

# ВСЕСВІТНЯ ІСТОРІЯ



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## ARROW CROSS ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS IN TRANSCARPATHIA BETWEEN 1938 AND 1942

**Abstract. Purpose.** The aim of this study is to examine the organizational activities of Hungarian far-right parties – in particular, the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarian Movement and the Arrow Cross Party – in Subcarpathia between 1938 and 1942. The research seeks to uncover how these parties attempted to expand their political influence in the region, what local structures they established, and what impact this had on public and political life. **Scientific novelty.** The article provides a detailed analysis of the far-right parties' organizational efforts in a borderland region that has often been overlooked in the study of political radicalism. The author uses underexplored administrative and police documents from the Berehovo branch of the Transcarpathian Regional State Archive, which shed new light on the process of political radicalization in the reclaimed territories. **Originality.** The research is based on archival sources such as reports on the establishment of local branches, official documents, and membership data. Despite the fragmentary nature of these materials, the author attempts to reconstruct the party network, explore the social composition of its membership, and identify the core themes of Arrow Cross propaganda. **Conclusions.** Until 1942, the Arrow Cross Party was an active and proactive participant in the political life of the region, particularly in building local party cells and spreading its propaganda. Although its influence declined following an internal split, it regained strength in 1944 after the German occupation. Its ideology focused on economic difficulties, the Jewish question, and the need for land reform – themes that resonated with lower social strata. The local party branches functioned as broad-based movements, with members including farmers, artisans, clerks, intellectuals, and even a Protestant pastor. The effectiveness of the propaganda is difficult to assess, as the central government and local authorities consistently restricted the party's activities by closing offices, arresting members, and countering its often distorted rhetoric through state-controlled media.

**Keywords:** Transcarpathia, Arrow Cross, Hungarian, far-right, right-wing radicalism.

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## ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНІ ЗУСИЛЛЯ ПАРТІЇ «СТРІЛОХРЕСТ» У ЗАКАРПАТТІ У 1938–1942 рр.

**Анотація. Мета.** Метою статті є аналіз організаційної діяльності угорських ультраправих партій – зокрема Націонал-соціалістичної угорської партії – Гунгаристського руху та Партії Схрещених стріл – на Закарпатті в 1938–1942 рр. Дослідження спрямоване на з'ясування того, яким чином ці партії намагалися розширити свій політичний вплив у регіоні, які структури вони створювали, а також який вплив це мало на суспільно-політичне життя краю. **Наукова новизна.** У статті детально проаналізовано зусилля ультраправих партій щодо організаційного укріплення в прикордонному регіоні, що досі часто залишався поза увагою дослідників політичного радикалізму. Автор залучив маловідомі адміністративні та поліцейські документи з архіву в Берегові, які дозволяють по-новому поглянути на процеси політичної радикалізації на приєднаних територіях. **Оригінальність дослідження.** Основу дослідження становлять архівні джерела – повідомлення про створення місцевих осередків, звіти органів

влади, дані про членство. Автор робить спробу реконструювати мережу партійних осередків, дослідити соціальний склад членства та виявити головні теми пропаганди, незважаючи на фрагментарність джерел. **Висновки.** Партія Схрещених стріл до 1942 р. була активним і ініціативним учасником політичного життя регіону, особливо у формуванні місцевих осередків та веденні пропагандистської діяльності. Хоча після розколу її вплив ослаб, з 1944 р., після німецької окупації, активність знову зростає. Ідеологія партії фокусувалася на економічних труднощах, єврейському питанні та земельній реформі – темах, які мали резонанс серед нижчих соціальних верств. Місцеві осередки мали характер масових партій, членами яких були селяни, ремісники, чиновники, інтелігенція і навіть один реформатський пастор. Ефективність пропаганди важко оцінити, адже влада та місцеві органи послідовно обмежували діяльність партії шляхом закриття офісів, арештів членів, а також публікацій у підконтрольній пресі, що спростовували часто викривлену риторiku руху.

**Ключові слова:** Закарпаття, Партія «Стрілохрест», гунгаризм, крайня правниця, праворадикалізм.

**Statement of the Problem.** The history of far-right movements is one of the key areas of research in historiography; however, the presence and activities of these movements in Transcarpathia have so far received only marginal scholarly attention. Between 1938 and 1944, Transcarpathia was part of the Kingdom of Hungary, and thus the examination of the role played by Hungarian far-right parties active in the region can serve as an important supplement to our historical understanding of the era. There is a particular lack of studies that analyze the formation, operation, and regional significance of the local organizations of the Arrow Cross Party and the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement. The aim of the present study is to explore the process through which these parties established their organizational structures in Transcarpathia between 1938 and 1942, and to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the region's political landscape during this period. The year 1942 represents 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 fragmentation of the Arrow Cross also had an impact on political life in the region, leading to a reshaping of far-right positions across Transcarpathia. Due to limitations of space and the complexity of the events, this study will focus exclusively on developments up to this turning point—namely, the period between 1938 and 1942.

The term Transcarpathia in the title of this study refers to both the lowland strip reannexed in November 1938 and the mountainous areas reclaimed in March 1939. It is important to emphasize that today's Transcarpathia did not form a single administrative unit between 1938 and 1944: the territories reannexed by the First Vienna Award were integrated into the Hungarian county system\*, while the mountainous areas reclaimed in 1939 were organized into a separate administrative unit known as the Governorate of Subcarpathia\*\*. Therefore, in geographical terms, this study covers both administrative units, and the term Transcarpathia is used solely for the sake of clarity.

**Analysis of Recent Studies and Publications.** In recent years, a number of scholarly works have been published focusing on the history of far-right parties in Hungary [1–4]. However, these studies have generally only marginally addressed events in Transcarpathia. In the historical literature dealing with the region's history between 1938 and 1944, the presence and activities of Hungarian far-right movements are typically mentioned only in passing. From this perspective, the work of Loránt Tilkovszky is particularly noteworthy, as it provides a wealth of valuable data regarding the organization of the Arrow Cross Party in both Upper Hungary and Transcarpathia between 1938 and 1941 [5]. Also deserving of attention is the source publication by Ákos Fóris and Renáta Paládi, which presents reports from the SMERSH group of the 4th Ukrainian Front and contains significant information about the political situation in Transcarpathia, including the local activities of the Arrow Cross Party [6].

**Purpose.** The aim of this study is to explore the forms of organizational activity carried out by Hungarian far-right parties – in particular the National Socialist Hungarian Party and the Arrow Cross Party – in Subcarpathia between 1938 and 1942. The research also seeks to understand how these parties attempted to expand their political influence in the region, what local structures they established, and how these developments affected the political landscape of Subcarpathia. The analysis is based primarily on materials preserved in the Berehove branch of the Transcarpathian Regional State Archive. Of particular value for the topic were documents from various administrative authorities, which include official reports on the Arrow Cross Party, registration forms of local party branches, and the names of local party leaders. It is also important to note that, although the Berehove archive holds an extensive collection of sources, the fonds covering the years 1938–1944 are often incomplete and contain mostly fragmentary records.

**Main Body.** 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

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

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

gaining ground across Europe, also appeared in Czechoslovakia, though they were fragmented due to the country's ethnic composition [7, c. 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 [8, c. 298–300]. There were far-right sympathizers in Transcarpathia as well. The leader of the National Autonomist Party, István Fencsik, organized his movement following the Italian model: they wore black uniforms and even had their own blackshirt squad. [9, n. 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 Szálasi\* 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 [10, c. 11]. Following the Munich Conference in September, Arrow Cross members appeared in Transcarpathia as part of the re-formed *Rongyos Gárda\*\**. 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 Komárno in October. 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 [11, c. 66–67].

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* [10, c. 11].

Arrow Cross organizing thus began during the one-and-a-half-month period of military administration\*\*\*. 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. [12, c. 11]. 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 [13, c. 31; 14, c. 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. 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). 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 [15, c. 1–2].

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. 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

\* Ferenc Szálasi (1897–1946) was a Hungarian military officer, Hungarist 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.

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

\*\*\* 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.

documents, Arrow Cross insignia, and membership lists were confiscated. 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 [2, c. 122–123]. 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) [5, c. 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 district\* [15, c. 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 district\*\* [16, c. 1–9; 17, c. 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 [18, c. 1]. In 1940, more local branches were founded, primarily in the counties of Ung\*\*\* [19, c. 1–27], Ugocsa\*\*\*\* and Máramaros, as well as in other areas of the Governorate\*\*\*\*\* [20, c. 1–20].

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. 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 [21, c. 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 [22, c. 4]. 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.

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. 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 [15, c. 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. Other sources reported that the Arrow Cross used community spaces like taverns and barber shops for organizing [20, c. 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. Also noteworthy are county meetings and illegally organized gatherings, which confirm

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

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

\*\*\* 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.

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

\*\*\*\*\* 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.

that the local branches in Transcarpathia were indeed active and that local party members played a genuine role in organizing party life [21, c. 35].

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. 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 [9, c. 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. «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 [23, c. 2]. 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. 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 [24, c. 45].

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 Bajesi 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. Thanks in part to the efforts of Andor Jaross\* 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. [25, c. 26].

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 *Magyarság*, they almost created a cult around these two figures. Journalist and editor Ferenc Fiala 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 [26, c. 9].

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 [27, c. 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». 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» [26, c. 9].

\* He was the Minister without Portfolio for Upper Hungary Affairs (1938–1940).

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 [28, c. 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». 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.

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 [20, c. 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 [29, c. 3–4]. 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.

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. 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. 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. 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» [12, c. 1–7].

**Conclusions.** Between 1938 and 1942, the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement, and later its successor, the Arrow Cross Party, was the most active Hungarian opposition political formation in Subcarpathia. No other party built as extensive a network of local branches as the Arrow Cross did. This organizational dominance lasted until the party split in the spring of 1942, when internal conflicts led 74 local branches to join the Hungarian National Socialist Party led by Fidél Pálffy. Although the Arrow Cross Party did not disappear after the split, its activity declined significantly, and it could only regain momentum following the German occupation in 1944. This study examines the organizational activity of the Arrow Cross Party in Subcarpathia. However, due to limited sources, we could not fully determine the size of the membership or the social composition of the party. According to some reports by sub-prefects, membership figures in certain towns were as follows: 340–350 in Vynohradiv, 130–140 in Vylok, and 796 in Mukachevo, based on the party newspaper. In 1942, the *Magyarság* reported that 1,850 members had resigned from the party, though the reliability of this figure is questionable. The lack of accurate membership records and the secretive nature of the movement make it difficult to provide exact estimates. Based on available sources, the local Arrow Cross branches functioned as broad-based movements, attracting farmers, artisans, clerks, intellectuals, and even a Reformed Church pastor. Nevertheless, the sample is too small to draw representative conclusions, and further archival research is necessary. In Subcarpathia, Arrow Cross propaganda focused primarily on three themes: economic hardship, the Jewish question, and land reform. However, it is difficult to assess how effective this propaganda actually was. The government and local authorities actively resisted the movement's efforts: party offices were shut down, members were

arrested, and official media outlets were used to counter or discredit the often false and distorted messages of Arrow Cross agitators.

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