

Julian Assange

How the state kills the truth



What did Julian Assange do and why?

- 2006: creation of the online platform WIKILEAKS, to publish classified documents, concerning different states and companies.
- «Intelligence agencies keep things secret because they often violate the rule of law or of good behavior».
- «Wikileaks is a mechanism to maximize the flow of information to maximize the amount of action leading to just reform».

How does WIKILEAKS work?

- WIKILEAKS works as publisher, which aims to diffuse («leak») classified documents of relevant public interest.
- WIKILEAKS receives the documents mainly by sources that are directly involved in the army or government or intelligence agency («whistleblowers») and who **spontaneously** decide to reveal violations of civil and human rights.
- WIKILEAKS puts the documents under careful examination and selects what is to be published, not to put anyone's life at risk.
- WIKILEAKS transfers the documents to selected journalists so that they can verify them and provide accurate news.

In which way WIKILEAKS is anarchist?

- WIKILEAKS= state-less organization
- Multiple servers in unknown locations
- Website constantly «mirrored» (=replicated)
- Cryptography (=system of protection of the documents) as warranty of the anonymity of the sources
- Anonymity of the members of WIKILEAKS except the founder and the spokesperson
- Aim to reveal the way in which states, governments, companies really operate

What did WIKILEAKS publish?

- 2007 Guantanamo's operating manual: intimidating techniques
- 2009 Oil trading company Trafigura's report: toxic waste
- 2010 Video «Collateral murder»: fire on civilians in Baghdad
- 2010 CIA's memorandum: techniques of persuasion on European society
- 2010 Afghan war logs: killing of civilians in Afghanistan
- 2010 Iraq war logs: torture in Abu Ghraib prison
- 2010 US diplomacy's correspondence: CIA spying on UN general secretary
- 2011 Prisoners' files at Guantanamo: detention and torture of innocents
- 2017 VAULT 7: CIA cyber-guns reaching private spaces around the world
-and much more

How did the US governments destroy WIKILEAKS?

- Cutting bank and social accounts
- Hacking WIKILEAKS' website
- Discovering the identity of the sources and persecuting them (see: Chelsea Manning)
- Destroying Julian Assange

How did they destroy Julian Assange?

- Strategy aimed at **creating a controversial image** of Assange, in order to cut off the empathy and support of the public opinion. Pressure on the media to deliver this image (narcissist, irresponsible, unsatisfied, etc.) and spread fake news about him.
- Strategy aimed at **accusing and incriminating** Julian Assange. Pressure on the courts inside and outside the USA (Sweden, UK) to prosecute him for, among others: minor rape, terrorism, espionage.

What is this case all about?

- It's about the fight between authoritarianism and the freedom of the press, which has always been considered by western society as one of the pillars of democracy.
- USA and its partners are prosecuting Assange and his sources with all the possible means in order to send a clear message: "don't you dare revealing in public the truth about our misdeeds and our wars".

Violations of civil rights

According to the “US Freedom of information act” (1966):

- Documents and evidences published by journalists and proving crimes cannot be censored, even if the crime is committed by the state.
- A journalist cannot be accused of publishing the truth.
- A journalist cannot be accused of using anonymous sources.

What has Assange already paid?

- over 9 years under the accuse of minor rape, with **no interrogation and no process** (2010-2020)
- **2 years home arrest** in England (2010-2012)
- **7 years as «political refugee» in the embassy** of Ecuador in London (2012-2019), in 20 square metres, without ever going out, under 24 hours surveillance by the English police and the American intelligence (illegal).
- **4 years of isolation** at the maximum-security prison of Belmarsh, England, also called «The British Guantanamo» (2019-present)

Violation of human rights

- The **UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention** considered that:
 - 2015: “Assange is arbitrarily detained by the governments of Sweden and the UK”.
 - 2019: “The treatment imposed to Assange contravenes the principles of necessity and proportionality envisaged by the human rights standards”
- Nils Melzer, **UN Special Rapporteur on Torture**, denounced constant psychological torture and spoke of **political persecution**.

What does Assange risk now?

- **Extradition to the US**, where he is accused of 17 different crimes including terrorism and espionage; the final verdict of the British Court is expected soon.
- Arrest and imprisonment in a maximal security prison for up to **175 years**.
- 500.000 signatures against his extradition have been collected by **Amnesty International**, as he “faces a high risk of prolonged solitary confinement, which constitutes a violation of human rights”.

Why is this case so important for all of us?

- **Censorship** has been applied within the «democratic world», where every constitution guarantees the freedom of the press, so that the citizens know about the operation of their governments.
- States, in cooperation among them, have used **legal and illegal ways** to destroy an organization and discredit a person who was revealing the truth in the interest of the public.
- Civil and human rights have been violated **within the European Union**, and no government has risen any question.
- An Australian citizen is kept in prison in Europe to please the will of the USA government. This is a **dangerous precedent** of global persecution within the western world, which aims at discouraging activism.

Further references

- Nils Melzer, *The trial of Julian Assange: a story of persecution*, Verso, UK, 2022.
- Stefania Maurizi, *Secret power: Wikileaks and its enemies*, Pluto Press, UK, 2022.
- www.wikileaks.org
- www.assangedefense.org
- www.assangecampaign.org.au
- www.amnesty.org



“If wars can be
started by lies,
peace can be
started by truth”

Julian Assange

Presentation by
Luisa de Bellis

Comitato per la liberazione di
Julian Assange - Italia