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The Origins of the World Wars I and II
The Contribution of the Cognitive-Developmental Approach
To the Explanation of the 20th century's Catastrophe

Georg W. Oesterdiekhoff

Karlsruhe Institute for Technology, Department of Sociology, Germany
PO Box 6980, Karlsruhe 76128
Professor
E-mail: Oesterdiekhoff@t-online.de

Abstract

The realistic school of political sciences explains politics and wars by reference to "rationality" and "material interests". However, a look at the political world of the first half of the 20th century shows forms of mind, culture, worldview, and behavior that are predominantly submerged in today´s most advanced nations. Racism, antisemitism, aggressive nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, and warfare for conquest targets shaped the political life. Cross-cultural psychology has evidenced that the generations born around 1870 or 1900 stood on intermediary psychological stages between those of humans from folk societies (R. Redfield) and from today´s most advanced nations. The rise of the adolescent stage of formal operations stepwise unfolded during the whole 20th century, while the earlier generations stood on lower stages. Accordingly, the intelligence of the peoples increased especially between 1950 and 1990 in consequence of school and job enrichments, a phenomenon the psychometric intelligence research calls Flynn effect. This article demonstrates that only the new developmental approach has the means available to disclose the psychological structures behind the former political life and the two world wars. The psychological advancement after 1950 is the main motor behind the humanitarian revolution (S. Pinker) that caused the changes and ameliorations of the moral and political life observable both on the national and international level. The considerate analysis of the causes to the world wars reveals that the instability of the international system originated in forms of mind and reason that are vanished nowadays not only in the Western world but partially beyond. The former instability of the international system, which led to the wars, has not institutional causes but mental ones describable by modern psychological approaches. On the whole, the 20th century catastrophe does not originate in the eternal structure of the human psyche but in a certain developmental stage modern humans occupied at that time.

Keywords: world wars, political culture, developmental psychology, historical anthropology.

Introduction

The social, political and cultural atmosphere and life of the today´s most advanced nations differs a lot of that it was around 1900 or 1940. The most advanced nations of that time had

occupied most parts of the non-Western world. In 1909, the British Empire dominated around 25 % of the world´s surface, feeling the right and duty to govern as much territory and people as possible. The French Empire amounted 8 % of the globe´s territories. The Russians had just accomplished the biggest conquest European peoples had ever conducted, governing as an Empire the entire North Asia. Many other nations, such as Italy, Germany, Belgium or Japan tried to expand, too, having the successful examples just for their eyes (Ferguson, 2003; Knopp, 2010).

Struggle for colonies, influence, power, and prestige caused never-ending tensions, diplomatic conflicts, turmoils, combats, and wars. The public opinion in these nations observed with a high attentiveness and patriotic passion the struggles, the readiness of their governments for fight to defend the nation´s position in the world hierarchy, and the activities of foreign nations. There was a high expectation that governments have to react with energy or even with violence in case of actual or alleged insults or embarrassments affected by other nations. A cult of honor, as among private persons in former times who occasionally resorted to duels in conflicts, penetrated the public discussion of international relations. Therefore, the threshold to start wars seems to have been much lower than it is today (Haffner, 2001b; Fischer, 2004; Herzfeld, 1991; Meyer, 1991).

France declared war on Germany 1870 because Berlin did not want to guarantee that in future no other Hohenzollern aristocrat would ever try again to become the king of Spain. Although the candidate had rejected the Spain´s offer due to the French threats, the missing declaration regarding future possibilities, a really immaterial option, was enough to start a war. Endless bundles of international treaties, conferences, and diplomatic activities in the Bismarck era and later on tried to smooth the never-ending tensions. However, again and again the nations were struck into conflicts that could have led to multinational conflagrations in the whole period from 1890 to 1914. Especially the tensions regarding Morocco and Bosnia in 1905, 1908 and 1911 could have aroused the Great War. The reasons behind were immaterial compared with the effects of the war but, notwithstanding, such small reasons repeatedly led the nations to the edge of war. The struggle for influence on the Balkan between Russia and the Danube monarchy then caused the World War I. It was a war that developed to a struggle for the decision which powers might dominate Europe (Haffner, 2001b; Meyer, 1991).

After 1918, the international atmosphere was far from getting much better. The whole period 1918-1939 was again and again in a steady expectation of a new war especially Germany would start to revise the treaty of Versailles. Among others, the main reason to World War II was the idea of Hitler to conquer Eastern Europe to build up there an empire which dominates greater parts of Western Eurasia. The Western nations, however, did not want to see a growing Germany, which could dwarf their influence. Therefore, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany after its invasion into Poland. Apparently, the two world wars belong to the era of imperialism and colonialism. Nazi Germany wanted to colonize Eastern Europe in a similar way as the European nations had colonized North America or Africa one or two generations earlier, by oppression, removal or exploitation of the indigenous peoples. Japan wanted to do the same with greater parts of Asia (Bracher, 1991; Churchill, 2010, pp. 125; Ferguson, 2004, pp. 292-300; Overy, 2002; Parker, 1998).

The imperialistic nations governed the indigenous peoples without giving them liberty rights, democracy, and independence. Often enough, racist ideas, according to them only European peoples have the capacity and the right to rule justified these authoritarian regimes in the colonies. Denial of democracy and of the principle of sovereignty of territory, and the readiness to conquests and wars are the inevitable preconditions to the empires the European nations erected right across the whole world. Altogether, the two world wars originate in the era of imperialism, in its culture and worldview.

However, the fundamental principles of imperialism, colonialism and world wars are the same that governed the world politics since ancient times. The politics of the ancient empires since Alexander and Caesar, Karl the Great or Czar Ivan base on similar ideas and practices. Only the means available differ. Hitler´s ideas on fight for land for people to settle and to grow as the main principle of history describe what reality was in former times. Therefore, the world history was a history of never-ending wars to defend or to build up states (Keeley, 1996; Keegan, 1993).

Some authors maintain that this kind of international affairs has vanished in the few past generations. Already H. Spencer and A. Comte announced in the 19th century that wars do not

match to modern, industrial societies but only to the former, military societies. Some political scientists now say that the "world of states" has transformed to a "world of societies" where nations try to settle any conflicts in peaceful ways and to care only for well-being, freedom, and security of their people. A peaceful world mainly depends from guarantees regarding the existence of democracy, liberty rights, and constitutional state. These principles realized avoid the existence of ethnic differences regarding the control of state, economy, and territory that is slavery, oppression of minorities, exploitation, and annihilation. Democratic structures, valid and given to every human and ethnicity, make therefore wars impossible, as already I. Kant recognized. Warfare can only exist in a non-democratic world, where at least one party involved violates the principles of democracy (Czempiel, 2002; Pinker, 2011; Berghahn, 2002). Correspondingly, the number of wars has been declining over the past decades. Basically, there happened over the past 25 years only a few conquests of territory across the globe.

Of course, there are some materialistic reasons too to this trend of pacification, for example, the increase of the destruction potential of arms, especially the atomic bomb, or the increase of economic richness and international economic dependencies. Both factors evidently lever the threshold to exert violence. However, some authors maintain that mainly psychological developments account both to the former warfare mentality and to the recent trend of pacification. Pinker (2011, pp. 260-261, 367-373) contends that some kind of psychological maturation of the humankind has caused this pacification trend. He writes that the former humankind was more childish and primitive, had a lower threshold to exert violence and cruelty, and had more difficulties to develop feelings such as sympathy, compunction, conscience, and guilt. Elias (1976), in his theory of civilization, describes the same, namely that the former humankind led endless wars due to this childish-primitive mentality. Conversely, Elias writes, as Pinker does too, that the decline of wars, accompanied by the decline of violence in society regarding gender relations, child upbringing, etc., originates in the psychological maturation of people in recent subsequent processes of civilization.

Even at first glance this theory of Elias and Pinker seems to be fruitful, although contradicting to the Political Correctness ideologies of our time, especially prevalent in the international social sciences. If we namely hear today a speech of Hitler and Mussolini, consider the actions of Cecil Rhodes or Carl Peters or the existence of the British rule over India, etc. we have the feeling that these things seem to come from a distant era of mankind. Is it possible that the psychological world of the world wars, the psychological structures of the generations born 1870 or 1900, are vanished with these people themselves? Is it possible that the past two generations have transformed their psychological structures in a way that would make the political affairs happening between 1914 and 1945 impossible to reappear? Are Obama, Hollande, Merkel, Cameron, and Putin psychologically advanced in comparison to Roosevelt, Churchill, Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini in a way that they would act otherwise when set into the same international system or in the same offices as they existed in 1940? Would they act otherwise even if they knew nothing about that what happened between 1914 and 1945, simply due to hypothetically existent different – advanced – psychological structures? Basically, do the world wars root in rests of the still more primitive mentality of the former generations, rests that died out in the meantime at least in the most advanced nations and partially beyond them?

1. Developmental psychology as Historical anthropology

There are psychological data that evidence the psychological maturation of the people of the most advanced nations even across the few past generations. Both the psychometric intelligence research and the Piagetian cross-cultural psychology (PCCP) have shown that both former European generations and generally the former humankind stood on lower psychological stages than the present generations do. According to the first approach mentioned, Europeans and North Americans of 1930 had intelligence scores of 75 or less when compared to modern adjustments. The 10 % of the most intelligent people of 1930 would now belong to the 10 % of the weakest. The biggest intelligence push ever seen in world history took place between 1950 and 1990, due to more and enriched school attendance, job qualifications, etc. observable in this period. These gains are not limited to the most advanced industrial nations but concern more or less many peoples across the five continents. The non-Western nations, including the Asian ones, 80 or 100 years ago, scored still lower as the Western nations did. They participated into the 20th century gains in case

they lived in societies which stood under modernization pressure. Only in archaic and traditional social milieus people have conserved their lower intelligence scores partially by today as they had done right across the whole history of humankind (Flynn, 2007; Oesterdiekhoff, 2009a, 2012b, 2013a, b; Rindermann, 2008; Irvine & Berry, 1988).

Archaic or traditional peoples with scores of 50 have the "mental age" of children aged seven; premodern or early modern peoples with scores of 75 have the mental age of teenagers aged 13 roughly. Accordingly, present-day peoples with scores of 100 have the mental age of roughly 20 (Inhelder, 1963; Oesterdiekhoff, 2012b, 2013b). Thus, the present-day generation in the modern, industrial world and elsewhere is disconnected from the grand-parents´ generation by more or less 5 or more developmental years. The Western peoples around 1930 stood on transitional stages between premodern or traditional peoples and those of the current time. Does this explain why a people admired a man (Kershaw, 1999) whose book "Mein Kampf", widely revealing the plans behind the Barbarossa campaign and much more, was sold a million copies before 1939? My answer is "yes". For example, it would be impossible for the current Belgian president to publish a book where he writes about the intention to restore the Leopold regime in Congo or for the US-American president to repeat the statement of T. Roosevelt that 9 of 10 Indians have deserved to be killed. On the whole, the peoples have radically changed their mind in a way describable only by developmental psychology.

The developmental approach considerably supports these psychometric data. According to J. Piaget, the human development unfolds through four main stages, the sensorimotor, the preoperational, the concrete-operational and the formal-operational stages. Psyche and personality, reason and consciousness, the understanding of logic, physics, social, moral, religious and political subjects dramatically change on every new stage (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). More than 1000 empirical studies, conducted in more than 100 cultures and milieus since 1930 roughly, have shown that premodern peoples (folk societies according to a term of R. Redfield) do not develop the formal-operational stage but stay on preoperational or concrete-operational stages (or mixtures of both). Peoples of modern, advanced nations develop the formal-operational stage stepwise between their 10th and 20th year of life. Every year between 0-20 can be a full developmental year, bringing the person to a higher stage of psychological life. About 50 % of modern people develop stage A of formal operations; the other half goes after its 15th year of life beyond to develop stage B. On the whole, the developmental age or mental age of modern peoples sways between the 10th and the 20th year; that of pre-modern peoples commonly sways between the fifth and the tenth year. Modern culture, school attendance, job qualifications, etc., forces and attracts people to develop beyond the childish stages, while the smaller incentives of premodern cultures cause the "arrested development" (Dasen & Berry, 1974; Dasen, 1977; Hallpike, 1979; Luria, 1982; Mogdil & Mogdil, 1976, vol. 8; Piaget, 1974; Oesterdiekhoff, 2009a, 2011, 2012a, b, 2013a, b). Obviously, the psychometric and the developmental data match and evidence each other.

Schultze (1900) and Werner (1948) were the first to evidence the childlike psyche of folk societies in a clear, encompassing and convincing way. The next big step was made with J. Piaget (1975, 1932) who showed the resemblances between children and premodern adults (folk societies) regarding every possible aspect. C. Hallpike (1979, 2004) was the first to define that premodern adults differ from children by their knowledge and life experience but not by their psychological structures and stages. J. Habermas (1976), J. Ziégler (1968) and C. Radding (1985) belong to those who contributed to this idea, too. I wrote about the subject 13 books and many articles in the past 30 years, describing that the history of the humankind is only understandable against the notions of developmental psychology. I reconstructed the history of population, economy, society, culture, religion, philosophy, sciences, literature, law, politics, morals, violence in the light of the new theory called the structure-genetic theory programme. It explains endless chains of phenomena such as the rise of modern democracy and modern, industrial society, the rise of sciences and the era of Enlightenment, the humanitarian revolution and the recent pacification trend. It explains the core structures of human´s history on earth.

Table 1: Human development and history

Typical age (in modern societies)	Piagetian stage of psychological development	Societal evolution	Some characteristics of reason and practice
From birth to 2 years	Sensorimotor stage IQ up to 20	Mammal societies	Practical intelligence in space and time. Morals and inhibitions scarcely existent.
2-8	Preoperational stage IQ 20-50	Some premodern societies	Weak reasoning abilities and low sense for reality. Animistic understanding of nature; everything is alive. Belief in man-made magical power over things and beings. Practice of oracles and ordeals, punishment of unintended consequences, and belief in eternal and divine rules (non-differentiation between nature and society). Belief in myths and fairy tales. Adherence to authorities and support of hierarchies. God himself rules law and government. Support of severe punishment. Weak tolerance of deviating opinions. High tendency to verbal and physical aggressions, declining from the third year onwards. Still low conscience and morals.
6-12	Stage of concrete operations IQ 50-75	Some premodern societies	Belief in man-made magic disappears gradually. Animistic schemes and other irrational belief systems still persist somewhat. Attenuation of the adherence to unilateral social relations and hierarchies. Still high tendency to verbal and physical aggressions. Preference of a law-and-order moral.
10-20	Stage of formal operations IQ beyond 70	Modern, industrial societies	The evolution of rational, combinatoric, systematic, and logical structures of reason takes place. The preconditions to the rational and scientific worldview emerge. Disappearance of magical beliefs, animistic schemes, and other forms of mysticism. Disenchantment of the worldview. Evolution of understanding for humanism, democracy, tolerance and human rights. Enlightenment and rationality shape the adolescent stage. Enthusiasm for moral and political ideals. Decline of verbal and physical aggressions. Ability grows for overtaking alien perspectives, empathy, compunction, conscience, etc. Tendency to support higher morals and pacifism.

2. The stepwise trend of psychological development and modernization

During the 17th century some scientists and philosophers in Europe were the first to erect the formal-operational stage (Piaget, 1950). The era of Enlightenment originated in the spread of the formal-operational stage in wider circles and social milieus. During this period the childish magical-animistic and fairy tale worldview of the Middle Ages came under criticism. Furthermore, the criticism of slavery, feudalism, tyranny, brutal punishment law and the evolution of the ideas of democracy and human rights are clear indicators of the evolving formal-operational stage in this era (Oesterdiekhoff, 2011, 2013a, b, 2014a, b, c, d, 2015). However, the common people only partially

shared these evolutionary advancements. Even the intellectual elites would be backward with this regard in comparison to present stages and standards. The childish belief in magic, superstition, witches, sorcerers or the support of tyranny, slavery, brutal punishment law etc. lessened but did not vanish. The last shadows of these manifestations of the childish stages persisted by 1950 roughly, with decreasing tendencies from about 1700 onwards. A lot of archaic beliefs and superstitions, prevalent among Australian Aborigines, Black Africans or Indians in their indigenous cultures, still existed in Europe around 1850 or even 1900, of course not to the same extent and rate (Wuttke, 1860; Werner, 1948; Frazer, 1994; Oesterdiekhoff, 2011, 2013a, pp. 241-250).

These data of the European ethnology are clear proofs that the 19th century Europeans stood on intermediary stages between peoples of folk societies and people of today´s most developed nations. These data are supported by those that show that people from backward European regions such as South Italy around 1960 did not attain the formal operational stage. Similar empirical results from developing countries make it plausible too that Europeans of 1850 or even 1930 stood on transitional or intermediary stages with incomplete higher cognitive functions, a fact proven by the corresponding psychometric data mentioned too (Luria, 1982; Flynn, 2007; Dasen, 1977; Oesterdiekhoff, 2012a, b, 2013a, b; Peluffo, 1967).

It is apparent that the different political, social, cultural and moral climate in Europe (and the world) around 1900 or 1940 with its preponderance of monarchy, tyranny, and Führerstaat, with its political extremism, antisemitism, colonialism, imperialism, and war mentality originates in these lower psychological stages (see also Pinker, 2011, pp. 784, 977). I dare to maintain that the lower psychological stage is the conditio sine qua non not only of the beginning but also of the duration of the two wars. Conversely, the psychological advancement, describable by both the psychometric and the developmental approaches, having taking place in the past two generations, accounts to the process of democratization and pacification and to the diminution of political extremism, racism, and fanatism. Consequently, developmental psychology is the fundamental theory to explain political developments, both regarding national and international issues. Rosenberg et al. dedicated a complete book regarding the link between developmental psychology and political sciences: “We therefore conclude that only genetic-epistemological theories currently provide the psychological theory and cross-cultural validity (not to mention the normative support) required for a normative-psychological theory underlying a general political development.” (Rosenberg et all., 1988, p. 160).

3. Imperialism and colonialism

S. Pinker (2011), in his book on the history of violence, describes the frequency of wars in the premodern world and its diminution in the past generations. Between the years 900 and 2000, the number of 2314 militarian conflicts between sovereignties happened in Europe. 26 % of the Aristocrats in England from 1300 to 1500 died from homicide. To start war to conquer a foreign territory or to revenge an insult was a normal procedure. Violence penetrated intra- and international social relations, manifesting in duels, gender relations, child upbringing, class conflicts, and in wars between nations or cities (Pinker, 2011, pp. 136, 252, 350, 372, 390; Elias, 1976; Oesterdiekhoff, 2000, 2009b, 2011, 2012a). The era of colonization and imperialism are parts of this history of violence and war. It implied leading wars against indigenous people, to rule them and to conquer their territory. The imperialistic nations felt the legitimacy to govern foreign nations and to exploit their territories, thus violating the principles of democracy, liberty rights, and sovereignty. As I wrote above, this culture of war and conquest traces back to ancient times and has been surrendered only in very recent decades.

Great Britain had occupied in 1909 25 % of the world´s surface. C. Rhodes wanted to see the USA as a part of the British Empire. In 1919, politicians in Great Britain again considered that the British Empire should encompass the whole world. Canada developed war plans to conquer the USA, while the USA around 1930 prepared plans how to defend the country against conquest tries of the British Empire. In 1917 and especially in 1931, however, the transformation from colonies to dominions exhibited the grown independence of the former dependent territories within the British Empire (Ferguson, 2004, pp. 227, 240, 315; Overy, 2002; Parker, 1998).

The early expansion trend of the USA manifested in the purchase of Alaska from Russia and the occupation of the southern states in consequence of the war with Mexico, later on in the occupation of the Philippines after the war with Spain. Latin America increasingly felt oppressed by

the overweight of the USA. A world power, however, became the USA finally with their role in the two world wars. Only then they overcame their tendency of isolationism.

Russia completed as late as in 1905 its expansion trend it had begun some centuries before. It was one of the greatest expansions European peoples had ever conducted, leading to the conquest and Russification of the entire North Asia. It is somehow comparable to the Iberian conquest of Latin America, to the conquest of North America by a collection of many European nations or to the conquest of Australia and New Zealand by the Britons.

France had in 1909 about 8 % of the world´s surface and had colonies mainly in Africa and South East Asia. Germany had lost its colonies during WW I but started to compensate its losses with the Barbarossa campaign on Russia in 1941, targeting now territories in its neigbourhood and primarily not any more overseas. Japan had imperialistic interests, too. The Japanese tried from 1931 onwards to conquer China and additionally from 1941 onwards South East Asia, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Pacific islands, and possibly Australia and India. After 1941, for a span of a few years, it tried to conquer and to master the biggest parts of the Far East (Berghahn, 2002, pp. 157-159).

On the whole, we see in that period of time most of the influential nations running for world dominance, competing with each other for territories and urging the non-industrial nations to become a part of their empires. They did not only try to swallow as much territories as they could, they partially tried to get the whole world under its respective rule. Of course, this tendency was mostly unclear or not identifiable but sometimes, again and again, it emerged when the situation seemed favourable. So it was with Great Britain for many decades, with Germany after 1940 for a few years only, with Russia in connection to its dominance in the prospective communist world revolution as some kind of intended world hegemony of Moscow after 1921/1945-1990, with the USA in the whole post-war era, especially after 1990, and with Japan, too, however, limited to the Far East after 1931/1941. Of course, these world dominance policies may tremendously differ from each other. The USA did not want to dominate their dependent nations as colonies as most of the other nations wanted to. For example, the USA very early and mostly rejected the British colonial system, while Hitler admired it and was inspired by its success. Of course, the Nazis under Hitler would have mastered their colonies in a more brutal way than France or Great Britain did (Ferguson, 2004; Fischer, 2004; Fest, 2004, pp. 532, 1065; Giordano, 2004, pp. 27, 29, 39, 48, 73).

4. Strategic positions and origins of world wars

It would be wrong to contend that the institutional framework of the imperialistic world automatically aroused the wars between the imperialistic nations. Only wars against the nations destined to be colonized were inevitable provided the imperialistic system should be maintained. According to my following considerations not institutional frameworks but mentalities alone account to the outbreak of the two world wars. This implies that the imperialistic nations were not forced to lead wars in consequence of rational interests and rational strategies, objective circumstances or material needs. It was the atmosphere of mutual threats regarding invasions and conquests that aroused the two wars.

In 1883, J. R. Seeley published a bestseller, continuing in print by 1956, titled “The expansion of England”, where he prognosticated that in 50 years (1933) Russia and the USA would be the world powers, dwarfing the European nations such as Germany, France and Great Britain as second class nations. Only close relations between the colonies and London could hinder the fate France and Germany would have to face, Seeley wrote (Ferguson 2004, p. 248). Accordingly, in 1915, in the second year of the war, 1347 German intellectuals signed a memorandum and sent it to the chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, outlining the idea that Russia might be the greatest threat to Germany with 250 millions of Russians in 1940. They demanded annexing of Western Russia to expand Germany and to shorten Russian territories and power (Giordano 2004, p. 190). Already in 1913, the Generalstabschef Helmuth von Moltke saw a war between Slavs and Germans as inevitable, likewise the emperor Wilhelm II spoke of the necessary “race war” between these two nations respectively races (Fischer, 2004, p. 34, 139).

The decline of influence of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkan was replaced by the growing influence of Russia and the Danube monarchy in this region. While the Russians wanted to get the Balkan in its sphere by supporting the Slavic peoples as the Serbians, the Austrians wanted to hinder the Slavs by expanding their own influence in the region. Therefore, as Russia mobilized its army to lead war against the Danube monarchy in case of an attack on Serbia in 1914, Germany

declared war on Russia and France, its ally. German politicians, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals developed plans to use this war to occupy the territories of the Baltic countries, Ukraine, Poland, Belarus, Finland, Crimea, and Georgia. These territories were destined to become provinces or protectorates of Germany after victory. The authors of numerous memoranda, written between 1914 and 1918, outlining these war targets intended to enlarge Germany with the aim to become a greater world power, to weaken Russia and its threat, and to dominate Europe and the world. After the peace of Brest-Litowsk Germany had these aims before his eyes but only for about one year (Fischer, 2004, pp. 93, 139, 281, 427, 535, 536; Herzfeld, 1991; Meyer, 1991).

Hitler knew via Heß and Haushofer already in 1924 the theory of H. Mackinder that whoever masters Eastern Europe would dominate Eurasia – and upon this the whole world (Fest 2004, p. 324; Brzezinski 2002, p. 63). His idea to conquer "Lebensraum im Osten", at first the Western parts of Russia, followed ideas widespread in Germany in WW I and afterwards (Haffner, 2001b, p. 271-281; Giordano, 2004). He wanted to colonize Eastern Europe and Russia with German settlers to create a German empire with 200 million of Germans. The remaining Russians should be treated as the colonized Africans around 1900. Upon this basis, Hitler intended Germany to dominate whole Europe and Russia, later on Africa and possibly America and Asia, too. Hitler shared the idea that the greatest threats to Europe and Germany in near future are Russia and the USA. He saw only a few years available to prevent Russia from becoming too strong to defeat and to realize Germany´s world dominance (Baker, 2009, pp. 33, 34, 56, 57; Fest, 2004, pp. 909, 910, 1065; Haffner, 2001a; Kershaw, 2007).

Hitler´s war plan regarding Russia was probably the immediate cause to WW II. Great Britain and France were namely informed about Hitler´s plans to conquer an Eastern empire, with Poland as a first part of the campaign (Giordano, 2004, pp. 37, 38, 39, 48; Churchill, 2010, p. 125; Kershaw, 2007). They declared war on Germany to prevent Germany from building up this huge empire dominating whole Europe. They wanted to prevent Germany from conquering Eastern Europe as they knew that this conquest would destroy the balance of power on the continent. They estimated that they would lose their power or even their sovereignty in case Nazi Germany conquered Eastern Europe. On the whole, this constellation was similar to that of WW I. England declared war on Germany in 1914 because it felt threatened by a country that occupied Belgium, the Netherlands, and North France close to the channel. France saw in both wars Russia as the allied counterbalance to Germany (Ferguson, 2004, pp. 292-300; Bracher, 1991; Parker, 1998).

Even the USA shared strategic positions not too distant from those of the European nations. In both wars, especially in WW II, it feared that after a defeat of Great Britain it would stand alone against an aggressive Germany. Roosevelt knew about the Z-plan of Hitler to conquer North America (Giordano, 2004, p. 57; Overy, 2002, p. 320). Strategic interests, more than moral sentiments and sympathy with Great Britain, caused Roosevelt to engage.

Russia wanted to revise the defeat of 1917 and to restore his borders of 1914. With swallowing Eastern Poland, Finland, and the Baltic states by war in 1939/1940 it regained its territories of 1914. During WW I, the Entente had promised Russia to get Constantinopel in case of victory. Brest-Litowsk disabled this gain. Although the world revolution plans would have brought Europe into the hands of Moscow – its participation into the Spanish civil war is to interpret in this light – Russia probably did not intend to conquer Europe during the Thirtees (Ueberschär/Bezymenskij 1998). Scheil (2005), however, judges in an opposite direction, assuming that Stalin had the idea to conquer Germany and Europe at least from 1939 onwards or even earlier from 1928 onwards. Nobody knows what would have happened with these Russian conquest ideas if the Americans hadn´t stayed in Europe in consequence of the invasion of June 1944 and WW II. The growing overweight of the USSR in the period 1950-1980 might have seduced the Kremlin to invade Western Europe, as reaction of any small crisis. Even Churchill from 1944 onwards predicted that the Soviet threat could become more dangerous than the Nazi threat had ever been. Beforehand, France, Great Britain and the USA saw the greater threat coming from Germany and not from Russia. From 1944 and 1945 onwards the Western allies changed their position and built up Germany as an ally against Russia (Churchill, 2010, pp. 366, 1045, 1080; Giordano, 2004, pp. 338, 343, 347; Baker, 2009, p. 398).

The consequence of the wars was the decline of the world power of the entire Europe. European nations became the second class nations as Seeley had predicted in 1883. The USA and

USSR dominated Europe and the world at least from 1945 to 1990, with the USA as the single world power from 1990 up to now, with an inevitably declining trend for some years in favor of China and other nations (Brzezinski, 2002; Czempiel, 2002).

5. The instability of the international system by 1945

In comparison to present standards the international system was extremely instabile in that period of time. European nations could not trust to each other regarding the respect of borders, the respect of sovereignty and the respect of invulnerability of their territory and residents. The thresholds to invade and to conquer another nation was much lower than today. Germany was not the only dangerous nation in Europe in that period. Poland attacked and defeated Russia in 1920; Poland and Hungary participated into the German conquest of the Czchec Republic in spring 1939. Poland thought during the Thirties to attack Germany and to conquer greater parts of Germany including Berlin, feeling strong enough to carry out these plans due to the treaties with France and England. Even Poland´s strategy in the crisis of 1939 was it to force France to attack Germany in order to realize its dream of a great empire including Lithuania, Ukraine, and Eastern Germany (Scheil, 2003). Russia attacked and occupied itself the Baltic states, Poland, and Finland in 1939/1940. During the whole period 1919-1939 Europe was scared of the expectation of a new war especially the revisionist Germany would start to annihilate the disadvantages coming from the treaty of Versailles. Numerous treaties between the nations should prevent the outburst of the new war; countless diplomatic activities and conferences aimed to maintain the peace.

In a certain way the two world wars can be understood as preventive wars when considering wider time perspectives and possible plans enemies could perform in future. Great Britain and France wanted the war against Germany in both wars because they feared a growing overweight of Germany in case of its possible eastern expansion. They feared a Germany too strong would threaten their independence. Possibly they were scared of losses of territory and of a German occupation in case of a total defeat of Russia. Germany feared attacks of both sides, of Western and Eastern Europe, for some generations. It wanted to annihilate the threats coming from France and Russia in both wars. Even Hitler´s concept of “Lebensraum im Osten” can be understood as a preventive plan. Interestingly, even the US-American involvement in both wars has preventive character. The US foreign policy was scared of standing alone in the world against Germany in case of a defeat or an occupation of England. Moreover, the world revolution idea of Moscow and its occupation of Eastern European countries after 1941 share this preventive strategy. The overall strategy of the greater nations was: only the master of the world is free from competitors and threats.

On the whole, the idea to expand and to conquer is a manifestation of the instability of the international system. It is cause and consequence of this instability likewise. If everybody could trust into the willingness of the other nations not to conquer and to expand, nobody would feel the necessity to “defend” by aggressive attacks and nobody would feel the need to conquer in order to prevent from being conquered. The lower threshold to lead wars is the main reason to this instability.

The so-called realistic school of the political sciences regards “power”, “interests”, and “rationality” as the main motors behind international politics and warfare. They maintain that the readiness to lead war originates in the inevitable struggle for power, economic resources, and prestige. However, today the conflict points should be higher than in former times due to the expansion of economic exchanges, international relations such as transfer of persons and goods, and additional relationships. International exchanges and relations were weaker in 1914 and 1940 than today. The lower threshold to lead wars and the international instability did not originate in social, economic, and political institutions or in traits of the institutional infrastructure. The changes of institutions between 1914 and 2014 are not a main factor behind the pacification of Europe and the world. Europe has today many international conflicts and problems that would have led to war provided the mentality of 1914 or 1940 would still persist. The problems regarding the Greek financial crisis, the EU conflict regarding the refugees, the Crimea conflict or other disputes would have possibly led to war, provided the mentality of former times would have continued. France and Germany have now the same kind of diverging interests as 1914 or 1940 regarding influential spheres, foreign policy, environmental policy, etc. Possibly they have now more problems than in the former generations because they have to cooperate now in many more

fields than in 1914 or 1940. However, it is completely unthinkable that these two partners would ever again lead war against each other. Why then they were hostile to each other during the past 1000 years up to 1945? The decisive reason is the mentality respectively the developmental stage.

It is not the institutional framework of the EU or of any other international organization, and it is not the bulk of treaties or diplomatic exchanges that have risen the threshold to lead wars. The pacification of the world does not primarily root in such institutional advancements. The rests of the primitive psyche and more precisely the developmental stage of the Europeans (and other nations) of 1914 and 1940 is the main cause to the world wars. In 1914, the peoples went to war enthusiastically. Authors and politicians said the war would strengthen mind and body of the people. Das "Stahlbad des Krieges" would refresh the whole nation, it was widely believed. To lead war about questions of honour and insult, prestige and embarrassment was seen as appropriate (Fischer, 2004, p. 46; Haffner, 2001b, p. 113). The readiness to settle conflicts by diplomatic agreements was weaker than today. "Nun soll das Schwert entscheiden", as Wilhelm II. said in 1914, this was a common attitude in that time. This naive mentality did not exist anymore to this rate in 1939. However, the former warfare mentality was by no means completely vanished in WW II. The Germans were proud of the victories over Poland 1939 and France 1940. Churchill had a clear warfare mentality and saw it as some kind of sports. He was keen on defeating Germany from 1939 onwards completely denying any form of peace talks (Scheil, 2003). Churchill (2010, p. 366) wrongly contends that not one government member during 1940 had thought for a moment to settle peace talks with Germany. However, Scheil (2005, 2003) and Kershaw (2007) showed that Churchill had problems with the appeasement politicians such as Lylod George, Halifax and Chamberlain during 1940, who wanted peace talks with Hitler in response to the many proposals Hitler made during 1939 and 1940 aiming to stop the war. M. Gandhi, understandable from his perspective, saw no difference between Hitlerism and Churchillism (Baker, 2009). Nobody forced the Britons to declare war on Germany in 1939 and to spare Russia – both nations occupied Poland. There existed more alternatives in the critical time of 1939 and 1940, for example, to negotiate with the Nazi Germans who surely wanted to cooperate with Great Britain (serious tries of Göring, Ribbentrop, Heß, etc.) (Scheil, 2005, 2003; Kershaw, 2007; Overy, 2002; Parker, 1998; Fest, 2004; Giordano, 2004, pp. 34-39). A country that occupied India and greater parts of Africa and Ireland but does not want Germany to expand has not much more moral qualities than Nazi Germany and obviously judges by two different measurements. Besides, the Americans did not think for a moment to react to Pearl Harbour 1941 otherwise than by bloody revenge and war.

The totally different mentality of the previous generations is discernible not only regarding the causes and incidents that led to war but also in their readiness to continue the war or to keep the war running despite the millions of victims and massive destructions. It may be possible that wars originate in wrong interpretations of incidents or in some misunderstandings. However, they are to end very soon provided intelligent politicians cooperate. I show this at first regarding WW I. On 9.9.1914, the US ambassador in Berlin made the proposal to make peace on the basis of status quo ante plus France pays reparations and hands over some colonies to Germany. Berlin rejected this reasonable proposal because it preferred a clear defeat of Great Britain, France, and Russia. Leading German associations of industry repeatedly maintained, documented in several memoranda and letters, it would be worth to lead war for ten years only for the ore of Longwy-Briey in Lothringen. The German industry had already 1/6 of all concessions to mine the ore of Longwy-Briey before the war. However, instead of enlarging the purchase of further concessions or of importing French ore the associations urged the government to continue the war, to prevent peace or armistice talks in order to continue the war to get Lothringen and its ore by war conquest – even if the war would last 10 years. Several further peace offers during the war years were made. They all were rejected because some participants promised themselves more by continuing the war than by peace. If Germany in the beginning of 1918 had renounced on the occupation of Belgium, then France, Great Britain and the USA had been ready to peace and would have let Germany its new and huge empire in Eastern Europe. A peace would have been possible with the guarantee of that great empire Hitler dreamt later on to build up – if only Berlin had been ready to hand over Belgium. However, Berlin did not want to renounce on Belgium and preferred to continue the war, although the USA was involved in the war since 1917, too (Fischer, 2004, pp. 106, 218, 243, 536). Germany had lost more than 1 mio. soldiers only in 1917 and some parts of the German population

died from starvation, altogether 500.000 by the end of 1918, but the political elite preferred to continue the war for the occupation of Belgium.

This problem is somehow different in WW II because the personality of Hitler makes it more difficult to analyze the readiness to armistice and peace. Obviously, Hitler aimed to come to peace with Great Britain during 1939 and 1940 but Churchill himself was dedicated to defeat Germany and to avoid any forms of peace settlements (Scheil, 2005, 2003). Some authors maintain that it would be possible to come to peace talks with Russia in 1942 and perhaps even in 1943 because the country suffered a lot and was suspicious of its Western allies (Haffner, 2001a; Kershaw, 2007). Although it was recognizable in 1942 that a clear victory of Nazi Germany in Russia was hardly possible, Hitler did not think at all about peace talks with Stalin. He maintained this denial of the idea of peace talks by the end of his days in April 1945 (Haffner, 2001a, Fest, 2004; Kershaw, 2007). He took the same position regarding the Western allies after June 1944 when some German generals such as Rommel urged Hitler to draw "the political consequences" of the invasion. Some German generals in France wanted to open the front for the allies to let them march to the East in order to stop the Russians as early as possible. Hitler finished these endeavours to cause the total defeat and destruction of Germany (Overy, 2002; Haffner, 2001a; Kershaw, 1999, 2007). Although greater parts of the political and military elite of Germany were ready to end the war, during several critical periods, they weren´t capable to remove Hitler. They felt obliged to the oath they swore to Hitler personally, a very irrational behavior, explainable only by the theory here presented. In fact, there were already in 1938 and again in 1939 tries of the military elite (Canaris, von Witzleben, Beck, etc.) to remove Hitler as they knew about his war plans against Poland. However, the inability of the German elite to stop Hitler, from 1933 to 1945, originates in some kind of political and moral incompetence, explainable by this new theory I outline here.

The situation in the Pacific war is somehow similar. The Japanese soldiers were not allowed to surrender; they really fought until they died. The political and military elite of Japan was ready to continue the hopeless war by admitting the total destruction of the cities and the depopulation of the country. Even after the fall of the atomic bombs some officials wanted to continue the war. Only the decision of the emperor forced the officials to surrender. Major parts of the Japanese shared Hitler´s idea to continue a hopeless war and to die heroically (Overy, 2002; Parker, 1998).

Conclusion

Historical disciplines, which renounce on historical anthropology or developmental psychology, have no chance to understand history generally or the 20th century history specifically. The history of the two wars is not explainable in terms of the rational struggle for material interests such as economic resources or political power. "Rationality" or "material interests" are not the ultimate reference points to explain these catastrophes. Rational Choice theories, widely spread in the international social sciences, are incapable to inform about the causes to the wars. These approaches cover more than they disclose; they are incapable to earmark the decisive phenomena. The mentality or the psyche of the peoples and their leaders are not a-historical or anthropologically universal but manifest certain developmental stages, which are the main causes to the wars and politics.

For example, the ideas of the Japanese or of Hitler to conquer huge territories contradict to any standard of formal-operational thought with its peculiarities of systemic, combinatorial, and coherent thinking abilities (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Oesterdiekhoff, 2013a). They could have known that it is practically impossible to occupy countries such as China and Russia for generations, to keep such huge regions in a form of slave states as it happened in ancient times. They could have known that not a single country has the ability to rule over the world, as Hitler intended, or over whole Asia, as Japan aimed to. They could have known that industrialization and modernization of the world would inevitably modify the power distribution in the world regions during the century. They could have known that the costs for the oppression of the colonized peoples would be higher than any profits from that. They could have known that the 20th century makes it impossible to sustain slave states with traits possible only in ancient times. They could have known that national economic growth and economic exchanges with foreign nations make economies and nations grow but not conquest wars. Hitler´s ideas on economy based on premodern concepts of land, population, and agriculture (Haffner, 2001a; Overy, 2002). He did not understand the dynamics of modern, industrial growth. He did not grasp that technology and

economic growth and not conquest decide about the welfare and position of any country. The conquest plans of Tokyo and Berlin were already outdated in that time and without any chance of possible realization, outdated as were the ideas of Churchill to maintain the British Empire forever. Their ideas were survivals of former times, of the "heroic age" or the "military age" of humankind, as H. Spencer would have judged.

Pinker (2011, p. 390) writes that a present-day politician who would propose in a democracy to conquer a foreign nation would reveal laughter among his colleagues. Apart from some opposite examples (USA/Iraq, 2003), Pinker is right and shows the remarkable difference between current standards and those of the past. Thus, imperialism, colonialism, and warfare of the first half of the past century belong to outdated standards of the political life. Pinker (2011, pp. 260, 261, 318, 977) describes that the humanitarian revolution especially after 1950 originates in the psychological maturation of greater parts of the humankind, in a growth of intelligence, morals, and humanistic feelings. He adds that the psychological world of our grand-parents was more childish and primitive than that of the following generations.

My structure-genetic theory programme is the theory that explains these psychological advancements of the peoples. Europeans of 1900 or 1940 stood on intermediary psychological stages between premodern adults and those of the currently most advanced nations. They had mental ages lower than those that currently prevail and manifested lower forms of intelligence, as the psychometric intelligence research found out. Their lower development of the adolescent stage of formal operations caused the persistence of political thought and warfare mentality more typical for archaic and premodern types of culture and society. This lower developmental stage accounted to their difficulties to accept democracy and liberty rights, their approval of Führerstaat, monarchy, and dictatorship. It accounted to their exaggerated preference of the own ethnicity and nationality, their denial and hate of foreign ethnicities and nationalities. Further, it accounted to their racism. The Japanese estimated any other Asian nationality as racially inferior, like the Americans looked at the Japanese as some kind of "barbarians". The Europeans had racist attitudes against all kinds of coloured people, and the Nazis saw even the Slavic peoples, the Jews, and the coloured peoples as "Untermenschen". The lower developmental stage caused the missing readiness to accept foreign sovereignties of territory, the integrity of foreign nations, and liberty rights given to any kind of human being or people. It caused the lower threshold to lead wars, the readiness to accept huge losses of lives, to accept incredible war conditions (Verdun, Stalingrad, etc.), and to fight for many years for questions of honor, revenge, the ore of Lothringen or Lebensraum im Osten (who were the Germans who really wanted to go there where Hitler wanted them to?). It caused the missing readiness to peace and to end the errors committed.

Lower psychological stages must be provided that people admired leaders such as Hitler, Stalin or Mussolini and followed them into the total disaster or mass murder. They must be provided also regarding the inability to remove them and to tolerate them against own better knowledge. The whole political culture of that time originated in lower forms of morals and politics, consciousness and reason. The psychological stages and structures, which formed the previous political life, died out with these generations themselves. The former political consciousness has not survived in the brains of the current generations. The psychological structures of the latter ones are divided from that of their grand-parents by some developmental years.

The ameloration of the current political life manifests in all parts and dimensions. It is recognizable in the official statements, journals, books, and media. It is apparent in the established forms of political discussions and struggles, in the party programs and government policies, in the international conferences and treaties, and in the international organizations and debates. The world policy of today concerns for human rights, environmental protection, peace, and welfare. International organizations care for a ban of racism, antisemitism, oppression of minorities, violent conflicts, etc.

Of course, the new theory programme sheds light on further advancements possible in the future. Not every nation of today stays on the same stages observable among the today´s most advanced nations. Both the backbenchers and the frontbenchers may develop beyond present-day stages and standards. It is also possible that setbacks such as wars in Asia or Africa may outburst in future, darkening the positive picture that the world has been showing over the few past decades. However, even such setbacks would not refute the fact of the humanitarian revolution having

taking place over the past generations and the psychological advancement of the peoples measurable by modern psychological theories and methods.

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