

PREFACE

This issue of the *Bulletin* reflects two themes that have been prominent in the Institute's recent work. Andrew Zimmerman's feature article on the Tuskegee Institute and Germany's colonial empire, a wonderful example of transnational history, is based on a lecture he delivered in the GHI's Spring 2008 lecture series "African-Americans and Germans: Historical Encounters." This series is part of a sustained thematic program of GHI events, research projects, and publications dedicated to the historical relationship between African Americans and Germany. This program includes the research project "The African-American Civil Rights Struggle and Germany, 1945–1989," which Martin Klimke, GHI Visiting Fellow in North American History, presents in this issue's *GHI Research* section. This *Bulletin's* second theme is the history of terrorism. To mark the thirtieth anniversary of the "German Autumn" of 1977—the Red Army Faction's (RAF) abduction of Hanns Martin Schleyer, the hijacking of the Lufthansa jet *Landshut*, and the suicides of the RAF leaders in Stammheim Prison—the GHI organized a lecture series on "Terror, State and Society in West Germany" last fall. Jeremy Varon's lucid comparative analysis of the German RAF and the American Weathermen is based on his lecture in that series. Pursuing the subject of terrorism further this spring, the GHI hosted an international conference on the topic "Why Do Terrorists Stop?" This issue features that conference's remarkable keynote lecture on the "Baader Meinhof Phenomenon" by Stefan Aust, former editor-in-chief of *Der Spiegel* and author of the standard work *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex*, along with Bruce Hoffman's incisive comparative comment "Putting German Terrorism in Perspective: An American Response."

In April of this year I began my tenure as GHI Director, taking the helm of a vibrant institute. A new director, however, is not only charged with continuing successful programs but also with taking the Institute in new directions. In this spirit, economic history will be playing a greater role at the GHI than before. The economy is a crucial factor in all historical processes, and it seems time to refocus attention on this often neglected or even forgotten dimension of history. I am particularly interested in the historical study of consumption, and the GHI will develop a research program in the history of consumption, an exciting field that brings together economic and cultural history.

One of first priorities of the past few months has been the redesign and relaunch of the GHI web site in order to better inform the Institute's friends and partners about our activities. The new web site makes it easy

to check for upcoming events, calls for papers, fellowships or new publications. It will also make conference reports available more quickly than this *Bulletin* can. If you have not yet visited the redesigned web site, please visit us at: www.ghi-dc.org. In closing, I want to thank the GHI's fellows and staff for their friendly welcome and their active support in the past few months. It is the Institute's individual members who make the GHI the wonderful institution that it is.

Hartmut Berghoff, Director