

UNDER THE GUISE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ANTI-GLOBALISATION. HOW RUSSIAN INFLUENCE AGENT ALEXANDER IONOV WORKS

Russia's unofficial "diplomacy" has performed a pretty good correction of mistakes made by its Soviet "predecessors."

Thus, the USSR general secretaries relied only on their satellites in the form of communist parties which were frankly a marginal phenomenon in many developed countries.

Unlike the Soviet Union, Putin's Russia is exploiting in its interests any movements aimed against the Western agenda.

The example of Germany is indicative: both the far-right Alternative for Germany and their ideological opponents from The Left party are equally "Putin-Versteher," loyal to the Russian president despite obvious differences.

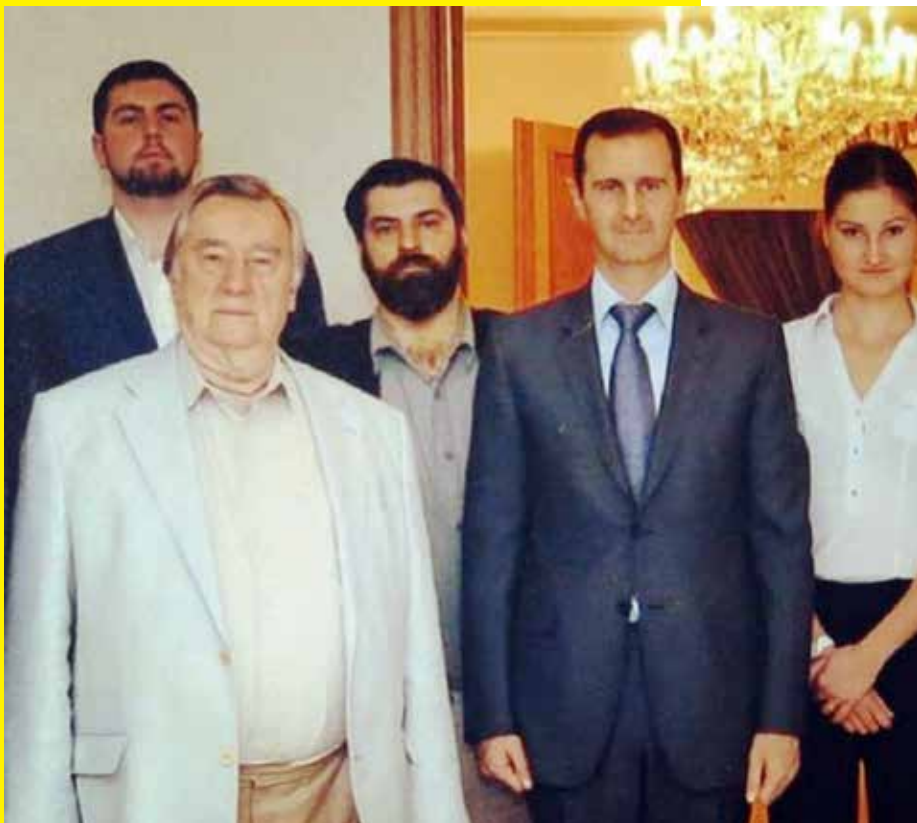
At the same time, the Russian curators for "foreign comrades" from different ideological camps may be the same people. Like **Alexander Ionov**.

Anti-globalisation in the pay of Putin

Alexander Ionov is an extremely multi-skilled political functionary. Since 2012, he has been heading the Anti-globalisation Movement of Russia (AMR).

The organisation activists support the dictatorial regimes of third world countries from Venezuela to Iran and hold various actions of "solidarity." And Ionov himself proudly poses for photos with Bashar al-Assad and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.





Ionov and his associates are generously funded from the state budget of Russia. First, they received a grant worth one million rubles from the National Charitable Foundation to support military-patriotic education, and then bigger sums flowed to them.

Ionov raised the flag of anti-globalisation not to fight the arbitrariness of corporations like Gazprom or Rosneft, and not to combat climate change, in which Russia's energy-intensive economy is heavily involved.

He has the same enemies as Putin – the “collective West” – on which the Kremlin tries to take vengeance for defeat in the Cold War.

Therefore, Ionov is ready to see among his allies anyone who has any reason to make it hot for Washington or Brussels.

Thus, in 2016, the **Dialogue of Nations** was held in Moscow under the auspices of the AMR. The event was attended by representatives of self-proclaimed Trans-

istria, “LPR” and “DPR,” together with emissaries of Somaliland and separatist movements in California and Texas.

While it had a noticeable leftist nature, the **International Russian Conservative Forum**, held a year earlier in St. Petersburg, “performed” on the right flank: Russian nationalists (including militants who fought against Ukraine in Donbas), separatists from the Italian Lombard League, neo-fascist **Golden Dawn** Greek party and, of course, Alexander Ionov were among the delegates.

The slogans on the right of nations to self-determination, the struggle against a unipolar world, and justice hide obvious Russian geopolitical goals – to weaken the West at any cost, to destabilise the political situation, at least by intensifying confrontation on racial (BLM in the USA) or social (Yellow Vest protesters in France) grounds.

By the way, while Alexander Ionov and his associates play up to various separatist sentiments in

other countries, the indigenous peoples in Russia either die out (there are 47 such people in Russia, even according to official statistics) or assimilate and finally dissolve their national identity in the empire's melting pot.

In 2019, Udmurt scholar Albert Razin set himself on fire in Izhevsk town to protest against the oppression of the language of indigenous people. However, Russian anti-globalists led by Ionov are not much interested in such tragic incidents as they prefer to fight against the “American military outlook” far beyond the Russian Federation.

In 2019, the Spanish newspaper **El Mundo Spanish** published results of a study stating that an extensive network of Internet accounts that incite protest sentiments from Santiago de Chile to Barcelona functioned in the Spanish-speaking countries in the interests of Russian military intelligence.

A “hub” of that network is the Spanish-language version of the Russia Today TV channel, and Alexander Ionov is one of its curators, the research underlined.

It is predictable because Latin America has long been in the purview of his “anti-globalist” interests.



“Expert on the Ukrainian issue”

Ionov often calls for “preventing colour revolutions” as Russian propaganda labels any civil society protests against the incumbent government from the post-Soviet area to Venezuela.

In addition to the Anti-globalisation Movement of Russia, Alexander is involved in a number of infamous organisations.

One of them is the **Antimaidan** Russian movement, and its goal is as follows: *“We unite in the Antimaidan movement because we love Russia and want to save our Great Country... We know our history, we remember the high price paid by the people of Russia to stop the unrest that has already happened in our history. We see the tragedy of Ukraine, where the fratricidal war in Donbas began with the Maidan, street protests and riots.”*

The organisation’s website is currently launching a massive information attack on Russian liberals, primarily, Alexei Navalny.

However, Antimaidan is not the only front of struggle against the opposition, where Alexander Ionov acts.

At his request, on the second try, the Ministry of Justice of Russia recognised popular independent Russian-language media outlet **Meduza** as a foreign agent.

This is a kind of **“black spot” for the media**, which greatly complicates their work.

Ionov willingly comments on his actions, claiming he just wants to establish legitimacy and justice. Although in communication with Meduza, he did not forget to mention the articles about the Spanish-language troll factory, with which, however, this media outlet had nothing to do.

According to him, one of the arguments for classifying Meduza as a foreign agent is the fact that its journalists criticise law enforcement agencies.

Later, in an interview with **Snob** online media outlet, he gave a detailed explanation:

“We have seen a number of events from Ukraine to Latin America, when numerous Western sources directly said that it was necessary to fight against security forces and organisations working to protect the rights of citizens and expose extremist groups and terrorists. They [Meduza] wrote that it was necessary to support so-called correct organisations (by the way, very opposition in nature) and thus, contrary to the Constitution, to adopt extreme revolutionary sentiments, to put it mildly. We all remember Maidan. What happened there should be a lesson to all of us. Because many activists died there. A lot of people became disabled. And there was the same rhetoric about the incumbent authorities and law enforcement agencies.”

Another intention of Ionov is read in this demagoguery: to please one of his many employers, since he is, among other roles, a member of the community council at the Directorate of Internal Affairs.

Like most Russian “public figures,” Ionov is an “expert on the Ukrainian issue.”

In 2014, he gave the then Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatsenyuk (remote) a lesson about signing the association agreement with the European Union on the air of Russia Today:

“If we look at the economic map of Ukraine, we will see that the main enterprises are located in the south-east of Ukraine. The conditions imposed on the country in case of economic association put businesses in a terrible position. If Ukraine signs the economic part of the agreement, the current illegitimate government in Kyiv will further turn the country’s south-east against it. And this is not in the interests of the incumbent government. Thus, the association itself was only a reason to remove Yanukovych.”

The fact that Ionov’s economic predictions about Ukraine did not come true does not prevent him from speaking in another role – “defence expert.”

Today, he gives advice of a geopolitical scale:

“It’s time for Kyiv to come to terms with the fact that Crimea is a part of Russia, Russia will defend its sovereignty. Therefore, any attempts of provocation – from military exercises to statements on NATO membership – are only a policy of discord and are aimed at escalating the situation and severing bilateral relations.”

To confuse at the level of symbols

Among the many titles and regalia of Ionov, probably the most pathetic is the **“vice-president of the International Human Rights Defence Committee,”** known by the French-language abbreviation CIPDH.

Such an organisation does exist, headquartered at Paris.

By all formal indications, it is one of the human rights structures that command respect of the Western world, which is what the Russian agent network actually uses.

If many people in Europe today have a rather cautious attitude to the phrase “Russian journalist,” a “Russian human rights activist” sounds much less suspicious.

The website of the International Human Rights Defence Committee, whose vice-president is Alexander Ionov, has only a French-language version, although it has offices (as stated on the same website) in eight countries (from Kazakhstan to the United States).

The organisation logo hints at the symbols of the United Nations, and this is an obvious way to boost respectability as this committee has nothing to do with the United Nations.

The organisation tries to use its own license plates, visually similar to those of the UN mission vehicles, and even issue passports, the invalidity of which even had to be reported by the European Commission.

Ionov himself first denies his involvement in the CIPDH, and then calls the denial “a made-up story by Western journalists.”

However, his affiliation with the International Human Rights Defence Committee and the post of Vice President for Human Rights is indicated on his personal website.

Selective defence of human rights

Currently, Alexander Ionov prefers to position himself as a human rights activist and a civil society figure.

So he is called this in the pro-Kremlin media.

Yevgeny Prigozhin is an influential Russian official, a “father” of the troll factory in Olgino, an establisher of the **Foundation for Combatting Repressions**.

It is clear that the foundation does not provide assistance to victims of Russian police brutality or persecuted oppositionists and activists.

Prigozhin, Ionov et al. have very peculiar proteges.

It is worth mentioning at least a few of them.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an American Black Panther Party activist serving a life sentence for killing a police officer.

Stanislav Lisov and Pyotr Levashev are Russian hackers arrested on suspicion of cyberfraud and interference in U.S. elections.

Viktor Bout is a shadow arms dealer.

Another one of Ionov’s apprentices, Maria Butina, who was arrested in the United States on suspicion of espionage, deserves special attention.

Her case, as well as many mentioned previously, had nothing to do with violation of human rights.

Butina’s rescue is just a story from the daily work of special services with which Ionov has no de jure ties.

Nevertheless, the released Maria Butina was met at the Moscow airport by her family and two other people – Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova and Alexander Ionov, who had even created the foundation for rescue.

He was awarded a letter of acknowledgment for the assistance to FSB for this or some other operation.

Doing all his “righteous” deeds, Ionov does not forget about his own well-being.

He is the President of **Ionov Transcontinental**, a foreign trade consulting firm.

Indeed, the leader of anti-globalists promotes the interests of Russian corporations, and his entourage is unlikely to be surprised by this fact.

Ionov’s business dimensions include “non-government security” (hence access to private military companies), and it is easy to understand that he has very powerful patrons in the Kremlin given that the geography of his business interests reaches such countries as Syria or Iran.

In fact, whichever sphere of Ionov’s activity is touched upon, his proximity to public authorities, performance of important subversive activities in the West, and manipulation of various statuses prestigious in the civilised world (civil society figure, human rights activist, etc.) become noticeable.

His move from the “anti-globalist” front to the international legal one may indicate some changes in the Kremlin’s tactics in its revanchist game.

Putin likes asymmetric solutions.

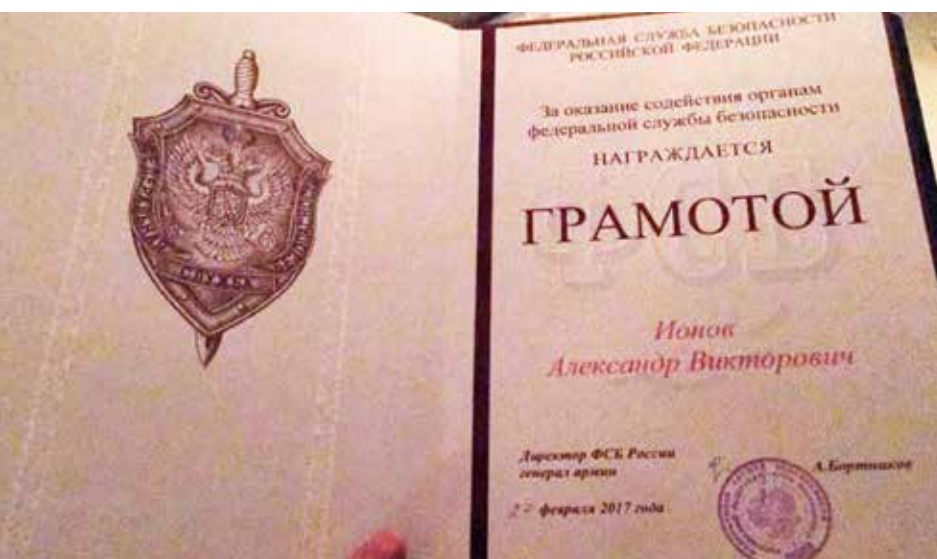
Along with inciting hatred with the help of various types of radicals, he tries to play on the field of his opponent: to use the concept of “human rights” so as to cover up various information-psychological and intelligence operations.

This is why such figures as Alexander Ionov come in handy.

His shift away from outright anti-globalisation may indicate that the Kremlin now has other plans for him and will try to push him to some serious international bodies under the guise of a human rights activist (PACE, OSCE, Trilateral Contact Group on Donbas) instead of participation in various separatist congresses.

To this end, a less aggressive image is formed.

To prevent this, European politicians must identify Ionov as a person who should be banned from entering the EU, thus blocking Moscow’s opportunities for further “anti-globalist” actions within the European Union.



FSB’s letter of acknowledgment

<https://meduza.io/feature/2021/05/20/poznakomtes-s-aleksandrom-ionovym-chelovekom-kotoryy-napisal-donos-na-meduzu-potrebavav-priznat-ee-inostrannym-agentom>