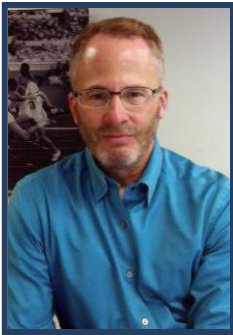


## HUNGARY: GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION?

### Viktor Orbán's "Illiberal" Hungary Looks Eastward

By John R. Haines



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*"This country's history was written by its enemies...We are the descendants of the Scythian-Hun people, who at one time ruled all of Asia...Our enemies encouraged us to forget that we were Huns...to deny our origins and deprive us of hope in the future in order to subjugate us once and for all."*

*"The God of the Hungarians will not forget...We will raise a Hungarian nation in which the people live and think as Hungarians and do not just speak the Hungarian language. Our ancestors dared to be Hungarians. What are we afraid of?"<sup>1</sup>-László Botos*

*Let no one say the past is dead.  
The past is all about us and within.  
Haunted by tribal memories, I know  
This little now, this accidental present  
Is not the all of me, whose long making  
Is so much of the past. -Oodgeroo, "The Past"<sup>2</sup>*

### "HUNGARY IS GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION"<sup>3</sup>

Hungary's new official state ideology, according to philosopher Gáspár Miklós Tamás, is "a mixture of euro-skeptic nationalism and ethnicism." To wit, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's statement after taking his oath of office in May 2014, "In the European Union elections we must tell Brussels loudly and resolutely: respect the

<sup>1</sup> Author's literary translation, adapted from László Botos (2008). *Magyarságtudományi tanulmányok [Selected Studies in Hungarian History]*. (Budapest: UN-Idea Publishers).

<sup>2</sup> Oodgeroo Noonucal (1990). *My People*. (Milton, Queensland, Australia: Jacaranda Wiley Ltd).

<sup>3</sup> From the title of a recent editorial by Michael Roth, German Minister of State for European Affairs. See: „Ungarn geht in die falsche Richtung.“ *Der Tagesspiegel* [online edition, 17 August 2014]. <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/spd-aussenpolitiker-michael-roth-im-interview-ungarn-geht-in-die-falsche-richtung/10344320.html>. Last accessed 1 September 2014.

Hungarians!"<sup>4</sup> Orbán's foreign policy was summarized recently as "maneuver[ing] between Brussels and Russia."<sup>5</sup> An August 2014 op-ed in the English language *The Moscow Times* put it more harshly:

"The wind is 'blowing from the East.' That's how Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has described the recent swirl of Russian precedent and influence, the storm of ethnic chauvinism and anti-Brussels sentiment that begins in Moscow and whips low across the Ukrainian plains. This storm is currently sweeping across Donetsk, and if Orbán has his way, it's heading directly toward the EU. How the EU will handle this rapidly approaching reality remains anyone's guess."<sup>6</sup>

**The word "illiberal"** in the subtitle is taken from a 26 July 2014 speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at Băile Tușnad (Hungarian: Tusnádfürdő), Romania, in which he stated, "[I]he new state that we are building is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not deny foundational values of liberalism, as freedom, etc. But it does not make this ideology a central element of state organization but applies a specific, national, particular approach in its stead." [http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp. Last accessed 30 August 2014] In response, Hungarian philosopher and former Alliance of Free Democrats [known by its acronym in Hungarian, SzDSz (Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége) MP Gáspár Miklós Tamás said "Orbán managed to write one of the blackest pages of the country's history." [http://budapestbeacon.com/politics/gaspar-miklos-tamas-democracy-has-ceased-to-exist-in-hungary/. Last accessed 30 August 2014] During an interview with the journalist Éva Kocsis on Kossuth Rádió's "180 Minutes" program aired 15 August 2014, Orbán reiterated that "we should not think along the lines of the logic of a liberal democracy" and "we are openly admitting that we don't want to construct a liberal democracy," one result of which is that "There are many who would like to portray Hungary as a black sheep." [http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/in\_english\_article/viktor\_orban\_on\_kossuth\_radio\_s\_180\_minutes\_programme. Last accessed 30 August 2014] Responding to Orbán's statements on Kossuth Rádió, Hungary's opposition center left E14-PM alliance accused him of repeating a preference for an illiberal state model that looks eastwards, and said Orbán "cannot be regarded as a legitimate, democratic head of government," [http://www.freehungary.hu/index.php/56-hirek/3172-e14-pm-accuses-pm-orban-of-repeating-a-preference-for-an-illiberal-state-model. Last accessed 30 August 2014]

The reference is to Orbán's November 2010 speech introducing his "Eastern Opening" policy, in which he said "We are sailing under a Western flag, though an Eastern wind is blowing in the world economy."<sup>7</sup>

That Eastern wind can also blow cold on the Hungarian economy: in mid-August, Economy Minister Mihály Varga urged a meeting of the Hungarian-Russian economic joint committee to discuss how "Hungarian-Russian economic relations could be kept alive."<sup>8</sup> This followed closely on the heels of a similar call by Hungary's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Peter Szijjártó, and earlier ones by *Jobbik Magyarorszáért Mozgalom* ("Movement for a

<sup>4</sup> "Prime Minister Orbán's Speech to Supporters, May 10, 2014." <http://theorangefiles.hu/prime-minister-orbans-speech-to-supporters-may-10-2014/>. Last accessed 30 August 2014.

<sup>5</sup> *The Economist* [19 July 2014]. <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21607862-prime-minister-seeks-play-east-and-west-between-brussels-and-russia>. Last accessed 30 August 2014. The quoted phrase is an allusion to a March 2011 speech by Orbán, during which he said "True to our oath, in 1848 we did not let Vienna dictate to us, just as we did not let Moscow dictate to us in either 1956 or 1990. And we will not let anybody dictate to us now either, from Brussels or anywhere else." [Hungarian: "Eskükhöz híven nem türtük el 48-ban, hogy Bécsből diktáljanak nekünk, nem türtük el 56-ban és 1990-ben sem, hogy Moszkvából diktáljanak. Most sem hagyjuk, hogy Brüsszelsből vagy bárhonnan bárki is diktáljon nekünk."] See: [http://index.hu/belfold/2011/03/18/az\\_idus\\_harom\\_nagy\\_tanulsaga/](http://index.hu/belfold/2011/03/18/az_idus_harom_nagy_tanulsaga/). Last accessed 30 August 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Casey Michel (2014). "Hungary's Victor Orbán Walks in Putin's Footsteps." *The Moscow Times* [online edition, 5 August 2014]. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/hungarys-viktor-orban-walks-in-putins-footsteps/504632.html>. Last accessed 30 August 2014.

<sup>7</sup> The sentence reads in the original Hungarian: "Nyugati zászló alatt hajózunk, de keleti szél fúj a világgazdaságban." See: "Orbán: Keleti szél fúj." *Index.hu* [online edition, 5 November 2011]. [http://index.hu/belfold/2010/11/05/orban\\_keleti\\_szel\\_fuj/](http://index.hu/belfold/2010/11/05/orban_keleti_szel_fuj/). Last accessed 30 August 2014.

<sup>8</sup> "Varga: Hungary Closely monitoring Russian Embargoes." *Hungary Matters* [online edition, 21 August 2014], p. 2. [http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary\\_matters/2014/afternoon/hm0821pm.pdf](http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary_matters/2014/afternoon/hm0821pm.pdf). Last accessed 31 August 2014.

Better Hungary"), an ethno-nationalist political movement. Jobbik's deputy head of parliament's foreign affairs committee Márton Gyöngyösi, who called on the Orbán government to request compensation from Brussels and to initiate direct talks with Russia.<sup>9</sup> The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry made a similar call for compensation from Brussels to offset losses incurred as a result of the sanctions.<sup>10</sup>

Total exports to Russia amounts to about €2.5 billion, and Varga estimated that Russia's one-year embargo on agricultural imports from EU states, Hungary included— an act described by Foreign Minister Tibor Navracsics as a "heavy, unilateral boycott"— was costing Hungary some €223,000 per day.<sup>11</sup> According to Varga, Hungary might "find mediators [sic] through which Hungarian goods could still reach Russia or Ukraine," but in any event, "it would be necessary to reconsider the entire policy of sanctions against Russia."<sup>12</sup> Russia quickly ruled out one "mediator": Hungarian-Russian joint ventures<sup>13</sup> operating in Hungary would not be exempt from Russia's import ban, which applies to the country of origin of the products, not the ownership of the venture producing them.<sup>14</sup> As to the EU sanctions, Orbán said earlier in the month, "We have shot ourselves in the foot" because the EU sanctions "hurt us more than Russia."<sup>15</sup> These concerns are more than rhetorical: Hungary's long-term contract for Russian gas, signed in 1996, expires in 2015.

## THE "PEACOCK DANCE"

Orbán describes his *pávatánc* ("peacock dance") as careful choreography "in which elements of agreement, consensus, defiance and resistance need to be mixed, in a very complicated string of tactical actions" to feign eagerness and fool a negotiating partner. Orbán appears to behave according to agreed-upon rules in order to avoid outside interference, while in reality, he acts solely according to his own interest. "These movements," Orbán explained, "belong to the art of politics."

His *pávatánc* expresses a studied ambiguity about the West. He professes "It is a big question whether the West changed or whether we began to view it differently once we got there,"<sup>16</sup> and warns he will not sacrifice "the one-thousand-year-old Hungary on the altar of some kind of European United States."<sup>17</sup> He asserts what Michael Roth called a *Lex Ungarum*: "I am among those who wanted a Hungarian, not an eastern, not a western, but a Hungarian country that stands on its own legs, travels its own path and turns on its own axis."<sup>18</sup> Orbán is quick to condition Hungary's "Western flag":

"Hungary is part of the Western alliance system, NATO and the European Union. There is no doubt about this, nor will there be during our administration. We are, however, members of these alliances and not hostages."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Jobbik Wants Government to Ask Compensation from Brussels After Russia Embargo." *Hungary Matters* [online edition, 12 August 2014]. [http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary\\_matters/2014/morning/hm0812am.pdf](http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary_matters/2014/morning/hm0812am.pdf). Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Hungarian: Magyar Kereskedelmi És Iparkamara (MKIK).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Varga also argued for an increase in the EU's €125 million emergency fund set up to compensate fruit and vegetable producers hit by the Russian embargo. See: *Napi Gazdaság* [21 August 2014], p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> "Varga: EU Response to Russia-Ukraine Conflict Impacts Hungary's Interests." *Hungary Matters* [online edition, 22 August 2014]. [http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary\\_matters/2014/afternoon/hm0822pm.pdf](http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary_matters/2014/afternoon/hm0822pm.pdf). Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>13</sup> At an 11 September 2013 meeting of the Hungarian-Russian Joint Economic Committee in Budapest, Hungarian State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and External Economic Relations of the Prime Minister's Office Péter Szijjártó (who is also Government Commissioner for Hungarian-Russian Relations) and Russian Agriculture Minister Nikolai Fyodorov agreed that the agriculture ministries of the two countries would begin preparations for the establishment of joint enterprises in order to increase agricultural trade. See: <http://emberijogok.kormany.hu/hungarian-russian-joint-economic-committee-decides-on-establishing-agricultural-joint-enterprises>. Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>14</sup> "Hungarian-Russian JVs Not Exempt from Import Embargo." *Hungary Matters* [online edition, 26 August 2014]. [http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary\\_matters/2014/morning/hm0826am.pdf](http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary_matters/2014/morning/hm0826am.pdf). Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>15</sup> "PM: Russia Sanctions Hurt National Interest." *Hungary Matters* [online edition, 15 August 2014].

[http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary\\_matters/2014/afternoon/hm0815pm.pdf](http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary_matters/2014/afternoon/hm0815pm.pdf). Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>16</sup> "Prime Minister Orbán's Speech to National Assembly, May 10, 2014." <http://theorangefiles.hu/prime-minister-orbans-speech-to-national-assembly-may-10-2014/>. Last accessed 30 August 2014.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "Orbán: nehéz lesz, 'nem babazsúrra készülünk'." *hvg.hu* [online edition, 29 March 2010]. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20100529\\_orban\\_nem\\_babazsurra\\_keszul](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20100529_orban_nem_babazsurra_keszul). Last accessed 30 August 2014.

<sup>19</sup> "Prime Minister Orbán's Speech to National Assembly, May 10, 2014." <http://theorangefiles.hu/prime-minister-orbans-speech-to-national-assembly-may-10-2014/>. Last accessed 30 August 2014.

And he is just as quick to praise Russia's Eurasian Economic Union: "Hungary considers this to be a positive global-economic development. We do not want to be excluded from this opportunity." However, as a recent headline proclaimed, "The Orbán doctrine has collapsed after three days"<sup>20</sup> with Russia's mid-August incursion into eastern Ukraine. So much for talk that "Hungary cannot stop at the edge of the carpet," described by one commentator as "a doctrine with no principles, just interests."

Orbán's footwork has been similarly clumsy regarding his "doctrine of illiberalism" articulated in the Tasnárdüldő/Băile Tuşnad speech. Some have defended Orbán by claiming that his meaning was purposefully misconstrued: what he intended, they say, was a critique of the "liberal" government he replaced in 2010, which among its many deficiencies did not recognize Hungarians living in the near-abroad as part of the greater Hungarian nation.<sup>21</sup> Recognizing, however, that "We must take the reaction of the international community into account because it may trigger actions the consequences of which are unfavorable" to Hungary,<sup>22</sup> another commentator concedes Orbán's choice of "illiberalism" (something he claims is "a Western construct"<sup>23</sup>) was "unfortunate," and suggests an alternative term, "national democracy" (*nemzeti demokrácia*),

Hungary's European neighbors are increasingly less charmed by Orbán-as-Terpsichore. In late August, Michael Roth and Tomáš Prouza of the German and Czech foreign ministries, respectively, cautioned Hungary that the European Community "is far more than a common market: it is a community of values" in which "our common values...weld us together."<sup>24</sup>

## GREATER HUNGARY

As Tamás Bauer observed a few years ago, such phrases as "We were, we are, and we shall be" create the conditions "to make irredentism the state religion."<sup>25</sup>

Contemporary Map of an Imagined "Greater Hungary"



Source: Nagy Magyarország <http://domonyi.aries.hu/Nagy-Magyarország.html#.VBMRd5RdXTp>

<sup>20</sup> "Három nap alatt összeomlott az Orbán-doktrína." *168 Óra* [online edition, 29 August 2014]. <http://www.168ora.hu/itthon/harom-nap-alatt-osszeomlott-orban-doktrina-130302.html>. Last accessed 1 September 2014. *168 Óra* (168 Hours) is a weekly newspaper published in Hungary.

<sup>21</sup> The quoted text reads in the original Hungarian: "nem védte meg Magyarországon a nemzeti vagyont, nem hozott létre nemzetközösséget, eladósította az embereket stb. Vagyis". See: Matild Torkos (2014). "A tusványosi szindróma: A Gyurcsány család ápolta Putyinnal szoros baráti kapcsolato." *Magyar Nemzet* [online edition, 4 August 2014]. <http://mno.hu/jegyzet/a-tusvanyosi-szindrroma-1240691>. Last accessed 1 September 2014.

<sup>22</sup> The quoted text reads in the original Hungarian: "Azért kell figyelembe venni a nemzetközi közvélemény reakcióját, mert annak következményei vannak, cselekvéseket indítanak el, amelyek számunkra nem feltétlenül kedvezőek." See: Fricz Tamás (2014). "Illiberális helyett inkább: közösségelvű és nemzeti demokrácia." *MNO* [online edition, 11 August 2014]. <http://mno.hu/fricztamasblogja/illiberalis-helyett-inkabb-kozosssegelvu-es-nemzeti-demokracia-1241777>. Last accessed 1 September 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Others, like Fidesz's "political philosopher" György Schöpflin, claim Orbán was referring to "economic liberalism" and that he used the term in contradistinction to *liberalism*, which Schöpflin claims "seeks to coercively impose its ideals on the whole world."

<sup>24</sup> The quoted text reads in the original German: "Doch die EU ist weit mehr als nur ein gemeinsamer Markt: Sie ist eine Wertegemeinschaft" and "Unsere gemeinsamen Werte dagegen schweißen uns zusammen." See: Michael Roth & Tomáš Prouza (2014). "Europa ist mehr als ein Markt." *Frankfurter Rundschau* [online edition, 28 August 2014]. <http://www.fr-online.de/meinung/gastbeitrag-europa-ist-mehr-als-ein-markt,1472602,28250772.html>. Last accessed 1 September 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Milan Jaroň (2010). "Trianon: A Different View." *Hungarian Spectrum* [online edition, May 2010]. <https://hungarianspectrum.wordpress.com/2010/05/page/2/>. Last accessed 8 September 2014.



The political rhetoric of *Magna Hungaria* (Hungarian: *Nagy Magyarország*) or "Greater Hungary" experienced a revival after the fall of the Hungarian People's Republic in October 1989. It conceptualizes Hungary as a homogenous ethnic nation, extending geographically to all ethnic Hungarians living in the Carpathian basin.<sup>26</sup> In the words of Hungary's first prime minister of the post-Communist period, József Antall, "in spirit he felt he was the prime minister not of ten, but of fifteen million Hungarians," a sentiment meant to "evoke the loss Hungarians experienced following the 1920 Treaty of Trianon."<sup>27</sup> Slovakia sees *Magna Hungaria* as a thinly disguised call for autonomy for Slovakia's Hungarian minority, intended to lead to southern Slovakia's annexation by Hungary, a perception common among Hungary's neighbors.<sup>28</sup>

Hungarian philosopher and political scientist János Kis wrote in 2002, "The Status Law is Fidesz's cherished child. If there is anything Orbán and his colleagues did from conviction, this is it."<sup>29</sup> The statute entitled all Hungarian-speaking citizens in contiguous states<sup>30</sup> (except Austria) to specified legal preferences, and from the beginning was perceived as politically motivated and a security threat to Hungary's neighbors with large ethnic Hungarian populations.<sup>31</sup>

So, too, the 2010 Act on Dual Citizenship, which extended "preferential naturalization...to non-Hungarian citizen whose ascendant was a Hungarian citizen or whose origin from Hungary is probable, and whose Hungarian language knowledge is proved."<sup>32</sup> Among dual citizenship's many effects it changed the contour of the Hungarian electorate: according to Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, some 610,000 ethnic Hungarians living abroad applied for Hungarian citizenship in the last three and a half years.

It also provoked a predictable backlash abroad. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico exclaimed "we have to defend ourselves," and Slovakia enacted its own Citizenship Act, revoking Slovak citizenship for anyone who acquire it of another state.<sup>33</sup> Lest anyone miss the point, Slovaks erected a Trianon memorial at the border town of Komárno (on the Elisabeth Bridge connecting Komárno and the Hungarian city of Komárom) on the occasion of the Treaty's 90th anniversary to "remind everyone, but especially the gentlemen from Hungary, that they are crossing the Slovak border and entering Slovak land that will forever belong to us."<sup>34</sup>

In late August, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén asserted, "We are neither second-class citizens, nor a second-class people," and declared that the Hungarian government "fully backs...all autonomy concepts developed by communities for their own survival."<sup>35</sup> Speculating on the political motivation of Semjén and others, Slovak MP and vice-chair of the political party *Most-Híd*,<sup>36</sup> Zsolt Simon, said:

<sup>26</sup> Dagmar Kusá, Arnold Kiss, & Veronika Klempová (2014). "Use of Collective Memory in Political Discourse: Slovakia-Hungary Citizenship Dispute." Paper prepared for the Third Euroacademia International Conference on Re-Inventing Eastern Europe (Berlin, 28–29 March 2014), p. 3. [http://euroacademia.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Dagmar\\_Kusa\\_and\\_Veronika\\_Klempova\\_and\\_Arnold\\_Kiss\\_Use\\_of\\_Collective\\_Memory\\_in\\_Political\\_Discourse-Slovakia-Hungary\\_Citizenship\\_Dispute1.pdf](http://euroacademia.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Dagmar_Kusa_and_Veronika_Klempova_and_Arnold_Kiss_Use_of_Collective_Memory_in_Political_Discourse-Slovakia-Hungary_Citizenship_Dispute1.pdf). Last accessed 2 September 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Tünde Puskás (2009). "We Belong to Them": *Narratives of Belonging, Homeland and nationhood in Territorial and Non-territorial Minority Settings*. (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang S.A.), pp. 81-82.

<sup>28</sup> Virtually all ethnic Hungarian Slovaks live in southern Slovakia along the border with Hungary, the population of which is 61.2 percent ethnic Hungarian. <http://www.slovakia.org/society-hungary2.htm>. Last accessed 2 September 2014. This territory was occupied by Hungary in March 1939.

<sup>29</sup> János Kis (2002). "The Status Law: Hungary at the Crossroads." *Beszélő* (March 2002). [http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no4\\_ses/chapter06.pdf](http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no4_ses/chapter06.pdf). Last accessed 1 September 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.

<sup>31</sup> Kusá, et al. (2014), p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/docs/CountryReports/recentChanges/Hungary.pdf>. Last accessed 2 September 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Michaela Džomeková (2013). "Minorities: 'Dual citizenship ban is silly'." *The Slovak Spectator* [online edition, 28 October 2013].

[http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51823/2/minorities\\_dual\\_citizenship\\_ban\\_is\\_silly.html](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51823/2/minorities_dual_citizenship_ban_is_silly.html). Last accessed 2 September 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Patrik Babjak, (2010). "V Komárne zničili pamätník Trianonu." *Webnoviny.sk* [online edition, 12 June 2010]. <http://www.webnoviny.sk/slovensko/clanok/158961-v-komarne-znicili-pamatnik-trianonu/>. Last accessed 2 September 2014. The quoted text reads in the original Slovak: "pripomínať všetkým, ale najmä pánom z Maďarska, že tu prechádzajú cez hranice a vstupujú na slovenskú zem, ktorá bude naveky naša". The monument was placed on the Elisabeth Bridge on 4 June 2012; on 12 June, police reported that an unknown person had destroyed it with a hammer.

<sup>35</sup> "Semjén: Government Backs Ethnic Kin's Autonomy Endeavours." *Hungary Matters* [online edition, 26 August 2014].

[http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary\\_matters/2014/morning/hm0826am.pdf](http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary_matters/2014/morning/hm0826am.pdf). Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>36</sup> The name combines the word for "bridge" in Slovak and Hungarian, respectively.

"[T]he Hungarian government commenting and engaging in Hungarian minority issues in Slovakia, Romania or Croatia tries to divert attention away from the real internal problems in Hungary...Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán gave Hungarians living in Slovakia and Romania the opportunity to achieve Hungarian citizenship. Actions of this type aim only to get new votes for Fidesz, but also bring more bad than good for Hungarians living in these countries."<sup>37</sup>

Moving west to Ukraine's Transcarpathia (*Kárpátalja* to Hungarians), it has been said that "Although located at the heart of Europe,<sup>38</sup> Transcarpathia is a peripheral and forgotten region."<sup>39</sup> To some, maybe, but not Orbán:

"Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin deserve dual nationality, they deserve collective rights and they deserve autonomy. This is the viewpoint we shall support on the international political stage. All of this is of particular current interest as a result of the situation surrounding the 200,000-strong Hungarian community in Ukraine, which must receive dual nationality, must receive collective rights in their entirety and must receive the possibility of self-administration."<sup>40</sup>

In mid-August, Orbán discussed representation of ethnic Hungarians<sup>41</sup> in Ukraine's *Verkhovna Rada*<sup>42</sup> with László Brenzovics, president of the Hungarian Cultural Association of Transcarpathia,<sup>43</sup> and Géza Gulácsy and József Barta, deputy presidents of the association. Simon's point about diverting attention away from internal problems certainly seems applicable. Indeed, Hungary's position on the conflict in eastern Ukraine is interesting for being almost entirely self-referencing: according to Foreign Minister Tibor Navracsics, Hungary's goals are "a peaceful settlement and stabilization; to see Ukraine emerge from the crisis as a democratic, independent state with territorial integrity and respect for minority rights; and protecting the needs of the Transcarpathian Hungarian minority."

He hastened to add that "It was crucial that the rights of Hungarians in Transcarpathia should not be curtailed nor their livelihoods jeopardized," an oblique reference to the reinstatement of conscription in Ukraine. On that point, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavel Klimkin replied that conscription "would not affect ethnic Hungarians disproportionately."<sup>44</sup> Jobbik was having none of this, however: "Transcarpathian Hungarians have nothing to do with the senseless bloodshed occurring thousands of kilometers away," said Jobbik vice president, Szávay István, "This is not a war of the Hungarian people."<sup>45</sup> Hungarian officials have persisted in the matter of the mobilization and deployment of ethnic Hungarians to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. In late August, Hungarian Human Resources Minister Zoltán Balog held discussions with Transcarpathia's Governor, Valery Lunchenko, and the

<sup>37</sup> Kazimierz Poplawski (2012). "Is It Possible to Work Together?" *New Eastern Europe* [online edition, 13 June 2012].

<http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/interviews/287-it-is-possible-to-work-together>. Last accessed 2 September 2014.

<sup>38</sup> The Carpathian Euroregion was formed in February 1993 by the governments of Ukraine, Hungary and Poland. At formation, it was comprised of Transcarpathia and three Ukrainian oblasts (L'viv, Ivano-Frankivsk & Chernivtsi); two regions of eastern Slovakia (Košice & Prešov); Poland's Podkarpacie Province (*a/k/a* Subcarpathia); seven *județe* in Romania's *Nord-Vest* (Bihor, Botoșani, Harghita, Maramureș, Sălaj, Satu Mare & Suceava); and five *megyék* in northeastern Hungary (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Hajdú-Bihar, Heves, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok & Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg). The Carpathian Euroregion's legal status is formally recognized by the parliaments of Ukraine, Slovakia and Poland, but not by Hungary or Romania.

<sup>39</sup> European Center for Minority Issues (1999). *Inter-Ethnic Relations in Transcarpathian Ukraine* (ECMI Report #4, September 1999), p. 8.

[http://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx\\_lfpubdb/report\\_4.pdf](http://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx_lfpubdb/report_4.pdf). Last accessed 28 August 2014. One scholar offers the following perspective: "Throughout its millennial history, Transcarpathia has known many names and rulers. Under the Hungarians, it was *Kárpátalja*. In Masaryk's Czechoslovakia it was referred to as *Podkarpatská Rus*, *Rusínsko*, or *Ruthenia*. For several hours in 1939, it was the independent Republic of Carpatho-Ukraine. The Soviets and now the Ukrainians call it *Zakarpatt'ja*, or Transcarpathia.

<sup>40</sup> "Prime Minister Orbán's Speech to National Assembly, May 10, 2014." <http://theorangefiles.hu/prime-minister-orbans-speech-to-national-assembly-may-10-2014/>. Last accessed 30 August 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Nor is Hungary's interest there limited to the condition of ethnic Hungarians: it has also spoken out on behalf of Transcarpathian Rusins, who demand Kyiv recognize the "Republic of Carpathian Ruthenia" as a special self-administered region on the basis of a 1991 referendum. See: "Подкарпатская Русь заявляет о своих правах." *Pravda* [online edition, 9 June 2014]. [http://www.pravda.ru/world/formerussr/ukraine/09-06-2014/1211350-karpaty\\_getsko-0/](http://www.pravda.ru/world/formerussr/ukraine/09-06-2014/1211350-karpaty_getsko-0/). Last accessed 31 August 2014. In November 2008, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko's *Our Ukraine* party accused Viktor Baloha, the head of President Viktor Yushchenko's secretariat and a Transcarpathian native, of supporting this movement. At the time, Ukraine's All-Ukrainian Union "Freedom" party (Ukrainian: Всеукраїнське об'єднання «Свобода». Ukrainian transl.: *Vseukrayinske obyednannia "Svoboda"*) declared presciently, "'Transcarpathia and Crimea are the weak spots exploited by the Kremlin in order to subjugate Ukraine."

<sup>42</sup> The *Verkhovna Rada* or Supreme Council of Ukraine is the national parliament. Ukrainian: Верховна Рада України (ВРУ).

<sup>43</sup> Hungarian: *Kárpátaljai Magyar Kulturális Szövetség-Ukrainai Magyar Párt* ("KMKKSz").

<sup>44</sup> "Navracsics: Eastern Ukraine Crisis Worsens." *Hungary Matters* [online edition, 21 August 2014], p. 1.

[http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary\\_matters/2014/afternoon/hm0821pm.pdf](http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary_matters/2014/afternoon/hm0821pm.pdf). Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>45</sup> "Az ukrán nagykövetség előtt akciózott a Jobbik." *Népszabadság* [online edition, 4 August 2014]. <http://nol.hu/belfold/ukran-nagykovetseg-elott-akciozott-a-jobbik-1479079>. Last accessed 1 September 2014. The quoted text reads in the original Hungarian: "A kárpátaljai magyaroknak semmi köze a tőlük ezer kilométerre zajló értelmetlen vérontáshoz" and "Ez nem a magyarság háborúja."

chairman of the Transcarpathian Regional Council (*Zakarpats'ka Oblasna Rada*), Ivan Baloga, during which the Transcarpathian leaders "gave reassuring answers concerning public safety, mobilization and keeping the staff of regional defense forces on Transcarpathia's territory."<sup>46</sup>

Hungary's aim is to promote ethnic kinship and Magyar nationalism; it does not promote separatism that would result in autonomy, especially given that Hungarians constitute a minority of the territory's residents. In early 2014, the Hungarian National Front,<sup>47</sup> a far right paramilitary group, claimed unspecified Western provocateurs were looking to "split Ukraine's Hungarian population."<sup>48</sup> This was important, it continued, because "Our country is in the process of a political realignment that will lead to Hungary's accession to the Eurasian Union within two parliamentary cycles,"<sup>49</sup> i.e., eight years. This, it concluded, "will allow for the reunification of the Hungarian nation; thus, it benefits only the West if Transcarpathian Hungarians to seek autonomy at this time,"<sup>50</sup> the reason being that "the CIA wants to create a new State on the border of Ukraine and Hungary."<sup>51</sup>

It should be said that recognition of the rights of ethnic Hungarians and other national minorities precedes Ukraine's 1991 independence: in July 1990, the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet adopted a "Declaration on the State Sovereignty of Ukraine" to guarantee all ethnic groups the right to "national-cultural development". The 1990 declaration followed the October 1989 language law, and was succeeded by the October 1991 citizenship law and the June 1992 law on national minorities, all of which contained relatively liberal provisions for ethnic minorities.<sup>52</sup> Ukraine's June 1996 Constitution, while stipulating that the Ukrainian language is the only state language, guarantees the use and protection of Russian and other languages of national minorities (Article 10), and secures the development of the "ethnic, cultural, language and religious originality of all native peoples and national minorities of Ukraine" (Article 11). Ukraine also entered into a series of the bilateral agreements with Hungary on the protection of ethnic Hungarians in Transcarpathia, one goal of which was "to avoid another Bosnia-Herzegovina or Kosovo." All that being said, the situation of ethnic minorities circa 2000 was described as "rights in word, but not in deed":

"Minorities in Ukraine can theoretically enjoy a high level of protection under several laws, but they are generally not used, or under-used. Kiev can pass as many laws as it would like to in accordance with international standards of protection for national minorities, but they mean nothing since they are not fully implemented."<sup>53</sup>

## CHOUKODAISHI,<sup>54</sup> HUNGARIAN-STYLE

*"History has transmuted into myth in the modern era...It is our lost referential, that is to say, our myth."*<sup>55</sup>

-Jean Baudrillard

*"We are tired of Hungary and its complex about a rampaging, great imagined empire."*<sup>56</sup>

-Bogdan Diaconu

<sup>46</sup> "Balog: Transcarpathian Leaders Safety Guarantee." *Hungary Matter* [online edition, 25 August 2014], p. 2.

[http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary\\_matters/2014/morning/hm0825am.pdf](http://mtva.hu/images/download/hungary_matters/2014/morning/hm0825am.pdf). Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>47</sup> Hungarian: *Magyar Nemzeti Arcvonal*. Its Hungarian language website, *Hidfő.net*, uses the tagline "The Voice of Truth in Hungary" (*Az Igazság Hangja Magyarországon*)

<sup>48</sup> The phrase reads in the original Hungarian: "magyar lakosságát Ukrajna feldarabolásának céljából mozgósítani." See: "Nyugati Zsoldosok Tartanak Kárpátalja Felé." *Hidfő.net* [online edition, 27 January 2014]. <http://www.hidfő.net/2014/01/27/nyugati-zsoldosok-tartanak-karpatalja-fele-0>. Last accessed 31 August 2014.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*. The quoted text reads in the original Hungarian: "Hazánkban is folyamatban van egy más irányú politikai átrendeződés, melynek köszönhetően két parlamenti cikluson belül realizálódik Magyarország csatlakozása az Eurázsiai Unióhoz."

<sup>50</sup> The quoted text reads in the original Hungarian: "Ez lehetőséget ad a magyar nép újraegyesítésére, és a kárpátaljai magyarságnak már csak ebből fakadóan sem érdeke, hogy Magyarországgal szemben különálló autonómiaként nyugati csatlósállammá váljon."

<sup>51</sup> The quoted text reads in the original Hungarian: "a CIA egy új államot akar létrehozni Ukrajna és Magyarország határán."

<sup>52</sup> ECMI (1999), p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> Brian J Požun (2000). "Multi-Ethnic Outpost." *Central Europe Review*. 2:40 (20 November 2000). <http://www.ce-review.org/00/40/pozun40.html>. Last accessed 28 August 2014.

<sup>54</sup> *Chourekishi* (Japanese: 超歴史) means "para-history" in the sense of treating ancient legends and folklore as an historical record. Put another way, *choukodaishi* is the projection of foundational myths onto an historical period. It is a compound word formed from *rekishi* (Japanese: 歴史) or "history" and the prefix *chou* (Japanese: 超). A variation on the term, *choukodaishi* (Japanese: 超古代史, means literally "para-ancient history."

<sup>55</sup> Jean Baudrillard (1982). *Simulacra and Simulation*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), p. 24.

<sup>56</sup> Bogdan Diaconu (2014). "Ne-am săturat de Ungaria." *Adevărul* [online edition, 27 July 2014]. [http://adevarul.ro/news/politica/ne-am-saturat-ungaria-1\\_53d4b8020d133766a8c66b32/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/news/politica/ne-am-saturat-ungaria-1_53d4b8020d133766a8c66b32/index.html). Last accessed 5 September 2014. The quoted text reads in the original Romanian: "Ne-am săturat de Ungaria și de complexele ei furibunde de mare fost imperiu imaginar."

Modern Hungary's foundational myths project onto the para-history of a mythologized people and an enigmatic Eurasian homeland.<sup>57</sup>

"The origins of the Hungarians can be traced back to Ancient Mesopotamia through the Sumerian-Scythian-Hun-Avar-Magyar ethno-linguistic continuity, which, together with the evidence of the archeological artifacts of Sumerian origin found in the Carpathian Basin, indicates that the ancestors of the Hungarians were the first permanent settlers of the Carpathian Basin."

"Within the Carpathian Basin as well as in their other homelands to the East, the preservation of Hungarian independence and culture was a constant struggle against foreign powers and foreign influences which sought to impose themselves upon the Hungarians: over the ages, foreign religions, cultures, languages, political regimes and rulers have been forced upon the Hungarians. In Hungary, the original ancient Hungarian culture, religion and language have been persecuted and suppressed since the forced Christianization of the country which began around 1000 AD."

"...The apparent end of communism in 1990 did not bring the promised and expected national renewal in Hungary. The injustices of the past were not redressed. The former communists and their collaborators are still in power and still serving foreign interests. Millions of Hungarians are still forced to live under oppressive foreign regimes in the territories lost by Hungary after the two World Wars."<sup>58</sup>

These sentiments have unleashed vices briefly (and it might be said, outwardly only) suppressed during the period of Soviet dominion, most pointedly, ahistorical notions of migration westward from Etekköz to the Carpathian Basin. Consider the following passage:<sup>59</sup>

"In Etekköz,<sup>60</sup> the Magyars<sup>61</sup> and other Hunnic tribes formed a tribal federation under the leadership of the Magyar tribe. This was sealed by the Covenant of Blood which... created the Magyar nation and it was in effect a constitution which provided for a democratic order and for the safeguarding of the nation's interests from internal and external threats."

"It was also from Etekköz that the Magyar tribal federation successfully executed the conquest of the Carpathian Basin in a series of carefully planned diplomatic and military maneuvers. The objective was to expel the powers which had occupied the Carpathian Basin following the collapse of the Avar empire (ca. 800 AD)<sup>62</sup>...With the successful completion of the settlement of the Carpathian Basin, Árpád and the other Magyar leaders held their first assembly at Pusztaszer, thus effectively establishing the Hungarian state on a firm constitutional basis."<sup>63</sup>

"It is important to realize the great significance and strong link between these successive events: the Covenant of Blood of Etekköz, the Conquest and Settlement of the Carpathian Basin, the First Constitutional Assembly of Pusztaszer, and the military campaigns in Europe following the settlement. These acts laid the foundation for a Hungary, which was internally stable and externally secure in its status as a major power. These events should also be considered in the context of the Hun-Magyar identity and continuity."

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<sup>57</sup> The quoted phrase is from Alexandar Nikolov (2011). "The Protobulgarians: Old Theories, New Myths and the Phenomenon of 'Parahistory' In Post-Communist Bulgaria," p. 46. *Myth-Making and Myth-Breaking in History and the Humanities*. Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Bucharest, 6-8 October 2011. [http://www.unibuc.ro/n/resurse/myth-maki-and-myth-brea-in-hist-and-the-huma/docs/2012/iul/12\\_09\\_22\\_09Proceedings\\_Myth\\_Making\\_and\\_Myth\\_Breaking\\_in\\_History.pdf#page=37](http://www.unibuc.ro/n/resurse/myth-maki-and-myth-brea-in-hist-and-the-huma/docs/2012/iul/12_09_22_09Proceedings_Myth_Making_and_Myth_Breaking_in_History.pdf#page=37). Last accessed 29 August 2014.

<sup>58</sup> See: "Hungarian History." <http://www.hunmagyar.org/tor/index.html> Last accessed 28 August 2014.

<sup>59</sup> See: "The Controversy on the Origins and Early History of the Hungarians." <http://www.hunmagyar.org/tor/controve.htm#CONCLUSION> Last accessed 28 August 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Etekköz historical-geographical concept and the first known Hungarian principality. It was established around 830CE by the seven Magyar tribes (Hungarian: *Hétmagyar*) below the Dnieper River in an area corresponding generally with modern Ukraine's Kirovohrad Oblast (Ukrainian: *Кіровоградська область*. Ukrainian transl.: *Kirovohrads'ka oblast*). It is thought that the Hétmagyar federation may have seceded from the Khazar Empire located to the east around 862CE.

<sup>61</sup> *Megyer* is the tribal name of the most prominent of the seven tribes comprising the Hétmagyar federation, and is thought to be the root of the modern term *Magyar*. The English term *Hungarian* is a derivative of the Latin *Ungri* or *Ungari*.

<sup>62</sup> Viktor Padányi (1963). *Dentumagvaria*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Transsylvania), pp. 385-388.

<sup>63</sup> Francisco Jós Badiny (1986). *Az Istenes Honfoglalók*. (Buenos Aires: Ósi Gyökér), p. 13.



And what of the conquered persons of the Carpathian Basin, at least some whose descendants presumably dwell there today?<sup>64</sup> The simple answer: they, too, were Magyars:

"Another contentious issue is that of the ethnic identity of the populations which inhabited the Carpathian Basin at the time of the Magyar Conquest. One side claims this region was already inhabited by Slavic, 'Daco-Roman', Germanic and other non-Hungarian peoples that were oppressed by the 'invading' Magyars. The opposing view argues that the majority of the population already established in the Carpathian Basin was in fact ethnically related to the Magyars, and that today's Hungarians are an amalgamation of these peoples whose settlement of the Carpathian Basin preceded that of the non-Hungarian ethnic groups currently settled there."<sup>65</sup>

The historian Patrick Geary wrote in *The Myth of Nations*, "Only the horrors of the twentieth century have created the illusion that language and ethnicity could or should be mapable":<sup>66</sup>

"Polish politicians compete to see who is the most Polish; Hungarians renew their disputes with Romanians to the east and Slovaks to the north...All these people inhabit areas that contain other ethnic minorities, and most have members living as minorities within areas dominated by other peoples. As a result, demands for political autonomy based on ethnic identity will inevitably lead to border conflicts, suppression of minority rights, and civil strife..."<sup>67</sup>

The political use of *Magyar* purposefully conflates *ethnicity*, a linguistic identity, with *denization*, a political identity:

"'Hungarian' has a state-political and territorial meaning, referring in the pre-1918 context to the multinational Kingdom of Hungary, 'Historical Hungary', which comprised all peoples and nationalities of the old Hungarian State. 'Magyar' on the other hand has a more specific ethno-national and linguistic meaning, referring to both the dominant group of 'ethnic Hungarians' and their language. In the Magyar language itself this distinction was usually not made, both denotations being referred to as *magyar*. But the Slovak language distinguished between the territorial-political *uhorský* (Hungarian) and the ethnic *maďarský* (Magyar), as did the German language between *ungarländisch* (Hungarian) and the ethnic *ungarisch*, *magyarisch*, or *madjarisch*."<sup>68</sup>

As van Duin himself concludes, the "conflation of the two concepts lies at the heart of many problems" in modern Hungary, expressing in both ethnic chauvinism at home and demands for Hungarian *autonomism* in its near-abroad.<sup>69</sup> An illustration of the latter is clear in a joint statement from earlier this year issued by Jobbik and the Polish neo-fascist group *Ruch Narodowy* ("National Movement"):

"[W]e jointly call upon our governments to immediately unite their efforts in applying their foreign and national political means to protect the rights of ethnic minorities living in Ukraine, with special regard for the Polish and Hungarian groups. Our movements regard the representation of our national interest as a priority, which, at a time of an escalating crisis in Ukraine, translates into the protection of our brothers and sisters, the constituent parts of our nations living beyond our borders."<sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Also called the Pannonian Basin, its area corresponds generally to the political boundaries of modern Hungary. In Hungarian, it is usually associated with *honfoglalás*, literally, "The Conquest."

<sup>65</sup> See: hunmagyar.org. "The Controversy on the Origins and Early History of the Hungarians." There is no persuasive evidence to support use of the word "majority": genetic evidence only supports a hypothesis that "the earlier migrations of the Magyars may also have contributed to the presence of this lineage in the Carpathian Basin." See: B. Csányi, E. Bogács-Szabó, Gy. Tömöry, Á. Czibula, K. Priskin, A. CsÓsz, B. Mende, P. Langó, K. Csete, A. Zsolnai, E. K. Conant, C. S. Downes, & I. Raskó (2008). "Y-Chromosome Analysis of Ancient Hungarian and Two Modern Hungarian-Speaking Populations from the Carpathian Basin." *Annals of Human Genetics*. 72:4, pp. 519-534.

<sup>66</sup> Patrick J. Geary (2002). *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 39.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Pieter C. van Duin (2009). *Central European Crossroads: Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921*. International Studies in Social History, Volume 14. (New York: Berghahn Books), xi-xii. Maxwell also writes about the distinction in Slovakian between the *mad'ar* and the *úhor* who may speak any language. See: Alexander Maxwell (2004). "Magyarization, language planning, and Whorf: The word *uhor* as a case study in Linguistic Relativism." *Multilingua*. 23:4, 319-337.

<sup>69</sup> As used here, *autonomism* means territorial political autonomy, i.e., "an arrangement aimed at granting a certain degree of self-identification to a group that differs from the majority of the population in the state, and yet constitutes the majority in a specific region." [Ruth Lapidoth (1997). *Autonomy: flexible solutions to ethnic conflicts*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press] *Autonomism* denotes the special political status of a region, populated by a people who differ ethnically or culturally from the majority population. [Jaime Lluich (2011). "Towards a Theory of Autonomism." *URGE-Collegio Carlo Alberto Working Paper* (20 January 2011) p. 7.) The term was coined in 1901 by Simon Dubnow to designate a theory and conception of Jewish nationalism in the Diaspora as a national-cultural entity.

<sup>70</sup> "Polish-Hungarian Joint Statement: Ruch Narodowy and Jobbik Demand Self-Governance for the Indigenous Polish and Hungarian People living in the Ukraine" [3

Nor is this sentiment limited to the far right Jobbik, as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe concluded a few years ago:

"Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, for example, advised ethnic Hungarian citizens of Romania on whether to participate in a recent referendum in that country, while members of the Hungarian Parliament convened a 'national cohesion' committee meeting in neighboring Slovakia. While non-violent, these actions are nonetheless provocative and undercut friendly and good neighborly relations among states. Moreover, this focus on ethnic Hungarians in neighboring states contrasts with the Hungarian Government's own tepid response to anti-Semitism,<sup>71</sup> as well as threats and violence against the Roma within Hungary. To quote the High Commissioner: 'As a guiding principle, States should not be more interested in minorities residing in neighboring States than those residing within their own borders.'"<sup>72</sup>

The High Commissioner may be right in principle, but in practice, other sentiments prevail. Case in point is a demand made in the name of Transylvania's 1.5 million "Diaspora Hungarians" that "the time has come for Hungarian autonomy." According to a statement in late July 2014 by the head of a civic organization<sup>73</sup> that represents ethnic Hungarians in Romania, László Tőkés, "only complete national independence can bring about the revival of the Hungarian community,"<sup>74</sup> a statement all the more remarkable for the fact that Tőkés, a Romanian MEP, is the former vice president of the European Parliament. Other voices in Romania sharply differ with Tőkés: in a vituperative May 2014 editorial published in the Romanian newspaper *Adevărul* under the headline "We are tired of Hungary," Romanian parliamentarian Bogdan Diaconu accused Hungary of unalloyed irredentism, "following Kremlin doctrine" and seeking "to restore the territory of the Austro-Hungary monarchy."<sup>75</sup> Diaconu wrote, "We are tired of Hungary and its elected Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, the savior of the Hungarian nation, who in his first speech to Parliament said it was Hungary's 'right' to control territories in neighboring countries and to give orders other nations." He continued:

"We are tired of Hungary which agitates incessantly for the European Union to deal with the Hungarian minority; the Council of Europe to address Hungarian minority; the European Council to deal with the Hungarian minority; the European Commission to deal with the Hungarian minority; the European Parliament deal of the Hungarian minority; the United States to deal with the Hungarian minority; Russia to deal with the Hungarian minority; Romania to deal with the Hungarian minority; Ukraine to deal with the Hungarian minority; Slovakia to deal with the Hungarian minority; Serbia to deal with the Hungarian minority; Turkey to deal with the Hungarian minority; the Dalai Lama to deal with Hungarian minority...The whole universe must deal with the Hungarian minority and its imaginary problems."<sup>76</sup>

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February 2014]. [http://www.jobbik.com/polish-hungarian\\_joint\\_statement\\_ruch\\_narodowy\\_and\\_jobbik\\_demand\\_self-governance\\_indigenous\\_polish](http://www.jobbik.com/polish-hungarian_joint_statement_ruch_narodowy_and_jobbik_demand_self-governance_indigenous_polish). Last accessed 28 August 2014.

<sup>71</sup> For an excellent overview of the problem, see: "Seven Statements About the Nature of Anti-Semitism in Hungary. An Analysis by Political Capital Institute" (7 August 2014). [http://deconspirator.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/pc\\_seven\\_statements\\_20140807.pdf](http://deconspirator.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/pc_seven_statements_20140807.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> Nida Gelazis (2012). "Statement delivered to Working Session 13- Rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including: Preventing aggressive nationalism and racism and chauvinism." Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw, 2 October 2012. [http://osce.usmission.gov/oct\\_2\\_12\\_ws13.html](http://osce.usmission.gov/oct_2_12_ws13.html). Last accessed 28 August 2014.

<sup>73</sup> The Hungarian National Council of Transylvania [Hungarian: *Erdélyi Magyar Nemzeti Tanács (EMNT)*. Romanian: *Consiliul Național al Maghiarilor din Transilvania (CNMT)*].

<sup>74</sup> "Лидер венгров Трансильвании потребовал "тотальной национальной независимости" от Румынии" [The leader of Transylvania's Hungarians demands 'total national independence' from Romania.]. *IIA REGNUM* [online edition, 29 July 2014]. <http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1830318.html>. Last accessed 7 September 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Bogdan Diaconu (2014). "Ne-am săturat de Ungaria." *Adevărul* [online edition, 27 July 2014]. Citește mai mult: [adev.ro/n9d56z http://adevarul.ro/news/politica/ne-am-saturat-ungaria-1\\_53d4b8020d133766a8c66b32/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/news/politica/ne-am-saturat-ungaria-1_53d4b8020d133766a8c66b32/index.html). Last accessed 5 September 2014.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* The full quote reads in the original Romanian: "Ne-am săturat de Ungaria care se agită fără oprire ca UE să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Consiliul Europei să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Consiliul European să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Comisia Europeană să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Parlamentul European să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, SUA să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Rusia să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Guvernul României să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Guvernul Ucrainei să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Guvernul Slovaciei să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Guvernul Serbiei să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară, Turcia să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară (Vona Gabor a vizitat și Turcia unde le-a vorbit „fraților și surorilor” popoului maghiar, care, întâmplător, a fost ocupat de Imperiul Otoman, dar istoria se rescrie), Dalai Lama să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară (Tőkés a vrut să-l aducă în Transilvania să-i arate minoritatea maghiară care suferă la fel ca poporul tibetan, iar europarlamentarul UDMR Sögor Csaba chiar s-a întâlnit cu Dalai Lama în 2010 și l-a salutat "în numele maghiarilor transilvăneni"), vorbind la comun despre drepturile minorităților tibetană și maghiară)...Universul întreg trebuie să se ocupe de minoritatea maghiară și de problemele ei închipuite."

## THE POLITICS OF BAD SCIENCE & GENETIC IDENTITY IN MODERN HUNGARY

Ethnicity, like race, is a social construct: nearly all geneticists reject the idea that biological differences underly racial and ethnic distinctions.<sup>77</sup> The term itself often functions as a racialized euphemism rather than as a conceptual break from treating social identities as biological categories.<sup>78</sup> While there are measurable biologic correlates of ancestry, there is no objective physiologic or anatomic mark of race or ethnicity. As one study notes, self-designation is the "gold standard"<sup>79</sup> for assessing ethnicity and race, which are more properly descriptors of identity.<sup>80</sup>

Political exigencies aside, human populations in Hungary and elsewhere are seldom demarcated by precise genetic boundaries. Substantial overlap occurs between groups, invalidating the concept that populations are discrete types.<sup>81</sup> So while ancestral inference may be useful in genealogical studies, it should not be treated as probative of ethnicity or race. With that in mind, consider the following:

"In the second half of the 20th century a new science, the science of genetics, began to be used in the quest to find out more about the question who were the ancestors of the Hungarians, and in particular, who were the peoples that gave birth to a nation that began to emerge a millennium ago in the Hungarian homeland."<sup>82</sup>

For its political expression, consider the comments of Jobbik MEP Csanád Szegedi after meeting the Kazakh ambassador.<sup>83</sup>

"[I]n the past centuries we have become accustomed our encirclement by hostile nations. We were annihilated out between a large Slavic and Germanic (sic) sea of which our internal enemies took cruel advantage. Now is the historical moment has come, to renew in the 21st century the natural covenant of our ancestors, the Scythians, Huns and Avars. A new and greater Turanian covenant is being created here today, and it will invigorate the Hungarian national consciousness, that we are not alone."<sup>84</sup>

The referenced *covenant* is of course the Covenant of Blood of Etelköz. What, then, is the "Turanian" reference? The person to whom Szegedi alludes in his prologue [see: fn(83)] is András Zsolt Bíró, an anthropologist and human biologist. Bíró claimed to discover genetic evidence that the Hungarians' closest relatives are a tribe called the Torgaji<sup>85</sup> *madiar* or *madjar*, in modern day Kazakhstan. According to Bíró, "We gathered Y-chromosomes from 40 nations and found that Hungarians, through paternal lineage, have 'blood ties' with the 'madjar' tribe of Kazakhstan." Thus, "modern Hungarians may trace their ancestry to Central Asia, instead of the Eastern Uralic

<sup>77</sup> Morris W. Foster & Richard R. Sharp (2002). "Race, Ethnicity, and Genomics: Social Classifications as Proxies of Biological Heterogeneity." *Genome Research*. 2002:12, p. 844.

<sup>78</sup> Foster & Sharp (2002), p. 845.

<sup>79</sup> Jay S. Kaufman (1999). "How inconsistencies in racial classification demystify the race construct in public health statistics." *Epidemiology*. 1999:10, pp. 101–3. Foster and Sharp [(2002), p. 845] write, "[T]he use of racial and ethnic classifications as a proxy for genetic heterogeneity [is] paradoxical: On the one hand, the use of these social identities can be critical for assembling biologically diverse genomic resources; on the other hand, using these social categories in the construction of genomic re- sources indicates a substantive biological significance that racial and ethnic classifications do not necessarily possess."

<sup>80</sup> Jay S. Kaufman (2001). "Commentary: Considerations for Use of Racial/Ethnic Classification in Etiologic Research." *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 154:4, p. 292. <http://aje.oxfordjournals.org/content/154/4/291.full.pdf+html>. Last accessed 5 September 2014.

<sup>81</sup> Lynn B Jorde & Stephen P Wooding (2004). "Genetic variation, classification and 'race'." *Nature Genetics*. 36, pp. S28-S33.

<http://www.nature.com/ng/journal/v36/n11s/full/ng1435.html>. Last accessed 2 September 2014.

<sup>82</sup> Nándor Dreisziger (2011). "Genetic Research and Hungarian 'Deep Ancestry'." *AHEA: E-Journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association*. 4, p. 1. The author notes that Dreisziger goes to great length to dissect and debunk several studies purporting to explain Hungarian ethnogenesis.

<sup>83</sup> Regarding Kazakhstan, Szegedi premised his remarks by stating "Our kinship with the Kazakhs is not only believed but is proved. Under the direction of the anthropologist András Zsolt Bíró, the existence of a genetic relationship was confirmed earlier this year." [Original German transcription: "Unsere Verwandtschaft mit den Kasachen ist nicht nur angenommen, sondern bewiesen. Unter der Leitung des Anthropologen András Zsolt Bíró... wurde diese Verwandtschaft dieses Jahr auch genetisch bewiesen."]

<sup>84</sup> From the original transcription in German. See: "Ungarische Außenpolitik à la Jobbik: Ab nach Kasachstan!" [1 October 2009].

<http://pusztaranger.wordpress.com/2009/10/01/ungarische-ausenpolitik-a-la-jobbik-ab-nach-kasachstan/>. Last accessed 28 August 2014. The complete quote reads in the original German: "[I]n den vergangenen Jahrhunderten haben wir uns daran gewöhnt, dass wir von feindlichen Völkern umgeben sind. Wir wurden aufgerieben zwischen einem großen slawischen und germanischen (sic) Meer, was unsere inneren Feinde\* immer grausam ausgenutzt haben. Jetzt ist der historische Augenblick gekommen, den natürlichen Bund, den unsere Ahnen, die Skythen, Hunnen und Avarer bildeten, im 21. Jahrhundert neu zu schließen. Ein neuer, großer turanischer\* Bund ist hier im Entstehen, und es wird sich stärkend auf das ungarische Nationalbewußtsein auswirken, dass wir nicht alleine sind."

<sup>85</sup> Torgaj [Kazakh: Торгай. Kazakh transl.: *Torgaj*. Russian Typraï. Russian transl.: *Turgaj*] is taken from the name of a river in western Kazakhstan's Akt'ubinská oblast (Kazakh: Ақтобе облысы. Russian Актюбинская область).

region as previously thought."<sup>86</sup>

One implication of Bíró's assertion is of course that *Magyar*-ness does not relate to where one was born, or to whether one speaks the language or adheres to a given set of beliefs.<sup>87</sup> Rather, it is that Hungarians are fundamentally different from surrounding peoples, and one's *Magyar*-ness can be objectively determined through genetic testing.<sup>88</sup> This is a highly challengeable assertion: the weight of the evidence is that "the original Magyar genetic contributions have become very diluted over the centuries due in large part to intermarriage with European tribes. This means that the modern Hungarian people are only somewhat descended from the ancient Magyars whose language they speak." Another critique of Bíró's study goes further:

"The y-DNA tests done on Madijar men indicate that they are so distant genetically from Hungarians that any relationship between the two peoples is inconceivable. Crudely put, the argument used by Bíró and company sounds like this: the Madijars are genetically extremely distant from all other populations, and they are very distant from Hungarians: therefore they must be the closest relatives of Hungarians."<sup>89</sup>

While there are "some Hungarian villages where the inhabitants possess small frequencies of Y-DNA haplogroups from Central Asia and Northern Asia," Hungarians' ancestral components (calculated that in terms of regional origins) are predominantly (83.1%) Atlantic-European.<sup>90</sup>

Dreisziger asks rhetorically: "how did the Hungarian nation get stuck with the argument that all the Magyars' ancestors arrived in the Carpathian Basin at one time, at the end of the 9th century?" It is, he writes, a myth "propagated by members of the Árpadian ruling house of Hungary who ruled the country for four centuries—and, in fact, Hungary's elite subscribed to this myth throughout a millennium of history." It was a counter-ideology against both Western-oriented depictions of Hungarian historiography generally, and the ascendant Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism of the period specifically.<sup>91</sup>

"Old myths rarely die, or die very slowly,"<sup>92</sup> Dreisziger concludes, and nowhere more so than Hungary's Jobbik. It advocates the mythical idea of *Turanizmus* ("Turanism"<sup>93</sup>), a movement that reached prominence as a political movement in the post-Trianon Hungary of the 1920s and 1930s promising to return Hungary to its supposed Eastern roots.<sup>94</sup> Associated with a virulently anti-Semitic<sup>95</sup> nationalism, Turanism provided the foundation for the

<sup>86</sup> A. Z. Bíró, A. Zalán, A. Völgyi, and H. Pamjav (200). "A Y-chromosomal comparison of the Madjars (Kazakhstan) and the Magyars (Hungary)." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*. 139:3 (July 2009), pp. 305-310. Bíró's findings are at odds with, for example, more credible findings such as those published a year earlier by Csányi, et al., which indicates "modern Hungarian and Szekler [author's note: a Hungarian subgroup found in concentrations in modern Romania's Transylvania region] populations are genetically closely related, and similar to populations from Central Europe and the Balkans."

<sup>87</sup> In November 2012, Jobbik MP Márton Gyöngyösi "stated that he knew the approximate number of Israeli Jews living in Hungary, and he said that it was time to assess how many of them are in the Hungarian National Assembly and in the government, posing a national security risk to Hungary." See: "Jobbik: No Israelis in the Hungarian Parliament!" *jobbik.com* [29 November 2012]. [http://www.jobbik.com/jobbik\\_no\\_israelis\\_hungarian\\_parliament](http://www.jobbik.com/jobbik_no_israelis_hungarian_parliament). Last accessed 1 September 2014.

<sup>88</sup> In June 2012, a genetic testing company based at Budapest's Eötvös Loránd University, Nagy Gén Diagnostic and Research, was sharply criticized for providing a certificate to an unnamed Jobbik MP that he was "free of Jewish and Roma" genes. See: Alison Abbot (2012). "Genome test slammed for assessing 'racial purity.'" Hungarian far-right politician certified as 'free of Jewish and Roma' genes." *Nature* [online edition, June 12 2012]. <http://www.nature.com/news/genome-test-slammed-for-assessing-racial-purity-1.10809>. Last accessed 1 September 2014.

<sup>89</sup> Dreisziger (2011), p. 3. He offers an extended debunking of Bíró's study: "[I]n the 1960s a physical anthropologist by the name of T. Tóth, on a visit to the Soviet Union, 'discovered' a clan in Kazakhstan called the Madijars and concluded that these people were Magyars. Decades later another Hungarian traveller, M. Benkő, visited the region and again declared this clan a relative of the Hungarian nation. Following this, Bíró and his team went to visit the Madijars and were greeted enthusiastically as long-lost relatives. Bálint points out that Bíró and his associates referred to this clan not by their real name, Madijars, but by a name they gave them: *Madjars*. Bíró and the members of his team managed to obtain y-DNA samples from a group of Madijar men and eventually compared the results with the y-DNA of another rather small group of Hungarian men. To make a long story short, Bíró and his associates came up with the conclusion that genetic evidence also supported their conclusion about the relatedness of Madijars and Magyars."

<sup>90</sup> "Hungarian Genetics: Abstracts and Summaries." The American Center of Khazar Studies. <http://www.khazaria.com/genetics/hungarians.html>. Last accessed 2 September 2014.

<sup>91</sup> Emel Akçah & Umut Korkut (2012). "Geographical. Metanarratives in East-Central Europe: Neo-Turanism in Hungary." *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. 53:5, p. 602.

<sup>92</sup> Dreisziger (2011), p. 7.

<sup>93</sup> "Although not precisely defined, Turán is the Persian name given for Central Asia, the land of the Tür. It is also an imaginary region, and thus a political term, developed by nationalist Turkish and Hungarian circles at the beginning of the 20th century." Jobbik formally embraced Turanism in December 2010. See: Akçah & Korkut (2012), fn(9) on p. 600.

<sup>94</sup> An excellent study of the development of Turanism is Michael Kneuppel (2006). "Zur Ungarischen Rezeption der sumerisch-turanischen Hypothese in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts." *Zeitschrift fuer Balkanologie*. <http://www.zeitschrift-fuer-balkanologie.de/index.php/zfb/article/view/76>. Last accessed 5 September 2014.

<sup>95</sup> Despite the fact that Turanism was introduced to the Hungarian public by a Jewish orientalist, Ármin Vámbéry, through the journal *Turan*.



pursuit of political and economic benefits beyond the Hungarian borders, not unlike German conceptions of *Lebensraum*.

"To have a national identity is to possess ways of talking about nationhood," wrote Michael Billig.<sup>96</sup> Jobbik's way is version of Turanism that exemplifies "various elements of far-right delusions of grandeur: hostility to Europe, arrogance and self-pity."<sup>97</sup> Neo-Turanism à la Jobbik is perhaps best summarized by the lyrics of the song "I Am a Hungarian" by the "nationalist rock" band, Hungarica:

"I am a Hungarian, proud scion of the Hunnish, Avarian bow-stretching Scythians. I know that when hordes of barbarians were butchering one another on the ruins of Rome and the plague was raging, this was long the kingdom of God. Don't tell me that my past stinks of fish<sup>98</sup> and that I have stolen words from here and there. What matters is the soul. The Middle Ages were dark elsewhere, and it wasn't here that Galilei was sent to the stake."

The reemergence of Turanism is interesting for the fact that "more than a generation grew up without knowing about Turanism in Hungary because it was forbidden in the communist era."<sup>99</sup> Its potency lies in the fact that it is a bottom-up political movement reflecting disillusionment with Hungary's "return to Europe,"<sup>100</sup> a sentiment well summarized by Jobbik deputy parliamentary leader, Márton Gyöngyösi:

"We have always been outsiders in Europe...For us, Turanism is a way to realize that we are not alone. We are in a huge cultural Turan family. We this need to find the deep interconnectedness between our nations and this gives us something like a 'spiritual resurrection'...After 50 years [of suppression], there is now a huge demand in Hungary for [tracing] the roots."<sup>101</sup>

## EURASIANISM IS NOT FOR RUSSIA ALONE

*"Central Europe is always at risk of being a product of someone else's imagination."*<sup>102</sup>  
-Tony Judt

Prior to Aleksandr Gelyevich Dugin and his *Eurasia* (Russian: *Евразия*) movement gaining attention in the West, *Eurasianism* enjoyed "a rich ideological heritage unknown to those who cannot read Russian."<sup>103</sup> Its modern iteration has two main conceptual underpinnings: the first, advanced by Prince Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoi in the 1920s is that the ethnic nationalism should be combined with pan-Eurasian nationalism; and the second, advanced by the Russian geographer Petr Savitsky<sup>104</sup> also in the 1920s, is the image of a Eurasia in which ethnic groups through a genetic mutation-like process<sup>105</sup> evolve into a unique geopolitical unit, one he called an "assembly of nationalities and religions."<sup>106</sup> For *Russkiy mir*<sup>107</sup> neo-Eurasianists like Dugin and his fellow

<sup>96</sup> Michael Billig (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. (London: Sage Publishers), p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> Krisztián Ungváry (2012). "Turanism: the 'new' ideology of the far right." *The Budapest Times* [online edition, 5 February 2012]. <http://budapesttimes.hu/2012/02/05/turanism-the-new-ideology-of-the-far-right/>. Last accessed 5 September 2014.

<sup>98</sup> A tenet of Turanism is the refusal to accept the Finno-Ugric origin of the Hungarian language, described colloquially as a "kinship smelling of fish."

<sup>99</sup> Akçah & Korkut (2012), p. 609.

<sup>100</sup> For example, "two out of three Hungarians—in contrast to citizens of the other three Visegrad countries—take the view that there are more disadvantages to life today than there were under the dictatorial regime before 1989. In contrast, seven out of ten Czechs, six out of ten Poles, and 53 per cent of Slovaks think that there are more advantages to life under democratic rule in 2009." See: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/press-room/return-to-europe>. Last accessed 5 September 2014.

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Akçah & Korkut (2012), p. 609.

<sup>102</sup> Tony Judt (1990) "The rediscovery of Central Europe." *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*. 119: 1, pp. 23-54. The quoted text appears on p. 48.

<sup>103</sup> Fr. Matthew Raphael Johnson, Ph.D. (2014). "Russian Nationalism and Euranism." *Geopolitika* [English language online edition, 25 June 2014]. <http://www.geopolitika.ru/en/article/russian-nationalism-and-eurasianism#.VAikl0u4n8s>. Last accessed 4 September 2014.

<sup>104</sup> In George Vladimirovich Vernadsky (1927). *Outline of Russian History. Part One*. (Prague: Evraziiskoe Knigoizdatelstvo), pp. 234-260. Vernadsky, for example, self-identified with a dual Russian-Ukrainian identity, and found the notion of Ukrainian separatism counterproductive [Igor Toborov (2008). "Rethinking the Nation: Imperial Collapse, Eurasianism, and George Vernadsky's Historical Scholarship." *Kennan Institute Occasional Papers*. (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars), pp. 5-6.]

<sup>105</sup> Savitsky's actual term was генетическая мутация (Russian transl.: *geneticheskaya mutatsiya*).

<sup>106</sup> The author credits the summarization of Savitsky's writing in Milan Hauner (1989). *What Is Asia To Us? Russia's Asian Heartland Yesterday and Today*. (New York: Routledge).

<sup>107</sup> In English, "Russian world" [Russian: русский мир]. The Russian World Foundation website is <http://www.russkiymir.ru>.

*Georgievskaya*<sup>108</sup> ideologues, "the 'other' is the 'West'."<sup>109</sup>

Notions of Eurasian geographical integration are not novel: in 1904, British geographer Halford Mackinder described the potential geographical power of controlling the Eurasia, a territory he called the *Pivot Area*<sup>110</sup> (and later renamed the *Heartland*<sup>111</sup>). Some years later Mackinder summarized of his pivot theory with this *senryū*:

"Who rules East Europe<sup>112</sup> commands the Heartland.  
Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island.  
Who rules the World-Island controls the world."<sup>113</sup>

Mackinder stipulated that the Eurasian Heartland started on the eastern frontier of Germany, from which an invader could establish a foothold to enter the Eurasian interior.<sup>114</sup> This led Mackinder after World War I to advocate a Central European buffer zone comprised of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary,<sup>115</sup> a construct reflected in today's Visegrád Group.<sup>116</sup>

There have been many variations on Mackinder's idea—Yves Lacoste's *troisième ensemble géopolitique*; Walther Penck's *Zwischeneuropa*; Michel Korinman's *l'europe médiane*—all describing a buffer region between the Baltic and the Black Seas. Common to them is the idea of a tripartite Europe that includes Russia. Three spatial elements reemerged from the Soviet Union's disintegration—Central Europe, Central Caucasus, and Central Asia—along with the Russian Federation as a fourth. Thus for Central Europe and Russia, Ukraine became an immediate focus of the geopolitical debate: as Zbigniew Brzezinski concluded, "Ukraine's loss of independence would have immediate consequences for Central Europe, transforming Poland into the geopolitical pivot on the eastern frontier of a united Europe."<sup>117</sup>

Marlène Laruelle divides neo-Eurasianism into three main trends. The first trend is associated with Dugin and his *Georgievskaya* and advocates the greatest expansionism. The second places greater emphasis on culture and folklore, and a Slavic-Turkic alliance; and the third defends Eurasianism as a special form of statehood that excludes the cult of nation and promotes diversity.<sup>118</sup>

The Eurasianist journal *Geopolitika* concludes an interview with Jobbik's Gábor Vona, "If one looks into the Hungarian identity, one finds there the Eurasian roots of the nation."<sup>119</sup> Vona himself writes elsewhere that while

<sup>108</sup> In English, "St. George" [Russian: Георгиевская].

<sup>109</sup> Johnson (2014). *Op cit.*

<sup>110</sup> Sir Halford J. Mackinder (1904). "The Geographical Pivot of History." *Geographical Journal*, XXIII:4 (April 1904), pp. 421-444.

<http://intersci.ss.uci.edu/wiki/eBooks/Articles/1904%20HEARTLAND%20THEORY%20HALFORD%20MACKINDER.pdf>. Last accessed 4 September 2014.

<sup>111</sup> Sir Halford J. Mackinder (1919; 1942). *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press).

<sup>112</sup> Mackinder included here the Baltic states, Poland Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia.

<sup>113</sup> Mackinder (1919; 1942), p. 106

<sup>114</sup> Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya (2007). "The 'Great Game': Eurasia and the History of War." *Global Research* [online edition, 3 December 2007].

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-great-game-eurasia-and-the-history-of-war/7064?print=1>. Last accessed 4 September 2014. Mackinder's thinking is reflected clearly in post-war containment theory. As Tristan Hunt writes, "When the architect of American postwar anti-Soviet strategy, diplomat George Kennan, argued that 'our problem is to prevent the gathering together of the military-industrial potential of the entire Eurasian landmass under a single power threatening the interests of the insular and mainland portions of the globe,' it was pure Mackinder." See: "A very foreign policy." *The Guardian* [online edition, 24 September 2009]. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/sep/24/obama-missile-europe-foreign-policy>. Last accessed 4 September 2014.

<sup>115</sup> At the time, the time the buffer was intended to prevent another German *Drang nach Osten* ("drive to the East") or *Ostbewegung* ("eastward movement") toward Russia. See: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/news/putin-medvedev-send>. Last accessed 4 September 2014. The late Hungarian historian Jenő Szűcs called this region "Central-Eastern Europe." See: Szűcs (1983). *The three historical regions of Europe: an outline*. Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>116</sup> As an interesting side note, Russian President Putin's 2013 birthday greeting to Orbán highlighted the latter's "immense contribution to strengthening friendly relations between Hungary and Russia...The Russian leader said he trusted that successful cooperation and a constructive dialogue with the Hungarian premier would endure."

<sup>117</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski (1997). *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. (New York: Basic Books), p. 46. The extended passage reads: "Ukraine, a new and important space on the Eurasian chessboard, is a geopolitical pivot because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire...However, if Moscow regains control over Ukraine, with its 52 million people and major resources as well as its access to the Black Sea, Russia automatically again regains the wherewithal to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia. Ukraine's loss of independence would have immediate consequences for Central Europe, transforming Poland into the geopolitical pivot on the eastern frontier of a united Europe."

<sup>118</sup> Marlène Laruelle (2000). "Pereosmyslenie imperii v postsovetskom prostranstve: novaia evraziyskaia ideologiya." *Vestnik Evrazii*. 8:1, pp. 5-18. Republished in: Laruelle (2009). *Forum noveyshey vostochnoyevropeyskoy istorii i kul'tury*. 1 (2009), pp. 78-92. <http://www1.ku-eichstaett.de/ZIMOS/forum/docs/forumruss11/4Laruelle.pdf>. Last accessed 4 September 2014. Cited in Eldar Ismailov & Vladimer Papava (2010). "Eurasianism and the Concept of Central Caucasus-Asia." *Rethinking Central Eurasia*. (Washington, D.C.: The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute), p. 30.

<sup>119</sup> The quoted text reads in the original Russian: Если мы посмотрим внутри венгерской идентичности, мы там обнаружим евразийские корни. See: "Габор Вона: евроатлантизм должен быть заменен на евразийство." *Geonoumuka* [online edition, 29 April 2013]. <http://www.geopolitica.ru/article/gabor-vona->

"Eurasianism was born as a uniquely Russian concept, it is not for Russia alone." Without explaining why, he continues, "The reality is that the establishment of a truly supranational traditionalist framework can only come from the East."<sup>120</sup> Vona's language reflects a strong belief that Hungary, to borrow a phrase from Ukrainian political and cultural analyst Mykola Riabchuk, "is a natural part of some primordial Russian-Eurasian space."<sup>121</sup> He offered the following in a November 2013 lecture in Istanbul:

"[W]e need to be able to integrate the essence of the European as well as the Asian mentality. The practical European and the profound Eastern approach need to shape us together. I can see three nations, countries that may be able to do so. The two great powers of Eurasia, Russia and Turkey, and my own homeland, Hungary. These three nations are European and Asian at the same time, due to their history, fate and disposition. These nations are destined to present the Eurasian alternative."<sup>122</sup>

Riabchuk wrote that "external actors often play an important role" in socially and historically constructed identities, a thought the late historian Tony Judt applied to Central Europe:

"There is a Central European fantasy of a never-ending Europe of tolerance, freedom, and cultural pluralism. It is held to be all the more firmly implanted in the consciousness of Czechs and Hungarians, for example, for want of the reality. But whereas for Central Europeans this fantasy has served perhaps as a necessary myth, it is odd to see it reflected in Western fantasies about Central Europe, the geographic expression."<sup>123</sup>

Vladimir Putin proposed one basis for Vona's sought *integration*— the Eurasian Union:

"[N]one of this entails any kind of revival of the Soviet Union. It would be naïve to try to revive or emulate something that has been consigned to history. But these times call for close integration based on new values and a new political and economic foundation. We suggest a powerful supranational association capable of becoming one of the poles in the modern world and serving as an efficient bridge between Europe and the dynamic Asia-Pacific region."<sup>124</sup>

Russian historian and political analyst Vladimir Ryzhkov concludes, "Russia no longer considers itself part of European, and especially, Euro-Atlantic civilization."<sup>125</sup> That being said, the status of Ukraine is central to Russia's ability to execute the Doctrine: as Janusz Bugajski aptly summarized, "with control over Ukraine, Moscow could project its influence into Central Europe; without Ukraine, the planned Eurasian bloc would become a largely Asian construct."<sup>126</sup>

The hegemonic goal, as Mr. Putin wrote, is to "defin[e] the rules of the game and determine the contours of the future." Here, it is important to distinguish Russian national interests from Russia's state ambitions. While the NATO accession of Russia's neighboring states does not challenge Russian national security per se, it does challenge Russia's ability to control their security and foreign policy orientation.

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evroatlantizm-dolzen-byt-zamenen-na-evraziystvo#.UZtcIKA4iN. Last accessed 4 September 2014.

<sup>120</sup> Gábor Vona (2014). "Some Thoughts on the Creation of Intellectual Eurasianism." *Journal of Eurasian Affairs*. 2:1. <http://www.eurasianaffairs.net/some-thoughts-on-the-creation-of-intellectual-eurasianism/>. Last accessed 4 September 2014.

<sup>121</sup> Mykola Riabchuk (2011). "Western 'Eurasianism' and the 'New Eastern Europe': Discourse of Exclusion." <http://www.postcolonial-europe.eu/en/essays/116-western-eurasianism-and-the-new-eastern-europe-discourse-of-exclusion.html>. Last accessed 4 September 2014.

<sup>122</sup> "Vona Gábor: az eurázsiai jövő alapja a tradíció." *Alfahir.com* [online edition, 31 October 2013]. [http://alfahir.hu/vona\\_gabor\\_az\\_eurazsiai\\_jovo\\_alapja\\_a\\_tradicio](http://alfahir.hu/vona_gabor_az_eurazsiai_jovo_alapja_a_tradicio). Last accessed 30 August 2013. The paragraph reads in the original Hungarian: "Ahhoz, hogy egy ilyen értékrendet és stratégiát fel tudjunk építeni, ahhoz az kell, hogy egyszerre tudjuk hordozni mind az európai, mind az ázsiai szemlélet lényegét. Az európai gyakorlatiasság és a keleti elmélyültség együtt kell, hogy munkáljon bennünk. Három olyan népet, országot látok, amely erre alkalmas lehet. A két eurázsiai nagyhatalmat, Oroszországot és Törökországot, valamint a saját hazámat, Magyarországot. Ez az a három népet, sorsa és adottságai alapján egyszerre európai is és ázsiai is. Az eurázsiai alternatívát ezért ezeknek a népeknek kell megfogalmaznia."

<sup>123</sup> Tony Judt (1990) "The rediscovery of Central Europe." *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*. 119: 1, pp. 23-54. The quoted text appears on p. 48.

<sup>124</sup> Prime Minister Vladimir Putin (2011). "A new integration project for Eurasia: The future in the making." *Izvestia* [online edition, 3 October 2011]. <http://www.russianmission.eu/en/news/article-prime-minister-vladimir-putin-new-integration-project-eurasia-future-making-izvestia-3->. Last accessed 6 September 2014.

<sup>125</sup> Vladimir Ryzhkov (2014). "Бои без правил, или Новая доктрина Кремля" ("Fighting without rules: the new Kremlin doctrine."). *Эхо Москвы* [online edition, 2 April 2014]. <http://www.echo.msk.ru/blog/rizhkov/1292700-echo/>. Last accessed 8 September 2014. The quoted text reads in the original Russian: "Россия не рассматривает больше себя как часть европейской, и, тем более, евроатлантической цивилизации. Россия — демократия, но особого рода."

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

Russia's approach in the case of Hungary and other states where this is the case was characterized in one analysis as "Facing East All Across Europe,"<sup>127</sup> involving what Mr. Putin called the "active measures"<sup>128</sup> of his Eurasian Doctrine: political support for "friendly" political parties and organizations, especially in Eastern and Central Europe.

"While its goals are imperial, the Kremlin's strategies are pragmatic and flexible; they have included enticements, threats, incentives and pressures. By claiming it is pursuing "pragmatic" national interests, the Kremlin engages in asymmetrical offensives by interfering in neighbors' affairs, capturing important sectors of local economies, subverting vulnerable political systems, corrupting national leaders, penetrating key security institutions and undermining national unity."<sup>129</sup>

For Hungary, that means Jobbik. Speaking in Moscow in May 2013 at Dugin's invitation, Vona called the European Union "a treacherous organization" and declared it would be better for Hungary to join the Eurasian Union should occasion arise. In March 2014, Jobbik MEP Béla Kovács accepted the invitation of the Eurasian Observatory for Democracy & Elections<sup>130</sup> to act as a "monitor" during the Match 2014 referendum in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. And in June 2014, Vona and Kovács held talks in Moscow with Alexei Zhuravlev, Russian State Duma deputy and chairman of *Rodina* (Motherland)<sup>131</sup> on the matter of "support for Hungarian-Ruthenian autonomy in Transcarpathia."<sup>132</sup>

Next month, Jobbik will attend the "Russian National Forum" in St. Petersburg organized by the Intelligent Design Bureau.<sup>133</sup> The Forum's declared mission is "to establish a movement that unites nationally-oriented forces in Europe, and to establish a permanent platform for discussion and decision-making on issues regarding the interaction of national conservative forces."<sup>134</sup> Its objective is "The formation of a new united national doctrine for Russia and Europe,"<sup>135</sup> and a main topic of the Forum will be "cultural unity as the fundamental factor in the formation of national space."<sup>136</sup>

## THE RISKS AHEAD

*"Hungary is the westernmost Turanic country, a link between East and West."*<sup>137</sup>

-Gábor Vona

Viktor Orbán is undoubtedly a skilled politician and has been adept at playing a weak hand.<sup>138</sup> As Peter Kreko

<sup>127</sup> Political Capital Institute (2014). *The Russian Connection: An analysis by the Political Capital Institute* (14 March 2014). (Budapest: Political Capital Policy Research and Consulting Institute), p. 4. [http://www.riskandforecast.com/useruploads/files/pc\\_flash\\_report\\_russian\\_connection.pdf](http://www.riskandforecast.com/useruploads/files/pc_flash_report_russian_connection.pdf). Last accessed 5 September 2014.

<sup>128</sup> Russian: активные мероприятия. Russian transl.: *aktivnyye meropriyatiya*.

<sup>129</sup> Janusz Bugajski (2014). "Confronting the Putin Doctrine." *Hungarian Review* [online edition, 14 May 2014].

[http://www.hungarianreview.com/article/20140514\\_confronting\\_the\\_putin\\_doctrine](http://www.hungarianreview.com/article/20140514_confronting_the_putin_doctrine). Last accessed 5 September 2014.

<sup>130</sup> The EODE is a Brussels-based non-governmental organization operated by two Belgian neo-fascists with an office in Moscow. EODE claims that it "practices a 'non-aligned monitoring'" and is "specialized the 'self-declared republics' (Abkhazia, Transdnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh), where it conducted missions and audit, among others for the 2006 referendum in Transdnistria." [sic] See: <https://web.archive.org/web/20140322080214/http://www.eode.org/eode-press-office-sabotage-and-restrictions-the-referendum-on-self-determination-of-the-republic-of-crimea-upsets/>. Last accessed 8 September 2014.

<sup>131</sup> Formally, "Motherland- the People's Patriotic Union" (Russian: Родина-Народно-Патриотический Союз. Russian transl.: *Rodina-Narodno-Patrioticheskij Soyuz*) a/k/a Rodina.

<sup>132</sup> "Jobbik vies for Russia's support for autonomy in Eastern Ukraine." *Politics.hu* [online edition, 19 June 2014]. <http://www.politics.hu/20140619/jobbik-vies-for-russias-support-for-autonomy-in-east-ukraine/>. Last accessed 8 September 2014.

<sup>133</sup> The Intelligent Design Bureau is headed by Andrey Petrov, who leads the St. Petersburg branch of the Motherland-National Patriotic Union a/k/a Rodina (Russian: РОДИНА), which is led by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin.

<sup>134</sup> See: <http://realpatriot.ru/русский-национальный-форум/>. Last accessed 8 September 2014. The quoted text reads in the original Russian: "Миссия: Учреждение движения по объединению национально ориентированных сил Европы и создание постоянно действующей площадки по обсуждению и выработке решений по вопросам взаимодействия национально-консервативных сил."

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*. The quoted text reads in the original Russian: "Формирование новой объединённой национальной доктрины России и Европы."

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*. The quoted text reads in the original Russian: "Культурное единство как основополагающий фактор формирования национального пространства."

<sup>137</sup> The quoted text is taken from a longer statement by Gábor Vona at Istanbul's Marmara University in November 2013. The full text reads in the original Hungarian:

"Vona előadásában leszögezte, a turáni összefogás egy olyan lehetőség lehet minden vérokon nép számára, amellyel hazánk a legnyugatibb turáni ország lehet és összekötő kapocs Kelet és Nyugat között." See: "A törökök támogatják a székelyek szabadságharcát." *Alfahir.hu* [online edition, 1 November 2013].

[http://alfahir.hu/a\\_torokok\\_tamogatjak\\_a\\_szekelyek\\_szabadsagharcat](http://alfahir.hu/a_torokok_tamogatjak_a_szekelyek_szabadsagharcat). Last accessed 29 August 2014.

<sup>138</sup> A commentator once quipped, "if the current Hungarian government of Viktor Orbán ever entered an international strudel-making competition, it would surely win gold," an allusion to the Hungarian phrase for "dragging one's feet," *nyújtja mint a rétestészát*, the literal meaning of which is the time-consuming process of rolling out the dough to make it very long and thin.

See: Kester Eddy (2012). "Hungary-EU/IMF: a right old strudel." *Financial Times* [online edition, 18 June 2012]. <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2012/06/18/hungary-euimf-a-right-old-strudel/#axzzlyBb4TswR>. Last accessed 1 September 2014.



wrote recently, Orbán “needs European Union money and does not want to leave the EU. But he also wants to send a message to Europe and to the USA, that if they don’t take Hungary seriously, it has another ally: Moscow.”<sup>139</sup> Regarding the plight of the *határon túli magyaroknak*— literally, “Hungarians beyond the border”— even Jobbik concedes armed conflict is no remedy. However, as Orbán stated somewhat enigmatically in late October, if in today’s Europe the key to international relations is acknowledging “there are no boundaries, then the people of Central Europe can no longer be separated from each other.” He added, “Western culture seemed to be shrinking” and “it is not at all certain that what was good elsewhere will be good here and now.”<sup>140</sup> However, if the recent claim by Hungarian opposition parliamentarian Tímea Szabó is correct— “Hungary will soon be the European Union’s poorest country”<sup>141</sup>— then it might be said that Orbán’s approach might not be “good here and now” either. So much for his prediction circa 2011 that “In the next 5-10 years the economic growth of Europe will not be dominated by the old, traditional great European economies, but those of the Central European area laying between the Baltic Sea and the Adriatic Sea.”<sup>142</sup>

The conflict in Ukraine has greatly complicated the position of Hungary, given its geographic position, its virtual complete dependence upon Russian energy, and its position as a member of both the European Union and NATO. Several days ago, the German newspaper *Die Welt* published a fascinating interview with Hungarian Foreign Minister Tibor Navracsics.<sup>143</sup> After disputing that Hungary was pursuing a “seesaw policy” toward Russia— elaborated as “on the one hand condemning Russian aggression toward Ukraine, and on the other rejecting sanctions against Russia”<sup>144</sup>— Navracsics was asked whether Hungary feared “Russian power and ‘European cowardice’? Does Hungary trust the West to protect it against Russia?”<sup>145</sup> While “Hungary had bad experiences from 1945 and 1956 when it came to western solidarity,” Navracsics said, “Personally, I still trust that our NATO and EU membership guarantees proper protection.”

As a Russian commentator noted, “ethnic identity is not the result of blood and culture, so it can quite quickly, by historical standards, change.”<sup>146</sup> Hungary’s Jobbik, sometimes called “the Kremlin’s Trojan horse in Europe,”<sup>147</sup> seems to agree: the theme of the October 2014 “Identitarian Congress”<sup>148</sup> to be held in Budapest will be “The Future of Europe: Perspectives on Geopolitics, Identity, and Nationalism.” As one commentator notes, gatherings such as this “seem to provide the Kremlin with a unique means to exert soft power influence on the European continent.”<sup>149</sup>

Hungary seems, for the moment at least, firmly anchored in the European Union and NATO; however, it would be exceedingly foolish to ignore the many forces exerting political and economic pull on the nation. At the same time, Hungary must heed the frustration heard in of other European capitals and especially its neighboring states,

<sup>139</sup> *The Economist* [19 July 2014], *op cit*.

<sup>140</sup> “Orbán: Szabadságharcos nép a magyar.” *Magyar Hírlap* [online edition, 19 August 2014].

[http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/3028/Orban\\_Szabadsagharcos\\_nep\\_a\\_magyar](http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/3028/Orban_Szabadsagharcos_nep_a_magyar). Last accessed 8 September 2014.

<sup>141</sup> “Együtt-PM: Magyarország az EU legszegényebb állama lesz. Orbán Viktor munkaalapú társadalma nem életképes?” *Magyar Hírlap* [online edition, 19 August 2014]. [http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/3031/EgyuttPM\\_Magyarorszag\\_az\\_EU\\_legszegenyebb\\_allama\\_lesz](http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/3031/EgyuttPM_Magyarorszag_az_EU_legszegenyebb_allama_lesz). Last accessed 8 September 2014. The full quote reads in the original Hungarian: “Az Együtt-PM véleménye szerint Magyarország hamarosan az Európai Unió legszegényebb állama lesz - közölte az Eurostat adataira hivatkozva a szövetség társelnöke.”

<sup>142</sup> “The Visegrád Four: The NATO’s shield against Russia.” *Jövönk.info* [online edition, 31 December 2011]. <http://jovonk.info/2011/12/31/visegrad-four-nato-s-shield-against-russia>. Last accessed 8 September 2014.

<sup>143</sup> “Russland wird sich von Europa abwenden.” *Die Welt* [online edition, 5 September 2014]. [http://www.welt.de/print/die\\_welt/politik/article131924817/Russland-wird-sich-von-Europa-abwenden.html](http://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/politik/article131924817/Russland-wird-sich-von-Europa-abwenden.html). Last accessed 5 September 2014.

<sup>144</sup> The quoted text reads in the original German: “einerseits Russlands Aggression gegen die Ukraine verurteilen, andererseits die Sanktionen gegen Russland ablehnen.”

<sup>145</sup> The quoted text reads in the original German: “Hat Ungarn Angst vor Russlands Macht und Europas Feigheit? Vertrauen Sie dem Westen, Ungarn vor Russland zu schützen?”

<sup>146</sup> “Карпатская геополитика Венгрии: распад украинской государственности дает редкий шанс.” *ИА REGNUM* [online edition, 21 May 2014].

<http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1804662.html#ixzz3Cg4X10bn>. Last accessed 7 September 2014. The quoted text reads in the original Russian: “Этническая идентичность является результатом не крови, а культуры, поэтому может быть довольно быстро, по историческим меркам, изменена.”

<sup>147</sup> To be fair, this tag has been applied to others as well: Russia’s then Ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, in 2008 called Bulgaria “Russia’s Trojan horse in the EU.”

<sup>148</sup> <http://www.npiamerica.org/identitarian-congress>. The “Identitarian Congress” [sic] was organized by the United States-based conservative and white supremacist National Policy Institute (<http://www.npiamerica.org>), a self-described “independent think-tank and publishing firm dedicated to the heritage, identity, and future of European people in the United States and around the world.”

<sup>149</sup> Richard Arnold (2014). “More European Far Right Conferences in Russia.” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* [online edition, 5 September 2014]. . Last accessed 8 September 2014.

to which Bogdan Diaconu gave voice:

"We've had enough of Hungary who always wants more special rights; preferential treatment; control over the Hungarian communities abroad, but most of all the wealth of countries in which they live; which wants a Hungarian state within a state everywhere, on behalf of the superior race they represent."<sup>150</sup>

The great risk is that the confluence of these factors— internal economic pressures, frustration outside Hungary with "the Sirens of atavistic irredentism"<sup>151</sup> within the governing Fidesz–Hungarian Civic Alliance (let alone Jobbik), the continuing conflict in Ukraine and calls for Transcarpathian autonomy— will be exploited by Russia, with the intent of fomenting intra-NATO discord, especially within the Visegrád Group ("NATO's shield against Russia"<sup>152</sup>) and between Hungary and Romania. Consider in conclusion the following quote from a recent assessment of the risk posed by Russian-led Eurasianism:

"Depending on the evolution of the balance of power between Russia and the EU, one should not exclude the possibility of such political actors functioning as 'Trojan horses' on behalf of Russian foreign policy. The prospects for Eurasianism to expand this strategy to political actors within the EU core, remains to be seen in the near future. In all of this, it should be borne in mind that...for the pro-Eurasian 'Trojan horses' from Central and Southeast Europe, Eurasianism seems to be pondering on systemic transformation, or a radical shift in the foreign policy agenda, that would bring the states in question within Russia's sphere of influence...In the case of Hungary, the state of friction between Budapest and Brussels...has been a driving force behind the readjustment of this state's foreign policy towards Moscow."<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Diaconu (2014), *op cit.*

<sup>151</sup> Credit to Theodoros Coulombis.

<sup>152</sup> <http://jovonk.info/2011/12/31/visegrad-four-nato-s-shield-against-russia>

<sup>153</sup> Vassilis Petsinis (2014). "Eurasianism and the Far Right in Central Europe and South East Europe." *Central and East European Review*. 8 (2014).