

PREFACE

Germany and the United States may stand at the center of the GHI's research program, but they have never been treated in isolation. Many of the projects and conferences the GHI supports focus on the broader transatlantic community. Conferences such as "Natural Disasters and Cultural Strategies" and "Historical Justice in International Perspective" have explored the particular national experiences of events, developments, and trends that transcend national borders. In collaboration with our colleagues at the German Historical Institute in London, we have also gathered scholars from across the globe on three occasions to reflect on the theory and practice of world history. The third of these conferences, held in Washington in the spring of 2005, focused on teaching world history. This issue of the *Bulletin* features the keynote lecture on the problem of conceptualizing world history by Arif Dirlik that opened the conference. World history, Professor Dirlik persuasively argues, is defined as much by the perspective it promotes—by its insistent questioning of established analytical categories and its focus on complexity—as by its subject matter.

Like Dirlik's model world historian, Timothy Garton Ash has devoted his career to challenging conventional ways of looking at the world. As a chronicler-participant in Eastern Europe's independent civic initiatives during the 1980s, Garton Ash explained to readers in the West the alternative vision of a united and democratic Europe espoused by groups such as Poland's Solidarity and activists like Vaclav Havel. With that vision now largely realized in the expanded European Union, Garton Ash has turned his attention to the broader ramifications of European integration. Thanks to the generous support of the ZEIT Stiftung Gerd und Ebelin Bucerius, the GHI was able to invite Professor Garton Ash to Washington to share his thoughts on relations between the enlarged Europe and the United States. True to form, Garton Ash called prevailing opinion into question by arguing against the widely held view that the transatlantic partnership has outlived its usefulness. The EU and the United States, he contends, can and should work together as strategic partners in building "an international community of democracies".

Professor Garton Ash's lecture was typical of many of the GHI's public events in bringing a historical perspective to contemporary issues and debates. Highlighting the pertinence of the past for the present was certainly one of the main objectives of the panel discussion the GHI organized last winter on the German suppression of the Herero uprising of 1904. German colonial forces employed not only conventional military tactics against the Hereros but also resorted to measures such as poison-

ing water sources and cutting off access to food. This horrific chapter in the history of German imperialism is the subject of current political discussion in both Germany and Namibia. At issue is not only the question of memory and commemoration, but also more immediately tangible matters such as aid policy and financial reparations. The suppression of the Herero revolt is also directly pertinent to ongoing debates on the definition of genocide and the use of military force against noncombatants. Three essays based upon presentations delivered at the panel discussion "The Measure of Atrocity: The German War Upon the Hereros" appear in this issue of the *Bulletin*. Isabel Hull examines the military background to the German response to the Herero uprising. Gesine Krüger considers the contemporary import of colonial-era violence in Africa. Jürgen Zimmerer situates the massacre of the Hereros within the history of twentieth-century genocide.

The GHI's panel discussions and lecture programs serve as a forum for dialogue between the scholarly community and the broader public. Public outreach is an important part of the GHI's mission. It thus was a great pleasure to offer the services of GHI research fellows Bernd Schaefer and Astrid Eckert on the two occasions this summer that producers at PBS's "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer" called to ask if the GHI had someone on hand to help explain the day's events from a historical perspective. The GHI has also been featured in the German press recently. Early this summer, several radio stations and newspapers, including the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, reported at length on the conferences "Animals in History: Studying the Not So Human Past," held at the Literaturhaus Köln and "Turning Points in Environmental History," jointly organized by the GHI and the University of Bielefeld's Center for Interdisciplinary Studies.

One recent public program had particular resonance for the GHI's staff and many longtime supporters. The conference "War in an Age of Revolution" opened with a panel discussion on the concept of total war that provided occasion to pay tribute to one of the initiators of the GHI's series of conferences on total war, GHI founding director Hartmut Lehmann. This event probably came as close as any could to reflecting the diversity of Professor Lehmann's scholarly interests. He has written widely on the cultural history of the early modern era as well on the points of intersection in the histories of Europe and the United States. Professor Lehmann recently retired as director of the Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte; he has used his newfound leisure since then to devote himself to a demanding regimen of writing, research, and guest teaching. My colleagues and I join in wishing Hartmut Lehmann all the best.

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