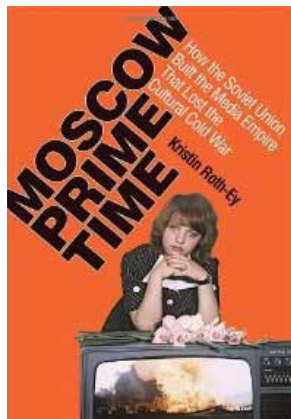


The year was 1984. Henry Rosovsky, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and donor Ira Kukin concluded the terms of the gift that would create the Harvard Academy.

Both were concerned that universities were growing out of touch with the new realities of the world. They saw this happening for structural reasons. It was clear in 1984 that non-Western nations and cultures were becoming more and more important to the US and to the world. Yet, at the same time, there was a dwindling supply of academic training in these regions. Leaders of the founding generation of area studies centers and programs were retiring and not being replaced. American universities were losing expertise in non-Western areas of the world. "This situation...has had a significant adverse impact on our capacity to do business abroad, on the quality of information purveyed by our media, and on public policy..." their founding document lamented.

In the lobby of the Harvard Academy here at the corner of Cambridge and Sumner streets, a new bookcase reflects some of the results of that gift: a collection (still incomplete) of books and articles written by Harvard Academy Scholars. When I look for a book or reprint of articles that were produced while the author was here—it's usually their first. The collection, I offer, matches the expansiveness of the founders' hopes. Here are four examples:

Historian **Kristin Roth-Eg**'s recently published *Soviet Prime-Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cold War* analyzes its attempt at successful mass-television culture in the 1950's and 1960's of the late Soviet Union. **Monika Nalepa**, a political scientist, wrote on the problems and strategies of lustration (exposure) of public figures in Eastern European states after the unraveling of the Iron Curtain in *Skeletons in the Closet: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Europe*. Who would have thought of these outcomes in 1984?



Left to right: Harvard Academy Chairman Jorge I. Domínguez, Executive Officer Laurence H. Winnie, and former FAS Dean Henry Rosovsky at this year's Academy Scholars end-of-year reception held on April 25, 2012. Photo credit: Megan County

Political scientist **Lisa Blaydes**'s *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt* explores the phenomenon of electoral competition in single-party states. While the country is now mostly Mubarak-free, this 30-year-long dynamic doubtlessly still influences the politics of present-day Egypt, and the many states like it. And then there is anthropologist **Saba Mahmood**'s book, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Mahmood offers a much more nuanced view of women and Islam than the less informed ones that remain useful to Western politicians, media, and the public since September 11, 2001.

These are just four from the shelves by Academy Scholars. I am struck by how they actively sought out the dramatic changes outside the West since the Academy was founded—and how well these area studies scholars were able to draw attention to the underlying structures as well as the essential subtleties of their regions outside of the West. Thankfully, they are part of a growing cohort.

Laurence H. Winnie, Executive Officer