This issue of the Bulletin marks the end of my term as Director of the German Historical Institute. I am delighted that the Bulletin’s readership has continued to grow during my tenure and that, beyond performing the service of informing the academic community about the GHI’s activities, the Bulletin has become widely recognized as a journal featuring first-rate scholarship.

As I leave my post, I have, from the vantage point of an economic historian, reflected on my years in the United States, delivering a “Farewell Lecture” on this theme at the GHI last June and at the German Embassy last September, which is published in this issue. My successor as Director of the GHI, as of October 1, is Simone Lässig, who is on leave from her position as Director of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig. I know that the GHI will be in very good hands with Professor Lässig and would like to convey all my best wishes for her tenure at the Institute.

My farewell lecture is not the only article featuring personal reflections in this issue. In “History Lived and History Written: Germany and the United States, 1945/55-2015,” which was first delivered as the Gerald Feldman Memorial Lecture this past May, the distinguished historian Charles Maier (Harvard University) offers his personal reflections on both “lived history” and “written history” in Germany and the United States since the end of the Second World War. This issue’s third feature article, by Loch Johnson (University of Georgia), one of America’s leading scholars of national security, is based on a lecture he delivered in the GHI’s 2015 Spring Lecture Series on “Intelligence Services and Civil Liberties: Security and Privacy in Historical Perspective.” In this article Johnson provides an incisive, historically informed analysis of the recent German-American controversies over the proper balance of national security and privacy that were fueled by Edward Snowden’s revelations concerning the National Security Agency’s mass surveillance of phone calls and internet traffic worldwide.

The remaining two feature articles present the research of GHI Research Fellows. Jan Jansen’s article “In Search of Atlantic Sociability: Freemasons, Empires, and Atlantic History” sketches the contributions that Jansen’s projected history of Atlantic masonic
networks and sociability in the decades around 1800 will make to the comparative history of empires as well as to Atlantic and global history. Elisabeth Engel’s article “From Sex in Colonial Africa to Anticolonialism in the Bedroom: Reflections on the African American Missionary Position,” which draws on her recently completed dissertation, which won the 2015 Franz Steiner Prize, argues that the travel writing of African American missionaries in Africa transformed both colonial and pan-African discourses about the relationship between African Americans and Africa by altering dominant assumptions about what the markers of sameness and difference were in the intimate domains of home, sex and family.

This issue’s conference reports range from Germans in the Pacific world to the history of “consumer engineering,” from environmental history to the “Black Atlantic,” from the early modern period to the twentieth century, and thus once again illustrate the diversity of research topics examined at the workshops and conferences organized and supported by the German Historical Institute.

I would like to express my gratitude to the entire staff of the GHI, who turned the Institute into the vibrant place that it is and contributed to our teamwork with a high level of energy and competence. I would also like to thank Richard Wetzell, who in his capacity of this Bulletin’s editor has borne the brunt of the challenging and time-consuming work of putting together this journal and has assiduously worked toward raising the academic profile of the Bulletin.

The GHI has, once again, lined up a great program of lectures and conferences for this winter and next spring. Please consult the calendar of upcoming events in this issue’s “News” section and on our website. I know that Simone Lässig and the GHI team look forward to welcoming you at one of these events in the coming academic year.

Hartmut Berghoff (GHI Director, April 2008 to September 2015)