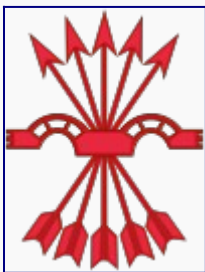


# Falangism

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Falangism



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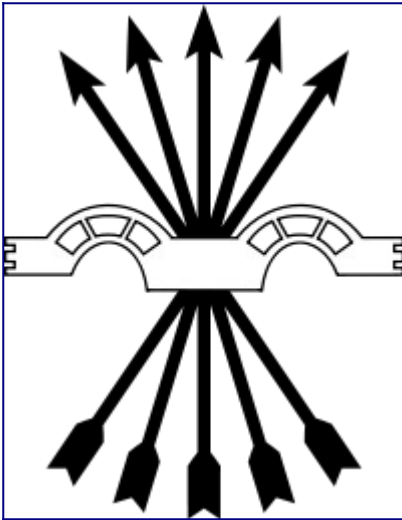
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Logo of the [Falange Española de las JONS](#).

**Falangism** ([Spanish](#): *falangismo*) was the political ideology of the [Falange Española de las JONS](#) and afterwards, of the [Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista](#) (both known simply as the "Falange") as well as derivatives of it in other countries. Under the leadership of [Francisco Franco](#), it largely became an [authoritarian](#), [conservative](#) ideology connected with [Francoist Spain](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

Opponents of Franco's changes to the party included former Falange leader [Manuel Hedilla](#). Falangism places a strong emphasis on [Catholic](#) religious identity, though it has held some secular views on the Church's direct influence in society as it believed that the state should have the supreme authority over the nation.<sup>[2]</sup> Falangism emphasized the need for [total authority](#), [hierarchy](#) and [order](#) in society.<sup>[2]</sup> Like fascism, Falangism is [anti-communist](#), [anti-democratic](#) and [anti-liberal](#);<sup>[3][4]</sup> under Franco, the Falange abandoned its original [anti-capitalist](#) tendencies, declaring the ideology to be fully compatible with [capitalism](#).<sup>[5]</sup>

The Falange's original manifesto, the "Twenty-Seven Points", declared Falangism to support the unity of [Spain](#) and the elimination of regional separatism, the establishment of a [dictatorship](#) led by the Falange, utilizing violence to regenerate Spain, and promoting the revival and development of the [Spanish Empire](#), all attributes that it had in common with fascism. The manifesto supported a [social revolution](#) to create a [national syndicalist](#) economy that creates national [syndicates](#) of both employees and employers to mutually organize and control the economic activity, agrarian reform, industrial expansion and respect for [private property](#) with the exception of nationalizing [credit](#) facilities to prevent capitalist [usury](#).<sup>[6]</sup> It supports [criminalization](#) of [strikes](#) by [employees](#) and [lockouts](#) by [employers](#) as illegal acts.<sup>[7]</sup> Falangism supports the state to have jurisdiction of setting wages.<sup>[7]</sup> The Franco-era Falange supported the development of [cooperatives](#) such as the [Mondragon Corporation](#) because it bolstered the Francoist claim of the nonexistence of social classes in Spain during his rule.<sup>[8]</sup>

The Spanish Falange and its affiliates in Hispanic states across the world promoted a form of [panhispanism](#) known as [hispanidad](#) that advocated both cultural and economic union of Hispanic societies around the world.<sup>[9]</sup>

Falangism has attacked both the political [left](#) and the [right](#) as its "enemies", declaring itself to be neither left nor right, but a [syncretic third position](#).<sup>[10]</sup> However, scholarly sources reviewing Falangism place it on the [far right](#).<sup>[11]</sup>

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## Components

### Nationalism and racialism

During the [Spanish Civil War](#), the Falange and the [Carlists](#) prior to the two parties' unification in 1937 both promoted the incorporation of [Portugal](#) into Spain. Both prior to and after its merger with the Carlists, the Falange supported the unification of [Gibraltar](#) and Portugal into Spain. During its early years of existence, the Falange produced maps of Spain that included Portugal as a province of Spain.<sup>[12]</sup> The Carlists stated that a Carlist Spain would retake Gibraltar and Portugal.<sup>[13]</sup> After the civil war, some radical members of the Falange called for a reunification with Portugal and annexation of former Spanish territories in the [French Pyrenees](#).<sup>[14]</sup> During World War II, Franco in a communiqué with Germany on 26 May 1942 declared that Portugal should be made a part of Spain.<sup>[15]</sup>

Some of the Falangists in Spain had supported [racialism](#) and racist policies, viewing races as both real and existing with differing strengths, weaknesses and accompanying cultures inextricably obtained with them. However, unlike other racists such as the [National Socialists](#), Falangism is unconcerned about racial purity and does not denounce other races for being inferior, claiming "that every race has a particular cultural significance" and claiming that the intermixing of the Spanish race and other races has produced a "Hispanic supercaste" that is "ethically improved, morally robust, spiritually vigorous".<sup>[16]</sup> It was less concerned about biological Spanish racial regeneration than it was in advocating the necessity of Spanish [Catholic](#) spiritual regeneration.<sup>[17]</sup> Some have nonetheless promoted [eugenics](#) designed to eliminate physical and psychological damage caused by pathogenic agents. Falangism did and still does support [natality](#) policies to stimulate increased fertility rate among ideal physically and morally fit citizens.<sup>[18]</sup>



[Franco](#) and [Ramón Serrano Suñer](#) with [Heinrich Himmler](#) and other leading Nazis like [Karl Wolff](#) in 1940

Franco praised Spain's [Visigothic](#) heritage, saying that the Germanic tribe of the Visigoths gave Spaniards their "national love for law and order".<sup>[19]</sup> During early years of the Falangist regime of Franco, the regime admired Nazi Germany and had Spanish archaeologists seek to demonstrate that Spaniards were part of the [Aryan race](#) particularly through their [Visigothic heritage](#).<sup>[20]</sup>

Founder of the [Falange Española](#), [José Antonio Primo de Rivera](#), had little interest in addressing the Jewish problem outside areas of political issues.<sup>[21]</sup> The Falange's position was influenced by the fact of the small size of the Jewish community in Spain at the time that did not favour the development of strong antisemitism.<sup>[22]</sup> Primo de Rivera saw the solution to the Jewish problem in Spain as simple: the conversion of Jews to Catholicism.<sup>[23]</sup> However, on the issue of perceived political tendencies amongst Jews he warned about Jewish-Marxist influences over the working classes.<sup>[21]</sup> The Falangist daily newspaper [Arriba](#) claimed that "the [Judeo-Masonic International](#) is the creator of two great evils that have afflicted humanity: capitalism and Marxism".<sup>[21]</sup> Primo de Rivera approved of attacks by Falangists on the Jewish-owned SEPU department stores in 1935.<sup>[21]</sup>

The Spanish Falange and its Hispanic affiliates have promoted the cultural, economic and racial unity of Hispanic peoples across the world in "[hispanidad](#)".<sup>[9]</sup> It has sought to unite Hispanic peoples through proposals to create a commonwealth or federation of Spanish-speaking states headed by Spain.<sup>[14]</sup>

## National syndicalist economics



Falange leader [José Antonio Primo de Rivera](#) advocated [national syndicalism](#) as the alternative to both capitalism and communism

Falangism supports a national, trans-class society while opposing individual-class-based societies such as bourgeois or proletarian societies. Falangism opposes [class conflict](#). [José Antonio Primo de Rivera](#) declared that "[t]he State is founded on two principles—service to the united nation and the [cooperation of classes](#)".<sup>[24]</sup>

Originally, Falangism in Spain as promoted by Primo de Rivera advocated a "national syndicalist" economy that rejected both capitalism and communism.<sup>[10]</sup> Primo de Rivera denounced capitalism for being an individualist economy at the hands of the bourgeoisie that turned workers "into a dehumanized cog in the machinery of bourgeois production" while [state socialist](#) economies enslaved the individual by handing control of production to the state.<sup>[10]</sup>

Falange's original manifesto, the "Twenty-Seven Points", called for a social revolution to create a [national syndicalist](#) economy that creates national syndicates of both employees and employers to mutually organize and control the economic activity, agrarian reform, industrial expansion, and respect for private property with the exception of nationalizing credit facilities to prevent capitalist usury.<sup>[6]</sup> Under Franco, the Falange abandoned its original [anti-capitalist](#) tendencies, declaring the ideology to be fully compatible with capitalism.<sup>[5]</sup>

Falangism is staunchly [anti-communist](#).<sup>[4]</sup> The Spanish Falange supported Spanish intervention during [World War II](#) against the [Soviet Union](#) in the name of anti-communism, resulting in Spain supporting the [Anti-Comintern Pact](#) and [sending volunteers](#) to join [Nazi Germany's](#) foreign legions on the [Eastern Front](#) to support the German war effort against the Soviet Union.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Gender roles

The Spanish Falange supported conservative ideas about women and supported rigid gender roles that stipulated that women's main duties in life were to be a loving mother and a submissive wife.<sup>[25]</sup> This

policy was set against that of the [Second Spanish Republic](#) that provided [universal suffrage](#) to women. [\[25\]](#)

# Rexist Party




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**Rexist Party**

**Parti Rexiste**



<b>Leader</b>	<a href="#">Léon Degrelle</a> (1935–41) <a href="#">Victor Matthys</a> (1941–44) <a href="#">Louis Collard</a> (1944)
<b>Founder</b>	<a href="#">Léon Degrelle</a> , Based on the writings of Belgian politician and writer <a href="#">Jean Denis</a>
<b>Founded</b>	2 November 1935
<b>Dissolved</b>	30 March 1945
<b>Headquarters</b>	<a href="#">Brussels</a> , <a href="#">Kingdom of Belgium</a>
<b>Newspaper</b>	<i><a href="#">Le Pays Réel</a></i>
<b>Paramilitary wing</b>	<i>Formations de Combat</i> (1940–44)  <a href="#">Walloon Legion</a> (1941–45) ( <i>French: <a href="#">Légion Wallonie</a></i> )
<b>Branch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> <a href="#">Wehrmacht</a> (1941–1943)</li><li> <a href="#">Waffen-SS</a> (1943–1945)</li></ul>
<b><a href="#">Rexism</a></b>	
<b><a href="#">Ideology</a></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Belgian nationalism</a></li><li><a href="#">Royalism</a></li><li><a href="#">Clerical fascism</a></li><li><a href="#">Fascist corporatism</a></li><li><a href="#">Anti-liberalism</a></li><li><a href="#">Anti-communism</a></li></ul>

- [Antisemitism](#) (after 1937)
- [Anti-parliamentarism](#) (after 1937)

**Political position** [Far-right](#)

**Religion** [Roman Catholicism](#)

**Flemish counterpart** [Vlaams Nationaal Verbond](#)

**Colors**  [Red](#),  [black](#)

**Party flag**



- [Politics of Belgium](#)
- [Political parties](#)
  - [Elections](#)

The **Rexist Party** ([French](#): *Parti Rexiste*), or simply **Rex**, was a far-right [Catholic](#), [nationalist](#), [authoritarian](#) and [corporatist](#) political party active in [Belgium](#) from 1935 until 1945. The party was founded by a journalist, [Léon Degrelle](#), and, unlike other fascist parties in the Belgium of the time, advocated [Belgian unitarism](#) and [royalism](#). Initially the party ran in both [Flanders](#) and [Wallonia](#), but it never achieved much success outside Wallonia and [Brussels](#). Its name was derived from the [Roman Catholic](#) journal and publishing company *Christus Rex* ([Latin](#) for [Christ the King](#)).

The highest electoral achievement of the Rexist Party was its gaining of 21 out of 202 deputies (with 11.4% of the vote) and twelve senators in the [1936 election](#).<sup>[1]</sup> Never a mass movement, it was on the decline by 1938. During the [German occupation of Belgium](#) in [World War II](#), Rex was the largest collaborationist group in French-speaking Belgium, paralleled by the [Vlaams Nationaal Verbond](#) (VNV) in Flanders. By the end of the war Rex was widely discredited, and was banned following the liberation.

Initially modelled on [Italian Fascism](#) and [Spanish Falangism](#), it later drew closer to German [Nazism](#). The Party espoused a "right-wing revolution" and the dominance of the [Catholic Church in Belgium](#),<sup>[2]</sup> but its ideology came to be vigorously opposed by the leader of the Belgian Church [Cardinal van Roey](#), who called Rexism a "danger to the church and to the country".<sup>[1]</sup>

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## Ideology

The ideology of Rex, which was loosely based on the writings of [Jean Denis](#), called for the "moral renewal" of Belgian society through dominance of the Catholic Church, by forming a [corporatist](#) society and abolishing [liberal democracy](#).<sup>[3]</sup> Denis became an enthusiastic member of Rex, and later wrote for the party newspaper *Le Pays Réel*. The original programme of Rexism borrowed strongly from [Charles Maurras'](#) [integralism](#). It rejected [liberalism](#), which it deemed decadent, and was strongly opposed to both [Marxism](#) and [capitalism](#), instead striving for a corporatist economic model, idealising rural life and traditional [family values](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

In its early period — until around 1937 — Rexism cannot accurately be categorised as a fascist movement. Rather it was a [populist](#),<sup>[4]</sup> authoritarian and conservative Catholic nationalist movement<sup>[5]</sup> that initially tried to win power by democratic means, and did not want to totally abolish democratic institutions. The party increasingly made use of fascist-style rhetoric, but only after Degrelle's own defeat in a by-election in April 1937 did it openly embrace [anti-Semitism](#) and anti-parliamentarism, following the model of German [Nazism](#). Historian and expert on fascism [Roger Griffin](#) only considers the Rexist Party during the German occupation of Belgium as "fully fascist"; until then he considers it "[proto-fascist](#)".<sup>[6]</sup>

The Rexist movement attracted support almost exclusively from Wallonia. On 6 October 1936, party leader [Léon Degrelle](#) made a secret agreement with Rex's [Flemish](#) counterpart, the [Vlaams Nationaal Verbond](#) (VNV; "Flemish National Union") led by [Staf De Clercq](#).<sup>[7]</sup> Both movements strove for a corporatist system, but unlike the Rexists, the VNV sought to separate Flanders from Belgium and to unite it with the [Netherlands](#). The Flemish side cancelled the agreement after just one year.<sup>[8]</sup> It also faced competition from the ideologically similar (but explicitly anti-German) Légion Nationale ("National Legion") of [Paul Hoornaert](#).



## Pre-war politics



[Léon Degrelle](#), leader of Rex, pictured at a pre-war rally

The Rexist Party was founded in 1935 after its leader Léon Degrelle had left the mainstream [Catholic Party](#) which he deemed too moderate. It targeted disappointed constituencies such as traditionalist Catholics, veterans, small traders and jobless people. In the [Depression](#) era, it initially won considerable popularity — mostly due to its leader's charisma and energy. Its greatest success was when it won 11.5 per cent of the total vote in the [1936 election](#).<sup>[9]</sup> On that occasion the Rexist Party took 21 of the 202 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 8 out of 101 in the Senate, making it the fourth-strongest force in Parliament, behind the major established parties (Labour, Catholic, Liberal).

However, the support for the party (even at its height) was extremely localized: Rexist succeeded in garnering over 30 per cent of the vote in the French-speaking [province of Luxembourg](#), compared with just 9 per cent in equally French-speaking Hainaut.<sup>[3]</sup> Degrelle admired [Adolf Hitler](#)'s rise to power and progressively imitated the tone and style of fascist campaigning, while the movement's ties to the [Roman Catholic Church](#) were increasingly repudiated by the Belgian clergy. Rexistism received subsidies from both Hitler and Mussolini.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

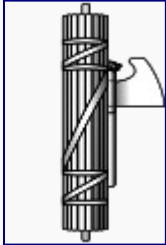
Degrelle ran in the April 1937 Brussels by-election against Prime Minister [Paul van Zeeland](#) of the Catholic Party, who was supported — in the hope of thwarting a Rexist victory — by all other parties, including even the Communists.<sup>[10]</sup> The [Archbishop of Mechelen](#) and primate of the Catholic Church of Belgium, [Jozef-Ernest Cardinal van Roey](#), intervened, rebuking Rexist voters, insisting that even abstention from voting would be sinful, and calling Rexistism "a danger to the country and to the Church". Degrelle was decisively defeated: he obtained only 20 per cent of the vote, the rest going to Van Zeeland.<sup>[11]</sup>

Afterwards, Rexistism allied itself with the interests of [Nazi Germany](#) even more strongly and incorporated [Nazi-style antisemitism](#) into its platform. At the same time, its popularity declined sharply.

[12] In the [1939 national election](#), Rex's share of votes fell to 4.4 per cent, and the party lost 17 of its 21 seats, largely to the mainstream [Catholic](#) and [Liberal parties](#).<sup>[12]</sup>

## Second World War

Part of a [series](#) on  
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With the [German invasion of Belgium](#) in 1940, Rexism welcomed German occupation, even though it had initially supported the pre-war Belgian policy of neutrality.<sup>[13]</sup> While some former Rexists went into the underground resistance or (like [José Streeel](#)) withdrew from politics after they had come to see the Nazis' anticlerical and extreme anti-Semitic policies enforced in occupied Belgium, most Rexists, however, proudly supported the occupiers and assisted German forces with the repression of the territory wherever they could.<sup>[13]</sup> Nevertheless, the popularity of Rex continued to drop. In 1941, at a reunion in [Liège](#), Degrelle was booed by about a hundred demonstrators.<sup>[13]</sup>

In August 1944, Rexist militia were responsible for the [Courcelles Massacre](#).

## Collaboration

Closely affiliated with Rex was the [Légion Wallonie](#), a [paramilitary](#) organization which later became the "Wallonien" Division of the [Waffen SS](#). After [Operation Barbarossa](#) started, the Légion Wallonie

and its Flemish counterpart, the [Legion Flandern](#) sent respectively 25,000 and 15,000 volunteers to fight against the [Soviet Union](#)<sup>[*citation needed*]</sup>. Degrelle took command of the Wallonien division, where he fought on the [Eastern Front](#). Whilst Degrelle was absent, nominal leadership of the party passed to [Victor Matthys](#).

## End of Rexism

From the liberation of Belgium in September 1944, the party had been banned. With the fall of Nazi Germany in 1945, many former Rexists were imprisoned or executed for their role during collaboration. [Victor Matthys](#) and [José Streeel](#) were both executed by firing squad, [Jean Denis](#) (who had played only a minor role during the war) was imprisoned.

Degrelle took refuge in [Francoist Spain](#). He was convicted of [treason in absentia](#) in Belgium and [sentenced to death](#), but repeated requests to [extradite](#) him were turned down by the Spanish government. Stripped of his citizenship and excommunicated (later lifted in Germany), Degrelle died in [Málaga](#) in 1994.<sup>[14]</sup>

# Arrow Cross Party

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**Arrow Cross Party – Hungarist Movement**

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**Nyilaskeresztes Párt – Hungarista Mozgalom**

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<b>Leader</b>	<a href="#">Ferenc Szálasi</a> 1935–1945 (executed for <a href="#">war crimes</a> )
<b>Founded</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1935 (as Party of National Will); banned in 1937.</li><li>Reconstituted as the Arrow Cross Party on 15 March 1939</li></ul>

**Dissolved** April 1945; Party cabinet dissolved on 7 May 1945  
**Headquarters** [Andrássy út 60, Budapest, Kingdom of Hungary](#)  
**Membership (1939)** 300,000[1]  
[Hungarism](#)

**Ideology**

- [Nazism](#)
- [Fascism](#)
- [Hungarian nationalism](#)
- [Hungarian Turanism](#)
- [Agrarianism](#)

**Political position** [Far-right](#)

**Religion** [Roman Catholicism](#)

**Colours** Red, White, Green (from the [flag of Hungary](#))

**Anthem** Awaken, Hungarian![2]

**Party flag**



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- [Politics of Hungary](#)
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The **Arrow Cross Party** ([Hungarian](#): *Nyilaskeresztes Párt – Hungarista Mozgalom*, literally "Arrow Cross Party-Hungarist Movement", abbreviated NYKP) was a [far-right](#) Hungarian party led by [Ferenc Szálasi](#), which formed a government in [Hungary](#) known as the [Government of National Unity](#). They were in power from 15 October 1944 to 28 March 1945. During its short rule, ten to fifteen thousand civilians (many of whom were [Jews](#) and [Romani](#)) were murdered outright,[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#) and 80,000 people were deported from Hungary to various concentration camps in Austria.[\[5\]](#) After the war, Szálasi and other Arrow Cross leaders were tried as [war criminals](#) by Hungarian courts.

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## Formation

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The party was founded by Ferenc Szálasi in 1935 as the Party of National Will.<sup>[6]</sup> It had its origins in the political philosophy of pro-German extremists such as [Gyula Gömbös](#), who famously coined the term "national socialism" in the 1920s.<sup>[7]</sup> The party was outlawed in 1937 but was reconstituted in 1939 as the Arrow Cross Party, and was said to be modelled fairly explicitly on the [Nazi Party of Germany](#), although Szálasi often and harshly criticised the Nazi regime of Germany.<sup>[8]</sup> The iconography of the party was clearly inspired by that of the Nazis; the [Arrow Cross](#) emblem was an ancient symbol of the [Magyar tribes](#) who settled Hungary, thereby suggesting the racial purity of the Hungarians in much the same way that the Nazi [Hakenkreuz](#) was intended to allude to the racial purity of the [Aryans](#).<sup>[9]</sup> The Arrow Cross symbol also referred to the desire to nullify the [Treaty of Trianon](#), and expand the Hungarian state in all [cardinal directions](#) towards the former borders of the [Kingdom of Hungary](#).<sup>[9]</sup>

## Ideology



Ministers of the [Arrow Cross Party government](#). [Ferenc Szálasi](#) is in the middle of the front row.

The party's ideology was similar to that of [Nazism](#) or [Fascism](#)<sup>[10]</sup> and [Hungarian Turanism](#) combined, which was called Hungarism by Ferenc Szálasi – [nationalism](#), the promotion of agriculture, [anti-capitalism](#), [anti-communism](#) and a special type of [anti-Semitism](#), called *a-Semitism*. In a series of four books on Hungarism, Szálasi distinguished between a-Semitism, which called for a society completely absent of Jews, and anti-Semitism, which, he argued, would nominally allow Jews to exist in a particular society with limited rights. He argued that a-Semitism was not opposed to the existence of Jews per se; it was opposed to their existence in as being incompatible with European society. Szálasi extended this argument to Arabs as well, as a matter of fact to the whole [Semitic Race](#).<sup>[11]</sup> The party and its leader were originally against the German geopolitical plans, so it was a long and very difficult process for Hitler to compromise with Szálasi and his party (they introduced the doctrine of *connationalism*, meaning the support of nationalist movements on their historical territories and influence spheres on the ground of the historical heritage and proven availability of cultural dominance; something that the Germans hardly understood, a kind of combination of nationalism and internationalism, the co-operation of the nations and their nationalist movements). Consequently, the party conceived [Jews](#) in racial as well as religious terms as incapable to be integrated into the society outside the place and culture of their historical origin. Although the Arrow Cross Party was certainly far more [racist](#) than the Horthy regime, it was still different in some ways from the [German Nazi Party](#). It was also more economically radical than other fascist movements, advocating [workers' rights](#) and [land reforms](#).<sup>[9]</sup>

## Rise to power



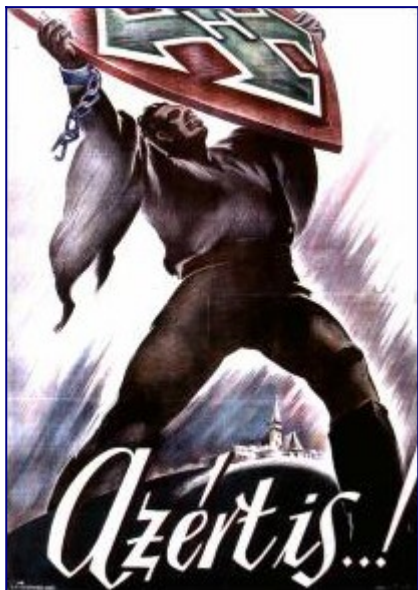
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*Find sources: "Arrow Cross Party" – news · newspapers · books · scholar · JSTOR (October 2017) ([Learn how and when to remove this template message](#))*

The roots of Arrow Cross influence can be traced to the outburst of anti-Jewish feeling that followed the [Communist putsch](#) and brief rule in Hungary in the spring and summer of 1919. Some Communist leaders, like [Tibor Szamuely](#), came from Jewish families, or like [Béla Kun](#), its leader, who had a Jewish father and a Protestant [Swabian](#) mother, were considered to be Jews, and the policies of the [Hungarian Soviet Republic](#) came to be associated in the minds of many Hungarians with a "[Jewish-Bolshevist conspiracy](#)."

After the communist regime was crushed in August 1919, conservatives under the leadership of [Admiral Miklós Horthy](#) took control of the nation. Many Hungarian military officers took part in the counter-reprisals known as the [White Terror](#) – some of that violence was directed at [Jews](#), simply because they were Jewish.<sup>[9]</sup> Although the White Guard was officially suppressed, many of its most prevalent members went underground and formed the core membership of a spreading nationalist and anti-Jewish movement.

During the 1930s, the Arrow Cross gradually began to dominate Budapest's working class district, defeating the [Social Democrats](#). The Social Democrats did not really contest elections effectively; they had to make a pact with the conservative Horthy regime in order to prevent the abolition of their party.



A [World War II](#) propaganda poster for the party – the text reads "Despite it all..!"

The Arrow Cross subscribed to the Nazi ideology of "[master races](#)",<sup>[9]</sup> which, in Szálasi's view, included the Hungarians and Germans, and also supported the concept of an order based on the power of the strongest – what Szálasi called a "brutally realistic [étatism](#)". But its espousal of territorial claims under the banner of a "[Greater Hungary](#)" and Hungarian values (which Szálasi labelled "Hungarizmus" or "Hungarianism") clashed with Nazi ambitions in central Europe, delaying by several years Hitler's endorsement of that party.

The [German Foreign Office](#) instead endorsed the pro-German [Hungarian National Socialist Party](#), which had some support among [German minorities](#). Before [World War II](#), the Arrow Cross were not proponents of the racial antisemitism of the Nazis, but utilised traditional stereotypes and prejudices to gain votes among voters both in [Budapest](#) and the countryside. Nonetheless the constant bickering among these diverse fascist groups prevented the Arrow Cross Party from gaining even more support and power.

The Arrow Cross obtained most of its support from a disparate coalition of military officers, soldiers, nationalists and agricultural workers. It was only one of a number of similar openly fascist factions in Hungary but was by far the most prominent, having developed an effective system of recruitment. When it contested the May 1939 elections – the only ones in which it participated – the party won 15%

of the vote and 29 seats in the [Hungarian Parliament](#). This was only a superficially impressive result; the majority of Hungarians were not permitted to vote. It did, however, become one of the most powerful parties in Hungary. But the Horthy leadership banned the Arrow Cross on the outbreak of World War II, forcing it to operate underground.

In 1944, the Arrow Cross Party's fortunes were abruptly reversed after Hitler lost patience with the reluctance of Horthy and his moderate prime minister, [Miklós Kállay](#), to toe the Nazi line fully. In March 1944, the Germans [invaded](#) and officially occupied Hungary; Kállay fled and was replaced by the Nazi proxy, [Döme Sztójay](#). One of Sztójay's first acts was to legalise the Arrow Cross.

During the spring and summer of 1944, more than 400,000 Jews were herded into centralised ghettos and then deported from the Hungarian countryside to death camps by the Nazis, with the willing help of the Hungarian [Interior Ministry](#) and its [gendarmerie](#) (the *csendőrség*), both of whose members had close links to the Arrow Cross. The Jews of Budapest were concentrated into so-called [Yellow Star Houses](#), approximately 2,000 single-building mini-ghettos identified by a yellow Star of David over the entrance.<sup>[3]:578</sup> In August 1944, before deportations from Budapest began, Horthy used what influence he had to stop them, and force the radical antisemites out of his government. As the summer progressed, and the [Allied](#) and [Soviet](#) armies closed in on central Europe, the ability of the Nazis to devote themselves to Hungary's "Jewish Solution" waned.

## Arrow Cross rule



Jewish victims of Arrow Cross men in the court of the [Dohány Street Synagogue](#)

In October 1944, Horthy negotiated a cease-fire with the Soviets and ordered Hungarian troops to lay down their arms. In response, Nazi Germany launched [Operation Panzerfaust](#), a covert operation which forced Horthy to abdicate in favour of Szálasi, after which he was taken into "protective custody" in Germany. This merely rubber-stamped an Arrow Cross takeover of Budapest on the same day. Szálasi was declared "Leader of the Nation" and prime minister of a "[Government of National Unity](#)".

[Soviet](#) and [Romanian](#) forces were already fighting in Hungary even before Szálasi's takeover, and by the time the Arrow Cross took power the [Red Army](#) was already far inside the country. As a result, its jurisdiction was effectively limited to an ever-narrowing band of territory in central Hungary, around Budapest. Nonetheless, the Arrow Cross rule, short-lived as it was, was brutal. In fewer than three months, death squads killed as many as 38,000 Hungarian Jews. Arrow Cross officers helped [Adolf Eichmann](#) re-activate the deportation proceedings from which the Jews of Budapest had thus far been spared, sending some 80,000 Jews out of the city on slave labour details and many more straight to



death camps. Virtually all Jewish males of conscription age were already serving as slave labour for the [Hungarian Army's Forced Labor Battalions](#). Most of them died, including many who were murdered outright after the end of the fighting as they were returning home.[\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)

Red Army troops reached the outskirts of the city in December 1944, and the siege action known as the [Battle of Budapest](#) began, although it has often been claimed that there is no proof that the Arrow Cross members and the Germans conspired to destroy the Budapest ghetto.[\[12\]](#) Days before he fled the city, Arrow Cross Interior Minister [Gábor Vajna](#) commanded that streets and squares named for Jews be renamed.[\[3\]](#):586