



Valentina Izmirlieva.
Photo by Jeffrey Schiffman.

Dear friends of the Harriman Institute,

I'm delighted to present to you this new issue of *Harriman Magazine*, coming out at a uniquely challenging moment for all of us. Russia's war in Ukraine has put to the test every aspect of the Institute's life, closed many familiar routes of operation, called many more into question, and demanded swift decisions and new initiatives under pressure from an evolving conflict at the very heart of our region of study. The months after February 24 have been filled with heartbreak and hard work, but, as usual, the Harriman Institute more than rose to the challenge and set the model once again for working successfully in the new political reality. This issue reflects on this experience by opening a creative space to both mourn the horrors of the war and honor the resilience of our community.

Most of the pieces you are about to read were intended for a second issue celebrating the Harriman Institute's 75th anniversary. We had the materials ready to go by early February. Then everything changed. The need to voice our collective emotions in the face of unspeakable suffering and loss gave rise to our new, highly popular podcast series, "Voices of Ukraine," hosted and produced by the magazine's editor, Masha Udensiva-Brenner. For this issue, we chose to publish a transcript of Episode 11, a conversation with our resident Ukrainian scholar Mark Andryczyk about novelist Volodymyr Rafeyenko. Rafeyenko is a familiar name to the Harriman family. In fact, the previous issue of this magazine featured an excerpt from Andryczyk's English translation of Rafeyenko's novel *Mondegreen* (2019), published in the U.S. earlier this year. The novel, a poetic meditation on loss and displacement in the wake of the war in Donbas, could not be more timely. Now, as war has engulfed Rafeyenko's entire country, the writer, together with so many Ukrainians, has been forced to relive the same traumas a second time. His novel thus brings into sharp focus the continual experience of war in Ukraine across the grim watershed of February 24, while also extending a narrative bridge between our magazine's latest issues.

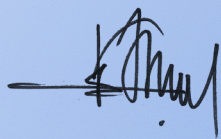
It also signals a larger theme around which this issue took its current form—the role of creative writers as spokespeople for a community in shock. Our centerpiece, "Writers Respond to the War in Ukraine," opens with excerpts from the online project "The War Diary" by Ukrainian writer and photographer Yevgenia Belorusets. Writing from Kyiv, she dispassionately records experiences in the immediate aftermath of the invasion. Day by day, her words and photographs document the unimaginable—nightly shelling, life in shelters, cleaning one's apartment in the dark just to retain some semblance of normalcy—in the hope that each entry would be the last. Belorusets is currently a fellow at Columbia's Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris, which is also hosting this year four Harriman residencies created especially for Ukrainian artists and writers.

Under the same rubric, you will also find essays by Harriman's two most recent writers-in-residence: Maria Stepanova, whom we hosted in Spring 2022, and Georgi Gospodinov, who is with us this fall. As two of Eastern Europe's most powerful literary voices today, they offer distinct, though emotionally concordant, perspectives on the war. A citizen of the invading country, Stepanova tries to make sense of the events, horror-struck: "We watch in real time, trembling in our shame and grief that this is happening here and now." Gospodinov writes as an involved

observer from his native Bulgaria, just across the Black Sea from the worst battles of the conflict. Written during the first week of the war, his “Fragments” draw parallels between the invasion of Ukraine and the outbreak of World War II, wary of the pernicious role media plays to make us complicit in the crimes and politics of war.

While this issue is emotionally anchored in the ongoing war in Ukraine, it still honors its initial mandate to celebrate the Harriman Institute with an anniversary lineup that spans its entire remarkable history. We feature alumni contributions from the earliest days of the Russian Institute all the way to the present day. Francis Randall recollects the very first visit to the USSR by the Institute’s students in 1954, and Alexander Motyl reflects on the Ukrainian diaspora in New York City as both an insider and a scholar, while Marijeta Bozovic and Benjamin Peters share their recent investigation of “The Belarus Cyber Partisans.” We equally honor old and new Harriman faculty with contributions by Peter Clement, who writes on his career path “from academia to the CIA and back again,” and Mark Lipovetsky, who outlines the literary significance of Maria Stepanova in an essay originally scheduled to coincide with her Harriman residence. Last but not least, we are pleased to share with you selected texts and illustrations from the forthcoming volume *Zenithism: A 1920s Yugoslav Avant-Garde Movement*, edited by Aleksandar Bošković, of the Slavic Department faculty, and Steven Teref.

We marked our 75th anniversary during a tumultuous year like no other. Here’s to 75 more years of continued Harriman success. And may the new chapter be a time of peace after a year of war.



Valentina Izmirlieva
Director, Harriman Institute

