



This academic year is an important one at the Harriman Institute. Not only are we celebrating our seventieth anniversary, but we are also marking the twenty-fifth year since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The post-Soviet era has seen many phases and turns, from post-Cold War triumphalism and the onset of the “transition,” to the return of the post-communist states to Europe, and attempts to come to terms with post-socialism and the onset of communist-era nostalgia. The rise of a more assertive Russia, the conflict in Ukraine, and the current deepening crisis in Russian-Western relations has further added to uncertainty about the future and generated competing narratives about the meaning and stability of the so-called post-Cold War order and the challenges associated with statehood and community building.

To reflect on these developments, we have launched Harriman at 70, a lecture series that brings together a number of distinguished members of the Harriman community. The series focuses on key issues in the emerging “post-post” Cold War period, the state of the region, the growing range of experiences encapsulated in the post-communist world, and our scholarly approaches to their evolution.

This issue of *Harriman Magazine* publishes the work of two scholars who have participated in the series. Sophie Pinkham, a 2012 MARS-REERS alumna currently preparing her Ph.D. dissertation in Columbia’s Department of Slavic Languages, shares astute observations from post-Maidan Ukraine in her piece, “New Year in Kiev,” excerpted from the final section of her book, *Black Square: Adventures in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2016). Sophie lived and worked in Ukraine from 2008 until 2010, researching women’s rights, AIDS activism, and harm reduction for the Open Society Institute. The piece details her return to the capital in 2014, at the height of the Ukraine crisis. We are also delighted to feature an essay by former Harriman director Mark von Hagen, who is now director of the Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies at Arizona State University. By tracing the arc of his undergraduate studies at Georgetown University, his graduate studies at Indiana and Stanford universities, and his academic careers at Columbia and ASU, Mark at the same time charts the evolution in Soviet and area studies and what it means to be an academic historian.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Cooley'.

Alexander Cooley
Director, Harriman Institute