The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Officials Secretly Assigned Patriotism 'Instructors' – Report

February 29, 2024



Vladimir Putin. **Sergey Bobylev, TASS / kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin has secretly assigned "political instructors" to Russian government ministries and state agencies to ensure loyalty among officials, the independent news outlets Meduza and IStories reported Thursday, citing leaked Kremlin files obtained by an international team of journalists.

The political instructors — called "deputy heads for social and political work" — are tasked with instructing officials and state employees how to perform their duties amid Russia's war against Ukraine.

The Kremlin first sought to introduce the post after coming up against loyalty problems among government officials in the months after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion, the Kommersant business daily reported in April 2022.

Putin signed the unpublished decree introducing political instructors in February 2023, according to Meduza and IStories.

Related article: Russia to Hike Spending on 'Patriotic Education' Fourfold – RBC

The work of political instructors is aimed at "filling in gaps or expanding knowledge in the areas of history, military and politics," the outlets said, citing publically accessible guidelines on "social and political work" published by Russia's Federal Subsoil Resource Use Agency (Rosnedra).

That knowledge "will become a powerful antitode to the ideological distortions spread by mass media that is financed by countries unfriendly to Russia," the guidelines read.

Several government agencies have in recent months published open statements about the sucess of their "social and political work," according to Meduza and IStories.

But anonymous sources in Russia's Agriculture Ministry, Finance Ministry and Federal Courier Service told the outlets that they have yet to introduce political instructors despite Putin's decree.

In 2018, Putin formed a "military-patriotic" directorate to promote patriotism inside Russia's military.

During the Soviet period, a similar directorate staffed by *politruks*, or political instructors, worked to ensure that the Red Army stayed loyal to the Communist Party.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/02/29/russian-officials-secretly-assigned-patriotism-instructors-report-a84289