city of Timişoara: "The empirical evidence in Timişoara showed that those invoking costs were either elderly people longing for the Communist past or young people who were not satisfied with the post-socialist capitalist order." And also: "The documented generational differences among the interviewed residents is very important in post-socialist cities' street-name changes: those born under socialism are more likely to preserve or even come back to street names inscribed from the 1950s to 1989, while the new generation has been more acquainted with the martyr names."

"the overwhelming majority of the respondents not only strongly disagree with the renaming of the street *Pohraniční stráže*, but the majority would not even consider such a move to be a way of coping with the communist [past]" (Hendrich 2023: 44).

5. Conclusion

The case of the street *Koněvova* clearly shows that the ban on naming public spaces after living people has its justification. An honorific name should "reward" a person for their life's work. If this person is still alive, there is unfortunately always a chance that he or she will do something negative, thereby trampling on his/her previous positive actions. This was also the case with I. S. Konev, who turned from a liberator into an occupier.

"A commemorative name has a political value; it is connected with a political regime and expresses the ideology of that regime" (David 2011: 216). Sometimes in this context, we can even talk about "toponymic newspeak." Commemorative names of public spaces are part of the "political landscape" and, in addition to their honorific function, have a myth-forming function, as pointed out by, for example, David (2011: 217–218): "Political power uses commemorative names in an attempt to usurp the landscape. […] The function of mythicization helps political power to create a new myth and adapt history to suit its ideological interpretation." And the figure of Konev – the liberator – was one of such myths. It is clear that after the fall of communism in the early 1990s, people were aware of the ideological impact of urbanonyms, which is why these street names associated with the previous regime were removed (this was also the case with several streets bearing Konev's name) and were replaced with others declaring ourselves to the new democratic order and values.[32]

Renaming did not take place everywhere and consistently in Czechia. We can still see the remains of this in Czech urbanonymy today. While in the hectic 1990s the social atmosphere was full of desire for change (including name changes), nowadays it is very difficult to achieve any renaming, as the current case of the street *Koněvova* in Prague shows. It is a sad fact that it took a shock in the form of the outbreak of war in Ukraine for this change (at least in Prague) to be implemented. At the same time, we can see here a certain social shift, which was also noticed by David & Klemensová & Davidová Glogarová (2022: 36) in connection with honorification but the above can also be applied to de-honorification:

[32] Changes to ideologically laden urbanonyms are opposed by the view, which is not universally accepted, that some names should be preserved as a memento of the times (cf. David & Mácha 2014: 146–156). Especially if urbanonyms were accompanied by explanatory signs, this would also serve as a kind of soft history lecturing, showing not only the glory of the country's history, but also its shadows.

The process of awarding honorifics has now moved from the top-down to the bottom-up sphere and is therefore primarily initiated by civic activity. What is also different from the pre-1990 period is that the introduction of a new honorific name not only takes place in public debate (petitions, surveys, media presentations), but also respects the practical needs of the inhabitants of the named locality (emphasis is placed on minimising complications). With a bit of ironic exaggeration, we could sum it up with a bon mot: "Naming yes, but without any costs."

This whole case of renaming the street *Koněvova* also opens up other research questions. Above all, a deeper analysis of the attitudes of ordinary residents who live in streets with such ideologically laden names will be necessary.

Acknowledgement

Published with support of the Strategy AV21: Research programme Identities in the World of Wars and Crisis. The preparation of this article was also financed within the long-term development program of the Czech Language Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences (RVO No. 68378092).

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