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Feb 29, 2024 · 20 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1763159042124308978](#)

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll introduce a Belgian political activist, Luc Michel (@LucMichelPCN). He's best-known for his extreme far-right views, supporting and promoting Russia-orchestrated fake elections, and organizing a vast African fake news network, Russosphere.

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In his early years, Michel became part of Front de la Jeunesse, a far-right militia. In 1980, members of the organization killed a French-Algerian man in Brussels. In 1981, they burned down a publishing house for a magazine who exposed the organization's internal structures.

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During the 80s Michel became an assistant of Jean Thiriart, a Belgian far-right political theorist and former Waffen SS member. Thiriart and Michel moved later towards National Bolshevism, and they also collaborated with Russian fascist Alexander Dugin.

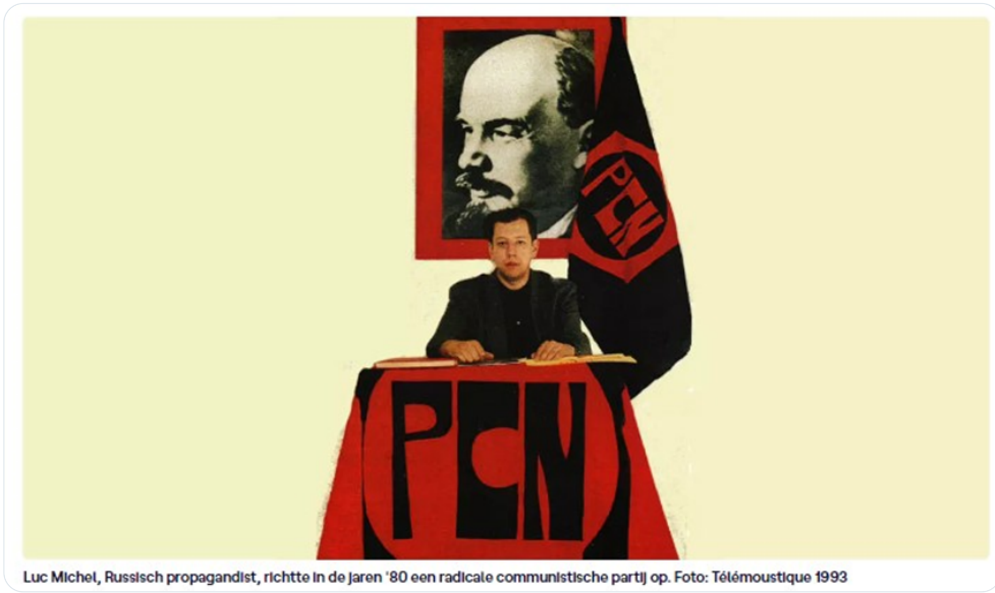


Luc Michel (left), the future director of the fake electoral observation organisation Eurasian Observatory of Democracy and Elections (EODE), and **Jean Thiriart** (centre).

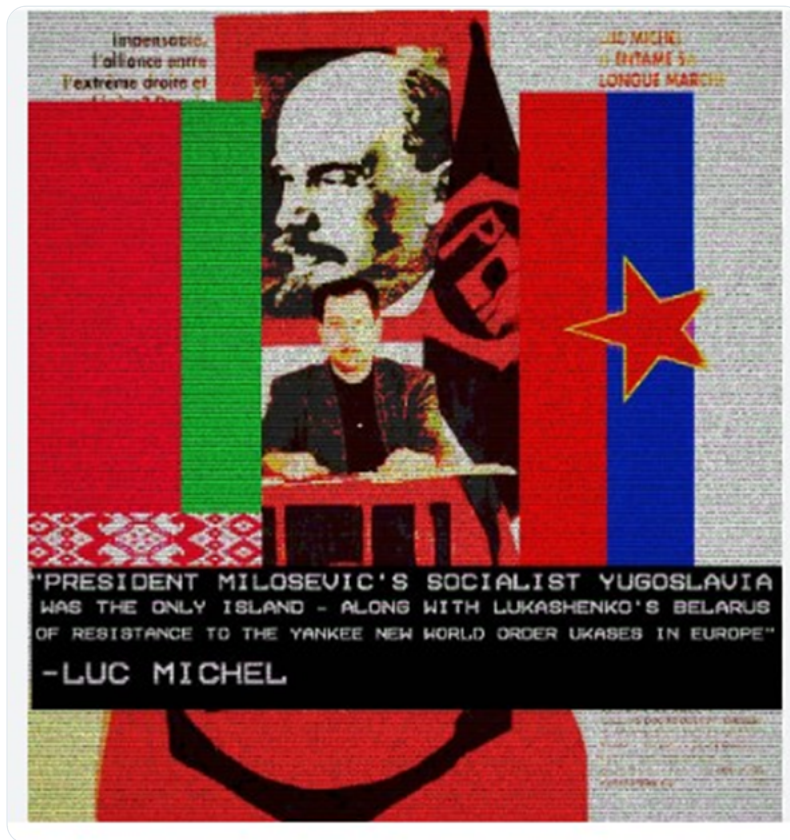


Aleksandr Dugin (far left), **Aleksandr Prokhanov** (second from the left) and **Luc Michel** (centre) at the "anti-mondialist" congress in Tripoli organised on the initiative of Libyan dictator **Muammar Gaddafi**. Tripoli, 1996.

In 1984 Luc founded The Parti Communautaire National-Européen (PCN), a National Bolshevik political organization with strong anti-US and "anti-Zionist" sentiments. It became the home of Maoists and neo-fascists, and admired the likes of Saddam Hussein & Slobodan Milosevic.



Luc Michel, Russisch propagandist, richtte in de jaren '80 een radicale communistische partij op. Foto: Télémostique 1993



The goal of PCN was to unite the European far-left and far-right against Europe's "Yankee and Zionist enemies" and establish one big European nation stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok. Dugin liked the idea so much, he made it the frontispiece of one of his books.

La Nazione europea

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Not One Inch, Unless It Is from Lisbon to Vladivostok

NATO-Russia Mythmaking and a Reimagined Kyivan Rus

In: *Journal of Applied History*

Author: Carl Mirra 

Online Publication Date: 12 Dec 2022

[Abstract](#) [Full Text](#) [PDF](#) [Metadata](#) [Metrics](#)

Abstract

A careful evaluation of recent history illustrates that the claim that US and NATO expansion threatens Moscow's existence is an exaggeration. That Russia would inflate fears of NATO to pursue its global aspirations is understandable. What is less comprehensible is the degree to which influential Western thinkers, particularly on the anti-imperial US left, have promoted this narrative. This paper will examine the work of prominent US anti-imperial leftists who view the Russo-Ukrainian war through a US-centric lens, a conceptual framework that distorts the historical record. It will first document how these commentators' explanatory models give outsized attention to US maneuvers, while neglecting regional fault lines, Russian irredentism and historical nuance. Consequently, many US anti-imperial leftists conclude that the US/NATO alliance is to blame for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This paper will explore Russia-NATO interactions and Moscow's imperial discourse to demonstrate that the blame NATO stance obfuscates the historical record.

Keywords: Russo-Ukrainian War; NATO; Russia disinformation; Surkov; Putin; imperialism

At the same time, Luc started making new connections in Africa. He was a close admirer of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, but he was also making connections to the president of the Central African Republic. He even became the advisor to president of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza.

Admirer of Gaddafi and Putin

Mr Michel's early history may seem unusual for a self-proclaimed friend of Africa.

Born in 1958, he was politically active from a young age, first in the neo-fascist groups of his native Belgium, and later as a follower of Jean Thiriart, a former Nazi collaborator who envisioned a "Euro-Soviet empire from Vladivostok to Dublin", united against America.

His career took him to Libya in support of the country's leader at the time, Muammar Gaddafi. He also went to Burundi as an advisor to then-President Pierre Nkurunziza.





Le consultant belge apparaît lors de la Fête du travail burundaise, le 2 mai, dans une vidéo publiée par le pouvoir. (Capture d'écran Youtube)

While Michel's party was fringe at best in Belgium, he managed to open a lot of doors in Russia. He headed the Eurasian Observatory for Democracy & Election, an organization with the sole purpose of whitewashing Russian-controlled elections in regions like Transnistria.

Democracy & Elections

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Contact

EODE /
Eurasian Observatory for Democracy & Election
(Brussels-Paris-Moscow-Sotchi-Kichinev)
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RAPPROCHE DE LA RUSSIE

NGO EODE: WHO ARE WE?

The NGO EODE (acronym for "European Observatory for Democracy & Elections"), the European Monitoring Centre for Democracy and Elections, is organized into four autonomous departments:

- The first department is the EODE MONITORING INTERNATIONAL GROUP .

It is, let us say, the executive arm of the NGO, the one which provides its missions. It is composed of specialists from all over Europe – including Russia and Turkey – but also from Africa.

- The second department is EODE-THINK TANK.

It is both a Institute for Analysis and Research. But also a production cell, as its name suggests, of ideas and concepts of reflection.

EODE focuses on geopolitics. But unlike many others, it neglects neither economy nor ideology. Those who advanced the "end of History" or " the death of ideologies" were wrong! Because we can not understand a political system or a geopolitical reality without discerning behind its ideological basis.

- The third department is EODE-EDUCATION.

It is both a School of executives and a training Institute. It aims to provide both internal and external training missions – seminars, symposia, conferences – but also simply standard courses.

The Department acts in synergy with among others:

Such as the Center for European Polical and Social Studies, the CEPSE (founded in 1963);

In Belgium, EODE EDUCATION has its education activities in those of the PAN-EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY (UPP) in Brussels.

- The fourth department is EODE-TV.

This is a Department of Multimedia Communications, which aims not only to cover in video the activities of the NGO and its partners, but also to undertake the websites activities (Internet) and a very active presence on the social networks.

EODE-TV will produce among others documentaries and programs under the labels "EODE-GEOPOLITICS" and "EODE-THINK TANK".

As the leader of the organization, Michel popped up in Transnistria (2006), Abkhazia (2007), Crimea (2014), Donetsk (2014) and Luhansk (2014) to observe the "elections". Russia even outsourced the hiring of observers to Michel and his henchmen for their sham referendums.



Marina Kochetkova (left), **Luc Michel** (second from the right) and **Aleksey Kochetkov** as “observers” of the illegitimate referendum on the independence of Moldova’s region of Transnistria in September 2006. Second from the left is Transnistrian politician **Grigore Mărăcuță**.



“Observing” the 2007 “parliamentary elections” in Abkhazia, left to right: **Luc Michel**, **Marina Kochetkova** (Klebanovich) and **Aleksey Kochetkov**.

At the time of writing, the following names of international “observers” hired by the the EODE and ECGA the can be disclosed:

Name	Country	Political affiliation
Frank Abernathy	USA	???
Fabrice Beur	Belgium	Parti communautaire national-européen (extreme right/National Bolshevik) / EODE
Fabrizio Bertot	Italy	Forza Italia (right-wing)
Frank Creyelman	Belgium	Vlaams Belang (extreme right)
Aleksey Didenko	Russia	Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (extreme right)
Vladimir Djukanovic	Serbia	Serbian Progressive Party (right-wing)
Márton Gyöngyösi	Hungary	Jobbik (extreme right)
Vladimir Krshlyanin	Serbia	Movement for Serbia (extreme right)
Georgios Lambroulis	Greece	Communist Party of Greece (extreme left/ Stalinist)
Viliam Longauer	Slovakia	Union of Fighters against Fascism (...)
Alessandro Musolino	Italy	Forza Italia (right-wing)
Manuel Ochsenreiter	Germany	<i>Zuerst!</i> (far right journal)
Jean-Luc Schaffhauser	France	Rassemblement bleu Marine (radical right)
Ewald Stadler	Austria	Die Reformkonservativen (right-wing)
Magdalena Tasheva	Bulgaria	Ataka (extreme right)
Sotirios Zarianopoulos	Greece	Communist Party of Greece (extreme left/ Stalinist)
Ladislav Zemánek	Czech Republic	No to Brussels – Popular Democracy (ultranationalist)



The EODE's **Luc Michel** and “president” of Transnistria (1991-2011) **Igor Smirnov** in Tiraspol, October 2011.

While the OSCE wanted nothing to do with Russia's fake elections, Russia cunningly went for deception. During the Crimea referendum, TV channel Russia24 claimed Michel represented the OSCE, while in Donetsk foreign observers came up with a similar acronym, ASCE.

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According to Moscow-based journalist Alec Luhn, at the press conference in Donbass, the international “observers” suggested creating the Association for Security and Cooperation in Europe (ASCE), but then Stadler proposed the name “Agency for Security and Cooperation in Europe” (ASCE). The name obviously refers to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), an international organisation that, in particular, monitors elections in different parts of the world. Since it provides objective and independent monitoring of elections and referenda, the OSCE is hated by the EODE and ECGA, as well as Russian authorities.

However, while constantly vilifying and trying to discredit the OSCE’s observation missions, Russian state-controlled media intentionally present fake “election monitors” as members of the OSCE. For example, in March 2014, Russian TV channel “Rossiya 24” claimed that notorious fascist Michel was the “organiser of the OSCE observation mission” at the illegal “referendum” in Ukraine’s Autonomous Republic of Crimea that Russia annexed afterwards.

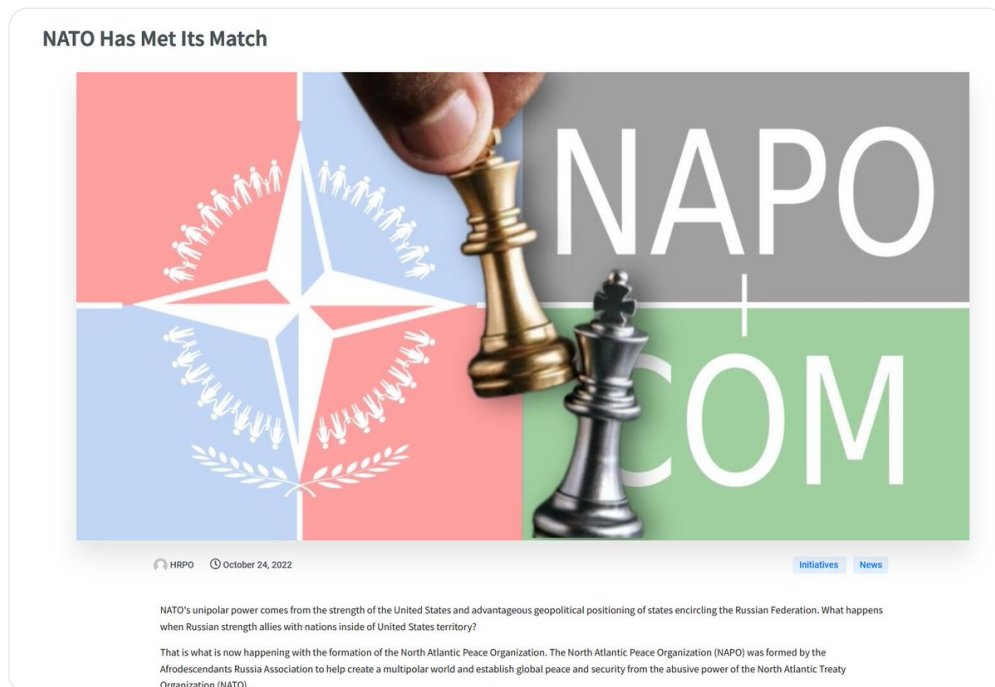


Belgian fascist Luc Michel, the head of the EODE, in Crimea. The caption reads: “Organiser of the OSCE observation mission in Crimea”



Russia loves these similar naming conventions, which is why Michel also founded NAPO (North Atlantic Peace Organisation), a counter organization for NATO. While in theory it proposed peace, in reality it served as a propaganda vehicle for Russia to promote its narratives.

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In a bizarre turn of events, Luc announced his involvement as an observer for The Detroit Republic Referendum. It turned out to be a project of Ramzu Yunus, a "NAPO activist" and a grifter who traveled to Russia in Sep 2023 where he allegedly met Wagner's youth members.



The "Republic of Detroit" movement appears to be the creation of Ramzu Yunus, an American whom Detroit's city attorney has described as a "snake oil salesman". In 2021, city officials [warned](#) Detroit residents that Yunus was pushing a hoax claiming to offer free houses.

Yunus and Michel also serve as co-chairs of the North Atlantic Peace Organization, which claims to be an alternative to the NATO military and security alliance, focused on "Afrodescendants in the United States who are asserting their right of self-determination and citizens of the Russian Federation."



Ramzu Yunus in Russia with members of the Wagner group "Leader".

After Feb 2022, Russia's state media was restricted or banned from most social media platforms. Michel quickly filled the gap with Russosphere, a fake news network spanning most sites and that, according to

Luc, is funded by "private money" and not financed by Russia.

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Russia in Africa: How disinformation operations target the continent

1 February 2023



A photograph showing a group of people, including a man in a military-style uniform, holding up a white banner with red text. The text on the banner reads "Merci WAGNER".

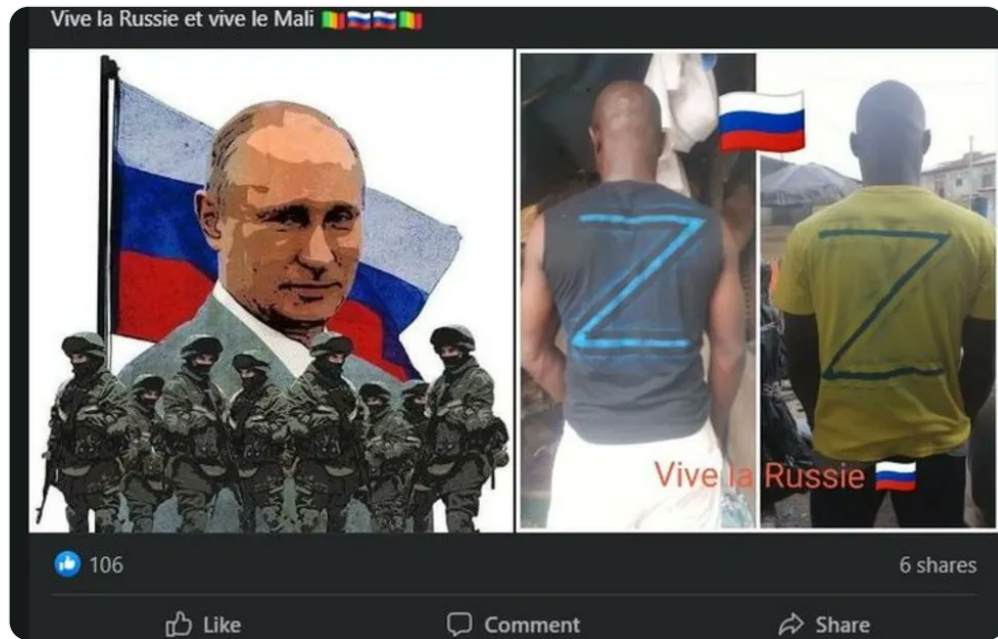
A large social network that promotes anti-Western and pro-Kremlin ideas is helping Russia expand its influence at the expense of France in some of its former colonies in Africa.

Called Russosphère (Russian Sphere), typical posts accuse France of modern-day "colonialism", eulogise Vladimir Putin, and call the Ukrainian army "Nazis" and "Satanists", echoing the official Russian line.

They also heap praise on Russia's Wagner mercenaries - even sharing recruitment information should followers want to join up.

Russosphère is targeted at the French-speaking population in Africa. At the beginning, the network was heavily promoted by paid trolls and bots, but later became an authentic organic influence operation with real followers around Africa.

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The influence of Russosphere shouldn't be underestimated - it has clearly helped Russia in gaining more influence in the region, where it mostly operates via Wagner. Russia has also provenly orchestrated many "anticolonial" demonstrations in Africa:

14/18



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In today's #vatniksoup, I'll introduce an attempt to create a pro-Kremlin fifth column in Ghana, Africa. This attempt was done by two prominent propagandists, @DD_Geopolitics (DDG) and Simeon "AussieCossack" Boikov.

This research was conducted by the Unintelligence Agency.

1/20



10:32 AM · Aug 20, 2023



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Michel's success in Africa can be attributed to his ability to use the local's real grievances towards their former colonizers, namely France, to grow support for Russia. Russian disinformation was also a factor in driving out the French forces in countries like Burkina Faso.

15/18



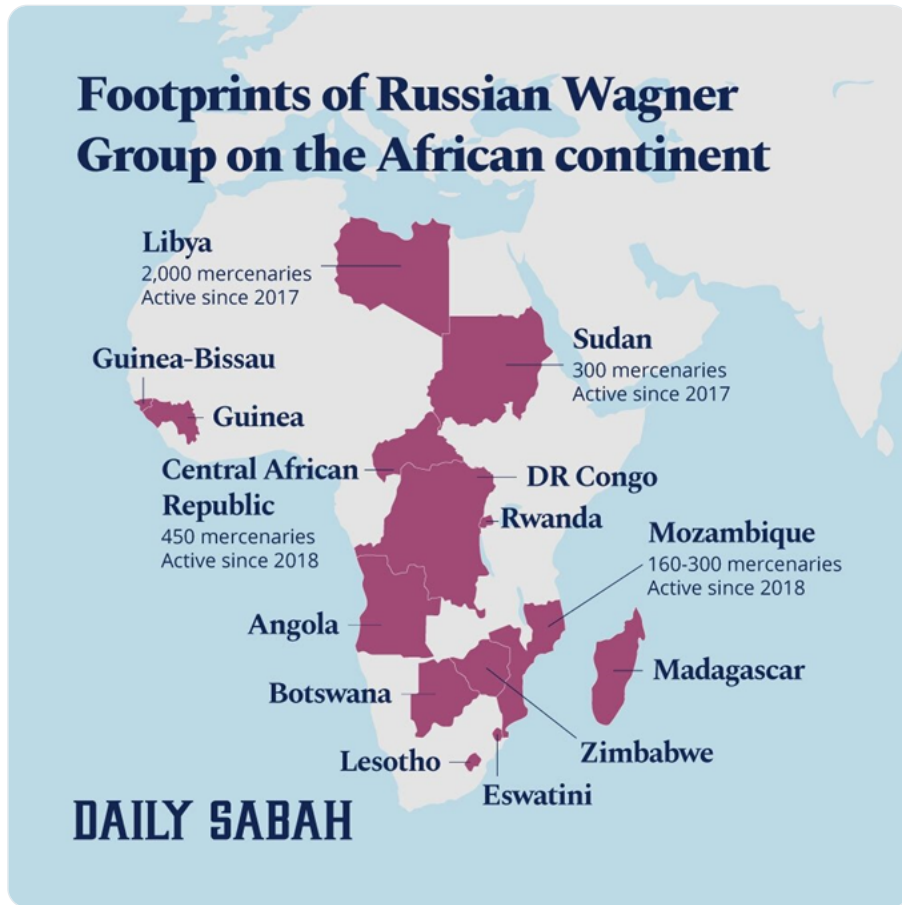
From social media to the streets

It is difficult to assess the impact of specific disinformation campaigns, but in Africa the pro-Russian message is being heard - amplified, say analysts, by local influencers cultivated by Russia.

"The success of people like Luc Michel is because of his opposition to France. It taps into real grievances on the ground," says Kevin Limonier, an associate professor at the University of Paris-8 studying Moscow's information operations in Africa.

"Russian misinformation was a factor helping to drive the French forces out of Sahel countries, especially Burkina Faso," according to Ulf Laessing, from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a centre-right German think tank.

From 2013, some 5,000 French troops had been deployed to fight militant jihadist groups in Mali as well as in Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger and Mauritania. But last year, they pulled out of Mali and are **preparing to leave Burkina Faso**.



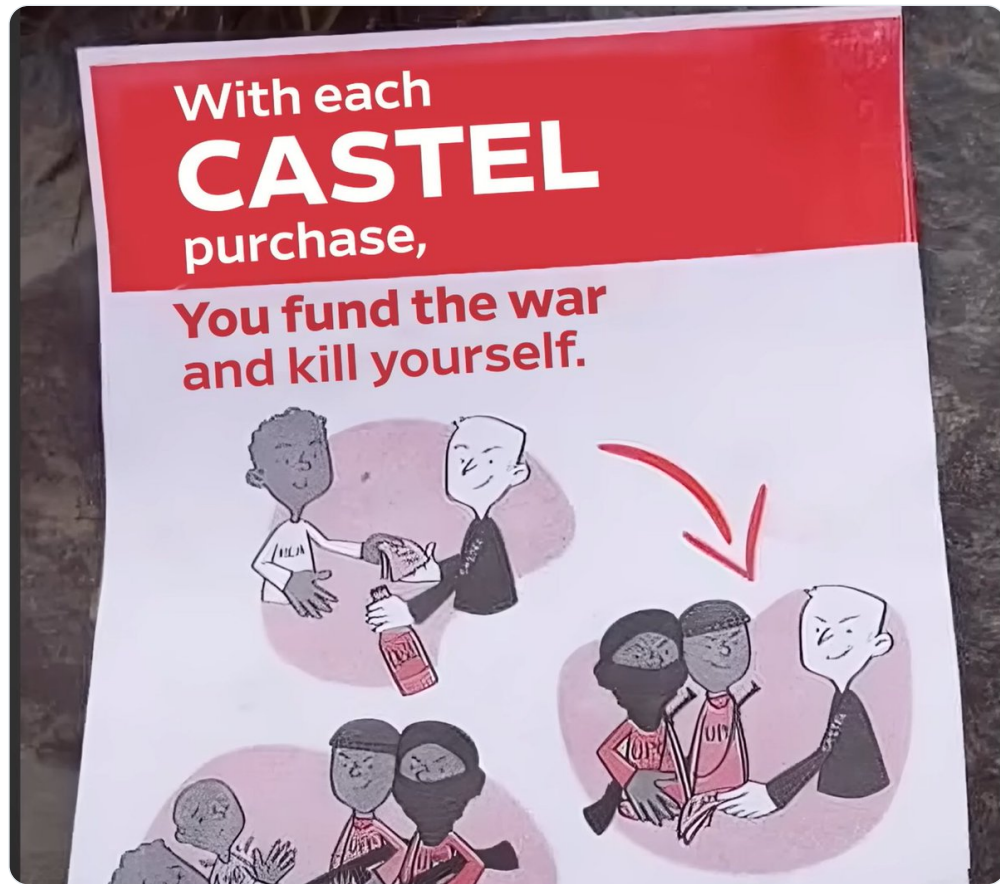
In Sep 2023, WSJ reported that Wagner had vandalized a French brewery, destroying most of their stock. Wagner then started their own brewery that made "Russian beer" Ti L'or, and at the same time started a hate campaign towards the French brewery:

16/18



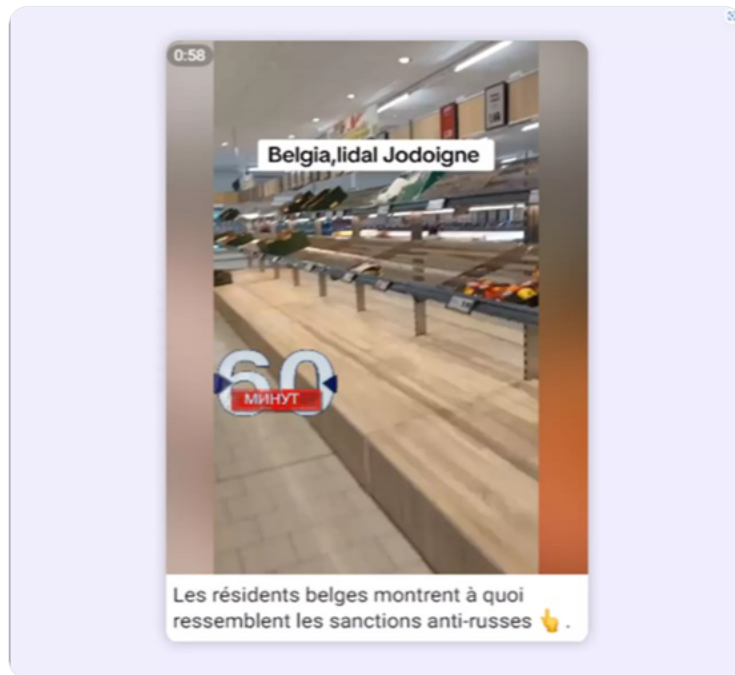
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/LwLbPDvM-c>





Back in Belgium, Luc shared a photo of a Lidl supermarket with empty shelves, claiming it was the result of the sanctions backfiring. Confronted with the facts (it had been a result of logistical problems not sanctions), Michel doubled down claiming it was a "NATO conspiracy".

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Luc Michel is a laughing stock in Europe, but his influence operations and organizations have legitimized Russia's sham referendums and activities to African and fringe Western audiences.

His Russosphere network has also become a popular fake news media outlet in Africa.

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Home / News / Global Europe / EU-Africa / Belgian Stalinist revealed as Russian fake news tsar in Africa

Belgian Stalinist revealed as Russian fake news tsar in Africa

By Benjamin Fox | Euractiv.com Est. 3min Feb 2, 2023

The Sahel region

Luc Michel, a 65 year old self-described 'Stalinist' whose resume includes founding a Belgian version of the National Front, has been revealed as the unlikely source of an elaborate network of fake news websites designed to spread pro-Russian propaganda across Africa. [AFP]

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The Soup Central

The Soup Central gives you in-depth knowledge on disinformation, bad actors and information operations.

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CORRECTION 2/18:

The photos in the post are posters by the French Front de la Jeunesse. Here's some from the Belgian one:



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