

# The Institute for Historical Study Newsletter

Volume XI, No. 1

Spring 1990

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After a successful annual membership meeting, the Institute is starting its eleventh year of activity. The new board of directors has held its first meeting and elected officers for the coming year. I will serve again as president, Anne MacLachlan is vice president, Jules Becker is treasurer, and Myrna Smith is secretary. Ethel Herr will continue to serve as membership chair. We look forward to another year of work-in-progress sessions, study group meetings, and special programs, as well as our various social events.

At the annual meeting the membership agreed to raise the yearly dues. The board requested an increase, since our expenses have increased over the past ten years and we are not currently able both to balance the budget and maintain the same level of program support we have provided in the past. For example, a work-in-progress mailing ten years ago cost about \$28; it now costs over \$45. The increase agreed upon was \$5, bringing the yearly membership contribution to \$35. It was felt that a larger increase would be prohibitive for many current members and would discourage potential new members.

At the same time, we recognize the need for contributions to help sustain our level of activity, and the agreement of the meeting was to encourage those members who are in a position to do so to make an additional contribution. The 1990 renewal notices provide an opportunity to put some additional funds in our coffers. We also look for support to non-members who receive the *Newsletter* and attend our programs. All contributions to the Institute are tax deductible.

I hope to see many of you at our tenth anniversary banquet and I look forward to celebrating our success with you.

—Lorrie O'Dell

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The tenth annual membership meeting was held on February 25 at the home of Ellen Huppert in San Francisco. About thirty members attended the after-

noon business meeting, hearing reports from the outgoing officers and electing five board members.

An important order of business was the consideration of a board proposal to raise the dues to \$35. President Lorrie O'Dell explained that in the early years the Institute was able to amass a financial cushion, owing largely to several grants received by the organization and to fees collected for administering grants for members. (In 1987 part of this surplus was set aside in two special accounts: an endowment that provides an annual grant-in-aid to support a member's research, and a seed-money fund to offer low-interest loans for members' projects.) Operating expenses must be met chiefly from dues and admission fees; it is not fiscally responsible to depend on donations and grants.

The reports of treasurer Glenna Matthews and membership chair Ethel Herr made it clear that membership has remained at about 150 over the last few years while expenses have increased. It was agreed that if we are to maintain our commitment to presenting worthwhile programs, rather than programs specifically designed to raise money, we must increase dues. An alternate proposal that the dues be raised to \$40 having been rejected, the proposal for an increase to \$35 was approved by a majority of those present.

Five slots on the board were to be filled, and the following members were elected: Sondra Herman, Ethel Herr, Ellen Huppert, Doris Linder, and Myrna Smith. Following the election, Lorrie O'Dell expressed appreciation for the services of four outgoing board members: Joanne Lafler, Bogna Lorence-Kot, Glenna Matthews, and Jim Silverman.

—Joanne Lafler

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Nancy McCauley

On January 21, Nancy McCauley presented her work-in-progress at the home of Agnes Peterson. Her presentation, "Images as Tools: A View of Earliest Women's Art Making," focused on a group of ancient Venus-figures, a generic term assigned by archaeologists to about 188 figurines generally

considered to be fertility charms used for religious or other ceremonial purposes. The tiny figurines all portray pregnant females with prominent features such as protruding bellies and exaggerated buttocks. Although they have many features in common, they were found at different sites throughout the western world and Africa and date from different time periods.

The audience was able to judge the similarities, since Nancy presented slides of several of these figures: the so-called Venus of Willendorf, found in what is now Germany; La Policinelle, a two-and-a-half inch figure found in a cave on the border of France and Italy and dated roughly 30,000–20,000 B.C.; a figure found at a site in England, dated around the time of Stonehenge; and a Romanian clay figurine.

These images were presented by Nancy in support of her hypothesis—admittedly highly speculative—that the figurines, which are generally considered to have been created by male artisans for religious purposes, were created by women and for women. Their distinctive shape suggests that they evolved from the earliest form of agricultural tool, also believed to have been created by women: the digging stick.

This startling hypothesis provoked a lively round of discussion and further speculation on the part of the audience. Since so little is known about the figurines, and scientific evidence is practically nonexistent, Nancy must carefully assess even the smallest evidence.

Next, Nancy focused on the tools used by the early hominids: simple hand axes, shaped a million years ago, and stone digging tools. The latter, usually shaped as elongated instruments that would fit into a human hand, show a certain resemblance to the Venus-figures shown in the slides, according to Nancy. Is it possible that an early agricultural tool would have evolved into the artistic creation of a female image? And if so, for what reason? One possibility, according to Nancy's theory, is that a digging stick shaped somewhat like a pregnant female would suggest a powerful image to early humans.

In studying some of the Venus-figures, Nancy observed scratches and signs of frequent handling on some of them, scratches that might in fact hint at the early digging stick function. Other signs of wear also suggest that these figures were used or handled a great deal, though probably no longer as digging sticks. If no longer used as digging sticks, what other function might these Venus-figures have had? The signs of handling are interpreted by Nancy as a clue that the figurines were meant to be felt and handled rather than to be seen as religious or art objects. This led to another provocative part of her theory: that the

small, pregnant Venus-figures might have been held by women in labor to ensure a successful delivery. That could explain the evidence of handling she has observed.

Nancy's proposed book promises to address some intriguing mysteries of women's possible contributions to early art by suggesting that they evolved from common functions in their lives: providing food and giving birth.

—Monica Clyde

### Jack Kornblau

Jack Kornblau, an instructor at San Francisco Community College, is compiling oral histories of Southeast Asian immigrants—people with whom his job puts him in daily contact. His purpose, as he explained in a grant proposal to the MacArthur Foundation, is "to further the cause of peace by providing a format for the personal testimonies of Vietnamese, Cambodians, and other Southeast Asian immigrants."

At a work-in-progress session at Georgia Wright's home on February 11, Jack read a draft of one of these histories: the story of Sovann Suy, a Cambodian woman now in her mid-thirties. In it the experiences Ms. Suy related to him, most often in her own words, were interlaced with a "standard" history of the conflict in which she had been caught up.

Sovann Suy, with her husband and five children, left Phnom Penh in an evacuation ordered by the Khmer Rouge in the spring of 1975. Although the evacuation was ostensibly conducted to protect the population from an anticipated U.S. bombing, it soon became clear that it was part of a Khmer Rouge attempt at a radical restructuring of Cambodian society by forcing people into "productive"—that is, agricultural—labor. After a brief time spent with her mother in a village south of Phnom Penh, the family was taken to farmlands north of the city, where they confronted a life of hunger, privation, and hard labor for which they were not prepared.

Sovann Suy's husband had been a government official before the Khmer Rouge took power, but now he gave his occupation as a baker in hope of avoiding particularly vindictive treatment. In any event, he fell ill under the harsh conditions and died in a makeshift hospital. The oldest daughter, at age 11, was transferred to another camp, but the rest of the family, along with Sovann Suy's sister—whose husband had died under similar conditions—and her four children were able to stay together.

In the period from 1976 to 1979 Vietnamese forces defeated the Khmer Rouge, and the two families moved to farmlands close to the Thai border where their situation was somewhat improved. But when it

seemed that the Khmer Rouge might regain control, they fled to a Red Cross camp in Thailand. There, bitter about the hardships they had endured and aided by the sister's new husband, they began concerted efforts to secure immigration to the United States. In their applications they described themselves as widows of Cambodian soldiers in hope of facilitating immigration. After trying for a year, they were finally successful.

The families went first to live with a sponsor in New York City, where Ms. Suy was terrified by the new experience of snow and icy winds. Through the immigrant network they found relatives in San Francisco and were able to relocate. Ms. Suy, supported by welfare, devotes herself to feeding her four children, studying English (which she regards as central to immigrant survival), and seeing to it that her children also learn to read their native language and make up for the schooling they had missed under the Khmer Rouge.

Although Jack's admiration for his informant was obvious—and perhaps because of that—he insisted that his purpose was not to question, analyze, or evaluate this or the other accounts he has recorded, but simply to present them as nearly as possible in the form in which he got them, thereby providing a format for expressing what his respondents feel, believe, and consider important.

—Oscar Berland

If you wish to present your work for comment at an informal work-in-progress meeting, or to offer your house as a meeting place, please contact Georgia Wright: (415) 549-1922.

## EYEWITNESSES

### Berlin, August 1961: The Wall Goes Up

On the afternoon of August 19, 1961 I arrived at the Berlin airport after a long trip. It was the first time I'd been back there since I had left in 1933, barely escaping the Gestapo.

I thought I knew the city well, having studied there for a couple of years, but looking down at it before landing I found it an alien place. So I went to a tourist information center to ask for a hotel. When I gave my nationality as American they recommended the Hilton, but I insisted on a German hotel. The one they recommended was quite new, moderately priced, with a pleasant staff. The only thing I objected to was their very old-fashioned, third-person form of address:

"Die gnaedige Frau wuenscht...." ["The gracious lady wishes...."]

"Mensch, habt Euch doch nicht so!" ["Don't put on silly airs!"] I snapped, and they stopped.

My room was large, on the fifth floor, very close to the Eastern sector, with a great view over the city. After dinner I went to the desk to find out if it would be difficult to visit East Berlin.

"Not at all; we have guided tours every morning at 9 A.M."

I booked a tour for the following day, asked to have a radio in my room, and retired early—and eagerly.

At that time, when Berlin was divided into American, British, French, and Russian sectors, each had its own official radio station that interpreted the news of the day according to its own politics. In addition there were the regular German senders, confined mainly to local events, and the radio stations from all the rest of Europe—a host of languages. It was a fascinating lesson in current politics, and I listened until I fell asleep.

When I awoke at six o'clock the next morning every station was wild with excitement: overnight the Russians had built a wall between East and West Berlin, slicing the city into two parts. The Russians were jubilant; they had achieved a total surprise. The Western Allies were furious. The ordinary Berliners were caught in between.

I dressed as fast as I could and ran to the nearest checkpoint—the famous Brandenburger Tor—to see for myself. There was no real wall, just barbed wire, but with armed police and soldiers on both sides. On the Western border there was an angry mob, yelling its opposition and throwing bottles and stones. I rushed back to the hotel to find out about the guided tour.

The manager had no word of a cancellation, so I swallowed a quick breakfast and rushed back to the Brandenburger Tor. Some changes had already taken place in this brief time. The West German police had erected barricades some thirty yards from the border to prevent the barrage of missiles, but an even larger number of people now stood behind them, shouting themselves hoarse.

I glanced at my watch—time for the tour. In front of the hotel two American couples were already waiting for the taxi, which had seats for five passengers. When it arrived, quite punctually, they got in back and I climbed in happily next to the young, dark-haired driver.

He soon began to share his vital problems with me. His parents were divorced, his mother and he lived in West Berlin and his father in the Eastern sector. They had one car among the three and his father had taken it home last night. How was he ever to get it back? I had no suggestions but plied Anton with questions of my own—about his parents,

friends, schooling, childhood experiences during the war, hopes for the future. He answered quite freely, maybe because we spoke German and he forgot that I was a tourist.

On all tours the guide had to follow a prescribed route. Anton drove us through wide, tree-lined avenues with imposing buildings. At one particularly photogenic point he stopped and invited us to get out, stretch our legs, and snap some pictures. The others followed his orders. I took a couple of shots for the sake of politeness, then turned to him and asked, "Aren't there any other scenic spots we could see?"

He looked at me, very searchingly this time.

"If you promise—you and the others—absolutely promise *not* to take any photographs, I'll show you something else."

I explained to the two couples, who of course were delighted and swore "cross our hearts and hope to die," the holiest American oath, I assured Anton.

Back into the car we went. Anton turned left after making sure we weren't followed, driving much faster through an entirely different neighborhood. Sixteen years after the war, it was still full of rubble. The few houses still standing were without roofs or windows. The people, often in rags, gaped at us. It was a different world. Finally Anton turned back into one of the avenues, slowed down, delivered us to the hotel, accepted the tips gratefully, and shook my hand when I wished him good luck.

After lunch I went to my room, put my passport in my purse, and walked again to the border. Many new developments had taken place. Along elegant streets and in the famous Tiergarten, tanks were parked as unobtrusively as possible under trees. The mob behind the barricades had grown even larger and angrier. On the opposite side a few East Berliners walked by, in groups of two or three, rather fast, just glancing at their police and at us, not stopping.

I took a deep breath, got out my passport, and started toward the "wall." At once I was stopped by West German police, who explained that it was forbidden to cross to the other side. I pretended not to understand a word they said, just held up my passport and smiled: "American."

One of the policemen tried to warn me by using his own sign language. He pointed at himself and then at me, took a few steps to the East, took an imaginary gun (he had a real one, too, but didn't remove it from his shoulder) and aimed it at me, saying "boom, boom, boom," and then staggered. But I continued to hold out my passport and smile. Finally his patience gave out and he turned to his colleagues.

"Wenn die alte Ziege erschossen werden will, soll sie's ruhig tun!" ["If the old goat wants to be shot, let her!"]

They turned their backs on me, and, shaking inside, I calmly walked forward. On the other side, East German policemen had been looking on. They watched suspiciously as I approached them, shouting in German and, in one case, Russian, which I truly didn't understand. But I repeated my successful performance and eventually they, too, just shrugged.

With my pulse beating in my throat, I crossed over. East Berliners were standing at some distance from the border or watching the action from upper story windows. I kept my eyes open for significant details, stopped at grocery windows, noted the goodly number of bookstores, wanted to go to a cafe but didn't dare, and became aware that, in contrast to West Berlin, there was not a single window with a flower box. I didn't talk to anyone, since I was afraid to get them, or me, in trouble. As the sun set I retraced my steps. This time nobody interfered with me. I returned to the hotel, exhausted but triumphant.

During the next few days I walked back and forth between the now separated cities, careful to wear the same clothes so I would be recognized. I soon lost my fears and roamed through the Eastern sector, entered stores and restaurants, spoke casually to people as I asked directions, discussed things like the weather or their families, but of course never mentioned politics.

I also strolled around West Berlin, through streets that looked unscathed, discovered old familiar structures that had been rebuilt, ate in a couple of restaurants that brought back memories. Mostly I felt like a stranger.

What impressed me most was the Russian War Memorial—now, through the freak circumstance of an artificial boundary, marooned in the West. It was a huge and truly overpowering complex with enormous statues at the entrance. Inside there was a large number of realistic sculptures, each one honoring the partisans of the various occupied countries who had fought the common enemy, Germany. The Western Allies had nothing comparable.

As was to be expected, there were practically no visitors to the Memorial now. I went there several times, not only to take a few pictures and retain detailed memories, but also out of compassion. Several Russian soldiers were detailed to protect the monument. It was their job to march back and forth before the entrance in a sort of goose step, eyes straight ahead, trying to ignore kids who jeered at them and adults for whom they didn't exist.

They were the loneliest people in West Berlin.

—Ilse Sternberger

#### Berlin, November 1989: History On and Off Camera

Here in Berlin almost sixty years back, Christopher Isherwood captured the material for one of

the *Berlin Stories*, "I am a Camera." He wrote on the eve of the coming of the Nazi disaster to Germany, telling his readers he wanted to observe everything, to report exactly what the eye had fixed, to describe events as they really happened.

Nowadays we are more sophisticated in our understanding of what the human eye, the camera, or any other recording device can fix objectively. But much of what can be recorded comes to us, sometimes belatedly, into our homes, across walls and borders meant to divide, into observing heads that have elsewhere collected experience culled from ambient times and places. Sometimes the passive viewer subsequently becomes the actor; later, sometimes, the viewer of his own deeds.

On the evening of the ninth of November last—a symbolic date, marking the anniversary of the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1918—I sat in my Berlin apartment with a longtime friend and colleague from Poznan University. Leszek was a veteran of the earlier Polish revolution (as I was also, in small measure, having been in Warsaw as observer for some months in the heyday of early Solidarity). He was visiting with me in Berlin for a month while working at the Historische Kommission zu Berlin on his forthcoming biography of Bismarck. We watched the evening news from the East and West.

For years few people, East or West, had ever sustainedly watched the German Democratic Republic's evening television news, as we were now doing. I had once been told that secret government polls in East Germany had fixed the number of nightly viewers at two percent of the possible audience. On occasion, over a number of years, I myself had watched while eating, preferably when I was slightly tipsy from my dinner wine or beer. In such circumstances viewing cost little work time, yet served as a continuing part of a quest for historical understanding, while affording a bizarre amusement value as propaganda wholly dis severed from the society it purported to reform.

Then, late in October, the Eastern newscast suddenly became as interesting as the West's. Gorbachev had come to Berlin on the seventh of October, ostensibly to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the GDR. In fact, whatever his intention upon arrival, as matters turned out he had come to bury it.

Perhaps he had told the superannuated party boss, Erich Honnecker, to change with the times, warning that the Soviet army would no longer prop him up. In any case, movement toward change had thereafter come very quickly. Sensing the GDR government's weakness, more and more protesters, participants in a long developing, long repressed internal opposition, took to the streets. Nine days after the anniversary fete, Honnecker was dumped as leader. Obviously the East Germans were no longer

prepared to await his demise before invoking the changes all but he knew must come.

Perhaps a week before the ninth of November, Leszek and I had been watching GDR television. For weeks we had guffawed our way through the camera-recorded desperate efforts of those Eastern mandarins, Honnecker and his successors, on the evening news, East and West, to bluff, lie, or concede their way out of the developing crisis. Tonight we were watching a finely restored version of the 1929 *The Blue Angel*.

Absorbed in our discussion of the film, we paid little attention to the announcements that followed, when out of the blue—as with so much of what has happened and is still happening in that part of the world—it was reported that the upcoming broadcast of the hateful Eduard von Schnitzler was to be his last. For years he had been the most outrageous anti-Western propagandist, master of the unsubtle half-truth on Eastern television—the "Black Channel." Now he was going. Only half believing, we watched as, minutes later, apparently not quite finished with his last televised paean to the virtues of "socialism," Schnitzler was virtually dragged off the set. So ungracious was the entire performance that we could readily, almost gleefully, imagine that he was unceremoniously strangled off camera, as well.

The quick liquidation of the "Black Channel" was a portent of the end of all that Schnitzler had represented. His dramatic television demise was testimony to the quickly accelerating revolution in the East and to a sudden, wholly unexpected, drastic change in GDR news reporting. What must have been the first television revolution, in the sense that Vietnam is said to have been the first television war, was gaining shape from multiple camera points.

By the beginning of November the protest parades in the GDR had burgeoned to a reported 300,000 participants. Not only were we able to watch them, so could those who participated, hearing on later broadcasts the chorus of comments from news readers and reporters.

At about the time Schnitzler abdicated, Western news reports mentioned that workers in the GDR factories near Berlin had withdrawn from state unions and were forming their own, and that the Czechs were allowing any East Germans who came there to travel freely to West Germany. Everyone watched. People openly discussed who would leave next. Clearly the security apparatus had broken down. A million people came to a Saturday protest rally in East Berlin. Stupendous visual moments.

Friends who regularly traveled back and forth across Checkpoint Charlie reported that the usually deliberately rude and unpleasant GDR border officials had suddenly become downright courteous and

efficient. Did they have orders, or was the change spontaneous, in anticipation of a new world to come in which harrassing and terrifying citizens and foreigners would no longer be accepted? Whatever the reason, they were even smiling.

Still, I could not even then conceive of anything so complete as the entire system coming apart. Yet we were certain of one thing. Honnecker's resignation did not simply mean a change of personnel—with some tiny modifications to keep the basic system intact—as it had seemed at first. Even if Honnecker's party successors were still in charge, vast changes had already been, and were being, effected. It seemed unlikely that they could be undone, for only the most brutal use of armed forces—if the army and police were still loyal—could repress the revolution, and obviously that choice had already been privately rejected.

On the evening of November ninth we went to our beds before the late radio and television news reports that all citizens who wished could receive a visa and that the authorities would keep the visa offices open all night. Television had already been showing thousands of GDR citizens fleeing across the Hungarian-Austrian and Czech-German borders and being welcomed emotionally on the other side.

The next morning, over my objections—for I was certain that the Germans would not upset their regular television schedule to broadcast an announcement of the Second Coming!—Leszek suggested that we turn on the television. His intuitions were well founded. At around seven in the morning we saw the first pictures of the cars and people coming across the intra-Berlin borders, with champagne and flower greetings and emotional encounters between the suddenly liberated and those who waited to welcome them.

I took the 29 bus up the *Kudamm* toward the State Library, where I had planned to spend the first work hour of the day. It was Friday; the weather was warm for November. Already on West Berlin's main street I saw thousands of East German young people waiting for banks to open in order to collect their "welcome money." It was the young people who had had the patience to line up all night to receive their visas.

I stayed on the bus past the State Library, all the way to Checkpoint Charlie, where I could directly watch the champagne and flower greetings. Then I took the underground to *Friedrichstrasse*, in East Berlin, where, for a number of years, Westerners had the right to transfer from one underground or overhead line to another and from which they could enter the GDR. Old people who for many years had the right to travel to the West or to move there, after being pensioned, were coming out of the GDR entry and exit point. No drink, no flowers, there.

I also saw that large groups of the young were coming out. The GDR border police and customs police stood around, purposeless. Their whole *raison d'être* had been to keep some in, others out. No one stopped me when I walked inside, then walked back out. But I hastened to the platform of the overhead railroad for the trip west, for I had to get to Leszek's lecture on Bismarck at the Historical Commission, way out in the West Berlin suburb of Nikolassee, and I was afraid that I would have to walk back if I did not get a train before the certain arrival of an even greater mass of travelers.

That evening Leszek and I—as historians fantastically privileged to combine our active consciousness of the past with events that were now unfolding—strolled along a mile or so of the *Kudamm* with thousands of others. Our promenade, like that of the others, had no purpose—beyond being there.

Aside from a few brightly lit bars, which were selling beer for eastern marks and western prices, a quietness dominated. There were no rowdies, no noticeable drunkenness. Banks were still open—some remained so all night. Hundreds of Easterners, mostly young, money spent, sat examining their loot. Other Easterners bedded down in their cars, which were parked everywhere—on sidewalks, lawns, even in the middle of the street. Police ignored them, directing all moving traffic around this center of the City-West. In the stillness we walked on both sides of the broad streets. On the center strip some slept; others sat quietly with their goods. We could feel the air pulsate with the collective emotion of the crowd. Words were clearly insufficient.

At the square by the Memorial Church, western television, German and other, lit up the immediate surroundings, broadcasting what others were seeing around the world. It is certain that much of the grist for the historian's mill will come, has come, from the camera's record and the camera's informational role in the spread of the revolution that now envelops much of the world. Will our graduate training institutions someday learn this?

The next morning I did go off to the library. On my way I saw a hand-lettered sign draped across the Memorial Church: "Dank den West-Berlinern."

—Richard Raack © copyright 1990

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Grants Handbook for Independent Scholars

A grants handbook geared especially for independent scholars, prepared by Georgia Wright, has been published by the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. Topics include types of financial

support (fellowships, grants-in-aid, travel to collections and conferences, residencies, teaching and learning), advice on writing fellowship proposals, and advice on grants. The handbook contains an annotated bibliography, a list of branches of the Foundation Center, and a list of state humanities councils. It is available for only \$5, BUT it is also available only to regular or associate members of NCIS. No problem—you've been intending to join, haven't you? For information about regular membership (\$10 a year, by application) or associate membership (\$5 a year), or for more information about the handbook, write to Georgia Wright, 105 Vicente Rd., Berkeley, CA 94705; (415) 549-1922.

### Third World Studies Conference

The University of Nebraska is pleased to announce the 13th National Third World Studies Conference, an interdisciplinary format devoted to the widest possible combinations of scholars, practitioners, and participants. Among the areas to be covered are western media and the Third World, education and teaching, literature, Third World women, and the Soviet Union and the Third World. A one-page abstract of papers or panels should be submitted by May 1, 1990, to the Conference Secretariat, Anne Ludwig, Third World Studies Conference, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0372. Phone: (402) 554-2293.

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Congratulations to **Emily Wortis Leider**, whose book, *California's Daughter: Gertrude Atherton and Her Times*, will be published this year by Stanford University Press.

**Mae Silver** has two articles soon to be published: "The 1906 Six Million Dollar Earthquake Relief Fund: Bail or Booty?" in the *Argonaut*, the journal of the San Francisco Historical Society, and "Henry M. Roberts' San Francisco Experience," in the *California Historical Society's California History*.

**Catherine Ann Curry** gave a paper titled "Sponsorship of Free Catholic Schools in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco" at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Society held in connection with the AHA meeting in December. The paper showed that in San Francisco several free schools were financed by sisters rather than male clergy, although men have traditionally gotten the credit for financing good works.

**Shirley Burman** gave a slide lecture, "Women and the American Railroad," at the Oakland Museum on March 10. The material she presented is part of the

historical and interpretive exhibit she has put together that will open on July 3 at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento and will run until January 5, 1991.

After returning to California for two months, **Richard Raack** is back in Eastern Europe, from where he reports upon the crowdedness of Berlin and the rapid pace of change, especially the movement toward unity which, when he was there in November, was hardly discussed.

**Sylvia Sun Minnick**, whose book on the San Joaquin Chinese legacy was reviewed in our last issue, ran for the Stockton City Council on a platform of "Good government, not politics." Having won 59.5 percent of the city-wide vote in the February election, she is now a full-fledged city council member.

### NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the members who joined since January.

**Laura Ashlock**, who has a bachelor's degree in psychology, has a number of interests in history, including women emigrating to California in the nineteenth century, material history, food history, and the history of healing. She joined the Institute to find a forum for the exchange of ideas and would like to share her work for advice and comment.

**Michael Black** has a PhD in political science from the University of Oregon. His doctoral thesis has been published under the title *Human Gods, Natural Woes: On the Origins of Ecological Crisis*. In connection with his strong interest in the social, historical, and ecological impact of science and technology, he is working on several projects. The first is an article about the need for a "social needs-driven" science and technology policy in the United States, co-authored with Joel Yudken and commissioned by the World Policy Institute of New York. Another is a study of the San Joaquin/Sacramento River Project. He joined the Institute to develop ties with historians of California and the West and to find peers with whom to share his work.

**Katherine Roper** is the newest addition to a burgeoning group of German historians within the Institute. She has a PhD in history from Stanford University and is professor of history and department chair at St. Mary's College in Moraga. Her book, *German Encounters with Modernity: Novels of Imperial Berlin*, will be published by Humanities Press later this year. She is currently working on a new book analyzing the fiction of Frederick Spielhagen (1829-1911) in terms of its implications for German identity formation in the late nineteenth century. A longtime friend of the Institute, she looks forward to

participating as actively as her busy schedule of administration, teaching, and writing will allow.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The next issue of the *Newsletter* will go to press in June. Deadline for receipt of material is May 30. Send announcements and contributions of general interest to Joanne Lafler, 43 Abbott Dr., Oakland, CA 94611; books for review to Monica Clyde, 1940 Cortereal Ave., Oakland, CA 94611; membership news to Kathleen Casey, 1130 Delaware St., Berkeley, CA 94702.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Nineteenth-century study group: for meeting times and dates, call Lorrie O'Dell, (415) 451-8682.

Historical fiction writers group: for meeting times and dates, call Ethel Herr, (408) 734-4707.

History play reading group: for meeting times and dates, call Joanne Lafler, (415) 547-1791.

Hoover Institution Readers' Roundtable: to receive announcements of meetings, call Agnes Peterson, (415) 725-3595.

General information about the Institute: call Lorrie O'Dell.

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The *Newsletter* is sent to all members. Non-members who wish to receive it and to get regular announcements of Institute events are invited to make tax-deductible contributions to assist with the cost of printing and mailing.

Direct membership inquiries to Ethel Herr,  
Membership Chair, 731 Lakefair Drive,  
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