II. Greetings Delivered at the Official Opening of the Institute's New Building

A. Hartmut Lehmann, Director, German Historical Institute

Four years after the German Historical Institute was established in Washington, D.C., the official opening of its new building today marks an important date in the Institute's young history. This is a time for looking back, for expressing gratitude, and for envisioning the next stage in our development.

For historians, it is certainly proper to begin by reflecting on the past. Starting with the conference "German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933," which I organized jointly with Jim Sheehan in 1988, the Institute has sponsored or co-sponsored no less than fourteen such events: six in Washington, six in other American cities, and two in Germany. Furthermore, we have organized more than fifty lectures and more than a dozen workshops and seminars. Our library, which specializes in recent publications on modern German history, has grown to over 10,000 volumes and has become a valuable instrument for research. The Institute has awarded scholarships to approximately fifty doctoral students. With the support of the Volkswagen Foundation and in cooperation with the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, we have just begun a post-doctoral research program in post-1945 German history. We have taken American doctoral students on tours of German archives and research institutions and have organized summer courses in paleography at the Herzog-August-Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, again with the financial assistance of the Volkswagen Foundation. Three members of the Institute's staff have been chosen for professorships, two in Germany and one in the United States, and two more are expecting appointments in the near future. American publishers have sought our opinion on the publication of new books written on German history, and faculties of American universities have requested our recommendations regarding the hiring and promotion of colleagues in this field as well. To conclude this survey, in the past four years we have published eight Bulletins, four Reference Guides, the first issue in our Occasional Papers series, four issues of the Annual Lecture series, and the first volume of our English book series with Cambridge University Press. Of the latter, four
volumes are in print, with another five in preparation, as are the first two volumes of our German book series and further issues of our Reference Guides and Occasional Papers. In the Institute's brief history, the Annual Lecture has been a special event, and this year we were able to establish the Alois Mertes Memorial Lecture with generous help from the Stifterverband.

One way for us to look at this growth is in terms of numbers. Another way is to express thanks to those who helped bring us where we are today. First and foremost, we are most grateful to the Ministry of Research and Technology of the Federal Republic of Germany, and to you, Minister Dr. Riesenhuber, for giving us the financial means to begin and continue our work, all without interfering in our scholarly activities. This is also the time to recognize the contribution of Ministerialdirektor Dr. Josef Rembser, Chair of the Institute's Board of Trustees. With your administrative experience, you gave us guidance.

Furthermore, we are very grateful to German foundations such as the Volkswagen Foundation, represented today by the Chair of its Board of Trustees, Professor Hans-Ludwig Schreiber. The Volkswagen Foundation deserves special praise because it not only supported some of our programs, as did the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and the Gerda Henkel Foundation, but it also acquired and speedily renovated this beautiful building. I am very glad to have you here with us today, Professor Schreiber. Please convey the expression of our sincere gratitude to Generalsekretär Möller. A sincere "Thank you" also has to go to Mr. Schönen of the WestLB.

Please allow me to say a word of thanks to the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, especially to Ambassador Ruhfus, Minister Nordenskjöld, and Attachés Dr. Rusnak and Dr. Schroeter. Your support is very welcome and much appreciated.

Little would we have achieved, however, without the help of our American and German colleagues. I am very grateful to the Executive Director of the American Historical Association, Dr. Gammon, for agreeing to say a few words of greeting today. I am also most appreciative for the support we have received from our American colleagues, namely, Professor Gunther Barth of the University of California at Berkeley and Professor Mack Walker of The Johns Hopkins University, both of whom have served on the Institute's Academic Advisory Board. Many others responded when we asked them to speak, help organize an event, or simply give advice when we needed it. I am extremely pleased that our American colleagues have
now formed a circle of Friends of the German Historical Institute, which is led by the Conference Group, the American Historical Association, the German Studies Association, and the Society for German-American Studies. All friends of the Institute are welcome to join this organization.

The German historians are represented here today by the President of their professional organization, Professor Dr. Wolfgang J. Mommsen from Düsseldorf. Wolfgang, I am very grateful that you have agreed to speak to us today. I find your choice of topic interesting as well as appropriate. I should add that Wolfgang Mommsen was the much-acclaimed first Director of the German Historical Institute in London. We have learned a lot from your example, and if we have been successful, you may rightly also consider this your achievement. I should furthermore like to acknowledge the support given to the Institute by our other German colleagues on the Institute's Academic Advisory Board: besides Wolfgang Mommsen, we recognize Professors Angermann, Bracher, Holtfrerich, Kielmansegg, Nipperdey, and Vierhaus. They have sacrificed much of their time and we are greatly indebted to them.

Last but not least, I would like to add some words of thanks to the Institute's certainly deserving staff, first and foremost to my Deputy, Dr. Norbert Finzsch, to our Administrative Director, Dieter Schneider, and to our Librarian, Gaby Müller-Oelrichs. Together with your colleagues, you can be proud of what has been achieved in the last four years.

The Institute's history could also be described by the principles we have attempted to follow in our work. To name the most important ones:

First, we are committed to fostering cooperation with American colleagues and institutions, especially with American historians of German history, but also by aiding German historians of American history. Second, we are committed to comparative work within the field of transatlantic history. Third, through colloquia and conferences, we are committed to finding the right balance between research and an exchange of views on the results of recent research.

In the coming years we plan to concentrate our activities on two areas: nineteenth-century American history, with special emphasis on its cultural and social aspects, and twentieth-century German history in the context of international relations. As much as we have reason to celebrate today, we also have reason to ask for the continued help and
support of our friends and colleagues. We have traveled far in four years. Nevertheless much work lies ahead. Important questions are waiting to be answered, and many of the problems we have yet to encounter can only be solved through cooperative effort, as they have been in the past.

The German Historical Institute in Rome celebrated its one hundredth anniversary three years ago. In comparison, we are in our infancy. Therefore, it is my wish today that we continue to grow so that our future will bring an even more substantive contribution to research and the exchange of ideas between German and American historians.

From the onset of my work in Washington, it has been my wish to give due recognition to the most important role played by our colleagues who came to these shores under circumstances far more difficult than ours. I am speaking, of course, about the refugee historians, many of whom were very actively engaged in supporting the exchange of ideas between German and American historians long before the Institute was founded. It was those colleagues exiled after 1933 who, after 1945, paved the way for the Institute's work. We are deeply indebted to them.

In recognition of their achievements and sacrifices, and in commemoration of their dedication to the improvement of relations between German and American historians, the German Historical Institute's Academic Advisory Council, in its meeting on August 27, 1991, unanimously voted to name the Institute's reading room for Felix Gilbert.

Among the refugee historians, Felix Gilbert's role was unique in at least three ways. First, he was the only refugee historian who made an original, important contribution to our understanding of American history, thereby acknowledging the history of the country that had given refuge to him and to many of his colleagues. In this context, I refer to his work on early American foreign policy, published in 1961 under the title *To the Farewell Address*.

Second, Felix Gilbert, together with Hans Baron and Paul Otto Kristeller, literally established the field of Renaissance Studies in this country. On the basis of the insight provided by Jakob Burckhardt, Felix Gilbert opened up to his American colleagues a whole new area of research on European history and culture.

Third, in his capacity as a permanent member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, Felix Gilbert was the one who invited many representatives of a new generation of German historians to this country, thus providing them with a unique chance to grow.
From the beginning of the Institute's activities until his death on February 14 of this year, Felix Gilbert was most supportive of our work. It is a fitting tribute to him, and an honor to us, that the center of our research activities, the Institute's reading room, should bear his name.

**B. Hans-Ludwig Schreiber**, Chairman, Volkswagen Foundation

It is my pleasure to convey to you the good wishes of the Volkswagen Foundation's Board of Trustees at the official inauguration of this building. Even though the Historical Institute in Washington has been working for quite some time already-and obviously all staff members and guests seem to be satisfied-its formal inauguration is of special importance.

The eve of the first anniversary of German reunification is quite a remarkable date for a German Historical Institute; the third of October, a new German national holiday, will also be celebrated in Washington in close connection with the Fourth Annual German-American Day. The German Historical Institute in Washington will be a representative of the unified Germany and shall contribute to deepening the German-American relationship through an intensive exchange of ideas, joint research ventures, visiting professorships, and manifold lectures and conferences involving German and American historians.

The Volkswagen Foundation is pleased to put this building, which it owns, at the disposal of the German Historical Institute and the Goethe Institute, two representatives of German science and culture in Washington.

The Volkswagen Foundation was—thirty-nine years ago—not created by the *Volkswagenwerk*, the well-known automobile manufacturing firm in Wolfsburg. The ownership of this company had been disputed between the state of Lower Saxony and the German federal government since 1949, and the Foundation's capital stock of more than one billion German marks originated from the sale of company stock to the general public in 1961. The Foundation is not a governmental institution either, but a private one, although it was established by the Federal Republic of Germany and the state of Lower Saxony, which both acted as trustees. Its aim is to promote science and technology in research and education, and it does so independently.