

In today's <u>#vatniksoup</u> I'll introduce a conspiratorial fake news blog called Mintpress News (<u>@MintPressNews</u>). The site's best-known for spreading disinformation and propaganda, and for its support of totalitarian regimes.

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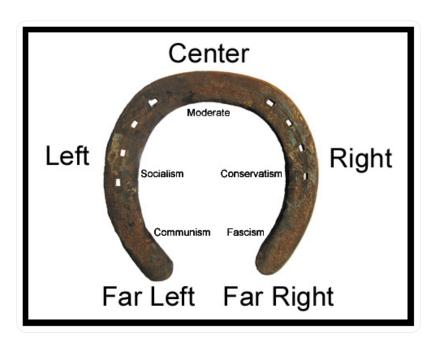
Mintpress News is headquartered in Minnesota, US, but as is the case with the Grayzone blog, its funding remains mostly unknown. The blog was found by Mnar Muhawesh (now Adley) back in 2012.



She's claimed that the site was originally funded by "angel investors" and "retired businesspeople", but in 2013 Muhawesh stated that she's the "sole investor of MintPress".

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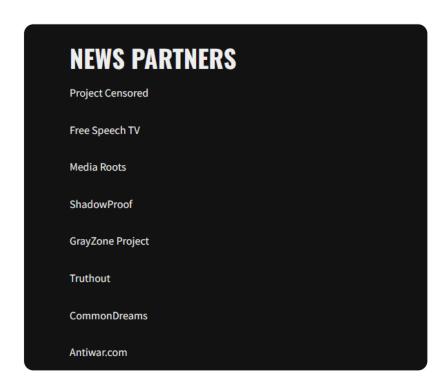
Some describe Mintpress as a "far-left" website, but I'll outright refuse to do that since I don't see anything "left-wing" about it - it's simply an anti-US propaganda outlet wooing the various totalitarian regimes around the globe.



MintPress can be seen as part of the disinformation/propaganda fake news blog network, including sites like The Grayzone, Truthout and



(MintPress actually lists them as "news partners" on their site).



At the beginning, the blog was reporting on "American imperialism" in the Middle East and on its support for Israel. Based on MintPress, the Americans were assisting on "the humiliation and slaughter of innocent Arabs" in the Middle East.

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While the MintPress site does indeed list 20 writers and a mission statement, there is nothing there that speaks to where the money is coming from to pay any of these people, the majority of whom are far-flung activist bloggers and none of whom were part of the group filling the operation's Plymouth office four years are.

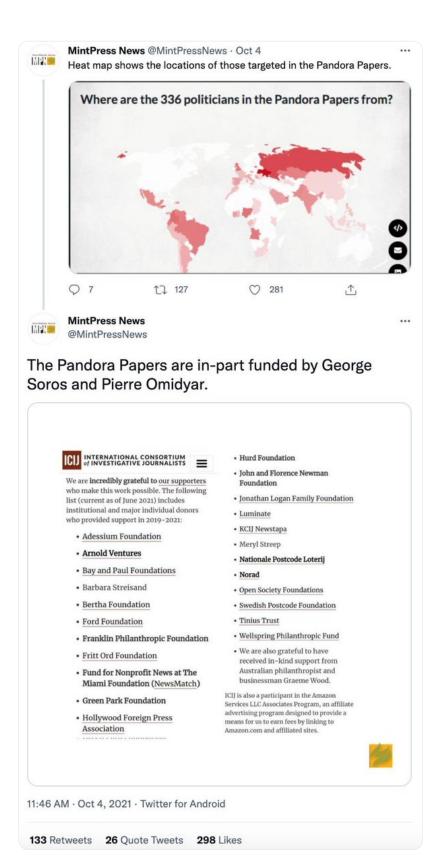
Recall that when MintPress first appeared on the local radar in 2011, it caught the attention of <u>David Brauer</u> <u>here at MinnPost</u>. A startup for-profit news organization actually hiring reporters and paying them? Stop the presses!

From the get-go, MintPress was your typical left-of-center web outlet. Climate change updates? *Check*. Republican candidates saying bizarre things? *Check*.

But from the start there was a clear focus on Israel and ways that "American imperialism" was abetting the humiliation and slaughter of innocent Arabs. (Ms. Muhawesh and her family are Palestinian.) In other words, a significantly different mix of focal points.

Not that there's anything wrong with that. A truly free press encourages the widest possible range of voices, and Israeli and American administrations have plenty to be held accountable for. But a steady run of stories sympathetic to Assad, at least in the context of Western powers committed to "regime change" by any and all means possible, is something else again.

As is tradition, they've also been pushing Soros related conspiracy theories, as they made a connection between Soros' funding and the Pandora Papers, somehow implying that revealing corruption would somehow be a bad thing.



MintPress has shared content from Kremlin-owned RT and Sputnik. They've also "partnered up" with Peace Data, a fake news blog run by Prigozhin's Internet Research Agency.

The site also provided platform for GRU troll with the codename "Alice Donovan". In "her" articles,...



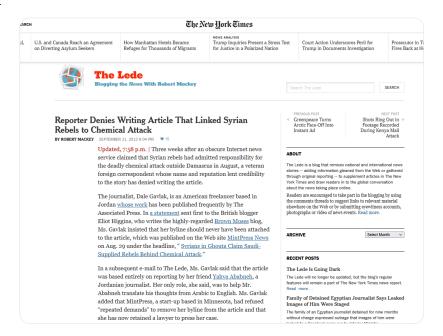
..."she" criticized Turkey and later started instigating political movement of African-Americans against Hillary Clinton. During 2016, "she" published at least 30 political pieces on various "left-leaning" blogs, including MintPress.



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In Aug, 2013, Mintpress article written by Dale Gavlak and Yahya Ababneh claimed that the Syrian rebels were responsible for the Ghouta chemical attack. Human Rights Watch found no evidence for this claim, and Foreign Policy magazine described it as...

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..."one of the most crazy conspiracy theories" when it comes to chemical attacks in Syria. Gavlak, who had also freelanced for Associated Press, later tried to get his name removed from the article, suggesting that Ababneh was the sole author of the article.

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He also said that the report had not been verified. Gavlak later got suspended from AP, possibly due to the article. MintPress put up an additional text stating that Gavlak wasn't actually in Syria, but wouldn't remove him from the author list.

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Dale Gavlak assisted in the research and writing process of this article but was not on the ground in Syria. Reporter Yahya Ababneh, with whom the report was written in collaboration, was the correspondent on the ground in Ghouta who spoke directly with the rebels, their family members, victims of the chemical weapons attacks, and local residents.

Gavlak is a MintPress News Middle East correspondent who has been freelancing for the AP as an Amman, Jordan correspondent for nearly a decade. This report is not an Associated Press article; rather it is exclusive to MintPress News.

Dale Gavlak is a Middle East correspondent for Mint Press News and has reported from Amman, Jordan, writing for the Associated Press, NPR and BBC. An expert in Middle Eastern affairs, Gavlak covers the Levant region, writing on topics including politics, social issues and economic trends. Dale holds a M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago. Contact Dale at dgavlak@mintpressnews.com

Yahya Ababneh is a Jordanian freelance journalist and is currently working on a master's degree in journalism, He has covered events in Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Libya. His stories have appeared on Amman Net, Saraya News, Gerasa News and elsewhere.

Instead of posting international human rights organization reports, MintPress has been reporting on the "other side" of the war by publishing interviews from al-Assad and other pro-al-Assad and anti-US/anti-rebel material.

Just like great humanitarian figures such as Jackson "Z" Hinkle and Vanessa "Al-Assad tortures but I'd never say it publicly" Beeley, MintPress has received the Serena Shim award for their "outstanding journalistic efforts".

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"And to be honest torture happened, I am never going to say it publicly....
But it happened. I have been to Syria and I know what went on. And I don't say it publicly. I'm saying it to you. Even government members don't deny it btw. Not going to go details about what the President said, but not going to deny torture ever happened, that is silly. Torture did happen... It happens globally..." -Vanessa Beeley, Associate Editor of 21st Century Wire

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The site's also amplified Beeley's conspiracy theories on the Syrian NGO, The White Helmets.

Some frequent contributors of MintPress include Vanessa Beeley, Eva Bartlett, Max Blumenthal, Lowkey, Kit Klarenberg, and always unfunny Lee Camp. I'm sure you can guess what's...



the connection between all of them. Latest articles on the site include conspiracy theories about "US/CIA-funded coup in Georgia", article that downplays the role of Russian collusion in the Cambridge Analytica scandal, and RT-reporter Chris Hedges' op-ed titled...



..."Ukraine's death by proxy". They've also amplified the NO2NATO movement in the UK and provided platform for various far-right, pro-Russian actors. For example, a Brazilian analyst Pepe Escobar wrote an article on how he met and had great discussions with Alexander...

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Dugin in a "New Horizon" conference in Iran. Another author, Whitney Webb, has spread classic anti-Semitic tropes of Rotschilds controlling the IMF. Her source for this rather bold claim was the True Activist article titled "The 5 Biggest Threats To Humanity Exposed".

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Climate change and mass extinction didn't make the list.

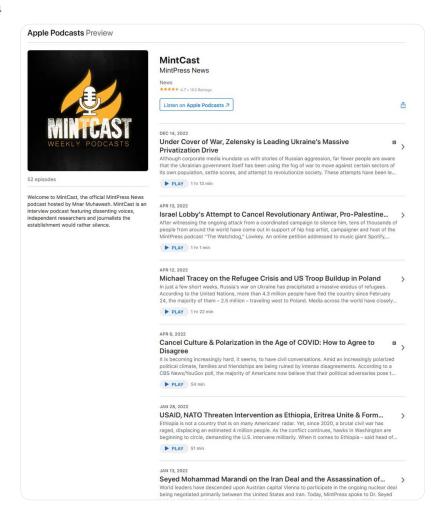
MintPress also re-published William Engdahl's anti-Soros article, originally written for Russian-controlled New Eastern Outlook. Engdahl's also contributed to several other Russian propaganda mills, including Global..19/24

...Research, Veterans Today and Katehon. The article itself discusses the Great Replacement conspiracy theory and George Soros.

Today I learned that being considered "far-left" includes being anti-Semitic and promoting fringe far-right voices.

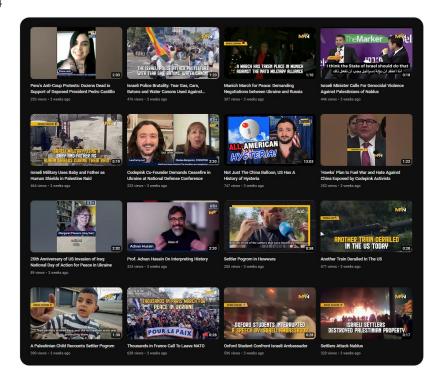


They also have a podcast, MintCast, which covers the same topics as the blog. By their own description, it's a podcast that features "dissenting voices, independent researchers and journalists the establishment would rather silence".



Of course they feature the loudest anti-Ukraine, pro-Russia voices online, including Michael Tracey and Rania Khalek. They also have quite active YouTube channel with new videos published almost on a daily basis.

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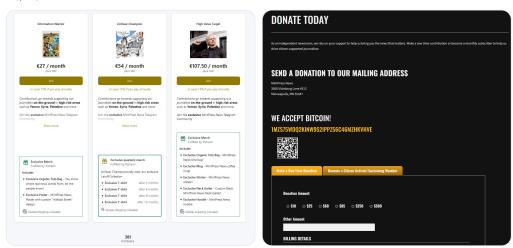
In May, 2022, PayPal shut down MintPress' account along with the account of another propaganda mill, Consortium News. Naturally "freedom of speech advocates" like Branko Marcetic and Matt Taibbi defended these noble "left-wing" establishments and their efforts for free speech.23/24





One funding source for the site is Patreon, and with 381 "patrons" the site makes anywhere from 1150 to 40 000 USD per month. MintPress are also asking for cash, BTC and credit card payment donations via their website.

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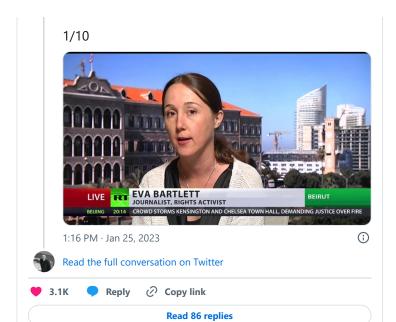


#### Vanessa Beeley:



#### Eva Bartlett:







Also, big thank you to <u>@vorkoz</u> for delivering today's <u>#vatniksoup</u>.

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