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THE ARROW CROSS MOVEMENT IN UNG COUNTY IN 1938–1944

Abstract. Purpose. The purpose of the article is to study the activities of the Arrow Cross Party and the Hungarian movement in Ung County in 1938–1944. The research focuses on how far-right ideology influenced local society, the methods the movement sought to gain influence, and the means by which the authorities attempted to restrict its activities. **Scientific novelty.** The novelty of the work lies in the use of lesser-known archival sources to highlight the process of establishing local organizations, the difficulties of obtaining permits, and the political instrumentalization of the land question. A detailed analysis is provided of how the Arrow Cross activists sought to address the peasantry and how the state and local authorities responded. **Originality of the research.** The originality lies in a microhistorical approach: through examples of specific settlements, the everyday functioning of the movement is revealed. The analysis goes beyond the ideological level and also demonstrates the living conditions of local members, their social background, and their attitude toward the organization. Particular attention is paid to political symbolism, public events, and forms of agitation that shaped the party's image within local communities. **Conclusions.** The results of the study show that the spread of the movement was facilitated by economic difficulties, social discontent, and a political vacuum; however, conscious resistance from both local and central authorities significantly limited it. Although Arrow Cross cells managed to reach rural communities and their agitation had an impact on certain groups, long-term consolidation of the movement was hindered by government actions, internal contradictions, and wartime circumstances. The party's influence remained spatially and socially differentiated: in some communities it managed to establish a base, while in others indifference or outright resistance prevailed. Overall, it can be concluded that the far-right movement in Ung County had a certain presence and temporary influence, but the conditions did not allow it to become a stable political force.

Keywords: Transcarpathia, Arrow Cross Party, Hungarianism, Ung County, Uzhhorod, far right.

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СТРІЛОХРЕСТІВСЬКИЙ РУХ В УЖАНСЬКОМУ КОМІТАТИ У 1938–1944 рр.

Анотація. Мета. Метою статті є дослідження діяльності Стрілохрестівської партії та гунгаристського руху в Ужанському комітаті у 1938–1944 роках. Дослідження зосереджене на тому, як крайня права ідеологія впливала на місцеве суспільство, якими методами рух прагнув здобути вплив і якими засобами влада намагалася обмежити його діяльність. **Наукова новизна.** Новизна роботи полягає у використанні мени досліджених архівних джерел для висвітлення процесу створення місцевих організацій, труднощів із отриманням дозволів, а також політичної інструменталізації земельного питання. Докладно аналізується, як стрілохрестівці намагалися звернутися до селянства та якою була реакція державної та місцевої влади. **Оригінальність дослідження.** Оригінальність полягає в мікроісторичному підході: через приклади конкретних населених пунктів розкривається повсякденне функціонування руху. Аналіз не обмежується лише ідеологічним рівнем, а й демонструє умови життя місцевих членів, їхнє соціальне походження та ставлення до організації. Особлива увага приділяється політичній символіці, громадським заходам і формам агітації, що формували образ партії в локальних громадах. **Висновки.** Результати дослідження свідчать, що поширенню руху сприяли економічні труднощі, суспільне невдоволення та політичний вакум, однак свідома протидія місцевої та загальнодержавної влади значно його обмежувала. Хоча осередки «нляшів» змогли охопити сільські громади і їхня агітація мала вплив на певні верстви населення, тривале змінення руху стримували як дії влади, так і внутрішні суперечності та воєнні обставини. Вплив партії залишався просторово та соціально

диференційованим: у деяких громадах їй вдалося створити опору, тоді як в інших переважали байдужість або відвертий опір. Загалом можна зробити висновок, що праворадикальний рух в Ужанському комітаті мав певну присутність і тимчасовий вплив, проте наявні політичні та суспільні умови не дозволили йому перетворитися на стійку силу.

Ключові слова: Закарпаття, Партія «Стрілохрест», гунгаризм, Ужанський комітат, Ужгород, крайня правиця.

Problem Statement. The emergence of far-right movements in Transcarpathia, particularly in Ung County after 1938, was a new and previously unprecedented phenomenon. During the Czechoslovak period, leftist and communist currents held greater influence among the Hungarian community, while the far right appeared only sporadically. However, the change of power following the First Vienna Award created a political vacuum that provided an opportunity for the Hungarian movement, the Arrow Cross Party, to organize and establish a presence in local society.

Analysis of Recent Studies and Publications. The nationwide history of the Arrow Cross movement has been examined in several monographs and studies within Hungarian historiography (e.g., the works of Rudolf Paksa, Zoltán Paksy, and László Karsai), but the Transcarpathian context has been far less explored [1–3]. The scholarly literature has mainly focused on national political developments and has devoted little attention to the everyday functioning of local organizations, their social base, and their relationship with the authorities. This study seeks to fill this gap by relying on archival sources, police reports, and local press materials.

Purpose. The purpose of the study is to present how the network of the Arrow Cross Party was established and operated in Ung County between 1938 and 1944. The research focuses on which social groups the movement sought to address, how the authorities responded to its organizational activities, and what role economic, social, and political factors played in the local spread of the far right.

Main Body. As a result of the First Vienna Award, signed on November 2, 1938, Czechoslovakia ceded 1,523 km² of territory from Transcarpathia to the Kingdom of Hungary. Four mixed brigades were designated to take possession of these territories. On November 10, 1938, the Debrecen mixed brigade, led by Lieutenant General Géza Siegler, marched into Uzhhorod. Following the entry of the Hungarian army, military administration was introduced, which lasted until December 22, 1938. The military commander of Uzhhorod became Colonel Gábor Tomcsányi, while the ministerial commissioner of the city was Károly Rauch. On December 17, 1938, Government Decree No. 9.330/938 on the «new order of administration of the liberated Upper Hungary» was issued, under which Ung County was re-established, with Uzhhorod as its seat [4, c. 298, 307]. The county's territory amounted to 692 km², and according to the census of December 15, 1938, its population was 73,980. The county was divided into two districts: one Uzhhorod district, with Uzhhorod as its center, and one Veľké Kapušany district, with Veľké Kapušany as its center [5, c. 40, 49].

Following the First Vienna Award, Hungarian political parties – including the radical right-wing parties – appeared in Ung County. The emergence of the far right was, in certain respects, a new phenomenon, since among the Hungarian population it was primarily the far left that had deeper roots both in Upper Hungary and in Transcarpathia during the Czechoslovak period. This does not mean, however, that far-right parties were absent from the Czechoslovak Republic. In 1927 Radola Gajda organized the National Fascist Community Party, although the movement was not particularly popular and did not possess a broad social base [6, c. 276]. The party had a Hungarian section in Bratislava, under the leadership of Imre Janovszky, but it did not constitute a widespread phenomenon among the Hungarian population, and the archival sources examined thus far suggest that no local groups were formed in Transcarpathia [7, c. 32–33]. Far-right ideas from Hungary, however, had already appeared in Transcarpathia prior to the First Vienna Award. According to an article in *Magyarság*, Arrow Cross leaflets were distributed in several Transcarpathian towns in May 1938: «The streets of Khust, Uzhhorod, and then Berehovo were covered with Arrow Crosses; in addition, in Berehovo the walls of houses and sidewalks were painted with National Socialist propaganda crosses» [8, c. 16]. Yet the far-right current arriving from the Kingdom of Hungary only became more popular among the Hungarian population after

the Vienna Award. In Ung County, the movement already unfurled its banner under the period of military administration. On December 13, 1938, Kálmán Hubay personally visited Uzhhorod, and under his chairmanship the first local branch of the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarianist Movement – was established [9, c. 31]. «In a large villa in Uzhhorod, Arrow Cross representative Kálmán Hubay unfurled the banner», proclaimed the front page of the *Kárpáti Magyar Hírlap*. According to the article, the movement found supporters among «discontented youth». Hubay presented the movement's aims to those gathered and stressed «that only reliable, racially pure elements could be admitted into the party» [10, c. 1].

The followers of the newly established party in Uzhhorod soon came into conflict with the local authorities. On December 31, 1938, a group of young people, singing «Szálasi songs», caused a disturbance in the city streets by smashing glasses and plastering shop windows with Arrow Cross propaganda materials. The noisy youths were taken into custody by the police but were released shortly afterward on the condition that such misconduct would not be repeated. The National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarianist Movement did not operate for long in the reincorporated territories, as the Teleki government banned the party on February 23, 1939, following the hand grenade attack on Dohány Street in Budapest on February 3. Police raids were carried out simultaneously across the country. The Uzhhorod police also launched an operation, conducting searches at the homes of registered Hungarists, seizing party documents, badges, membership lists, and propaganda materials [9, c. 32]. On March 8, 1939, Kálmán Hubay announced the formation of the Arrow Cross Party, which was the successor to the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarianist Movement. The repeatedly banned movement began to reorganize once again in the spring of 1940 in the territory of Ung County*.

The party had concrete plans for Upper Hungary and Transcarpathia, where it intended to send members of parliament as well as propaganda specialists. Arrow Cross deputies were expected to travel every two weeks to towns and villages, where they were to hold lectures and meetings for party members. They were also tasked with delivering propaganda materials to local functionaries [11, c. 16]. The personal presence of the deputies was particularly important because they enjoyed parliamentary immunity, which made it more difficult for the authorities to take action against them. Higher-ranking Arrow Cross members and parliamentary deputies visited Transcarpathia on several occasions. Kálmán Hubay, for instance, visited Uzhhorod, Mukachevo and Berehovo. Ferenc Szálasi likewise appeared in Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Berehovo, and Vynohradiv. His visit to Uzhhorod took place on July 21, 1941. The event was also reported in the *Kárpáti Magyar Hírlap*. Ferenc Szálasi arrived in Uzhhorod by car together with Count Lajos Széchenyi and another unidentified person. The party leader was received by Arrow Cross leaders of Ung County's districts and villages: «In view of the present times, we gave no outward signs to the reception; only after he held his official party inspection did he attend a lunch for sixty guests». Afterwards, Szálasi and his entourage continued their journey to Mukachevo [12, c. 2].

The return of Hungarian administration to Transcarpathia did not bring about a higher standard of living. The withdrawal of Czech capital and the loss of markets also negatively affected the local economy. Practically nothing came of the Hungarian economic plans, such as the development of the timber industry and tourism or the construction of hydroelectric plants. The price of cornmeal and salt rose, export opportunities narrowed, and as a result fruit and tobacco production suffered significant decline. The Arrow Cross sought to present these developments as the sole responsibility of the government, attempting to gain the locals' trust by exploiting economic hardship [7, c. 37]. In the program announced by the Arrow Cross Party on March 15, 1939, one finds numerous points that could have had an impact on local society. The call for «unification» and the promise of «more bread for every Hungarian» may have resonated on an emotional level, while issues such as eliminating unemployment, creating jobs, and ensuring adequate wages could have appealed rationally to those negatively affected by the change of power [13, c. 160–163].

The most promising slogan, however, was the call for a just land reform. This was a crucial issue for the local population for two main reasons. First, according to a 1930 survey, 84.6% of

* In Ung County, the Arrow Cross Party had local branches operating in the following settlements: Uzhhorod, Botfalva, Korytniany, Siurte, Holmok, Velyka Dobron, Mala Dobron, Solomonovo, Shyshlivtsi, Velyki Heivtsi, Koncovo, Tysaagtelek, Kráľovský Chlmec, Veľké Kapušany, Sirenfalva, Mokra, Velyki Selmenci, Palad-Komorots, Vojany.

the population of Transcarpathia lived in rural areas. Second, the Czechoslovak land reform had adversely affected the local Hungarians. At that time, several thousand people still did not have Czechoslovak citizenship, and thus were not eligible, while much of the redistributed land came from Hungarian and German landowners [14, c. 32–35]. The question of land reform also appeared on the local political stage. In February 1941, József Baranyi, Arrow Cross leader of Bereg and Ugocsa counties, reportedly addressed the issue during a speech in the village of Kid'osh, stating that after the «imminent» takeover of power, land would be confiscated from priests, counts, and Jews, and everyone would receive twenty-five holds, along with adequate tools and long-term credit [9, c. 35]. The movement also sought to rally the peasant strata in Ung County to its side. First and foremost, it tried to attract the landless peasants, persuading them that in the event of a future land reform they would only be entitled to redistributed plots if they joined Szálasi's party [11, c. 3].

The central leadership of the Arrow Cross Party also took further steps to win over the local peasantry. The chief magistrate of Vel'ké Kapušany, Zoltán Páska, even warned the district clerks that the Arrow Cross was attempting to recruit the farming population into the party ranks. The party's instructions required local Arrow Cross activists to infiltrate the farmers' circles in the villages with their own men. In response, the authorities prepared counter-propaganda, focusing primarily on the issues of land and taxation. The authorities were careful to ensure that the propaganda materials did not contain statistical data, since, according to their assessment, such information did not interest the peasantry [11, c. 25]. The Arrow Cross plan to attract the rural population was not without results. This is best demonstrated by the successive waves of newly established local branches, which spread not only to larger towns but also to smaller villages. Notification forms arriving from party headquarters listed the organizers of the local branches and their occupations. Archival sources indicate that the majority were farmers, peasants, or engaged in small-scale crafts. It is important to note, however, that the sample of 40–50 individuals cannot be taken as representative of the entire membership; these were merely the persons mentioned at the founding of the party branches in the respective settlements [15, c. 1–27]. To answer the question comprehensively, insufficient archival material is available, and the sources at hand remain rather limited. Greater insight into the living conditions of the members can be gained from the reports surveying the party premises. In each village, buildings consisting of one or at most two rooms were typically registered as party headquarters, with one room generally used for sleeping and the other serving as a kitchen. In some settlements, several buildings were reported, but none met the requirements set by the authorities, and thus a number of party premises were ordered to be closed [15, c. 1]. The party premises operated in simple peasant houses, and the members generally lived under modest conditions [16, c. 1–20].

The movement launched an intensive campaign of agitation against the Jewish population living in the county. Numerous articles were published in *Magyarság* that sought to portray the local Jews as holding economic and political dominance. Ferenc Fiala's article, entitled *«In the Footsteps of Ede Egán»*, perhaps best illustrates the themes employed against the Jewish community: *«Their hand directs the economic life of the city and its surroundings, they purchase the grain from the plains and the timber from the mountainous areas, at their invisible signal the most essential foodstuffs disappear from the shops, and woe to anyone who dares to confront this very visible bearded army»*. The Jewish community of Uzhhorod was thus presented to the public as an extension of Czechoslovak power [17, c. 9]. Agitation against the Jews was in part connected to anti-government propaganda. The reigning authorities were most often attacked for failing to act adequately against the Jews, which, it was argued, prevented Christian craftsmen and merchants from prospering. The confiscation of Jewish-owned estates was also advocated, and to this end an anonymous memorandum was compiled in Uzhhorod [18, c. 7]. In the village of Holmok, for example, a local Arrow Cross supporter denounced the district clerk to the deputy lord lieutenant, claiming that he had failed to assist him in acquiring a 40-hold pasture owned by Jews [16, c. 20]. Due to the lack of archival sources, it is difficult to form a precise picture of the social base of the Arrow Cross Party at the local level. However, given that 84.6% of Transcarpathia's population lived in rural areas, one may infer the agrarian character of the party membership. Conditions observed in Ung County also confirm that members were predominantly individuals living off the land or engaged in small-scale crafts. Surveys of party premises likewise

demonstrate that members lived in difficult conditions. Arrow Cross propaganda, such as promises to resolve the land question, found its target audience, as indicated by the organizations registered in the Uzhhorod district. Yet the picture is more nuanced: not only peasants and craftsmen joined the party, but also officeholders and state employees, including individuals who did not struggle with the hardships of subsistence. The portrait could be further refined if more precise data were available on the conditions prevailing in the towns.

The Hungarian government did everything in its power to take the wind out of the sails of the far right. From the summer of 1938 until the autumn of 1940, the Hungarian party leader, Ferenc Szálasi, was imprisoned, and many others followed him into jail. A serious blow to the movement was dealt by the decree of the Imrédy government, No. 3400/1938 ME of May 20, 1938, which prohibited state officials from being members of extremist parties. The Arrow Cross parties were repeatedly dissolved and banned, and similar measures were taken against their press organs as well [13, c. 135,156]. The following examples, though not exhaustive, are intended to illustrate in broad terms the attitude of state administration toward the Arrow Cross. With the help of archival sources, one can also gain insight into how local authorities in Ung County related to the Hungarian movement.

Even the attempts at party formation and the registration of party premises did not proceed smoothly for the movement. The authorities continuously obstructed these efforts, effectively rendering their operation impossible. According to archival sources, these developments can be traced most clearly in Ung County. The chief magistrates, together with district clerks and village leaders, kept party members under constant surveillance. With the involvement of the gendarmerie and the district physician, the party premises were practically dismantled. The local party headquarters usually operated in the homes of party members. These were the so-called «Arrow Cross houses», where local members gathered [2, c. 92]. Since the party premises were in simple residential buildings, they had to meet certain requirements; if these were not met, the authorities used this as grounds to block the establishment of local party branches, which they often did. The condition of the buildings was assessed according to three criteria: public health, public order, and fire safety.

By presenting the events in Velyka Dobron, we aim to provide insight into the course of developments. The establishment of the party in the village was first reported in October 1940. The house of the applicant, Sándor Hidi F., was only much later, in March 1942, deemed unsuitable by the authorities. The building was found inadequate from both public health and public order perspectives. At that time, the membership sought to overcome the problem by registering another person's house as the party premises, which they attempted on March 17, 1942. The chief magistrate, however, rejected the request, citing §2 of Government Decree No. 8120/1939 ME, and prohibited the members from holding further meetings. Chief Magistrate Károly Köszörű, relying on §56 (b) of Act XXX of 1929, also ordered the enforcement of his decision and notified the Velyka Dobron gendarmerie to ensure the implementation of the measures. After exploiting the legal framework, the building was subjected to further inspection, but once again failed to meet any of the required criteria [15, c. 26–27]. The Arrow Cross members of Velyka Dobron tried once again to register their party premises on December 9, 1942. On this occasion, Károly Köszörű summoned the local party leader, József Hidi M. Tired of the continuous official action against the Arrow Cross Party, Gyula Gieser, the Arrow Cross leader of Ung County, addressed a letter to Deputy Lord Lieutenant János Kossey on January 23, 1943, seeking to intervene on behalf of the Velyka Dobron branch. In his letter, Gieser argued that there was no legislation preventing a rural house from being used as a party premises. He also expressed his view that the Arrow Cross Party was being treated unequally compared to other parties. In his appeal, he pointed out several instances of double standards, for example, that the ruling party held its meetings in similar «peasant houses», as did local community leaders. On these points, Gieser's claims likely had some validity. He accused the authorities of abusing their power: *«We are subjected to official persecution, even though there is no dictatorship. Our party members are morally upright, tax-paying citizens who fulfill their duties to the nation, but at the same time also wish to exercise their rights»* [15, c. 27]. Despite the letter from the county leader, the authorities' decision did not change. Károly Köszörű continued to insist on the closure of the party premises,

justifying his stance by stating that the «party office was nothing more than an ordinary village house». The issue of the Velyka Dobron Arrow Cross members was finally settled on March 17, 1943, by a three-member commission. The commission consisted of District Physician József Csordás, District Clerk István Ujlaky, and the head of Velyka Dobron village, János Hidi. They assessed the condition of the building and still found it unsuitable, arguing that the parameters of the house were not adequate [15, c. 10].

The question arises as to why the liquidation of party premises was considered so important. By doing so, the authorities were effectively able to force the movement into illegality. First, they made use of legal frameworks. Once a given party headquarters was dissolved, they subsequently invoked Government Decree No. 8120/1939 ME, which dealt with the restriction of assembly rights, to prohibit the holding of newly formed meetings. Appeals were rejected on the basis of §56 (b) of Act XXX of 1929. For example, the authorities did not recognize the establishment of the Arrow Cross Party in the village of Mokra because the local members had not requested permission to hold a founding – meeting permission which, due to restrictions on the right of assembly, they would likely not have received in any case [19, c. 36]. Beyond the legal framework, another factor was that the commissions were composed of individuals who held some form of public office (village leader, district clerk) [16, c. 11]. This was crucial, since they most likely represented the government's position against the Arrow Cross. By dissolving the party premises, the authorities effectively closed off all avenues for the Arrow Cross. First, they did not authorize the holding of founding meetings; and, with a ban on assemblies in place, members had no legal means of reorganizing the party. There were even villages where, during the appeal process, local members noted that all party members' houses in the community had already been registered, but none had been deemed suitable. In Královský Chlmec, members attempted to circumvent the authorities' restrictions by renting premises from another person. According to descriptions, the building was indeed in better condition than the previously inspected houses, yet proceedings were still initiated against them [15, c. 1–27].

The members of the Arrow Cross Party had to face not only the measures of the reigning governments but also those of the local authorities. Beyond the legal frameworks provided by law, officials in leading positions often employed their personal influence against the movement. Members were under constant surveillance or, in some cases, held in custody, and were frequently required to attend interrogations. Their propaganda and press materials were not only confiscated, but in some smaller villages their mailboxes were searched daily in pursuit of such items [11, c. 11]. In addition to screening their political backgrounds, they were treated as individuals dangerous to the ruling power. As a result, dismissal from employment, transfers, as well as the possibility of internment or imprisonment were constantly looming over them. By liquidating party premises, the authorities forced the movement into illegality. This proved an effective method of obstructing the party at the village level. The movement remained under official control until the spring of 1944, but it was never completely eradicated. A 1941 report noted that although the Arrow Cross had «lost momentum», they quietly continued their activities [20, c. 1–25]. In July 1942, an illegal party meeting was held in the village of Velké Kapušany, in the house of a local farmer. The chief magistrate of the Velké Kapušany district even issued a circular warning district clerks that similar meetings may have been taking place in other villages as well. Delegates from the Uzhhorod party headquarters presumably attempted to coordinate the rural branches and reorganize those local premises that had been shut down by the authorities. By 1943, however, the party was in sharp decline within the county. This can be attributed to several factors: first, the party was already in decline at the national level; second, other far-right movements (the Party of Hungarian Renewal and the Hungarian National Socialist Party) had moved into the foreground both nationally and regionally. In Uzhhorod, most of the members were at the front, which meant that no active movement life was taking place [21, c. 1–2]. Nevertheless, the party managed to stay afloat, and following the German occupation, in the freer political atmosphere created for them, they once again began to organize in the county.

On March 19, 1944, Germany occupied Hungary under the so-called Operation *Margarethe*, thereby preventing the country's potential withdrawal from the war [22, c. 162]. The occupation brought significant domestic political changes. Döme Sztójay, formerly the Hungarian ambassador

to Berlin and a well-known pro-German figure, was appointed prime minister. Among the members of his new government, six came from the former ruling party, four from the Party of Hungarian Renewal, and one was non-partisan. Ferenc Szálasi distanced himself from having the Arrow Cross Party participate in the far-right coalition government, since he wished to form his own cabinet in which his party would have been the sole decisive force [13, c. 276]. German troops arrived in Uzhhorod on March 22, 1944. Shortly thereafter, beginning on April 1, Government Decree No. 1.440 ME came into force, declaring the counties of Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa, and Máramaros, as well as the administrative districts of Ung, Bereg, and Máramaros, to be operational military zones. Political conditions in Ung County also changed, with far-right forces becoming dominant. The Sztójay government carried out significant administrative measures: on April 27, twenty of the thirty-one county lord-lieutenants, who held broad governing powers, were dismissed [13, c. 272]. Some requested their release voluntarily, as they refused to cooperate with the occupying forces. Among them was Vilmos Pál Tomcsányi, governor's commissioner of the Carpathian Governorate, who was replaced by retired Lieutenant General András Vincze. Ferenc Réthy-Haszlinger, a retired hussar colonel, was appointed lord-lieutenant of Ung and Ugocsa counties. Réthy-Haszlinger was a member of the Hungarian National Socialist Party and maintained close ties with László Endre, state secretary at the Ministry of the Interior. The occupation proved catastrophic for the Jews of Transcarpathia. German soldiers committed numerous violent crimes, breaking into homes, looting, and assaulting the Jewish population. On April 14, the roundup began. Between 16,697 and 17,560 Jews from both rural areas and the city itself were gathered into ghettos in Uzhhorod. Between May 17 and May 31, 1944, the collected Jewish population was deported [13, c. 188–190].

As a result of domestic political changes, far-right movements were revitalized, the previous obstacles were removed, and state pressure and control ceased. According to press materials, the Arrow Cross Party became particularly active in Ung County. The change in the political climate was clearly noticeable. This is well illustrated in a report on one of the party's conferences, where Gyula Geiser, the county leader of the party, «drew the attention of village leaders to the welcome fact that today they are no longer exposed, as in the past, to restrictions or the closure of party premises». The county leader declared that the period when the opening of party headquarters was refused on various grounds had come to an end, and he assured the village leaders that in the future they would receive the necessary permits [23, c. 2]. Previously, a public party conference would have been unimaginable, as would the unrestricted operation of party premises. In May 1944, however, the party's thirty-nine rural branches held general meetings. At that time, in the two districts of Ung County, there were a total of fifty-six settlements; including Uzhhorod, party organizations were maintained in forty of them. The movement's members also carried out small relief actions, primarily for wounded Hungarian soldiers. In May 1944, party members from Uzhhorod visited the patients of military hospitals with food and gifts, while young activists also visited wounded German soldiers. The branch in Mala Dobron' donated four baskets of baked pastries to the wounded soldiers. In April 1944, during the county Arrow Cross conference, on the initiative of county leader Gyula Geiser, it was resolved to organize a collection for the «brothers» who had suffered bomb damage. Local leaders donated significant sums for this purpose [23, c. 2].

On July 24, 1944, Government Commissioner András Vincze banned assemblies and political party meetings in the operational zone. Nevertheless, the daily *Őslakó* wrote the following about the situation: «As we write these lines, a detailed decree has not yet arrived. The Minister of the Interior's order has been in force for days. Yet we still see Szálasi posters and new Arrow Cross graffiti». Far-right parties were certainly still active in August 1944, but in the available press sources we find only occasional articles reporting on their activities [9, c. 49]. On August 23, 1944, Romania succeeded in leaving the war. Taking advantage of the Germans' weakened position, Regent Miklós Horthy dismissed the Sztójay government and appointed instead a military-official cabinet under Géza Lakatos on August 24, 1944 [31, c. 167–177]. By Decree No. 3080/1944 ME, the activities of all parties were suspended, forcing the Arrow Cross Party once again into illegality. After the Arrow Cross takeover (October 16), Minister of the Interior Gábor Vajna lifted the previous restrictions on the party by Decree No. 202 800/1944 VII. However, by this time, part of Transcarpathia was already under Soviet control. On October 27, 1944, the Red

Army entered Uzhhorod, and shortly thereafter Hungarian administration ceased to exist not only in the county but throughout all of Transcarpathia.

Conclusions. The change of sovereignty generated serious social tensions, which partly opened the way for the Arrow Cross with its populist promises. After the First Vienna Award, the dissolution of Czechoslovak parties created a political vacuum, leaving many without representation; some even turned from communism to the far right. In Ung County, however, the movement's expansion was curbed by the government and loyal local elites. The absence of elections and the appointment of reliable officials entrenched state power, making it possible to suppress extremism through closing party premises and removing leaders. Similar measures were applied in Bereg County, Ugocsa County, and across the Carpathian Governorate. Thus, far-right parties remained under strict control until the German occupation. Domestic political shifts also had local effects: personnel changes in offices, the lifting of censorship, and the free reorganization of far-right movements.

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