

## LATIN AMERICA, NORTH AMERICA, AND EUROPE: INTERNATIONAL ENCOUNTERS AND RELATIONS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Conference held in conjunction with the Fiftieth Annual Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies, Portland, Oregon, April 10–13, 2002. Conveners: Christof Mauch (GHI) and Friedrich Schuler (Portland State University). Participants: Walther Bernecker (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg), Ragnhild Fiebig von Hase (University of Cologne), Thomas Fischer (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg), Claudia Haake (University of Bielefeld), Friedrich Katz (University of Chicago), Alan Knight (St. Anthony's College, Oxford), Uta Kresse Raina (Temple University), David Lazar (GHI), Uwe Lübken (University of Cologne), Ray Sadler (New Mexico State University) Thomas Schoonover (University of Southwestern Louisiana).

Over the years, the GHI has organized numerous conferences in the area of transatlantic history focusing on the manifold interactions between the United States and Europe. The annual meeting of the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies (RMCLAS) provided an opportunity to take a broader perspective. In collaboration with RMCLAS, the GHI invited several European scholars to share their thoughts on the three-way interactions between North America, Europe, and Latin America with experts on Latin America from the U.S. While most of the papers presented at the conference "Latin America, North America and Europe: International Encounters and Relations in Historical Perspective" focused on U.S.-European rivalry for influence in Latin America, much of the discussion centered on Latin American responses to that rivalry.

The first session of the conference was devoted to "German Interests in Latin America." In her paper "Clio and the German Danger 1896–1914," Ragnhild Fiebig von Hase suggested that historians' discussions of the question whether Imperial Germany posed a challenge to the Monroe Doctrine or a threat to U.S. interests in Latin America in the years immediately preceding World War I have been skewed by preoccupation with other issues. German historians long tended to subordinate analysis of German policy toward Latin America to consideration of Germany's dealings with the other great powers and the origins of the first world war. American scholars, meanwhile, have tended to link the question of the "German threat" to the question of the long-term influence of President Theodore Roosevelt's Latin America policy.

Fiebig von Hase's paper was followed by a case study of the differing goals two German governments pursued in their dealings with a Latin

American nation. Friedrich Katz opened his paper "A Comparison: German Policy Toward Mexico During Imperial Germany and the Third Reich" by noting that Mexico generally played a minor role in German policy in Latin America. In contrast to several other Latin American nations, pre-World War I Mexico had very limited economic dealings with Germany and comparatively few German settlers - the focal points of Imperial Germany's interest in Latin America. German interest in Mexico suddenly increased, according to Katz, with the Mexican revolution - during which Germany proposed establishing a de facto German-British-U.S. protectorate in Mexico - and the outbreak of the World War I, when Germany sought to provoke conflict between the U.S. and Mexico to divert U.S. attention from Europe. During the 1930s, Katz went on to argue, there was initially little basis for expanding ties between Hitler's right-wing government and the leftist Mexican government of Lázaro Cárdenas. A new impetus in German-Mexican relations came, however, in the wake of the Mexican government's nationalization of the oil industry in 1938; faced with a boycott by foreign oil companies, the Mexican government was willing to barter oil for industrial products with Germany. Cárdenas nonetheless remained fundamentally anti-Nazi - his was the only government to protest the German-Austrian *Anschluss* - and Mexico was eventually to join with the United States in declaring war on Germany.

The second session of the conference explored "U.S., British, and German Imperialism in Latin America." Alan Knight made the case for the utility of the notion of "informal imperialism" in his paper "British and U.S. Imperialism in Latin America: A Comparison." Britain's relations with Latin America after about 1850, Knight argued, illustrate the exercise of informal imperial control to advance the imperial power's economic interests. Before roughly 1840, Britain had tried to use coercion to secure favorable terms for trade and investment in the region, but with little success. After 1850, Latin American elites, for reasons of their own self-interest, became increasingly receptive to British economic influence. Britain was thereafter able to obtain much of what it had earlier sought by way of economic advantage; although coercion did not figure in Britain's dealings with the nations of Latin America, Knight stressed, there was a marked imbalance of power that worked in Britain's favor. The United States' relations with Latin America, he went on to argue, exemplify the defensive function of informal imperialism. Until the end of the Cold War, U.S. policy toward Latin America was shaped by a preoccupation with perceived external threats to U.S. interests in the region - fascism in the 1930s and 40s, for example, and communism in the following decades. The U.S. was more interested in trying to shape the social and political order in Latin America than Britain was, Knight noted, and U.S. policy had moralistic and missionary undercurrents missing from British policy.

Looking at the work of German scholars on Andean cultures, Uta Kresse Raina invoked another form of imperialism in her paper "Anthropology and Archaeology as Means for Intellectual Conquest in the Andes, 1850-1920." Germany had only very limited political and economic ties to the Andean nations, but the region was a major focus of German "intellectual imperialism," according to Kresse Raina. German self-identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was built upon the notion of the Germans as a people with ancient roots, and that notion strongly influenced the work of German scholars who studied ancient cultures, be it the Greeks or the Incas. Drawing a sharp contrast between a "noble" Inca past and a less glorious, ethnically mixed present, German anthropologists and archaeologists appropriated the Andean past for the construction of a German identity.

The two papers presented during the third session of the conference, "Concepts and Cultural Space," pointed to some of the difficulties - archival in one case, conceptual in the other - in studying the points of intersection between U.S., European, and Latin American history. In his paper "Finding Master Spy Abwehr Agent August Lüning in Havana, 1942 and 2002," Thomas Schoonover outlined the challenges of trying to piece together an account of Lüning's covert career and eventual arrest from the surviving records. Although Lüning's superiors were apparently dissatisfied with the information he provided them, and although he was undone largely by his own bumbling and clumsiness, U.S. counterintelligence officials were quick to portray Lüning as a serious threat to the Allied war effort and his arrest as a major blow to Nazi espionage. In the second paper of the session, "Genocide: Different Approaches to the Application of a European Concept in Latin America and the United States," Claudia Haake sketched the history of the term "genocide" and the ways it has been applied in studies of the indigenous peoples of North and South America. The term was coined by the Polish legal scholar Raphael Lemkin toward the end of World War II to describe the Nazi regime's policy of mass murder directed at specific groups. A central issue in early discussions of the concept of genocide, Haake noted, was the question whether intent was a necessary defining element. Some of the scholars and activists who have applied the term to the experiences of Native American groups have argued against the necessity of demonstrating intent in applying the concept of genocide or have side-stepped the issue by focusing on numbers and avoiding precise definitions. Voicing dissatisfaction with the often emotional tone and frequent vagueness in discussions of possible instances of genocide in the Americas, Haake closed by suggesting that a firm definition of genocide is still needed before the question whether genocide did in fact occur in the Americas can be decided.

The two papers presented during the fourth session, "European and U.S. Competition in Latin America," were conceived as twin case studies

of great power economic rivalry. Walther Bernecker, sketching the competition between Great Britain and the United States in Mexico, called attention to the impact of the differences in Spanish, British, and U.S. colonial economic policy. Thomas Fischer placed U.S.-German competition for economic advantage in Colombia within the context of regional economic differentiation within Colombia itself.

The subject of the closing session of the conference was "Japan and Germany in Latin America in the Interwar Period and World War II." Uwe Lübken's paper "Playing the Cultural Game: Nelson Rockefeller and the German Threat to Latin America" set out the dilemma U.S. policy makers confronted as they sought ways to counter Nazi and Fascist influence in Latin America in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Too direct a response, Lübken explained, might prompt Latin American governments and publics to suspect the U.S. was reverting to either the policy of the "Big Stick" or dollar diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy, on the other hand, seemed to offer a method for achieving traditional diplomatic goals through indirect means. The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) was created in 1940 under the direction of Nelson Rockefeller to serve as a channel to provide private groups with governmental funding to showcase U.S. culture in Latin America. Even with the OCIAA, however, the U.S. did not have a long-term policy for achieving long-term goals through cultural diplomacy in Latin America. U.S. cultural policy in Latin America, according to Lübken, remained first and foremost a response to the perceived fascist threat.

The conference closed with Friedrich Schuler's paper on "Japan in Latin America, 1933-1939." Schuler began by explaining his interest in reconsidering the terms and categories that have been used in writing Latin American history. The case of the development of the Japanese government's trade policy toward Latin America during the 1930s suggests, in his view, that the unfolding of events and decisions was much more haphazard than historical accounts indicate. The start of Japan's war on China coincided with the collapse of diplomatic efforts to address the Depression in the early 1930s, but it was only later in the decade that the Japanese government tried to direct trade with Latin America to serve the needs of its war effort. Japanese policy developed, Schuler argued, in opportunistic response to developments such as the U.S.-British embargo of Peru or the threat of protectionist measures on the part of Japan's Latin American trading partners: the eventual subordination of trade policy to the war effort was not preordained.

The organizers are planning to publish a collection of essays based upon the conference.

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