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Erik MARUSYCH

Assistant of the Department of History and Social Sciences

Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8468-3106>

e-mail: maruszics.erik@kmf.org.ua

THE ARROW CROSS MOVEMENT IN TRANSCARPATHIA (1938–1942)

In recent years, numerous works have been published on the history of far-right parties in Hungary. However, scholarly literature dealing with the history of Transcarpathia between 1938 and 1944 has generally only mentioned Hungarian far-right movements in passing. This study therefore primarily presents the organizational efforts undertaken in Transcarpathia by the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement and the Arrow Cross Party during the period between 1938 and 1942. The year 1942 marks a turning point in the history of the movement in Transcarpathia, as seventy-four local branches left the Arrow Cross Party and joined the Hungarian National Socialist Party. The disintegration of Arrow Cross unity also affected political life in Transcarpathia. The far-right political landscape was reshaped in the region: the influence of the Arrow Cross Party declined noticeably, while the Party of Hungarian Renewal and the Hungarian National Socialist Party began to gain ground. Due to limitations of length and the complexity of the events, this study will focus only on the period up to this turning point, the years between 1938 and 1942.

The term «Transcarpathia» in the title of this study refers to both the Hungarian-inhabited lowland strip reannexed to the Hungarian Kingdom in November 1938 and the Rusyn inhabited mountain territories occupied in March 1939. It is important to emphasize that today's Transcarpathia did not constitute a unified administrative area between 1938 and 1944: the parts reannexed by the First Vienna Award were integrated into the Hungarian county system¹, while a separate administrative unit called the Transcarpathian Governorate² was established in the mountain territories reclaimed in 1939. Therefore, in geographical terms, this study covers both administrative units, and the term «Transcarpathia» is used solely for the sake of clarity.

In the course of the research, I primarily examined materials preserved in the Berehove division of the Transcarpathian Regional State Archive. Particularly valuable for the topic are the records of various administrative bodies, which include official reports related to the Arrow Cross Party, registration sheets of local branches, names of local party leaders, etc. At the same time, it is important to note that although the Berehove archive holds a vibrant source base, the fonds containing documents from the 1938–1944 period are often incomplete and contain only

¹ After the First Vienna Award, two counties were reorganized in the returned territories: Ung, and Bereg and Ugocsa counties as unified administrative units.

² The Transcarpathian Governorship was further divided into three administrative districts, which were as follows: Ung County, Bereg County, and the Máramaros Administrative District.

fragmentary sources. Moreover, significant record groups, such as the records of the deputy lord-lieutenant of Bereg County, are currently inaccessible to researchers.

Key words: Transcarpathia, revision, Arrow Cross, Hungarian, far-right.

The emergence of National Socialist Parties and the formation of Arrow Cross organizations in Transcarpathia. Far-right parties with significant mobilizing power were a new phenomenon among the local Hungarian population, as during the interwar period it was primarily the far left that had social embeddedness in the region. However, it is important to mention that far-right movements, which were gaining ground across Europe, also appeared in Czechoslovakia, though they were fragmented due to the country's ethnic composition (Palotás, 2003, p. 276). Radola Gajda's movement, the National Fascist Community Party, attracted votes mainly from among the legionnaires, while the (Catholic) People's Party of Andrej Hlinka became increasingly popular among Slovaks. The Sudeten German Patriotic Front, united by Konrad Henlein, gained traction among Germans in the latter half of the 1930s (Ormos, 1987, p. 298–300). Among the Rusyns in Transcarpathia, there were also far-right sympathizers. Stepan Fenczik, leader of the Rusyn National Autonomist Party, organized his movement based on the Italian model: they wore black uniforms and even had their own blackshirt squad (Brenzovics, 2010, p. 52–54).

Far-right movements were also present in Hungary and grew increasingly popular toward the end of the 1930s. In the 1939 elections, the National Socialist parties won one-quarter of the list votes and nearly one-fifth of the parliamentary mandates, making them the largest opposition force. The most significant among these parties was the Arrow Cross Party.

Hungarian far-right propaganda had already appeared in Upper Hungary and Transcarpathia months before the First Vienna Award. In May 1938, *Magyarság* reported – citing the *České slovo* newspaper – that: «In the counties of Zemplén, Ung, Ugocsa, and Máramaros, pamphlets labeled ‘Szálasi³ 1938’ are being distributed in huge quantities». Later, the streets of Khust, Uzhhorod, and Berehove were littered with Arrow Cross leaflets, and in the latter town, swastikas were even painted on several house walls (M-1). Following the Munich Conference in September, Arrow Cross members appeared in Transcarpathia as part of the re-formed *Rongyos Gárda*⁴. The so-called free corps were trained in Kisvárdá under the leadership of racist Iván Héjjas and were sent across the border near Berehove at the same time as the Hungarian–Czechoslovak negotiations in Komárom in October⁵ (Sallai, 2008, p. 104–107). Arrow Cross members participated in these units, of whom Miklós Kozma⁶ wrote in his diary: «There is no doubt that these Budapest asphalt-brothers [Arrow Cross members] were driven here by political ambition; we shall see how much

³ Ferenc Szálasi (1897–1946) was a Hungarian military officer, Hungarian politician, leader of the Arrow Cross Party, and later the Head of State (National Leader) and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Hungary during the German occupation. Between 1938 and 1940, he was imprisoned, during which time the party leadership was taken over by Kálmán Hubay.

⁴ The *Rongyos Gárda* was an irregular paramilitary unit in Hungary, initially active in 1921 and reestablished in 1938.

⁵ According to the provision of the Munich Agreement, Prague was required to initiate bilateral negotiations with Budapest and Warsaw regarding the issues of the Hungarian and Polish minorities. The Hungarian and Czechoslovak delegations attempted to reach a compromise on the border issues between October 9 and 13, but without success.

⁶ The Governor's Commissioner of Transcarpathia.

they gain if they cross». In the Hungarian press, the failures of the *Rongyos Gárda* were often blamed on the Arrow Cross, but their propaganda activities on the Czechoslovak side effectively paved the way for organizing efforts after the territorial revision (Kovács, 2009, p. 66–67). During these actions, they had the opportunity to establish direct contact with the local population, and through the leaflets they distributed, they primarily promoted the idea of a United Land of Hungary among both Hungarians and members of the Rusyn and Slovak nationalities (Tilkovszky, 1967, p. 27).

The territorial revision enabled more intensive far-right organizing in Transcarpathia, where especially during the initial period, they exerted a greater influence on local society. On November 5, party leader Kálmán Hubay issued an open «military order» for organizing, under which the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement lifted its ban on admitting new members: «Considering that primarily our old Hungarist Brothers, who remained loyal to the ideals of Hungarian national socialism even during the Czech occupation, have requested to openly join the party, I have today, in agreement with the party leadership, lifted the ban on admitting new members», explained the party leader in *Magyarság* (M-1).

Arrow Cross organizing thus began during the one-and-a-half-month period of military administration⁷. For example, on November 22, in the village of Hat in the Mukachevo district, the streets were littered with leaflets bearing the slogan «Hungarist State with Szálasi» under cover of night (MNL OL-2). According to a confidential report dated December 2, 1938: «The population of the returned territory generally does not engage in politics, but the majority of the population has National Socialist sympathies. According to our current intelligence, the Hungarist Movement has the most followers. There is no open organizing, only so-called whispering propaganda» (MNL OL-2). The claim that National Socialist sentiment was dominant in the returned territories is likely exaggerated. However, it is undeniable that the movement had sympathizers even in its early stages. On December 13, 1938, in Uzhhorod, the first local branch of the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement was officially founded under the presidency of the party leader himself, Hubay (Maruszics, 2023, p. 31). «The Arrow Cross movement in Uzhhorod found support mainly among the so-called ‘discontented young men’ and did not raise its flag strictly in accordance with the principles of racial theory [Rusyn youth also participated in the event]», wrote the pro-government *Kárpáti Magyar Hírlap*, the daily newspaper of the United Party (KMP-1).

The organizing did not stop in Uzhhorod; on February 14, 1939, a local branch of the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement was established in Berehove as well (ДА30-3, арк. 1–2). Other far-right groups also appeared: in the same town, a branch of Sándor Festetics’s Hungarian National Socialist Party had already been established on February 1. According to police reports, they managed to recruit fifty to sixty people in the village of Chopivka (now part of Berehove) (ДА30-3, арк. 1–2). In June 1939, Arrow Cross Front politician Mátyás Matolcsy visited the region. Based on press sources, the United Hungarian National Socialist Party, led by Fidél Pálffy, conducted successful organizing activities and by early 1940 had established local branches in Berehove, Korolevo, Khust, Vynohradiv, and Tiachiv (M-4).

⁷ The military administration was in effect between November 9, 1938, and December 22, 1938, in the areas that were returned under the First Vienna Award.

Arrow Cross organizing, however, was temporarily halted even in the returned territories when, citing the Dohany Street assassination attempt, the government banned the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement on February 23, 1939 (Paksa, 2013, p. 122–123). As part of a nationwide measure, the police raided all local branches. For the returned areas, only press sources provide some insight into the crackdown, particularly in Uzhhorod and Košice. In Uzhhorod, where the party still did not have an office in February 1939, the police «only visited the party representatives», from whom various propaganda materials, party documents, Arrow Cross insignia, and membership lists were confiscated (KMP-2). With the ban on the activities of the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement, the first phase of Arrow Cross organizing in the returned territories came to an end.

Following the ban, Hubay soon reorganized the movement and on March 8 announced the establishment of the Arrow Cross Party. Preparing for the parliamentary elections scheduled for May, the party initially focused its efforts on the Trianon-era Hungarian territory, meaning that the organization in Transcarpathia lagged somewhat behind. Lóránt Tilkovszky dated the Arrow Cross «infiltration» into the returned territories to the summer of 1939 and attributed particular importance to the cooperation between the Greenshirts (Arrow Cross) and the Blackshirts (Fenczik István's movement) (Tilkovszky, 1967, p. 187). In fact, as shown above, this was more a reorganization and continuation of the activities of the banned National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement.

The first local branch of the Arrow Cross Party was established in Uzhhorod on July 26, 1939. Between July and August, the party's foundation was reported in several settlements of the Berehove district⁸ (ДА30-3, арк. 1–9). In Bereg County, branches were soon established one after another – for instance, in Mukachevo on August 1, 1939, and from there across the entire district⁹ (ДА30-8, арк. 1–4; ДА30-9, арк. 1–4). Soon after, the party also appeared in Svaliava, meaning that by the summer of 1939, Arrow Cross organizing had already extended across the territory of the Transcarpathian Governorate (ДА30-10, арк. 1). In 1940, more local branches were founded, primarily in the counties of Ung¹⁰ (ДА30-6, арк. 1–27; ДА30-5, арк. 1–20), Ugocsa¹¹ (ДА30-5, арк. 2) and Máramaros, as well as in other areas of the Governorate¹² (M-8).

⁸ The following villages established the foundational organizations of the Arrow Cross Party: Didove, Som, Nove Selo, Kidosh, Velyki Berehy, Muzhiyevo, Choma.

⁹ The foundational organizations of the Arrow Cross Party were established in the following areas of the Mukachevo district: Rosvyhovo, Mala Hut, Velyka Hut.

¹⁰ In Ung County, the following settlements saw the establishment of basic organizations of the Arrow Cross Party: Botfalva, Koritnyani, Syurte, Kholmok, Velyka Dobron, Mala Dobron, Solomonovo, Sislivci, Velyki Heyivci, Koncovo, Tysaahtelek, Holmec, Vel'ké Kapušany, Ptruksa, Krizany, Vel'ké Slemence, Palad Komarivci, Vojany.

¹¹ In Ugocsa County, basic organizations of the Arrow Cross Party were established in the following settlements: Vinohrady, Vilok, Koroleve, Trosnyk, and Nove Szelo.

¹² In Máramaros County, basic organizations of the Arrow Cross Party were established in the following settlements: Tyachiv and Solotvyno. In the area of the Berehove Administrative Directorate, an organization was established in Veliki Komjati. In the area of the Máramaros Administrative Directorate, basic organizations were created in the following villages: Khust, Mizhirja, Kelechyn, Synevyr, Vuchkove, Nyzhnij Studenyj, Kolochava, Velykyi Bychkiv, Dobryanske, Vilhivci, and Yasinia.

The content of Arrow Cross propaganda. The electoral success of 1939 naturally encouraged the far right to intensify its preparations for elections planned – but ultimately never held – in the returned territories. The Arrow Cross had a detailed plan for organizing in Upper Hungary and Transcarpathia, which included sending members of parliament and propaganda specialists to these regions (Maruszics, 2023, p. 32). According to these plans, MPs would arrive in Transcarpathia and Upper Hungary every two weeks to hold lectures and meetings with local party members. They were also partly responsible for distributing propaganda materials in the region (ДА3О-12, арк. 5). In July 1939, a group led by Kálmán Hubay conducted a multi-day tour through Transcarpathia and Upper Hungary. The MPs visited the branches in Berehove, Mukachevo, Uzhhorod, and Košice, although in many places the authorities did not permit public meetings. Despite this, the press remained optimistic about the upcoming elections: «Based on the mood and enthusiasm for the idea among Hungarians in Upper Hungary and the Rusyns of Transcarpathia, one may conclude that in the possible upcoming elections, the Arrow Cross Party may contest with the hope of complete success» (M-3).

In August 1939, another Arrow Cross MP, Mihály Orosz, visited several settlements in Bereg County, including Berehove. However, large-scale public gatherings were not possible due to the outbreak of World War II, as the government – through decree no. 8.120 M.E. of 1939 – banned «political rallies, parades, and other political gatherings». All other types of meetings were made subject to police permission (M-5)¹³.

During their efforts to recruit members from the population, the Arrow Cross used various methods. According to police reports to the chief magistrate of the Berehove district, an unknown group of people in Chopivka went door-to-door trying to recruit members for the movement (ДА3О-3, арк. 1). In the village of Bucha (now also part of Berehove), the leader of the local Arrow Cross branch, József Kiss, together with two unidentified Budapest-based Arrow Cross members, approached a local tavern owner and tasked him with organizing the party locally (ДА3О-3, арк. 1–3). Bereg County was not the only place with such activity. In Vynohradiv, a Budapest-based Arrow Cross member, Ferenc Joó, temporarily moved there to recruit new members (ДА3О-5, арк. 90–92). Other sources reported that the Arrow Cross used community spaces like taverns and barber shops for organizing (ДА3О-5, арк. 39).

It is important to note, however, that local branches were not led by individuals sent from Budapest. Transcarpathian Arrow Cross members were actively involved in organizational tasks and also maintained contact with the party center in Budapest. Insight into the movement's activity at the local level can be found in documents preserved in the Berehove branch of the Transcarpathian Regional State Archives, as well as in some press sources. For example, the Arrow Cross leader for Bereg and Ugocsa counties, József Baranyi, was particularly active; between 1940 and 1941, he repeatedly visited the branches under his supervision (M-9). Also noteworthy are county meetings and illegally organized gatherings, which confirm that the local branches in Transcarpathia were indeed active and that local party members played a genuine role in organizing party life (PÚ, ДА3О-12, арк. 35).

¹³ This did not mean that far-right politicians stopped arriving in the region. Márton Bodor, a representative of the United Hungarian National Socialist Party, visited in February 1940, while from the Hungarists, János Lill and Imre Tatár Jr. (the latter visited Transcarpathia at least twice) visited several local Arrow Cross basic organizations in April 1940.

Arrow Cross propaganda focused on three main issues: economic hardship, the «Jewish question», and land reform. The economic and social difficulties in the returned territories played a key role in the rise of the far right. Before the territorial revision, the Czechoslovak authorities had deliberately removed the equipment from various state institutions in the soon-to-be-ceded territories, and the retreating Czechoslovak army carried out requisitions in several places (Hámori, 2006, p. 177). The partition resulting from the First Vienna Award also caused serious economic problems by splitting Transcarpathia into lowland and mountain regions, resulting in widespread transport and trade issues. Basic goods such as cornmeal, salt, and potatoes became more expensive, and firewood shortages emerged in the lowlands (Brenzovics, 2010, p. 112–113).

The Arrow Cross propaganda after the First Vienna Award also sought to exploit the stark differences between the Czechoslovak and Hungarian social safety nets, particularly the shortcomings of the latter. As early as 1918, Czechoslovak governments had introduced unemployment insurance, whereas Hungary had still not resolved the issue by 1938. Salaries for civil servants were also higher in the Czechoslovak Republic than in the Kingdom of Hungary (Hámori, 2001, p. 570). «During the Czechoslovak occupation, the unemployed received benefits, and officials generally received better pay – conditions that provide rich material for far-right propaganda», stated a report by the Budapest-based 1st Royal Hungarian Army Corps (MNL OL-1).

The problems caused by the shift of power are well illustrated by the case of Vynohradiv. After the change in control, production in many local factories – including brickworks, tile factories, and tobacco plants – either halted for an extended period or ceased entirely, despite previously providing steady livelihoods for locals. Unemployment, inflation, and supply shortages provided fertile ground for Arrow Cross propaganda and greatly contributed to the movement's later strengthening in Vynohradiv (ДА3О-4, апк. 45). Authorities themselves were aware that the Arrow Cross would attempt to exploit discontent caused by economic difficulties. In the Vynohradiv district, the gendarmerie therefore kept bread, flour, and sugar distribution centers under surveillance to prevent the Arrow Cross from using these sites for publicity purposes (ДА3О-5, апк. 27–34).

In addition to the social and economic difficulties, the unresolved «Jewish question» also formed an integral part of Arrow Cross propaganda. In her recent works, Ildikó Bajcsi pointed out that – unlike in the post-Trianon Hungary – the Jewish question in the returned territories was not framed as a social or economic issue but was instead presented in terms of national loyalty (Bajcsi, 2020, p. 26). Thanks in part to the efforts of Andor Jaross¹⁴ and his circle, some segments of Hungarian public life portrayed the Jewish populations of Upper Hungary and Transcarpathia as having betrayed the Hungarian nation during the Czechoslovak period and as having unconditionally served the state power.

The Arrow Cross advocated for an even more radical «Jewish policy» than that of the ruling government, promoting the complete disenfranchisement of the Jewish population in the returned territories. Accordingly, they considered the anti-Jewish laws that came into force after the revision to be too lenient. In support of their anti-Semitic incitement, they even created a historical foundation, portraying themselves as heirs to the political legacies of Ede Egán (1851–1901) and Miklós Bartha (1848–1905). In the newspaper *Magyarország*, they almost created a cult around these two figures. Journalist and editor Ferenc Fiala

¹⁴ He was the Minister without Portfolio for the Slovak territories of Hungary (1938–1939).

published a multi-part series entitled *In the Footsteps of Ede Egán*, in which he analyzed Egán's work in Transcarpathia – particularly the so-called «Highland Action» – and the condition of the Jewish population in the region (M-2).

At the turn of the century, Egán had identified several factors contributing to the problems of the Transcarpathian region, including the persistence of agricultural practices unsuitable for the mountainous climate, the cultivation of low-yield crops, and the scarcity of pastures and arable land. He also emphasized the negative effects of usury practices by wealthy Jewish groups. The Arrow Cross, however, focused solely on this last point, presenting Egán's work as if his exclusive goal had been to curb Jewish influence. As a Member of Parliament for the Independence and 1848 (Ugron) Party, Bartha visited Transcarpathia in 1899, traveling through areas such as Mukachevo, Veretske, Volovets, and Khust. His travel notes were published in 1901 under the title *On the Land of the Khazars*, in which – like others – he emphasized the differences between Hungarian Jews and those who had migrated from Galicia. He referred to the latter group as «Khazars» and blamed them for the difficulties faced in the northeastern counties. Arrow Cross propaganda heavily built on this idea (Bartha, 1901, p. 83–87).

In another article titled *Jewish World in Transcarpathia*, the full enforcement of the anti-Jewish laws was demanded, and Mukachevo was referred to as «the most Judaized city in Hungary» (M-7). The article described the economic status of the Jews in Transcarpathia as follows: «Everything here is in their hands. They control the entire region's economic life – industry, commerce, credit, liquid capital, the best arable land, every plant, factory, and enterprise – everything of economic value and wealth belongs to them» (M-7).

Arrow Cross propaganda attributed the unresolved economic problems to two factors: the economic dominance of the Jews and the inaction of the state and its local representatives, who allegedly failed to address the Jewish question. A striking example of local anti-Jewish agitation was Vynohradiv, frequently mentioned in this context. In February 1942, the head of the police station in the Khust border region reported that the town's residents were dissatisfied with the enforcement of the anti-Jewish laws. This dissatisfaction stemmed from Arrow Cross propaganda, which claimed that sixty shops on the main street of Vynohradiv were Jewish-owned, while only four or five belonged to Christian Hungarians (ДА3О-5, арк. 27–28).

The Arrow Cross's propaganda was so «effective» that even Árpád Siménfalvy, the Lord Lieutenant of Ung County, had to address the issue and report on it to the Minister of the Interior. He nevertheless attempted to downplay the significance of the movement in Vynohradiv: «In the other villages of the county, there is hardly any Arrow Cross activity; that in Vynohradiv is also insignificant, consisting mostly of drinking artisans, tradesmen, and former communist members» (ДА3О-5, арк. 33b). In reality, however, the Lord Lieutenant took several countermeasures against the movement in the Vynohradiv district. He ordered the closure of the Arrow Cross headquarters in Vylok and attempted to do the same in Vynohradiv. When issuing industrial permits, he considered whether the applicant was a supporter or member of the Arrow Cross movement (Maruszycki, 2024, p. 81–100).

In the case of Vynohradiv, the Lord Lieutenant even ordered a survey to determine the ownership distribution of shops in the town center. The results contradicted the Arrow Cross's claims: 84 shops were owned by Christians, while only 49 were in Jewish hands (ДА3О-5, арк. 34). In a May 1942 statement to *Kárpáti Híradó*, which he also submitted

to the Minister of the Interior, the Lord Lieutenant tried to refute allegations that anti-Jewish laws were not being properly enforced. He warned that «Béla Imrédy's party, and especially the Arrow Cross Party, may use such rumors for whispering campaigns, suggesting that Jewish affairs are not being handled in the spirit of the right-wing government in these border areas» (KH). Another example of local anti-Jewish activity by the Arrow Cross is found in the actions of József Kiss in Berehove. As the local leader of the Arrow Cross Party, Kiss repeatedly launched attacks against the Jewish community, citing the inadequate enforcement of anti-Jewish laws. However, his actions targeted not only the Jewish population of Berehove but also the city's leadership, which he sought to discredit at the national level – using the far-right *Magyarság* newspaper as his platform.

Kiss first submitted a petition to the mayor of Berehove, invoking the anti-Jewish laws and demanding the immediate dismissal of three municipal employees of Jewish origin: Jenő Klein, head of the economic department; Károly Fodor, head of the technical department; and József Vámos, an administrator in public affairs (ДІА30-1, арк. 164a). Shortly thereafter, the case appeared in *Magyarság*: «Hungarian public opinion in Berehove views with dismay that the Jewish takeover continues not only in economic life but also in the municipal administration, where Jews still occupy prominent positions» (M-5). In response, the city government preemptively retired the three men to avoid further public scandal (K). Soon after, Kiss reemerged, this time demanding the closure of the bathhouse operated by the Orthodox Israelite Religious Community in Berehove, citing unlicensed business activity. In a petition addressed to the deputy lord lieutenant, he even suggested that the main entrance to the bathhouse be walled up (M-6).

The third major theme in Arrow Cross propaganda was the «just settlement» of the land issue. In their nation-building program, the Arrow Cross Party specifically addressed land redistribution in the regained territories, insisting that land allocation should prioritize national loyalty and economic necessity (Paksa, 2013, p. 140–143). This promise of land reform may have appealed to Transcarpathian residents for several reasons. First, due to the agrarian character of the region: 58,5 % of the population in the territories regained in 1938 (Upper Hungary), and 78,2 % in Transcarpathia, lived from agriculture. Second, the Czechoslovak land reform had negatively impacted a large portion of the Hungarian population. After 1919, thousands were left stateless and thus excluded from land distribution (Szakál, 2017, p. 32–35).

In the villages of Ung County, local Arrow Cross activists tried to influence the lower social classes by promising that they would benefit from the party's land reform only if they joined the movement. In Uzhhorod, an anonymous memorandum called for the expropriation of Jewish-owned estates (ДІА30-12, арк. 3). At a meeting held in the village of Kidosh, the Arrow Cross Party leader of Bereg and Ugocsa counties claimed that, following a change in power, the lands owned by the nobility, clergy, and Jews would be confiscated (ДІА30-13, арк. 1–10). This mobilization campaign among rural communities was largely successful, as Arrow Cross organizations were established not only in larger towns but also in smaller villages throughout Transcarpathia. Nevertheless, the movement attracted not only the lower social classes but also members of the professional elite, as confirmed by official reports: «The supporters of this ideology come not only from the working class and landless peasants but also from the ranks of the official class: judges, lawyers, etc., who are enthusiastic followers of the movement» (MNL OL-3).

The Arrow Cross Party also attempted to reach out to ethnic minorities. According to research by Lóránt Tilkovszky and Attila Simon, the party operated a Slovak section in Upper Hungary (Tilkovszky, 1967, p. 136–137; Simon, 2014, p. 74–75). Some sources suggest that pro-Czech Rusyns used the Arrow Cross Party as a «cover organization» (MNL OL-3). The party indeed made efforts to recruit among the Rusyn population, as evidenced by a (ultimately unsuccessful) request to the authorities for permission to distribute Rusyn-language leaflets (KMP-3). Like the Slovak section, a Rusyn section also existed, led by Jenő Pifkó (8ÓÚ). The participation of Rusyns in the Arrow Cross is further supported by a Heroes' Day commemoration held in Velykyi Bychkiv in May 1941. During the event, 200 Arrow Cross members – both Rusyns and Hungarians – marched through the village, and the speech of the Máramaros County party leader was translated into Rusyn for the audience (M-10).

Archival and scholarly sources rarely mention Arrow Cross members of non-Hungarian ethnicity. Exceptions include a Rusyn man named Ludvik Bencs in Khust, who became president of the local Arrow Cross organization, and a presumably Slovak man who was appointed leader of the local movement in Berehove in 1941. In Vynohradiv, the party's treasurer was also reportedly of Slovak descent (ДА3О-1, арк. 8–9; ДА3О-5, арк. 57). Nonetheless, there is no accurate data on the proportion of Rusyns or other minorities who joined the Arrow Cross movement. The records of the Transcarpathian Governorate and its administrative districts – such as the offices of chief magistrates and local clerks – are highly incomplete. Only the reports from the Máramaros Administrative Office and the chief magistrate of the Khust district provide some insight into the political landscape (ДА3О-2, арк. 405). These reports mostly describe general political apathy. They also mention the rivalry between the parties led by István Fenczik and András Bródy, as well as the fragmented organization of the communist movement following the establishment of the Soviet–Hungarian border. However, with regard to the activities of the Arrow Cross Party, information is available only for the Khust area (ДА3О-7, арк. 1; ДА3О-11, арк. 17).

Between 1938 and 1942, the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarian Movement, and later its successor, the Arrow Cross Party, was the most active opposition party from Hungary operating in the recently reannexed territories of Transcarpathia. The success of Arrow Cross organizing efforts is evidenced by the fact that, for a long time, no other opposition party had as many local branches in the region. This dominance lasted until the party split in the spring of 1942. The events surrounding the party schism in Transcarpathia cannot be entirely separated from national developments. In the autumn of 1941, Fidél Pálffy and László Baky left the Arrow Cross Party and soon re-established their old political formation, the Hungarian National Socialist Party. Several followers joined them, and shortly thereafter, Pálffy entered into an alliance with Béla Imrédy, creating the Hungarian Renewal National Socialist Party Alliance. At this point, the split was temporarily avoided in Transcarpathia; in fact, seventy-nine local organizations publicly pledged loyalty to Ferenc Szálasi in *Pesti Újság*. Eighteen individuals (including four women), all party functionaries, signed the declaration (PÜ-2).

At the national level, however, the departure of Pálffy's «splinter group» prompted additional waves of defections. The resulting fragmentation divided the Arrow Cross leadership, with some members continuing to advocate for unity among the various National Socialist factions. In 1942, Ferenc Szálasi expelled several party members –

including his deputies, Kálmán Hubay and Jenő Ruskay – while others left voluntarily soon after (Paksa, 2013, p. 236). The fallout reached Transcarpathia as well: in early May 1942, seventy-four local branches announced their withdrawal from the Arrow Cross Party, explaining their decision as follows: «We are resigning solely because the ideological, personnel, and organizational-strategic issues that have arisen have not been addressed, resulting in a complete loss of confidence in the party leadership» (M-11). These breakaway groups simultaneously joined Pálffy Fidél's new National Socialist formation (M-12).

It is important to note that the Arrow Cross Party did not disappear from the region after the 1942 split. However, its activities were significantly reduced and would not regain their earlier intensity until the German occupation in 1944.

This study aimed to explore the organizational efforts of the Arrow Cross Party in Transcarpathia. However, two key questions remain unresolved: the total party membership and the precise composition of its social base. Source material concerning the number of members in local branches is scarce: according to reports from the deputy lord lieutenant, there were an estimated 340–350 members in Vynohradiv, 130–140 in Vylok, while the *Magyarság* newspaper – clearly biased in favour of the party – claimed 796 members in Mukachevo (ДАЗО-4, арк. 45).

During the 1942 party schism, *Magyarság* reported the resignation of 1,850 members, but this figure should be treated with caution due to the context of ongoing internal rivalries among far-right groups. Accurate membership numbers are difficult to determine, as local branch registration forms often listed only the names of officials. Moreover, fear of official retaliation led many members to conceal their affiliation.

Regarding the party's social base in Transcarpathia, available sources suggest that Arrow Cross branches – much like their counterparts in post-Trianon Hungary – functioned as «catch-all» parties. Their ranks included peasants, artisans, civil servants, intellectuals, and even a Reformed pastor. However, the sample size is too small to draw representative conclusions, and answering this question more fully will require further in-depth archival research.

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ДАЗО-2: Держархів Закарпатської обл., ф. 162 (Марамороська адміністративна експозитура, м. Хуст Марамороської жупи), оп. 1, спр. 3, арк. 405.

ДАЗО-3: Держархів Закарпатської обл., ф. 185 (Берегівський окружний начальник, м. Берегово Березької жупи), оп. 1, спр. 4, арк. 1–15.

ДАЗО-4: Держархів Закарпатської обл., ф. 258 (Піджупан Угочанської жупи, м. Надьселлеш), оп. 4, спр. 142, арк. 1–50.

ДАЗО-5: Держархів Закарпатської обл., ф. 259 (Наджупан Угочанської жупи, м. Надьселлеш), оп. 1, спр. 14, арк. 1–44.

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Ерік МАРУСИЧ

асистент кафедри історії та суспільних дисциплін
Закарпатського угорського інституту ім. Ференца Ракоці II
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8468-3106>
e-mail: maruszics.erik@kmf.org.ua

РУХ «СХРЕЩЕНІ СТІЛИ» НА ЗАКАРПАТТІ (1938–1942)

Зазначено, що в останні роки було опубліковано численні праці з історії ультраправих партій в Угорщині, однак наукова література, що стосується історії Закарпаття 1938–1944 рр., зазвичай лише побіжно згадує ультраправі рухи. Тому висвітлено організаційні зусилля, здійснені в Закарпатті Націонал-соціалістичною угорською партією – Гунгаристським рухом і партією «Стрілохрест» у період із 1938 р. по 1942 р. Констатовано, що 1942 р. став переломним моментом в історії руху в Закарпатті, оскільки 74 місцеві осередки вийшли з партії «Стрілохрест» і приєдналися до Угорської націонал-соціалістичної партії. Зауважено, що розпад єдності партії «Стрілохрест» також вплинув на політичне життя Закарпаття – політичний ландшафт ультраправих у регіоні зазнав змін: вплив партії «Стрілохрест» помітно зменшився, тоді як Партія угорського відродження та Угорська націонал-соціалістична партія почали здобувати підтримку. Через обмеження обсягу і складність подій зосереджено увагу лише на періоді до цього перелому, тобто на 1938–1942 рр.

Застережено, що термін «Закарпаття» в назві статті охоплює як угорськомовну низинну смугу, приєднану в листопаді 1938 р., так і гірські русинські території, повернуті в

березні 1939 р. Наголошено, що сучасне Закарпаття не становило єдиної адміністративної одиниці в період із 1938 р. по 1944 р.: території, приєднані за Першим Віденським арбітражем, були інтегровані в угорську систему повітів, а окрема адміністративна одиниця під назвою «Закарпатське намісництво» була створена в гірських територіях, повернутих 1939 р. Тому констатовано, що в географічному плані ця стаття охоплює обидві адміністративні одиниці, а термін «Закарпаття» використано винятково для зручності.

У процесі дослідження вивчено переважно матеріали, збережені в Берегівському відділенні Закарпатського обласного державного архіву. Особливо цінними визнано документи різних адміністративних органів, що містять офіційні звіти, пов'язані з партією «Стрілохрест», реєстраційні картки місцевих осередків, імена місцевих партійних лідерів тощо. Водночас зазначено, що хоча Берегівський архів має надзвичайно багатий джерельний матеріал, фонди, які містять документи 1938–1944 рр., часто неповні та містять лише фрагментарні джерела, крім того, значні групи документів, як-от матеріали заступника жупана Березького повіту, наразі недоступні для дослідників.

Ключові слова: Закарпаття, ревізіонізм, партія «Стрілохрест», гунгаризм, крайня правниця.

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