

# THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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# NEWSLETTER

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## **Still Enduring Vietnam by Leslie Friedman**

In 1966, I got on a bus to Oakland at San Francisco Airport. I had never been to San Francisco and don't think I had previously heard of Oakland. I had taken a Youth Fare ticket to San Francisco to surprise my parents in Oakland. I relied "on the kindness of strangers" to find out how to get there. Three servicemen coming back from Vietnam were the only others on the bus. They spoke in short phrases that seemed to choke them. I remember one telling about a buddy who had gotten killed and mostly eaten by a tiger. They exchanged abrupt reports about the jungle, bad food, heat, bugs, fear. In 1967, my friend L.E.L was drafted out of his Marshall Scholarship at Oxford. He went to Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. His basic training buddies wanted to write home but needed him to show them where to put a stamp on an envelope. He went to Saigon, reviewed intelligence, and wrote reports for colonels. The colonels did not like the reports and changed them before sending them to the generals. "Sponky," red-headed, football star two years ahead of me in high school, was the first one I knew who was killed. That's how I remember him.

In 2017, when I heard that my college friend Susan's husband had published a book about Vietnam, I was perplexed. I had, thought I had, a read-no-Vietnam-books policy, but I wanted to read *Enduring Vietnam*, by James Wright, because he is married to my friend. He is also President Emeritus of Dartmouth College and Eleazar Wheelock Professor Emeritus of History. This fine book led me to remember, relive, and learn more about those war years. The names were as real and close to me as people I had lived with growing up. Try this one: Mel Laird. Is he part of your life, too?

Reading the book, I recognized that despite the boycott I thought I had lived by, I had read many books about Vietnam. I read Bernard Fall's *Hell in a Very Small Place* in the mid-1960s and knew the story of Fall's death, Schell's *The Village of Ben Suc*, Herr's *Dispatches*. There's one with newspaper pictures of the war, another with pictures of people tracing names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall, Jean Lacouture's biography of Ho Chi Minh, and more.

Last fall, KQED's many ads proclaimed *Vietnam* was coming soon and "Vietnam continues." I thought, "Watching it won't change it." I didn't watch it, but I saw Ken Burns, the film producer, on TV. He said people would be as surprised as he was that Ho Chi Minh had once admired the United States. I live with the knowledge that Ho went to Paris and worked washing dishes in order to try to speak to Woodrow Wilson. He believed in Wilson and was convinced this American leader would help Vietnam to independence. Ho was not allowed to approach Wilson or the place where the Versailles Treaty was being created. Acts of arrogance and bigotry: future, horrible wars.

A great aspect of Wright's book is his reliance on interviews with veterans and their families. The soldiers and families are excellent witnesses of the war, of the imprint it left on their lives, and thus of its reshaping of American society.\*\* Wright's book is eye-opening in many ways, not least because it breaks from a widespread idea that American soldiers lost the war, that our generation was thrown an opportunity for glory and we all balked. His interview subjects talk about wanting to serve their country to match the service of fathers and uncles. It was impossible for any of them to know what experiences awaited them.

– *continued on the back page*

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Reading this book and looking back, I know that their lives are intertwined with my own. Their history is also mine. *Enduring Vietnam* reminded me that every individual's life is bent this way and that by history unfolding near or far. Reading tales of Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon saddled with Viet Nam, in some instances welcoming it, in others torn to illness by it, gives me anxiety I may try not to revisit, but I need to know.

Around 1980, a coworker found a Marine's camouflage green jacket. Was it for ammunition? Was its slender padding meant as protection? I hung it from the molding in the front hall of my apartment. It is my *momento mori*. Grand geopolitical, economic issues aside, I opposed the war because I didn't want those grunts on the bus to die.

Read *Enduring Vietnam: An American Generation and Its War* by James Wright (Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2017).

\*\* The only other book I can think of that relies on such interviews, hundreds of them, is *Daring Young Men*, by Robert Reeves (Simon & Schuster, 2010). The Berlin Airlift came out of an urgent crisis and lasted July 1948–May 1949, very different than the Vietnam war which trudged through mud and bodies for sixteen years.

**Institute for Historical Study**  
**P.O. Box 5743**  
**Berkeley, CA 94705**

# PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

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Happy New Year!

I hope you will take part in the Annual Meeting of the Institute on Saturday, February 24 (see page 10). During this meeting, at least three candidates will be elected to two-year terms ending in February 2020, and at the end of the meeting, the newly-reconstituted board will select four of its members to serve as the Institute’s officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) for one-year terms ending in February 2019.

My term ends on February 24, and I am not a candidate for reelection to the board or for president, but I will do what I can to make the transition easier on those who are about to take office in 2018. Other members of the current board, as well as the administrative secretary (Maria Sakovich), will join me in this effort.

Otherwise, I am looking forward to resuming work on some of my own historical projects and discussing them with members of the Institute. For example, I will be giving a work-in-progress presentation on January 21, entitled “Let Us Not Praise Famous Men: Political Correctness in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I.” Later in the year, Gail and I will be going back to London for additional study and research, she to focus on Chinese art, I to look further into the documentary traces of various Elizabethan explorations.

I want to thank outgoing board members Taryn Edwards, Ellen Huppert, Margaretta Mitchell, Kathleen O’Connor, and Judith Offer for their years of service to the Institute. At this time we have a slate of three nominees to join the five continuing board members. A board of eight will meet the requirement of the bylaws, but if any additional members would be interested in being appointed to the board, please contact the new president at any time.

The coming year should be an interesting one, as we review the results of our member survey and look for ways to make membership in the Institute more compelling for younger generations of history scholars. We are also making plans for two public panel presentations in March examining how new technologies are being used in the study of history. Stay tuned to Institute e-mails, and please return your member survey, if you have not yet done so.

– *Charles Sullivan*

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Maria Sakovich

## COPY EDITOR

Ann Harlow

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## ADDRESS:

P. O. Box 5743  
Berkeley, CA 94705

[www.instituteforhistoricalstudy.org](http://www.instituteforhistoricalstudy.org)

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# Russian Revolution Centennial

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## **Siberia and California: Connections during the Russian Revolution and Civil War**

Featured at the monthly Merced Arts & Culture Salons at the Merced branch of the San Francisco Public Library (under the expert hosting of Institute member **Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada**) were four presentations commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. The 15th of November evening attracted “nearly twice the number who usually attend the series”—a goodly sprinkling of interested San Franciscans as well as Institute members.

When they volunteered or were recruited, the future soldiers of the American Expeditionary Force Siberia, which operated between September 1918 and April 1920, would hardly have imagined that the vast expanse of Asia would be the center of their military activities. Neither did the citizens of the former Russian Empire fleeing Bolshevik forces dream that California would ultimately offer refuge. Nearly 5,000 young men left Camp Fremont, an Army training camp in nearby Menlo Park, joined by about 3,000 others who were part of the American military in the Philippines. Two hundred lost their lives in Siberia; over 200 servicemen came back with Russian wives; 150 American soldiers settled in California after their return. Approximately 10,000 refugees from the revolution and civil war settled in the San Francisco Bay Area. About 2,000 even made it to Hollywood, forming a small community; some worked as movie “extras” and at other jobs in the film industry. (Many more would have come if US immigration law in July 1924 had not drastically reduced the numbers allowed from the former Russian empire.)

Institute member **Richard Robbins** summarized the complexities of the Russian civil war (unknown to most Americans). “The adjectives ‘clear’ and ‘straight-forward,’” he said, “have no place in a consideration of the Russian civil

war. However you mark the beginning and endings of the period, what is called the civil war was a multi-layered, multi-faceted, multi-ethnic drama. It was class war, a struggle between the cities and the countryside, struggles for national independence in an empire that was by the beginning of the 20th century a ‘minority-majority’ concoction. At the center of this whole bloody, totally confusing business was the struggle between the Red and White forces; between the armies fielded by the nascent Bolshevik regime, defending the revolution begun in October 1917, and the White or counterrevolutionary armies determined to overthrow the Bolsheviks and to establish or reestablish something else—exactly what was not entirely clear. It is estimated that in the years following the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917, fighting, famine, epidemics, executions and general social breakdown cost roughly 20 million lives and drove two million people into exile.” But, Rob concluded, “the real story of the Russian civil war is not so much the history of battles lost and won as it is the story of how the struggle defined the Communist regime that would rule the Soviet Union for seventy years.”

Lada Tremsina, independent scholar and editor of four books centered on three participants on the side of the Whites, provided a view of the civil war from the perspective of Boris Shebeko, one of the cadets, age 17, who was assigned the defense of the Winter Palace in Petrograd when the Bolsheviks seized power. After being arrested and released, he joined the White forces in Southern Russia, where he was wounded and sent to Constantinople for treatment. A long sea voyage brought him (and comrades) to Vladivostok and by train to Omsk, the capital of the Whites, the day before it was captured by the Reds in November 1919. For the first part of the retreat eastwards Shebeko was ill with typhus (one of the major characters in the drama of the civil war). Lada presented some of the details of

# RUSSIAN REVOLUTION CENTENNIAL

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the infamous Ice March across Lake Baikal. The last fighting of the civil war took place in Siberia's Far East. Shebeko documented these episodes with a small camera. (It is likely that he took photos earlier, but these did not survive.) In addition to these civil war photos, the Shebeko archive includes family photographs; both were part of the presentation.

Yves Franquien, archivist at both the Hoover Institution Archives and the Museum of Russian Culture in San Francisco, provided examples of photos and documents that form their civil war collections—the largest in the United States. Among the many images was evidence of the presence of other Americans in Siberia: the Red Cross—over 500 American doctors, nurses, and lay volunteers carried out relief work along the Trans-Siberian Railway for both military and civilians. Another American contingent was the Russian Railway Service Corps, already contracted to go Russia before the Bolsheviks took power in Petrograd. The YMCA, which had been operating in Russia since 1900, also carried out relief work. One photo reminded the audience of other allied forces in Siberia during this time; the most numerous were the Japanese.

Institute member **Maria Sakovich** presented the experience of refugees in Siberia during the civil war from the perspective of women and children, drawing from the writings of three families. Refugees came from all ranks of society, though fewer from the peasant class, and represented all political persuasions. Refugees faced difficult conditions: chaos and uncertainty; harsh weather, especially in winter; long distances (the Trans-Siberian railroad traverses 4100 miles); typhus; filth; unreliable food sources; separation from family members for long periods of time, warfare—both Reds and Whites committed atrocities. After “a bloody street battle, with the death of 3,000 on the side of the Whites,” Nadia Shapiro, age 21, with her sister and parents, left the border town

of Blagoveshchensk amid shooting and walked across the frozen Amur River to safety in China, along with 8,000 other refugees in one morning. Over a period of about ten months Princess Lubov Golitzina brought her five children (the youngest was 18 months old when they left their estate near Moscow) and three female servants from Tyumen' in Western Siberia to Harbin in Manchuria. Twice her husband, Prince Dr. Alexander Golitzin, was arrested by the Bolsheviks; during the second arrest he worked as a surgeon in a Red military hospital. “It wasn't easy for Mama to take care of us . . . We didn't have the slightest idea where Papa was. Food was hard to get. I don't know where the money came from.” Olga Ilyin fled Kazan when her infant son was nine days old. When he was 14 months old, they were being evacuated again, this time in a sleigh train. “Bibik, who had been amazingly quiet for almost ten hours, woke up hungry and miserable and began to struggle and cry. The milk in his bottle, though swaddled in blankets, was ice.” The next 20 miles were “filled with his wails.” For two years she heard nothing from her husband. Although they were eventually reunited, her father had been executed and her younger brother killed in battle. Nadia and her mother, the Golitzins, and the Ilyins ultimately ended up in California.

## **Churchill and Contemporary British Historians: Effacing History to Support Politics**

On November 19, Institute member **Richard Raack** gave a work-in-progress talk at the home of Nancy Zinn. He spoke about the events leading up to World War II and the way they have been misrepresented by, among other people, Winston Churchill.

Richard argues that in writing his famous war memoirs Churchill willfully distorted events, suppressing documents, for example, that

showed the extent of the Duke of Windsor's clandestine support of the Nazis. More importantly, Churchill also concealed the fact that in his opposition to the "appeasement" of Hitler, he was prepared to appease Stalin and his ambitions to spread communism in the wake of a war between the "capitalist" powers.

Richard's researches reveal that Churchill was aware of Stalin's August 19, 1939 speech to the Politburo in which he explained and justified his "nonaggression" pact with Hitler (actually an alliance) arguing that a war between Germany and the Anglo-French coalition would weaken both to the extent that an exhausted Europe would be ripe for picking at the conflict's end, no matter which side came out on top. Richard further argues that Churchill, and later FDR, continued this "appeasement" of Stalin during the war years despite (on Churchill's part at least) an awareness of Stalin's grand designs.

He maintains that the whole history of the prelude and first stages of World War II needs to be rethought and rewritten. Stalin's policies in the years immediately before the Nazi-Soviet pact were not an effort to keep the USSR out of war, but maneuvers designed to foment conflict between Hitler and the western powers. Given the fact of Stalin's plans to expand communism, Richard argues, the German attack on Russia in June 1941 can be seen as a "defensive war," a preemptive strike against a dangerous foe.

– *Richard Robbins*

### Play Readers

In October and November we read *Breaking the Code*, a 1986 play by Hugh Whitmore about British mathematician Alan Turing, who was a key player in the breaking of the German Enigma code at Bletchley Park during World War II. He is credited by some with shortening the war in Europe and saving millions of lives. He was also a pioneer in computer science and technology.

The play's title has a double meaning, referring both to Turing's work in breaking the complex Enigma code used by the German military in World War II and also to his open homosexuality at a time when there were stringent laws in Britain against "gross indecency." Breaking the Enigma code brought him fame and high regard. Breaking the sexual code was his undoing. Convicted of a criminal act of homosexuality, he faced either prison or hormone treatments—chemical castration—and chose the latter, a decision that left him debilitated, physically and mentally. In 1954 he committed suicide by eating an apple laced with cyanide. His mother took comfort in believing that this was a careless accident, not a deliberate act of suicide.

Following his death Turing became a hero in the movement to decriminalize homosexuality between consenting adults, which resulted in the Wolfenden Report of 1957 and the Sexual Offenses Act of 1967. In 2009 the British government apologized for the appalling treatment to which he was subjected, and in 2013 the Queen granted him a posthumous pardon.

The playwright suggests that it might have been Turing's autism that led to his fall. (Others thought that he was incapable of telling anything but the plain truth.) The play opens with the scene in 1952 in which, having reported a minor robbery, Turing blurts out that he had a sexual relationship with the man who had robbed him. The scenes that follow go back and forth in time, from the 1950s to scenes of his childhood in the 1920s and to times and relationships in between. We encounter a number of friends and colleagues, each with his own agenda. We sympathize with Turing as he copes with the loss of his best friend from childhood and watch as the history of his relationship with his mother

## GROUP REPORTS

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unfolds. She initially wants to believe that he will marry a woman he met while they were working at Bletchley Park, but when he comes out to her after his arrest she is loving and supporting.

We found the nonlinear structure of the play extremely effective in dramatizing the complexity of the man. In one charming sequence he speaks to boys at his former boarding school, comparing the brain to the gray porridge served to them for breakfast. In other scenes we find him angry and defiant; intense, but still gentle. Strongly attached to the woman from Bletchley—his only true soulmate after the death of his childhood friend—he is too honest to propose marriage to her. (The historic Turing did propose marriage but soon broke off the engagement.) Although he was confident of his ability, he acknowledged that it took determination and tenacity much more than mathematics and electronic ingenuity to break the Enigma code.

There was some discussion of a 2014 movie about Turing, *The Imitation Game*, that contained numerous inaccuracies and was criticized by historians. The play was much closer to biographical fact. Despite its sad conclusion and our sympathy for the pain that Turing suffered, it was a pleasure to read.

– *Edith Piness and Joanne Lafler*

### Medieval Studies Group

The Medieval Studies group met on November 27, 2017, after some months' hiatus. Ellen Huppert reported on the career of Genghis Khan and the beginnings of the Mongol Empire.

Until quite recently, the sources for an objective understanding of Genghis and his empire were scarce and written in Chinese, Persian, and Arabic, not translated into English. The most comprehensive source is the 13th-century Secret

History of the Mongols, translated only in the late 20th century.

From the beginning of the empire, western writers saw the Mongols, who were nomadic herders, as barbarians. In turn, areas overtaken by their expansion blamed their lack of civilization for their own failures; the best example of that thinking is Russia.

In the late 20th century, new approaches created a more sympathetic picture. A great fan of Genghis and his people is the cultural anthropologist Jack Weatherford, author of a very popular book, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*. Drawing on his understanding of the culture, he focused less on military conquests than on the spread of cultural goods made possible by those conquests. Morris Rossabi's *The Mongols: A Very Short Introduction* provides a most readable account.

The Mongol empire founded by Genghis Khan was the largest land-based empire in the history of the world. Genghis began as the leader of one of numerous warring clans and he built power through military conquest and organization. First he united the clans through force and good treatment of those who accepted his leadership. By giving power to those loyal to him, he raised a new elite, bypassing the traditional inherited patterns. By 1206 he had been named the ruler, the Khan.

While the nomadic Mongols operated with little formal political structure, they were dependent on trade with nearby powers for necessities as well as luxuries. To protect those trading connections they first moved against tribes to the southeast of their tribal lands. Their first attack against China failed, but eventually Genghis and his forces took control of that country.

Genghis was merciful to those who accepted his control but merciless against those who fought him. For example, an attempt to ally with

Kharazmia to the west in 1219 failed when the Sultan killed Genghis's envoys. Genghis reacted by invading with an army of 200,000, destroying the central city of Bokhara. That led to further expansion; by 1227, the Mongols controlled land from the Caspian Sea to the Pacific.

That control was enhanced by policies of religious toleration, use of foreign experts, such as scribes, encouragement of trade and craftsmanship, creating a code of laws, and developing a massive army. At Genghis's death, a succession struggle was settled when one of his three sons took power; his son became the ruler in turn as Kublai Khan. The Mongols continued their pattern of expansion and liberal governance.

Eventually overwhelmed by forces beyond their control, the Mongols left a legacy of trade routes (the Silk Road) and of long-lived successor states in China, India, and Central Asia. The last of those states, the Kazakh Khanate, endured until 1847.

Among Europeans, the Mongols were regarded as a purely destructive force despite the admiration of individual travelers like Marco Polo. Recent historians have rethought that conclusion and argued for the positive effects of the Mongols.

*Ellen Huppert*

### **Reports from Minigrant Recipients**

#### **A Stellar Research Trip!**

Seeing Calabria from a different perspective: this is how I spent most of June 2017 on a research trip for "A Torrid Splendor," my book on contemporary Calabria. Because my family is from Italy's Deep South, I had visited several times, but my recent trips have been to investigate, not just to visit cousins! A few items about Calabria: it is one of Italy's poorest regions, although once upon a time, its communities constituted western Greece, along

with Sicily—the jewels in the crowns of several Hellenic city-states. Calabria is small, about the size of Connecticut, with a population of two million. Its geopolitical importance—the only part of the Italian peninsula that is actually a peninsula, surrounded on three sides by Mediterranean outliers—has always thrust it into prominence.

On this trip, I concentrated on the northern and southern ends of Calabria, with nearly ten days in Reggio and more than a week in Cosenza. Reggio was among the first of the Hellenic colonies. St. Paul writes about seeing Reggio on his passage to Rome circa 60 CE. The power of antiquity is still so strong here that a large statue of Athena watches over the city on its Lungomare (embarcadero/promenade) along the Strait of Messina. Also, an inscription that covers the arch at the Reggio Cathedral replicates a bit of Paul's description, in Greek. Cosenza was the capital of one of Italy's native peoples, the Bruttians, who were known for their stubbornness and independence. Alaric died in Cosenza after sacking Rome, and from Cosenza Napoleon's troops, under Joachim Murat, launched a campaign to capture all of Calabria. Thanks to the furious resistance of the rebellious Cosentini—an early appearance of guerilla warfare—it took a decade, in contrast to the single day Napoleon needed to subdue Prussia. The energy of Cosenza is evident at the University of Calabria, where I participated in a panel during a symposium on the Italian diaspora organized by the Italian American Studies Association and the University of Calabria and attended mostly by Americans but also including others from the UK, Australia, et al. UniCal faculty and students are a dedicated bunch, offering excellent scholarship (in nearly impeccable English), and the university outdid itself with two superb banquets!

On this trip, I gained some additional insights into another phase of Calabria's history of conquest. For the first time, I realized the impact



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of the Normans in the region. They arrived in 999 CE and by 1071 had completed their conquest of the South and Sicily. Britain was a barbarian outpost compared to south Italy, which the Normans snatched from Byzantium and Islam. Today, the results of their encastellation of the region hover over many Calabrian villages and cities, including Cosenza. The Normans also left feudalism—which, in many forms, dominated land use in south Italy for centuries—family and place names, and the blue eyes and light hair of some of my cousins! This illuminating trip was funded in part with a minigrant from the Institute, so thanks! I reported on this trip to the Writers’ Group, whose members have generously critiqued several excerpts of the book.

– *Cathy Robbins*

### ***Dance for Life Exhibition***

The 2017 Isadora Duncan International Symposium *Resurgence: Bridging Time and Techniques* was held from August 10-12 at the ODC Theater in San Francisco. A pioneer of modern dance, Isadora challenged the cultural morés of her time and created a new approach to dance. She left a legacy of over 100 pieces of repertory. She has been called the “Mother of Modern Dance” for her contribution to the radical changes in dance in the early part of the 20th century.

The Isadora Duncan International Symposium (IDIS) is an organization for the international community of practitioners of the philosophy, technique, choreography and legacy of Isadora Duncan. The symposium is open to serious students and professionals devoted to Duncan Dance in disciplines rooted in the humanities. It provides a unique opportunity to study with eminent Duncan practitioners.

This year I was invited to mount an exhibition of my portfolio *Dance for Life: Isadora Duncan and her California Legacy at the Temple of*

*Wings*. My month-long exhibition made a meaningful contribution both to the symposium and to the larger dance community in San Francisco. The minigrant helped to cover costs in the preparation of prints and framing for the exhibit as well as preparation of text and printing of a postcard distributed to symposium participants.

The portfolio of photogravures and original text tells the story of a unique legacy of Duncan dance as it was practiced at the Temple of Wings in Berkeley for three generations. Twenty years in the making, the project of images and research culminated in a 1985 exhibition at the Oakland Museum of California with both historical material and a 16-minute film. My original research is published in this portfolio, which is in many American collections. This project also inspired a series of musical pieces commissioned by Kent Nagano for the Berkeley Symphony in 2000.

As a participant in the 2017 symposium I showed the 16-minute piece along with an illustrated lecture about the California legacy of Isadora at the Temple. We also held a session to show the film *Isadora Duncan: Movement from the Soul* for which I was a producer.

I wish to thank the minigrant committee of the Institute for Historical Study for support. I am pleased to be part of this new international organization (IDIS), which will continue to support studies of historical Duncan dance as well as new contributions to her contemporary legacy. My experience with the minigrant goes back to the earliest days of the Institute, when I received funds to develop the historical material on the Temple of Wings. Today, looking back to that time, I can see that the original grant supported the making of history itself. The interest in Isadora Duncan both as a great dancer and choreographer seems to have sustained itself and become a part of dance history.

– *Margaretta Mitchell*

## MEMBER NEWS

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**Welcome to** new members **Jonathan Marshall** and **Oliver Pollak**. Jonathan describes himself as “a freelance writer after a career in journalism and corporate communications.” He is the author of numerous books and articles, including most recently *The Lebanese Connection: Corruption, Civil War and the International Drug Traffic* (Stanford) and *To Have and Have Not: Southeast Asian Raw Materials and the Origins of the Pacific War* (UC Press). He received an MA in American History from Cornell University. Until 2012 Oliver was professor of history at the University of Nebraska, Omaha (Ph.D. from UCLA). Among his 11 books (and 650 articles) are *To Educate and Serve: The Centennial History of Creighton University School of Law, 1904-2004*, where he also received his J.D., and *Empires in Collision: Anglo-Burmese Relations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Both members have studied in England, at the Universities of Sussex and London, respectively.

**Ann Harlow** has been exploring the local history of both Berkeley and her small unincorporated community of Kensington, just to the north. She recently led a walking tour of part of Kensington for the Berkeley Historical Society.

**Maria Sakovich** recently added to the internet collection of vignettes of various experiences at the Angel Island Immigration Station, *Immigrant Voices*: “A Russian Summer at the Immigration Station,” “Tikhon Lavrischeff: A Life in Two Parts,” “Deaths at the Immigration Station: John Henry Stevens and Willie Sienang”; the research for another short episode, the contrasting cases of two Russian choir directors from China, has been completed. (<https://www.aiisf.org/immigrant-voices/>)

**Judith Robinson** reports the publication of her book, *Gold Rush Bishop: William Ingraham Kip, First Episcopal Bishop of California and His Family*. Judith, a direct descendant of

Bishop Kip (1811-1893), relied on family memoirs, those of the bishop himself, his brother Leonard, and son Lawrence, as well as others, to tell the story of the challenges to the 1853 charge to “gather up and reduce to order” the church in wild California. Others in the extended Kip family (which originally settled in Dutch New York in the 1600s), also made contributions to American history—“as Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution, merchants, physicians, philanthropists, poets and authors, anti-war activist, Civil War officer, a U.S. president.” Contact Judith at Telegraph Hill Press ([judyrobo@pacbell.net](mailto:judyrobo@pacbell.net)).

Now in print from Cambridge University Press: *The Woman Question in France, 1400-1870* by **Karen Offen**, who also reports that *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920* is forthcoming soon, and previews are now available on Google Books.

**Rob Robbins** describes a round of recent activities: “On November 8, my biography of Vladimir Dzhunkovsky, *Overtaken by the Night*, was “launched” as part of an all-day event at the Mechanics’ Institute commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. We got a rather big crowd and some interesting questions. The next day I went to Chicago for the convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies where I participated in a roundtable “Russian Lives across the 1917 Divide.” The panelists were all biographers whose subjects, like Dzhunkovsky, lived on both sides of the revolutionary events that began in 1917. After returning to San Francisco, on November 15, I joined Maria Sakovich, Yves Franquien, and Lada Tremsina at the Merced Branch of the San Francisco Public Library for a presentation about the Russian Civil War and its connections to Siberia and California. On November 28-29 I was in Albuquerque, New Mexico where I discussed *Overtaken by the Night* at Bookworks, an independent bookstore, and gave a talk on

Dzhunkovsky at the History Department of the University of New Mexico. On January 11, I gave another book talk at Green Apple Books on the Park; on January 22, I will speak on the Russian Revolution at SFSU as part of the “Sixty Plus” OLLI program.

**Dot Brovarney’s** October writing residency at Hypatia-in-the-Woods in Shelton, Washington included a bookstore presentation. She thought her regional topic, the history of Lake Leonard and Reeves Canyon in Mendocino County, would be a tough sell, 740 miles from home. However, by focusing her talk on the historical research process, which has yielded surprising discoveries and connections stretching across several states, Dot was able to engage the audience. The enthusiastic response included an invitation to return when book publication is imminent. On this same Washington trip, she followed up one of those connections and paid a visit to the couple who had shared their inheritance of thirty years of correspondence written from the Lake. Dot’s visit, intended as a thank you, yielded yet another discovery—several photo albums filled with images of the Lake and Canyon, as well as the letter writer, taken between the 19-teens and the 1950s. A further surprise took the form of an invitation to revisit the couple in the spring and scan images for her book. Dot hopes that by the next newsletter deadline, she will have at least a working title for the manuscript.

### Upcoming Activities

**Annual Meeting:** The Institute’s annual meeting will be taking place on Saturday, February 24, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00pm at the Mechanics’ Institute, in the 4th-floor meeting room. Coffee begins the morning at 10 o’clock; the business portion, starting at 10:30, includes reports to the membership, discussion of the 2017 survey and recruitment of new members, as well as election of new directors to the board.

Lunch between noon and 1 o’clock. The program part of the meeting, beginning at 1:00, features an illustrated talk by member **Monika Trobits:** “From Vigilance in Early San Francisco to the 1859 Duel.” She will explore how gang violence led to the vigilante movements of the 1850s and their link to the Broderick-Terry duel. She will also discuss her research methods and her research for her current book.

Lunch details and sign-up will be available later in an annual meeting mailing.

**San Francisco History Days:** The Institute is participating in San Francisco History Days, an annual two-day community open house for the dozens of history-related organizations operating in the Bay Area, many devoted to telling the stories of San Francisco’s past. This event attracts thousands and is a good opportunity for the Institute to advertise our existence. We need volunteers to staff our table and talk to visitors about our programming and services. (It’s a great opportunity, as well, to visit other tables and attend some of the programs, including the one we are sponsoring—see below.) The event will take place on Saturday and Sunday, March 3 & 4, in the Old Mint on Fifth and Mission Streets. More information about the event will be available at [www.sfhistorydays.org](http://www.sfhistorydays.org). If you would like to volunteer for a two-hour shift that Saturday or Sunday, please contact Institute member Taryn Edwards, [tedwards@milibrary.org](mailto:tedwards@milibrary.org), or 510-542-7289.

**Using today’s technology to study history** is the topic of two upcoming panels to be sponsored by the Institute. The first will be held on one of the two days of San Francisco History Days, March 3 and 4, and the second, more intensive, will be at the San Francisco Main Library (Civic Center) in late March. Stay tuned for more details once the panel participants, dates, and times have been firmed up.

## OF INTEREST TO INSTITUTE MEMBERS

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### **At the Mechanics Institute:**

IHS member Taryn Edwards, also librarian at the MI, provided information about an upcoming workshop that might be of interest to Institute members.

### **Funding for Creative Writers**

Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 10:30am

Cost: MI Members \$85, Public \$100.

This workshop will appeal to writers who are considering applications for—or wish to learn about—writing grants, fellowships, scholarships, or residencies.

In this one-day workshop we will cover: the best places to locate submission and application opportunities; how to demonstrate a rising trajectory (remembering that most people who are awarded grants are on their way up, not already there); using headings and “buckets” to make your statement navigable; how to craft clear, concise personal or “artist” statements (you will need this for most grant, fellowship, residency, and scholarship applications); why the marketing angle is so important; creating an effective, online, professional literary profile (yes, judging panels do look for these!). This is an intensive hands-on workshop; laptops, iPads, or notebook computers are essential for participation. To register visit [www.milibrary.org/events](http://www.milibrary.org/events) or call 415-393-0101.

Taryn reports that “this event will appeal to those working on creative writing projects—novels and narrative nonfiction (like biography and history). I have taken her classes before and she’s an expert on what she teaches—especially professional development for writers of all stripes.”

### **At the Cantor Arts Center and the Hoover Institution Library & Archives:**

Maria Sakovich recommends the current (through March 4) exhibition “The Crown under the Hammer: Russia, Romanovs, Revolution,” which highlights Hoover’s rich collections of

artworks, archival documents, photographs, and rare books related to late imperial and early Soviet Russia. Only the Cantor Center was open during the winter holiday break, but here the selection of original large posters of the 1918–1922 Soviet period and the moving watercolors of Ivan Alekseevich Vladimirov provided striking contrasts: the heroic aspirations of the revolution portrayed in large-scale images of workers and peasants versus capitalists and the realities of daily life. The artist, “a formally trained battle artist,” carried his sketchbook with him as he traveled to various Russian cities and towns in the months immediately after the October/November revolution. From his hastily-made drawings emerged the moving watercolors, with titles such as “Miserable Life of Russian Nobles and Persons of High Rank (drawn from nature in the home of General Buturlin), 1919,” “Waiting [in line] to Receive a one-eighth pound of bread,” and “Hungry Ones in Petrograd,” 1919—ordinary folk butchering a dead horse on the street.