

## MOLDOVA Romanian and Russian fascists ally against Ukraine and Moldova

From Natasha Pankowska for Antifa-Net in Chisinau

THE RUSSIAN FASCIST Eurasian Youth Union (ESM) and the Romanian fascist New Right group (Noua Dreapta) have made a pact to cooperate in defence of the Orthodox faith. They will also "organise joint actions to defend the rights of the Russian and Romanian populations in Ukraine" and "support national movements that are now repressed by the Ukrainian authorities".

They justify their agreement on the grounds that "the existence of Ukraine is not fair to the interests of Russian and Romanian people", but the reality is that it will further destabilise Ukraine's fragile political situation. Moldova, and its separatist Trans-Dniester region, is also a priority target for the bloc's future activities.

The ESM is the youth wing of the Eurasian Movement, headed by the Russian philosopher and political scientist Alexander Dugin, who recently became a director of the Centre for Conservative Studies at Moscow State University's Department of Sociology. He is said to be close to some individuals in the Russian ruling elite.

The Eurasian Movement's ideology originates in the early 20th century. It is based on Russian nationalism and imperialism and calls for the formation of a new Eurasian empire centred on Russia. The Movement's leading body includes diplomats, journalists and politicians from Russia and other eastern European countries, including the leader of the pro-Russian

Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, Natalia Vitrenko. The Movement has a representative in Moldova, who is based in Trans-Dniester, a mainly Russian-speaking strip of land on the Moldovan border with Ukraine, which is a meeting point for Russian and Ukrainian nationalist extremists.

The ESM, which also has branches in many eastern European countries, including Moldova and Trans-Dniester, is banned in Ukraine because of its extremely violent nature.

In Moldova and Trans-Dniester, representatives of the Eurasian Movement and the ESM are part of the hardline opposition to Communist President Vladimir Voronin and the current Moldovan government, whom they criticise for not being pro-Russian.

The Romanian New Right group, which has a branch in Moldova, has recently become quite active and played a visible role in violent anti-government protests in April in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova. It also organised a chain of protests throughout Romania at the same time, mainly by young people, to oppose "communist totalitarian dictatorship" in Moldova and to unite the two countries.

New Right's own ideology has its roots in Corneliu Codreanu's antisemitic Iron Guard of the 1930s. Its main aim is to restore the "Greater Romania" of the interwar period which included the Ukrainian part of Bukovina and Moldova.

These fascists are notorious for their



militant nationalism and their opposition to Roma people, the Hungarian minority, gays, communists, the European Union and religions other than Orthodox Christianity.

Internationally, New Right is part of the European National Front, an umbrella group of fascist and nazi organisations that includes the Falange in Spain, the National Democratic Party in Germany, New Force in Italy and National Rebirth of Poland. The ENF's gathering in Germany in 2007 was attended by Chris Beverley of the British National Party.

New Right also cultivates links with mainstream right-wing politicians, including Dorin Chirtoaca, the mayor of Chisinau and vice-chairman of the Liberal party of Moldova, who is known for his hardline pro-Romanian and pro-unification views. A frequent visitor to Romania, Chirtoaca has participated in New Right events.

Significantly, New Right has also built links with sections of the mainstream media in Moldova, including the *Vocce Basarabiei* radio station and newspapers such as *Timpul* and *Ziarul de Garda*. These papers have also become an unofficial political platform for Moldova's Liberal and Liberal-Democratic parties and are

notorious for Holocaust revisionism and the iconisation of Ion Antonescu, Romania's pro-Nazi wartime dictator. In Moldova, they pose as democratic and pro-European media supported by such respected organisations as the Centre for Independent Journalism.

New Right's Moldovan leader Sergiu Bacalov is employed in the History Department of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences and writes extensively on the "history of the Romanians".

What seems marginal in western Europe has become mainstream in post-Soviet countries such as Moldova. The issue of re-division of territories is at the top of the agenda of post-Soviet regional politics today as Russia tries to maintain its influence in the former Soviet countries. Conflicts between Romania and Ukraine have become widely discussed in the media and by politicians. Similarly, the violent events that followed the Moldovan general election in April can be analysed in this context.

One of the key roles in these political-territorial conflicts is being played by previously marginal fascist groups that are gaining growing popularity in the region, have increasing access to the media and hide their disruptive agenda behind slogans about "democracy", "human rights" and "free speech". ◀