

lelibrepenseur.org

A website that frequently publishes false health claims, including anti-vaccine misinformation and misleading claims about the COVID-19 pandemic.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic standards of credibility and transparency.

Score: 5/100

Ownership and Financing

LeLibrePenseur.org does not disclose information about its ownership. The site is registered under the name of Salim Laïbi, a French-Algerian dental surgeon and author, who calls himself Le Libre Penseur — “The Free Thinker” in French.

Laïbi is also the publishing director of Editions Fiat Lux, a Marseille-based publishing house that produces non-fiction books by Laïbi and other authors, including radical anti-colonialist Franco-Beninese activist Kemi Seba and alternative medicine proponent André Gernez.

According to the site’s Legal Notice page, its publishing director is Abdellah Debbache, a journalist based in the Bouira province of Algeria, who writes for the Algerian daily French-language newspaper Liberté.

LeLibrePenseur.org generates revenue from online donations and crowdfunding campaigns.

The site also promotes Fiat Lux books and health supplements sold on Amazon’s French website. It does not run advertising.

- ✗ Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
- ✗ Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
- ✗ Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
- ✗ Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
- ✗ Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
- ✗ Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
- ✗ Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
- ✓ Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
- ✗ The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Content

According to its About page, “Le Libre Penseur” refers to “the freedom to think and analyze what does not fit the numbing, modernist paradigm, and that bans all criticism.” (“La liberté de penser et d’analyser ce qui ne correspond pas au paradigme moderniste ankylosant et interdisant toute critique.”)

Most articles on LeLibrePenseur.org are republished, with credit, from French and international news websites, including FranceInfo and news channel BFMTV. The site often adds its own commentary to the

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

articles. The site also posts political and health content drawn from social media, including YouTube videos produced by Salim Laïbi.

Articles on the site frequently accuse pharmaceutical companies, mainstream political leaders, Jewish groups, and Freemasons of being involved in corrupt conspiracies. Typical headlines have included “How Big Pharma corrupted medical research! By Salim Laïbi” (“Comment Big Pharma a corrompu la recherche médicale ! par Salim Laïbi”); “Coronavirus: Germany or the success of mass screening” (“Coronavirus : l’Allemagne ou le succès du dépistage massif”); and “High school girl threatened for criticizing Islam: Freemasons support” (“Lycéenne menacée pour avoir critiqué l’islam : le soutien des francs-maçons”).

Credibility

Although LeLibrePenseur.org often republishes content from reputable news outlets, including AFP and Ouest France, it also cites sources that NewsGuard has found to be unreliable, including TVLibertes.com and ReseauInternational.net. LeLibrePenseur.org itself regularly publishes false and misleading claims.

For example, an April 2020 article — a French translation of an article that was first published by a U.S. blog called HarvardToTheBigHouse.com — claimed that COVID-19 virus was created in a laboratory. “More and more articles are published all over the world and in prestigious newspapers that demonstrate the COVID-19 virus isn’t at all natural,” the article claimed, “but actually is artificial since it was designed in high-tech laboratories.” (“De plus en plus d’articles sont publiés dans le monde entier et dans des journaux prestigieux qui démontrent que le virus du Covid-19 n’est pas du tout naturel mais bien artificiel puisqu’il a été conçu dans des laboratoires de haute technologie.”)

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus was deliberately created in a lab. A March 2020 study published in the journal Nature Medicine concluded that the virus “is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.” An earlier study, published in

February 2020 in the journal Nature, found that the COVID-19 virus is “96% percent identical at the whole-genome level to a bat coronavirus.”

LeLibrePenseur.org has made numerous false claims regarding vaccine safety. For example, In September 2019, the site published an article translated from the British anti-vaccine website Age of Autism, which claimed that vaccines can cause autism. The article cited a 2017 study published in the Journal of Translational Science, which it said found that “vaccinated children were significantly more likely than the unvaccinated to have been diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disorder: most notably, the risk of being affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was 4.7 fold higher in vaccinated children.” (“Les enfants vaccinés étaient significativement plus susceptibles que les enfants non vaccinés d’avoir reçu un diagnostic de trouble neurodéveloppemental : plus particulièrement, le risque d’être atteint d’un trouble du spectre autistique (TSA) était 4,7 fois plus élevé chez les enfants vaccinés.”)

In fact, the study in question had been published but then was retracted, according to Retraction Watch, which covers retractions in research publications. The research had been funded by two American anti-vaccine groups, Generation Rescue and the Children’s Medical Safety Research Institute, Retraction Watch reported.

Santé Publique France, French’s national public health agency, and many other health and science authorities, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.K. National Health Service and the World Health Organization, have repeatedly stated that there is no link between vaccines and autism, based on an abundance of scientific evidence.

In July 2019, the site published the translation of an article by anti-vaccine site ChangingTimes.media that claimed that Gardasil, the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine that protects against cervical cancer, is responsible for an increase in cervical cancer cases. “In Australia, Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, the incidence of cervical cancer has

increased among young women since HPV vaccination began,” the article stated. “It has never been proved that HPV vaccination has, or ever will, prevent a single case of cancer.”

There is no evidence that the HPV vaccine has resulted in an increase in cervical cancer rates in any country. Numerous government health agencies, including the French National Agency for Medicines and Health Products Safety (Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament et des produits de santé) and the CDC, have stated that the HPV vaccine is safe and effective. This conclusion has been backed by multiple clinical studies.

Because LeLibrePenseur.org has promoted false and unsubstantiated health claims, NewsGuard has determined the site repeatedly publishes false content, fails to gather and present information responsibly, and does not avoid deceptive headlines.

The site does not disclose a political or ideological orientation and does not have a dedicated section for opinion. However, many stories published under the heading “Front Page News” (“À la une”) express opinions.

For example, an April 2020 news article, titled “Macron, the President controlled remotely by pharmaceutical lobbies,” stated that “Big Pharma is more powerful than the Élysée, it’s a fact because members of the government are often its employees or used to be.” (“Macron, le Président téléguidé par les lobbys pharmaceutiques... Big Pharma est plus puissante que l’Élysée, c’est un fait car les membres du gouvernement sont souvent ses salariés ou l’ont été.”)

A September 2019 news article stated that laws that prohibit anti-Semitism “act as a human shield which protects the Israelites from all criticism against them, those Israelites who are leading the Jewish people to its ruin.” (“Cette interdiction de l’antisémitisme agit donc comme un bouclier humain qui protège les israélites de toute critique à leur encontre, ces israélites qui mènent l’ensemble juif à sa perte”).

Because LeLibrePenseur.org often infuses articles in its news section with opinion advancing the site’s undisclosed perspective, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

LeLibrePenseur.org does not articulate a corrections policy, and NewsGuard did not find corrections on the site.

Asked about its editorial standards and practices, LeLibrePenseur.org declined to comment.

Transparency

LeLibrePenseur.org does not disclose its ownership. The Legal Notice page identifies Abdellah Debbache as the site’s publishing director and includes an address in Algeria, along with a contact email.

Many authors on LeLibrePenseur.org write under pseudonyms, such as “Aguelid” and “Bardamu.” The website does not generally provide contact or biographical information for its content creators.

The site publishes articles that promote products such as capsule bottles of vitamin C and zinc, with links to purchase the product on Amazon. Because the site does not disclose that it may get a commission from purchases made through these articles, or label the content as sponsored, NewsGuard has found that the site does not meet the standard for labeling advertising.

LeLibrePenseur.org declined to respond to NewsGuard’s inquiries related to its transparency practices.

History

The site was created in 2010.

Written by: [Sophia Tewa](#)

Edited by: [Eric Effron](#), [Chine Labbe](#), [Yves Clarisse](#)

Send feedback to NewsGuard: [Click Here](#)

Sources

Ownership and Financing

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Credibility

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Transparency

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History

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