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Review by **Balázs Apor**, Trinity College Dublin

David G. Haglund and Umut Korkut's "Going against the Flow: Sinn Féin's Unusual Hungarian 'Roots'" offers a fascinating account of the impact of the Compromise of 1867 between Austria and Hungary on the political thinking of the Irish writer and politician, Arthur Griffith. Griffith's remarkable booklet *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* (published in 1904) deemed the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy a model to be followed by Ireland. As the authors of the article demonstrate, Griffith was convinced that the political strategies adopted by the Hungarian political elite in its struggles with the Viennese court could be applicable to Ireland, and could eventually result in the improvement of the country's status within the framework of the British Empire. Griffith's dream was to elevate Ireland from the position of a colony to that of partner state through peaceful means. The Irish politician thought that the non-violent political acts of the Hungarian elite—passive resistance and the refusal of Hungarian delegates to take up their seats in the Viennese parliament—constituted the most suitable means whereby Ireland's autonomy could be achieved.

However, as the authors argue, Griffith had fundamentally misunderstood the Hungarian situation, and the adoption of political strategies from a Central European polity to the Irish context would therefore have inevitably resulted in failure. According to Haglund and Korkut, the Irish writer's assessment of Hungarian history in the nineteenth century remained simplistic, and he failed to realise the complexities of political developments that had led to the Compromise of 1867. As the article demonstrates, Griffith did not pay any attention to political conflicts within the Hungarian elite in the nineteenth century; he totally ignored the importance of the modernising agenda of the Hungarian leaders; and he failed to appreciate the specificities of the international situation (in particular the war between Austria and Prussia in 1866) that accelerated the improvement of relations between Hungary and Austria. One of Griffith's oversights included the inability to recognise the crucial contribution of Count István Széchenyi towards the formation of modern Hungarian liberalism. Initially, Széchenyi was not antagonistic towards the Viennese court. In fact, he deemed close political and economic partnership between Austria and Hungary desirable for the successful realisation of his modernising agenda. Griffith, however, was more in favour of peaceful non-cooperation between the imperial centre and the colonial periphery. Therefore, he picked Ferenc Deák as his hero, and portrayed the policy of

passive resistance—advocated by Deák—as the most important strategy that managed to secure political concessions for Hungary. Haglund and Korkut offer a sophisticated criticism of Griffith's somewhat tendentious analysis of nineteenth-century Hungarian politics, highlighting the differences between historical reality and the Irish author's rendering of it.

The authors conclude that due to the incompatibility of the Hungarian and Irish political contexts, there was very little in the 'Hungarian lesson' that could have been adopted by the Irish political elites in their struggles for autonomy with Westminster. In addition, Griffith's ideas found little resonance in Ireland, where voices advocating violent means to achieve autonomy gradually overshadowed ones that remained in favour of more peaceful methods.

The authors analyse their topic in the theoretical framework of 'policy transfer.' They argue that the notion, despite the torrent of scholarly criticisms it has triggered in the past, has its merits, and it provides the most useful conceptual lens through which Griffith's ideas can be studied. However, since no policies were actually transferred from Hungary to Ireland as a result of the Irish politician's book, one might have doubts as to the appropriateness of 'policy transfer' in this particular historical context. Arguably, a more fruitful theoretical approach would have been provided by 'transnational history' that also highlights the importance of transfers—ideational, cultural, economic, or political—from one cultural context to another, yet does so in a broader, and significantly more flexible, conceptual framework. In addition, the theoretical assumptions of the article would have also benefited from recent theoretical assessments of modern empires. The 'imperial turn' in Russian historiography, for example, has led to the emergence of new interpretations about the diverse nature of 'imperial rule'; the dynamics between centre and periphery; and the transnational aspects of modern statecraft.[1] Such theoretical insights would have significantly enriched the conceptual apparatus of the article.

The second critical reflection is related to the authors' assessment of Austria-Hungary as an unlikely political model to follow. The article gives the impression that the fact that the Compromise of 1867 inspired politicians in distinct parts of Europe at the time was somehow unexpected, and that the impact of the event was limited. Unexpected or not, the dual monarchy exerted a lasting influence on twentieth-century European politics. Joseph Stalin, the nationalities expert of the Soviet Bolsheviks, for example, studied the ethnic composition of Austria-Hungary carefully while living in Vienna before World War I, and was inspired by the Austro-Hungarian 'historical lesson' to a certain extent. His observations were included in his essay, *Marxism and the National Question* that was published in 1913. The founder of the Paneuropa movement, Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi was another prominent political figure of the twentieth century who considered the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire a model to be emulated in the construction of a united Europe. Similarly to Griffith, both Stalin and Coudenhove-Kalergi offered a simplified and idealised interpretation of the history of the dual monarchy, and their selective reading of the past served their

[1] Some of the most remarkable publications within the 'imperial turn' include Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, eds., *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), Daniel Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber, eds., *Imperial Rule* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), Nicholas B. Breyfolge, Abby Schrader and Willard Sunderland, eds., *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian history* (London: Routledge, 2007), Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, Anatolyi Remnev, eds., *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

respective political agendas. The article would have certainly benefitted from a brief comparative assessment of the impact of the "Austro-Hungarian lesson" on modern political thought, and it would have contributed to an even more sophisticated analysis of the Irish case.

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