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Nov 10, 2022 · 13 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1590624121813368832](https://twitter.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1590624121813368832)

In today's [#vatnik](#) soup, I'll go through the many motives in creation of pro-🇷🇺 "useful idiots". By useful idiot I refer to a person who spreads propaganda and disinfo for a cause, either consciously or unconsciously. It's by no means a comprehensive list, but it's a good intro. 1/13



I have divided these methods into four distinct categories, but individuals can of course be affected by multiple methods. These methods are: 1) wealth, 2) power, 3) anxiety/disenfranchisement, and 4) kompromat. 2/13

1) Wealth: You can include many politicians and businessmen on this list. After the collapse of USSR, Russia opened up its businesses to the West, and many answered to this call. In case you were willing to ignore the human rights violations and ongoing invasions by 🇷🇺, 3/13



it was a quick and rather easy way to make a buck. Many prominent politicians, such as the 🇩🇪 ex-chancellor Schröder and 🇫🇮 ex-PM Lipponen are part of this block. Its roots go back to Brandt's "Ostpolitik", which tried to bring peace between USSR and Europe with commerce. 4/13



For some, propaganda simply pays the bills: troll farm employees, news/blog "journos" and admins, etc. also belong to this list, as spreading disinfo and propaganda can be rather lucrative business (by Russian standards, at least):

<https://www.news.com.au/technology/online/social/simple-wellpaid-work-russian-trolls-were-simply-in-it-for-the-money/news-story/b9a533675eb91f8ab6e460c1515c2894>

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2) Power: Power and influence can also be a strong motivator. Getting recognition and praise from higher-ups can motivate bloggers to spread propaganda through different channels. Social media algorithms have put most of us in information bubbles... 6/13

...through which we try to get validation and acceptance. Being admired for your input feeds our ego which motivates us to produce more content (I should know). Some of us are also drawn towards authoritarian causes. 7/13

3) Anxiety/disenfranchisement: This category is by far the largest and it grows quickly through effective disinfo and propaganda. The Russian style "firehose of falsehood" (see [@jayrosen_nyu](#)'s fantastic lecture:



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/9A1nKxxEcc>

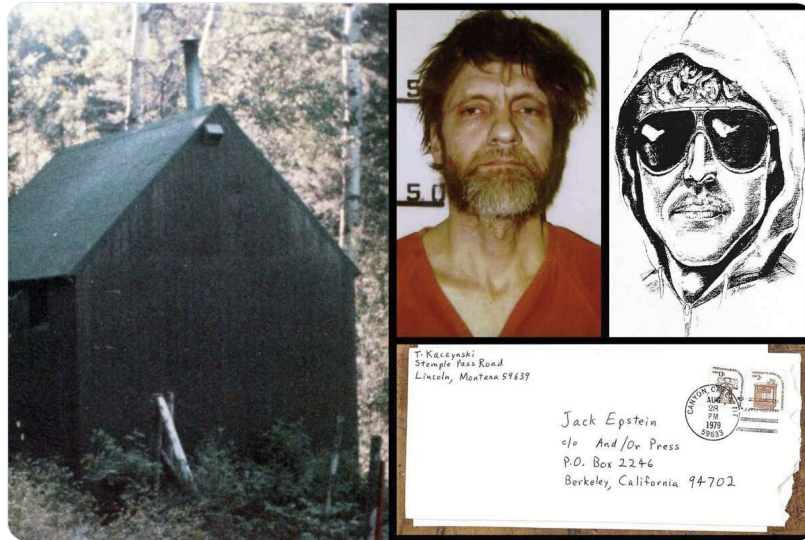
) works especially well in a low trust...8/13


...environment (it also lowers it further). Douglas et al. (2017, <https://doi.org/10.1177/096372141771826>) found out that belief in conspiracies is closely related to these two feelings. In short: they feel anxiety because of the state the society is in, and feel like they cannot make a change.9/13

This makes them blame the people in charge, and think that "if these bad people weren't there, everything would be fine". Disenfranchisement is often triggered by injustice treatment by the authorities, personal debt/bankruptcy, unemployment, health-related problems, etc. 10/13

Propaganda and disinformation feed anxiety and disenfranchisement. "You cannot change the society because its rotten and corrupt." and "Authorities are lying." It also drives these actors to social groups who tend to agree with them, creating before-mentioned info bubbles.

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4) Kompromat: Finally, one can be influenced by kompromat. It's one of the characteristic features of  politics, and can be defined as "damaging information about a person that can be used to blackmail them". Fake photos, planted drugs, videos of liaisons with prostitutes..12/13



...and information retrieved through cybercrimes can all be considered kompromat. One of the most famous kompromat cases was a sex video of 🇷🇺's Prosecutor General, Yury Skuratov:



Russia and the art of 'kompromat'
Russia denies collecting scandalous material on the US president-elect - but what is 'kompromat'?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38613979>

Allegedly Trump also was a victim of this tactic:



Absolutely Every Single Thing We Know About the Pee Tape
Following the release of the Mueller report, we answer critical questions about this notorious tape: What's on it? Is it real? Are there porn parodies yet? We have the answers for you.

<https://www.thecut.com/2018/04/donald-trump-pee-tape.html>