THE FACTORS DEVELOPING THE HUNGARIAN GEOPOLITICS BETWEEN YEARS 1919-1943

Abstract

Hungarians who ran out the domination of Ottoman Empire in 1699 and came under the domination of Habsburgs, started to pursue a policy so as to reach their majority against Austria as of this date. When nationalism movements started to develop European map once again by the atmosphere that is generated by French Revolution in 1789, this ideology started to penetrate also Hungarians. The Hungarian revival which started under language and literature fields against the Germanization politics of Austria, ensured Hungarian folk to act towards nationalism. However, this claim of Hungarians required a two-way campaign; while Hungary was being established, disintegration of non-Hungarian minorities in this land should be prevented and Austrian dominance should be discharged. While this was being done, lands shouldn’t be lost. Hungarian uprisings had to resist these problems all the time. The aim of this research is to make an analysis on how Hungarians created their own geopolitical hinterlands over their problematic historical heritage.

Keywords: Hungary, geopolitics, the Triannon Treaty, Austria

1919-1943 YILLARI ARASINDA MACAR JEOPOLİTİĞİNİN ŞEKİLLENDİRİLEN UNSURLAR

Özet

1699’da Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun egemenliğinde kurtularak Habsburglar’ın yönetimine giren Macarlar, bu tarihten itibaren Avusturya’ya karşı rüştünü ispat etme siyaseti izlemeye başlamıştır. 1789’da Fransız İhtilali’nin yarattığı atmosfer ile milliyetçilik hareketleri Avrupa haritasını yeniden şekillendirmeye başlayışca, bu ideoloji Macarlara da etkisi altına almıştır. Avusturya’nın Almanlaştırma politikasına karşı dilsel ve edebiyat alanında başlayan Macar uyanışı, Macar halkın uluslararası yönünde hareket etmesini sağlamıştır. Ancak Macarların bu talepleri iki yönlü bir mücadeleyle gerekli kılınmıştır; Macaristan kurulurken, bu topraklardaki

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INTRODUCTION

Geopolitics is not a term which was developed only for the countries which have a capacity to affect international system in politics and economics, such as United States of America, Russia, Germany or People's Republic of China. Also medium and small scale countries have an international politics strategy as well as geopolitical preferences. The size of the field involving geopolitics is expanding or narrowing depending on the sizes of the countries in the system. As how USA directs the system and how Hungary does, are not same, having geopolitical effect fields in the same size cannot be expected. Therefore, in order to determine the borders of the area that a country is addressing, its history, place in the system, its economic status as well as its power must be evaluated. Geopolitics which is emerged from the need of prediction concerning the future over the contact of geography with the politics, can change depending on the conditions of the current time and it can remain uncertain as well (Tezkan, 2007: 12).

While Alfred Thayer Mahan was developing his sea power theory, Friedrich Ratzel was forming the idea of living space of the biological government, Halford Mackinder was bandying about his land power theory, Rudolf Kjellen was building his geopolitic doctrine in the linear government and Nicholas Spykman was building his rimland theory, they considered the relation of geopolitics with time, place and historical perception (Tezkan and Taşar, 2013). In order to determine the geopolitical hinterland of Hungary, which is a medium scale European country, between years 1919 and 1943, its perception of time and place must be reviewed, starting from the historical background of the country. Hungary's being in a crisis in the aspect of nationalities and social classes has a big effect in every revolutionary activity experienced in Europe in nineteenth century is reciprocated in Hungary. Hungarian nation is a politicized nation (Devrimler ve Karşı Devrimler Ansiklopedisi, 1975: 205).

Before 1918, Central and Eastern Europe were governed by supranationalism empires for centuries. However, one of the places where the cost of World War I is high is Hungarians. At the early years of the war hundred thousands of Hungarians were lost their lives and remaining ones were struggling with hunger and poverty in 1917. The country who is paying the cost of being an ally of Austria in 1918, fell into a politic instability after war. On 28th of October 1918, 79th Croatian Artillery Unit started "Double Daisies Revolution" while country was in a political turmoil, and the nation took to the streets with the slogans of "Long Live Republic". On 31st of October 1918, the president of the Independence Party formed the government. Hungarian National Assembly took place accordingly (Devrimler ve Karşı Devrimler Ansiklopedisi, 1975: 216-217).

1919-1920 amicable agreements took step in the direction of formation of nation states which are created on the national independence basis in Eastern Europe. By Triannon
Agreement, in new Hungary which is having lesser geographical space, approximately 3 million Hungarians remained homeless from lost Slovakia, Transylvania, Banat, Voivodina and Croatia-Slavonia lands (Bideleux and Jeffries, 1998: 407-408). Moreover valuable mineral deposits were lost and trading routes were lost by the new-determined borders. After 1920, international politics and geopolitics of Hungary were determined under these conditions. Problematic relations with Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania, the neighbors of Hungary, were forming the fate of Middle Europe (Salter, 1924: 190). Furthermore Hungary was complaining about that post-war arrangements developing the European map were determined only in accordance with the benefits of winnings of the war. Even, Hungary was asserting that the right of determining the own fates of the nations, which was the basic principle of the period, was contravened for this purpose while establishing Czech-Hungarian border and Yugoslavian-Bulgarian border in Czaribrod (Booth, 1929: 318).

Hungarians, one of the most deep-rooted communities of Europe, was living the trauma of losing seventy percent of their lands and sixty five percent of their nation. Hungarian nation who feel themselves abased, started to consider irredentist politics as a valid geopolitical preference in order to reborn out of their ashes (Booth, 1929: 321, 323). Heartland of Hungarians is the productive lands between Pannonian plan and Danube River and Carpathian Mountains. Hungarians, with this heartland, were defenseless in the other hand actually in the planes of Middle Europe. For this reason, while Hungarians were determining their territorial borders throughout the history, they tried to take them to the normal limits in order to ensure their country defense. Their aim was to close their east and northeast borders to the Carpathians, to make Tatra Mountains their northern border, to take foothills of Austrian Alps which are known also as Burgenland to their west and accordingly to make Sava-Danube line a defensive barrier for the south. Thus, Hungarian state would have borders comprising of huge mountain chains and rivers and providing them with a natural protection (Stratfor, 2010, www.stratfor.com). Geopolitical aim of Hungarians was to capture this heartland.

1. Important Building Stones in Establishment of Hungarian State

The Austro-Hungarian Empire which has a social structure where various races and sects come together, was having a spirited absolutist structure under the government of Metternich since 1815. Nationalism movements which left mark in the nineteenth century were proposing independence to the nations living under great empires. Also Austro-Hungarian Empire was affected from nationalism movements by 1848 revolutions. While absolutism was desired to be abolished, in the other hand non-German nations were stepped into action to achieve their independences (Uçarol, 2006: 136).

By the independence movements which were started by Hungarian reformists Lajos Kossuth and Lajos Batthyány, the nation revolted at the "constitution and freedom" on 13rd of March 1848. Upon the emerging social events, Emperor Ferdinand I has declared that he would adopt a constitution and fulfill the demands of the nation (Sander, 1995: 141). In this period, Hungarians obtained the right to found a separate state provided staying loyal to the Empire. However, this situation led domestic disturbance within the Empire. Because minorities such as Croatians, Serbians, Slovakians, Romanians were existent in Hungary and they were claiming to cut loose from Hungary. Austria was provoking these groups as a counter lunge. In such a circumstance, Hungarians declared their full independence and established a republic regime (Uçarol, 2006: 136).
When Croatians went into use the right to determine own fates of the nations for which Hungarians didn't avoid to use for themselves, Hungarians took quite severe measures. Austria who didn't want the independence of Hungarian state collaborated with Russia against this action of Hungarian. A great Russian and Austrian army entered in Hungary in 1849 and quelled the Hungarian independence action. Hungarian was adhered to Austria back. Upon this, some part of Hungarians and some Polish people who helped them had to take refuge in Ottoman Empire (Ateş, 2007: 232).

Hungarians achieving an efficient position in international politics of the empire could guaranteed by the eighth article of Ausgleich-Conciliation Act dated 1867. In accordance with this article, Hungarian Prime Minister was able to develop international politics decision taking process and would be informed about the decisions taken (Stone, 1966: 154). By this conciliation, two parts of the empire could become states which were independent in their domestic affairs. In the matters of defense, international relations and economics, two states would act together (Kontler, 1999: 278). In this dual structure where both Budapest and Vienna were capitals, both countries would have their own constitution, government and parliament (Tustall, 2003: 114). Thus, 1867 Conciliation has established an Austro-Hungarian monarchy which was integrated with the "Austria Emperor and Hungarian King” capacity of Franz Josef. Real development of Hungary has started as of this date (Eddie, 1967: 293). However, 1867 regulations could not achieve success because three huge races, that is Germans, Hungarians and Galicia Polish, tried to establish a global superiority on others. Administrative structures were appearing so complicated, while Germans in Bohemia were able to govern Czechs; Hungarians in Hungary were able to govern Slovaks, Romanians and Croatians; and Polish in Galicia were able to govern Ukrainians. Accordingly, the pressures were causing each isolated nation to be captivated by the nationalism (Davies, 2006: 875).

2. Geographical Areas Lost by Hungarians In the Consideration of Regulations After World War I.

At the early stages of twentieth century, three quarter lands of Europe were governed by three Empires; Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Russia. In 1914, Balkan lands of Ottoman Empire were disintegrated so as to form six independent states. In 1918, Central and Eastern European lands have experienced such a similar conversion by the defeat of Czarist Russia and disintegration of Austro-Hungarian Empire. Eight consecutive states have been founded as result of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and Paris Agreements out of the lands of these two empires. Dominance of Russia on Finland, Poland and three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was abolished. Also St. Germain (1919) and Triannon (1920) treaties confirmed the demolition of Habsburg monarchy and foundation of Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia states (Lee, 2000: 258, Sander, 1995: 293). Triannon Peace stroke all of a heap for Hungarians. By the treaty Presburg has been devolved on Czechoslovakia, Burgenland on Austria, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina on Yugoslavia and Transylvania on Romania (Armaoğlu, 1983: 180).

Reasons of local crisis, international disputes and total wars which contributed the development of the dictatorial regimes in this part of Europe, are hidden in the matters to which these eight consecutive states have encountered. First of these problems is ethnical incorporation of consecutive states. In theory Paris Agreement is quite conceivable; the “nations

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2 For detailed information about the change in the demography and land losses occurred by Treaties, see: Miklos Molnar, A Concise History of Hungary, UK; Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 262.
principle” that is based on President Wilson’s self-determination, has discriminated in practice in Austria and Hungary. Huge German and Hungarian minorities have left their homelands while new borders were drawn. Such as Hungarian population in Slovakia, 3.1 million Germans in Sudetenland have entered the rule of Czechs. The reason of this circumstance is that Sudetenland was an industrial zone which was very essential for Czech economy (Lee, 2000: 258). Triannon Peace did not result only in displacement of Hungarian minorities, but also in Hungarians having lost their two thirds of lands they owned. Borders of the country do not coincide with the borders of the nation (Antonsich and Szalkai, 2014: 2). For this reason Triannon Peace is a national mourning for Hungarians (Stratfor, 2010, www.stratfor.com).

Ethnical conflicts comprise of mergence of economic difficulties. The second problem is having Austro-Hungarian empire shared their industrial and agricultural lands lopsidedly. For example, though Czechoslovakia came in for only 27% of the empire population, almost 80% of its heavy industry was at a level able to compete successfully with many Western industrial countries. Hungary was less lucky. Though specialized engineering and wood working factory constitute approximately 80-90 percent, Hungarians were able to achieve iron ore less than 89 percent and timber less than 85 percent (Lee, 2000: 259). Moreover formation of the free trade areas in the region where 55 million people were living was hindered. If textile industry is an example, spinning was gathered in Austria and weaving was gathered in Bohemia. After 1919, new independent stated had to establish an economy so as to stay at balance in the aspect of agriculture and industry in the regions where are not developed yet. For this reason Austria had to strengthen the weaving sector and Bohemia had to strengthen the spinning sector (Lee, 2000: 259).

Third problem is that both economic crisis and institutional irregularities have caused political instabilities. In 1918 and 1919 consecutive states started preparations for constitution and progressive features of Western democratic thinking such as general voting right, proportional representation right and certain control of legislation on the execution; have been adopted as a holy feature in new regimes. One of the big disappointments in the period between two wars is having these constitutions could not process properly in the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, except Czechoslovakia. Hungary experienced very severe changes in this context. Mihály Károly who took office as Prime Minister of Hungary on 31st of October 1918, lost the public support at first because of the lack of social services and military failures in February, 1919; and he resigned when alliance forces claimed more lands from Hungary on 21st of March 1919. Upon this circumstance, Hungary Communist Party took office from extremist right-wing under the dictatorship of Bela Kun, and declared Hungarian Soviet Republic. After 133 days of government by Bela Kun, authoritative conservative Horthy regime and Gyula Gömbös who was having good relations with Germany in 1932 came into power. Gömbös was at extreme nationalist wing and was pursuing a politics on the favor of Maygarization politics. In 1935, it is started to be governed by Ferenc Szelasi who was a Nazi supporter from the most right-wing (Lee, 2000: 259).

3. Hungarians’ Irredentism Politics in the Period Between Two World Wars

Once first liberal government of independent Hungary resigned, first time in the country a communist regime has been established after Russia however Hungarian revolution ended in a short while. Hungarian communists took over the government with support of both former military officers and social democrat together with the promise that Slovaks and Romanians would be discharged from the contradictive regions. In June, 1919 Hungary occupied Slovakia.
and a new constitution has been accepted, all industrial organizations were nationalized, and church properties were seized. However, Hungarians wakened the sleeping enemy with their this act and a group dissident military officer gathered under leadership of Admiral Horthy applied to Romania with the claim of help. Romanian army entered in Budapest in August and put an end to the Hungary Soviet Republic (Davies, 2006: 979-980).

In 1920, Miklos Horthy who declared the regime of "Kingdom without a King", tried to restore Hungarian monarchy by removing 1867 Conciliation in domestic policy (Ahlbrandt, 1993: 133). In this period, dichotomies emerged which were effecting each other by the competition between the big forces in the region among the consecutive states in international politics. Hungary pursued the policy to claim Hungarian lands that they lost from their Slavic neighbors in accordance with the irredentist politics, and for this reason they followed a revisionist way. Geopolitical aim of Hungary in this aspect was specified as returning to their prewar lands. The aim is land revisionism that is to take Slovakia, Burgenland and Transylvania back. Anti-Bolshevism had influence in international politics. Effect of the Hungarian nationalism's texture on politics is quite high. Within this period while nationalist secessionism of Czechoslovakia was being supported, common borders have been strengthened with Poland (Sakmyster, 1975: 21-22, Winchester, 1973: 741).

As Austria lost the role of being a great power, an Anschluss or Unity politics have been tried to be pursued with Germany. Baltic countries were focused on mainly to continue their existence. After 1920 these politics were resulted in emergence of two blocks. At one hand a group took place which comprises of Austria and Hungary and wants to get Paris Agreement revised. This idea has been completed by having Anschluss and Hungary to be a member of Hitler's Anti-Comitern Treaty. Second block was comprised of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania (Lee, 2000: 260).

Hungary got closer with Germany in this period. By entrance of Germany into Hitler period, rapid recovery of the country in spite of the affected German economy after war, effected Hungarian civil government apart from the military bureaucracy deeply. At this point nationalist structure of Hungary and the conservative inclination in the government were affected from Germany's authoritative orientation. Arming attempt of Hitler for Rhineland and his consideration towards Czechoslovakia's existence in this area as a threatening, served Hungarian geopolitics. Especially Berlin ambassador Sztojay did not hide his racist inclination. This inclination created a contradictive situation in the power struggle of Hungary to a large extent. An argument emerged between the conservative civil leaders and military officers who don't want to determine the international politics with a direct racist government (Sakmyster, 1975: 26).

Countries in this region established close diplomatic relations with each other relying on the France's guarantee against the attacks of other forces during 1920s. The politics that Hungary pursued during Poland crisis, accelerated Czechoslovakia-Yugoslavia cooperation. This cooperation is not a new formation. Actually Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia made cooperation in 1920 during peace conference among them (Orde, 1980: 483). Hungary signed an entente cordiale with Italy in April, 1927 in order to break "Little Entente" principle that is comprised of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania (Armaoğlu, 1983: 180).

1930s are "diplomatic war" years. Nazi Germany tried to impose their own wills to the European countries (Winchester, 1973: 741). In this period, while Hitler turning the European
map upside down by anti-Semitism politics, was also trying to pull some countries at his side. Hungary was taking place in this politics of Hitler. Hungarians became one of the practitioners of anti-Semitism by approaching with sympathy to Hitler who offered them the lands that they lost by Triannon Treaty. In this accordance, Cross Arrow party which was a racist party has been established by Ferenc Szálasi in 1935 in Hungary. By these politics, also Little Entente started to receive damages. Czechoslovakia succeeded to resist German effect. However Czechoslovakia has been attacked by Germany, Hungary and Poland who were living and claiming rights in Sudetenland and the south of Slovakia, in 1938. West failed to support Czechoslovakia as a buffer zone against Soviet attacks (Lee, 2000: 260).

Having Hitler occupying Bohemia and Moravia in March, 1939 showed that aims of Führer are not limited with German geography only. Central and Eastern Europe countries found themselves in a situation open to the attacks. Reich's rising political and economical pressure at west, and Soviet Union which wants to spread Communist regime at east of them took place (Winchester, 1973: 741). By signatory of German-Italian alliance named "Patto d'acciaio" in 1939, the gap between Axis and West deepened more (Armaoğlu, 1983: 295-296). Moreover, in August, 1939 Stalin started to find solutions to completely remove the memories of Brest-Litovks Treaty as he was agreeing with Hitler about division of Poland and share of Eastern Europe as German and Soviet influence areas (Lee, 2000: 260).

Hungary has been taken into "Three Power Pact" on 20th of November 1940 with Romania upon the success that Germany achieves in the way towards World War II. Even, after Germany occupies Yugoslavia, Banat part of this country has been devolved on Hungary. Macedonia was devolved on Bulgaria and Slovenia was devolved on Italy. However the course of the war changed by war declaration of Germany against Soviet Russia on 22nd of June 1941.

Soviet Russia cooperated with West and Germany's superiority on Europe ended. Russian forces entered in Hungary and Yugoslavia after Bulagria. Miklos, one of the Hungarian generals, cooperated with Russians together with the Hungarian forces under his command and established a temporary government. Miklos government signed a treaty with Soviets on behalf of the allies on 20th of January 1945 and Hungary was sentenced to pay 100 million dollars to Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and 200 million dollars to Soviets as war indemnity (Armaoğlu, 1983: 374-397).

Conclusion

By referring to the word of Ibni Haldun "geography is fate", history of Hungary is developed over having settled on a junction point of east and west, where is compliant to the Europe's human life and having rich sources. After Hungary was emerged as a national state being captivated by nationalism movement, the course of history for this country has changed by Tirannon Treaty in 1920. Hungarians were exposed to economic losses and they lost very important lands in the aspect of politics, by the treaty in question. As of that date, the geopolitics of Hungary became the establishment of "Greater Hungary" by taking the lost lands back. In this context, revisionist policies have been adopted in the period between two wars.

It is observed that Hungarian international politics have been formed actually in the context of changes occurred in domestic politics between years 1919-1943. Years 1938 and 1941 became milestones of Hungarian history. It is seen that Hungary inclines towards Slovakia in order to realize "land revision" in 1938. In 1941, the German superiority in Europe is
damaged as result of having Soviets made alliance with West and started counter attacks, and Hungary has been attacked by Soviets. This international politic doctrine which aims to reunite Hungarians who left their homelands, based on land revisionism, couldn't be realized and so ended. From that time on, Hungary is far from the dream of realizing a change in this direction. However, this is an ideal and Hungarians bear the dream of "Greater Hungary" in their hearts.

REFERENCE


