

REFERENCE

For

The academic position of *Professor*

Human Sciences, professional field 2.2 (Modern History - History of the USA and Latin America)

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of History, Department of Modern and Contemporary History

By Prof. Dr. Darina Grigorova Grigorova

Competition data

The procedure is proper in terms of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Holding of Academic Positions of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The only candidate - *Associate Professor Dr. Alexander Mihailov Sivilov*.

Details of the candidate

The only candidate for the competition is Associate Professor Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov, graduate of History, Master's Program "History of Russia" at the Faculty of Arts of Sofia University. He is also a graduate of the Russian Studies Program at the University of St. Kliment Ohridski (2003). He works as a political reporter and international editor for. In 2008-2012 he worked as a political analyst and political analyst at the newspaper "Klasa". In 2009 he received his PhD in History with a dissertation on the Transitions in Chile 1970-1993, which he published as a monograph. Senior Assistant Professor at the Faculty of History, Sofia University (2010). Became associate professor at the Faculty of Arts of the SU with the habilitation topic: the USSR and Latin America (2016), published as a monograph in the same year: the Bear's Embrace (USSR and Latin America).

Since 2019, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mihailov Sivilov has been elected Head of the Department of New and Contemporary History, Faculty of Arts, Sofia University.

His research interests are in the field of modern history of Russia/USSR, USA and Latin America, as evidenced by his publications at home and abroad, as well as his research specializations in the USA (Loyola University, 2013), Russia (MSU "M. V. Lomonosov", 2018), Japan (Meiji University, 2016), Latin America (Chile, Argentina, 2023).

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov is an editor of the refereed journal "La Revista Europa del Este Unida" <https://europadelesteunida.com/index.php/edeu/index>

Description of the scientific works used for the competition

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov is the author of two monographs, *The Gangsters of the Dry Regime and The Great Depression in the Social History of the United States, 1919-1936* (Sofia: Book Rat 2025); *Leaders, Authoritarianism, and Transitions. On the Example of Russia and Chile*, Sofia: Book Rat, 2025.

The publications for the competition used by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov are in Bulgarian and English, including six studies and five articles. The main research problems analysed in the candidate's texts are in several thematic circles:

1/ In the history of political ideas: Totalitarianism theory as a political weapon before and at the dawn of the Cold War (2023); Excerpts from the Latin American Left as a different reading of Marxist ideology (2019); Ideological basis of the Soviet diplomacy (2014); The colour of war (2012);

2/ In the field of foreign policy concepts, US-Soviet, Soviet-Latin American and Soviet-Bulgarian relations: Stalin versus Trotsky in the foreign policy concepts of the USSR in the late 1920s and early 1930s (2022); US Policy Towards Russia as a base for the creation of multipolar geopolitical order 2000-2013 (2023); Preconditions for an emerging superpower - on the case studies of USSR and USA (2022); The forbidden tango USSR and Argentina (2013). The Comintern, the World Revolution and the September Uprising (2023).

3/ In the field of the political profile of the role of personality in history: The Good and the Bad in a South American Western: Salvador Allende and Augusto Pinochet (2008); Augusto Pinochet - The Personality that Divided Chile (2007).

All of the studies of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov selected for the competition are based on a strong source base and research work in Russian, American, Latin American and Japanese libraries and research centers with rich documentary collections. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov uses Soviet and American archives in his research.

The monograph *The Gangsters of the Dry Regime and the Great Depression in the Social History of the United States, 1919-1936* (Sofia: Book Rat, 2025) with a total volume of 478 pp.

The author explores the Mafia as a tool against the left in the United States, an original look at the relationship between organized crime and the social history of Americans, and Hobsbawm's typology of the "social bandit" on American terrain, the subtle social difference between the "mobster" and the "gangster"-robinhut.

In this monograph, the original and contributory scholarly approach of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov is in the analysis of American social reality through the history of gangsters. The chronological framework is the period from the end of the Great War to the end of the Great Depression (1919-1936).

The primary source material is the FBI archives, where the files of American mobsters and gangsters have been declassified. Also used are official documents of American law, as well as political speeches by American leaders.

Chapter One (1919-1929) outlines the economic, political, and social framework of postwar America, of the Dry Regime as a "social experiment" and cultural phenomenon situated in African American music (blues, jazz) on the one hand, and as a criminal catalyst that created "Al Capone's criminal empire" on the other. There is a particular emphasis on the "Red Menace," or the demonization of American leftists, socialists and communists, by the official establishment fighting "German influence" in the United States.

Assoc. Prof. Sivilov analyzes in detail the trade union movement in the United States in its various social stratifications and in the war between labor organizations and local governments. The author gives all aspects of the "workers' resistance" confronted by the federal army, a real social war in urban conditions, which also provoked the racial question in the USA - with the intertwining of social and racial inequality. The author analyzes music, film, and literature as sources for American social resistance.

Chapter Two (1929-1936) focuses on various aspects of the Great Depression and the high social price paid by ordinary Americans, not without the administration's cooperation. Of particular interest is the analysis of the migrant worker "hobos" and their particular culture. The author provides a comparative analysis of the labor and farm movements and forms of social resistance. An interesting parallel is drawn between the US, with the dispossession of land from small American owners, and collectivization in the USSR, "in both cases a huge social price was paid by small farmers, which was expressed in horrific starvation and migration" /p. 283/. The author also analyzes the reflection of the social crisis in the literary reality, as well as the cinema propaganda of "g-man" productions.

The third chapter is thematic about the mafia and gangsters through their portraits with social, historical, criminal touches. /Editor's note to the author.

The author's analysis of the Dry regime "as delegitimizing power" and conversely legitimizing gangsters as part of American society leaves open the question of "whether they are social bandits" or common criminals.

The monograph *Leaders, Authoritarianism and Transitions. On the Example of Russia and Chile* (Sofia: Book Rat, 2025) with a total volume of 183 pp. is devoted to the role of the personal factor in the history of the USSR and Chile, through the ideological framework of "totalitarianism" and "authoritarianism", and through the personalities of Yeltsin and Pinochet, both of whom are in the author's sphere of research interest, comparing the Eurasian with the Latin American authoritarian experience. /Editor's note to the author: when arranging the bibliography, titles in Cyrillic are better before those in Latin.

The overall assessment of the research and academic work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov shows an excellent command of the source base - Soviet and American, of the historiographical trends in the field of modern history of the USA, Latin America and Russia/USSR, as well as the presence of scientific contributions in the author's publications submitted for the competition.

Participation in research projects (2017-2024)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov has an active and fruitful activity in the field of scientific projects, both national and international, combining with ease the research skills with the administrative ones, showing qualities to work in a scientific team.

Assoc. Prof. Sivilov is the leader of international projects. He is a participant in the international project *From Regional Conflicts to an Era of Global Transformations: Bulgarian and Russian Historians' Perspectives on International Relations in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twenty-First Centuries* (Contract Number: KP-06-Russia-24, 2020), a member of the national projects *War for History - 75 Years since the End of World War II* (2020) and *Personalities and Transitions in Eastern Europe and South America after the Cold War* (2020).

Scientific contributions

- New sources

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov introduces into scientific circulation documents from the FBI archive, as well as from Boris Yeltsin's archive.

- *New author theses*

In his main monograph for the competition, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov presents a multilayered original reading of the social picture in the United States (1919-1936) through the history of organized crime (gangsters, mobsters) intertwined with manifestations of social resistance (workers, farmers) in all aspects: political, economic, trade union, cultural (music, cinema, literature), ideological (American Reds and the image of the "Red Menace").

Teaching

The teaching work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mihailov Sivilov covers full-time and part-time Bachelor students from the Faculty of History: history, history and foreign language, history and philosophy; from the Faculty of Law: international relations; from the Faculty of Erasmus. Courses taught are in the fields of modern history of the USSR/Russia, Latin America, and the USA, as well as in specialized courses on the Red Army, Industrialization, and Collectivization.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov is the head of the MA Program in History and Modernity of Russia, East Asia and Eurasia, where he teaches specialized courses on the USSR in international relations before the WWII, on Russia and the East Asian countries, on the USSR and the radical left in the Western world, on Russia as a geopolitical factor in Europe and East Asia 1991-2018, etc.

Lectures abroad:

At the University of Chile (2023) on *La Unión Soviética y las relaciones con Chile y América Latina desde los años 1960 a los años 1990*

Supervision of doctoral students:

Angel Apostolov. NATO and Russia (1992-2002), defended (2021).

Stefan Petrov. Topic: the Russian Empire and anti-war resistance in the years of the First World War, defended (2022).

Abel Rodriguez. Topic: Cuba under Raúl Castro, 2006-2018, def. 2021.

Elitsa Nenova. Topic: Diplomatic relations between Germany and Japan in the period 1936-1941, assigned from 2022.

Christian Georgiev. Topic: Brazilian-Soviet relations in the period 1918-1953, enrolled from 2023.

Practical and popular application of teaching and research experience:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov promotes his historical knowledge in the research field of modern history of the USA, Latin America and Russia/USSR in his original projects in a variety of directions, successfully combining the academic with the creative approach: In a popular science TV show About History Freely (2019-2020); in a radio show on the national air of the Bulgarian National Radio After the End of History (2020-2024), as his book of historical essays is titled (2024); in a YouTube podcast about history and politics Smokescreen with Alexander Sivilov with over 70 thousand followers and 1.6 million views per month (since 2022. 7.6 million followers). The author's publishing activity, partner in the popular science publishing house Book Rat (since 2023), adds to the promotion of historical science among a wide audience.

Conclusion

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Mikhailov Sivilov categorically and convincingly meets all academic areas (research, teaching, administrative), which he develops according to the high requirements necessary for the academic position of "Professor" of Human Sciences, professional field 2.2 (Modern History - History of the USA and Latin America)

Sofia, 16 February 2025

Jury member:

Prof. Dr. Darina Grigorova Grigorova