A far-right website that often publishes false information, including about the COVID-19 pandemic. The site’s founder, Alain Soral, has been convicted of inciting racial hatred.

Ownership and Financing

EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr belongs to the association Egalité & Réconciliation, based in Saint-Denis, north of Paris. The president of the association is far-right essayist Alain Soral, who was convicted multiple times for making anti-Semitic slurs and for engaging in Holocaust denial in posts and videos on the website.

Egalité & Réconciliation seeks donations and offers memberships. Donations and memberships provide users with access to premium content.

The organization states on its website that its bank account at French bank BNP Paribas was closed in September 2019. “It is an outrageous measure, one more persecution aimed at preventing Alain Soral and E&R,” the site states on its Membership page. (“Il s’agit d’une mesure scandaleuse, une persécution de plus visant à vous empêcher d’aider Alain Soral et E&R”).

In November 2019, Swiss newspaper Le Matin reported that Soral was using a Geneva-based association called Geneva Friends of Tolerance (Les Amis genevois de la tolérance) to receive funds. In an interview published in November 2019 on EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr, Soral said that “I have an apartment in Switzerland to go and write there and escape the odious atmosphere that dominates in France.” However, he did not confirm that Egalité & Réconciliation was now collecting funds through a Geneva-based organization. (“J’ai pris un pied-à-terre en Suisse pour venir y écrire au calme et échapper à la détestable ambiance qui règne en France”).

Soral did not respond to two NewsGuard messages inquiring about the site’s funding.
EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr runs advertising. The site also links to an organic food e-commerce website called Au Bon Sens and to the online library Kontre Kulture. Soral is listed on the library’s website as Kontre Kulture’s collection director (directeur de collection). The site sells books by Soral and others, including Hitler’s Mein Kampf and Goebbels’ The Battle for Berlin (Combat pour Berlin), and the Protocol of the Elders of Zion, a forgery that presents itself as a plan for world conquest by Jews.

Kontre Kulture and Au Bon Sens both belong to a company called Culture pour Tous, registered at the same address as Egalité & Réconciliation. Soral owns 80 percent of the company, according to registration documents.

The website’s mission, stated in its editorial guidelines, is to “bring together the left of work and the right of values … against finance and globalized ultraliberal networks.” (“pour le rassemblement de la gauche du travail et de la droite des valeurs (...) contre les réseaux de la finance et l’ultralibéralisme mondialisé”).

The association calls on nationalists from all countries to unite (“nationalistes de tous les pays, unissons-nous !”) and lobbies for France's exit from the European Union and NATO, among other nationalist policies. The site describes itself as one of the leaders of the “reinformation” movement, a term used by far-right French websites to describe an alternative to the mainstream media.

Most articles on the site are long analyses or opinion articles. Frequent areas of coverage include global finance, “big pharma,” feminism, and Jews and Judaism. The site’s treatment of Israel and the Jewish community in a negative manner has led many media outlets and the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (Crif) to describe the site as anti-Semitic.

For example, a March 2020 article argued that “the problem is the complete domination of the Zionist cultural lobby on French cinema.” (“le problème c'est la
domination sans partage du lobby culturel sioniste dans le cinéma français”). A February 2020 article stated that “The Auschwitz Memorial has become a satellite of the World Censorship. If there is something that it doesn’t like in the world, the Memorial thumps the table, and you need to change that thing otherwise you can be sure to be socially put aside, or go to jail. Shiver goyim! (a word used to refer to non-Jews).” (“Le Mémorial d’Auschwitz est devenu une antenne de la Censure mondiale. S’il y a un truc qui ne lui plaît pas dans le monde, le Mémorial tape du poing sur la table, et il faut vite changer le truc sinon c’est la mise à l’écart sociale, voire la prison. Tremblez, goyim !”).

Typical articles on the site have run under headlines including “Confinement: E&R demands an investigation to be opened against Macron and his government” (“Confinement : E&R exige l’ouverture d’une enquête contre Macron et son gouvernement”); “He better shut his mouth! : the pedophile Cohn-Bendit insults the professor Raoult” (“’Qu’il ferme sa gueule!’ : le pédophile Cohn-Bendit injurie le Professeur Raoult”); and “From Big Pharma to pharma bug” (“Du Big Pharma au bug pharma”).

Website users can also access an online radio station called ERFM, another outlet that says that it provides “reinformation.”

EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr publishes a mix of original videos and text articles and publishes excerpts of articles from other sites, including sites that NewsGuard has found to be unreliable, including the Russian-owned outlets Francais.RT.com and Fr.Sputniknews.com and Mondialisation.ca, the French-language version of GlobalResearch.ca. Sources are usually listed at the beginning of the article, with a link to the full story at the end.

EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr often publishes false claims and conspiracy theories, including about the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.
For example, in March 2020, the website re-published an article from Mondialisation.ca titled “Coronavirus - Evidence that the Covid-19 might have originated in the United States.” (“Coronavirus – Des preuves que le Covid-19 trouverait son origine aux États-Unis”). The article stated that “Japanese and Taiwanese epidemiologists and pharmacists have determined that the new coronavirus almost certainly originated in the United States, given that this country is the only one to have all five typical pathogens” found in the virus. “It is therefore likely that the original source of the COVID-19 was the biowar lab in Fort Detrick, [Maryland].” (“Des épidémiologistes et pharmaciens japonais et taïwanais ont déterminé que le nouveau coronavirus trouve presque certainement son origine aux États-Unis, étant donné que ce pays est le seul à disposer de tous les cinq pathogènes types” -- “Il est donc vraisemblable que la source originale du virus du COVID-19 soit le laboratoire de guerre biologique de Fort Detrick”).

There is no evidence to back the claim that the new strain of coronavirus came from a lab or is a bioweapon. 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.”

Research at a military germ lab in Fort Detrick, Maryland, did involve dangerous microbes and was suspended in August 2019 because the center did not have “sufficient systems in place to decontaminate wastewater,” The New York Times reported at the time. There were no leaks of dangerous materials, a lab spokeswoman told The New York Times, and there is no evidence the lab’s work involved the coronavirus.

In February 2020, EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr published an article titled “Piracy everywhere and pandemic for all” (“Piraterie à tous les étages et pandémie pour tous”), drawn from a website called Geopolintel.fr. According to the article, “the crisis originated less in a miserable animal market in Wuhan … than in an
ordinary act of piracy … possibly perpetrated, in the summer of 2019, by a couple of Chinese scientists who might have stolen coronavirus strains” in a laboratory in Winnipeg, Canada. (“la crise trouve son origine moins sur un sordide marché d’animaux de la ville de Wuhan (…) que dans un acte de piraterie ordinaire… perpétré possiblement (…) durant l’été 2019 par un couple de chercheurs chinois (…) qui auraient volé des souches de coronavirus”).

The site did not provide any evidence backing this claim, although it noted that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation denied the story. CBC, PolitiFact, and FactCheck.org all reported that there is no evidence that the new coronavirus was stolen by Chinese spies from a lab in Winnipeg. Two Chinese scientists were indeed escorted from the lab in July 2019. However, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) told the CBC that they were asked to leave due to an investigation of what it described as a “policy breach” and “administrative matter,” and was not connected to the coronavirus outbreak. “This is misinformation and there is no factual basis for claims being made on social media,” PHAC spokesperson Eric Morrissette told the CBC in January 2020.

In November 2019, the website republished an article from the French version of Russian propaganda outlet Sputnik titled “Wikileaks confirms that the ‘chemical attack’ in Douma described in the OPCW [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons] report was a scam” (“Wikileaks confirme l’arnaque du rapport de l’OIAC sur l’'attaque chimique’ à Douma”). The article claimed that leaked internal emails from the OPCW mission proved that the organization doctored its report concluding that a chemical attack was carried out in Douma by Syrian government forces.

This claim contradicts a large body of evidence assembled since the attack by, among others, the Syrian civil defense group White Helmets and the Syrian-American Medical Society. Multiple press reports, including by the BBC and The New York Times, have pointed to evidence linking chemical attacks to the Syrian government.
As for the OPCW, its final report addressed all the points raised in the leaked email, the fact-checking platform EU vs Disinfo reported. According to the investigative journalism platform BellingCat, “The letter refers to a ‘redacted report’ that was either not published or was heavily updated before it became the final version of the report. The issues raised in the letter appear to have either been addressed with further work and research, or changed to reflect the concerns of the employee who wrote the letter.”

Because EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr has often published unsubstantiated or disproven conspiracy theories, NewsGuard has determined that the website repeatedly publishes false information, does not gather and present information responsibly, and fails to avoid deceptive headlines.

The website does not articulate a corrections policy, and NewsGuard found only two recent corrections on the site, from 2018. Moreover, many false stories remain uncorrected, which is why NewsGuard has determined that EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr does not meet its standard for regularly publishing corrections.

Most content on EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr is opinionated and consistent with the site’s disclosed agenda. Therefore, NewsGuard has determined that the site meets its standard for handling the difference between news and opinions responsibly.

Soral did not respond to two NewsGuard messages sent via the website requesting comment on the site’s editorial standards, the articles cited above, and the site’s approach to corrections.

The website’s legal notice states that the site belongs to the association Egalité & Réconciliation, and an organizational chart on the site indicates that Alain Soral is the president of the association. However, the site does not provide any information about its donors, which does not meet NewsGuard’s standard for nonprofits’ and NGOs’ disclosure of ownership and financing.
The legal notice identifies the site’s publishing director. The organizational chart only gives the first name — Pierre — of its editor-in-chief, although according to his biography on the online library Kontre Kulture, his full name is Pierre de Brague. Because EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr identifies its publishing director, the site meets NewsGuard’s standard for disclosing editorial leaders.

The organization chart and the legal notice provide a postal address, and a contact page provides an online form to reach the newsroom. The site also provides forms to contact the publishing director and the association’s secretary.

Some articles include the name of the writer, and bylines sometimes link to an online form to contact the writer. However, the website is inconsistent in this practice, and many articles are not credited to a writer — which is why NewsGuard has determined that the site does not meet its criteria for giving information about content creators.

Advertising is distinguished from editorial content.

Soral did not respond to two NewsGuard messages requesting comment on the lack of information on its financing and content creators.

History

Egalite Et Réconciliation was created in 2007 by far-right essayist and author Alain Soral. When he created the organization, Soral said he aimed to “create a sacred union between the patriotic left and the anti-finance right.”

Before joining far-right parties and movements, Soral was active in far-left politics. In a 2007 speech titled “From communism to nationalism, itinerary of a French intellectual” (“Du communisme au nationalisme, Itinéraire d’un intellectuel français”), Soral explained how he moved from the French communist party to Jean-Marie Le Pen’s far-right National Front in 2002, when Le Pen made it to the second round of the presidential election. This evolution, he wrote, “matched my consistent belief and my long-standing commitments, namely: the defense, by all means, of the
people of France, of brave and little people.” (“C’est lors de cette élection à deux tours que se produira... mais mon passage logique du PCF au FN, puisque celui-ci correspond (...) à une constante dans les convictions et les engagements qui ont toujours été les miens, à savoir : la défense, par tous les moyens, du peuple de France, des braves gens et des petites gens”).

In 2009, Soral distanced himself from the National Front and got closer to the controversial humorist Dieudonne, with whom he led an unsuccessful “anti-Zionist” electoral list at the 2009 European elections.

Dieudonne, whose videos are often published on the website, was convicted several times for inciting racial hatred. Dieudonne invented the “quenelle,” a hand gesture that involves an arm stretched towards the floor and the other arm grabbing the shoulder, which is seen by many as reminiscent of the Nazi salute.

Soral was also convicted many times for making anti-Semitic slurs and inciting racial hatred. A page on EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr lists all the ongoing trials involving him and his association. “To this day, Alain Soral was convicted to a total of jail time of: 6 years, 3 months and 10 days,” the page stated in March 2020. (“A ce jour Alain Soral a été condamné à un emprisonnement correctionnel d’une durée de 6 années, 3 mois et 10 jours”).

Most recently, in October 2019, the Paris criminal court sentenced Soral to one year in jail a for a 2018 video describing the Pantheon, the Paris monument where the country’s “great men” are buried, to a “kosher centre for waste” (“déchetterie casher”). He made the comment after Simone Veil, a Holocaust survivor and former Health Minister, was buried there. The Paris criminal court condemned what it called Soral’s “obsessive and persisting hatred” of Jews (“haine obsessionnelle persistante”), the AFP reported. In March 2020, Soral’s appeal of the ruling was pending.

In late 2017, EgaliteEtReconciliation’s Facebook page was shut down by the social network for violating its general terms of use, and in June 2018, the site’s YouTube channel was temporarily suspended. In July 2020, the channel, which said it had over 185,000
subscribers, was taken down by YouTube for what YouTube called “severe or repeated violations of YouTube’s rules forbidding the use of content inciting hatred.” (“manquements graves ou répétés aux règles de YouTube interdisant l'usage de contenu incitant à la haine”). The YouTube channel of Kontre Kulture, an online library for which Soral is listed as collection director, was also closed in July 2020. Soral will not be allowed to create a new channel on the platform, Google France said, Le Monde and 20 Minutes reported.

Following these announcements, Egalite et Reconciliation published an article in July 2020, stating: “This censorship must be seen as an opportunity: that of slowly bringing people away from the giant platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc), towards alternative free and non-commercial solutions, where there is no censorship.” The article added that videos from ERTV would remain available on a platform called Ibry.tv. (“Cette censure doit être vue comme une chance, celle de faire basculer tout doucement le public des plateformes géantes (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc.) vers des solutions alternatives libres et non commerciales dans lesquelles la censure n'opère pas”).

*Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on July 8, 2020.*

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