

## PREFACE

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Amid the intensive public discussion of global tensions and global conflict during the fall of 2002, a leading German historian used the GHI's Annual Lecture as an opportunity to address the challenge of global history. Professor Jürgen Osterhammel of the University of Constance has written widely on the interactions between states and regions which are separated as much by political, economic, and cultural differences as by geography. He has proven himself a master at linking detailed analysis of specific regional phenomena to consideration of broader issues. His skill in moving between the local and the global was brilliantly displayed in his lecture "In Search of a Nineteenth Century." "Can the nineteenth century plausibly be construed as a period in world history?" Osterhammel asked. By way of response, he examined a number of competing chronological frameworks and, perhaps more importantly, raised a series of further questions that need to be addressed if we are to make generalizations on a global scale. In his comments on Osterhammel's lecture, Professor Ira Berlin of the University of Maryland offered a pointed reminder that world history is not simply "the sum of all national histories." The texts of Osterhammel's lecture and Berlin's comment appear in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

In addition to reporting on activities such as the Annual Lecture and recent conferences, this issue of the *Bulletin* takes a step toward repaying a debt of gratitude. The GHI owes its existence in no small part to the lobbying efforts of German Americanists. Germany's principal American Studies association, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Amerikastudien (DGfA), is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its founding this year, and we mark the occasion here with two features. "Between Political Reconnaissance Work and Democratizing Science: American Studies in Germany, 1917–1953," by former GHI Research Fellow Philipp Gassert, is based on a paper delivered at a panel devoted to "Amerika in Deutschland, Deutschland in Amerika" at the Historikertag in Halle last September. While the study of American culture, society, and history in Germany was by no means unaffected by political events, Gassert's essay makes clear that the history of *Amerikanistik* prior to the founding of the DGfA cannot be cast in terms of simple continuity or discontinuity: The postwar discipline of American Studies in West Germany owed much to both the intellectual traditions of the Weimar era and the institutional promotion of the field during the Third Reich. The subsequent development of the discipline is discussed in the series of interviews with four

noted German scholars of modern U.S. history conducted by GHI Research Fellow Astrid Eckert. Each offers an assessment of the current state of American studies in Germany and speculates on the future of the field.

The future is as much a concern as the past at the GHI. Supporting the work of younger scholars and assisting in the training of tomorrow's historians stand high on the list of the Institute's objectives, as the reports on its activities in this issue of the *Bulletin* attest. The GHI was proud to host the third annual Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize ceremony in November. The Stern Prize is awarded by the Friends of the GHI to the authors of the best doctoral dissertations in the field of German history submitted to North American universities in the past year. Julia Roos and Rebecca Wittmann, the 2002 Stern Prize recipients, outline their research in this issue. German and American students still working on their dissertations had the opportunity to compare notes and exchange ideas at the second meeting of the GHI's Medieval History Seminar, as research fellow Christoph Strupp explains in his report. The GHI is grateful to the Humboldt University, Berlin, for helping organize the Seminar and to the European Recovery Program for its financial support. In addition to its programs designed to bring younger scholars together, the GHI also awards a number of short-term fellowships to doctoral students and *HabilitandInnen* to undertake archival research. Several recent fellowship recipients presented their projects at the GHI Fellows Seminar; a list of their presentations is included in this *Bulletin*.

The GHI and the Friends of the GHI are especially proud to announce a new initiative designed to assist students of German history at all levels—as well as their teachers. Over the next five years, the German History Documentation Project will make a wealth of primary source materials—texts as well as images—available free of charge on the GHI's website. A generous grant from the Max Kade Foundation has made this project possible. The first installment of the German History Documentation Project is scheduled to go on-line in the fall of 2003.

In the meantime, readers of the *Bulletin* are encouraged to visit the GHI's newly redesigned website—[www.ghi-dc.org](http://www.ghi-dc.org)—and to keep watch for another major initiative, our on-line Directory of German Studies in North America. The Directory will be a searchable database of North American scholars in all disciplines whose work touches on Germany and the German-speaking world. We expect the Directory to be up and running early in the coming summer.

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