

PRIDE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PROTEST

Far too much of the world has completely forgotten the lessons of the past



Participants gather for the Budapest Pride march in Hungary on June 28 despite government efforts to ban celebrations. (Szilard Koszticsak/via The Associated Press)

Aug. 8, 2025

The Hamilton Spectator

By Lyla Miklos

Lyla Miklos is an out and proud member of Hamilton's Two Spirit and LGBTQIA-plus community. She is a former chair of Hamilton Pride and the City of Hamilton's LGBTQ Advisory Committee. lylamiklos.com

In the late 1990s when I was a radio broadcasting student at Mohawk College, I did my co-op placement at CHML/Y95.

One day, all the staff were in a tizzy over a handwritten letter delivered by Canada Post. It was addressed to "the radio station where Paddy Greene's used to be." Paddy Greene's was [a popular](#)

[Hamilton pub](#) that had closed over a decade ago. Everyone had to see and touch that letter. No one could believe that it actually had been delivered! There was even talk of framing it and hanging it up in a place of honour at the station.

When I shared this story with my father, he was especially tickled. He revealed to me that when he was a high school student at Westdale his father, Dezso Miklos Sr., was the manager of Paddy Greene's.

My father, his parents and his uncle escaped to Canada from Hungary during the [1956 Hungarian Revolution](#). My grandparents saw hope, freedom and a future in this new country they came to call their home.

I often wonder what my grandparents would have thought of their granddaughter becoming a Two Spirit and LGBTQIA-plus activist and Hamilton Pride organizer. Regrettably, by the time I came out of the closet my grandparents had passed away.

It has been nearly two decades since I last sat on the board of Hamilton Pride. A lot has changed and evolved for queer and trans Hamiltonians over that time. Unfortunately, not all for the better. As much as visibility and rights have grown over the past 20 years, much of what we have gained as a community is now being lost. Ignorance, fear and hate are back with a vengeance all over the world, and Canada has not been immune.

In Hamilton, reported [hate-related crimes and incidents](#) have gone up 35 per cent with Two Spirit and LGBTQIA-plus Hamiltonians being one of the most frequent targets. Attacks on local Pride celebrations by hate groups over the years have sent many who used to feel safe being out retreating back to closets that previously swung proudly open. Even more devastating is the stripping away of rights by various levels of governments across Canada, with so-called leaders adding more fuel to hate-filled fires with [harmful rhetoric and legislation](#).

I have to imagine that my grandparents who survived Nazis and Communists are exhausted from constantly rolling over in their graves. Far too much of the world has completely forgotten the lessons of the past, by recreating the horrifying conditions our ancestors fought so hard to spare us from.

I have to imagine that my grandparents who survived Nazis and Communists are exhausted from constantly rolling over in their graves. Far too much of the world has completely forgotten the lessons of the past, by recreating the horrifying conditions our ancestors fought so hard to spare us from.

[Hamilton's Pride celebrations](#) are happening this year from Aug. 8 to 10. We sometimes forget with all the rainbows, drag queens, glitter, music and fun that Pride started as a political act of

resistance. In 1969, New York City's Stonewall Riots were led by trans women of colour rising up against police raiding their spaces. In 1981, [Toronto's first pride march](#) was a mass demonstration protesting police raids on gay bath houses.



Hamilton Pride participants march down Augusta Street as part of Hamilton Pride's "Pride in the Park" event in 2017. Much of what we have gained as a community is now being lost, Lyla Miklos writes. (Scott Gardner/The Hamilton Spectator file photo)

Pride has always been a protest. This June, Hungarians understood this. Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban passed [legislation banning Pride celebrations](#). Anyone taking part could be fined or face a prison sentence. In an inspiring act of defiant solidarity, more than 200,000 people took part in Budapest Pride, making it [the largest Pride celebration in Hungarian history](#).

Hungarians knew that an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us. They lived the words of [Martin Niemoller](#). If they didn't speak up now for their queer and trans communities, there would be no one left to speak up for them later.



Participants cross the Elisabeth Bridge during Budapest Pride celebrations on June 28 in Hungary. Events such as Pride marches are illegal in the country. (Janos Kummer/Getty Images)

Echoes of Hungary's 1956 Revolution reverberated down the rainbow flag draped streets of Budapest this summer as Hungarians staged their country's largest anti-government demonstration in years.

Magyarok (Hungarians), you did my grandparents proud!

In 2003 at the rally to launch Hamilton Pride's annual march I gave a [speech](#) ending with these words.

"Freedom only comes when you fight, fight for it every day."

Happy Pride Hamilton!

From: https://www.thespec.com/opinion/contributors/pride-has-always-been-a-protest/article_9429f379-08d2-529a-bbc2-afb0d94d015d.html