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# “THE TRUTH TODAY IS WHAT PUTIN SAYS IT IS”

The Activity of Pro-Russian Extremist Groups in Hungary

Edited by Krisztián Szabados

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**“The Truth Today Is What Putin Says It Is” - The Activity of Pro-Russian Extremist Groups in Hungary**

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## INTRODUCTION

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This paper is the summary of the results of a one-year-long research project covering five countries and exploring the connections between a wide range of pro-Kremlin stakeholders and Central and Eastern European countries' political forces in general and the violent, fringe extreme right movements in particular. Political Capital has already published Europe-wide research studies and country-specific case studies on the connections between (far-right) political players in Slovakia and Hungary, and has published a report on the “export” of ultraconservative, illiberal values by pro-Kremlin players to Central and Eastern Europe. Others have done important research on this topic as well. However, this is the first research project that focuses mainly on the violent ramifications of the strategy of the Russian state and its proxies to support fringe, extremist organisations in order to undermine bilateral ties with Ukraine and the United States, and destabilise the region. The five countries that we are focusing on are Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Most of our findings are indicative of the trends in the broader region.

The war in Eastern Ukraine and the migration crisis have acted as catalyst events not only re-legitimising these extremist organisations' *sine qua non* for paramilitary activities, but have also pitted against each other organisations harbouring ancient chauvinistic, revisionist historical sentiments between Central and Eastern European states. The Kremlin's aim is indisputable in this process: by reaching out to or supporting paramilitary organisations, it successfully destabilises Ukraine, and the surrounding European region, to keep Ukraine's legitimacy, territorial sovereignty and minority issues in a constant state of limbo.

In this study, we look at Hungarian far-right extremist organisations which are perhaps less relevant politically speaking, but are the most risky in terms of political violence. Accordingly, we will examine, in addition to the Hungarian National Front (which acquired notoriety over the killing of a police officer in Bóny, but has since largely been shut down), the potential for violence and the pro-Russian radicalisation of the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement, the Army of Outlaws, the Wolves, the New Hungarian Guard and the Hungarian Self-Defence Movement.

At certain points (e.g. regarding the role of national security authorities), it was necessary to mention the pro-Kremlin policies of the government of Hungary and their resemblance to Putinist patterns, given how these have contributed significantly to the evolution of a political environment conducive to pro-Russian radicalisation.

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All errors and omissions are our own.

## METHODOLOGY

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The following research methods were used to prepare this study.

- Desktop research to collect the necessary information, note the sequence of events and their evolution, and to collect statements and quotes.
- In-depth interviews with experts of scientific life, politics and the media so as to move beyond an exclusive reliance on open-source information, and to acquire a deeper understanding of the background of certain actors and events.
- Tools of investigative journalism to acquire confidential and background information from actors active on the extreme right scene or individuals close to them. To protect these sources, they shall remain unnamed in the study.
- Content analysis of Hungarian extreme right media and Facebook pages.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- Russian attempts to exert influence on Hungarian extreme right (and left) groups disposed to violence have been detected as early as the mid-1990s, albeit initially in a marginalised fashion. The Kremlin has been able to revive its existing, lukewarm links from 2010. Today, almost all extreme right paramilitary organisations show some kind of connection to Russia. Lacking political will, national security authorities are essentially idle spectators of the events.
- In terms of activities, structure and human composition, the majority of extremist organisations are closely intertwined with the right-wing radical scene, specifically with Jobbik, its largest political party. The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement, the Army of Outlaws, the Hungarian Self-Defence Movement and the Wolves, considered a paramilitary organisation, are all affiliated with the party. Spreading the illiberal ideology and propaganda of the Kremlin directly or indirectly, these organisations serve Russian geopolitical interests and goals (e.g. inciting irredentist action and bolstering the autonomy of Subcarpathia).
- The organisations examined are openly supportive of Russian geopolitical efforts, identifying these with the same rejection of the liberal world order, the fight against American dominance and possibly the promise of revisionism that they themselves espouse. These views are not without their precedents, but have become especially prominent in light of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Support for the annexation of Crimea, and the federalisation of Ukraine, are good examples of how these organisations interpret the conflict in Eastern Ukraine through a Russian lens. Given their international networks and cross-border activities, these organisations present a threat not only to domestic security, but also pose trans-border risks. The Russian connections of violent extreme right organisations, and their commitment to Putinist ideology, present risks as far as the stability of Hungary and the entire Central and Eastern European region is concerned.
- The wing of the Hungarian National Front, an organisation less closely affiliated with Jobbik, led by István Györkös, has also been proven to have connections with Russian military intelligence; earlier, Russian “diplomats” have participated in the group’s paramilitary exercises. To date, no other organisation has been confirmed to be this directly linked to and influenced by Russia.

- Pro-Russian radicalisation is especially dangerous not only as a result of potential paramilitary training exercises, but also because in certain cases, openly advocating violence may become acceptable on a societal level as a result of the political environment. The 2015 refugee crisis has also shown that extremists, radicals and the government, as well as anti-refugee campaigns in the media linked with Russian propaganda, have made inciting hatred and taking violent action against refugees perfectly acceptable, or almost the norm. This is all the more true as according to Political Capital's earlier research study<sup>1</sup>, the risk of latent violence among the Hungarian population was already high in 2014. Twenty-three percent of respondents believe that the use of violence is acceptable even in a democracy to achieve important objectives.
- Our Facebook analysis found that Hungarian pro-Russian propaganda is successful primarily as a result of xenophobic and pro-Russia campaigns and rhetoric by Jobbik and the governing Fidesz.
- Countering foreign influence on paramilitary organisations and radical groups is also made difficult by the increasingly pro-Russian policies of the Orbán government. Similarly to the extreme right, the government's rhetoric also features ideological elements and conspiracy theories originating in Russian propaganda and attempting to weaken western values from a cultural and political perspective. A member of the transatlantic alliance, the government has nonetheless essentially swapped its enemies and friends; this shift has taken place not only on the level of rhetoric, but according to publicly available information,<sup>2</sup> its impact is visible in the political direction of the country's national security efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> Political Capital, 'Measuring Political Violence', 2015, [http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC\\_ISEC\\_political\\_violence\\_study\\_eng\\_web.pdf](http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_ISEC_political_violence_study_eng_web.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Szabolcs Panyi, 'Egy Magyar Titkosszolga Részletesen Felfedi, Mennyire Súlyos Az Orosz Fenyegetés', *Index*, 21 March 2017, [http://index.hu/belfold/2017/03/21/titkosszolga\\_orosz\\_fenyegetes\\_romagyilkossag\\_interju/](http://index.hu/belfold/2017/03/21/titkosszolga_orosz_fenyegetes_romagyilkossag_interju/).



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Considering the different ideological and political influence detected in the various countries, there is no “one size fits all” solution suitable for hindering efforts by the Kremlin to exert influence through radical political groups. While Russia is actively working to become involved in European political and social life, Europe and the affected countries for the most part lack the political will to roll back soft and hard power (e.g. the export of ideology).

In Hungary, pro-Russian radicalisation is proceeding primarily through paramilitary organisations affiliated with Jobbik, supported behind the scenes by pro-Russian media. Any comprehensive solution must address “all four Rs”: revealing the methods of pro-Russian activities; reacting to Russian influence or radicalisation; ridiculing pro-Russian positions; repeating the responses consistently in light of continuing efforts by the Kremlin. In this respect, each segment of society has different tasks.

### **Sectoral Recommendations**

#### **State Actors: Reveal & React & Repeat**

- Following western examples, the Constitution Protection Office in its annual reports must publish Russian attempts to exert geopolitical influence posing a risk to the Hungarian state, civil society and the media – with a special focus on paramilitary and neo-Nazi organisations.
- The relevant committees of the Hungarian National Assembly, in co-operation with counter-intelligence and law enforcement authorities, must explore and publicly expose the illegal, semi-legal, unethical or – in particular – intelligence-related contacts and events taking place between or involving the Russian Federation and Hungarian paramilitary or extreme right entities.
- The Hungarian state, together with representatives of civil society and the media, might establish a standing forum for the comprehensive monitoring and joint countering of national security threats related to radicalisation, disinformation efforts and hate-acts (e.g. hate speech) forming a part of the hybrid war being waged by the Kremlin against Europe. As part of this, the state might provide resources to civil actors and investigative journalists working against radicalisation, to ensure the continuity of their efforts.
- Hungarian authorities should develop appropriate official vetting protocols to explore the currently existing links between radical organisations and law enforcement authorities and to prevent links from being established in the future; e.g. in the interest of the active or reserve law enforcement members of the Army of Outlaws.

### **Civil Society: React & Ridicule**

- Civil society should strive to join forces in projects whose aim is to prevent specifically pro-Russian, extremist and paramilitary groups from increasing their ideological influence, recruiting and acquiring resources.
- Civil society organisations dealing with human rights should use deradicalisation programmes and presentations to target groups understood to be “vulnerable” to radical ideology or violence – primarily those affiliated with the extreme right and paramilitary subculture.

### **Media: Reveal & Ridicule**

- Hungarian media outlets and investigative journalists may contribute to these efforts and help inform public opinion, civil society and decision makers by presenting credible reports about the dangers of violent, xenophobic radicalisation and by showcasing the results of state actors and civil society in the field of de-radicalisation.
- Publishing information on Russian influence would serve primarily to reveal the hidden agenda and motives of organisations embodying and conveying illiberal influence, while also providing state actors and civil society with appropriate information as they make additional efforts against harmful processes.
- The media, together with members of civil society, can ridicule or reveal the falsehoods of the messages of neo-Nazi and paramilitary organisations based on conspiracy theories and anti-liberal messages.

# PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF RADICAL RIGHT EXTREMIST ORGANISATIONS

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Far-right extremist organisations are described as formal or informal groups inciting hatred, which use ideological foundations to commit symbolic, verbal or physical aggression, or call explicitly on others to do so against specific individuals or a clearly defined community of individuals, generally because of their (real or perceived) national, racial, ethnic, religious, political or sexual orientation.<sup>3</sup> In terms of ideology, these groups belong under the umbrella of national-socialist sympathiser organisations espousing totalitarian aims;<sup>4</sup> their operation is often paramilitary in nature.

Nonetheless, the majority of organisations examined are difficult to place precisely in any one segment of the heterogeneous extreme right. As far as their activities, structure and personnel composition are concerned, they are closely intertwined with the right-wing radical scene, and primarily with its largest party, the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik). Thus, the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (HVIM), the Army of Outlaws, the Hungarian Self-Defence Movement (MÖM) and the paramilitary organisation the Wolves are all affiliated to some extent with the party.

One of the central figures of Jobbik and of the satellite organisations affiliated with the party is László Toroczkai. Among the most prominent actors of the Hungarian far-right, Toroczkai is the founder of several organisations and is mayor of Ásotthalom; he was a leader<sup>5</sup> of the 2006 siege against the building of the national television,<sup>6,7</sup> and in 2016, at the party's regular meeting, was elected Jobbik's vice president upon the recommendation of Gábor Vona. In summer 2009, Toroczkai was an organiser of the "National Guarantee Meeting" in Szeged, where the "definitive forces of the national wing" – to include Jobbik and a number of other extreme right organisations – entered into a strategic alliance with one another. Participants at the event included Jobbik president Gábor Vona; György Budaházy, since then convicted of terrorism; Róbert Kiss, then superintendent (captain) of the Hungarian Guard; Army of Outlaws leader Zsolt Tyirityán; and György Gyula Zagyva, at the time head of the HVIM and between 2010 and 2014 a Member of Parliament representing Jobbik.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 'Athena Institute', accessed 26 April 2017, <http://www.athenaintezet.hu/projektek>.

<sup>4</sup> According to categories described by historian Rudolf Paksa. Rudolf Paksa: *A magyar szélsőjobboldal története* [History of the Hungarian Extreme Right]. Budapest, 2012, Jaffa Kiadó. 248-251.

<sup>5</sup> Péter Magyari, 'Toroczkai Először Ütheti Meg a Bokáját', *Index*, 24 October 2007, <http://index.hu/belfold/torocz6539/>.

<sup>6</sup> Following the 17 September 2006 leak of a speech by former prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány in Ószöd, anti-government mass demonstrations erupted in Budapest. In a recording made 26 May 2006, the Hungarian prime minister spoke among other things about how the MSZP-SZDSZ governing coalition had won the 2006 parliamentary election by relying on lies. On 17 September, the hard core of the extreme right groups, which latched on to the demonstrations, marched to Szabadság Square and, led by László Toroczkai, stormed the headquarters of the Hungarian Television. This was an important, symbolic event in the restructuring of the Hungarian extreme right following the millennium; later, it was in reference to these events that Jobbik leaders labelled themselves the generation of 2006. Source: 'Csata a Szabadság Téren - Ostrommal Foglalták El Az MTV-T', *Index*, 19 September 2006, <http://index.hu/belfold/ost060919/>.

<sup>7</sup> Vona: "Ha Az Anyaföldünket Bántják, Akkor Azt Megvédjük", *Alfahír*, 15 March 2012, [http://alfahir.hu/vona\\_ha\\_az\\_anyafoelduenket\\_bantjak\\_akkor\\_azt\\_megvedjuek-20120315](http://alfahir.hu/vona_ha_az_anyafoelduenket_bantjak_akkor_azt_megvedjuek-20120315).

<sup>8</sup> Vice President of Jobbik-Ally Organisation Wants Hangings and Murders. 15 August 2012.

ATV, 'Gyilkolna a HVIM Alelnöke', *ATV.hu*, accessed 13 April 2017, [http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20120815\\_akasztana\\_es\\_gyilkolna\\_a\\_jobbik\\_szovetseges\\_szervezet\\_alelnoke](http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20120815_akasztana_es_gyilkolna_a_jobbik_szovetseges_szervezet_alelnoke).

Officially, this strategic alliance remains in force – despite the fact that Jobbik, since 2013/2014, has been pursuing a new political strategy<sup>9</sup> aimed at transforming Jobbik into a “people’s party” and accordingly working to present a more moderate image. To this end, the party has made significant public efforts to attempt to distance itself from extremist organisations which are becoming increasingly unpleasant for Jobbik to be affiliated with. In view of the links, however, Jobbik’s attempts at de-radicalisation are little more than superficial actions. The party remains linked to, and holds events together with, the organisations mentioned, which when necessary also serve as channels of mobilisation, recruitment and the foundations for bringing new members on board. In 2015, it also emerged that Jobbik’s party foundation, benefitting from public funding, provided significant financial support for several years to radical individuals, events and organisations, including for instance the Sixty-Four Counties Foundation, a backer of the HVIM.<sup>10</sup>

Jobbik also plays an important role in extremist organisations’ increasingly forceful attempts to establish a geopolitical platform that serves to oppose the transatlantic alliances (the European Union and NATO). These viewpoints are not without their precedents, but have become especially prominent in light of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In this context, extremist groups interpret the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine exclusively from the perspective of Russian interests. Army of Outlaws leader Zsolt Tyirityán provided the following assessment in an interview:

*“This is an interesting question. At times like these, we see how it is impossible to define what being a Nazi is these days. The skinheads who are currently fighting on the side of Ukraine, ideologically speaking, may be going against Russian aggression, but they are also sacrificing their lives in the interest of advancing U.S. geopolitical aims. And this goes directly against national socialist principles. And then you have Russian rebels, who are fighting viciously against the advancement of Zionist and U.S. geopolitical aims, and while they do this under a sickle-and-hammer flag, they may still find themselves in a far more symbiotic relationship with national socialist principles, because these directions and efforts were originally its greatest enemy.”<sup>11</sup>*

Thus, representatives of these movements consider Russian separatists their kindred spirits primarily insofar as their opposition to western liberal values and “U.S. geopolitical aims” are concerned. They believe that today’s Russia, which embodies Christian, nationalist, traditionalist and ultra-conservative values, should be a natural ally of Hungarian extreme right organisations. Their perspective never appears to consider that the Kremlin may only be using them as tools to further fragment Ukraine and to further destabilise the region. It is also never mentioned that geographic proximity and historical experiences would suggest that it is precisely Russian geopolitical interests which pose the greatest threat to Hungary’s national interests and security.

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<sup>9</sup> Vona Tells Jobbik: Look for a New Party President if You Disagree with Me. 23 November 2015.

Szabolcs Panyi, ‘Vona a Jobbiknak: Keressenek Új Pártelnököt, Ha Nem Kell a Politikám!’, *Index*, 23 November 2015, [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/11/23/neppartosodas\\_jobbik\\_merskeletek\\_radikalisk\\_tisztujitas\\_vona\\_gabor\\_2\\_resz/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/11/23/neppartosodas_jobbik_merskeletek_radikalisk_tisztujitas_vona_gabor_2_resz/).

<sup>10</sup> Albert Wass in Runes: Read the Jobbik Party Foundation’s List of Contracts. *Atlátszo.hu*, 22 May 2015.

Tibor Sepsi, ‘Wass Albert Rovásírással: Itt a Jobbik Pártalapítványának Szerződéslistája’, *Atlátszo.hu*, accessed 13 April 2017, <https://atlatszo.hu/2015/05/22/wass-albert-rovasirással-itt-a-jobbik-partialapitvanyanak-szerzodeslistaja/>.

<sup>11</sup> Sándor Jászberényi and Richi Tóth, ‘Tyirityán: Nem Tartjuk Orbánt Közellenségnek’, *24.hu*, 23 November 2016, <http://24.hu/kozelet/2016/11/23/tyirityan-nem-tartjuk-orbant-kozellensegnek/>.

## The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement

The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (HVIM) is a revisionist, irredentist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic organisation founded in Szeged by László Toroczkai<sup>12</sup> in 2001. The Movement rejects the borders determined in the Trianon treaty; its goal is the restoration of Greater Hungary and “to rear young people of Hungarian ethnicity in the spirit of belonging to Hungary.”<sup>13</sup> In neighbouring states, the organisation is active primarily in certain Hungarian-inhabited areas of Romania; this covers Cluj, Covasna, Harghita and Mureş Counties, with the Târgu Secuiesc cell in Covasna County generally considered the most active.<sup>14</sup> In Hungary, the HVIM – in addition to revisionism – focuses on the dissemination of anti-Roma propaganda and inciting fear among the Roma population. The organisation co-operates closely with the Army of Outlaws, the guard alliance and other extremist groups.<sup>15</sup>

The radicalisation efforts of the HVIM, defining itself as a traditionalist-revisionist organisation espousing national sentiments, are present in the hate speech typical of the organisation’s rhetoric, which in many cases advocates open violence.<sup>16</sup> The rhetoric of the organisation is based on encouraging constant confrontation and violence; members of its leadership in several public speeches have emphasised the significance of engaging in armed resistance by citizens.<sup>17</sup> The group’s tenets suggest that a “Sixty Four County youth is naturally willing to fight and to engage in conflict,” and will resort to any possible means to fight for order against the enemy.<sup>18</sup>

Facebook has banned<sup>19</sup> the pages of all groups affiliated with the organisation, ostensibly for their use of Nazi symbols.<sup>20</sup> László Toroczkai lost a lawsuit against journalist Aranka Mayer, whom he called a “sewer-dweller.” A user commenting on Toroczkai’s Facebook page suggested the journalist be assassinated when possible, and Toroczkai was unwilling to remove the post.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> ‘A Mozgalomról | Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom’, *Http://Www.hvim.hu/Mozgalomrol*, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.hvim.hu/mozgalomrol>.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> ‘Hogyan Radikalizálódott a Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom. A „Nagy-Magyarország” Térképektől Terrorista Merényletek Kiterveléséig – Adevärul’, *EuroCom - Romániai Sajtófigyelő*, 25 May 2016, <https://eurocom.wordpress.com/2016/05/25/hogyan-radikalizalodott-a-hatvannegy-varmegye-ifjusagi-mozgalom-a-nagy-magyarorszag-terkepektol-terrorista-merenyletek-kiterveleseig-adevarul/>.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Athena Institute’, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://athenaintezet.hu/terkep/olvas/52>.

<sup>16</sup> “It is astonishing that there are always sentimental, neophyte elements on the national side who mourn rubbish bins that are crushed, police dogs which are kicked or liberal journalists who get their noses broken.” For the margins of 23 October 2012.

‘Gondolatok | Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom’, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.hvim.hu/gondolatok>.

<sup>17</sup> Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement Leader Discusses Bombings. 26 July 2011.

‘Robbantásról Beszél a HVIM Vezetője, Vizsgálódik Az Ügyészség’, *ATV.hu*, accessed 13 April 2017, [http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20110726\\_reggel\\_munka\\_este\\_robbantas](http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20110726_reggel_munka_este_robbantas).

<sup>18</sup> ‘HVIM Iránymutatás’ (HVIM), accessed 13 April 2017, <http://hvim.hu/sites/default/files/hvim%20iranymutatas.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> “It appears that the content published on the page is not in line with Facebook’s terms of use and community rules. We have withdrawn the page.”

<sup>20</sup> Facebook Moves to Delete Thousands-Strong Jobbik-Affiliated Pages. 8 February 2016.

‘Sorban Törli a Facebook a Többezres Jobbik-Közei Csoportokat’, *ATV.hu*, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20160208-sorban-torli-a-facebook-a-tobbezres-jobbik-kozeli-csoportokat>.

<sup>21</sup> László Toroczkai Convicted in Final Ruling of Slandorous Comment. 20 January 2016

‘XIII. KERÜLETI HÍRHATÁR - Toroczkai László Jogerosen Felelös a Becsületsértő Kommentekért’, *XIII. KERÜLETI HÍRHATÁR*, accessed 13 April 2017, [http://www.13keruleti-hirhatar.hu/index\\_cikk.php?hh=toroczkai-laszlo-jogerosen-felelos-a-becsuletserto-kommentekert](http://www.13keruleti-hirhatar.hu/index_cikk.php?hh=toroczkai-laszlo-jogerosen-felelos-a-becsuletserto-kommentekert).

Although Toroczkai, according to a 2010 recording made secretly in Esztergom, said he does not wish to become a martyr<sup>22</sup> – unlike György Budaházy<sup>23</sup> – and the HVIM must therefore take on an image free of violent acts, this has not always played out. The Movement’s website openly advocated the harassment of a Budapest gay rights activist, who eventually left Hungary after being physically assaulted.<sup>24</sup> The organisation’s activities in Hungary regularly include participating in political propaganda events such as an April 2014 demonstration in support of the construction of a monument in Budapest commemorating the German occupation. Each year, the organisation also participates in Day of Honour commemorations, paying tribute to the attempt of German and Hungarian forces to break out of Buda on the eve of 11 February 1945, which have become some of the most important events of far-right extremists.<sup>25</sup>

At the 2010 meeting in Esztergom, Toroczkai spoke of a 2009 incident when HVIM members got into a brawl with a group of Roma at a petrol station in Enying. On 14 February 2009, Toroczkai and his group pulled into the Enying petrol station with their car; already at the petrol station was a group of Roma known within criminal circles. The latter group included János R., who subsequently was one of the individuals charged in the Cozma murder, committed a few days earlier. (Romanian handball player Marian Cozma was stabbed to death six days previously.) Because Toroczkai and his group arrived driving a vehicle with Serbian licence plates, the Roma later testified that they were afraid it was the father of the murdered handball player who had sent Serbian former military men after them, prompting them to throw stones in self-defence at Toroczkai’s vehicle. An interesting element of the story is that it was not only Toroczkai and his group who pulled into the petrol station by coincidence, but also a reporter for Hír TV, who proceeded to record the incident (or at least its culmination). Thus, Toroczkai and his group became victims (as witnesses); however, what the HVIM leader later said in Esztergom about the brawl paints the events in a different light:<sup>26</sup> “The only thing you see in the video is that we left the scene and (...) the Roma, so this makes us victims (as witnesses). We reported the Roma mafia to the police, saying all we wanted to do was stop to pee quite innocently, and then these savages attacked us. According to their testimony, the Roma said we attacked them wearing ski masks, which is pure slander; we reject this, but we cannot prove it is false,” says Toroczkai on the recording.

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<sup>22</sup> “We strike, we hide, we strike, we hide. It would be great to strike and then to stand up and say, come and get me; it was me. Instead, I choose not to brag about certain things we did; things we did in the past ten years. What I’m proud of is that I am not in prison.” Tough Guys of the Extreme Right. 25 August 2014.

András Dezső, ‘A TEK-Be Is Beépülnének a Szélsőjobboldali Nehézfiúk’, *Index*, 25 August 2014, [http://index.hu/belfold/2014/08/25/nehezfiuk\\_a\\_szelsojobboldalon/](http://index.hu/belfold/2014/08/25/nehezfiuk_a_szelsojobboldalon/).

<sup>23</sup> György Budaházy is a key actor of the Hungarian extreme right. Founder of the radical Hunnia Movement, Budaházy represents an extremist position critical of the parliamentary representation of national radicalism. The “Justice-Doling Outlaw.” On 30 August 2016, he was convicted of terrorism and sentenced to thirteen years in prison in the so-called Hunnia Case. György Budaházy Gets 13 Years. 30 August 2016.

Kata Janescsó, ‘Budaházy György 13 Év Fegyházát Kapott’, *Index*, 30 August 2016, [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/08/30/budahazy\\_gyorgy\\_magyarok\\_nyilai\\_ugy\\_itelet/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/08/30/budahazy_gyorgy_magyarok_nyilai_ugy_itelet/).

<sup>24</sup> “At the time, several of our members visited him at his workplace. His boss was so unhappy about this that he sent his subordinate on directed leave. A lot of time has passed since. His address has been made public, someone broke his nose in the street, and then look ... he could not take the pressure, and left our country. Our thanks to HCLU for reporting on this success story and for not failing to mention our considerable efforts. It is at times like this that we feel there is a point to our activities.”

‘Kitüntetett Minket | Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom’, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.hvim.hu/hir/kituntetett-minket-tasz>.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Athena Institute’.

<sup>26</sup> The Hír TV journalist, some years later, joined Jobbik’s television station, N1TV, and to this remains closely linked to the Army of Outlaws.

It was also at the Esztergom meeting where conversation turned to how Toroczkai and his associates must join forces with the Army of Outlaws to push Roma criminals out of criminal nightlife – Toroczkai was referring primarily to the group in Enying and the Black Army, led by Róbert Magyar, who has since been sentenced in a binding verdict to life in prison, as well as to the South Great Plains and Szolnok groups: “Obviously, I think that it must be our goal to push this Roma mafia out everywhere. Including from the nightlife, because if there is no money to be had, they will go back to where they belong, be that elderberry-picking or stone quarries, or I don’t even know where – the point is that they get the hell out.” Toroczkai and his associates knew as much as they did about such nightlife events because Jobbik and the HVIM, and the Army of Outlaws they are affiliated with, includes a number of individuals who came from criminal circles, or due to their physical characteristics made their living as “night doormen” – bouncers, in reality.

Since spring 2015, the Budapest chapter of the HVIM has paid special attention to migration; according to their own reports, they have conducted night-time and day-time surveillance of public areas.

*“We mapped out where we have the most migrants. We conducted surveillance, and we took notes. We then narrowed down the possible venues, and because we saw that the Western and the Eastern Railway Stations are the areas most affected, we decided to stage our demonstration at the latter. More than one thousand people turned out.”*<sup>27</sup> The organisation’s website reported about the event: by relying on “techniques employed as part of the Érpatak Model” they worked successfully to enforce the law together with the police; as a result, 110 illegal migrants were removed from the premises.<sup>28</sup>

The HVIM kicked off its activities in Serbia around 2004, when the organisation made efficient use of the conflict between Serbia and Hungary, and the mistrust of the local Hungarian minority against the Serbian state.<sup>29</sup> According to the Athena Institute, which examines hate groups, it was the group in Serbia which the HVIM considered its most successful operation outside Hungary. Between 2004 and 2005, it founded several local chapters in Ada, Bačko Petrovo Selo, Bečej, Čoka, Kanjiža, Mali Idoš, Srbobran, Subotica and Temerin.<sup>30</sup> In a 2014 research paper, the Institute noted that the HVIM successfully expanded its network in Vojvodina – and primarily in Temerin, where violent crime against the local Hungarian minority and members of the local community remains widespread. The HVIM was assumed to be responsible, for instance, for the 11 September 2011 beating of a Serbian young person; one year later, following a scuffle, weapons and HVIM propaganda materials were found in the possession of seven young people – Toroczkai, however, denied even the existence of the organisation in Serbia.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement Continues the Fight Against Immigration in Budapest. Video. 28 July 2015. ‘A HVIM Budapesten Is Folytatja a Harcot a Bevándorlás Ellen (+videó) | Betyársereg’, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://betyarsereg.hu/a-hvim-folytatja-a-harcot-budapest-en-is-a-bevandorlas-ellen-video/>.

<sup>28</sup> Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement Continues the Fight Against Immigration in Budapest. Video. 28 July 2015. ‘Magyar Szélsőjobbosok Szerbiában’, *Index*, 4 April 2014, [http://index.hu/kulfold/eurologus/2014/04/04/magyar\\_szelsojobbosok\\_szerbiaban/](http://index.hu/kulfold/eurologus/2014/04/04/magyar_szelsojobbosok_szerbiaban/).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> ‘Athena Institute’.

<sup>31</sup> The Temerin Incident. Toroczkai: Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement Has Nothing to Do with Serbia Events. ‘Temerini Incidens - Toroczkai: A HVIM-Nek Semmi Közé a Szerbiai Eseményekhez’, *Boon.hu*, accessed 26 April 2017, <http://www.boon.hu/temerini-incidens-toroczkai-a-hvim-nek-semmi-koze-a-szerbiai-esemenyekhez/2109481>.

As far as the activities of the HVIM in Slovakia are concerned, the Athena Institute believes it is primarily its chapters in Šamorín, Košice and Rimavská Sobota which are active.<sup>32</sup> One of their key platforms for mobilisation was the series of demonstrations organised in connection with the case of Hedvig Malina. László Toroczkai, in fact, was declared *persona non grata* in Slovakia for five years in 2006 for his participation in a demonstration held without official authorisation.<sup>33</sup> Speaking at a 2011 recruitment event for the Movement in Komárno, Toroczkai said, “*I would not eradicate all Slovaks. I would pick out one or two, but not all of them.*” He added he has “*no intention of committing mass murder, of the sort committed by Breivik, a crazy mass murder. At least not in Upper Hungary.*”<sup>34</sup> According to the Athena Institute, the activities of the Šamorín chapter, led by Attila Búss, are confined largely to regular monthly talks and film screenings; they are also regular participants of HVIM propaganda events in Hungary, as well as at Day of Honour commemorations.<sup>35</sup>

In September 2015, a shared hatred of migrants brought together representatives of the Hungarian and the Slovak extreme right, who are generally antagonistic with one another, for what was thus a highly unusual demonstration. Marian Kotleba’s organisation (People’s Party – Our Slovakia) staged a demonstration that month against the Gabčíkovo refugee camp in the same place as the HVIM; the latter ultimately joined the petition initiated by Kotleba’s group opposing the acceptance of refugees.<sup>36</sup>

The HVIM in Transylvania is different in character from other movements advocating for autonomy using peaceful means in that its local vice president, Zoltán Szőcs, has spoken out openly in favour of employing physical violence.<sup>37</sup> Another sign of the radicalisation of the organisation is that two members of the HVIM, István Beke and Zoltán Szőcs, have been charged with attempting violent acts in Romania with revisionist intentions. According to charges filed by attorneys of Romania’s Directorate for the Investigation of Organised Crime and Terrorism (DIICOT), Beke and Szőcs had wanted to blow up a section of a natural gas pipeline leading to Bucharest near Târgu Secuiesc. Romanian prosecutors – likely highly exaggerating – maintained that the firecrackers found on the two men could have been used to produce lethal explosives; at the same time, news portal Maszol.ro, which had obtained access to the indictment documents, suggested that the authorities were attempting to influence the judges emotionally by emphasising the anti-Romanian sentiments of the defendants.<sup>38</sup> According to DIICOT, members of the HVIM had established ties with groups such as Basque separatist group ETA, the IRA or the National Democratic Movement of Moldova; following the planned explosion, they were said to be looking to Russian organisations to support a subsequent attack. According to the indictment, the leaders of the Transylvanian chapter of the Movement were mentored by István Sebestyén-Teleki, a resident of Switzerland, who was said to be the author of the document “A Manual for Hungarian Freedom Fighters.”

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<sup>32</sup> ‘Athena Institute’.

<sup>33</sup> Magyarai, ‘Toroczkai Előszőr Ütheti Meg a Bokáját’.

<sup>34</sup> Jobbik Representative Not Out to Eradicate All Slovaks. 16 November 2011. ‘Nem Irtana Ki Minden Szlovákot a Jobbik Képviselője’, *ATV.hu*, accessed 13 April 2017, [http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20111216\\_nem\\_irtana\\_ki\\_minden\\_szlovakot\\_a\\_jobbik\\_kepviseloje](http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20111216_nem_irtana_ki_minden_szlovakot_a_jobbik_kepviseloje).

<sup>35</sup> ‘Athena Institute’.

<sup>36</sup> Youth Counties Members Demonstrate Alongside Slovak Nationalists. 23 September 2015. ‘Vármegyések Együtt Tüntettek a Szlovák Nacionalistákkal | Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom’, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.hvim.hu/hir/varmegyések-együtt-tuntettek-szlovák-nacionalistákkal>.

<sup>37</sup> “We must take action and wage physical fights for everyone. It will not work without bloodshed.” Victor Ilie, ‘Fantomszervezet Toborozza Erdélyben a Radikális Magyar Fiatalokat’, *Atlatszo.hu*, accessed 13 April 2017, <https://atlatszo.hu/2015/04/01/fantomszervezet-toborozza-erdelyben-a-radikalis-magyar-fiatalokat/>.

<sup>38</sup> Read the Indictment: Presenting the Prosecutors’ File of Terrorism in Sekler Land. ‘Itt a Vádirat: Bemutatjuk a „székelyföldi Terrorizmus” Ügyészégi Dossziéját’, *Maszol*, accessed 13 April 2017, [http://www.maszol.ro/index.php/tarsadalom/64783-itt-a-vadirat-bemutatjuk-a-szekelyfoldi-terrorizmus-ugyeszegi-dossziejat?utm\\_source=mandiner&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_campaign=mandiner\\_201610](http://www.maszol.ro/index.php/tarsadalom/64783-itt-a-vadirat-bemutatjuk-a-szekelyfoldi-terrorizmus-ugyeszegi-dossziejat?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201610).



The publication advocates the establishment of structures of civil disobedience as a way to prepare for guerrilla warfare, and lays out specific recommendations for taking action (setting up road blocks, committing sabotage, acquiring arms, blowing up bridges etc.).<sup>39</sup> Sebestyén, incidentally, denies being the author of the Manual,<sup>40</sup> but has acknowledged having met members of the HVIM on several occasions.<sup>41</sup>

Although the charges do not appear to be especially well-founded for now, and Romanian authorities are clearly attempting to sanction the intentions of the two men,<sup>42</sup> Beke and Szócs – by appearing as martyrs – may make the organisation appear in an even more positive light to followers of this subculture and among individuals prone to radicalisation by emphasising the anti-Hungarian nature of the proceedings. The HVIM continues to portray Szócs and Beke as martyr heroes who have been dragged through the mud; they have organised benefit events in their support in several locations (including in Hungary).<sup>43</sup>

## The Army of Outlaws

The Army of Outlaws is a Hungarian racist, anti-Semitic organisation with perhaps the largest potential for violence. Founded in 2008 by Toroczka and his associates, the motto of the civil organisation is “Intelligence and Efficiency.” Their basic tenet is to always be ready for the fight.<sup>44</sup> The current head of the organisation, Zsolt Tyirityán, claims the movement has approximately 400 members today, and individuals more loosely affiliated with or supporting them number in the several ten thousands on a national level.<sup>45</sup> The Army of Outlaws produces a part of its revenue from “protecting” other organisations.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Sekler Terrorism Trail Leads to Switzerland. 26 November 2016.

Lehel Lázár, ‘Svájcba Vezetnek a „székely Terrorizmus” Szálai’, *Maszol*, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.maszol.ro/index.php/tarsadalom/70180-svajcba-vezetnek-a-szekely-terrorizmus-szalai>.

<sup>40</sup> Barna Csibi, *Dr. Ing. Sebestyén-Teleki István a Székely ‘terrorista’ ügyről I.*, accessed 13 April 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijHQDxRM6i4>.

<sup>41</sup> Sekler Terrorism Trail Leads to Switzerland. 26 November 2016. <http://www.maszol.ro/index.php/tarsadalom/70180-svajcba-vezetnek-a-szekely-terrorizmus-szalai>

<sup>42</sup> Miklós Bakk: Sekler Terrorism and Romania’s ‘Deep State’ [A székely terrorizmus és a román „deep state.”] 12 September 2016. *Élet és Irodalom*. Vol. LX. p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> “We ask all our sympathisers to support the Transylvanian Youth Counties members as best they can. Their fight is the fight of a nation, and we cannot desert them when they are about to face difficult times. Or send your donation via PayPal to [magyarellesseg.com](mailto:magyarellesseg.com) ([jovoteam@yahoo.com](mailto:jovoteam@yahoo.com)); in the comment, note ‘Support for István Beke and Zoltán Szócs.’ If you cannot afford to send financial support, please share our call for support widely, send it to your friends, acquaintances, and show that Hungarians can pull together.”

‘Bajban Ismerszik Meg a Barát! | Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom’, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.hvim.hu/hir/bajban-ismerszik-meg-barat>.

<sup>44</sup> ‘A Csepeli Klán Is Letudta a Kötelezést – Harcosaink Itt Is 100%-Ot Teljesítettek! | Betyársereg’, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://betyarsereg.hu/a-csepeli-klan-is-letudta-a-kotelezot-harcosaink-itt-is-100-ot-teljesitettek/>.

<sup>45</sup> Tyirityán: Orbán Not a Public Enemy. 23 November 2016  
Jászberényi and Tóth, ‘Tyirityán’.

<sup>46</sup> Székesfehérvár ’56 Commemoration Secured by Army of Outlaws. 23 October 2016.

‘A Betyársereg Biztosításával – ’56-Os Megemlékezés Székesfehérváron’, *Nemzeti.net*, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://nemzeti.net/a-betyarsereg-biztositasaval-56-os-megemlekezes-szekesfehervaron-6710564.html>.

Tyirityán has shared the following description of his personal ideological position:

*“What is a Nazi? That is a very interesting question. I have a racial identity, I have a national identity, I am socially sensitive, I believe in a type of hierarchy of the races, and I think in terms of autocratic systems. If, in the eyes of the liberals, this makes me a Nazi, then I am a Nazi.”*<sup>47</sup>

The Army of Outlaws is the most open about its willingness to engage in violence. As an organisation which rejects the current political system in its entirety<sup>48</sup> and is violence-focused, its members include former members of law enforcement and security services as well as body-building groups. Advocating white supremacy, the organisation makes its services available to any community dissatisfied with local public safety; they organise acts to intimidate in Roma-majority communities.<sup>49</sup>

Tyirityán, who between 2006 and 2009 was incarcerated in Sátoraljaújhely for aggravated assault of a Roma victim, in 2009 called on members of the organisation to participate in military training, as part of their preparations for guerrilla warfare.<sup>50</sup> Tyirityán’s role as a leader of the organisation is unquestioned; members follow his instructions unconditionally, and he himself decides who gets to join the Army after a seven-month probation period.<sup>51</sup> In addition to their activities in Roma inhabited areas, which in itself presents a real security threat, the organisation poses additional risks of radicalisation with its rhetoric encouraging violent acts and armed violence. At, for instance, the 2011 Hungarian Island festival, Tyirityán spoke of murdering coloured individuals and Jews.<sup>52</sup> Tyirityán thinly disguises his white supremacist ideology, the activities of his organisation terrorising minorities and their parades against the Roma using “law enforcement” terminology:

*“One thing we have to make clear. The Army of Outlaws is a group which, if necessary, if someone gets into a certain kind of trouble, we use our presence to point this out, that law enforcement authorities have to pay attention to this. We march there and we stand by our fellow Hungarian; we provide support through our presence. (...) This is how we impress upon those anti-social elements, who in many cases even after committing a crime continue to keep the victims in constant fear. So usually if we show up, they generally give up on this, on this type of behaviour.”*<sup>53</sup>

The Army of Outlaws, similarly to other highly organised criminal groups in the past, is capable of mobilising 200 tough guys within a day or two. Their goal is to be present everywhere in the country.

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<sup>47</sup> I’m a Nazi, and I Stand by It. And Vona is My Friend. 15 June 2015.

Tamás Fábrián, ‘Náci Vagyok, Vállalom! Vona Meg a Barátom’, *Index*, 15 June 2015, [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/15/naci\\_vagyok\\_vallalom\\_vona\\_meg\\_a\\_baratom/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/15/naci_vagyok_vallalom_vona_meg_a_baratom/).

<sup>48</sup> I’m a Nazi, and I Stand by It. And Vona is My Friend. 15 June 2015. *Ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> Video: You Will Die, Roma. Army of Outlaws Harassing Family for Three Months.

‘Videó: “Meghaltok, Cigányok!” – 3 Hónapja Zaklat Egy Családot a Betyársereg’, *HVG*, 13 May 2015, [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150513\\_Meghaltok\\_ciganyok\\_\\_Raszallt\\_a\\_betyarsereg](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150513_Meghaltok_ciganyok__Raszallt_a_betyarsereg).

<sup>50</sup> “Donate 1% of Your Tax, and We Will Bomb on Your Behalf if Necessary.” 9 March 2015.

‘Vigyázó!’, accessed 13 April 2017, [http://vigyazo.blog.hu/2015/03/09/\\_ajanlja\\_fel\\_adoja\\_1\\_-\\_%20at\\_es\\_mi\\_akar\\_robbantunk\\_is\\_on\\_helyett](http://vigyazo.blog.hu/2015/03/09/_ajanlja_fel_adoja_1_-_%20at_es_mi_akar_robbantunk_is_on_helyett).

<sup>51</sup> Tyirityán: Orbán Not a Public Enemy. 23 November 2016. Jászberényi and Tóth, ‘Tyirityán’.

<sup>52</sup> Army of Outlaws Announces Racial War. 10 August 2011.

‘Faji Háborút Hirdetett a Betyársereg’, *Index*, 10 August 2011,

[http://index.hu/belfold/2011/08/10/faji\\_haborut\\_hirdetett\\_a\\_jobbikkal\\_szovetseges\\_betyarsereg/](http://index.hu/belfold/2011/08/10/faji_haborut_hirdetett_a_jobbikkal_szovetseges_betyarsereg/).

<sup>53</sup> ‘A Betyársereg Főhadiszállásán Járt Az N1TV’, *Alfahír*, 5 February 2016,

[http://alfahir.hu/a\\_betyarsereg\\_fohadiszallasan\\_jart\\_az\\_n1tv](http://alfahir.hu/a_betyarsereg_fohadiszallasan_jart_az_n1tv).

Comprised of a loose alliance of clans, the organisation is structured hierarchically, with the leaders of the clans owing total obedience to the leader, and expecting the same of their own men. At the same time, law enforcement sources wishing to remain anonymous have confirmed that the Army of Outlaws includes individuals who in the past have worked in law enforcement, military or in some cases security fields, and thus have received specialised training. Tyirityán himself is a good example, who in the past had served at the László Bercsényi 34<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Battalion before putting his skills to use in organising the Army of Outlaws.

## The Wolves

According to their own definition, the Wolves are simply a “youth organisation conducting exercises using airsoft weapons.”<sup>54</sup> The leader of the group, Gábor Barcsa-Turner, however, also maintains that Hungary today is “lacking individuals of solid character trained in blood and in storms.”<sup>55</sup> The activities of the organisation are assisted by professional trainers;<sup>56</sup> one of their unofficial trainers, Zsolt Dér, is a veteran of the Balkan wars and is in direct contact with separatists fighting in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>57</sup> He has acknowledged having been approached by pro-Russian forces to join them in Ukraine. Dér said he ultimately refused to do so because he was employed by the Jobbik-delegated deputy speaker of Parliament, Tamás Schneider.

Conversations with national security experts about the movement, in existence since 2011, suggest that the group, currently inactive but otherwise involved in the establishment of Jobbik’s internal elite unit, chose the wolf as their namesake because of its role in German mythology and as one of the most frequently used totem animals of extremism and militarism. The group’s motto, “Ancient content, new form,” points to the acquisition of, in part, skills of modern warfare. The group provides basic military training to members, who among others use airsoft replicas of weapons.

The closed group has in the past placed the greatest emphasis on the training of members, relying on training materials of the King Atilla Academy, led by Tibor Imre Baranyi. Little is known about the number of its members. Gábor Barcsa-Turner, in connection with the killing of the police officer in Bőny, denied that the Wolves would espouse radical ideology.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> What is the Link to Jobbik? ‘Milyen Kapcsolatban van a Jobbikkal a Félkatonai Szervezet, a Farkasok Vezetője?’, *Faktor.hu*, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://faktor.hu/faktor-milyen-kapcsolatban-van-a-jobbikkal-a-felkatonai-szervezet-a-farkasok-vezetoje>.

<sup>55</sup> Cool Recruitment Video for Modern Military Camp. ‘Útós Videóval Toboroznak a Modern Harcászati Táborba’, *Alfahír*, 26 June 2014, [http://alfahir.hu/utos\\_videoval\\_toboroznak\\_a\\_modern\\_harcaszati\\_taborba](http://alfahir.hu/utos_videoval_toboroznak_a_modern_harcaszati_taborba).

<sup>56</sup> What Weapons Does the Wolves Use? ‘Milyen Fegyvereket Használ a Farkasok Nevű Félkatonai Szervezet?’, *Faktor.hu*, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://faktor.hu/faktor-milyen-fegyvereket-hasznal-a-farkasok-nevu-felkatonai-szervezet>.

<sup>57</sup> Zsolt Dér and the Truth: Answers to Tabloid Media Lies. 31 March 2016. ‘Dér Zsolt És Az Igazság – Válaszok a Bulvár Média Hazugságaira’, 31 March 2016, <http://szentkoronaradio.com/blog/2016/03/31/der-zsolt-es-az-igazsag-valaszok-a-bulvar-media-hazugsagaira/>.

<sup>58</sup> The Wolves, a military traditionalist and youth training group using airsoft weapons, does not espouse extremist ideology or principles. We reject this kind of demonisation on the part of the media. Our organisation does not take a position, and has not taken a position in any kind of current political or party political question. All we ask of our members is to demonstrate an honest, normal lifestyle and to reject deviancy. 30 October. 2016. ‘Farkasok: Együttműködünk a Hatóságokkal, De...’, *Szent Korona Rádió*, 30 October 2016, <http://szentkoronaradio.com/blog/2016/10/30/farkasok-egyuttmukodunk-a-hatosagokkal-de/>.

At the same time, it was he himself who acknowledged, in 2012, that he was the author of a letter obtained by ATV in which he said if need be, he would be willing to be anti-Semitic, Fascist or Nazi, and would even be willing to commit murder.<sup>59</sup>

Despite links among the groups affiliated with Jobbik, the party is very determined – and rather successful – in distancing itself publicly from the Wolves. They refer to the paramilitary organisation as an unregistered, unofficial group of friends that the leaders of the party by their own admission had only heard about recently.<sup>60</sup>

## The New Hungarian Guard Movement

Founded by Jobbik in 2007,<sup>61</sup> the aim of the paramilitary organisation Hungarian Guard was primarily to instil fear in the Roma. Following its banning in 2009, the extremist groups affiliated with the party became highly fragmented. Several successor groups with their roots in the Hungarian Guard were established, including the Hungarian National Guard, the New Hungarian Guard and the Hungarian Self-Defence Movement. Prior to Jobbik's attempts to transform itself into a people's party, it expended considerable energy on keeping these successor organisations under its control, just as it had made use of the Hungarian Guard in the past.<sup>62</sup>

Little information is available about the leadership and members of the New Hungarian Guard. Its supposed leaders, István Mészáros and Henrik Ferenczi, are assumed to lead a group of approximately 200 individuals.<sup>63</sup> Although Gábor Vona, who has been trying to reposition Jobbik, does less to promote the guards' movement, as party president he remains openly affiliated with the community and continues to assure it of his support.<sup>64</sup> The party most often depicts the organisation it is understood to be affiliated with as an entity which primarily conducts charity work to benefit the civilian population.<sup>65</sup> According to its own definition, the New Hungarian Guard Movement is a self-defence alliance which transcends parties and boundaries,<sup>66</sup> which in recent years has been most active in the organisation of athletic events and the renovation of monuments; it has also focused on public mobilisation for events such as the Day of Comradery.

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<sup>59</sup> Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement Leader Would Kill. 16 August 2012. ATV, 'Gyilkolna a HVIM Alelnöke'.

<sup>60</sup> Wolves Group of Friends Engaging in Pastime Activity. 13 March 2016. 'Jobbik: A Farkasok Egy Baráti Társaság, Amely Hobbitevékenységet Folytat', *PestiSrácok*, 13 March 2016, <http://pestisracok.hu/jobbik-farkasok-egy-barati-tarsasag-amely-hobbitevekenyseget-folytat/>.

<sup>61</sup> 'A Gárda Miatt Kiléptek a Jobbikból a Párt Alapítói', *Origo*, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20080310-lemondtak-a-jobbik-alapittoi-a-veszelyes-vallalhatatlan-magyar-garda-miatt.html>.

<sup>62</sup> Hungarian Guard Remains Banned. 15 December 2009. 'Érvényben Marad a Gárda Betiltása', *Index*, 15 December 2009, [http://index.hu/belfold/2009/12/15/ervenyben\\_marad\\_a\\_garda\\_betiltasa/](http://index.hu/belfold/2009/12/15/ervenyben_marad_a_garda_betiltasa/).

<sup>63</sup> 'Athena Institute', accessed 13 April 2017, <http://www.athenaintezet.hu/gyuloletcsoportok/>.

<sup>64</sup> Gábor Vona: "Not only have I been a member of this organisation in the past; not only do I stand by it in the present; I will remain your comrade in the future." 'Az MTI Hírt Adott Az Új Magyar Gárda Mozgalom Bajtársiasság Napi Rendezvényéről', *NÉPSZAVA Online*, accessed 13 April 2017, <http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1062512-az-mti-hirt-adott-az-uj-magyar-garda-mozgalom-bajtarsiasag-napi-rendezvenyerol>.

<sup>65</sup> Jobbik Denies the Wolves. 13 March 2016. 'A Jobbik Letagadja a Farkasokat', *HVG*, 13 March 2016, [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20160313\\_jobbik\\_farkasok\\_parthadsereg](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20160313_jobbik_farkasok_parthadsereg).

<sup>66</sup> 'Rövid Tájékoztató Az Új Magyar Gárda Mozgalomról | Új Magyar Gárda Mozgalom',

<Http://Ujmagyargardamozgalom.com/>, accessed 13 April 2017,

[http://ujmagyargardamozgalom.com/r%C3%B6vid\\_t%C3%A1j%C3%A9koztat%C3%B3\\_az\\_%C3%BAj\\_magyar\\_g%C3%A1rda\\_mozgalomr%C3%B3l\\_5](http://ujmagyargardamozgalom.com/r%C3%B6vid_t%C3%A1j%C3%A9koztat%C3%B3_az_%C3%BAj_magyar_g%C3%A1rda_mozgalomr%C3%B3l_5).

Despite the euphemistic use of words, the paramilitary nature of the organisation remains beyond question. Two guardsmen have been sentenced by first-instance courts to prison terms for marching from the Day of Comradery to the Budapest Pride demonstration and assaulting three individuals while shouting homophobic, racist slogans.<sup>67</sup> Interpretations of the refugee crisis having to do with conspiracy theories are featured prominently at their events, suggesting that “background forces have brought about chaos, which led to the tide of refugees hitting Europe and Hungary.” These “background forces” are also responsible for the banning of the Hungarian Guard.<sup>68</sup> The rhetoric of the satellite organisation, thus affiliated with Jobbik, mirrors one of the most important messages of Russian ideological and cultural influence: that the wave of refugees arriving in Hungary and Europe is organised with U.S. funding.<sup>69</sup> According to our sources, the Guards – which also espouse anti-Roma sentiments – have become “victims” of Jobbik’s attempts to become a moderate party; their demonstrations have for the most part been suspended. At the same time, it is important to note that the paramilitary satellite organisations and the Guards have remained active despite the wishes of the party, in terms of both anti-Roma and anti-refugee activities.

## The Hungarian Self-Defence Movement

The Hungarian Self-Defence Movement (MÖM) was launched in October 2014 under the leadership of Jobbik member Attila László; its establishment came just after a court ruled to disband László’s previous organisation, the Association for a Better Future, for regularly violating rules governing the freedom of gathering, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom of expression. László, already at events of the predecessor organisation, spoke out against “all Roma,” labelling Roma “vermin, creatures of Satan, rats and garbage.”<sup>70</sup> A sister organisation of Jobbik, the group tries to depict itself as a group open to society, and one which organises donation drives and flood prevention and community care projects. Its charity events, organised regularly in co-operation with Jobbik, are used as parts of a comprehensive propaganda strategy to mobilise members and sympathisers.<sup>71</sup> In addition to the countless joint events,<sup>72</sup> Attila László’s statements serve to reinforce the group’s close links to Jobbik. László believes it is a misunderstanding propagated by the press that Gábor Vona would like to sever ties to the radicals.

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<sup>67</sup> Two Guardsmen in Pride Fight Sentenced to Prison. 7 November 2016.

‘Letöltendő Börtönt Kapott a Pride-on Verekedő Két Gárdista’, *HVG*, 7 November 2016, [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20161107\\_letoltendo\\_bortont\\_kapott\\_a\\_prideon\\_verekedo\\_ket\\_gardista](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20161107_letoltendo_bortont_kapott_a_prideon_verekedo_ket_gardista).

<sup>68</sup> Gábor Vona a Friend of the Guard in the Past, Present and Future. 4 June 2016.

‘Vona Gábor a Múltban, a Jelenben És a Jövőben Is a Gárdisták Bajtársa’, *Alfahír*, 4 July 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/vona\\_gabor\\_a\\_multban\\_a\\_jelenben\\_es\\_a\\_jovoben\\_is\\_a\\_gardistak\\_bajtarsa](http://alfahir.hu/vona_gabor_a_multban_a_jelenben_es_a_jovoben_is_a_gardistak_bajtarsa).

<sup>69</sup> ‘Az MTI Hírt Adott Az Új Magyar Gárda Mozgalom Bajtársiasság Napi Rendezvényéről’.

<sup>70</sup> After Guard, Movement for Better Future Also Disbanded by Anti-Hungarian Authorities. 8 October 2014

‘Kuruc.info - A Gárda Után a Szébb Jövőért Egyesületet Is Feloszlattatta Az Antimagyar Hatalom’, *Kuruc.info*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://kuruc.info/r/2/134152/>.

<sup>71</sup> Jobbik and Hungarian Self-Defence Movement Help Together on Banks of Zagyva. ‘Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom - Közösen Segített a Jobbik És a MÖM a Zagyva Parton!’, accessed 25 April 2017, [http://www.magyaronedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/Kozosen\\_segített\\_a\\_Jobbik\\_es\\_a\\_MOM\\_a\\_Zagyva\\_parton\\_](http://www.magyaronedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/Kozosen_segített_a_Jobbik_es_a_MOM_a_Zagyva_parton_).

<sup>72</sup> Jobbik 13<sup>th</sup> District Chapter, with Help of Hungarian Self-Defence Movement, Conducts Latest Food and Clothing Distribution. 10 November 2016. ‘Kuruc.info - Ismét Étel És Ruhát Osztottak a XVIII. Kerületi Jobbikosok a MÖM Segítségével’, *Kuruc.info*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://kuruc.info/r/34/165971/>.

According to the president of Movement, the positions as members of the party executive of former spokesperson of the Hungarian Guard János Volner and Tamás Sneider, a former leader of skinheads in Eger, are guarantors of Jobbik's radical wing.

The organisation is dangerous primarily because the military-type training offered by the “self-defence chapter” of the group, as well as the constant threat it poses to the Roma minority, represent a real potential for radicalisation.<sup>73</sup> By assuming a law enforcement role, the organisation conducts “walk-arounds” to intimidate, primarily in communities inhabited by the Roma, advertising its patrols as “walks to improve the public mood.”<sup>74</sup> They call on their sympathisers to form their own local chapters, suggesting that while “law enforcement officials patrol the borders, murderers and robbers have free run of our cities and villages.”<sup>75</sup> In addition to anti-Roma activities, they regularly conduct events against migrants together with Jobbik; one such event was a demonstration outside the Debrecen reception centre (since shut down) on 25 June 2015.<sup>76</sup>

## The Hungarian National Front

To date, the most extreme group of the Hungarian far right was the Hungarian National Front (MNA), which was banned in late 2016. The organisation was more loosely affiliated with Jobbik than the other groups. A predecessor of the MNA was founded in 1989 under the name Hungarian National Socialist Action Groups; it only became relatively prominent later, under the leadership of István Gyórkös, who declared himself the exclusive leader of the Hungarist movement. Gyórkös has been credited with elevating the Day of Honour commemorations, celebrating Nazis, to international events, as well as with operating the paramilitary training camps created in Bőny and other places. Later, however, the relationship between Gyórkös and the Hungarists, as well as the skinheads associated with the latter, soured. The first split took place at the time of the turn of millennium. Following this split, the MNA began a gradual break with Hungarism, and became increasingly isolated on the extreme right. After 2011, Gyórkös's moves toward Russia and communist principles led to tensions within the organisation. In 2012, the group ultimately split in two: the MNA expelled its former leader, finding it unacceptable that Gyórkös would “cosy up to the communists;” they said this goes against their principles. Thus breaking with the MNA and Hungarism, the group led by István Gyórkös transformed into a paramilitary organisation representing a peculiar mix of ideology and likely influenced by Russian intelligence services.

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<sup>73</sup> Hungarian Self-Defence Movement Established. 19 October 2014 ‘Kuruc.info - Zászlót Bontott a Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom’, *Kuruc.info*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://kuruc.info/r/2/134666>.

<sup>74</sup> Hungarian Self-Defence Movement Executive Meeting (Naturally, with Walk to Improve Public Mood). ‘Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom - MÖM Vezetői Értekezlet (Természetesen, Közérzet Javító Sétával Zárva).’, accessed 25 April 2017,

[http://www.magyaronvedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/MOM\\_vezetoi\\_ertekezlet\\_\(termeszetenen\\_kozerzet\\_javito\\_setaval\\_zarva\)](http://www.magyaronvedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/MOM_vezetoi_ertekezlet_(termeszetenen_kozerzet_javito_setaval_zarva)).

<sup>75</sup> Establish Your Own Local Hungarian Self-Defence Movement Chapter. ‘Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom - Alakítsd Meg Te Is Településeden a MÖM Helyi Szervezetét!’, accessed 25 April 2017,

[http://www.magyaronvedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/Alakitsd\\_meg\\_te\\_is\\_telepuleseden\\_a\\_MOM\\_helyi\\_szervezetet\\_&min=160&translate](http://www.magyaronvedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/Alakitsd_meg_te_is_telepuleseden_a_MOM_helyi_szervezetet_&min=160&translate).

<sup>76</sup> Fake News and Violence Against Migrants – Extreme Right Takes Campaign of Hate to New Heights. 16 July 2015. Botond Bötös, ‘Álhírekkel, Erőszakkal a Menekültek Ellen – Csúcsra Járhatja a Gyűlöletkampányt a Szélsőjobb’, *Átlátszó Blog*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://blog.atlatszo.hu/2015/07/alhirekkel-eroszakkal-a-menekultek-ellen-csucsra-jaratja-a-gyuloletkampanyt-a-szelsojobb/>.

One of the clearest indicators of this was the news portal Hídfe (Bridgehead) created by Gyórkös and his followers, which in recent years has pursued blatantly Russian propaganda after being moved to a Russian URL (hidfo.ru).

The goal of the organisation has also been to prepare for armed conflict: one of their propaganda videos glorifies the killing of American soldiers.<sup>77</sup> Boasting about one hundred members, the group found itself the centre of attention again on 26 October 2016, when a police officer of the National Bureau of Investigation was fatally wounded in a shooting between István Gyórkös and the police; the authorities were searching the house of the leader of the organisation in Bóny for illegal weapons. The Counter-Terrorism Centre and the National Bureau of Investigation then, in co-ordinated raids, detained and charged eighteen individuals affiliated with the MNA with violence against a community and abuse of firearms; in related raids, the authorities seized automatic weapons, handguns and explosives in several locations.<sup>78</sup>

In connection with the Bóny events, journalists of Index have described, citing intelligence service sources unaffiliated with one another, that officers of Russia's military intelligence service, the GRU (*Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravleniye*) have been in contact with the MNA, and that Russian "diplomats" have in the past participated in airsoft exercises of Gyórkös's group – all of which was known to Hungarian intelligence services, including military counter-intelligence.<sup>79</sup> This once again directed attention to the efficiency of the Kremlin in influencing paramilitary and extremist organisations operating in Hungary.

## **Connections Between the Various Organisations; the Influence of Jobbik**

The membership of the various extremist groups and Jobbik overlaps in many cases. This is true despite the fact that according to the leader of one extreme right group, no one to the right of the HVIM actually cares for Jobbik, because "they consider it a part of the system." "By System, the majority means the Orbán government, but we mean the entirety of the system, which the Orbán government is part of," this leader told us in response to a question.

In addition to the founder, Toroczkai, other HVIM leaders who are politicians representing Jobbik include Ádám Magvasi and Tamás Gábor Fodor, both of them local district presidents of the party. György Gyula Zagyva, a former Member of Parliament representing Jobbik and also affiliated with the organisation, has been banned several times from Romania. In Transylvania, he worked to recruit young people for the Movement at roundtable events he hosted under slogans such as, "Be a Part of the Resistance" or "We fight not only in the virtual space; the flag of our freedom is once again flying high. Take Action with Us!"<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> 'Athena Institute'.

<sup>78</sup> Giant Raid: Hungarian National Front Beheaded. 15 November 2016. 'Lecsapott a TEK a Nemzeti Arcvonalra', *24.hu*, 15 November 2016, <http://24.hu/belfold/2016/11/15/oriasrazzia-lefejeztek-a-nemzeti-arcvonalat/>.

<sup>79</sup> Russian Intelligence in Exercises with Fighters of Police Killer. 27 October 2016. András Dezső and Szabolcs Panyi, 'Orosz Diplomáták Gyakorlatoztak a Rendőrgyilkos Brigádjával', *Index*, 27 October 2016, [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/10/27/orosz\\_hirszerzok\\_gyakorlatoztak\\_a\\_rendorgyilkos\\_harcosaival/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/10/27/orosz_hirszerzok_gyakorlatoztak_a_rendorgyilkos_harcosaival/).

<sup>80</sup> Phantom Organisation Recruiting Radical Hungarian Youth in Transylvania. 1 April 2015. Ilie, 'Fantom szervezet Toborozza Erdélyben a Radikális Magyar Fiatalokat'.

Although Jobbik has distanced itself from the Wolves, founded as a paramilitary organisation in 2011, the group's leader, Gábor Barcsa-Turner is affiliated with the party in several ways. He is a co-president of the HVIM and a founder of the national-radical Holy Crown Radio. Zsolt Dér, a leading figure of the Wolves and a member of the Army of Outlaws, was employed as late as April 2015 as an assistant to Tamás Sneider, the Jobbik-delegated deputy speaker of Parliament.<sup>81</sup> Dér, avowedly, had been invited by Russian separatists to join the fighting in Eastern Ukraine, an offer he rejected precisely because of his role alongside Sneider.

Zsolt Tyirityán, a member of the MNA between 1995 and November 2000, had maintained a good personal relationship with István Györkös, whom he described as a “deeply religious, family-loving man; a true patriot.” Following the killing of the police officer in Bőny, and the ensuing raid by the National Bureau of Investigation, Tyirityán used an interview with 24.hu to attempt to lessen the responsibility of the MNA and to shield Jobbik from the case.

*“They wanted to use any means possible to label radical right organisations and to make their operations impossible, by accusing them of amassing arms; this was what they claimed in connection with the Army of Outlaws of course, but we see that they are also trying to bring Jobbik into this incredibly tragic story. But let me ask: where are the arms warehouses? Where are the explosives? Because all I see are airsoft guns, air rifles and weapon replicas on the images they produced. Anyone who has any sense of the conditions in Hungary knows that it is impossible to amass arms illegally; the services especially know this.”<sup>82</sup>*

The relationship, however, between Jobbik and the Army of Outlaws is not without conflict. “I have slapped them, if you will, yet I can live with them and work with them,” Tyirityán said of Jobbik at a January 2013 meeting in Pécs according to another recording made secretly.<sup>83</sup> He was referring to an incident in 2011 when he slapped then-Jobbik-vice-president Előd Novák at an event.<sup>84</sup> Jobbik had said it would break with the Army. Later, however, they reconciled. At the meeting in Pécs, Tyirityán described already how he and Novák have cleared things up and moved on; he called the Jobbik leader a “good patriot.” At the same event, the Army of Outlaws leader spoke out harshly against the Nazi organisation Hungarian Dawn as well, which was founded largely by radical former Jobbik members disappointed with the party. In the 2014 election campaign, Hungarian Dawn claimed Jobbik had entered into a secret pact with Fidesz and become corrupt. “Do they not see that if they take Jobbik away, or if Jobbik burns up, then it is not Jobbik which will disappear, but the ideals of Hungarian nationalist thought which will go down the drain?” – Tyirityán asked his listeners.

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<sup>81</sup> Zsolt Dér and the Truth: Answers to Tabloid Media Lies. 31 March 2016. ‘Dér Zsolt És Az Igazság – Válaszok a Bulvár Média Hazugságaira’.

<sup>82</sup> Army of Outlaws Leader: Is this Nazi? Then I Want to Be One! 22 November 2016. Sándor Jászberényi and Richi Tóth, ‘A Betyársereg Vezetője: Ez Nácinak Számít? Hát Legyek Az!’, 24.hu, 22 November 2016, <http://24.hu/belfold/2016/11/22/a-betyarsereg-vezetoje-ez-nacinak-szamit-hat-legyek-az/>.

<sup>83</sup> Dezső, ‘A TEK-Be Is Beépülnének a Szélsőjobbboldali Nehézfiúk’.

<sup>84</sup> Gábor Vona pushed Előd Novák out of Jobbik in 2016, when the latter went against the party president. In June 2016, Novák gave up his seat in Parliament when the party faction revoked its confidence in him. Some analysts noted that his removal from the party forms a part of Vona's strategy of transforming Jobbik into a people's party, which required him to get rid of radical, extremist politicians, but this does not appear to be the whole story. When Novák was expelled from the party, László Toroczkai was elected to Jobbik's executive, despite being one of the most radical figures of the far right.



Jobbik would have a difficult time severing its ties with the Army of Outlaws because several members of the party are linked to the Army, or perhaps are indebted to Tyirityán and his group. The Jobbik mayor of Vecsés, Attila Szabó, for instance, asked for the help of the Army of Outlaws in 2008 when Roma perpetrators “broke into his home in Vecsés, attacked him physically, and using weapons forced members of his family – including his wife and five-year-old daughter – to hand over their valuables.”<sup>85</sup> Later, in a video, Tyirityán presented Szabó as the leader of the Army’s Vecsés clan (the video is no longer accessible). Szabó is also connected with the City National Alliance (whose seat is identical to his home address). The president of the Alliance is József Czeróczy, singer of the skinhead band Pitted Cherries; Tyirityán spoke of him as a dear old comrade.<sup>86</sup> “The City National Alliance has operated a gym in Vecsés for several years, where a prominent coach of the Army of Outlaws, Tamás Edelényi, known as one of the defendants of the 2006 siege of the television building in Budapest, holds training sessions,” according to Átlátszó. It is interesting to note that in late December 2016, when Gábor Vona and Ádám Mirkóczy (Jobbik spokesperson) sent Hanukah greetings to Rabbi Slomó Köves, the Vecsés chapter of Jobbik distanced itself from the party president, publishing the following clear message on its Facebook page: “Jobbik in Vecsés does NOT send greetings to the Jews for Hanukah (or f.k knows what)! If someone still has this deranged idea in their heads, we distance ourselves from them.”<sup>87</sup>

The ends justify the means – this is generally the explanation the extreme right uses to tolerate the rougher figures within its ranks. According to several members of the party, however, “there is a price” for Jobbik’s friendship with the militant organisations to its right. The alliance with the tough guys does not come for free. The “outlaws” are a regular presence at party events, providing security. The head of the Army’s Esztergom clan, known as Bandi the Skinhead, had previously helped provide personal security to Gábor Vona.<sup>88</sup>

The links between Jobbik and its satellite organisations are present in a particularly demonstrative way at the sacral-ideological events of the extreme right subculture. One example was the 2015 Trianon Parade of the HVIM, which featured Adrián Magvasi, a leader of the HVIM and editor-in-chief of *Alfahír*; Előd Novák, the former vice president of Jobbik and a Member of Parliament; Gergely Kálló, mentor to the Budapest youth section of Jobbik; György Gyula Zagyva, co-president of the HVIM; and Gergely Dobay, vice president of the HVIM, its leader in Upper Hungary.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Sándor Jászberényi, ‘Vecsési Hagyományőrző Egyesület Mögött Szervezkedik a Betyársereg’, *Atlatszo.hu*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://atlatszo.hu/2014/03/19/vecsesi-hagyomanyorzo-egyesulet-mogott-szervezkedik-a-betyarsereg/>.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> András Dezső, ‘A Vecsési Jobbik Elhatárolódott Vonától’, *Index*, 29 December 2016, <http://index.hu/belfold/2016/12/29/a-vecsesi-jobbik-elhatarolodott-vonától/>.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Közeleg Az Idő, Hogy Romániát Is Fel Lehet Darabolni’, *Alfahír*, 8 June 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/kozeleg\\_az\\_ido\\_hogy\\_romaniat\\_is\\_fel\\_lehet\\_darabolni](http://alfahir.hu/kozeleg_az_ido_hogy_romaniat_is_fel_lehet_darabolni).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

At the event commemorating Miklós Horthy, the authoritarian right-wing leader governing Hungary during the interwar years, speeches were delivered by – among others – Előd Novák; Zsolt Tyirityán; Érpatak mayor Mihály Zoltán Orosz; Levente Murányi, director of the ‘56 Pest Lads Institute; István Mészáros, chief captain of the New Hungarian Guard.<sup>90</sup>

The examples above show that the extreme right media not only cares for the image of these organisations and defends them from attacks, but also provides them with publicity equal to Jobbik’s at events advancing the myth of the far right, which also serve as the cultural focal points; basically, the media channels these paramilitary and revisionist formations into the centre of extreme right public thought.

In terms of relationships with organisations beyond the borders, it is clearly the HVIM – which focuses on activities in neighbouring countries – that is in the lead. At the same time, even here we encounter high-level co-operation between the group and other actors of the far right. In November 2015, Jobbik, the Jobbik Youth Section and the HVIM – in keeping with years of tradition – joined the March of Independence in Warsaw, where – alongside representatives of several other European extreme right parties – the Hungarians met above all with their most significant Polish partner organisation, Ruch Narodowy.<sup>91</sup> Earlier, in September 2015, members of the Slovak chapter of the HVIM demonstrated together with Marian Kotleba and his party against the Gabčíkovo refugee camp.<sup>92</sup> The migration crisis quickly placed the extreme right entities throughout Europe on the same platform, despite them otherwise not having particularly close relationships with one another. The case of Kotleba and the HVIM is unique, however, in that it represented a revisionist organisation joining, at least temporarily, Slovakia’s most radical, openly anti-Hungarian neo-Nazi party. In 2016, a local chapter of the HVIM and the New Hungarian Guard – which is not covered in-depth in this study – commemorated, together with an unnamed “SS veteran,” the Axis powers’ breaking out from Budapest against the Russian front reaching the Hungarian capital at the end of the Second World War.<sup>93</sup> The encounter shows that the Hungarian extreme right does maintain relationships with German neo-Nazi subculture. An example of the “opening to the west,” which to date has been an elusive goal for Jobbik, is a 2016 event on migration entitled, “*Revolution in Hungary – An Example for Austria?*” where the far right Austrian Wiener Akademische Burschenschaft Olympia conducted a discussion with the Jobbik Youth Section and the HVIM.<sup>94</sup> There are obviously more examples of co-operation across the border, even if we look only at the broad network of the HVIM, but the organisations do not report about these, wishing to keep their operations secret.

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<sup>90</sup> ‘Horthy Budapesti Bevonulására Emlékeznek a Hétvégén’, *Alfahír*, 13 November 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/horthy\\_budapesti\\_bevonulasara\\_emlekeznek\\_a\\_hetvegen](http://alfahir.hu/horthy_budapesti_bevonulasara_emlekeznek_a_hetvegen).

<sup>91</sup> ‘Száz ezer Hazafi Készülődik Varsóba’, *Alfahír*, 23 September 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/szazezer\\_hazafi\\_keszulodik\\_varsoba](http://alfahir.hu/szazezer_hazafi_keszulodik_varsoba).

<sup>92</sup> ‘Vármegyések Együtt Tüntettek a Szlovák Nacionalistákkal’, *Alfahír*, 20 September 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/varmegyesek\\_egyutt\\_tuntettek\\_a\\_szlovak\\_nacionalistakkal](http://alfahir.hu/varmegyesek_egyutt_tuntettek_a_szlovak_nacionalistakkal).

<sup>93</sup> ‘Kuruc.info - SS-Veteránnal Emlékeztek a Kitörés Hőseire Székesfehérváron’, *Kuruc.info*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://kuruc.info/r/1/154816/>.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Toroczkai És a Migránskérdés Érdekli a Legjobban Az Osztrák Nacionalistákat’, *Alfahír*, 25 April 2016, [http://alfahir.hu/toroczkai\\_es\\_a\\_migranskerdes\\_erdekli\\_a\\_legjobban\\_az\\_osztrak\\_nacionalistakat](http://alfahir.hu/toroczkai_es_a_migranskerdes_erdekli_a_legjobban_az_osztrak_nacionalistakat).

## RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN RADICALISATION

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### **The First Messengers: Pro-Russian Hungarists and Communists**

One segment of the Hungarian extreme right took action against the Euro-Atlantic alliance and the role of the United States of America as a global power shortly after the change of regime. Of the figures of the extreme right known nationally, it was Albert Szabó who after the change of regime was the first to demonstrate a clear sympathy for Russia. This was all the more apparent because in the early 1990s, while the Hungarian extreme right was not necessarily a fan of the west, the majority of the organisations – being nationalists – identified clearly with anti-communist sympathies. This excluded the possibility that Russia or the Russians – following the country recovering its national independence from Moscow after the system change – could be considered friends. Albert Szabó was the exception to this notion.

Szabó was born in Debrecen in 1955. He studied at a vocational school before moving to Budapest and enrolling in high school there. In 1986, at the age of 31, he left the country and moved to Australia where, by his own admission, he quickly fell in with the innermost circles of the Hungarist group of Hungarian émigrés living there.<sup>95</sup> Any discussion of Szabó's emigration must mention that Directorate No. III/I of the Ministry of Interior – the part of the political police of the People's Republic of Hungary dealing with external intelligence – at the time placed<sup>96</sup> agents within Arrow Cross emigrant groups living abroad; these operations were not conducted independently, but with help from Soviet partner organisations.<sup>97</sup> "It was the Soviets' general practice at the time that they 'emigrated' Subcarpathian Hungarians to Hungary, where they 'got in trouble' and then 'had to go' west. At the time of the change of regime, several of them got stuck here, or this kind of plan broke down somehow," a former counter-intelligence officer wishing to remain unnamed said. No information is available as to whether or not Szabó ended up abroad as part of a similar scheme, but the possibility cannot be excluded given later developments. According to Hungarian national security sources, when Albert Szabó – as a leader of the extreme right – showed up on the radar of the National Security Office in the 1990s, the counter-intelligence service never dealt with this aspect of his past. Yet this could have been a key circumstance in view of the fact that when Albert Szabó returned after the change of regime, he became publicly known on the margins of Hungary's accession to NATO, also calling attention to the World National People's Rule Party which he founded.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Following the Second World War, some Hungarian Arrow Cross members – like German Nazis – emigrated to South America, where they were received with arms wide open. After 1945, a number of Hungarian Arrow Cross members also chose Australia as their new home.

<sup>96</sup> Placing here means that the intelligence service inserts the illegal agent inside the target community.

<sup>97</sup> The Mitrokhin Archive shows that the head of the illegal programme of Directorate No. III/I was a Soviet agent. The Hungarian edition of the Mitrokhin Archive also includes the name and identity of the individual, which led to his being uncovered. The individual later worked in the Information Office, the successor entity of Directorate No. III/I, without it being known that he was a Russian agent.

<sup>98</sup> The World National People's Rule Party was registered by the courts on 11 October 1993. Source: 'A Magyar Köztársaság Területén Hivatalosan Bejegyzett Pártok Listája', [Http://Valasztas.hu/](http://Valasztas.hu/), accessed 25 April 2017, <http://www.valasztas.hu/ujweb/inf/partok.htm>.

On 20 April 1994 (the anniversary of the birth of Adolf Hitler), the openly anti-Semitic Party<sup>99</sup> merged with the MNA (led by István Gyórkös) and the Association of Those Persecuted by Communism (chaired by György Ekrem-Kemál) under the name Hungarian Hungarist Movement; not much later, the Movement and its constituting organisations were banned.

On 20 September 1994, Szabó and several others established the Hungarian People's Welfare Alliance (MNSZ); Szabó became its president. In the Alliance's publication entitled "Hungarian Consciousness," Russian propaganda was featured frequently. These writings drew a parallel between the conditions in Russia and Hungary at the time; American culture was described as anti-nation and a pre-planned conspiracy. A review of the archives of the Hungarian wire service MTI reveals that from its inception, the MNSZ used almost all its public appearances to emphasise its position against NATO and the EU, and to underscore that its key objective was in fact to protest Hungarian membership in NATO and the EU. Szabó was the first on the Hungarian extreme right to speak about a Euro-Asian alliance.<sup>100</sup>

As Szabó's statements at the time showed, policies which regard the west as the enemy and mention the "Eurasian model" as an example to follow appeared much earlier than Hungary's accession to NATO. It is also interesting to note that the MNSZ and the extreme left Workers' Party both began active campaigns against NATO membership in the same year, 1995; the former publicly voiced its position at all its public events. It is also telling of the media landscape at the time that – before the Internet – it was the national press, and primarily MTI, which served as their only useful media surface. Today, it is rare that MTI or any other mainstream medium would report in-depth about the demonstrations of an extremist or marginal group; in the 1990s, this was still the norm. This also meant, however, that even a smaller group could serve the interests of states which were disinterested in Hungary's efforts at NATO and EU membership, as long as these groups included geopolitical issues in their party platforms – the way the MNSZ did.

On 25 October 1997, the MNSZ once again demonstrated in Budapest. According to MTI reports, the march of some 150 people – led by Albert Szabó – protested against Hungary's efforts to join NATO and the EU. On 14 November 1997, Albert Szabó – together with fifteen-twenty "aviator-jacket-wearing" teenagers – organised a demonstration in front of the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, protesting NATO.

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<sup>99</sup> The World National People's Rule Party was in its rhetoric an openly anti-Semitic, Hungarist party. According to the party's ideology, Hungarians are the descendants of the Sumers, but evidence proving as much was destroyed by the Hapsburgs, whom they claim are in fact Jewish. The Party denied the Holocaust took place, and glorified the Arrow Cross Party, the Hungarist Movement and its leader Ferenc Szálasi.

<sup>100</sup> On Wednesday, 15 March 1995, at a Budapest event of the MNSZ, Szabó according to MTI reports demanded a "Hungary free of NATO, and a national army and police." On 1 May 1996, according to MTI, some one hundred young persons, primarily with "swimmers' haircuts" were on hand for an event of the Alliance in the City Park of Budapest. Albert Szabó described the "struggle against robber capitalism and international capital and banking groups, and the re-nationalisation of national assets" as "some of the most important tasks of nationalist youth." As an ultimate goal, he mentioned the "establishment of the Alliance of Eurasian Nation States, and spoke out strongly against Hungary's membership in the EU and NATO." On 15 March 1997, at a Budapest event of the MNSZ, Albert Szabó called for the removal of "this government pursuing anti-Hungarian policies, skinning its people and executing the nation itself." The Hungarist leader also spoke out harshly against the "European Union flying the flag of David's star" and NATO, which he called a "boot-wearing army of Niggers." He called for the revision of the borders; according to MTI, he "advocated for the peaceful recovery of areas lost at Trianon."

Speaking at the event, Szabó said, “NATO is a terrorist organisation protecting the interests of organised international Jewish criminals,” adding that the Alliance needs the Carpathian Basin as a staging ground against Russia. At the gates, the demonstrators presented an employee of the embassy with a petition laying out their principles against NATO and the EU. The same year, Szabó and his group also demonstrated outside the Russian Embassy against the economic policies of the Hungarian government at the time, which they were concerned would hurt their “white Aryan brethren.” Additionally, Szabó’s organisation protested against NATO accession. According to national security sources, Szabó at this time maintained contact with Russian diplomats posted in Hungary.<sup>101</sup>

In the late 1990s, Szabó’s manoeuvring room began to shrink. He received a suspended prison sentence for instigation. Later, when the National Security Office (the predecessor of today’s Constitution Protection Office, AH) succeeded in fomenting dissent within his group, he moved to Australia. Some Hungarists suggested he is a fraud, while others suspected him of being an agent of Israel. He remained active for some time after his departure. MNSZ vice president Viktor Sárosi told the weekly *Magyar Narancs* in 1999 that “Albert Szabó had left the country in order to build further political and economic contacts.”<sup>102</sup> In the same interview, Sárosi said MNSZ leaders visited Iraq in the spring of 1999 and participated in Saddam Hussein’s birthday celebrations; there they met radical Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy,<sup>103</sup> with whom they had hoped to forge closer ties. “We would like to visit Moscow, and we would like to invite him to Budapest, but the situation in Russia is such at the moment that he cannot leave,” Sárosi said in the interview.<sup>104</sup>

In addition to Szabó’s MNSZ, the communist Workers’ Party and Izabella B. Király’s Party of the Hungarian Interest also expressed their views against the United States in Hungary in the 1990s. Although Sárosi claimed that the MNSZ had concluded an agreement in February 1999 with the Workers’ Party and the Party of the Hungarian Interest about co-operating with the Iraqi Ba’ath Party “in a fight against American and English aggression and Zionism,” as well as to “support the fight of the Palestinian people and help the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital,” the Workers’ Party<sup>105</sup> subsequently distanced itself from the MNSZ, claiming it was simply a bilateral agreement they had concluded with Iraq.

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<sup>101</sup> Apart from the fact that the MNSZ considered the United States its enemy, in terms of external features it resembled the similarly extreme right Russian National Unity (RNU). Szabó’s organization looked to skinheads following a “Russian example, using open and militant recruitment” tactics. “Join our ranks and fight to stay alive – under the flag of the cogwheel and for a Better Future!” – they announced. There is, however, no information available on whether or not Szabó had in fact been in contact with RNU.

<sup>102</sup> Csaba Vultur, “Távozó Főhungerista: Volt, Nincs, Lesz”, *Magyar Narancs*, 2 December 1999, [http://magyarnarancs.hu/belpol/tavozo\\_fohungarista\\_volt\\_nincs\\_lesz-60496](http://magyarnarancs.hu/belpol/tavozo_fohungarista_volt_nincs_lesz-60496).

<sup>103</sup> Zhirinovskiy, whom Putin had decorated, stated at the time of the crisis in Ukraine that Poland, Hungary and Romania should recover the territories in Western Ukraine lost by them earlier to Russia, and that Eastern Ukraine should become a part of Russia.

<sup>104</sup> Sárosi noted that Szabó went first to Australia, but then would be moving on to the United States and finally to Chile, where a meeting of “national parties” was to be held. “There will be representatives there from everywhere from Germany through England and to Hungary, and according to some preliminary information, even from Russia and Japan,” Sárosi said. He said the meeting would be used to co-ordinate positions on what they can do “against the current international criminals; we will be co-ordinating our efforts economically and politically.”

<sup>105</sup> The Workers’ Party led by Gyula Thürmer maintained good relations with Russian communists in the 1990s. The Workers’ Party and MNSZ, however, shared one thing: both organisations opposed Hungary’s efforts at membership in NATO and the EU. When on 6 July 1996 Gyula Thürmer sent a telegram on behalf of the Workers’ Party to Gennady Andreyevich Zyuganov, chair of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, he did not

Following Szabó's return to Australia, the only reports of his later activities were news that he was working as the director of an Australian export-import company. Although rumours circulated that he returned to Hungary in 2006, even if these were true, he never appeared publicly with the extreme right. In 2010, the closely Jobbik-affiliated Kuruc.info published articles attempting to "rehabilitate" him.

## **After Crimea: The New Russian Propaganda Network**

When the Russia-Ukraine conflict took a bloody turn in March 2014, a number of non-Russian-language websites and Facebook pages were launched which were created by Moscow to spread Russian propaganda. The Kremlin clearly adopted a new media strategy in Eastern and Central Europe. Local editions of the Voice of Russia were on the one hand shut down and integrated under Sputnik; on the other hand, a decentralised media network run by local pro-Russia actors and pages numbering in the thousands were created largely on new media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogs). Experts claim these pages are co-ordinated by a section of Russian intelligence dealing with so-called active measures; a number of these propaganda pages feature Hungarian-language content. At the same time, not all pages are under direct control; many pages are created fuelled by users' own personal convictions. The majority of these pages are anonymous, and little is known about their authors or editors.

All of this is connected to the return of Albert Szabó to Hungary in an interesting way. Following his self-imposed exile, it was almost as though the former Hungarian leader had been replaced. In 2011, Albert Szabó created a Facebook page entitled Work Abroad, to help an Australian company recruit employees in Hungary. (The fact that he was the creator of the page became clear, as he used his own email address and would initially sign his name after some of the posts.) What was apparent was that Szabó stated at the time that the company was involved in industrial projects which – as priority EU projects – were supported by the European Union.

"Our sponsor company, registered in Australia, is launching a green energy climate and soil protection industrial project in Australia which is supported by the European Union and the

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fail to mention in his message that his party "will continue its struggle against the solidifying of capitalism in Hungary, will fight for the social and democratic rights of working people and will take steps to prevent Hungary from becoming a servile periphery of the West and from becoming a battle ground for NATO – so that Hungary may instead be a modern, democratic and neutral nation." The Workers' Party had initiated a referendum against NATO membership in 1995, but Parliament did not call for one citing the lack of a need for a decision at the time. Some twenty years later, the president of the Workers' Party had not changed his mind. On 19 February 2014, Thürmer gave an interview to the Hungarian-language online publication Voice of Russia, where he had this to say of the relationship between Hungary and Russia: "We have always believed that the relationship of Hungary and Russia cannot be treated as simply a question of the economy. So we cannot consider Russia simply a market where we sell Hungarian products. Hungary must consider Russia a political factor, a global power and a strategic actor; we must determine our foreign policy so as not to harm Russian interests while of course maintaining Hungary's independence and its own manoeuvring room. We welcome political steps taken forward at the highest level; we support advances in the cultural realm, we welcome the creation of the Tolstoy Society in Hungary, among others; and we welcome that ties are being expanded. There is still a need for greater reserves. It would be good to ensure that Russian-language television broadcasts can be seen again in Hungary and offered as part of cable television packages. It would be good to publish Russian-language books and literature, as well as newspapers, in large numbers, and it would be good to reintroduce the teaching of Russian in schools – so a lot of things where we could still make progress." Full text: 'Kádár Jobban Teljesít – Interjú Thürmer Gyulával', *Oroszország Hangja*, 19 February 2014, [http://hungarian.ruvr.ru/2014\\_02\\_19/Kadar-jobban-teljes-t-interju-Thurmer-Gyulaval/](http://hungarian.ruvr.ru/2014_02_19/Kadar-jobban-teljes-t-interju-Thurmer-Gyulaval/).

government of Australia. Since 2002, the project has been a priority project of the Brussels Commissions of the EU, which is now being implemented in Australia,” Szabó said at the time on Facebook, recruiting Hungarians to join the project. The business opportunity proposed by Szabó was highly reminiscent of a multi-level marketing scheme. He encouraged people, if they were lacking money, to bring shareholders on board for a commission, thereby eventually becoming shareholders themselves. At the time, the page made no mention of anti-EU Russian propaganda; in fact, Szabó wrote about how the company will have an “EU pilot phase” in Hungary, with employees involved in “global marketing” eventually to end up in Australia. Furthermore, Szabó spoke of Australia as “the world’s most dynamically growing economy,” where “tens of thousands of Hungarians have settled and lead happy and successful lives,” “proving that it is never too late to make a change and to start a new life in another country.” The attractive offer appealed to many, and the page eventually gathered thousands of followers, especially among Hungarians who were lured by the promise of potentially being able to settle in a developed western nation at some point. (The page also alluded to how someone working for the company may be able to obtain a residency permit easily in the future.) Szabó’s email address also appeared in a WikiLeaks document, after he had sent a message to President Barack Obama, raising the bizarre notion that the United States take in European states among its members. (This was also signed by Szabó under his real name.)

Szabó’s Facebook page took a 180-degree turn in the spring of 2014, when the situation in Crimea became more intense. Work Abroad carried the first post in late March which offered praise for the Eurasian Union. The page then quickly transformed into one of those sites which regularly publish anti-EU content praising the “opening to the East,” the Eurasian Union and Putin’s regime. The shift is all the more remarkable because previously Szabó (as Work Abroad) had been luring Hungarians to Australia because it is a “welcoming and tolerant society,” “a solid and functioning democracy” with “independence and freedom” as well as “political stability.” These adjectives, especially “solid” and “functioning democracy,” “welcoming” and “tolerance” are not especially characteristic of Russia, but are rather typical curse words of Russian propaganda against the West.

Not only had the former Hungarist leader become a component of the Russian propaganda machine, he was also recently one of the most vocal supporters of a pro-Russian demonstration entitled Anti-Maidan. The Anti-Maidan was staged in Budapest on 17 February 2015, timed to coincide with the visit of Vladimir Putin. The event itself was organised by Orientalista.hu and the Facebook group We Stand By Russia. The former domain was registered by Adonis Kassab, the former president of the Ferencváros chapter of Jobbik, while the administrators of the latter page are unknown. The Anti-Maidan Facebook event was created by a Facebook profile registered under the alias Károly Kovács; a friend, and the first person to like the profile picture of, the user was the Facebook page Work Abroad created by Albert Szabó.

The Free Nation Association also joined the Anti-Maidan demonstration. Csörsz T. Elzaszer, representing the organisation, initially denied that organisers are in contact with Albert Szabó, although it remained unclear who the organisers really are. “I stand by the Hungary-Russia relationship, and I am unwilling to participate in any event which would lead to disquiet against any minority,” Csörsz T. Elzaszer said.

The organiser added: according to his information, the “alias mentioned” (Szabó) only appeared later, and had received no privileges in organising the event; he did not participate in preparations and would not be present. “We cannot influence his activity, and because of his misleading alias, we cannot identify him. We have, however, banned the alias everywhere we have administrator privileges,” Elszaszer said. The tracks vanished at that point: the user registered as Károly Kovács changed his profile picture (the one Work Abroad was first to “like”), and then removed Work Abroad from his friends. One day later organisers decided to cancel the entire event, claiming “actors with opposing interests are working to paint this important day in Hungary-Russia relations in a negative light, potentially co-operating with extremist elements.”

## **We Stand by Russia: Useful Idiots and Professional Manipulators**

In 2016, a rift developed within the Facebook group We Stand by Russia. The internal conflicts ultimately led one of the administrators who left the group, Máté Kovács, to reveal his identity. Kovács is the deputy secretary general of the Hungarian Communist Youth Organisation (MIKSZ) founded in 2007 in Tiszaújváros. MIKSZ calls itself a radical left-wing, anti-Fascist, Marxist-Leninist, system-critical political movement. It is a marginal organisation, albeit one with connections to other countries. They are in touch with Russian diplomats accredited to Hungary as well as with pro-Russian foreign politicians such as the Belgian ideologue of Eurasian affairs Luc Michel. The page We Stand by Russia was, however, founded not by Máté Kovács, but by a Jobbik activist living in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, together with another unknown individual who the administrators claim lives in Serbia. Kovács, an online acquaintance of the Jobbik activist from Szabolcs County, joined the page shortly after it was registered. The team then expanded to include a Fidesz-sympathiser administrator as well as a number of others.

Because the administrators represented ideologically diverse camps, there were frequent conflicts over how the page should be run. “*The disagreements among the editors were primarily ideological in nature. The very much left-leaning administrators always wanted to push content in line with their own views. They were also not trying to take a balanced position; they just wanted to broadcast Russian views. Some of the editors were right-wing, including myself; and then there were the hard-core left wingers, too,*” one former administrator since disillusioned with Russia related. “*Each editor was able to share content as they pleased; then if someone had a problem with a piece of content, the editor-in-chief and the editors could make changes. The above-mentioned ideological conflicts also come up in this respect. Ultimately, it was this which led to my departure, which took place when the first more serious conflicts erupted. But it also took me recognising that you cannot always simply stand by the Russians in everything. There were too many fights. In addition to the editor-in-chief, I was most supportive of not allowing too much space for content serving the Kremlin. And because of this I was afraid of in-fighting and attacks within our group of editors. I also recognised the contradiction between my intentions and efforts, and the nature of the page as evinced by its very name. You cannot pretend to be an independent analyst if you are publishing on a page entitled We Stand by Russia. So I thought it better for me to leave. I do not wish to deal with the page anymore; it is a part of my past. It was a valuable lesson. Some ten years ago I looked to the United States as a reference point, because they were of course the ‘leader of the free world,’ Reagan took down the wall and these types of things.*”



*Then, when I became disappointed in them, I thought I needed to stand behind everything that would weaken them, but primarily behind Putin. But now that I see more clearly as regards Russia, there are no more idols. I've realised that as far as the great powers are concerned, it is not kissing up that is the correct behaviour, but endless doubt and criticism all the time and in every direction. Hungary is a member of the EU and of NATO; this is a given, and I think this is just as well. That does not mean you have to forgive the United States for the surveillance scandal, or for Iraq; but it also means you do not have to look at Russians as though they are savages," he said. When asked why he did not use his real name as an administrator of the page, he said, "the topic and 'mission' of our page was considered highly controversial and is still considered divisive in Hungary. Even in my own circle of friends people were extremely divided on the issue. And there are reasons for me not to be proud of this story in retrospect. The international situation has changed in the meantime, or at least we know more. In early 2014, all we saw was that a group had come to power in Ukraine which did not look kindly upon the autonomy and the rights of Hungarians in Subcarpathia. Because the western powers lined up behind the new government in Kyiv (all the while behaving antagonistically against Hungary, like in the case of the media law), Moscow seemed to be the only balance. Since then we know that it was precisely this chaos which the Kremlin used to try and obtain influence in Europe. They support fake pages which can easily be turned off, they encourage populist or anti-Europe and anti-EU parties, and their hackers interfere in elections. So today it is plain to see that being a friend of Russia is problematic."*

According to information from the former administrator of the page, the founder of the Facebook page We Stand by Russia was never in touch with other propaganda sites, including Hídfő. Yet the list of authors included an individual who later would appear as an author or expert on other propaganda pages: retired diplomat Sándor Csikós. According to information provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Csikós – who had studied in Moscow – was employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade from 1 August 1974 until his retirement on 30 June 2013. He was posted abroad four times: between 1979 and 1983 in Ulaanbaatar; between 1986 and 1989 in Kyiv; between 2002 and 2005 in Almaty; and between 2010 and 2013 in Chişinău, the latter two assignments as deputy chief of mission. Sándor Csikós became an administrator of the page We Stand by Russia through Máté Kovács, and was primarily responsible for translating articles from Russian.

### **Hídfő.ru: Paramilitary Propaganda and the Russian Intelligence Services**

In addition to Albert Szabó, his former brother-in-arms István Györkös was also of use to the Russians. As discussed earlier, the MNA founded by Györkös played a key role in the creation of Hídfő.ru, one of the most prominent Hungarian-language Russian propaganda portals. Hídfő.ru was originally registered by MNA leaders as Hídfő.net in 2012. Hídfő.net published its first Facebook post in the fall of 2012 in Cyrillic: “Новый новостной сайт запущен!” – reporting on the creation of a new news portal. This means that Györkös and his group were already under Russian influence at the time. Independently of one another, several security sources claim that MNA members had engaged in airsoft exercises with Russian intelligence officers posted as diplomats under cover, that the organisation was intertwined with Russian military intelligence (GRU), and that Hungarian authorities knew about this. A leader of the Hungarist organisation Pax Hungarica said that while he has no hard evidence to prove as much, Hungarist circles treat it as fact that Györkös and his associates “had sold themselves to the Russians.” This also highlights the fact that the technical, media

and political toolset of the hybrid war and information war used after Crimea was in fact ready years before the conflict erupted. In accordance with Russian military doctrines, the Kremlin worked step by step to develop its information base by relying – among others – on extreme right actors.

Hídfő.net has served Moscow well. In August 2014, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused Hungary of shipping arms, including T-72 tanks, to Ukraine; senior Russian officials cited a Hídfő article. The website published three photos by “readers” which were said to have been taken on 2 August, showing a train near Nyíregyháza transporting Hungarian T-72 tanks. Russian military intelligence may have played a role in the taking and publishing of these photographs. Parliament’s National Security Committee dealt with the issue of the tanks, and the government was aware that Russian intelligence services were behind the news of the shipment of the T-72 tanks. The Orbán government made its displeasure known to Moscow. “It is certainly bizarre that a news item appears on an insignificant website, and then the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacts on its official website,” said Tibor Navracsics, who at the time was in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In the Committee hearing, Navracsics called Moscow’s move an unfriendly gesture. Later, contradictory reports were published about the fate of the tanks.<sup>106</sup>

In 2012, the MNA split in two. Prior to the split, the highly hierarchical organisation was led by István Gyórkös, Jr., with Gyórkös, Sr. as the ideological leader. The fact that Gyórkös, Sr. wished to forge closer ties with the communist Workers’ Party led by Gyula Thürmer played a role in the split. But this was not the primary reason of the internal fight. That was due rather to the suggestion that Gyórkös, Jr. was unable to account for several hundreds of thousands of forints – according to other sources, several million forints – which had flowed to the MNA in the form of membership dues or other support. The fact that the organisation was already in touch with the Russians at the time is proven by a letter dated August 2012. The letter was written by the leader of the Miskolc MNA group to several other leaders of the organisation, including to István Gyórkös. Among others, he says the leaders of the organisation should not be surprised if the Russians refuse to send financial help if the group’s own leader is so greedy. The letter suggests that the MNA already had active contact with the Russians at this time; one obvious reason for this would have been that they were lacking resources or were looking to obtain additional funding, either at the suggestion of the MNA itself or as proposed by Russian intelligence services. Ultimately, however, it is unclear whether or not the Russians sent the MNA money, because only István Gyórkös, Jr. had access to the finances of the group; other leaders had no such information. The Gyórköses say this is only partly true, however, because donations coming in via the MNA’s portal at the time – Jövönk.info; shut down since – flowed in to the bank account of the wife of Gábor Szalma, who later split off from the group.<sup>107</sup>

Although several MNA leaders were on the side of the author of the letter from Miskolc, sooner or later everyone who inquired about finances was labelled a “traitor” or an “agent.” The original

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<sup>106</sup> Dezső and Panyi, ‘Orosz Diplomáták Gyakorlatoztak a Rendőrgyilkos Brigádjával’.

<sup>107</sup> When the leader of the Miskolc chapter spoke out about the issue of finances, Gyórkös, Sr. instructed him to prove his statements that Gyórkös, Jr. cannot account for the money within 24 hours. The Miskolc MNA chapter leader was unable to do so, as they had never signed documents certifying the handing over of money. True, the two Gyórköses refuted as much, saying dues paid by members were handled initially by a cashier in Győr and then by the chapter leader in Törökszentmiklós, but both kept exact records of all money, which was only used to cover standing expenses anyway. In any event, Gyórkös, Jr. was in charge of producing and disseminating propaganda materials, but the Gyórköses maintain that they kept exact track of these expenses as well.

organisation ultimately expelled the Gyórköses. The two Gyórköses and their followers – which included the Budapest chapter, who stood by them – quickly began to rebuild the organisation so that they could keep the Front going with their remaining people. The “renegades,” however, also considered the MNA their own, and continued to build the organisation under the leadership of Gábor Szalma. While Gyórkös and his group lost Jövönk.info (which Szalma held on to), they very clearly bolstered Hídfő.net, which at the time still carried numerous Front articles. It was also clear during this period that the Gyórköses’ MNA – despite being far smaller in terms of numbers than the “renegades” organisation – was receiving external support for the development of the website and for graphic design. The Gyórköses boasted of this, but several pieces of writing (since removed) on Hídfő also suggested that the renegades were also working to “get money.”

Regardless of whether it is the Gyórköses’ group or Szalma’s group that is right, what is certain is that things were not necessarily in order with the organisation’s finances. It is also certain that the organisation was under Russian influence prior to the split in 2012. Analyses were published far before the split which were authored by anonymous individuals in the name of the Social and Political Strategic Analysis Institute. In October 2011, the “Institute” published an analysis about how the West intends to attack Russia and capture its resources. “The Russian people will once again wallow under the influence of alcohol and drugs; they will only keep as many as will be necessary to work in the mines for imperialist interests, to produce oil and natural gas; and the famously beautiful Russian women will be put to work in local and European brothels. And to prevent the Putinist example from happening again, they will do away with the military, and the police will be like the mafia – so it will be the Hungary playbook all over again. With this, Zionist imperialism will cement its rule for 200 years, just as it did in the case of the English empire of colonies,” they wrote of what may happen if the West succeeds.<sup>108</sup> In the spring of 2012, they described a nationally representative poll conducted by the “Institute,” which clearly must have served as a survey of the geopolitical landscape in Hungary for the Russians.<sup>109</sup>

All of this may of course be fake news stories, but the path Hídfő followed after the split may also confirm that there really were such surveys. Following Hídfő’s move to a Russian domain in April 2015, it split completely – even in content – from the Gyórkös-affiliated MNA.

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<sup>108</sup> We used the page Wayback Machine to reconstruct earlier content on Hídfő.net. ‘Internet Archive: Wayback Machine’, <https://Archive.org/Web/>, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://archive.org/web/>.

<sup>109</sup> “The first part of the representative survey (conducted on a sample of one thousand people) collected information primarily on respondents’ perceptions of the system change, the democratic state of affairs of today’s Hungary and the relationship between politicians and society. The second part looked at the expectations of the population of social and economic policy, and their assessments of the current system in this regard. The third part examined the attitude of the population to Hungary’s membership in the EU and NATO,” they said then. We used the page Wayback Machine to reconstruct earlier content on Hídfő.net. Ibid.

As we have said in a previous Political Capital analysis: “Its professional and continuous provision of content; exclusive information published on the portal; geopolitical, energy, economic and foreign policy information which suggests more in-depth background than usual; references to the Kremlin – these all suggest that Hídfő.net is not simply a website produced by Hungarists, but is the public message book and propaganda page of Russian intelligence services active in Hungary. (...) Almost all items published on the portal discussing activities of the Hungarian government, including its decisions and plans, approach the given economic or foreign policy topic from the perspective of Russia and through the lens of the opening to the East.”<sup>110</sup>

## The Killing of a Police Officer in Bőny

Following the killing of the police officer in Bőny, mentioned earlier, István Györkös, Jr. told TV2’s Tények that the organisation they had earlier been leaders of had ceased to exist a long time ago.<sup>111</sup> This is contradicted by the fact that the organisation’s website (nemzetiarcvonal.org) was still available on the day of the shooting and had been updated in the days before the event. In the summer of 2016, the website was used to advertise a training camp and to publish anti-migrant, xenophobic and instigating articles. The website was taken down in the days after the shooting. Although, it must be noted, the website already rejected Hungarism: “*the MNA broke with Hungarists reflexes years ago, and has shed its Nazi and Arrow Cross affiliations. It is neither Fascist, nor Nazi, and it is not Arrow Cross; in a traditional sense, it is not Hungarist. So anyone looking for arm-swinging salutes or communities waving swastikas is wrong, and should expect no such thing.*”

Among Hungarists, unconditional love for Vladimir Putin is only true in the case of the organisation led by Györkös, although – as we have seen – they do not call themselves Hungarists and their ideological position is rather convoluted. When we asked Endre János Domokos, leader of the extreme right Pax Hungarica Movement (PHM)<sup>112</sup> for his opinion about Russian attempts to obtain influence and for his thoughts on why supporters of the extreme right are prone to support Russia, he said the following: “*One of the curses of the past five hundred years – but even of the Middle Ages – is that the group in power always begins to serve some other foreign power (German, Turkish, Russian) in an attempt to hold on to power; those not in power do the same to get into power. We believe in the co-operation of the people of Central and Eastern Europe; we are not looking for ‘new masters’ (Brussels instead of Moscow), but are trying to show the Hungarian public that we are dependent on one another. If we do not join forces, we will inevitably become the playthings of some superpower. The same goes for domestic politics. In order for a party to become a factor, it must sell its soul to some foreign intelligence service. For Hungarian patriots, Putin is just as appealing as Orbán is to the right wing of the West, but only because they do not know him. We have information – from Russian national socialists who visited on the Day of Honour – that the Russia of the father tsar is not all that great of a place.*”

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<sup>110</sup> Capital Political, ‘„Eurázsiai Vagyok” – A Political Capital Tanulmánya a Magyar Szélsőjobboldal És a Kreml Kapcsolatáról’, *PC Blog*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://pcblogger.atlatszo.hu/2015/04/08/eurazsiai-vagyok-a-political-capital-tanulmánya-a-magyar-szelsojobboldal-es-a-kreml-kapcsolatarol/>.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Megszóltak a Bőnyi Rendőrgyilkos Fiai - Videó’, *HVG*, 28 October 2016, [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20161028\\_bonyi\\_rendorgyilkos\\_fiai\\_video](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20161028_bonyi_rendorgyilkos_fiai_video).

<sup>112</sup> PHM is the ideological successor of the Hungarist Movement founded by Ferenc Szálasi Ferenc in 1935, preserving and embodying the same ideology today.

According to press information, even Fidesz vice chair Szilárd Németh, at the session of the National Security Committee discussing the killing of the police officer in Bőny, was unusually vehement in his criticism of representatives of the national security services present, calling it unacceptable that members of these organisations should be allowed to exercise using weapons in the country. This criticism may be more indicative, however, of how under-informed Németh may have been, for the phenomenon was anything but new.<sup>113</sup> So much so, in fact, that in 2011, the incident in Gyöngyöspata (where members of an organisation called Protective Force clashed with local Roma) showed that free groups calling themselves protectors of the nation are allowed to “play soldier” anywhere in the country; it is true, however, that at the time it was the Protective Force, led by Tamás Eszes (who has since committed suicide) which was the focus of attention. Viktor Orbán then had instructed Minister of Interior Sándor Pintér to disband these organisations, but as the shooting in Bőny has shown, not much has really happened (not even on the level of legislation).<sup>114</sup>

Following the shooting of the police officer in Bőny, the authorities – as discussed – disbanded the MNA. According to law enforcement sources cited by pro-government daily *Magyar Idők*, the termination of the Jászberény sub-chapter of the MNA did receive more publicity than that of other sub-chapters – but the bottom line is that today the MNA has no more militant groups left. János Lázár, the minister in charge of the Office of Prime Minister, had said earlier that the MNA has most recently only had seven remaining active members. It is noteworthy however that the authorities have exerted no pressure on the Army of Outlaws; in fact, the Army began to visibly boost its presence in the Jászság region – exactly where the MNA had been active until that point. According to security sources, the goal of the Army of Outlaws is to pick up any potentially active fighters in the Jászság after the shutdown of the MNA.<sup>115</sup>

### **The Enthusiasm of the Army of Outlaws for “Russian Patriots”**

Although one might surmise, looking at public commentary and government statements after the events in Bőny, that the relationship to Russia was only made emphatically clear in the case of the organisation led by Györkök, that is in fact not the case. Several extremist organisations have demonstrated their enthusiasm for “Russian patriots,” and this has only increased recently. At the same time, this does not prove that all of these organisations are under the influence of Russian intelligence services, in part because the strong connection that was evident in the case of Györkök’s MNA is not apparent in the case of the Army of Outlaws or other extremist organisations.

What is a fact, however, is that the Army of Outlaws is fully open to Russian propaganda; in fact, it uses its own fora to spread it. The Army, with roughly thirteen clans around the country, has active contacts with “Russian patriots” – at least according to one member of the movement. “Tyirityán, at a closed-doors event in Zagyarékás last summer, said Russian patriots are very much impressed by the Army.

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<sup>113</sup> András Dezső, ‘A Bőnyi Rendőrgyilkosság Hazavágta a Hungaristákat’, *Index*, 16 November 2016, [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/11/16/az\\_arcvonalosoknak\\_ezzel\\_befellegzett/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/11/16/az_arcvonalosoknak_ezzel_befellegzett/).

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> ‘A Sport Szellemében a Hadrafoghatóságért | Betyársereg’, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://betyarsereg.hu/a-sport-szellemeben-a-hadrafoghatosagert/>.

The Army's website also featured a video which shows Russian nationals practicing. Tyirityán then said they want to be able to make a video of the same quality," this source said. The website of the Army of Outlaws does feature such a video, but neither it nor Tyirityán's words prove a direct link with the Russians. The Gyula clan of the Army of Outlaws has a member who is a Russian citizen. Ruslan Domrachev is interesting not only because of his nationality, but also because he is one of the "Outlaws" who represents the link between the Army and martial arts enthusiasts. Viktor Szlávik is also affiliated with the Army of Outlaws; a former Jobbik candidate for the local council of Bánytereny, Szlávik is a fan of Russia and actively spreads Russian propaganda. His Facebook page features several pieces of Russian propaganda material, as well as posts glorifying Putin and Russian soldiers.

The Army of Outlaws also helps advance Moscow's geopolitical goals. The organisation maintains that a world war is underway on three continents, a conflict they portray as one which involves Ukraine, Russia, Syria, Iraq, the Islamic State and migration. In connection with this, and in line with Russian narratives, Tyirityán emphasised the responsibility of the West, and described NATO as an aggressor in the conflict.<sup>116</sup>

In the Army of Outlaws' interpretation, "Ukraine saw a coup fuelled, organised and funded by the United States and the EU against a corrupt, albeit lawfully elected, legitimate Ukrainian government."<sup>117</sup> In connection with the intervention in Eastern Ukraine, which they believe was legal, as well as in connection with the intervention in Syria, they describe the Putin regime as the guarantor of peace and orderliness. In this context, they present Russia as a global actor which, by acting as a balance to the United States, has a calling to dismantle the unipolar world order. Their website carries a field report from a visit by one of their members to Russia, describing the country as a representative of law and order and normalcy, as opposed to the West, infected by liberal values; in contrast to the West, in Russia it is "not fashionable for someone to be gay, and it is not illegal to be a patriot."<sup>118</sup> Glorifying Russian militarism in general, the website of the Army describes and praises the techniques of one branch in particular, Russia's airborne troops.<sup>119</sup>

## **The Hungarian Self-Defence Movement and Britain First**

Mentioned already above, the Hungarian Self-Defence Movement (MÖM), led by Attila László, was considered by the extreme right as a kind of reincarnation of the Hungarian Guard founded by Jobbik in 2007, which some years later split into several groups and was eventually banned.

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<sup>116</sup> Tyirityán: Orbán No Public Enemy. 23 November 2016 Jászberényi and Tóth, "Tyirityán".

<sup>117</sup> 'Ukrán Háború És Lehetséges Kockázatai | Betyársereg', accessed 25 April 2017, <http://betyarsereg.hu/ukran-haboru-es-lehetseges-kockazatai/>.

<sup>118</sup> Russia through the Eyes of an Outlaw. 8 June 2016. 'Oroszország Egy Betyár Szemével – Szentpétervárról "jelentkezünk" | Betyársereg', accessed 25 April 2017, <http://betyarsereg.hu/oroszorszag-egy-betyar-szemevel-szentpetervarrol-jelentkezunk/>.

<sup>119</sup> 'Kiegészítés a Tesztoszteronnövelő Videókhoz – Tyirityán Zsolt Gondolatai | Betyársereg', *Betyársereg*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://betyarsereg.hu/kiegeszites-a-tesztoszteronnoveleo-videokhoz-tyirityan-zsolt-gondolatai/>.

On 22 October 2016, the MÖM entered into an alliance with the Knights Templar International (KTI) at a meeting in Rajka. The KTI's representative, British extreme right politician Jim Dowson attended the meeting, flying in from Ireland. Dowson, who in his private life runs a PR company, had previously been a member of the extreme right British National Party (BNP), but left the group in 2010. British anti-Fascist activists claim Dowson had helped several extreme right entities with their fundraising; Dowson himself claims he has collected 4 million GBP for the BNP.<sup>120</sup> According to Channel 4, Dowson serves as the ideological guru of the extreme right organisation Britain First. Articles on Britain First's website applaud Viktor Orbán's refugee policies and quota referendum,<sup>121</sup> just as they laud Vladimir Putin.<sup>122</sup> Britain First has expressed its unconditional support for Russia's annexation of Crimea.<sup>123</sup>

At the meeting in Rajka, Jim Dowson – according to MÖM's report of the event,<sup>124</sup> published on its Facebook page – told participants that they must pay close attention to Central Europe, for he believes it is the Carpathian Basin which, amidst the current transitions going on in the world, will be able to protect and thus preserve European values and culture for posterity. MÖM noted that they “fully share this position of Dowson's.” Dowson also explained that “the native peoples of Europe are facing a demographic disaster of proportions which will have unforeseeable consequences and may lead to the disappearance of the nation states.”

This was not Dowson's first visit to Hungary. In the spring of 2016, he had an appearance in the Budapest church of Calvinist pastor Lóránt Hegedűs, Jr., at a so-called demographic conference supported by Jobbik's party foundation. Additionally, he posed publicly for photographs with members of the openly racist Army of Outlaws, and has praised the work of the Army. Nick Griffin and Imre Téglásy, who *Magyar Narancs* suggests are also members of the KTI, also participated in the conference. Dowson, born in 1964, is also understood by *Magyar Narancs* to have played a role in 2013 unrests in Belfast; he is said to have been responsible for ensuring that a demonstration turn violent, but Dowson denied as much. He met Hungarian-born Imre Téglásy, leader of the Alpha Alliance, over one of their shared causes: their rejection of abortion. Téglásy, who also rejects the use of condoms, is today the Hungarian head of the KTI, but was unwilling to discuss the work of the order with *Magyar Narancs*.

According to the British press, Dowson has been convicted of a number of offences in the past, including for possession of firearms, breach of the peace and damaging property. He has appeared alongside the extreme right British National Party as a fundraising figure, but left the party unexpectedly in 2010. He then joined another party, Britain First (BF), although it is more precise to say he actually assembled this party.

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<sup>120</sup> Liam Clarke, 'Jim Dowson Laughs off TV Claims He Is the "Evil Genius" of British Fascism', *BelfastTelegraph.co.uk*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/jim-dowson-laughs-off-tv-claims-he-is-the-evil-genius-of-british-fascism-30371992.html>.

<sup>121</sup> 'Hungary', *Britain First – Taking Our Country Back!*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.britainfirst.org/tag/hungary/>.

<sup>122</sup> 'Russia', *Britain First – Taking Our Country Back!*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.britainfirst.org/tag/russia/>.

<sup>123</sup> 'Britain First - The War in Ukraine Is Not a simple "Russia Is Bad"...', *Archive.is*, 5 October 2015, <http://archive.is/X5u5v>.

<sup>124</sup> 'Facebook', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/magyaronvedelem/posts/1088034477917635>.

The group is so extreme that not even UKIP, which has promoted Brexit, is willing to talk to them. Officially, BF is headed by Paul Golding, with Jayda Fransen as his deputy. The latter has a Hungarian company, Britannia Management Kft. According to *Magyar Narancs*, Fransen was convicted in November of harassing a Muslim woman wearing a hijab. According to the weekly, BF may be the solution to the KTI puzzle, with the order actually a branch of the party; the weekly provides several pieces of evidence supporting these claims. Dowson and another member of the KTI, Nick Griffin, have appeared last year at the so-called Russian national conservative forum in Saint Petersburg, where they were joined by representatives of other Fascistoid parties such as the Greek Golden Dawn, the German NDP or the Italian Forza Nuova. Dowson regularly appears alongside paramilitary groups, and has, for instance, referred to the Army of Outlaws as friends of the KTI. Several photographs prove that Dowson and Griffin have participated in “border-protection efforts” of the pro-Russian Bulgarian free group Sipka. Specifically, they were beating refugees; the Army of Outlaws has travelled to Hungary’s southern borders with similar intentions. Jobbik’s Tamás Sneider has also met with Dowson, and has given him a tour of Parliament. *Magyar Narancs* claims Sneider is not in touch with Dowson, but László Toroczkai is, so much so that he helps Dowson with his real estate activities in Hungary. Under cover, a journalist for *Magyar Narancs* has gotten in touch with the British KTI, which revealed that the group is involved in real estate; that László Toroczkai is “a great guy and a supporter;” and that the KTI has offered several remote plots and buildings in Ásotthalom to the journalist for sale. They also sent the journalist a video which shows Toroczkai offering the Ásotthalom properties for sale to foreigners, suggesting they can buy them at very little cost. The video also shows the Hungarian leader of the KTI, who asks Toroczkai to describe why it is worth it for foreigners to buy property in Ásotthalom. According to *Magyar Narancs*, the evidence suggests that the KTI, with the help of Toroczkai, is working to relocate Western Europeans to Ásotthalom.

### **The Ideology and the Risks of Being Pro-Russian**

As the above has shown, the relationship between extreme right activists and the Kremlin is not new; it dates back many years. The Kremlin, since the 2000s, has regarded European extreme right groups as priority strategic allies in efforts to exert influence on target countries and the European Union.

According to Hungarian intelligence experts, Russia’s services are working to establish ties with extremists or even individuals with murky ideological backgrounds because these persons can easily be influenced and co-opted to commit violent acts without the authorities later being able to identify the instigator or originator.<sup>125</sup> The establishment and maintenance of these types of contacts was facilitated by activities and related events in Hungary such as the search for artefacts and corresponding fairs, or the looking after of military graves. Private “researchers” from the extreme right and the extreme left are frequent visitors at such fairs, as are agents of the GRU. The job of the Russians was made somewhat easier by the fact that this is a “roving subculture,” and there are frequent overlaps in terms of membership among the various organisations.

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<sup>125</sup> The method has already been used during the Cold War. Documents in the Stasi archives appear to confirm suspicions that the KGB may have been behind the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II, with the assassin, Ali Ağca, in the role of the “useful idiot.” ‘A KGB Rendelte Meg a Pápa Elleni Merényletet’, *Múlt-Kor Történelmi Magazin*, 5 April 2005, <http://mult-kor.hu/cikk.php?id=9431>.



The individuals approached oftentimes do not even know – or may only suppose – who their newfound Russian friends really are. It also often happens that the new acquaintance is in fact not a Russian citizen, but a Hungarian, which also means that it does not necessarily take direct contact with Russian intelligence services for the Russian party to be successful; they can act indirectly as well.

As discussed above, extremist movements regard Russia in part as the guarantors of the revisionist efforts of Hungary's extreme right; the Russians<sup>126</sup> act accordingly to fuel such hopes. Irredentist movements ensure Russians fighting for their freedom of their support against western liberal values; thus, the Kremlin has become a reference point in part with the support of the separatists fighting in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. A Facebook statement issued by the HVIM in May 2014, entitled "Patriotic Support for Russia," has made as much obvious; it maintains the Subcarpathia is not Ukraine and that Transylvania is not Romania.<sup>127</sup> In a pro-separatist demonstration staged in Heroes' Square in 2015, HVIM expressed its thanks to the leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, Alexander Zakharchenko, for providing a peaceful way for Hungarian troops drafted by the Ukrainian government, and then circled on the front, to exit the theatre.<sup>128</sup>

In connection with the refugee crisis and the conflict in Syria, the role of Russia is also interpreted according to the Kremlin's playbook, which suggests that the otherwise anti-immigration Russian regime, by stabilising the Assad regime, is becoming the protector of the peace and order. "*Russia is once again one of the greatest actors on the stage of global politics. President Vladimir Putin on Monday clarified the situation and said the unipolar world order is over. The counter-terrorist offensive in Syria is now officially underway.*" (...) "*When we see the return of Russia as a positive development, that does not mean we look to Vladimir Putin to bring us paradise on Earth. All we want is order,*" they said.<sup>129</sup>

The HVIM and other organisations, by spreading the traditionalist values espoused by Moscow and taking on the anti-western and anti-gender cultural fight, have voluntarily become parts of the Russian propaganda machine, thereby legitimising the geopolitical interests of the Kremlin. In addition to its ideological commitment to the Kremlin, the HVIM is also showing signs of indirect institutional Russian influence through their network of relationships cultivated with pro-Russian organisations in the region. The Transylvanian branch of the HVIM in summer 2013 met to exchange experiences with the Moldovan National Democratic Movement (MND), who later reciprocated the visit at the 13<sup>th</sup> Hungarian Island festival in Verőce.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Zoltán Sipos, 'A Székelyföldi Autonómia Orosz Érdek, Állítja Egy Offshore Elemzőcég', *Világtérkép*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://vilagterkep.atlatszo.hu/2014/08/26/a-szekelyfoldi-autonomia-orosz-erdek-allitja-egy-offshore-elemzoceg/>.

<sup>127</sup> Ghica Sorin, 'Beke István És Bandája, a Székely IRA', *Http://Foter.ro/*, accessed 25 April 2017, [http://foter.ro/cikk/20160526\\_beke\\_istvan\\_es\\_bandaja\\_a\\_szekely\\_ira](http://foter.ro/cikk/20160526_beke_istvan_es_bandaja_a_szekely_ira).

<sup>128</sup> 'Köszönjük, Zaharczenko!', *Alfahír*, 5 February 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/koszonjuk\\_zaharczenko](http://alfahir.hu/koszonjuk_zaharczenko).

<sup>129</sup> Putin Kicks Off – Russia Launches Anti-Terror Offensive in Syria. 1 October 2015. 'Putyin Elkezdte! – Elindult Az Orosz Teroellenes Offenzíva Szíriában | Betyársereg', *Betyársereg*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://betyarsereg.hu/putyin-elkezdte-elindult-az-orosz-terorelles-offenziva-sziriban/>.

<sup>130</sup> It Will Not Go Without Blood: Hungarian National Radicals in Transylvania II. Zoltán Sipos, 'Vér Nélkül Nem Lehet: Magyar Nemzeti Radikálisok Erdélyben II.', *Atlatszo.hu*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://atlatszo.hu/2014/05/28/ver-nelkul-nem-lehet-magyar-nemzeti-radikaliskok-erdelyben-ii/>.

According to the MND's interpretation, Moldovans represent an ethnicity different from Romanians, and their goal is to advance pro-Russian sentiments among the Romanian population living between the Prut and the Dniester Rivers. Szócs, discussing their attempts to build sister relationships, said, "They want to know how we built up our organisation; they want to learn from us." (...) "The EU has not been good for the Seklers. Hats off to Putin; we can count on the Russians."<sup>131</sup>

On the whole, then, the organisations examined, by adopting the ideology projected by the Kremlin and by spreading Russian propaganda either directly or indirectly, legitimise Moscow's geopolitical efforts. These actors thus represent not only a domestic security risk, but are also a cross-border security threat. Their Russian contacts and their dedication to Putinist ideology makes these violent extreme right organisations a danger for Hungary and for the stability of the entire Central and Eastern European region.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

## THE ROLE OF THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL SECURITY AUTHORITIES

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Monitoring extremist paramilitary organisations is the task of the intelligence services. Although the mere existence of these organisations is threatening, they generally are careful not to commit any crimes, or if they take any threatening action they ensure that that is not in itself illegal. Because law enforcement authorities are only able to take action if there is reason to suspect a crime, their monitoring falls to the intelligence services. However, because the fragmented nature of the Hungarian security services results in a positive clash in the scope of authority in several fields, including counter-terrorism, this makes intelligence work more difficult. In the case of a paramilitary organisation professing radical ideology and suspected of maintaining contact with, or being under the influence of, foreign entities, the relevant regulations place the responsibility for monitoring with the Constitution Protection Office (AH), one of the country's civilian services; the military intelligence service (Military National Security Service); the Counter-Terrorist Centre (TEK); or even the Information Office, responsible for foreign intelligence. This means up to four security services may be dealing with the same group; in terms of organisation, these four bodies report to three different ministries.<sup>132</sup>

The fragmented nature of the security services also allows for “ping-pong matches.” One good example is that according to our sources, Hungarian intelligence services had obtained information prior to 2010 about how GRU agents, under diplomatic cover, were engaged in airsoft exercises with members of the MNA. Our sources suggest that because the information pertained to the GRU, the AH handed the case over to the Military Security Office KBH.<sup>133</sup> The question is how seriously the KBH took it at the time.

The rivalry among Hungary's services, including the political rivalry between the ministers overseeing the services, leaves a highly visible mark on the day-to-day work of these authorities and on the quality of co-operation among the security services. The TEK, established in 2010, has only made the situation worse. Since its inception, the AH has been deprived of its authority to deal with counter-terrorism. If, in the course of their work, AH staff obtain information which touches on counter-terrorist work, they are obliged to hand it over to the TEK, and from that point forward, the TEK is responsible for further action. The TEK, however, despite certain national security purviews, is not an intelligence service, but a law enforcement body, even if its staff includes personnel who had earlier worked for one of the intelligence services. According to intelligence professionals, the TEK – whose staff were recruited primarily from the police – does not possess the knowledge and the right perspective which is necessary for intelligence investigations.

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<sup>132</sup> The Constitution Protection Office and the Counter-Terrorist Centre are overseen by the Minister of Interior; the Information Office is overseen by the minister in charge of the Office of the Prime Minister; and the Military National Security Service is overseen by the Minister of Defence.

<sup>133</sup> The KBH no longer exists; military intelligence and counter-intelligence have been merged under one organisation, the Military National Security Service.

This was one of the reasons why several Western European members of the Counter Terrorist Group (CTG), which brings together European intelligence services, expressed their displeasure that counter-terrorism work was being transferred from the AH to the TEK.<sup>134</sup>

The TEK's relationship, however, is strained not only with the AH, but also with the police. This is due partly to the fact that police officers employed by the TEK earn far more than their peers with the police. Another source of the conflict is that many police detectives do not appreciate how the perpetrators of some crimes receiving significant media attention are captured by TEK units, suggesting to the public that the larger part of the investigation was also done by the TEK. This rivalry has resulted in tragedy. The 16 October 2016 killing of the police officer in Bóny may have been avoided if the relevant commander of the National Bureau of Investigation had asked for help from the TEK when searching the home of István Györkös, whom they suspected of possessing live military firearms. An internal investigation was later launched into this neglect.<sup>135</sup>

The countering of foreign influence on Hungarian paramilitary organisations and extremist groups is difficult not only as a result of the fragmented nature, organisational problems and internal rivalry of the security services, but also because of the Russia policies of the Orbán government. Exploring the Russian connections of extremist groups is a task for counter-intelligence services. However, whether the information obtained will have political or diplomatic consequences (take-down, expulsion from the country, diplomatic note etc.), and what those may be, is in every case decided by the government. It is also the government which determines the country's national security priorities. While Russian attempts to obtain influence in Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary, have clearly become more forceful since the eruption of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, no Russian diplomats have been declared *persona non grata* in Hungary since the second Orbán government took office in 2010.<sup>136</sup> This is the case despite the fact that in May 2014, an espionage case with an impact on domestic politics emerged: that of Jobbik Member of the European Parliament Béla Kovács. This was not the case earlier. According to our sources, so-called "quiet" bans were instituted against diplomats in several cases prior to 2010. In almost each case, the AH director general would inform the Russian resident verbally that one of their diplomats had engaged in unfriendly activity. Shortly thereafter, the Russian diplomat in question would leave the country. While such quiet bans may in some cases have been followed by reciprocal steps (recalling an active Hungarian intelligence officer from Russia), they never led to public diplomatic rows.

One telling sign of the pro-Russian policies of the Hungarian government is that Viktor Orbán, who otherwise is willing to enter into public diplomatic conflict even with the United States, has not been willing to implement even quiet bans against Russia. In espionage cases, the final call is always made by political decision makers – since 2010, that is most likely Viktor Orbán himself.

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<sup>134</sup> András Dezső, 'Mázli, Hogy a Terroristák Csak Átmennek Rajtunk', *Index*, 11 October 2016, [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/10/11/tek\\_nemzetkozi\\_megitelese/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/10/11/tek_nemzetkozi_megitelese/).

<sup>135</sup> KaG KK, 'Belső Vizsgálatot Indít Az NNI a Rendőrgyilkosság Ügyében', *Hirtv.hu*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://hirtv.hu/ahirtvhirei/belso-vizsgalatot-indit-az-nni-a-rendorgyilkossag-ugyeben-1368770>.

<sup>136</sup> András Dezső and Szabolcs Panyi, 'Brüsszelben Eltévedve Az Életünkért Kell Futni, Velem Megtörtént', *Index*, 2 August 2016, [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/08/02/szijasarto\\_peter\\_interju\\_usa\\_oroszorszag\\_exim\\_no-go\\_zona/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/08/02/szijasarto_peter_interju_usa_oroszorszag_exim_no-go_zona/).

Additionally, the prime minister has elevated the same enemy to a national security level as Russia has: civil society organisations obtaining support from foreign donors, with the foundations of George Soros in the focus.<sup>137</sup> The fact that the prime minister, who is frequently confrontational with the West, has essentially swapped enemies for friends, and vice versa, is something seen not only on the level of rhetoric; according to publicly available information,<sup>138</sup> this is evident also in the political management of national security work. At the same time, organisations which show direct or indirect Russian influence are enjoying the support of the government. These include the Tolstoy Society, founded in 2011, or the Hungary-Russia Co-operation Association, whose honorary chair is Sándor Lezsák.<sup>139</sup> The government's rhetoric also continues to use ideology stemming from Russia which attempts to weaken Western European political values from a cultural and political perspective.<sup>140</sup>

## Parliamentary Oversight of National Security Services

In Hungary, the various intelligence services are responsible for uncovering, controlling and countering the activity of Russia aimed at obtaining influence or spreading propaganda with the intention of influencing. The quality of their work is a determining factor in what the relevant members of the government do and what they do not do vis-à-vis the activity of Russian intelligence services. We have limited information on the effective oversight of these activities. At the same time, we are able to say that while in several other European nations it was precisely the intelligence services and the political decision makers responsible for their oversight which were instrumental in raising the public's awareness of the serious security risk Russia poses to them. In Hungary, however, the broader public has only heard of the case of one Jobbik Member of the European Parliament, Béla Kovács, whose story came out during an EP election.

Parliament's National Security Committee is responsible for the societal oversight of the national security services; the Committee is a standing body of the Parliament, which holds regular meetings. Government MPs hold the majority on the seven-member Committee: three are Fidesz and one is a KDNP Member of Parliament. Additionally, MSZP, Jobbik and LMP have delegated one member each to the Committee; it is chaired by Zsolt Molnár of the Socialists, with Fidesz MP Németh Szilárd as the vice chair. In recent years, Hungarian investigative journalists have produced several articles suggesting secret service activity by the Russians, yet neither the intelligence services (whose task would be to assess this type of Russian presence) nor the National Security Committee (which oversees the work of these agencies) have published any kind of report or results of an investigation.

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<sup>137</sup> Attila Rovó, 'Orbán Elkezdte Kóstolgatni a Nagy Ellenséget', *Index*, 21 October 2016, [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/10/21/orban\\_soros\\_nemzetbiztonsag/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/10/21/orban_soros_nemzetbiztonsag/).

<sup>138</sup> Panyi, 'Egy Magyar Titkosszolga Részletesen Felfedi, Mennyire Súlyos Az Orosz Fenyegetés'.

<sup>139</sup> 'Megalakult a Tolsztoj Társaság', accessed 25 April 2017, <http://www.tolsztojtarsasag.hu/magunkrol/rolunk-irtak/megalakult-a-tolsztoj-tarsasag.html>.

<sup>140</sup> András Dezső, 'Orbán Ugyanazt Mondja, Amit a Nyugat-Ellenes Orosz Főideológus', *Index*, 13 September 2016, [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/09/13/orban\\_es\\_az\\_orosz\\_foideologus\\_egymasra\\_talalt/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/09/13/orban_es_az_orosz_foideologus_egymasra_talalt/).

The Act on National Security<sup>141</sup> allows, in certain cases, for the Committee to initiate “fact-finding investigations” in a particular matter; the government majority in the Committee could, however, easily veto any such proposals, as has been the case in the past.<sup>142</sup> What this means in practice is that currently, Parliament is only able to exercise real control over the activities of the national security services if there is political will on the part of the governing parties. This leaves the opposition members of the Committee, if they are looking for information in a matter, essentially only able to obtain partial and highly limited information from the heads of the services; this is the case even in closed sessions, and the opposition members have no way to verify the background or specifics of the matter – or even the voracity of statements made – since they may only view case documents or files containing operative information in exceptional cases (for instance if a “fact-finding committee” is established). Furthermore, members of the Committee are sometimes denied information as such in certain matters which are said to still be pending or “in progress.” While the question of Russian influence may come up when discussing the annual reports of the various services, the government majority has prevented an in-depth discussion of the topic, when an opposition member of the Committee – LMP’s Bernadett Szél – (and her fellow party MP Ákos Hadházy) initiated that the Committee convene an “ad-hoc committee to examine the national security implications of Russian attempts to obtain influence.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Paragraph 14/E of the act allows for this in cases when “it notices the unlawful operation of any of the national security services, or it deems it justified during the procedure specified in paragraphs c) and d) and in Section 27, subsection (4), may conduct a fact-finding inquiry, in the course of which it may have access to the relevant documents kept in the registry of the national security services, and may hear the staff members of the national security services.”

<sup>142</sup> ‘Nem Indul Tényfeltáró Vizsgálat Az Állítólagos Újságíró-Beszervezési Ügyben’, *Hirado.hu*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://www.hirado.hu/2016/09/15/nem-indul-tenyfeltaro-vizsgalat-az-allitolagos-ujsgiro-beszervezesi-ugyben/>.

<sup>143</sup> ‘A Bizottság Által Benyújtott Irományok - Országgyűlés’, accessed 25 April 2017, [http://www.parlament.hu/web/nemzetbiztonsagi-bizottsag/a-bizottsag-altal-benyujtott-iromanyok?p\\_auth=Cc2uEhIP&p\\_p\\_id=pairproxy\\_WAR\\_pairproxyportlet\\_INSTANCE\\_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=1&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&p\\_p\\_col\\_id=column-1&p\\_p\\_col\\_count=1&\\_pairproxy\\_WAR\\_pairproxyportlet\\_INSTANCE\\_9xd2Wc9jP4z8\\_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy\\_biz.biz\\_irom\\_es%3Fp\\_izon%3D13051%26p\\_ckl%3D40%26p\\_biz%3DA431](http://www.parlament.hu/web/nemzetbiztonsagi-bizottsag/a-bizottsag-altal-benyujtott-iromanyok?p_auth=Cc2uEhIP&p_p_id=pairproxy_WAR_pairproxyportlet_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&_pairproxy_WAR_pairproxyportlet_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_biz.biz_irom_es%3Fp_izon%3D13051%26p_ckl%3D40%26p_biz%3DA431).

# MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF FAR-RIGHT EXTREMIST ORGANISATIONS

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## **The Transformation of Far-Right Public Opinion: The Refugee Crisis and Russian Propaganda**

Since 2015, two marked changes have impacted the far right media scene. First with the migration crisis and its corresponding campaign of hysteria, then with the 2016 referendum against the European migration quota, Fidesz-KDNP have essentially resorted to using the rhetoric of the extreme right in the migration crisis. The government's communication has relied on the criminalisation of refugees, suspicions of terrorism and conspiracy theories to explain migration, leaving Jobbik and other extremist organisations unable to formulate their own pronounced narrative in the story. As a result, anti-refugee and anti-migration comments by radical organisations and their related activities have essentially blended in with mainstream xenophobic political discourse and a stream of anti-terrorism measures (from the construction of the border fence between Hungary and Serbia to the announcement of the state of terrorist emergency).<sup>144</sup> The government's rhetoric has therefore legitimised the hate speech and violent actions of radical organisations. In fact, the campaign of hate against migrations has also further aggravated the negative perception of the Roma. In a cynical way, the government's communication has threatened the Roma with cutting their social benefits in connection with the arrival and alleged resettlement of "migrants" in Hungary. Far-right online fora have seen an increase in voices essentially equating the "enemy within," the Roma, with the "external enemies," the "migrants" who threaten Hungary.

The second shift in far-right public opinion was brought about by the fact that following the capture of Crimea, Russia expanded its disinformation warfare to the Eastern European region. While the Voice of Russia (today: Sputnik) shut down its Hungarian-language site in Hungary, dozens of anonymous websites and Facebook pages were created all of a sudden supporting the Kremlin and its geopolitical goals. One of them, the currently dormant Facebook page South Front HU reported straight from the Eastern Ukrainian front, in line with the political direction of the Kremlin.<sup>145</sup> A characteristic of the new, pro-Russian propaganda network is that it generally espouses extreme right political ideologies, and supports the policies of both the pro-Russian Orbán government as well as of Jobbik. Jobbik's close relationship with Moscow and the tone of the articles make it likely that the pro-Russian communication on these pages not only intends to target the extreme right subculture as a priority, but also sees Jobbik's media experts play an active role in producing content.

## **Extremist Organisations in Far-Right Public Opinion**

Extreme right outlets set the tone as far as the organisations examined in this report are concerned primarily through interviews conducted with their leaders, broadcasting their original messages and reporting on camps they organise, their finances, court proceedings and activities against minorities.

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<sup>144</sup> Szabó, 'Mi Az a B Szintű Terrorfenyegettség, Amit Most Bevezetnek?', *VS.hu*, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/mi-az-a-b-szintu-terrorfenyegetettseg-amit-most-bevezetnek-1114>.

<sup>145</sup> 'South Front Hu - Home', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/SouthFrontHu/>.

While racist and race protection content and messages are published without problems and openly, the organisations also generally try to craft their ideology and activities so as to make their image more appealing (de-demonisation). We see a kind of de-radicalisation in the image these groups project to the world and in the information and vocabulary they use to characterise their activities. One explanation for this phenomenon may have to do with the “cuteness campaign” Jobbik launched in 2013 and then in its subsequent efforts to transform itself into a people’s party, which aimed to bring Jobbik towards the political centre by curbing openly racist content and vocabulary.<sup>146</sup> Although many assumed this shift was only a matter of rhetoric, which changed nothing as far as the local racist politics of the party’s chapters were concerned, it may have had an impact on the satellite organisations dependent on the party financially and, primarily, politically. On the other hand, the violent organisations may have adopted an apparently more moderate stance of their own volition, having created – together with Jobbik – an institutionalised form of “moderate” hate speech and hate acts against the Roma embodied by the “Érpatak Model” – and the viability and legitimacy of the institution (or, ultimately, its success) demands the “political normalisation” of these solutions. As a third reason, some of these organisations played a role in the attempts of the extreme right to create the myth of the far right subculture, which essentially refers to their links to the historical discourse of the idealised, authoritarian right-wing state order of the interwar years – the Horthy regime –, which also required some distancing from representing open violence.

Accordingly, the communication of the extremist organisations appears on three levels or through three filters. On the one hand, in the national extreme right media space ruled by Jobbik, which itself is transforming into a people’s party and “moving to the centre,” where open rants against minorities – with the exception of migration – are less prominent or appear only in a highly coded way. And on the other hand, on the websites of the organisations, which feature more open and more racist language use. The best example of the latter may be Army of Outlaws leader Zsolt Tyirityán’s explicit statement on the conflict between the races:

*“No one wants war; no one wants mass murder; no one wants racial conflict for us to live in the ruins. Everyone wants a normal, acceptable future for themselves.”<sup>147</sup>*

Nonetheless, the Army of Outlaws, the HVIM, the Wolves etc. all subscribe to the above-mentioned “security policy discourse,” which paints a “law enforcement” veneer over their actions against the Roma or migrants.

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<sup>146</sup> Gergely Miklós Nagy, ‘Szexivé Tenni a Szélsőjobbot - Krekó Péter a Jobbik Arculatváltásáról’, *Magyar Narancs*, 6 November 2013, <http://magyarnarancs.hu/belpol/szexive-tenni-a-szelsojobbot-87209>.

<sup>147</sup> ‘Hogyan Találkozott a Betyársereg Vezetője Vona Gáborral?’, *Alfahír*, 3 July 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/hogyan\\_talalkozott\\_a\\_betyarsereg\\_vezetoje\\_vona\\_gaborral](http://alfahir.hu/hogyan_talalkozott_a_betyarsereg_vezetoje_vona_gaborral).



Those euphemistically referred to as “volunteers,” who substitute or complement the work of official authorities, take action against crime; or as Alfahír puts it:

*“Drugs; stealing; endangering children. These ‘activities’ pursued by segments cast out by society fill the day-to-day lives of many villages in the countryside, while the police and other relevant bodies are idle spectators of the events, or stand by fearing retribution by the criminals. The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement and the National Network of the Érpatak Model have had enough of this, and are now working in an organised manner to uncover and take care of what the authorities should actually be tending to.”<sup>148</sup>*

Ultimately, racism has become coded, and has become an institutional practice which dehumanises the victims and glorifies the organisations assisting the perpetrators, where physical violence and intimidation are hidden as the cynical and everyday tools of the authorities. The third layer of violence is coded in the activities of the extremist organisations against Roma communities and settlements, because few credible reports (or ones outsiders would consider reliable) are available of these measures disguised as “law enforcement.” Telling is an off-hand comment by György Gyula Zagyva, who while “uncovering theft of electricity” spoke of “lethal threats” voiced by the victims.<sup>149</sup> It points out the real racism and violence of local provocations along ethnic fault lines.

### **“Normalising” Pro-Russian Attitudes in the Media**

The organisations examined have made a number of pro-Russian statements in recent years; however, with the exception of Gyórkös’s MNA, which found itself the centre of attention over the killing of the police officer in Bőny, this has not made a real mark in mainstream or extremist media.

The HVIM, the Army of Outlaws and the Wolves, for the most part, present their pro-Russian positions on their websites or in occasional interviews. Thus, in the media, this appears as the peculiar extreme right / paramilitary / revisionist / neo-Nazi ideology and activity of these groups, without touching on their unique geopolitical perspectives. This is also complemented by the fact that in Hungarian political life, the media tend to deal above all with the foreign policy of political parties. In this respect, it is primarily the pro-Russian behaviour of Jobbik and its politicians which has become apparent; e.g. Béla Kovács, the Member of the European Parliament accused of espionage, appearing as an “independent” election observer in Crimea, or Márton Gyöngyösi taking on the same role in Eastern Ukrainian separatist territories.<sup>150</sup>

The pro-Russian position of far-right extremist organisations was picked up as a significant story in two instances. First, in 2015, the extreme right Ukrainian paramilitary organisation Karpatska Sich threatened to annihilate Jobbik and HVIM activists undermining the Ukrainian state and destabilising the region along ethnic fault lines in Western Ukraine and Subcarpathia.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> ‘Önkéntesek Védik a Vidéket a „kiilleszkedettektől”, *Alfahír*, 20 April 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/onkentesek\\_vedik\\_a\\_videket\\_a\\_kiilleszkedettektol](http://alfahir.hu/onkentesek_vedik_a_videket_a_kiilleszkedettektol).

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Lánchíd Rádió, ‘Gyöngyösi Márton Sem Kér Ukrajnából’, *Lanchidradio.hu*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://lanchidradio.hu/lanchidradiobelfold/gyongyosi-marton-sem-ker-ukrajnabol-1304892>.

<sup>151</sup> ‘Fegyveres Ukrán Szervezet Fenyegette Meg a Jobbikot És a HVIM-Et’, *Alfahír*, 24 April 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/fegyveres\\_ukran\\_szervezet\\_fenyegette\\_meg\\_a\\_jobbikot\\_es\\_a\\_hvim\\_et](http://alfahir.hu/fegyveres_ukran_szervezet_fenyegette_meg_a_jobbikot_es_a_hvim_et).

Jobbik convened a closed session of Parliament's National Security Committee, and Márton Gyöngyösi, deputy faction head of the party and vice chair of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, together with MP Ádám Mirkóczki, a member of Parliament's National Security Committee, protested in a statement against the intimidation affecting "Jobbik and HVIM activists living in Subcarpathia and all Hungarians."<sup>152</sup> Another time, Gábor Vona ascribed actions of Romanian authorities against Jobbik and HVIM activists to the Russian-American conflict: "(...) *I have this fear that this is some kind of prequel to the Russian-American war. (...) I feel as though what is happening in Transylvania is not necessarily about Hungarians and Romanians, (...) but about the superpowers' struggle between Americans and Russians.*"<sup>153</sup> With this, the activities of the party and its satellite organisations became part of Jobbik's foreign policy, and this is also the context in which to understand these organisations' pro-Russian positions.

On the whole, pro-Russian radicalisation is so dangerous in terms of public opinion because the radicalisation potential and pro-Russian posture of these extremist groups have been separated and become normalised. While the neo-Nazi and paramilitary direction of these groups is receiving the attention it deserves, a pro-Russian position is primarily only associated with Jobbik and its foreign policy. The close co-operation of the party and its satellite organisations has, however, created a homogenous space for violent radicalisation where pro-Russian, or any other radicalisation, patterns are able to spread very rapidly, and are to be considered the norm in this scene. In other words, both violence as well as foreign policy orientation, and the links between the two, remain hidden from the public. Violence is coded on several levels; it is institutionalised and legitimised as a means of protecting the group itself; while the representation of open and occasional violence has relatively decreased in extreme right and mainstream media. Its place has been taken over by a form of physical aggression interwoven in the entire fabric of extreme right culture: the violent organisations, either in a somewhat moderated form or "de-demonised" by Jobbik and its media, have been elevated to the very centre of the extreme right's cultural myth-building, right in front of the public. Violence that is difficult to defend and is featured prominently in well-covered criminal proceedings is denigrated by extreme right media as show proceedings, or is justified at European fora as a cultural or political "freedom fight."

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<sup>152</sup> 'Nemzetbiztonsági Kérdés Lett a Jobbikot Ért Fenyegetés', *Alfahír*, 6 May 2015, [http://alfahir.hu/nemzetbiztonsagi\\_kerdes\\_lett\\_a\\_jobbikot\\_ert\\_fenyegeset](http://alfahir.hu/nemzetbiztonsagi_kerdes_lett_a_jobbikot_ert_fenyegeset).

<sup>153</sup> 'Vona: Nagyhatalmak Mélyítik El a Magyar-Román Konfliktusokat', *Alfahír*, 14 February 2016, [http://alfahir.hu/vona\\_nagyhatalmak\\_melyitik\\_el\\_a\\_magyar\\_roman\\_konfliktusokat](http://alfahir.hu/vona_nagyhatalmak_melyitik_el_a_magyar_roman_konfliktusokat).

## HUNGARIAN PRO-RUSSIAN FACEBOOK PAGES

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We selected three Facebook pages for analysis.<sup>154</sup> One, *We Stand by Russia – We Reject Russo-Phobia* (*Kiállunk Oroszország Mellett – Elutasítjuk a ruszsofóbiát*), was launched in the immediate aftermath of the events in Crimea, along with a number of other Hungarian-language online propaganda pages and/or Facebook pages, for the sole purpose of spreading political propaganda.<sup>155</sup> The page *Exposé Latest News – Világlátó News Magazine ex. Hidden News* (*Leleplező Friss Hírek – Világlátó Hírmagazin ex. Titkolt Hírek*) is the largest conspiracy theory page in Hungary, and is also pro-Russian.<sup>156</sup> *Hídő* (*Bridgehead*), operated from a Russian server and available under the .ru domain, was originally launched by the above-mentioned neo-Nazi group in 2012.<sup>157,158</sup> Common features of these three and other Hungarian pro-Russian pages is the anonymity of their founders and administrators, their markedly extreme right position, and their support for the governing Fidesz-KDNP alliance and the extreme right Jobbik.

**Table 1: Key Data of the Three Facebook Pages**

Page	No. of Likes	Created
Exposé Latest News – Világlátó News Magazine ex. Hidden News	75,254	1 January 2010
We Stand by Russia – We Reject Russo-Phobia	22,934	3 March 2014
Hídő	13,149	3 July 2014

We may conclude that the three Hungarian Facebook pages examined have succeeded in latching on to the Hungarian government's anti-migration quota campaign. In supporting the government's hard-line position on migration, the pages also stood visibly in support of similar policies of the Kremlin in this discourse. This kind of operation points to a rather frightening possibility, in that they have succeeded in conveying Moscow's political direction directly and effectively to the Hungarian public by latching on to the country's defining pro-Russian parties – Fidesz-KDNP and Jobbik. Additionally, lacking other significant and new geopolitical events, the propaganda pages reached back to their well-known anti-NATO, anti-EU and anti-American messages, to destroy confidence in western institutions and in leading western politicians. Despite this, the Hungarian pages do not generally attract a constant set of visitors, perhaps because of this "campaign-like" approach to their news-making. On the other hand, these pages were able to produce successful or at least systematically constructed and concentrated propaganda, placing the European refugee crisis in their spotlight, as part of their efforts to influence the Hungarian public.

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<sup>154</sup> The selection was made considering the number of likes and the content as a whole. When two pages had a nearly identical number of likes, the presence or strength of pro-Russian content was primarily what tipped the scale for selecting a page. Period examined: September-October 2016.

<sup>155</sup> 'Kiállunk a Többpólusú Világrend Mellett - Elutasítjuk a Demokráciaexportot - Home', accessed 26 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.roszorszag.mellett/>.

<sup>156</sup> 'Leleplező Friss Hírek - Világlátó Hírmagazin Ex. Titkolt Hírek - Home', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/vilaglatohirmagazin/>.

<sup>157</sup> 'Hídő Net - Home', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/hidfo.net/>.

<sup>158</sup> Political Capital, 'PC\_SDI\_Boll\_study\_IamEurasian.pdf', március 2015, [http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC\\_SDI\\_Boll\\_study\\_IamEurasian.pdf](http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_SDI_Boll_study_IamEurasian.pdf).

## General Statistics

Comprehensive statistics for the period from September through October 2016 show that it was *Világlátó* which shared the greatest number of posts; the other two pages produced somewhat less content. Despite this, however, it was *We Stand by Russia* which was most successful in transmitting its messages to its target group, if we consider the number of interactions per post. In this respect, it was *Világlátó* which performed the worst, despite its extraordinarily high number of posts.

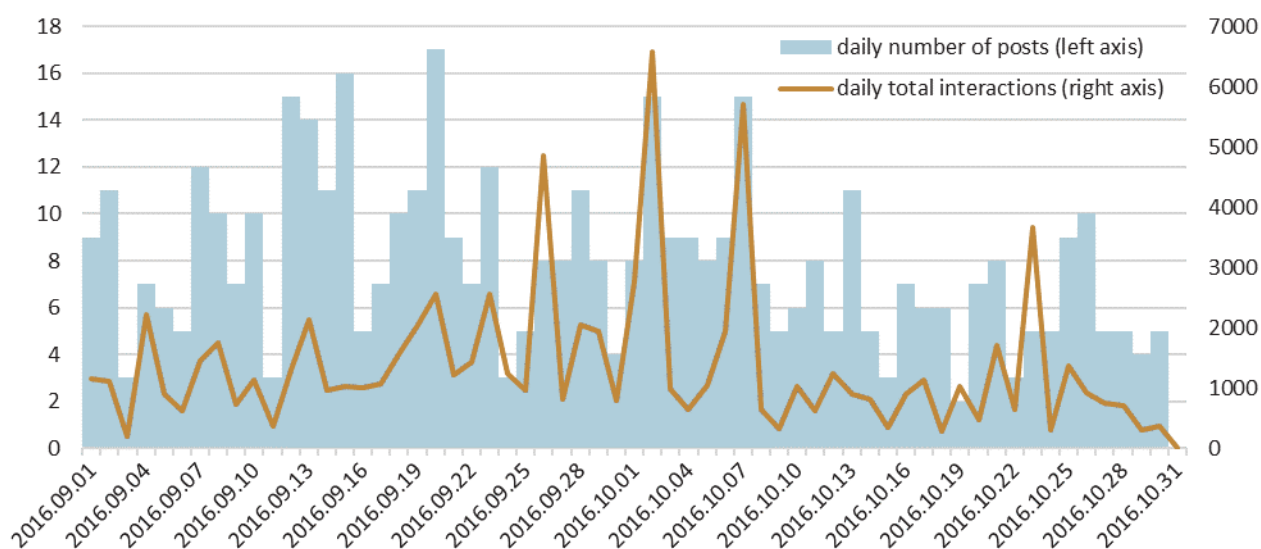
**Table 2: Page Statistics, September-October 2016**

Pages	We Stand by Russia	Világlátó	Hídő
<b>Posts</b>			
No. of posts published during this period	474	4,418	193
Average no. of posts daily	7.8	72.4	3.2
<b>Interactions<sup>159</sup></b>			
No. of interactions detected during this period	83,408	357,518	18,120
Average no. of interactions daily	176.0	80.9	93.9

## Page Activity

Tables 3, 4 and 5 show the general distribution of posts and audience reactions during the period examined. The number of posts on the page *We Stand by Russia* shows the “campaign-like” approach of the page, which saw periods of high activity alternate with more quiet periods. The reactions of the audience generally tend to follow the hectic changes in the number of posts, suggesting that the audience was very reactive and sensitive, but also low in its level of stability. The reach of the page thus depends greatly on the activity of its editors.

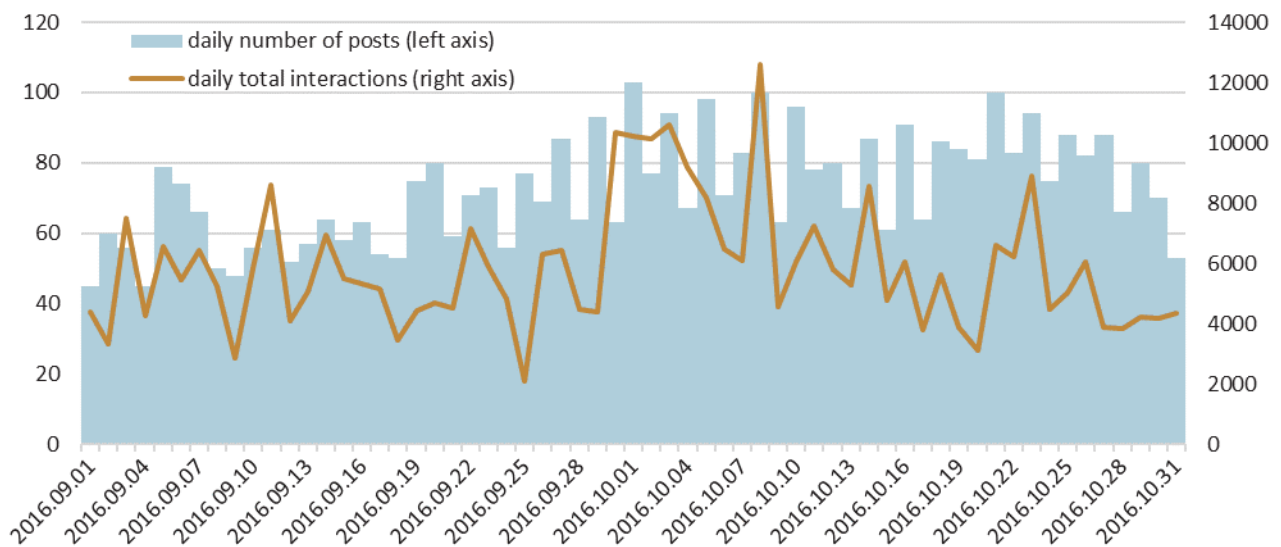
**Table 3: Typical distribution of posts and audience reactions; daily breakdown; *We Stand by Russia* Facebook page**



<sup>159</sup> Likes, comments and shares.

On the other hand, as Table 4 shows, *Világlátó* produced a fairly consistent – high – number of posts (72.4 posts per day), so even extraordinarily high activity is based on consistent and continuous foundations. The audience of the page shows a higher level of stability, because the number of interactions never dropped close to zero during the period examined. The primary reason for this may have been the vast amount of information, published consistently. Following 1 October, there is a major leap in the number of interactions, especially because Fidesz-KDNP’s anti-quota referendum was held on 2 October.

**Table 4: Typical distribution of posts and audience reactions; daily breakdown; *Világlátó* Facebook page**



**Table 5: Typical distribution of posts and audience reactions; daily breakdown; *Hídő* Facebook page**

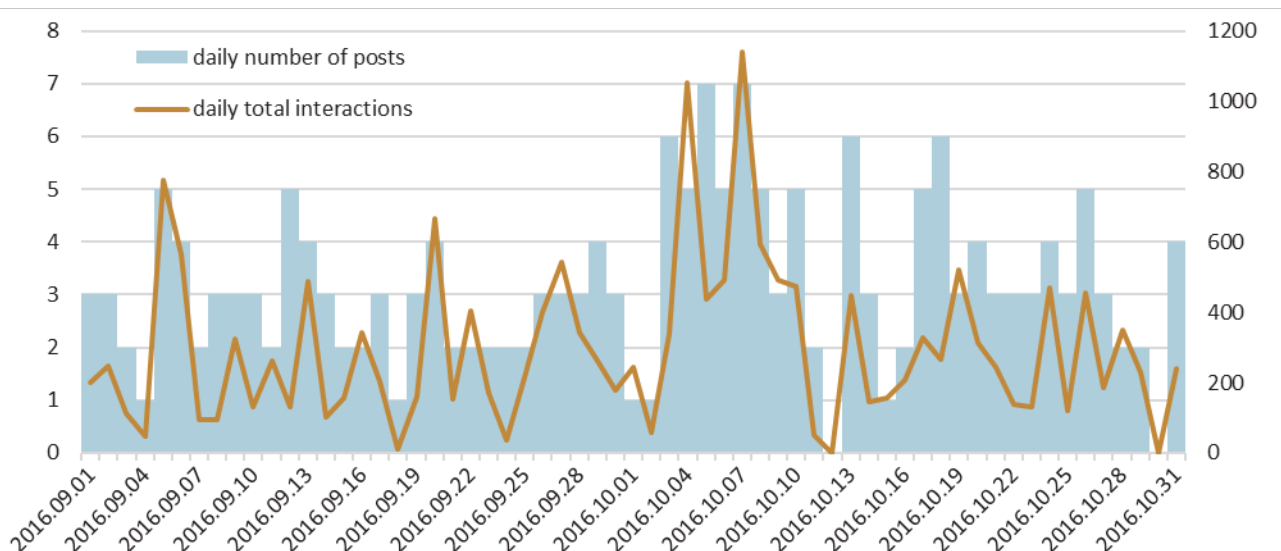


Table 5 shows the activity of the page *Hídő*, which may also be divided into stand-alone “campaign” periods, which exceeds the volatility of the activity on the page *We Stand by Russia*. Interaction trends suggest a highly hectic, unstable audience, with a tremendous number of interactions some days and zero on other days. These low-points were accounted for by days without important political events or posts.

On the whole, we may surmise that two of the three pages examined publish news items on a rather “flexible” schedule, which is more in line with the *modus operandi* of propaganda campaigns built around priority messages and unexpected geopolitical events. Only the page *Világlátó* is able to sustain its audience at a relatively constant level, thanks to the high number of posts it produces, while the other two pages showed unstable results. This suggests that the lower number of posts and their inconsistent distribution over time may be helpful in creating concentrated campaigns, but likely represents a disadvantage in the collection of a stable group of readers.

## Campaigns

During these months, the Hungarian media was occupied primarily with the impending referendum on quotas initiated by the governing Fidesz-KDNP alliance. Few significant international events occurred which would have impacted Hungarian public discourse, apart from the long-standing conflict in Syria, the presidential election campaign in the United States and parliamentary elections in Russia. Nonetheless, pro-Russian propaganda was able to rely on the moral panic related to the migration crisis, which had dominated the Hungarian news cycle since early 2015.

An analysis of the page *We Stand by Russia* reveals three separate campaigns which began 12 and 18 September and 2 October. The first and the third were occupied primarily with the Hungarian quota referendum, before and after the vote. The first included a historical reinterpretation of the Maidan events (September 2013), suggesting a “Nazi coup” facilitated by western military assistance. The second campaign dealt with the results of the Russian parliamentary elections, recognising and legitimising the success of United Russia.

The page *Világlátó* did not demonstrate clear campaign periods, but there were three specific days which saw extraordinary activity with a very high number of interactions. These were 11 and 30 September and 8 October. Because Hungarian public discourse was dominated by the quota referendum, it is hardly surprising that during this period migration was in the spotlight even on these pages. The key difference stems from the fact that *Világlátó* is a conspiracy theory page, so for the most part it carried various theories about how millions have set off from the Middle East on their way to the EU, and how Europe was about to be engulfed in a “civil war” as a result. Each of these news items is suitable for inciting mass hysteria. To a lesser extent, Russia was also a topic; one piece, for instance, praised Russia’s military role, while another denied the role of the Kremlin in breaking into and publishing Hillary Clinton’s campaign emails.

*Hídfő*’s trends showed three campaigns. The first commenced 5 September, and the audience reacted in an unusually active way. The main topic of this period was President Putin’s statement which projected a possible revision of the border between Hungary and Romania, as long as the West was willing to reopen post-Second-World-War geopolitical questions. Putin’s rhetoric clearly made waves because the Hungarian extreme right had never given up on revision and on recovering territories lost after the First World War. The next productive period, following 3 October, did not have a central theme, but migration was one of the issues in the spotlight. Yet another period of high intensity commenced 17-18 October, structured around the events in Eastern Ukraine – e.g. mentions of the western mercenaries fighting on the Ukrainian front against the Luhansk People’s Republic or of the death of the commander of the people’s militia of Donetsk.

## Posts

It is clear that links and photos are the most common types of posts on all three pages examined, as Table 6 shows. If we consider the average reactions of the audience, we see that the high numerical ratio of certain types of posts does not lead to more effective communication. In other words, based on average reactions, the most effective messages on the pages *We Stand by Russia* and *Világlátó* are videos – yet they are not being posted in high numbers. *Hídfő*, however, relies exclusively on links for its success. The typical success of photographs and videos, as visual messages, as opposed to links is self-explanatory. *Hídfő*'s unusual posts, then, may be ascribed to the fact that they also maintain a traditional website, making their Facebook page just one platform for sharing original articles.

And another important conclusion: quantity does not always matter. Even though *Világlátó* shares a vast number of articles each day, the average impact of these on the audience is far lower than in the case of the other two pages (80.9 reactions per post; 176 reactions per post; 93.9 reactions per post)

**Table 6: Statistics on Types of Posts by Page**

<b>We Stand by Russia</b>			
Type	No. of Posts	Distribution of Posts	Reactions/Posts <sup>160</sup>
Link	311	65.6%	144
Photo	92	19.4%	277
Video	40	8.4%	309
Status	30	6.3%	25
Event	1	0.2%	22
Note	0	%	0
<b>All</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>176.0</b>
<b>Világlátó</b>			
Type	No. of Posts	Distribution of Posts	Reactions/Posts
Link	4399	99.5%	81
Photo	1	0.0002%	4
Video	18	0.004%	94
Status	0	0%	-
Event	0	0%	-
Note	0	0%	-
<b>All</b>	<b>4418</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80.9</b>
<b>Hídfő</b>			
Type	No. of Posts	Distribution of Posts	Reactions/Posts
Link	193	100%	93.9
Photo	0	0%	-
Video	0	0%	-
Status	0	0%	-
Event	0	0%	-
Note	0	0%	-
<b>All</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93.9</b>

<sup>160</sup> Average number of likes, comments and shares.

Table 7 shows the most important outgoing domains which these pages obtain their news from. The page *We Stand by Russia* relies primarily on other Hungarian-language pro-Russian pages and the official outlets of the Hungarian government. We may say, then, that it creates a kind of echo chamber by keeping their audience confined within the right-wing media space. *Hídfő* and *Exposé Latest News*, on the other hand, reference almost exclusively their own media page, meaning that for them, Facebook is just another media platform. In the case of *Exposé*, however, the majority of articles are made up of content pasted together from other websites, so indirectly they actually are directing attention to other media providers.

**Table 7: Outgoing Domains**

<b>Hídfő</b>	<b>We Stand by Russia</b>	<b>Világlátó</b>
hidfo.ru (100%)	oroszhirek.hu (35%)	vilaglato.info (99.6%)
-	zotmundhirek.blogspot.hu (5%)	ezoterikus.info (0.4%)
-	888.hu (5%)	-
-	mno.hu (5%)	-
-	alfahir.hu (4%)	-
-	mandiner.hu (4%)	-
-	origo.hu (3%)	-
-	hidfo.ru (2%)	-
-	pestisracok.hu (2%)	-
-	hirado.hu (2%)	-

## Issues and Narratives

We used three aspects to identify the key issues the pages had dealt with. First, we selected 60 posts, which included the 20 most liked, 20 most shared and 20 most commented ones. We then selected the four best-performing posts of the sixty – the most liked, shared or commented posts, or the messages with the most interactions, in order to identify the most important public issues.<sup>161</sup> Finally, using the 60 selected posts, we mapped the best-performing narratives, according to pre-determined issues used consistently by Russian propaganda, including ones such as Russia, the EU, NATO, Syria, Ukraine and migration.<sup>162</sup>

The post most liked and the post most shared by the audience of the page *We Stand by Russia* was the same video, generating a total of 3878 interactions, which compared the European Union and the Soviet Union.<sup>163</sup> In a cynical way, Russian propaganda suggests the EU, like the Soviet Union, is an anti-democratic, bureaucratic and aggressive international organisation. The English-language video includes Hungarian subtitles, implying it was intended for international dissemination to begin with. The post which elicited the most emotional reactions (likes and such) was about the Putinist reinterpretation of 1956; as such, it rightfully elicited, in part, outrage among visitors of the page.

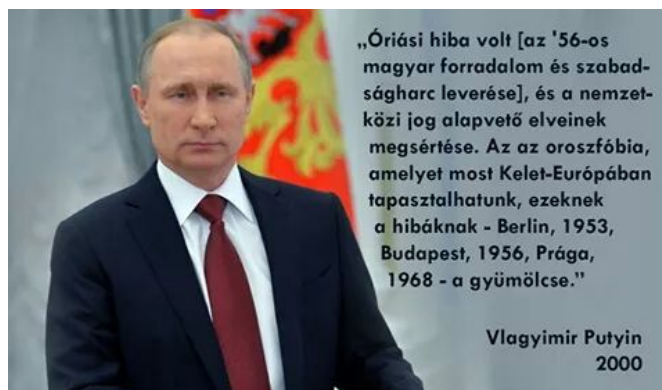
<sup>161</sup> Selecting the posts with the most interactions meant tallying the number of likes, shares and comments per post.

<sup>162</sup> We used a pre-compiled “list of issues” to analyse the principal narratives, relying on the conclusions of earlier propaganda analysis; this, however, did not guarantee that our sample would include the key themes mentioned already.

<sup>163</sup> ‘Kiállunk a Többpólusú Világrend Mellett - Elutasítjuk a Demokráciaexportot - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.oroszsorszag.mellett/videos/1288683971164825/>.



The message called into question the sanctity and status of the revolution and freedom fight in the Hungarian historical conscience and in Hungarian history.



Source: We Stand by Russia – We Reject Russo-Phobia<sup>164</sup>

The most comments were posted in response to a video of Ferenc Gyurcsány, the former left-wing prime minister, who called on his supporters to abstain from the quota referendum.<sup>165</sup> The reactions were in part the results of the extremely high rejection rate of the former prime minister on the right and on the extreme right, and also in part due to the hysterical public opinion fuelled by the government's migration quota campaign.

The post on the page *Exposé Latest News – Világlátó News Magazine ex. Hidden News* (hereinafter *Exposé Latest News*) which generated the most interactions, as well as the most shared post, was an article about a Debrecen lorry driver who was “attacked in the parking lot” in France.<sup>166</sup> The victim-focused discourse appearing in the article drives home the dangers of migration, and also attaches a face and credibility to general accusations about crimes committed by immigrants. The most emotional reactions were elicited by Jobbik Member of the European Parliament Krisztina Morvai's statement on the referendum.<sup>167</sup> The MEP set Jean-Claude Juncker straight with her public law interpretation of the Hungarian referendum.<sup>168</sup> The news item most commented, also in connection with the referendum, covered a demonstration by the opposition in Kossuth Square under the title, “*Migrant-Petting Idiots Demonstrating in Kossuth Square*”.<sup>169,170</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> ‘Kiállunk a Többpólusú Világrend Mellett - Elutasítjuk a Demokráciaexportot - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.orszorszag.mellett/photos/a.727401260626435.1073741828.727359837297244/1315152941851261/?type=3&theater>.

<sup>165</sup> ‘Kiállunk a Többpólusú Világrend Mellett - Elutasítjuk a Demokráciaexportot - Posts’.

<sup>166</sup> ‘Leleplező Friss Hírek - Világlátó Hírmagazin Ex. Titkolt Hírek - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/vilaglatohirmagazin/posts/1175293069231132>.

<sup>167</sup> ‘Leleplező Friss Hírek - Világlátó Hírmagazin Ex. Titkolt Hírek - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/vilaglatohirmagazin/posts/1180275058732933>.

<sup>168</sup> The most controversial aspect of the referendum was the subject of the question itself. The “mandatory resettlement” mentioned in the referendum cannot be applied to any single specific current legal institution or action. Many therefore accused the Hungarian government of inciting anti-migration sentiments. The original question read: “Do you wish to allow the European Union to mandate the resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens to Hungary without the approval of the National Assembly?” Source: ‘Kormányzat’, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://www.kormany.hu/hu>.

<sup>169</sup> ‘Leleplező Friss Hírek - Világlátó Hírmagazin Ex. Titkolt Hírek - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/vilaglatohirmagazin/posts/1175876605839445>.

<sup>170</sup> The primarily right-wing and extreme right readership of the propaganda site was given a rare opportunity to criticise the opposition and human rights NGOs.

*Hídő*'s most shared and liked post, as well as the one eliciting the most emotional reactions, was President Putin's announcement of the possible revision of the border between Hungary and Romania, if "western politicians" wish to conduct a discussion of national borders determined after the Second World War.<sup>171</sup> The article itself is highly cynical, quoting a leader who himself consistently redraws borders through war. The popularity of the post, however, points to both the success and danger of Russian destabilising efforts in a primarily extreme right community, where the revision of borders continues to enjoy widespread support.<sup>172</sup> The most commented item on the page was Ferenc Gyurcsány's "going crazy," when the politician condemned the use of violence by Hungarian authorities against refugees on the southern borders of the country.<sup>173</sup> The post with the most interactions discussed Washington's "destabilisation of the Middle East" by precipitating the migration crisis.<sup>174</sup> As a result, pro-Russian pages were successful in using Hungarian voters' fears about refugees as political capital, thereby also legitimising Russian military intervention in Syria. Some 99% of the posts on *Hídő* reflected their own website, meaning that their use of social media was exclusively to present *Hídő*'s own narrative. Their top posts were more in-depth discussions of migration and NATO. The page approached migration on the one hand from the perspective of the Hungarian quota referendum, and on the other hand in light of foreign developments, striking a negative tone. Domestically, *Hídő* chose clearly to back the government's political platform against immigration. As part of this, the page encouraged voter turnout, claiming that if the referendum is invalid, later "the Hungarian government will not be able to take action against migration" in EU institutions.<sup>175</sup> Additionally, the page accused the left wing opposition of dividing "the Hungarian nation" facing a referendum of "historical significance."<sup>176</sup> The activity of the medium in this respect is a typical example of covert and direct intervention in Hungarian domestic politics – knowing that the Hungarian page, as confirmed by several sources, is under the control of Russian intelligence services.<sup>177,178</sup> The majority of foreign news about migration either play on welfare chauvinism and/or examine the responsibility of western politicians in precipitating mass migration and terrorist threats.<sup>179,180</sup> Alternatively, they promote what they consider authoritative policy responses by, and opinions of, extremist politicians.

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<sup>171</sup> 'Hídő Net - Posts', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/hidfo.net/posts/1060556453997825>.

<sup>172</sup> As an extremist paramilitary organisation, it is precisely this Hungarian revisionism which HVIM considers its main creed; this was the reason for its establishment as a movement both in Hungary as well as in neighbouring states Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine.

<sup>173</sup> 'Gyurcsány Megőrült | Magyar Idők', *Magyar Idők*, accessed 25 April 2017, <http://magyaridok.hu/belfold/gyurcsany-megorult-19674/>.

<sup>174</sup> *hidfo.ru*, 'Az Amerikai Követséghez Kell Irányítani a Menekülteket', *Hídő*, 10 September 2015, <http://www.hidfo.ru/2015/09/az-amerikai-kovetseghez-kell-iranyitani-a-menekulteket/>.

<sup>175</sup> 'Hídő Net - Posts', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/hidfo.net/posts/1080204602033010>.

<sup>176</sup> 'Hídő Net - Posts', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/hidfo.net/posts/1077110825675721>.

<sup>177</sup> Political Capital, 'PC\_SDI\_Boll\_study\_IamEurasian.pdf'.

<sup>178</sup> András Dezső and Szabolcs Panyi, 'Jobbikos Politikusnak Fedte Fel Magát Az Orosz Propagandaoldal Újságírója', *Index*, 3 November 2016, [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/11/03/azt-sem\\_kepes\\_megvarni\\_hogy\\_hatalomra\\_kerulunk/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/11/03/azt-sem_kepes_megvarni_hogy_hatalomra_kerulunk/).

<sup>179</sup> One article, for instance, discusses land ownership potentially offered to refugees in Sweden; another one discusses free housing granted automatically by the European Union to immigrants. 'Hídő Net - Posts', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/hidfo.net/posts/1073434996043304>.

<sup>180</sup> 'Hídő Net - Posts', accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/hidfo.net/posts/1082691601784310>.



### Breedlove: Európa Oroszország elleni háborúra kell készüljön

Egy nyugállományú amerikai ezredes szerint Európa nem ad elég határozott választ az orosz hadsereg gyors ütemű modernizálására, emiatt nem is áll...

HIDFO.RU

Source: *hidfo.ru*<sup>181</sup>

The page *We Stand by Russia* relied primarily on external sources; its narrative was thus based on the careful selection of articles from other pro-Russian websites. The propaganda page published narratives critical of migration and the European Union, often striking a highly radical tone. It additionally also published official Russian policy. In keeping with the imported content and looser editorial rules, one article on migration conveyed pure neo-Nazi ideology on the impending eradication of the “white race.”<sup>182</sup> Anti-EU writings, in a cynical way, compared the European Union to the Soviet Union, and portrayed the European Commission as the annihilator of European nations, which through migration is working to create a globalised, “uniform super-culture.”<sup>183</sup> The majority of the posts describing Russian positions quote President Putin, for instance on the subject of the rethinking of borders, the failures of European migration policy etc.<sup>184, 185</sup> This page, too, bravely and in a servile fashion, conveys Russian attempts to reinterpret the history of 1956, calling the Hungarian freedom fight the first “colour revolution” and suggesting it was fundamentally an uprising against “Jewish Bolshevism.”<sup>186</sup>

The majority of *Világlátó*'s most successful posts dealt almost exclusively with migration, which was quite the feat from a page which produced an average of 70 posts per day. It also shows that the audience of the largest Hungarian conspiracy theory page is able to select, from a vast amount of propaganda, the content most relevant in terms of domestic political occurrences and most appropriate to their taste.

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<sup>181</sup> ‘Hídfo Net - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/hidfo.net/posts/1076400639080073>.

<sup>182</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.orszorszag.mellett/videos/1282308481802374/>

<sup>183</sup> ‘Kiállunk a Többpólusú Világrend Mellett - Elutasítjuk a Demokráciaexportot - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.orszorszag.mellett/posts/1293342214032334>.

<sup>184</sup> ‘Kiállunk a Többpólusú Világrend Mellett - Elutasítjuk a Demokráciaexportot - Posts’, accessed 26 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.orszorszag.mellett/posts/1268664656500090>.

<sup>185</sup> ‘Kiállunk a Többpólusú Világrend Mellett - Elutasítjuk a Demokráciaexportot - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.orszorszag.mellett/posts/1290311567668732>.

<sup>186</sup> ‘Kiállunk a Többpólusú Világrend Mellett - Elutasítjuk a Demokráciaexportot - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/kiallunk.orszorszag.mellett/posts/1314651355234753>.

In accordance with the political position of the page, it tries to create ordinary or at least moral panic by portraying migrants as criminals and masses looking to constantly enter into conflict with Europeans.<sup>187,188</sup> Far-right, extremist groups – e.g. motorcycle groups, football fans – protecting the “native people” are depicted in this discourse in a positive light, further radicalising the rhetoric.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> ‘Leleplező Friss Hírek - Világlátó Hírmagazin Ex. Titkolt Hírek - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/vilaglatohirmagazin/posts/1182917668468672>.

<sup>188</sup> ‘Leleplező Friss Hírek - Világlátó Hírmagazin Ex. Titkolt Hírek - Posts’, accessed 25 April 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/vilaglatohirmagazin/posts/1197940236966415>.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.