

Abstract:

Fault line wars as collateral damages of a World Order: The case of China and Paraguay faced with the Congress of Vienna

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The Congress of Vienna was one of the most important turning points not only of European history. To diplomacy this congress was considered as an order of peace by means of political communication: This idea gave birth to the modern system of diplomacy with extraterritorial embassies<sup>1</sup>. The European international order should be kept by the principle of the balance of power, which was vaguely known since the treaty of Westphalia, but it was not made explicit before the congress of Vienna<sup>2</sup>. Anyway, 19<sup>th</sup> century modernity was imposed as standards of “civilized life” against “barbarians”: The Empire of the civilized nations<sup>3</sup> established by the congress of Vienna had a “barbarian frontier”<sup>4</sup>. Two show-cases will make visible this approach: (1) The opium wars against China (as interpreted by political scientists)<sup>5</sup> and (2) the war of the Triple-Alliance against Paraguay.

Concerning (1) China: Rivalling forms of states in Asia were for instance “solar states” in South-East Asia<sup>6</sup> defined by the sacred centre as sun and the provinces as planets and China, defining itself as *zhong-guo*, the center of a civilized way of life<sup>7</sup>. The congress of Vienna moulded the idea to make China paying the price for her political system: To political scientists the so-called Opium wars enforced China’s integration into the system of diplomacy as negotiated at the Congress of Vienna. Kindermann<sup>8</sup> even employs Sam Huntington’s clash-of-civilization theory<sup>9</sup>. The Western nations’ embassies should be established in the sacred centre of the Sinic civilization: Beijing. In fact, it was an enforced opening of the Chinese market to opium and the beginning of the decline and fall of the Chinese imperial civilization. The damages of the Opium war obscured the pernicious impact of the Taiping rebellion, which was driven by a mixture of religious ideas originating in South China with a vague idea of Christendom. The Taiping challenged the canonized state ideology of the Qing dynasty (the Manchus). The problem is that in Asia (or what Marx tried to explain as “Asiatic mode of production”<sup>10</sup>) conflicts over religion (Islamic world) or standards of civilization (China) were the idiom to articulate class conflicts.

The (2) Paraguayan war: In South America a similar conflict occurred: The war of the Triple Alliance against the government of the Republic of Paraguay (1864-1870): It was This the first total war in history with a slaughter similar to the World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

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<sup>1</sup> This abstract is based on a paper published in German: Uwe Christian Plachetka: “Der Krieg, den der Wiener Kongress auslöste” *Der KonaK* 70 (1) 2013, pp.31-37 (Vienna)

<sup>2</sup> Arno Strohmeyer: [in German] *Theorie der Interaktion. Das europäische Gleichgewicht der Kräfte in der frühen Neuzeit*, Böhlau, Wien, Köln, Weimar 1994

<sup>3</sup> A minimalist definition of an Empire holds that an Empire is a World System brought under a central authority’s aegis (Terence N. D’Altroy: *The Incas*, Blackwell 2003, pp.14-15).

<sup>4</sup> Herwig Münkler [German original] *Imperien*, rororo, Berlin 2005, pp. 127-167

<sup>5</sup> Henry Kissinger: *On China* (2011), German edition: *China. Zwischen Tradition und Herausforderung*, Pantheon, München 2012, pp. 45-82.

<sup>6</sup> Victor Lieberman: *Strange Parallels. Southeast Asia in Global context Vol.1: Integration on the Mainland*, Oxford University Press, Oxford et.al. 2003, p.33

<sup>7</sup> Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer [in German] *China. Vielvölkerreich und Einheitsstaat. Von den Anfängen bis heute*, C.H. Beck, München 1997

<sup>8</sup> Karlheinz Kindermann [in German] *Der Aufstieg Ostasiens in der Weltpolitik 1840-2000*, dvA. Stuttgart-München 2001

<sup>9</sup> Samuel P. Huntington „The Clash of Civilizations?“ *Foreign Affairs* 72(3), pp.22-49

<sup>10</sup> Dieter Eich: [in German] *Ayllú und Staat der Inka. Zur Diskussion über die asiatische Produktionsweise* (Editionen der Iberoamericana III,11) vervuet, Frankfurt am Main 1983

About 2/3 of the male population of Paraguay were killed off. This reminds on “ethnic cleansing” as it happened during the Yugoslav civil wars. Was the Paraguayan war therefore a *fault line war* according to Huntington? Whereas Huntington’s reification of civilizations is to be rejected the road to the fault line is palpable to a good historian who can cope with some shortage of historical documents<sup>11</sup>. The conflicts were already provoked with Austria’s acknowledgement of Paraguay’s independence in 1847: The unified provinces of La Plata to become Argentine<sup>12</sup> were backed by Great Britain, whereas Paraguay fighting against its enforced unification was backed by Brazil and Austria, although people spoke Guarani there and the conception of state and government were closer to pre-Columbian American ideas than to the political discussions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as we will see. The Guarani issue probably fuelled Francisco Solano Lopez’ hope to win the war of the Triple Alliance<sup>13</sup> he declared to back Uruguay avoiding puppet regime of Brazil jeopardizing the balance of power in the mouth of the Rio de la Plata, Paraguay’s gate to the world. This explanation is considered as trustworthy<sup>14</sup> as the Congress of Vienna declared the principle of the balance of power to the pattern of international relations. But Paraguay was beyond the “barbarian frontier” of the system of the Congress of Vienna: Paraguay was a nation state based on Guarani legacy in a more profound way as Kahle assumed<sup>15</sup>: It was not the (documented) Spanish-Guarani alliance of the 16<sup>th</sup> century but the 18<sup>th</sup> century Comuneros revolt<sup>16</sup> the charter era<sup>17</sup> of nationality. Lasting from 1721 to 1816 as a phenomenon of longitudinal history<sup>18</sup> traces are found by discourses on people’s sovereignty mentioned in documents: The Paraguayan hostility to the nearby Jesuit missions may be explained by 19<sup>th</sup> century lower class Paraguayan notion of nationalism derived from the Guarani view of the world mingled with a regional version of Catholicism<sup>19</sup>: The Jesuits as papal crack troops of Catholicism could never accept such a phenomenon. After Paraguay’s independence in 1811 Dr. Francia was in fact the leader of a populist revolution<sup>20</sup>. His successor Carlos Antonio López is explicit on the “revolución popular” in a political mission statement mentioned in his letter to the Austrian Emperor Ferdinand<sup>21</sup> in 1847. Therefore the goals of the war of the Triple Alliance were kept secret: The replacement of the Paraguayan government possibly by the “Paraguayan league” composed by upper class Paraguayan expats hostile to the populist

<sup>11</sup> Uwe Christian Plachetka: [in German], „Paraguay im Lichte des normativen und interaktiven Multikulturalismus. Eine Korrektur der grundlegenden Irrtümer Samuel P. Huntingtons anhand des Fallbeispiels Paraguay bis 1870“ *Wiener Ethnohistorische Blätter* 44 (1999), pp.3-49

<sup>12</sup> Diplomatic notes in the imperial archive of the Hapsburg monarchy (Haus-Hof und Staatsarchiv) between 1846 and 1850 concerning Austria’s acknowledgement of Paraguay’s sovereignty endorse the ideological alliance between Argentina and Great Britain against Paraguay versus Brazil and Austria in favor of Paraguay (cited in Plachetka (1999) n. 11).

<sup>13</sup> Corrientes and Entre Rios were then populated by “civilized” Guaranies, which may explain Francisco Solano’s miscalculation that these Argentine provinces would join Paraguay’s side (Leslie Bethell: *The Paraguayan War (1864-1870)*” (University of London, Institute of Latin American Studies Research Papers 46) University of London 1996

<sup>14</sup> Diego Abente “The War of the Triple Alliance: Three explanatory models” *Latin American Research Review* 22(2) (1987), pp. 47-69

<sup>15</sup> Guenther Kahle: [in German] *Grundlagen und Anfänge des paraguayenischen Nationalbewusstseins*, Dissertation, Köln 1962

<sup>16</sup> Royal Library of Prussia Manuscripts (Ms.It.) Codex Phillips 1947, see: Uwe Christian Plachetka: “A new document on the comuneros revolt in Paraguay” *Américas* 16 (4) 2000, pp.51-62 (Vienna).

<sup>17</sup> A “charter era” refers to the foundations of a specific political system (Lieberman (2003) n.6, p.23)

<sup>18</sup> Uwe Chr. Plachetka [in German] “Comuneros zur Revolution popular” *Américas* 15 (3) 2000, pp. 63-107 (Vienna)

<sup>19</sup> Michael Kenneth Huner: *Sacred Cause, Divine Republic: A History of Nationhood, Religion, and War in Nineteenth- Century Paraguay, 1850-1870*. Dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA, 2011

<sup>20</sup> Richard Allan White: *La primera revolución popular en America. Paraguay (1810-1840)*, Asunción del Paraguay 2<sup>a</sup> edición 1989

<sup>21</sup> Plachetka (1999) n. 11. The British protest against Austria’s acknowledge of Paraguay’s independence printed in 1849 blames Austria to export the revolution of 1848 to South America (ibid).

regime. This target is more audacious than the proclaimed goal of the Opium wars: It was in fact an assault against a nation's sovereignty due to its domestic affairs and its "ethno-policy".

Consequently South American conceptions of state and kingship are to be identified<sup>22</sup> now facilitated by the first complete edition of Juan Polo de Ondegardos reports on Inca statecraft to the Spanish king<sup>23</sup>. Whereas the Inca Empire was probably shaped by the foregone disasters of the Medieval Climatic Anomaly as argued by Ann Kendall and Alex Chepstow Lusty<sup>24</sup> there is too little assured knowledge to reconstruct the *cosmovisión* of the recently discovered civilizations in the Amazonian basin and the forgotten Western part of the "Jesuit state", that means Moxos and the Chiquitania in present Bolivia, whereas the Alto Xingú region was already investigated by Heckenberger. The Jesuit missions had started on the Upper Paraná River. Paraguay's situation at the frontier<sup>25</sup> was possibly responsible for original American ideas of statecraft, so that Carlos Antonio López searched diplomatic relations to cross the "imperial frontier" of the political world order stipulated by the congress of Vienna. But when Francisco Solano López insisted on the rules, he soon learned that Paraguay was still beyond the frontier.

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<sup>22</sup> Pierre Clastres argues that the Guarani people didn't accept even the idea of a state. The problem is that recent archaeological findings indicate civilizations in the Amazon region, whose legacy is the so-called *terra preta antropogênica* or *terra preta de indio* which even caused a business bonanza.

<sup>23</sup> Polo de Ondegardo: *El Orden del Inca*, edited by Andrés Chirinos and Martha Zegarra, Editorial comentarios, Lima 2013

<sup>24</sup> Ann Kendall, Alex Chepstow Lusty „Cultural and environmental change in the Cuzco region of Peru: Rural development implications of combined archaeological and paleoecological evidence“: Working paper #19 on [www.cusichaca.org](http://www.cusichaca.org), copy archived by the author.

<sup>25</sup> Huner (2011), n.19