



## Social Science History Association

### **34<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association Long Beach, California, 12-15 November 2009**

**Submission deadline: 1 March 2009**

#### **"Agency and Action"**

The 2009 Program Committee seeks panel proposals that will focus on questions related to Agency and Action. (Please note that individual papers and complete panels not related to the "Agency and Action" theme are also welcome!)

Agency – the capacity to act – is a concept central to everyday life and many academic disciplines. But quite different ideas of actors and agency abound. Some celebrate agents as the autonomous springs of action. Others focus on agents as both foundational units of social structure and evasive delegates in need of monitoring. What are we to make of the relationship between these camps, each in its own way faithful to the idea of the unified social actor operating within constraints, and still others' ideas of subjects as internally driven and constituted by social, biological or discursive structures?

Turn the problem around, then, and foreground historical formations of agency, including social movements, collective action and the depersonalized edifices of firms, states, families, networks, associations, schools, churches, and other forms of organized social order in whose name people act. How these edifices emerge, are designed, built, demolished and rebuilt, in continual processes of change: this is the flip side of the agency question.

As social science historians and historical social scientists, we hail from many traditions and disciplines. But we share common ground in the weight we assign to thinking historically about agency and action. In exploring the connections between agency and history, can we deploy our differences to advantage? How might our collective intellectual resources help each of us rethink our own work and others' contributions? More broadly still, what do the streams of social science history imply for understanding action in today's world, and for the historical social science of the future? Let's embark.



The 2009 conference will be held in Long Beach, California on the historic Queen Mary ocean liner. Launched in 1934, the Queen Mary served as an allied military personnel carrier in World War II and then became a passenger ship until 1967 when it anchored permanently at Long Beach. It is twice the size of the Titanic in gross tonnage.

#### **How to participate in the 2009 SSHA Program**

Starting in December 2008, proposals for individual papers and complete sessions will be accepted at <http://ssha.org>. Proposals for individual papers and complete sessions are due 1 March 2009.

#### **SSHA President for 2008-2009**

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#### **Program Committee Co-Chairs for 2009 Conference:**

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