

NEWS



of the History Department at Boston University

February 2009

in brief

EVENTS OF NOTE!

Professor **Nina Silber** contributed an article on Barack Obama and the legacy of Abraham Lincoln for a special inauguration issue of the *Boston Herald*.

Professor **Allison Blakely** presented a paper entitled "Gannibal, Pushkin, and Afro-Russian Identity in European Context" at a conference on "Alexander Pushkin and Russian National Identity: Taboo Texts, Topics, Interpretations" at the University of Notre Dame, January 9-11.

Professor **Houchang Chehabi** has been named president-elect of the International Society for Iranian Studies.

Professor Emeritus **Dietrich Orlow**'s latest book, *The Lure of Fascism in Western Europe: German Nazis, Dutch and French Fascists, 1933-1939*, has just been published by Palgrave-Macmillan of New York.

Over this past Thanksgiving, Professor **Jeffrey Rubin** co-ran an international conference in Porto Alegre, Brazil, for his project "Enduring Reform: Business and Activist Responses to Progressive Civil-Society-Based Reform in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Mexico." The project brought together thirteen researchers and guest commentators working in pairs on six cases, including worker-run factories in Buenos Aires; participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre; the Afro-Reggae Cultural Group in Rio de Janeiro; CETHA schools for indigenous adults in Cochabamba, Bolivia; the new indigenous presence in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas; and the three-for-one migrant remittance program in Zacatecas, Mexico. "Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the conference," Rubin reports, "was the grouping together of experiences of successful regional reform that are not often viewed through the same lens, as well as the bringing together of researchers from five countries, most of whom had not met one another previously and who were inquisitive and energized by the joint endeavor and the opportunity for comparison."

Professor **Andrew Bacevich** had an op-ed piece, "The Lessons of Gaza," published in the January 8 issue of the *Boston Globe* as well as an essay, "'Tragedy Renewed'—A Reconsideration of William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*," in the Winter 2009 issue of *World Affairs*. He also had two book reviews published: *The Warrior Image: Soldiers in American Culture from the Second World War to the Vietnam Era* by Andrew J. Huebner, in *Journal of Cold War Studies* (Winter 2009) and *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* by John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, in *Diplomacy and Statecraft* (December 2008).

Nina Silber wins Humanities Foundation senior fellowship

The Boston University Humanities Foundation has announced that Professor Nina Silber has been named to a Jeffrey Henderson senior fellowship for the 2009-10 academic year. The award will allow her to take off the spring 2010 semester from teaching. She plans to spend the time undertaking initial research on a project tentatively titled "The Civil War in American Life, 1929-1941," which will investigate the way Americans invoked, remembered, and derived meaning from the US Civil War during the period of the Great Depression and the New Deal. The period in question witnessed an extraordinary amount of reflection on the war and Reconstruction, including a wave of popular literature and film exploring the conflict, commemorations celebrating the 75th anniversary, re-imaginings by writers and politicians of the life and character of Abraham Lincoln, and an extensive public works initiative that recorded the memories of former slaves. In ex-



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Events of the International History Institute

Schedule for Spring 2009

- ❖ IHI Film Series: “The Sorrow and the Pity,” Part I. Professor William R. Keylor will show and discuss Part I of the documentary by Marcel Ophüls about Vichy and the French Resistance during World War II: “*Le Chagrin et la pitié*” (“The Sorrow and the Pity”). Location: SED 130. Date: February 24, 4-6:30 p.m.
- ❖ IHI Film Series: “The Sorrow and the Pity,” Part II. Location: SED 130. Date: February 25, 4-6:30 p.m.
- ❖ IHI Film Series: Professor Cathal J. Nolan will show the film “Michael Collins” and lead a discussion on the question: “Michael Collins: Terrorist or Freedom Fighter?” Location SED 130. Date: March 4, 4-6:30 p.m.
- ❖ Three IHI Authors: “Modernization and Revolution in China: From the Opium Wars to World Power.” Three IHI authors and Fellows, Professors June Grasso, Jay Corrin, and Michael Kort, will discuss their book on modernization and revolution in China. They will take questions and lead a discussion of key trends in modern Chinese history. Location: The Castle, 225 Bay State Road. Date: March 16, 4-5:30 p.m., with a reception to follow.
- ❖ IHI Faculty Seminar: “Neither War Nor Peace: FDR’s Diplomats in Berlin and Policy toward Germany, 1933-1941.” Professor David Mayers will discuss his findings on US diplomacy toward Nazi Germany prior to US belligerency, the product of research carried out in Berlin in 2008. Location: The Castle, 225 Bay State Road. Date: April 9, 4-5:30 p.m. with a reception to follow.
- ❖ IHI Film Series: Professor Suzanne O’Brien of the Department of History will introduce, show, and take questions on the 2005 Japanese feature film “Yamato” (“*Otoko-tachi no Yamato*”), the tale of members of the crew of the IJN *Yamato* on its last—some say, suicide—voyage to Okinawa in April 1945. Location SED 130. Date: TBA, 4-6:30 p.m.

All events are open to members of the Boston University community.

8 students earn history BA degree in January

The following history concentrators received the bachelor’s degree in January:

- Enrique Fabian Balino (double major in International Relations)
- Alexander Robert Gould (*cum Laude*)
- Robert J. Hauske (minor in Classical Civilization)
- Sachin Mehta (*Summa cum Laude*)
- Jeffrey Mark Moskowitz (with a bachelor’s degree from the College of Communication)
- Jonathan Adam Salt (double major in Political Science)
- Matthew Mills Shaw (double major in International Relations)
- Michael Daniel Walker (double major in Economics)

GRADUATE STUDENT MILESTONE

On January 16 **Beth Forrest** passed her qualifying oral examination with distinction. Examiners in the major field of early modern European history were Professors Ken Albala (of the University of the Pacific), Barbara Diefendorf, and Thomas Glick; examiner in the minor field of the anthropology of food was Professor Mary Beaudry (of the Departments of Anthropology and Archaeology). Beth is the first student to be awarded a grade of “pass with distinction” since the department established this category.



Summer Term 2009 highlights

The department is offering a larger-than-usual number of courses in summer 2009. Besides the stalwarts (both halves of the Western Civilization and the American surveys and the two halves of the international relations sequence), there are some more unusual offerings, including colloquia for majors who need to fulfill a requirement of the undergraduate concentration and several graduate seminars:

Session I

- ✿ Introduction to Modern Japanese History (taught by Professor Suzanne O'Brien)
- ✿ The Great War and the Fragile Peace (colloquium taught by Professor William Keylor)
- ✿ The United States and the Cold War (another colloquium, Professor Keylor)
- ✿ World War II: Causes, Course, Consequences (colloquium, Professor Cathal Nolan, also carries graduate credit)
- ✿ The American Transcendentalists (new colloquium taught by Professor Charles Capper, for both undergrads and graduate students)
- ✿ Economic History of the United States (graduate seminar, Professor Louis Ferleger)

Session II

- ✿ History of American Foreign Relations Since 1898 (Professor David Mayers)
- ✿ African American History (Andrea Mosterman)
- ✿ The Twentieth-Century American Presidency (Seth Blumenthal)
- ✿ Introduction to the Middle East (Shahram Shadbash, available also for graduate students)
- ✿ The Armenian Genocide (Professor Simon Payaslian, colloquium for both undergrads and graduate students)

Full details, with course descriptions and scheduling information, are available on the departmental website (www.bu.edu/history) under "Courses."

Paul Schmitz teaches in Boston Public Schools program

As part of the continuing collaboration between the History Department at Boston University and the Boston Public Schools under the auspices of the US Department of Education's Teaching American History grant program (developed and managed by Professor Bruce Schulman), visiting assistant professor Paul Schmitz is teaching a course for Boston history instructors. With the assistance of graduate student Seth Blumenthal, the class (which is offered at Boston English High School in Jamaica Plain) covers nineteenth-century US history and is pitched to junior-high and high school teachers.

ploring these varied invocations of the Civil War, the project aims to illuminate the way historical memory allowed Americans, north and south, black and white, as groups and as individuals, to shape a narrative of the past that would give meaning to their lives amidst the social upheaval of the present.

"Like other scholars," Silber states, "I see in this process of remembrance an important means by which people made sense of their current circumstances and carved a sense of place in their changing surroundings. Hardly a passive recollection of past events, memory entails an active process by which individuals, social groups, even nations construct stories about the past as a way to create cohesion, sustain identity, and justify social practices." ◆

Back issues available online

Issues of this newsletter, beginning with September 2006, are now available in electronic form on the department website. Go to www.bu.edu/history and click on "News."

Issues before 2006 (back to January 1987, when the first newsletter was published) are filed in the department office.

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Environmental history featured in *AHR*

The December 2008 issue of *The American Historical Review* includes “*AHR* Conversation: Environmental Historians and Environmental Crisis,” a 34-page article featuring Professor James McCann and four other environmental historians.

“We were obviously moved to choose this topic,” the editors state in the introduction, “by present-day concerns with the environment, but the discussion itself provides a historical perspective on the problem, something that is usually missing from contemporary discussion. It also stresses the methodological issues and challenges of doing environmental history, providing, we hope, readers with a snapshot of the field in its present state.” Besides McCann, the participants are Richard C. Hoffman of York University in Toronto, Nancy Langston of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Peter C. Perdue of Yale University, and Lise Sedrez of California State University, Long Beach.

The cover photo of this issue of the *AHR* (at right) is a satellite map showing some of the fires that raged across southern Africa in August and September 2000.

