



When I first stepped into my role as director of the Harriman Institute in June 2015, the ongoing Ukraine crisis and the deteriorating relations between Russia and the United States had reinvigorated the demand for experts on Russia and Eurasia, reviving an interest in area studies.

Meanwhile, the Institute was still mourning the recent losses of former directors and faculty members who had shaped the Harriman from its early years. The losses, combined with the changing geopolitical atmosphere, led me to reflect about the Institute and its role in the field of Russian and Eurasian studies.

As director of the country's oldest regional institute, I felt strongly that we needed to preserve and understand our institutional memory. And I wanted to examine our evolving role in the events as we approached our 70th anniversary in 2016.

In the fall of 2015, together with Columbia's Center for Oral History Research at INCITE, the Institute embarked on an oral history project—a series of interviews with some of the Institute's key actors that would allow us to reconstruct and examine the evolution of the Institute's history over time.

The oral history is an ambitious and time-consuming endeavor; and I'm proud to say that in June 2018 we launched a website, *Cold Wars and the Academy: An Oral History on Russian and Eurasian Studies*, containing the initial 26 interviews. I hope that the interview collection, which we will continue to add to, serves as a valuable resource for scholars, journalists, and regional practitioners.

To celebrate the launch of the collection, we have devoted a large part of the Fall 2018 issue to it, with an article and book excerpts from three of our narrators (interviewees)—Alexander Motyl, Colette Shulman, and Grace Kennan Warnecke—and a general overview of the project and its goals from Masha Udensiva-Brenner, who interviewed some of the central figures involved in the oral history.

There's a lot more to the issue, including a cover story by our 2018 Paul Klebnikov Russian Civil Society Fellow, *Novaya Gazeta* correspondent Elena Kostyuchenko, and I hope you enjoy it.

As always, we'd love to hear your feedback and ideas for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Cooley'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Alexander Cooley  
Director, Harriman Institute