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Fixing Europe's Orbán problem

Euractiv (27.08.2014) <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/central-europe/fixing-europes-orban-problem-307998> - Viktor Orbán recently revealed his ultimate objective to build an "illiberal state" on "national foundations". One might expect European conservatives, in particular, to react strongly to Orbán's actions, but they continue to treat Orbán with kid gloves, write Thorsten Benner and Wolfgang H. Reinicke.

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In April, when German Chancellor Angel Merkel congratulated Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on his reelection, she let it be known that his large majority implied a "[special responsibility](#)" to use good judgment and behave with sensitivity toward opponents. He has done exactly the opposite.

Indeed, Orbán has consistently defied the European Union's core values and practices. Taking a page from Russian President Vladimir Putin's playbook, Orbán has wielded his Fidesz party's two-thirds parliamentary majority to push through a number of laws that attack what freedom remains in Hungary's media, civil society, and academic community.

In his latest move against the media, Orbán has implemented an additional [40% tax on advertising revenue](#), in order to take down [RTL Klub](#), Hungary's last independent-minded television station. Meanwhile, he is tightening the screws on local civil-society groups, run by [what he denounces as](#) "paid political activists who are attempting to enforce foreign interests." For example, he has sent government auditors to harass Norwegian government-funded NGOs promoting civil liberties and human rights. And last month, the parliament passed a law mandating a government-appointed supervisor for each Hungarian university, with budgetary authority and veto power.

In a [recent speech](#), Orbán revealed that his ultimate objective is to build an "illiberal state" on "national foundations," citing authoritarian regimes like Putin's Russia, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Turkey, and China's one-party state as role models. He then asserted that these plans do not conflict with his country's EU membership.

One might expect European conservatives, in particular, to react strongly to Orbán's actions, which discredit their entire political movement. But they seem determined to continue treating Orbán with kid gloves, even as he spurns liberal democracy.

For starters, EU Commission President-designate Jean-Claude Juncker has remained silent on Orbán's actions. Meanwhile, Merkel, the EU's most influential politician, has expressed only moderate criticism, saying in May that she is "certainly not in agreement" with all of his policies, and often does "not quite agree with his tone" of certitude. As if these statements were not weak enough, she tempered them further by emphasizing that this failing was not exclusive to Orbán.

But the most problematic reaction has come from the European People's Party, the center-right umbrella grouping to which Orbán's Fidesz belongs. In April, then-EPP President Joseph Daul [praised](#) the Hungarian leader for renewing public confidence in the government with honesty and "courageous" economic reforms.

This response has convinced Orbán that behaving like a populist autocrat in the center of Europe does not pose any political risk, and has emboldened him to press his crusade against liberal democracy further. The only way to stop him – and to protect the EU's fundamental values, not to mention its self-respect – is to offer him a clear choice: act like a democratic statesman or become a pariah.

Given that Germany is Hungary's most important trading partner, Merkel should lead the charge, rallying Juncker and the new EPP president, Manfred Weber, behind a set of tough and credible measures. These should include, first and foremost, the exclusion of Fidesz from the EPP faction in the European Parliament, to be readmitted only if and when Orbán changes course.

Second, Merkel must make it clear that Orbán will face severe sanctions if he continues on his present path. As Sweden's [EU Affairs Minister Birgitta Ohlsson has proposed](#), EU funds – which Orbán distributes to his supporters – should be withheld. Moreover, Orbán should be put on notice that Hungary's EU voting rights could be suspended, based on [Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union](#), which spells out penalties for a "serious and persistent breach" of common values.

Third, the EU must create more effective mechanisms for monitoring the democratic health of its member countries. To this end, European leaders must flesh out the [rule-of-law initiative](#) that Denmark, Germany, Finland, and the Netherlands proposed last May. At the very least, they should task the [European Agency for Fundamental Rights](#) with providing a regular assessment of democracy and basic rights in European countries, and authorize corrective action by the European Council and the Commission against countries that perform poorly.

Finally, following Norway's example, European countries should increase support for civil-society initiatives that are under pressure from Orbán's government, and find innovative ways to support independent media. With all of Hungary's public media outlets singing Orbán's tune, Radio Free Europe and Deutsche Welle might consider launching Hungarian-broadcasts.

If Orbán succeeds in building an illiberal state within the EU, others might be encouraged to follow suit. Fortunately, the EU and its members are far from powerless to prevent such an outcome. All that is needed is the political will to confront the clear and present danger to democracy that Orbán poses.

If Orbán were active in Germany, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution would likely be pursuing him for his anti-democratic activities. It is time for Germany to promote its constitutional principle of wehrhafte Demokratie, a democracy capable of defending itself, to the entire EU.

Stop targeting civil society!

Sexture - After the widespread criticism due to the elimination of independent institutions, the dismantling of the framework of parliamentarianism, the opening of the second term of the Orban's government in 2014 has seen even more challenges: new impetus was given to questioning the credibility and hindering the independent financing of autonomous civil organizations representing a counterbalance to the government.

The Norway Financial Mechanism (Norway Grants) is part of an agreement between the EU and Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein about funding projects in less-developed European economies. The Hungarian government launched its attack against the Norwegian Civic Fund (NCTA) at the beginning of April, only a day after its massive re-election victory. The NCTA is a small portion of the Norway Grants, which is distributed by a consortium of four Hungarian foundations, which have previously administered the grants with great success. The accusation is that through the four foundations, Norway is trying to influence Hungarian politics. Norway firmly denied the accusations.

When the Norwegian government rejected the charges, the Hungarian government sent agents of the Government Control Office (KEHI) to audit the Fund's administering organizations. The government has led an escalating campaign accusing the four NGOs of political meddling that helped Norway disburse the grants. It said KEHI would audit Okotars, the consortium leader NGO, but sent KEHI agents to two other partner organizations as well. The foundations were threatened with the suspension of their tax number if refused cooperation. The legal basis of the audit is disputed by the administering organizations of the consortium.

In the past years, NGOs, especially those critical of or countering the ideology of the government (LGBT+ rights groups) were subjected to defamatory attempts. On May 30, 2014, an article was published stating that the government blacklisted independent Hungarian civil organizations that have benefitted from the Norwegian Civic Fund (NCTA) on the basis of their alleged political affiliation. In an emailed statement to Reuters on this day, the government said it had no intention of fighting individual NGOs, but it repeated the charges that the grants sought to exert political influence.

Civil organizations' opportunities for legal advocacy and the room to maneuver are becoming smaller, and media publications may be henceforward constrained to exercise self-censorship because regulations of the media law curtailing the freedom of speech and judicial practices would hold them back from publishing articles criticizing the government. All these steps make Hungary resemble Putin's Russia, where, with the silencing of the last free voices, all the defenses of the democratic state are being demolished.

According to Atlatzso.hu - one of the blacklisted NGOs: the scandal sparked by the Hungarian government over the Norwegian funding of local NGOs has escalated to the extent that groups advocating environmental concerns and anti-corruption are being targeted by the authorities. The only tangible reason to be found is that the Hungarian government doesn't approve of funding being distributed to organizations, which they do not approve of.

As things stand, the organizations that are receiving or have received a grant are prone to face investigations from the authorities, with the declared intent to decide whether they were legitimate recipients of the Norwegian tax-payers' money, or whether they were handpicked to represent niche political interests that go against the will of the Hungarian majority.

According to the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, another blacklisted NGO: These are steps in a series of government actions aiming to silence people, from ordinary citizens to the press to civil society, and prevent them from voicing any criticism against the government. An examination of government actions since 2010 shows that the elimination of independent institutions, the dismantling of the frameworks of parliamentarianism and the trivialization of opposition voices already started during the previous government cycle. Such measures include the Media Law, the curtailing of the Constitutional Court's authority, the elimination of the institution of the independent Data Protection Ombudsman, the transformation of the election system and the means of approval and contents of the Fundamental Law.

As part of the government's silencing efforts of independent voices, the editor-in-chief of one of the largest Hungarian online news sites, Origo.hu, was forced unexpectedly to leave his job on June 2. On the last week of May, the news site published a series on János Lázár, Secretary of State for the Prime Minister's Office, noting that his recent spending of 6.500 EUR from public funds on travel expenses was presumably unjustified. In response, János Lázár exercised visible pressure. It is probably due to this incident that the editor-in-chief of Origo.hu, who was said to have resisted the political pressure exercised by the publishing company, was forced to quit yesterday. The editorial board of Origo.hu expressed its disagreement with dismissing the editor-in-chief and considers the conditions for continuing its work insecure. Since June 2, a number of staff members quit their jobs. The management of Origo.hu denied the accusations about political pressure.

Recommended articles, statements:

<http://www.liberties.eu/en/news/putins-methods-against-criticism>

http://norvegcivilalap.hu/en/government_attacks_hungarian_NGOs

<http://english.atlatszo.hu/2014/06/03/hungarian-govt-targets-ngos-atlatszo-hu-is-also-under-assault/>

http://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/transparency_international_calls_for_an_immediate_end_to_intimidation

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/02/us-hungary-norway-funding-ngo-idUSKBN0ED1QW20140602?feedType=RSS&irpc=932>

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/05/dispatches-harassing-civil-society-hungary>

About the constitutional de-constructing:

<http://tasz.hu/en/news/hclu-hungarian-example>

Timeline:

On June 12, the Hungarian Government meets the representatives of Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein to discuss the European Economic Area Grants, to which the Norway Grants is part of. In response to the above-described events, we ask our partner NGOs to publish the statement below on June 12th at 9AM in solidarity with Hungarian civil society.

Statement:

Stop Targeting Hungarian NGOs!

Since its re-election, the Hungarian government launched a campaign attacking the credibility of Hungarian NGOs and are striving to gain controlling power over their funding distributed independently from the government. We believe that a dynamic and independent civil society plays a fundamental role in a democratic society, as it is one of the key checks and balances to governing power. As demonstrated by Putin's Russia, the harassment of the civil sector could easily lead to the criminalization of NGOs and could effectively hinder their work. We stand in solidarity with the Hungarian NGOs and call on the Hungarian and all other governments to refrain from harassing civil society!

Hungary's "revival of the cult of Anti-Semitism"

Gatestone Institute (16.01.2013) - The Hungarian national football team, after fans chanted aggressively anti-Semitic abuse during a game with Israel, has been ordered to play the next World Cup qualifier in an empty stadium.

The international governing body of football, known as FIFA, also fined the Hungarian Football Association (MLSZ) 40,000 Swiss Francs (\$43,000) as punishment for anti-Semitic acts by Hungarian fans.

The Zurich-based FIFA announced the sanctions on January 8, after completing an investigation into reports that Hungarian fans not only turned their backs during the playing of Israel's national anthem, *Hatikva* [The Hope], but also chanted anti-Semitic slogans such as "stinking Jews" and "Heil Benito Mussolini" at a match against Israel in Budapest on August 15.

The FIFA Disciplinary Committee said it "unanimously condemned the abhorrent episode of anti-Semitism" and actions of a "political, provocative and aggressive nature perpetrated by supporters of the Hungarian national team."

According to the FIFA Disciplinary Code, the home football association is liable for improper conduct among spectators.

FIFA said the Hungarian national team would be forced to play the World Cup qualification match against Romania, set for March 22, without spectators in the stadium. FIFA also warned that if another such incident occurs, the Hungarian team could be excluded from the next World Cup tournament, scheduled to be held in Brazil in mid-2014.

MLSZ called the punishment excessive and said it would file an appeal against the decision.

The case involving Hungarian football is just the latest in a rapidly growing list of anti-Semitic incidents in Hungary, home to around 100,000 Jews amid a total population of about 10 million.

Some analysts believe the open climate of anti-Semitism in Hungary is partly being fuelled by Prime Minister Viktor Orban and his ruling Fidesz Party [Alliance of Young Democrats]. Orban's government has been attempting to steer Hungary through a severe economic crisis in which the unemployment rate has skyrocketed and the country's credit rating has been downgraded to "junk" status.

Critics say Orban has been turning a blind eye to the rise in anti-Semitism in an effort to blunt the growing popularity of the anti-Semitic nationalist party, Jobbik [The Movement for a Better Hungary], the third-largest party in the Hungarian Parliament. Local observers say anti-Semitism is a key part of Jobbik's strategy to enhance its chances of winning the parliamentary elections in 2014. Jobbik is especially popular with Hungary's influenceable younger generation, which, observers say, is at risk of becoming increasingly racist and supportive of all forms and expressions of hate.

In December, Balazs Lenhardt, and independent parliamentarian, was arrested for burning an Israeli flag at an anti-Zionist demonstration in Budapest. The demonstration

was organized by two ultra-nationalist groups, the Guardians of Carpathian Homeland Movement and the Guard Federation, and held in front of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. Those who attended the rally shouted anti-Semitic slogans such as "Filthy Jews" and "To Auschwitz with You All."

In November, Marton Gyongyosi, an MP for the Jobbik party, called for the creation of a list of Hungarian lawmakers and members of the Hungarian Cabinet who are of Jewish origin. Gyongyosi made the request during a November 26 parliamentary debate on Israel's military operations to combat Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip. He said Jews represent a "national-security risk" by allegedly slanting Hungarian foreign policy in Israel's interest.

On November 29, Elod Novak, a lawmaker for the Jobbik party, demanded that a Parliament colleague, Katalin Ertsey of the opposition LMP Party, resign because she has Israeli citizenship in addition to her Hungarian nationality. Local media quoted Novak as saying that "Israel has more deputies in the Hungarian Parliament than they have in the Israeli Knesset," and that this caused the Hungarian Parliament to make "favorable" decisions toward Israel.

In October, Andras Kerenyi, a Budapest Jewish leader, was attacked by an assailant who kicked him in the stomach and shouted obscenities at him, including "rotten filthy Jews, you all will die." The attack came after the same assailant had shouted anti-Semitic remarks through the door of a synagogue in the city.

In August, Csanad Szegedi, a fascist politician known for his anti-Semitic rhetoric was expelled from Jobbik after Szegedi admitted he has Jewish roots and that his grandmother was a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust. As a leading member of the anti-Semitic party, Szegedi frequently appeared at political rallies where he accused Jews of "buying up" Hungary and desecrating national symbols.

Also in August, Budapest Mayor Istvan Tarlos cancelled plans to stage an anti-Semitic play at a city-funded theater after Hungarian intellectuals -- Jews and non-Jews alike -- said the issue was a test case regarding increasing government tolerance of anti-Semitic behavior.

The canceled play, "The Sixth Coffin," is set in 1920 France and features a group of powerful Jews plotting to destroy Hungary and plunge humanity into another world war shortly after the end of World War I. The drama was set to premiere in February 2013 in Budapest's renowned New Theatre.

In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Adam Fischer, a music director at the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra, said the staging and sponsoring of "The Sixth Coffin" would have been part of an ongoing process of growing acceptance of anti-Semitism in Hungary. He said: "Things that were unthinkable five years ago are acceptable today. An artist must speak up when a publicly funded theater in the capital of an EU country plans to show anti-Semitic pieces -- something that has not happened since the war."

In July, vandals desecrated 57 graves in a Jewish cemetery in the city of Kaposvar, located 190 kilometers (115 miles) southwest of Budapest. Local Jewish leader Lazlo Rona said the vandalism, which caused 12,000 euros (\$16,000) in damage, was "clearly motivated by racism."

On July 17, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Hungarian President Janos Ader in Jerusalem and expressed his concern about the "resurgence of anti-Semitism in Hungary."

Also in July, Hungarian state prosecutors arrested Laszlo Csizsik-Csatory, an alleged Nazi war criminal, now 97 years old, in his apartment in Budapest. Csizsik-Csatory was a police commander in charge of a Jewish ghetto in the city of Kosice (then part of Hungary, now part of Slovakia). During World War II, he allegedly helped deport more than 15,000 Jews to their deaths at the Auschwitz concentration camp. After the Allies won the war, he fled the town. In 1948, he was convicted in absentia of war crimes in Czechoslovakia and was sentenced to death.

In June, the 90-year-old retired Chief Rabbi Joseph Schweitzer was accosted near his Budapest home by a man who insulted him and shouted, "I hate all Jews." A day earlier, a reporter from the daily newspaper *Nepszabadsag* was called a "dirty Jewish whore" and was spat on by people while she was covering a taxi strike in Budapest, according to a video posted on the publication's website.

That same month, the Hungarian Socialist Party sent an open letter to Prime Minister Orban, warning that Hungary was experiencing a "serious moral crisis" triggered by the government's "revitalizing of the historic crimes of the Horthy era."

Over the past 18 months, several municipalities have named streets and erected statues to honor Miklos Horthy, the Hungarian Nazi collaborator. Under Horthy, an estimated 500,000 Hungarian Jews were sent to their deaths in Nazi concentration camps. The Socialist Party called on Orban to stop "the revival of the cult of anti-Semitism."

In May, Orban expanded the reading curriculum for schools to include books by anti-Semitic authors such as Istvan Sinka, Dezso Szabo, Albert Wass and Jozsef Nyiro. In an open letter to the Hungarian Ministry of Culture, the Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary wrote that the authors "spread hatred and anti-Semitism during their lives. It is unacceptable that their writings be taught to the young Hungarian people."

On May 27, members of the Hungarian parliament attempted to move Nyiro's remains from Madrid, where his ashes were buried in 1953, to the Romanian town of Odorheiu Secuiesc, once part of Hungary. But the Romanian government blocked the plan because Nyiro, a fascist parliamentarian associated with Nazism, was an outspoken anti-Semite.

Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta said Romania "doesn't accept commemorations and anniversaries for people who were known for anti-Romanian, anti-Semite and pro-fascist behavior."

Instead of the reburial, Nyiro loyalists opted for a veneration ceremony, which was attended by the leadership of the Jobbik party, as well as by the speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, Laszlo Kover.

Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Prize laureate and Holocaust survivor, sent a letter to Kover saying he was furious that Kover had participated in the ceremony honoring Nyiro, an act he said reflected the desire of the Hungarian government to gloss over the country's dark past. Wiesel wrote: "I found it outrageous that the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly could participate in a ceremony honoring a Hungarian fascist ideologue."

In April, Zsolt Barath of the Jobbik party claimed that Jews had been implicated in a notorious blood libel case in northern Hungary 130 years ago. In a speech in front of the Parliament building, Barath cited the 1882 blood libel case in the village of Tiszaeszlar in which 15 local Jews were accused of murdering a Hungarian girl, Eszter Solymosi. The case triggered widespread anti-Semitic hysteria, but after a lengthy trial the Jews were acquitted.

In his speech, Barath questioned the outcome of the Tiszaeszlar trial and said the culprits had never been determined. He said: "As we can see, there is no clear explanation, we do not know what happened to Eszter. Nevertheless, there is one point common to the known variants: The Jewry and the leadership of the country were severely implicated in the case." Barath said the verdict acquitting the Jews had been due to "outside pressure."

In February, Marton Gyongyosi of the Jobbik party questioned the Holocaust; he claimed that Jews were colonizing Hungary and that Israel runs "a Nazi system." In an interview with the London-based Jewish Chronicle, Gyongyosi questioned whether 550,000 Jews were really killed or deported from Hungary during World War II. "It has become a fantastic business to jiggle around with the numbers," he said. Gyongyosi called successful Israeli businesses in Hungary a threat and "expansionism."

Also in February, the New York-based Anti-Defamation League published a report on European anti-Semitism which shows that anti-Semitism is becoming increasingly entrenched in Hungary. The survey reports that 55% of all Hungarians believe that "Jews are more loyal to Israel than to Hungary" and 73% believe that "Jews have too much power in the business world." In addition, 75% of Hungarians believe that "Jews have too much power in international financial markets," and 63% believe that "Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust."

Revised Hungarian media legislation continues to severely limit media pluralism, says OSCE media freedom representative

OSCE (25.05.2012) - Dunja Mijatović, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media today said that the new Hungarian media legislation can still curb media pluralism and put the media at the risk of political control.

The Parliament adopted a new media package on 24 May 2012, following a Constitutional Court decision in December 2011 which ruled several provisions of the laws unconstitutional.

"I welcome that the revised provisions provide broader protection of sources, annul the ban of certain content from print and online media, and abolish the right of the Media and Communications Commissioner to interfere with editorial decisions in case of complaints. These are important improvements," said Mijatović. "Unfortunately, other elements that I raised as problematic already in 2010 have not been improved."

"These include the ways of nomination and appointment of the President and members of the Media Authority and Media Council, and their power over content in the broadcast media, as well as the prospect of very high fines that can lead to self-censorship among journalists," she stressed. "Key provisions of the legislation are not clearly defined, and the financial and editorial independence of the public broadcasters is not guaranteed."

Mijatović emphasized that these concerns were also raised by the Council of Europe in its recent analysis.

In addition, she pointed out that several amendments to the media package were introduced and adopted at short notice without consultation with the stakeholders or the public.

Mijatović noted that rules of frequency tendering, which present the core requirement of independent regulation, have significantly changed. She argued that the legislation also does not clearly state that the Media Council has the obligation to sign a contract with the winning candidate, even when the winner is confirmed by a court decision. "These amendments could clearly affect the broadcast pluralism, given the lack of clarity in the definitions and procedures stipulated by the new legislation," underlined Mijatović.

She reminded that all participating States of the OSCE, including Hungary, committed themselves to strengthening media pluralism. "The changes to the Hungarian media law, however, only add to the existing concerns over the curbing of critical or differing views in the country," Mijatović said, recalling that on 23 May she sent a letter to Laszlo Kover, Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, asking the Parliamentarians not to adopt the amendments that can harm media pluralism.

Round up the usual scapegoats

By Frank Bruni

New York Times (23.04.2012) - How do you know if a real storm is brewing — or if you're just reacting to a few passing clouds?

That's a question that many Hungarians and people keeping an eye on the country are asking these days. Iren Kollanyi, 61, is one of them.

She has lived here her entire life, through decades of Communism, the adjustment to a whole new system and Hungary's admission into the European Union in 2004.

But the last two years have been among the most peculiar. A conservative party won two-thirds of the seats in Parliament and something akin to legislative carte blanche, which it has used in ways that may spell trouble. At the same time, a party far to its right has become a foul-tempered, foul-mouthed player in the country's affairs.

And to Kollanyi's ears and those of many other Hungarians, there's an authoritarian, nationalistic tenor to things, along with strains of anti-Semitism and antipathy to other minorities.

"It's not good," said Kollanyi, who is Jewish, when I spoke with her last weekend. "It's not even a little good."

Pay attention to Hungary. It may not have any great economic heft, and it's home to only about 10 million people with a tropism toward beer and a talent for brooding. But it could turn out to be a test case of the E.U.'s imperiled sway in these days of debt and austerity. Brussels and Budapest have clashed already over the Hungarian government's attempts at tighter control of the news media, the judiciary and the central bank.

Hungary could also be a window into just how potently economic anxiety fans the flames of bigotry. E.U. membership hasn't brought Hungarians the broad prosperity they had hoped for; the country has had severe budgetary woes of late. And the far-right party I mentioned, Jobbik, has converted these disappointments into questions about the country's orientation to the West and, for good measure, about its supposed coddling of Jews, gays and Roma: Hungary's trusty trinity of scapegoats.

This month Jobbik introduced a bill that refers to homosexuality as a perversion and bans its promotion in language so vague, opponents say, that two men or two women holding hands in public could theoretically be imprisoned.

That bill is almost certainly going nowhere. Jobbik has only 46 of the 386 seats in Parliament and most Hungarians don't support the party, which is better at noise than change. It has, for instance, been agitating for the ouster of Robert Alföldi, the director of the National Theater, whom Jobbik supporters publicly deride for his presumed homosexuality.

But in an interview on Saturday, Alföldi noted that "they have not managed to have me removed."

"There has been no censorship whatsoever," he added. For now, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his ruling party, Fidesz, are letting Alföldi be.

Julia Lakatos, a political analyst with an independent think tank here, said that Fidesz's repressive, power-consolidating image in the international media isn't quite matched by reality. When Brussels balks, Orbán blinks.

"At the end of the day, he's a European politician," she said.

But one danger is that Jobbik, with the third-highest number of seats in Parliament, could continue to rise and tug him in its direction.

I met with one of Jobbik's members of Parliament, Marton Gyongyosi, who studied in Western Europe, provides an erudite voice for his party and has a measured manner.

Still, he sneeringly referred to the belief of successive Hungarian governments that "the most important thing is to join the glorious West," which he called "arrogant about basically everything."

Jobbik has advocated closer ties to Iran, which Gyongyosi recently described as "an extremely peaceful country" in an interview with a Jewish publication. The publication also questioned the seriousness with which he takes the Holocaust.

He told me: "No normal person can ever question the existence of the Holocaust." But, he added, the Holocaust isn't "exceptional and above all sufferings" and genocides, and is perceived that way only because Jews talk about it more, not less, as time passes.

"What the people know about is what gets the most attention," he said. "Why do people buy Head & Shoulders shampoo? Well, that's because that's the most advertised."

On the coffee table between us were copies of *The Economist* and *Time*. But over on his desk, less conspicuously displayed, was the Jobbik magazine, a recent issue of which had an article extolling the party's effort to stop Budapest's gay pride parade, the kind of degenerate event that's too blithely tolerated in other E.U. countries, the article maintained.

"Deviant West, Normal East," was the headline.

The cover story mentioned historical accounts of Jews using Christian blood in rites. "Whether this is true or not," the story said, is unknown.
