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## HIS UNIVERSITIES: TO THE ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSOR ALEXANDER I. KUBYSHKIN

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**Abstract.** *Introduction.* The article is about Professor A.I. Kubyshkin, who had devoted more than 25 years of his career to the Volgograd State University (Volsu). He taught at the Department of History, headed the Center for American Studies “Americana”, and from 1995 to 2008 headed the Department of Area Studies and International Relations at Volsu. Professor A.I. Kubyshkin is one of the founders of the series 4 “History. Area Studies. International Relations” of the *Science Journal of Volgograd State University*, and he is a member of the Editorial Board. Professor A.I. Kubyshkin is the author of 160 publications, 7 monographs, and 15 collective ones, and he has published in Russia, the USA, Great Britain, Canada, and France. *Materials.* The main materials for the article are memoir articles by Professor A.I. Kubyshkin and his colleagues about the development of American studies and research of the North American states in Russia and, in particular, at Volgograd State University, and publications by A.I. Kubyshkin about the U.S. higher education system and universities. *Analysis.* The article briefly describes the main stages of the teaching and research career of A.I. Kubyshkin. Since 1978 and up to the present, Professor Kubyshkin has conducted his main educational and scholar activities at three Russian universities: Ivanovo State University, Volgograd State University, and St. Petersburg State University. At Volsu from 1995 to 2008, A.I. Kubyshkin headed the department and contributed to the development of the study of North American states. From 2008 to 2025, Professor A.I. Kubyshkin, working at St. Petersburg State University, has defined the field of his research interests, in addition to the history of Russian-American relations, as university studies and the particular study of universities in the USA and Canada as resource models of international educational space and modern innovations, which resulted in the monograph “Town and Gown. American University in the Structure of Civil Society”.

**Key words:** A.I. Kubyshkin, Volgograd State University, “Americana”, U.S. history and politics, American studies, American university, international education.

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## ЕГО УНИВЕРСИТЕТЫ: К ЮБИЛЕЮ АЛЕКСАНДРА ИВАНОВИЧА КУБЫШКИНА

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**Аннотация.** *Введение.* Статья посвящена профессору А.И. Кубышкину, чья деятельность уже более 25 лет неразрывно связана с Волгоградским государственным университетом (ВолГУ). Александр Иванович преподавал на кафедре истории, руководил центром «Американа» и с 1995 по 2008 г. возглавлял кафедру регионоведения и международных отношений ВолГУ. А.И. Кубышкин является одним из основателей серии 4 «История. Регионоведение. Международные отношения» журнала «Вестник Волгоградского государственного университета» и остается членом редакционного совета. Его научное наследие включает 160 статей, 15 коллективных изданий, 7 монографий, опубликованных в России, США, Великобритании, Канаде, Франции. *Материалы.* Основу для написания данной статьи составили мемуарные публикации Александра Ивановича Кубышкина и его коллег о развитии американистики, исследовании североамериканских государств в России, и в частности в ВолГУ, статьи и монографии А.И. Кубышкина об американской системе высшего образования и университетах США. *Анализ.* В статье кратко изложены главные этапы преподавательской и исследовательской деятельности Александра Ивановича. Начиная с 1978 г. и по настоящее время вел основную преподавательскую деятельность в трех российских университетах: Ивановском государственном университете, Волгоградском государственном университете, Санкт-Петербургском государственном университете. В ВолГУ с 1995 по 2008 г. возглавлял кафедру, которая занималась подготовкой специалистов по направлениям «международные отношения» и «регионоведение», способствовал развитию изучения стран Северной Америки и открыл исследовательский центр «Американа». С 2008 по 2025 г. Александр Иванович, работая в СПбГУ, сферой своих исследовательских интересов, помимо истории российско-американских отношений, определил университетологию и изучение университетов США и Канады как ресурсных моделей международного образовательного пространства и современных инноваций, результатом чего стала монография «Город и мантия. Американский университет в структуре гражданского общества».

**Ключевые слова:** А.И. Кубышкин, Волгоградский государственный университет, «Американа», история и политика США, американистика, американский университет, международное образование.

**Цитирование.** Решетникова Л. М. Его университеты: к юбилею Александра Ивановича Кубышкина // Вестник Волгоградского государственного университета. Серия 4, История. Регионоведение. Международные отношения. – 2025. – Т. 30, № 4. – С. 223–228. – (На англ. яз.). – DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15688/jvolsu4.2025.4.19>

**Introduction.** Alexander Kubyshkin was born on June 28, 1950, in Ivanovo. He graduated from Ivanovo State University in 1974 and completed his postgraduate studies at Leningrad State University in 1978. From 1978 to 1982, he worked at Ivanovo State University. After defending his candidate dissertation, A.I. Kubyshkin received an invitation to VolSU. He had become the first lecturer of modern European and U.S. history at the young university in Volgograd. Thanks to Kubyshkin, a group of enthusiasts was formed at the new classical university who thought about the formation and development of specialization in the field of history, economics, politics, and culture of the countries of North America.

**Materials.** The main materials for the article are memoir articles by Professor A.I. Kubyshkin and his colleagues about the development of American studies and research on the North American states in Russia, particularly at Volgograd State University [8; 11; 13], and publications by Professor Kubyshkin about the U.S. higher education system and universities.

**Analysis.** In the autumn of 1983, the first round table (readers' conference) was organized

with the participation of Yu.N. Korolev, deputy editor-in-chief of the journal “Latinskaya Amerika” (“Latin America”), and A.I. Sizonenko, a journalist, interpreter, and specialist in the history of relations between the USSR/RF and Latin American states. As Alexander Kubyshkin remembers, “We were driving through a rainy and icy Volgograd and did not suspect that this visit would mark the beginning of the history of American studies in Volgograd. The round table was a success. About 30 people took part in it, including students from Latin American countries studying at Volgograd universities” [8, pp. 352–353]. From that moment, cooperation between VolSU and the Institute of Latin America of the Russian Academy of Sciences began and continues to the present.

From 1985 to 1989 Alexander Ivanovich conducted a so-called “coffee” special seminar on North American studies with students. The relaxed atmosphere prevailed during the classes, which was due to the interest of its participants and the changes that had taken place in the country. During this period, the development of American studies was a bold decision. From Kubyshkin's point of view, “this whole venture

with American studies smacked of adventurism. After all, at that time, the study of the United States was concentrated and developed exclusively in the capital city and partly in Leningrad. American studies in a concentrated form did not exist in any of the large regional centers surrounding Volgograd” [8, p. 353].

From 1989 to 1993, A.I. Kubyshkin studied for a doctorate at the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Upon the completion in 1994, he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on the history of Anglo-American rivalry in Central America in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In his academic thesis, he has defined the stages and features of the evolution of regional hegemony from Great Britain to the United States in the area, identified the key consequences of this for the countries of Central America, and subsequent trends in the development of U.S. and Great Britain foreign policy in the subregion. With defending his dissertation, the United States and Canada firmly entered the sphere of A.I. Kubyshkin’s research interests.

In 1995, the Department of Area Studies and International Relations and the Laboratory of North American Studies were founded at Volgograd State University (today they are part of the Department of History and International Relations of VolSU and the Volgograd Center for American Studies “Americana”). The first head of both structures was A.I. Kubyshkin, for whom this period was a time of establishing active working relations with both domestic centers of American studies and foreign ones, as well as the first internships in the USA and other countries. In the memorable article “Quarter Century of American Studies in Volgograd,” he notes the institutional asymmetry in the study of Russia in the USA and the United States in Russia: “American Russianists find more resources and opportunities during times of escalation of Russian-American conflicts, while Russian Americanists enjoy comparatively greater opportunities during periods of improving relations between the two states” [8, p. 350]. The research objective of the center in those years was “Russia and the Countries of America: The Experience of Historical Interaction,” to the discussion of which, with the support of N.N. Bolkhovitinov, research specialists were involved.

From that moment on, A.I. Kubyshkin has begun actively studying North American universities and promoting “university studies” as a research field. The professor had visited many (over a hundred over many years) educational institutions in the USA and Canada and had spoken to students and met with lecturers, university staff, and officials. Thanks to his meetings and contacts, long-term collaboration began between Volgograd State University and Mansfield University of Pennsylvania (now a campus of Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania). Within the framework of this partnership, dozens of students and professors visited another country to study and lecture and significantly broadened their horizons. A.I. Kubyshkin repeatedly taught in Mansfield and was the organizer of the “Year of Russia” at this regional university.

The results of studying the principles of American universities and their contribution to the development of the USA and Canada were the articles of A.I. Kubyshkin and the monograph “Making Nation’s Intellect: The U.S. State Policy Towards Higher Education (First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century)” [10]. The authors (A.I. Kubyshkin and E.Yu. Ladonina) have described the U.S. state policy in the field of higher education during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the basis of the campus system was developed on a large scale and thanks to which the higher education system in the United States has continued to demonstrate its feasibility and effectiveness and attract students all over the world.

In addition to developing university studies, A.I. Kubyshkin was interested in disseminating a comprehensive approach to the study of the USA and Canada. Many of the research results of VolSU professors and students of American studies were published in the compilation “Americana”, the chief editor of which was Professor Kubyshkin. Nine issues were released under his editorship. During this period, the collection of articles has gone from a modest brochure with papers of various levels to an authoritative publication recognized in Russian American studies. As I.A. Tsvetkov notes, Kubyshkin’s department colleague at the St. Petersburg State University, “Americana” is a compilation of academic articles which, along with the publishing projects of Kursk and Far

Eastern researchers, competes with the oldest and authoritative “American Yearbook” [15, p. 171].

Another publishing project worth mentioning is the international collection of research papers “Representations of Canada”, published jointly by Russian and American Canadianists under the editorship of Professors Alexander Kubyshkin and Robert Timko (6 volumes published); a collection of articles by young Canadianists, “Canadian Notebooks” (3 issues); and a series of papers from scholar conferences held at VolSU.

Professor Kubyshkin has repeatedly become a pioneer for Volgograd State University, constructing the pedagogical design of his lecture courses in a new way. As I.I. Kurilla notes, in the 1980s, the organization of “simulation games” for students by A.I. Kubyshkin based on the plot of the 1938 Munich Conference was far ahead of the future “UN models” and other innovative forms of studying international relations [13, p. 7]. The first systematic course on political science at VolSU was also taught by A.I. Kubyshkin. In the mid-2000s, Alexander Ivanovich had conducted the first online course on the history of World War II together with Professor Tom Heed from Ramapo College of New Jersey. Students from Russia and the United States, being thousands of kilometers apart, listened to lectures together and discussed events on the Soviet-German front and in the Pacific Ocean, expanding their understanding of the history of World War II and international relations [13, p. 7]. Volgograd State University could repeat such an educational experience in the perspective. Thanks to Professor Kubyshkin, VolSU has been teaching students in the field of “Area Studies” (with two specializations in Eurasian studies and North American studies), within the framework of which students studied a combination of various courses on the history, politics, economics, and culture of the USA and Canada. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary graduation of American studies students took place in 2025. In 2001, under the leadership of Kubyshkin, at VolSU, a specialist and bachelor program in “International Relations” with a focus on “Processes of World Politics” was launched and is currently successfully ongoing.

After 2008, Alexander Kubyshkin has continued his teaching and research career at the Department of North American Studies of Saint Petersburg State University (SPSU), developing

the American studies field. In 2025, A.I. Kubyshkin is a professor at the Department of Theory and Methodology of Teaching Arts and Humanities at SPSU. During his work in Saint Petersburg, Professor Kubyshkin, maintaining the tradition of internships at American universities, prepared a number of studies and publications on the history of U.S.-Russian and Russian-Canadian relations [4; 9] and contemporary U.S. foreign policy [1; 12], paying attention to the study of the history of Latin American countries [5; 6], while continuing to be a participant and editor of the Volgograd compilation of “Americana” [7]. After 2012, American studies entered the period of uncertainty, and the academic career of A.I. Kubyshkin in Saint Petersburg, like almost every North American studies researcher in the Russian Federation, was influenced by tensions in Russia-U.S. relations and changes in the Russian educational environment [11].

Continuing his scientific research in the field of university studies, Professor Kubyshkin has not stopped reflecting on U.S. universities, classical Russian universities, and their future fate, despite the attempts of their failed modernizations in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s. In American society, discussions about the role of universities have not subsided for decades, resulting in new concepts for improving civic education constantly appearing, which then spread throughout the world. Comparing the reform processes in modern Russian universities, as Kubyshkin writes, it is easy to notice that they often mirror the crisis phenomena that American higher education faced in the 1970s and 1980s. This is explained by the fact that, despite the differences between the two societies, there is much in common, for instance, in mentality, culture, and approaches to solving life’s problems [2, p. 205].

By 2021, A.I. Kubyshkin finished working on his fundamental monograph on U.S. universities: “Town and Gown. The American University in the Structure of Civil Society” [3]. Within the framework of the university studies field, the author was able to present the history of development of the national American university, helping to put together a puzzle of models that form U.S. universities as a phenomenon of economic and cultural hegemony and modern civil society. According to the reviews of Professor Kubyshkin’s fellow

researchers, his monograph laid the foundation for an objective and scientific examination of the Americanization of educational systems in foreign countries, as well as an understanding of the essence of national education in the United States [17, p. 248]. Professor Kubyshkin's historiographic study demonstrates not only the advantages but also determines the underlying causes of the crisis in modern American education, helping to understand the degree of decline in the influence of the university environment on the state of American society as a whole [16, p. 131]. The author confirms that universities have long been the most important part of American civil society, an institution that connects society and the state through a system of expertise, the top of the intellectual pyramid, a way of training professionals, and a social elevator [14, p. 126]. Alexander Kubyshkin, in his monograph, touched upon such an important layer of problems that will give food for thought to domestic scholars for a long time. Anyone who has read this book cannot help but wonder: what about us? What from their experience is acceptable, and what is unacceptable for us? What can be done to transform our universities into drivers of socio-economic and technological growth of the country and at the same time make them attractive to the local community? [17, p. 250].

*Results.* All the universities where Professor Kubyshkin had worked and continues to teach, one way or another, became *his* universities. A.I. Kubyshkin is remembered and known to students and colleagues as an erudite, charismatic speaker and a brilliant lecturer who enthusiastically talks about the events of the past, the history of international relations, and the present one. His creative approach and talent as a science manager contributed to the emergence of many seminars, conferences, and research projects. Professor Kubyshkin has stood at the origins of or developed new scientific, educational, and cultural projects in U.S.-Russia relations. And to this day, the desire to strengthen ties between Russia and the United States is an important component of the scientific, educational, and enlightening activities of Professor A.I. Kubyshkin.

With sincere respect, gratitude for the years of study and joint work, and wishes of indestructible health and increased success!

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