



Dossier

Estudios sobre China desde (Latino) América en conmemoración de los 160 años de la llegada de los chinos a Costa Rica

V Sección: China Contemporánea

Peace Conference of Asia and the Pacific Region (October, 1952): an approach between China and Central America¹

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[...] The new/ Conquistadors,/ Meanwhile,/ Our
blood/ Feeds/ The putrid/ Plantations and the
buried mines,/ The dollars flow,/ And/ Our silly
young girls/ Slip a disk learning the dance/
Of the orangutan./ Oh, pure Americas,/ Sacred
lands,/ What sadness! [...].²

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Conferencia de paz de Asia y la Región del Pacífico (octubre de 1952): un acercamiento entre China y Centro América

Resumen

¹ This paper constitutes an exploratory work of identification and translation of Chinese sources, and it is part of a wider research project. We specially want to thank Ye Weiwei for the help to access some of the sources used for this paper.

² Pablo Neruda, "Ode to the Americas," in *Selected Odes*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 23-29.



Este artículo identifica la participación de la representación no oficial de los países centroamericanos antes y durante la Conferencia de paz de Asia y la región del Pacífico. Si consideramos los seis países de Centroamérica como subregión de Latinoamérica, y de lo expuesto por estas delegaciones ¿Qué aspectos se pueden considerar representaciones comunes de esta sub región de acuerdo a lo expuesto por estas representaciones en esta conferencia? ¿Cuál fue la importancia de la participación centroamericana en esta conferencia? Haciendo uso de fuentes chinas sugerimos aspectos comunes para Centroamérica y un sentimiento compartido de las delegaciones en la búsqueda de la paz mundial. Este espacio constituyó la primera interacción oficial de China con Latinoamérica. Además, fue la primera oportunidad de contacto entre la Nueva China y representantes de los pueblos de todos los países de Centroamérica.

Palabras clave:

Conferencia de paz de Asia y la región del Pacífico; China; América Central; Paz Mundial; Relaciones Internacionales

Peace Conference of Asia and the Pacific Region (October, 1952): an approach between China and Central America**Abstract**

Our aim in this paper is to identify the role of the Central American non-official delegations, before and during the Peace Conference of Asia and the Pacific Region (PCAPR). If we consider the six Central American countries as a sub region of Latin America, which aspects can be perceived as common features of Central America according these representations during the Conference? What was the relevance of Central America in this conference? Using Chinese sources we suggest that the PCAPR held in Beijing in 1952 was an alternative in the search of World Peace. It was the beginning of contact between New China and Latin America. Moreover it was a chance to interact with representations of peoples of all Central American countries.

Keywords: Peace Conference for Asia and the Pacific Region, China, Central America, World peace, International relations



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Introduction

The Pacific Ocean became a critical stage of ideological conflict immediately after the Second World War: the two superpowers (United States, and the Soviet Union) at the Northern part of the Pacific, supported conflicts in third countries located at the Southern part of these two countries. In Asia, the Communist Party of China that defeated the government of Kuomintang in Mainland China proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October the first, 1949. Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Kuomintang,

jointly with the leaders and the army established in Taiwan with the aim to invade China. For achieving this goal he initially counted with the support of the United States. In the other side, Mao Zedong found support in the Soviet Union, assuring protection to Mainland China in case any invasion. This was the situation at the beginning of 1950 when other conflict broke out, this time in the Korean peninsula. The U.S. troops supported South Korea, and the North Korean troops received aid from the Soviet Union. The presence of the United States in Taiwan and in South Korea was considered by the Chinese Communist Party as a threat because both territories are located near Mainland China. This country that hardly recovered from a long period of war, first against the Japanese invaders, since 1895 until the end of the Second World War, later with the Civil War of Communists against the Kuomintang, faced the threats of the United States in South Korea and Taiwan at the beginning of the 1950s. In addition, there was the menace that Japan would have applied a policy of military rearmament. In this context the Chinese leadership developed the country under the menace of war: they had to be prepared military in case of invasion. However, the desire of peace was the general feeling and the ideal



circumstance to develop the Chinese economy and the society.

Meanwhile, what happen in the other side of the Pacific Ocean? The Latin American countries were influenced by the foreign policy of the United States. However, it seems the region was divided into two sub regional spheres of interaction with United States: one sphere integrated by the South American countries, most of them with big territories, big populations, and different resources; and another sphere comprising Central America and the Caribbean zone, close to the U.S.: small countries, with weak economies, fertile lands for the monoculture exploitation, surrounded by some European colonies.³ The governments of these small countries provided the U.S. investors' facilities for exploiting natural resources, assured cheap work force, and granted exonerations for the exports, basically consisting in fruit production. The 1950s began in this sub region with the presence of dictatorial regimes, already installed years ago, and backed by the United States: Trujillo, in Dominican Republic, since 1930; Somoza, in Nicaragua since 1936; military governments in Honduras and El Salvador, as well as Batista, in Cuba 1948. This sub-region of Central America was geopolitically strategic for the U.S. interests, because by one hand the Panama Canal, that connected the Pacific Ocean with the

³ We can notice the existence of an office of Central America and Panama Affairs in the United States government, in charge of a territory know as Middle American Area. See more in United States, "Memorandum by the Officer in Charge of Central America and Panama Affairs (Siracusa) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mann)", 720.001/9-452, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, The American Republics*, vol. 4, doc 98 (Washington: Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952), accessed October 8, 2016, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d98>.

In 1953 it was mentioned a post of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs to Mexico, the Caribbean and Central American Republics and Panama. See more in United States, "Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Smith) to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Lay)" S/S-NSC files, lot 63 D 351, NSC 144 series, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, The American Republics*, vol. 4, doc 4. Office of the Historian (Washington: Foreign Relations of the United States, 1953), accessed October 8, 2016, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d4>



Caribbean Sea in the Atlantic Ocean, was managed by the first country, and by the other hand, the small countries summed votes together to support the U.S. foreign policies, in the recently created American States Organization (known as OAS), as well as in the United Nations Organization. One of these supports was materialized in the negative to include China as member of the United Nations.⁴ Making use of an agreement with the Latin American countries, the United States was recruiting Latin American army forces to fight against the Korean War. However, this policy found an opposition precisely from a Central American country in May 1952: the government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala.⁵ This political position received support of people from other countries of Latin America, and was applauded by China as a brave decision.⁶

Most of the people of Latin America had a desire for peace on the world. This desire was shared and also expressed by the Chinese leadership of New China, and was considered the basic framework to establish contact between both sides of the Pacific Ocean. The conflict that took place in the Korean peninsula in 1950 was considered into a maritime perspective: all countries that shared coast in this Ocean had not only quotes of responsibility in the current situation, but also the common opportunity to discuss for peaceful solutions. Under this perspective, the Pacific became not an Ocean of battle, but an Ocean of convergence in the search of the peace: delegations of countries that represented a diverse and significant part of the planet population were convoked to the PCAPR in Beijing. The importance of this first official meeting

⁴ United States, "Memorandum by the Officer," 12.

⁵ By the way, Guatemala was considered as a threat because the expansion of 'communism' in the other Central American countries. The government of Arbenz was considered by the U.S. as communist. See United States, "Memorandum by the Officer", 365.

⁶ "yingjie yazhou ji taipingyang quyu heping huiyi," *Renmin Ribao*, May 25, 1952, 4.



held by New China reflected in the words of Mao Zedong when pointed out that “the convening of the Conference will make a great contribution to the great common cause for the defense of peace in the Asian and the Pacific region and the peoples of the world.”⁷

This meeting adopted the peace as the central topic, and the Pacific Ocean as the geographical background, established either one or two requirements to participate as member: to belong to Asia, or to the Pacific Region. Considering this last aspect, the sub region of Central America became a majority in Latin America, because the whole six countries of that moment shared territories in the Pacific Rim: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Of the rest of Latin America five countries shared coast in the Pacific Ocean: Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. Canada and the United States have territories in the Pacific, therefore they completed the list of countries in the American continent invited to participate.⁸ The topics included in the Conference schedule to be discussed were the following: the problem of Japan, the problem of North Korea, cultural exchanges, economic exchanges, the independence of the nations, the problem of the women and children living conditions, the problem of the establishment of a five-continent pact of peace, reports of the peace movement situation in Middle and Near East.⁹

The preparation for the conference

⁷ Translation [会议的召开，对于亚洲及太平洋区域以及全世界的人民保卫和平的伟大共同事业，将有巨大的贡献]. See zhongong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *mao zedong nianpu* (yijiusijiu – yijiuqiliu), v. 1. Beijing: zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2013, 608.

⁸ At that moment no country in the American Continent recognized the People’s Republic of China. The delegations from this continent that attended the PCAPR were formed by intellectuals, representatives of social organizations, workers representatives, and political parties’ representatives of the respective countries.

⁹ zhongong zhongyang, *mao zedong nianpu*, 608.



Before the PCAPR took place there were some preparatory meetings in which the Latin American delegations interacted together with the Central American delegations from June until September, 1952. Here we can perceive an active participation of representatives from countries of Latin America that had territory in the Pacific coast. As it was mentioned before, the representations of all countries of Central America took part on the convocation, but for the case of Latin America only the countries that share the Pacific Ocean as littoral, participated. Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Venezuela were excluded from the invitation. Later, while the PCAPR was taking place, a delegation of Brazil joined the talks as observer. If we take into account the geographic perspective, and considering the Pacific Ocean as the context, the Central American delegations were predominant. The reports do not show details about what was discussed in these meetings. They were basically given information about which representations attended the meeting, the place of the appointment. We can observe the reports about the preparatory meetings by the Latin American delegations in the chart below. We divided the whole regions into two sub regions: the countries of Central America, including Panama; and the countries of Mexico, South America that we name as Latin America.





| Latin American delegations preparatory meetings for the Peace Conference for Asia and the Pacific Region | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Date of report (1952) | Source | Report Translations | Activity | Central American delegations mentioned | Other Latin American delegations mentioned |
| 11-Jun | 出席和平会议筹备会议 哥伦比亚等三国代表抵京 | Attendance to the Conference of Peace preparatory meeting Representations Colombia and three countries arrived | Preparatory meeting for Conference of Peace | Costa Rica, El Salvador | Colombia |
| 25-Jun | 拉丁美洲的哥伦比亚等六国代表抵京 | Representations of Colombia and six countries of Latin America arrived Beijing | Signature of the Declaration of the preparatory conference for the Asia and Pacific conference | Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala | Colombia, Mexico |
| 8-Jul | 亚洲及太平洋区域各国人民热烈拥护和筹备召开和平会议 各国和平组织积极展开运动并推选代表 | The peoples of Asia and the Pacific region support preparations for the covering peace conference organizations actively campaigned and elected representatives. | meeting in Berlin to discuss how to advance preparatory work and send representatives | Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras | Colombia, Chile, Mexico |
| 15-Aug | 来北京参加亚洲及太平洋区域和平会议 萨拉萨尔等谈哥斯达黎加和平运动 | Representations came to Beijing to participate the Peace Conference for Asia and the Pacific Region, and talked about the peace movement in Costa Rica | Interview of representatives of peace movement | Costa Rica | |
| 29-Aug | 筹备参加亚洲及太平洋区域和平会议 墨西哥危地马拉等五国组成出席代表团 | Preparations for the Peace Conference for Asian and the Pacific region to attend the peace conference Five countries composed the group of representatives | Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, El Salvador and Honduras formed a delegation to attend the Peace Conference for Asia and the Pacific Region | Guatemala El Salvador Honduras Nicaragua | Chile Mexico Colombia |
| 8-Sep | 迎接亚洲及太平洋区域和平会议 拉丁美洲各国人民热烈进行筹备工作 墨西哥智利等九国先后组成代表团出席和平会议 | Peace Conference for Asia and the Pacific Region meeting The people of Latin America warmly conducted the preparatory work | Attendance in Chile Preparatory Meeting for Peace Conference, Local support for the Conference | Guatemala, Nicaragua | Chile, Colombia |
| | | Nine countries, including Mexico and Chile had representatives to attend the Peace Conference | Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, El Salvador and Honduras formed a delegation, and Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, has also formed another delegation | Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama | Chile, Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia |

For this study we separated Central America countries from Latin America in this chart. The sources of this chart are shown in chronological order as footnote.¹⁰

¹⁰ Sources: Xinhuashe, “chuxi heping huiyi choubai huiyi gelunbiya deng san guo daibiao di jing,” *Renmin Ribao*, June 11, 1952, 4; Xinhuashe, “lading meizhou de gelunbiya deng liu guo daibaio di jing,” *Renmin Ribao*, June 25, 1952, 4; Benbaoxun, “yazhou ji taipingyang quyu geguo renmin relie yonghu he choubai zhaokai heping huiyi geguo heping zuzhi jiji zhankai yundong bing tuixuan daibiao,” *Renmin Ribao*, July 28, 1952, 1; Xinhuashe, “lai Beijing canjia yazhou ji taipingyang quyu heping huiyi, salasaer deng tan gesidalijia heping yundong,” *Renmin Ribao*, August 15, 1952, 4; Xinhuashe, “chubei canjia yazhou ji taipingyang quyu heping huiyi, riben tuixuan chuxi daibiao yundong da xin gaochao, moxige weidimala deng wu guo zucheng chuxi daibiaotuan,” *Renmin Ribao*, August 29, 1952, 4; Xinhuashe, “yingjie yazhou ji taipingyang quyu heping huiyi, lading meizhou geguo renmin relie jinxing choubai gongzuo,



Five months before the PCAPR the Guatemalan government decided not to send troops to Korea. This act was recognized by the Chinese press as brave and it gave the sub region some prominence. One month later the first Latin American preparatory meeting was taking place. Then, we can notice the presence of Costa Rican representatives that came to China two months before the PCAPR, for preparation and to talk about the peace movement in Costa Rica. According to an interview made by some Chinese press reporters to these representatives, we can notice that most of the discussions in the preparatory meetings were centered in the democratic election of the representatives, the study of the peace movement in each particular country, and the support of the declarations for approaching the universal peace as common aspiration. In this particular interview report the representatives said to come from different sectors of the Costa Rican society, committed with the desires for world peace: workers, intellectuals, trade unions, women organizations, youth organizations, university students, and Catholic groups, representing one million of the Costa Rican population in that moment. And about the expectations of the Conference the interviewed representatives are expressed in the following quotation:

Salasaer[?] said: I hope the peace in the world is being established, if there is no peace, there is no progress. From Costa Rica we passed through many places to come to China, I personally have seen the peace created here. In a peaceful atmosphere the Peace Conference is convened, and it benefits the world peace. Murillo said: from the middle of the upright conscience of the people it was been elected representatives that will take part in the Peace Conference, its impact will be significant. JiaBazha[?] said: I hope and believe that the International Peace Conference will take place in a friendly

moxige zhili deng jiu guo xianhou zucheng daibiao tuan chuxi heping huiyi," *Renmin Ribao*, September 8, 1952, 4.



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atmosphere, if the representatives freely and democratically carry the discussions, in this way will be obtained a resolution that will improve the peace struggle. Shegzi [?] said: the Peace Conference will let the people understand the dangers of the Korean War, will let the people understand the seriousness of the problem in Japan. The end of the Korean War is a safeguard of the world peace. ¹¹

One of the members of the Canadian delegation, Elgin Neish, in his journey to attend the PCAPR reported the encounter with a member of the Guatemalan delegation that had the same destination as Neish. According to him, the Guatemalan group was integrated by members that represented different political positions in the Guatemalan society: “a columnist from a rightist newspaper, a director of their principal radio station, and a young man who is a communist party member of the Guatemalan Legislature”.¹² Neish also mentioned about the Colombian group “made up of one scientist, a doctor who is specializing in nutrition, and another young medical doctor as well as a small man who represents a large group – the peasants of Colombia.”¹³ He said that he got to know that the Minister of Defense made a proclamation toward those men leaving Colombia for the Peking Peace Conference “will be deemed as traitors and will be dealt with as such upon their return to Colombia.”¹⁴ He was told by them that there have been over 60 000 people arbitrary killed in less

¹¹ Own translation [萨拉萨尔说：我希望和平在全世界建立起来，没有和平就没有进步。我从哥斯达黎加经过很多地方到中国来，我亲眼看到这里在创造和平。在和平的气氛中召开的和平会议，对世界和平是有益的。穆里洛说：从正直的有良心的人们中间选出的代表举行的和平会议，它的影响将是很大的。加巴扎说：我希望并相信和平会议将在国际友爱的空气下进行，代表们自由地民主地进行讨论，这样得出的决议，将更好地为和平斗争服务。圣兹说：和平会议将使人民了解朝鲜战争的危险性，让人民了解日本问题的严重性。结束朝鲜战争就是对世界和平的保障。] “lai Beijing canjia yazhou ji taipingyangqu salasaer deng tan gesidalijia hepingyundong”, *Renmin Ribao*, August 15, 1952, 4.

¹² Benjamin Isitt, “Fellow Traveller: A British Columbia Fisherman Writes Home from the Eastern Bloc,” in *Labour/Le Travail*, 63 (2009): 113.

¹³ Benjamin Isitt, “Fellow Traveller,” 113.

¹⁴ *Ibid*



than three years by the Colombian government. We can notice by one hand, the diversity of social sectors represented by the people who attended the PCAPR, not only in Central America, but in Latin America. By other hand, we can notice menaces expressed by government functionaries against representatives that tried to attend this event. The same difficulties can be noticed in other latitudes. For example, the Australian government prohibited issuing passports for those people who wanted to attend the PCAPR.¹⁵

The main motivation for the preparation of the PCAPR was the discussion about the peace. However, the relevance of this activity was that for the first time the People's Republic of China would hold an international conference that would gathered Asian and American countries of the Pacific coast to discuss about other topics that were banned by the U.S. economic blockade against China such as a press note mentions:

This conference will be the beginning of the Asian and Pacific Rim countries cultural exchanges; it will become a break to the artificial economic barriers, establishing the beginning of trade relations; it will greatly inspire and promote the peace movement in the region to a higher level.¹⁶

Cultural and trade exchanges as well as the promotion of the peace movement between China and the Latin American countries would be the topics of this first interaction. Mexico and the South American countries represented a big region for the supplies of raw materials and cultural exchanges, but what was the role

¹⁵ Phillip Deery and Craig Mclean, "Behind Enemy Lines' Menzies, Evatt and Passports for Peking," *The Round Table*, 370 (2003): 407-422.

¹⁶Translation[这一和平会议，将成为亚洲和太平洋沿岸各国文化交流的开端；将成为打破人为的经济障碍、建立贸易关系的开端；将大大鼓舞和推动这个区域的和平运动走向新的高潮。]“yingjie yazhou,” 4.



of the small Central American countries in this conference? We suggest that in this first international meeting between China and Latin America, the presence of the Central American delegations was important in terms of number of countries represented. In addition, the intervention of their representatives reveals the need of peace not only the Eastern, but also in the Western Pacific. The position taken in Central America such as the Guatemalan position regarding the Korean War were recognized in the international meeting as a brave decision, considering it belonged to a closer sphere of influence of the U.S. The denial of Guatemala led other people to follow and to request their governments in the region stop sending troops to North Korea.

The conference opening

The opening ceremony of the PCAPR took place from the 2nd until the 13th October in Beijing city. Several personalities of the Chinese leadership had a role in the preparation and realization of this event. However, we should say that the two main authors of this event were Song Qingling and Guo Moruo.¹⁷ 378 people representing countries of 37 countries from Asia, Oceania, and from the Pacific Coast of the American Continent.¹⁸ In the discourse for the opening ceremony Song Qingling mentioned the decision of the people in Latin American to protest against sending troops of their own armies to join the Korean War as a remarkable action in favor of the world peace, as an example in favor of the world peace:

The Latin American people already opposed to join the United States

¹⁷ Song Qingling was the second wife of Sun Zhongshan, known also as Madame Sun Zhongshan. Guo Moruo was one of the intellectual personalities of the Chinese Communist Party. Among many positions, he was the first president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the chairman of the Chinese people committee to defend the world peace.

¹⁸ Zhonggong zhongyang, *mao zedong nianpu*, 608.



in the aggression against North Korea. They already publicly and firmly warned their government leaders: 'don't allow intervene in North Korea!' There are some countries that have no option but to cancel one aspect of agreement they had with the United States. The people are determined to continue along this path forward as it has demonstrated in the 'Montevideo meeting'.¹⁹

In fact, in Latin America the official position was divided: from the Colombian government that agreed to send their troops to Korea to the Guatemalan government that assumed an opposition against the War. In some countries the governments were pushed to stop sending troops to war; in others, such as Cuba, the decision was delayed because it was discussed in the parliament. For Song Qingling, "national independence and peace are generated from the same struggle."²⁰ According to the Chinese press the struggle for national independence in Latin America, meant a struggle of the people of the countries against the U.S. intervention in their own internal affairs.

Guo Moruo in his speech mentioned the difficulties the Latin American delegations faced attend to the Peace Conference in Beijing:

There are representatives of many countries; it was not easy for them to be able to attend the meeting. They encountered all kinds of difficulties for coming to the meeting, after returning home they may also encounter greater difficulties. Many delegates have unanimously said that they have come to Beijing through or without the U.S. blockade, such as the representatives of the Americas. Because of

¹⁹ Own translation [举一个例子：拉丁美洲的人民已经拒绝参加美国在朝鲜的侵略。他们已经公开地、坚决地警告他们的政府领袖：“不许干涉朝鲜！”有几个国家已经不得不取消它们和美国在这方面的协议。人民继续沿着这条道路前进的决心，已经在“蒙得维的亚会议”中表现出来了。] Song Qingling, "dongyuan qilai! Wei yazhou, taipingyangquyu yuquan shijie de heping er douzheng zai yazhou ji taipingyang quyu hepinghuiyi kaimu shishang de kaimuci," *Renmin Ribao*, October 10, 1952, 1.

²⁰ Own translation ["民族独立与和平是从同一个斗争中产生出来的"。] Song Qingling, "dongyuan qilai," 1.



the U.S. blockade at sea, it was not possible to come to China by the Pacific Ocean, but it was needed to bypass Europe. The United States Government is hostile to our meetings. It not only forbids American peace delegates from going abroad, but also forces some governments in Asia, Australia and Latin America to do the same. Despite the United States, Japan, Australia, Thailand, and many Latin American countries used obstructions, sabotages, and intimidation the delegates of United States and many other countries in Latin America came victoriously to Beijing.²¹

Guo Moruo mentions the role the European countries played as hub to connect Latin American countries with China. The U.S. as part of the economic embargo toward China blocked the travel connections via Pacific. This Ocean became in that moment a “wall”, a barrier for the exchange of visits and ideas.

Pablo Neruda, the famous Latin American poet and representative of the Chilean delegation for the Conference in Beijing, addressed a discourse in which gave more common elements for further links between China and Latin America. First, he paired the Mao’s voice as representative of the Chinese people with the Latin American people’s voice for freedom:

From the other side of the ocean came a voice fully listened. Mao Zedong’s speech was widely read, and widespread in North and South America, everywhere people with respect and love listen. For the people of our America, this voice sounds familiar. It is our own voice. Therefore the ocean cannot be blocked, because it crossed

²¹ Own translation [有许多国家的代表，他们能够到会，是很不容易的。他们在到会之前已经遭遇到种种的困难，回国之后可能还会遭遇到更大的困难。许多代表们都异口同声地说，他们是通过了或者避开了美国的封锁而来到北京的，例如美洲的代表们，就由于美国在海上的封锁，不能够直接从太平洋，而需要绕道欧洲才能来到中国。美国政府是敌视和平运动，敌视我们的会议的。它不仅禁止美国的和平代表出国，而且迫使亚洲、澳洲和拉丁美洲的某些国家的政府采取了同样的行动。然而尽管美国政府和一些追随它的别国政府用尽了阻挠、破坏、诬蔑、恫吓等等手段，但美国、日本、澳大利亚、泰国和拉丁美洲许多国家的代表们，却依然胜利地来到了北京。] Guo Moruo, “guanyu yazhou ji taipingyang quyue heping huiyi de baogao,” *Renmin Ribao*, November 5, 1952, 1.



the vast deep ocean²².

The Neruda's discourse denounces the U.S. blockade against China, and the lack of freedom the people of Latin America experienced in their own countries and the opportunities toward the U.S. capital given by the governments:

The imperialists with delusions blocked the great Peoples China. The Latin American governments lost national pride, independence, and sovereignty when accepted the blocked command. However, the blocked are our small countries. China continues to grow up, it sounds loud and clear every day, spreading throughout the world. Meanwhile, the Pacific Rim small countries continue in the poverty being pressed by big merchants and bankers of New York to make oil from dried blood. The ships cross the sea only to transport weapons and destructive tools. ²³

This blockade policy against China, ordered by the U.S. and accepted by the Latin American governments affected mainly the small countries of Central American and the Caribbean. The closer U.S.' influence sphere was a fertile territory to accept and adopt the U.S. measures.²⁴ This due to two reasons: first, the presidents of these countries were aligned of the U.S. government;

²² Own translation [从海洋对岸传来的声音都被全心倾听，毛泽东的言语被人传诵，并且在南北美洲广泛传播，到处的人民都怀着敬意和热爱来倾听。

对于我们美洲人民，这个声音是熟悉的；它也就是我们自己的声音。因此海洋不能拦阻，它横过了辽阔深邃的海洋。] Xinhuashe, "Zhili mingshiren nieluda gei yazhou ji taipingyang quyue heping huiyi de zhuci," *Renmin Ribao*, October 3, 1952, 2.

²³ Own translation [帝国主义者妄想封锁伟大的人民中国。拉丁美洲各国政府丧失了民族自尊心和独立主权，接受了封锁的命令。但是，被封锁的却是我们这些小国家。中国继续壮大起来，它的声音一天比一天宏亮，传遍了世界。而同时，太平洋沿岸的小国家被纽约的大商人和银行家压榨得油干血尽，继续穷困下去。轮船横渡大海，只为了输送武器和破坏性的工具。] Xinhuashe, "Zhili mingshiren," 2.

²⁴This could be a reason to understand why the countries of the Spanish speaking and some other countries of this sub region, with the exception of Cuba and Costa Rica, don't have diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China nowadays. After the revolution of 1959 Cuba decided to align with the Sino-Soviet bloc. Even after U.S. recognized China and established diplomatic relations in 1979, the only country in the region that broke relations with Taiwan and started friendly relations with China was Costa Rica lately in 2007 (with the exception of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua 1985-1990).



second, the economies were strongly dependent on the U.S. monopoly. Neruda described the economy of these countries as small merchants subordinated to the New York bankers who exploited thousands of workers until produce “oil with dry blood”, in other words, more poverty.

The Peace Conference was considered by Neruda as the first opportunity to create links between China and the countries of the Pacific Rim in Latin America:

This is the first time in which Asia and the People of the Pacific Rim closely join together for understand mutually, in order to exchange ideas and achievements, hopes and realities, experience and plans, in order to exchange full pockets of rice and wheat rather than murder weapons. ²⁵

The Pacific Rim was the entrance door through which the New China started to create links with Latin America. If we consider the geographical location and the regional perspective, certainly the contact China had with the non-official delegations of the Central American countries was, if not direct, the previous closest contact with countries of the Caribbean such as Cuba.²⁶

Participation of the Central American delegations

In this section we show the main points of the intervention of the Central

²⁵ Own translation [这是第一次，亚洲和太平洋沿岸的人民紧紧联合起来，为了互相了解，为了互相交换思想和成果、希望和现实、经验和计划，为了互相交换装满米麦的口袋，而不是杀人的武器。] Xinhuashe, “zhili mingshiren,” 2.

²⁶It is interesting to mention that Central America was precisely the door of entrance of Chinese people who went to work in Cuba during the second half of 19th Century. Some of them were employed by the Costa Rican and the Panamanian railway. The enterprises in charge of these constructions were U.S. companies. In the case of Costa Rica the owner of the railway company was Minor Keith, one of the founders of the United Fruit Company (UFCO). This company expanded extractive activities later in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, and Honduras, becoming a monopoly in the market of tropical fruits. This was the same company that in 1954 provoked the Coupe d'état in Guatemala: the secretary of State during the Eisenhower administration (1953-1959), John Foster Dulles, had direct links with that company. Coincidentally Dulles was a main actor in the first years of the Cold War, especially in the struggle against the Communism.



American delegations. What did they proposed in this Conference? What common aspects can be evidenced for Central America according to the speeches they addressed? Although the Central American sub region is small, there was space for them to express their ideas and to interact with the entire concert of nations that had meeting in Beijing. The interventions were centered on the internal problems as well as on the international situation. The main need in the Central America, according to the reports, was the national independence and the World peace. These aspects were the common points shared with China and with the rest of delegations in the PCAPR. According to the delegations, the intervention of the United States in this sub region produced dramatic consequences. According to the reports, the immediate reaction of the Peace Conference in Central America came precisely from the U.S.: persecutions with the pretext of fight against the 'communism'. Under the Truman's government any local people's reaction against the local governments or against the policy of the U.S. was considered as an expression of the communism. In the chart below we show the main points reflected from the speeches the Central American delegations pronounced during discussion sessions of the Conference. This scheme constitutes a synthesis of the concerns, proposals and actions taken by these delegations.



| Participation of the Central American delegations in the Peace Conference of Asia and the Pacific Region, Beijing, 1952 | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Origin of delegation | Level (International/Local) | Main points | |
| Guatemala | International | U.S. army against North Korea Japanese rearmament | |
| | Local | Intervention U.S. army in Cuba, Guatemala, | |
| Nicaragua | International | U.S. army against North Korea | |
| | Local | Economic crisis Protest against government | |
| | | U.S. intervention killing and plundering people | |
| Honduras | International | Fight for peace Desires for friendship with China | |
| | | Local | U.S. intervention in government and economy Oppression on Honduran people People desires to fight for peace |
| | International | | Suggestion for final declaration: condemnation of colonial system (imperialism) |
| | | Local | Report of a telegram on government repression over people U.S. Embassy intervention on government for repression |
| Costa Rica | International | | Situation of semi feudal and semi colonial regimes in Latin America Situation of women and children Chinese people awarded by delegation with medal against the American aggression of 1856 |
| | | International | Suggestion: Panama Canal a peaceful bridge for the World |
| | | | Local |

The Guatemalan delegation reported that by the pronouncement of the people against the Korean War Guatemala became the first country in Latin America that opposed sending soldiers to the Korean peninsula. They also denounced the Japanese rearmament as a threat for the world peace.²⁷ According to the

²⁷Benbaoxun, “hepinghuiyi di wu ri xiawu huiyi qingkuang,” *Renmin Ribao*, October 8, 1952, 1.



same report, the U.S.' military presence was located not only in the Eastern side of the Pacific, but also in the Western counterpart which are the Latin American shores, especially in Central America. The Nicaraguan delegation expressed the difficulties of his country people dealing with a government that had alliance with the U.S. They finished their intervention with a conviction: "we are determined to fight for our peace. Although our situation is very difficult, we still do it. Although our homeland is small, but we must be able to do everything in our power to reach the peace between countries."²⁸ The Honduran delegation described the conditions of oppression the Honduran people suffered. They evoked the Chinese people's peace friendly feeling to all the delegates of the Conference: "let not permit the durable flame of friendship be extinguished in the war."²⁹

While this Peace Conference was taking place, the delegation of El Salvador received a telegram from their counterparts in that country informing about some facts: the government of El Salvador received instructions from the U.S. Embassy in that country to set off a new wave of persecution, detention, torture and exile toward the members of the peace movement. The delegation of El Salvador immediately denounced these facts as an excuse for the U.S. to promote militarization in Latin America.³⁰ This delegation proposed to add a formal protest in the final declaration: condemn the colonial system in the form of imperialism.³¹

²⁸ Own translation [我们重申：我们决心要为我国的和平而奋斗。尽管我们的处境非常困难，我们仍然要这样做。虽然我们国土很小，但是我们一定能够尽我们的一分力量使各国之间获致和平的谅解。] Benbaoxun; Xinhuashe, "yazhou ji taipingyang quyue heping huiyi di liu ri xiawu ji di qi ri," *Renmin Ribao*, October 9, 1952, 2.

²⁹ Own translation [让我们在永远不衰的友谊的火焰中把战争烧毁。] Benbaoxun; Xinhuashe, "yazhou ji taipingyang," 2.

³⁰ Benbaoxun, "hepinghuiyi di wu ri", 1.

³¹ See Xinhuashe, "Saerwadoo ·Chaweisi·Weilasike de fayin (zhaiyao) yazhou ji



The head of delegation of El Salvador expressed the situation in his country and continued denouncing the Salvadorian government and the U.S. as colonialist actions sending one thousand two hundred people to prison.³²

The Costa Rican delegation reflected the neutral position of this country by focusing in the international situation. They described the tragic situation of the semi feudal and semi colonial regimes in Latin America, the women and the children. According to this delegation, the defense of women and children welfare only could take place in a peaceful atmosphere.³³ This delegation that represented many sectors of the Costa Rican society including workers, housewives, university students, and catholic groups shared the desires of national independence in Asia and Latin America. They finally awarded the Chinese people with the patriotic warrior medal against the American aggression of 1856.³⁴ In the same way, the representative of Panama delegation spoke in favor of the independence of Panama and proposed a Canal serving to build friendship links, not wars.³⁵

Through the intervention of the Central American countries in the PCAPR, we can perceived the reality of direct intervention U.S. had over governments in this sub region, governments that were controlled by the U.S. policies, and

taipingyangquyu hepinghuiyi daibiao de fayin," *Renmin Ribao*, October 11, 1952, 4.

³² Benbaoxun; Xinhuashe, "yazhou ji taipingyang," 2.

³³ Benbaoxun, "hepinghuiyi jixu tingqu baogao mazihafuren he huitun deng fenbie zuo bawei funü ertong quanli ji dijie wudaguo heping gongyue de baogao," *Renmin Ribao*, October 6, 1952, 1.

³⁴ Benbao, "rang taipingyang liang an kai bian heping youyizhuhua ji yazhou ji taipingyangquyu hepinghuiyi," *Renmin Ribao*, October 16, 1952, 2.

³⁵ Benbaoxun, "yazhou ji yang quyu heping huiyi di ba ri huiyi jixu ting qu keguo heping daibiao fayin," *Renmin Ribao*, October 10, 1952, 2.



weak economies under control of U.S. monopolistic companies that maintained people in situations of poverty. The reports of Central American countries were very specific in denouncing the direct U.S. intervention by immediate measures toward the local governments. The need of peace and independence in this sub region were not expressed in the same intensity (with exception the Brazilian delegation³⁶) by other Latin American delegations.³⁷

The closure of the Conference

At the end of the PCAPR, it was clear the desire of the people of Central America as well as the rest of Latin American delegations to establish friendship links with China. This desire of friendship between the Peoples of the two borders of the Pacific Ocean was expressed by the Chilean delegation that reconsidered the problem as a window for opportunities:

We think the Pacific Ocean is now beginning to be a bridge that joins together peoples from both sides of shores, rather than the wall that divides us with war and colonialism – this is the enemy of peace, the oppressors of the past and now so that we cannot but complete the task. ³⁸

It is interesting to notice that when one of the concluding reports of the PCAPR made allusion to Latin America, the discourse was centered in the specific problematic of the countries that belong to Central America:

³⁶ See Benbao, “yazhou ji yang quyū,” 2.

³⁷ We can observe declarations of the Colombian and Chilean delegations with discourses less focused in the U.S. intervention in their own countries. Cultural, trade and commercial exchanges were part of the South American delegations offered in the conference. In the Chinese press the intervention of U.S. in South America seems not to be at the same level of tension if compared with the corresponding Central Americans'. For the Chilean delegation pronouncement see Xinhuashe “zhili daibiao, huajia, zhili zhishi fenzi lianmeng zhuxi miliya-lafentuo de fayin (zhaiyao) yazhou ji taiping quyū heping huiyi daibiao de fayin,” *Renmin Ribao*, October 14, 1952, 5. For the Colombian see the following: Xinhuashe, “gelunbiya daibiao, zuojia qiaozhi-salamiya de fayin (zhaiyao) yazhou ji taiping quyū heping huiyi daibiao de fayin,” *Renmin Ribao*, October 11, 1952, 4.

³⁸ Own translation [我们觉得现在太平洋以正在开始成为它的两岸各国人民的一座团结的桥梁了，而不再是战争和殖民主义给我们树立的那座使我们分裂的高墙了——这是和平的敌人，过去与现在的压迫者使我们不能不完成的任务。] “zhili daibiao te tuoerbaomu yan ci, zhongguo de pengyoumen! ‘zai beijing shi gejie renmin qingzhu yazhou ji taipingyang quyū heping huiyi shengli bimū dahui shang’,” *Renmin Ribao*, October 15, 1952, 2.



Latin American representatives told us that there is a beautiful land where grows tropical fruit trees: coffee and cocoa, bananas and sugar cane, with tin and copper, oil and nitrates buried underground. But Nicaraguan workers stay working the whole day under the tropical palm trees without earning the minimum salary for living; many Honduran miners die of pneumonia, and the hands of Costa Rican people are as gray and dull as the agave trees.³⁹

We can observe here the social situation of Central America: countries, whose people worked in extractive activities, under unhealthy environments and paid with salaries not enough for minimum living standards. Was that description close to the history of the Central American countries at the beginning of the 1950s? How was the social, economic and political situation in these countries? Who were the employers of extractive work force? The general impression is that the Central American sub region shared common problems. The employers in this moment seemed not to worry about the salary, health and conditions of their employees.

The members of the delegations that showed this situation were visualized themselves as representatives of different sectors of the Central American societies. They were conscious about the need of national independence because their own societies experienced oppression, and lack of freedom. The representatives of Costa Rica recognized the Chinese people as an example in this struggle and awarded them with a medal that represented the War against U.S. invaders in 1856.⁴⁰

³⁹ Translation [拉丁美洲的代表们告诉我们：那儿有着美好的土地，生长着各种热带果树：咖啡和可可，香蕉和甘蔗，地下埋藏着锡和铜，石油和硝酸盐。但是尼加拉瓜的工人在热带棕榈树下整日劳动却得不到最低生活的待遇，洪都拉斯的许多矿工因肺病而死亡，哥斯达黎加人民的手像龙舌兰那样灰白和枯燥……。] benbao, "rang taipingyang," 2.

⁴⁰Benbao, "rang taipingyang," 2.



In addition, a Soviet newspaper mentioned in the Chinese press recognized the Latin American people who protested against sending troops to fight in the Korean Peninsula as a significant achievement in favor of world peace:

The representatives of Latin American countries in the Congress pointed out that the campaign for peace and opposition to U.S. expansion was growing in their countries. It is a matter of great significance that the most of people in Latin American countries at last did not let their countries to send troops to North Korea.⁴¹

Conclusions

The PCAPR was the first international activity organized by China. This official meeting was attended official representations of several Asian countries that already recognized the People's Republic of China, and by non-official representations of Central America. Representatives of China and of Central America sat together jointly with other nations of Asia and the Pacific region to discuss mainly the ways to reach the peace: The World peace was the common framework, and the Pacific Ocean was the geographical stage.

This paper identified the common voice of the Central American delegations: a united claimed against sending troops to the Korean Peninsula. These delegations coincidentally denounced the conditions of the sub region whose governments were easily intervened politically and economically. Guatemala

⁴¹ Translation [拉丁美洲各国的代表在会议上指出了争取和平和反对美国扩张的运动正在他们国家内日益高涨。拉丁美洲大多数国家的人民终于没有让他们的国家派兵士到朝鲜去，这是一件意义重大的事。] Xinhuashe, "heping liliang riye zhuangda de youli biao xian sulian zhenli bao ping yazhou ji taipingyang quyue heping huiyi de chengjiu," *Renmin Ribao*, October 23, 1952, 4.



was the first country in Latin America that openly opposed to the Korean War. Its delegation played a leading role denouncing the threats of U.S. military presence in the East Pacific and Central America. The participation of the other delegations showed a similar discourse: they were focused on describing the political, economic and social problems of their own countries and the intervention of the U.S. The need of peace and national independence were the common concerns of the Central American delegations. This differed respecting the rest of the Latin American delegations that were beyond by taking into account commerce, trade, and cultural exchanges as common interests. The concluding intervention of Central America was in charge of the Costa Rican delegation. They recognized the Chinese people as example in the search for world peace. This delegation awarded the Chinese people with a meaningful medal that symbolized a war the Central American nations launched together against U.S. invaders in 1856.⁴²

With the exception of Costa Rica since 2007, and the short period of Nicaragua (1985-1990), the Central American countries continue without official relations with China. Since the first interaction of delegations that took place in 1952, what kind of interactions do the countries of this sub region have with China? During the first international meeting organized in Beijing, the Chinese and Central American people recognized a common origin of threats, but also a common interest: their representations sat together discussing the search of world peace, a common desire shared by peoples of both sides of the Pacific

⁴² For the first time in the Central American History the five nations in that moment fought together against U.S. filibusters lead by William Walker, who recognized the geographical importance of the sub region as maritime transit way for the expansive U.S. interests toward new territories in the middle of 19th Century. Some scholars recognized this fight as the truly independence war for Costa Rica



Ocean. The PCAPR constituted the first official international meeting of New China, and it was the first time in which all Central American countries representations, even though at non-official level sat together with China. Now the people of China and Central America jointly with the people from other countries are facing common problems of global dimensions such as socio economic inequalities, and threats to the environment, as well as World peace. The threat of a potential conflict in the Korean peninsula prevails nowadays, and the peace is just a temporal fire cease in both sides. What is the situation in Central America now? What spaces can be created as the Beijing Conference of 1952 in the search of alternatives for these new global challenges?

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