

## FIFTEENTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE FRIENDS OF THE GHI AND AWARD OF THE FRITZ STERN DISSERTATION PRIZE

Symposium at the GHI, November 17, 2006. Conveners: Gerald D. Feldman (President, Friends of the GHI) and Christof Mauch (GHI). Participants: Elizabeth Heineman (University of Iowa), Christoph Klessmann (University of Potsdam/ ZZP Potsdam), Lars Maischak (California State University, Fresno). Made possible by a grant from the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

The Friends of the German Historical Institute convened in Washington on November 17, 2005, for their fifteenth annual symposium, chaired by Gerald D. Feldman. The morning session featured the awarding of the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which has been awarded for seven years for the best dissertation—or two dissertations—in German history at a North American university. This year's prize was awarded to a single winner, Lars Maischak, who earned his 2005 doctorate at the Johns Hopkins University under the supervision of Ronald G. Walters, for his dissertation "A Cosmopolitan Community: Hanseatic Merchants in the German-American Atlantic of the Nineteenth Century." An article offering an overview of Maischak's dissertation can be found in the "Stern Prize" section of this *Bulletin*. Fritz Stern attended the award ceremony and gave a comment. The Prize Committee was composed of Doris Bergen (University of Toronto), Norman J.W. Goda (Ohio University), and Craig M. Koslofsky (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). The prize committee cited Maischak's dissertation as "extraordinary in the range of issues it addresses, its depth of research, and its elegance of style." "At once transnational and clearly focused on Bremen, Maischak's dissertation brings to life a group of people who emerge as a self-conscious elite but also as individuals and members of complex family and business networks. . . . In sum," the award statement concluded, "Lars Maischak's dissertation succeeds on every level: it is ambitious, original, transnational, innovative in its focus, aware of gender and religion, and beautifully written. It is a model for what many scholars seek to do, not only as an integrated approach to the past, but in its understanding of cultural, economic, intellectual, and political exchange in the Atlantic world."

The afternoon featured an event honoring Konrad Jarausch on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday in order to thank him for his extraordinary service to the Friends of the GHI. Jarausch was the first president of the Friends of the GHI from 1991–94 and served as their president

again from 2000–2002. Elizabeth Heineman spoke from the perspective of one of Jarausch's former Ph.D. students. With his wide range of thematic and methodological interests, she noted, Jarausch inspired in his students "a kind of fearlessness" about venturing into new territory. But former students equally valued Jarausch's conscientiousness about teaching: his thoughtful responses to draft chapters, his constant engagement even when abroad, and his ability to divine "not just when grad students need some direction, but also when to get out of the way and let them get on with it." Christoph Klessmann, Jarausch's longtime partner as co-director of the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung (ZZF) in Potsdam, spoke about Jarausch's role in the founding and successful establishment of the ZZF as a premier research institute. Jarausch's most important contribution, he argued, was to bring an "outsider's view" and an international perspective to the ZZF. This ensured that the ZZF's work was informed by and connected to international historical research, and thus helped to gain the ZZF international recognition. He also commented on the remarkable stamina underlying Jarausch's transatlantic commute between Chapel Hill and Potsdam, as well as the initially improvised, but successful division of labor between the two co-directors, who seem to have complemented each other in felicitous ways.

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