

INTRODUCTION

"The more things change, the more they stay the same," a popular saying goes. The German Historical Institute, Washington, DC, has certainly experienced a great deal of change since its founding in November 1987. Staff have come and gone. Research projects have been brought to completion. New programs have been continually added to the institute's roster of activities. One thing that has not changed is its basic mission: to support research and foster transatlantic scholarly dialogue. This summary of programs and activities stands as a record both of the continuous change in the GHI's day-to-day work in the years 2003–2007 and of its ongoing commitment to serving the international community of historians.¹

Most of the period covered by this summary fell within Christof Mauch's tenure as director of the GHI. One of the focal points of the GHI's research program under Prof. Mauch was environmental history. The GHI's conferences, workshops, and research projects in environmental history were usually international in scope and comparative in approach, thus building on the GHI's long engagement in comparative and transatlantic history. Some of the projects took the GHI into entirely new territory: the conference "Animals in History" that we organized in collaboration with the University of Cologne is perhaps the most conspicuous example. Other projects, notably our conference "The Environmental History of the Cold War," opened new perspectives on topics of long-standing interest to the GHI. Environmental history, I should stress, was only one of several areas of research concentration during the five years under review here. The fields of German and American history, and the many points where they intersect, remain central to the GHI's work, as the record of activities and publications that follows here amply demonstrates.

The GHI's commitment to German, American, and transatlantic history is probably most apparent in its fellowships and programs for historians at the beginning of their careers. In recent years, we have awarded approximately 25 fellowships annually to doctoral students and *Habilitanden* for research in American archives. Thanks to the generosity of several foundations, we were able to expand our *Nachwuchsprogramme* over the past five years. The Ebelin and Gerd Bucerus ZEIT Foundation,

¹ An overview of the institute's projects during its first fifteen years can be found in *The German Historical Institute: A Summary of Programs and Activities*, Washington, DC, 2003, also available on the web site (www.ghi-dc.org/summary).

for example, made it possible for us to complement our long-running Summer Seminar in Paleography and Archival Studies for American doctoral students in German history with a similar program for German students of American history. Another important addition to our programs to support younger scholars is a year-long postdoctoral fellowship in environmental history funded by the Breuninger Foundation.

When the previous *Summary of Programs and Activities* covering the GHI's first fifteen years was published five years ago, work had only just begun on what is undoubtedly the most ambitious project the institute has undertaken, the German History in Documents and Images (GHDI) web site. GHDI gives students, teachers, and everyone with an interest in Germany's past free access to an amazingly broad range of primary sources materials. Documents are given both in the original German and in English translation, and the accompanying explanatory materials are likewise provided in both languages. To date, approximately 800 texts and 1,000 visual documents (e.g., photographs, prints, political cartoons, maps) have been posted on the GHDI web site. It is an unrivalled resource that is growing richer literally by the day.

The GHDI web site, which can be used by anyone anywhere in the world who has Internet access, has extended the GHI's reach far beyond the scholarly communities of Germany and the United States. On a more modest scale, the public events we stage in Washington likewise serve an audience that is not limited to members of the historical profession. The GHI organizes lectures, panel discussions, and exhibitions in the belief that the insights gained through scholarly research can and should be shared with the interested lay public. The five years covered in this summary saw a notable increase in the number of public programs that were undertaken in collaboration with other institutions or that were made possible by generous outside funding. The events we have organized with the local Goethe-Institut and the Cultural Affairs Department of the German Embassy have been extremely successful in broadening our audience. Our annual Gerd Bucorius Lecture, sponsored by the Ebelin and Gerd Bucorius ZEIT Foundation, and German Unification Symposium, initially financed by E.ON North America and now organized in collaboration with the Hertie Foundation, have attracted steadily larger audiences over each of the past five years. The Bucorius Lectures and German Unification Symposiums enable the GHI to bring leading public figures and shapers of public debate to Washington. Even in a city as rich in cultural offerings as Washington, these two events stand out.

Taking stock of the GHI's activities provides occasion to recall many debts of gratitude. These thanks go first and foremost to Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research which supports the GHI Washington and numerous other German Historical Institutes worldwide—

since 2002 through the foundation *Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland (DGIA)*. As this summary documents, much of our work is done in partnership with other institutions and organizations. Without the collaboration of many universities and research institutes, without the support provided by our donors, and without the invaluable assistance of *The Friends of the German Historical Institute*, we simply could not have undertaken as broad an array of scholarly programs and public events as we did in the years 2003–2007. Thank you to all of them. The record of the five years presented here stands as a tribute to my predecessor, Christof Mauch, and the entire staff of the GHI. Christof Mauch's curiosity, energy, and creativity were an inspiration to all of us who had the pleasure of working with him at the GHI. I want to thank him and all my colleagues for their part in making the GHI the dynamic institution it is today.

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