This issue of the Bulletin opens with the thirtieth Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute, delivered last fall by Adelheid von Saldern (University of Hannover). Her lecture, titled “Benchmark Europe: Liberalism and Cultural Nationalism in the United States, 1900-1930,” examines the role of the so-called quality magazines in American liberal cultural nationalism — including the search for authentic American art and literature — and as transatlantic mediators who sought to construct a transatlantic network among cultural elites in an era of rising anti-Americanism in Europe. In his comment on the lecture, Thomas Bender (New York University) reminds us that, unlike most European countries, the United States did not have a national culture supported by state institutions; instead, American national culture was largely the product of commerce. The next feature, by Martin Sabrow (Center for Contemporary History, Potsdam), presents the lecture he delivered at the GHI’s German Unification Symposium last fall. Examining the question whether the year 1990 represents an epochal break in German history, Sabrow challenges the depth of the rupture and makes a strong case that growing temporal distance has relativized the break of 1990.

As regular readers know, every November the Friends of the GHI award the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university. In this issue, this year’s prize winner, Katharina Matro, presents an overview of her dissertation on the “Soviet Occupation of Junker Estates in Poland’s New Western Territories, 1945-1948.” While most recent studies of postwar central Europe have focused on cities, Matro examines the important transformations that took place in the countryside, focusing on the former landed estates of the Prussian nobility in Western Pomerania, where from mid-1945 to mid-1948 three groups — remaining Germans, arriving Poles, and Soviet military authorities — had to negotiate the return of war-torn lands to agricultural cultivation in a situation in which it remained unclear who owned the land.

The next two articles present lectures delivered at the January 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA). The first, “Arnold Toynbee and the Problems of Today,” is the 2017 Toynbee Prize Lecture, delivered by Jürgen Osterhammel (University
of Konstanz), a former member of the GHI’s Academic Advisory Board, on the occasion of accepting the 2017 Toynbee Prize. In this lecture, Osterhammel, whose recent book *The Transformation of the World* presented a global history of the nineteenth century, embeds his assessment of the work of Arnold Toynbee in a set of wide-ranging and incisive reflections about the emergence of global history and the challenges facing its practitioners. Paul Nolte’s article “Historians in the Political Arena in Germany” presents a lecture he delivered as part of an AHA panel co-organized by the German Historical Institute. In this piece, Nolte (Free University of Berlin) draws on his own experiences as a public intellectual, a member of public advisory panels as well as informal political advisory circles to analyze and critically reflect on the role of historians in the public sphere in contemporary Germany.

Our final feature article presents the research of GHI Research Fellow Anne Schenderlein on “German Jewish ‘Enemy Aliens’ in the United States during the Second World War.” This article investigates and analyzes the little-known but disturbing story of German Jewish refugees’ classification as “enemy aliens” during World War II, and how the refugees and refugee organizations responded to and negotiated this discriminatory treatment in their newly adopted country.

The “Reports” section of the Bulletin reports on the GHI’s recent conferences and academic events, which ranged from a series of panels on “migration and knowledge” to a conference on the use of digital mapping technology to create “spatial historical knowledge,” and from the history of knowledge restrictions imposed by national security agencies to the economic history of “industrial decline and the rise of the service sector” in 1970s Europe and North America. As always, our “News” section informs you about recent developments at the Institute, new publications, and upcoming events. For up-to-date information on upcoming events, publications, fellowships, and calls for papers, please also consult our website — http://www.ghi-dc.org — as well as our Facebook page.

Simone Lässig (Director) and Richard F. Wetzel (Editor)