

PREFACE

The GHI is a scholarly institution dedicated to historical research, but its programs are not limited to scholars and are not without bearing on present-day concerns. The three feature articles in this issue of the *Bulletin* grew out of talks that were open to the public, and each touches upon an issue of profound contemporary resonance. It would be hard to think of a political leader more qualified to comment on the sensitive—and pressing—issue of international migration than Professor Rita Süßmuth, who chaired the independent commission that drafted a series of proposals to reform Germany’s immigration policies. Thanks to the generous support of the ZEIT Foundation, the GHI was able to invite Professor Süßmuth to Washington to deliver the third Gerd Bucerius Lecture. In her lecture, “People on the Move: The Challenges of Migration in Transatlantic Perspective,” Professor Süßmuth calls attention to some of the differences in how the United States and the countries of Western Europe have handled immigration. Noting that there are many positive things that Germany and its neighbors could learn from the American experience, Professor Süßmuth also voices concern that recent discussions of immigration in the United States have taken an unfortunate turn as a result of the heightened attention to domestic security since the September 11 terror attacks.

Another area where divergences between European and U.S. policies have provoked much discussion is the environment. Whether those divergences are rooted in historical experience was the subject of a public program at the GHI in late 2002. Joachim Radkau, one of Germany’s leading environmental historians, makes the case for a distinctive European approach to interacting with nature in his paper “Exceptionalism in European Environmental History.” In his “Theses on Radkau,” John McNeill, whose work is as formidably wide-ranging as Radkau’s, weighs the evidence Radkau presents and offers evidence of his own in affirming some aspects of Radkau’s argument and challenging others.

A. James McAdams’s essay “Transitional Justice After 1989: Is Germany So Different?” was originally presented as the public keynote lecture of a groundbreaking conference held at the GHI this past spring. “Historical Justice in International Perspective: How Societies are Trying to Right the Wrongs of the Past” brought together twenty-five scholars from nearly a dozen countries. The diversity of the academic disciplines represented by the participants—which included philosophy, sociology, and literary studies as well as history, political science, and anthropology—was matched by the diversity of the individual cases they dis-

cussed—which ranged from the treatment of the Maori in New Zealand to the call for reparations for slavery in the United States. Several of those cases are mentioned in McAdams’s essay, which uses the experience of post-unification Germany to elucidate the complex series of issues associated with the notion of “transitional justice.”

In the “GHI Research” section of this *Bulletin*, GHI deputy director Dirk Schumann reports on his ongoing research on “Authority in the ‘Blackboard Jungle’: Parents and Teachers, Experts and the State, and the Modernization of West Germany in the 1950s.” Schumann joined the GHI in the summer of 2002, following a three-year term as DAAD Visiting Professor of History at Emory University. Not least among his many responsibilities at the GHI is overseeing programs for graduate students and recent PhDs.

Several of the GHI’s programs for younger scholars and the general public would not have been possible without outside support. The very successful 2003 session of the Young Scholars Forum, outlined in this issue of the *Bulletin* by GHI Research Fellow Christine von Oertzen, was funded by Allianz AG. The tribute to Willy Brandt described in this issue by Dirk Schumann would have been inconceivable without the assistance provided by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Willy Brandt Foundation. And, as noted above, the Ebelin and Gerd Bucerius ZEIT Foundation has provided the means for the GHI to present distinguished public figures to a broad audience in Washington, DC. The GHI is very grateful to these generous organizations and to the Friends of the German Historical Institute.

While the *Bulletin* regularly reports on the activities of many scholars associated with the GHI in different ways—including Research Fellows, guest speakers, conference participants, and grant recipients—there is one important group of scholars whose efforts on behalf of the GHI are rarely if ever mentioned in these pages. The German and American scholars who served on the GHI’s Academic Advisory Board for over a decade provided invaluable guidance in matters such as research staff appointments and publications policies. With Professor Klaus Hildebrand as chair, the Academic Advisory Board was a reliable advocate of the GHI’s interests during the recent legal restructuring of the foundation of which the institute is a part. The long-serving Academic Advisory Board stepped down this summer, and its successor, chaired by Professor Friedrich Lenger of the University of Gießen, had its constituent meeting in August. The GHI is greatly indebted to the former board and looks forward to working with its successor.

Christof Mauch
Director