

# PREFACE

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On November 18, 1987, Heinrich August Winkler and Bernard Bailyn delivered the first of the GHI's Annual Lectures. The GHI had opened its doors only months earlier, and the Annual Lecture was its first major event. As founding director Hartmut Lehmann explained in the inaugural issue of the *Bulletin* that fall, a fundamental objective of the GHI would be to foster "a continuing dialogue between scholars across the borders of nations." The Annual Lecture has indeed become established as an important forum of German-American scholarly dialogue in the years since Winkler and Bailyn shared the podium, and it was with justifiable pride that the GHI used the 2007 Annual Lecture as occasion to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of its founding. By pleasant coincidence, the main speaker, James J. Sheehan of Stanford University, had earlier joined with Lehmann in organizing the first conference held at the GHI, "German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States, 1933–1970" (1988). Lehmann was on hand for the 2007 Annual Lecture and graciously agreed to be interviewed on the early years of the GHI. The interview appears in this issue of the *Bulletin* along with the texts of Sheehan's Annual Lecture and the comment by Cornelia Rauh-Kühne.

Thematic diversity has been a hallmark of the GHI's research program from the outset. German-American relations are a core topic, but the GHI has also supported work on subjects ranging from Jewish-gentile relations in medieval Germany to the impact of the automobile on the ways Europeans and Americans experience landscape. Within the scope of the GHI's broad scholarly mandate, each director has given special attention to a particular field of research. During Lehmann's tenure as director (1987–93), the GHI undertook a number of projects on the history of migration. The Cold War stood at the center of the GHI's work during the directorship of Detlef Junker (1994–99). Under Christof Mauch's direction (1999–2007), the GHI became a major sponsor of research in international and comparative environmental history. Shortly after this issue of the *Bulletin* goes to press, Hartmut Berghoff will arrive in Washington to take up the directorship of the GHI. Berghoff, a specialist in economic and social history, will set out his research agenda in a forthcoming issue of the *Bulletin*.

The dialogue the GHI has sought to foster crosses not only borders but also generations. From "German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States, 1933–1970" on, GHI conferences have always included both junior and senior scholars as participants. If the Annual Lecture pays

tribute to distinguished members of the historical profession, the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize ceremony, traditionally held the day after the Annual Lecture, provides a platform for the young historians who will be shaping the field of German history in the U.S. in the years ahead. This issue of the *Bulletin* features project descriptions by the 2007 Stern Prize recipients, Monica Black and Winson Chu. The Stern Prize, we should note, is awarded not by the GHI, but by the Friends of the German Historical Institute, who have become a vital part of the institute's work.

Another fall event at the GHI is the annual symposium on German unification. The speakers at the symposia over the years have been not historians but rather *Zeitzeugen*, men and women who played a part in the events of 1989–90 and the subsequent public debate on the ongoing process of unification. It was a great honor last fall to welcome Bärbel Bohley to Washington. Bohley's civic engagement long preceded the East German revolution of 1989. From the late 1970 on, she found herself ever more frequently in trouble with East German authorities on account of her participation in the independent peace movement. She went on to play a leading part in establishing Neues Forum, the group at the forefront of the civil liberties movement in 1989, and co-authored its founding manifesto, *Die Zeit ist reif* (The Time is Ripe). After unification, Bohley was an outspoken proponent of granting onetime citizens of the German Democratic Republic access to their Stasi files. True to character, she spoke her mind freely on unification and its aftermath in her address at the GHI, which appears in English translation in this issue of the *Bulletin*. We would like to thank the Hertie Foundation for its generous sponsorship of the October 3 symposia.

Events like the Annual Lecture, the unification symposia, and the GHI's scholarly conferences are planned long in advance and involve considerably more work than one might expect. This work has carried on much as normal during the year-long period between Christof Mauch's departure from the GHI and Hartmut Berghoff's arrival. We are grateful to them both for the help and guidance they have offered. We also owe a great debt of gratitude to all of our colleagues at the GHI. The full calendar of upcoming events and steady flow of new publications attest to their commitment and professionalism.

*Philipp Gassert and Anke Ortlepp*  
Deputy Directors