

Corporations and Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America

September 12-13, 2016

Conference at the Georg-August University Göttingen, Germany

Conveners: Hartmut Berghoff (Georg-August University Göttingen), Marcelo Bucheli (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) and Manfred Grieger (Corporate History Department, Volkswagen AG)

Historical research has dedicated considerable energy to the interplay between the business community and the Nazi dictatorship. Meanwhile there is a large number of very detailed case studies available, from Alusuisse to Volkswagen or from Deutsche Bank to General Motors demonstrating the close but often ambivalent relationship between political power and capitalist corporations.

Between the 1960s and 1980s most Latin American countries were ruled by military regimes that often modeled themselves after the European Fascist regimes. A large number of works (particularly those written during the rule of the military regimes) assumed a close relationship between business interests and the dictators. As has happened to the studies on Nazi Germany, we believe that with the hindsight of time between the fall of the Latin American military regimes and the availability of previously uncovered primary sources the relationship between the business community and the dictators needs to be revisited. This conference invites for new interpretations on the relationship between business and the Latin American military dictatorships that shed new lights on the various forms of entanglement between business and dictatorial regimes from joined or opposing interests, from close collaboration to ambivalent relationships or even resistance. What role did businesses play in the ascent to power of the dictatorships? How did they change the general climate of business? And how far did they change the rules and regulations? Human rights issues are also to be addressed just as well as infrastructure projects, as some juntas aimed at accelerating the development of their countries with the help of multinational corporations. We also invite studies on corruption, collusion, and revolving doors between dictatorships and businesses. The conference will consider multinational and domestic corporations including state-owned companies.

The two-day workshop seeks to bring together junior and senior scholars from the fields of Business History, Latin American History, Political Science, Sociology and related fields. The workshop will be conducted in English. The organizers will cover travel and accommodation expenses.

Please submit paper proposals of no more than 300 words and a short bio in one document to Mrs. Christel Schikora (WiSoGeschichte@wiwi.uni-goettingen.de) by February 08.