

## Freedom of the Press is Dead Worldwide

Mathias Broeckers 2019-04-22 08:34

**CIA Director Pompeo claims Wikileaks is a "hostile secret service" and Julian Assange is not a journalist. Wikileaks embodies what a free press should do as the fourth branch - control power. Democracy cannot function without watchdogs. Watchdogs and whistle-blowers must be under special protection.**

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IS DEAD WORLDWIDE

WHEN UNPLEASANT JOURNALISTS CAN BE SIMPLY REDEFINED AS AN "UNFREINDLY SECRET SERVICE"

A Commentary by Mathias Broeckers

[This commentary published on 4/16/2019 is translated from the German on the Internet, <https://kenfm.de>.]

What are "The New York Times," "Guardian," and "Spiegel" really doing? Since their informant Julian Assange was arrested, the servers of his Wikileaks platform have been disconnected and the bank and credit card accounts blocked, - a medium, an organ of the press is stripped of its financial and journalistic means while the Big Media that profited with Wikileaks information say nothing!?

"Freedom of the press," "human rights" and "democracy" are often proclaimed with strong words when the "axis of evil" is decried... Public and political pressure is built up... But the heralds of freedom of the press now hardly respond to Wikileaks. The owner of the New York Times personally protested that the "Guardian" mobilized the British public against the scandalous arrest or that Spiegel threatens to cancel his Visa- and Master card accounts... The illustrious essayists of the "free press" may not object to the future suppression of Wikileaks. While Julian Assange was an important "source" for NYT and Spiegel & Co. for years, there is suddenly no talk about the constitutional rights of the press...The eloquent essayists of our "quality media" only use the word "censorship" when this happens in China or Iran.

While one of the obligations of the media as the "fourth pillar" of the constitution is providing information is as old as the whole newspaper trade, this is not self-evident today. In the past, Wikileaks supplied information like every other press organ, scrutinized the authenticity of the information and published it. Wikileaks sought to make information publically accessible in the public domain and not to carry on a business.

The following commentary by Julian Assange from December 13, 2010 is more burning than ever after the new arrest of the Wikileaks founder. The baseness of the leading media shrugging its shoulders has become more repulsive and disgusting in the last ten years. In a progress report from 2017, I wrote:

"CIA Director Pompeo claims Wikileaks is an "hostile secret service" and not a medium and Julian Assange is not a journalist to defuse the reproach that the authorities violated the constitutional principle of freedom of the press. Wikileaks is not under the control of a media corporation and embodies what a free press should do as a fourth branch – control power. This indispensable function as a democratic watchdog is the reason why press freedom is an essential asset of all constitutional states. Democracy cannot function without watchdogs, monitors and whistleblowers and these are under special protection, not because the lapdogs, sycophants, boot-lickers, press-titutes and scribes were worth protecting. Press freedom is definitively dead when unpleasant journalists can be simply redefined into an "hostile secret service."

We witness a funeral procession that can now strike any journalist who uncovers the crimes of the empire with the kidnapping of Julian Assange from his asylum which a corrupt president declared nothing after the empire granted him a credit of \$4.2 billion.

Last weekend, the philosopher Slavoj Zizek wrote: "Assange has described himself as a spy of the public. He spies on the powerful in the commission of humanity and does not spy on humankind in the mandate of the powerful. Therefore, only we the people can help him. It is up to us to exert pressure. We can mobilize to relieve his predicament.

Wikileaks is only the beginning. Our motto should be a Maoist motto: Let a hundred Wikileaks blossom. The panic and rage with which our rulers and those who administer our digital commons have reacted to Assange is evidence or proof that he and his actions struck a nerve. In this struggle, he was hit by several blows below the belt. Our side is accused of

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collaborating with the enemy (as Assange is assumed to work in Putin's commission). We should get used to this and learn to strike back just as hard, to mercilessly play off one side against the other with the goal of shooting down everyone."

Julian Assange forces the empire to let the crumbling façade of democracy, freedom and human rights fall and to show the bloody claws of colonial, imperial power. Everything must be done so Julian Assange is not handed over to them.

Mathias Broeckers wrote "Newton's Ghost and Goethe's Polaroid – On Nature" and with Paul Schreyer "We are the Good – Views of a Putin Admirer." He blogs at broeckers.com.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ON THE ARREST OF JULIAN ASSANGE

[These letters published on April 14, 2019 are translated from the German on the Internet, [www.nachdenkseiten.de](http://www.nachdenkseiten.de).]

These articles appeared on the Nachdenkseiten website after Julian Assange's arrest on Thursday in London: "Julian Assange arrested by British police. Hello, Amnesty, where are you?", "Special on the Arrest of Julian Assange," and "Julian Assange. Used, fought and buried by the media." The normal media suddenly rediscover their interest in Julian and report about his cat or the condition of his bathroom. The Nachdenkseiten readers who wrote us have important things to say. The revelations of Wikileaks concern all of us.

We cannot abandon or desert persons of the Enlightenment. We should show international solidarity with Julian Assange.  
Jurgen Karsten

How outrageous that someone who makes the war horrors of passive murderers and war-mongers accessible to the public could spend his whole life behind bars if Assange is handed over to the US. Volker Kamp

A dark day for human rights and freedom of the press! Ulrike Simon

Dear Friends of Amnesty, I am shocked and appalled about Julian Assange's arrest. The condemnation by British justice occurred incredibly fast. The charge from the US of conspiracy with Chelsea Manning could enable British authorities to hand over Assange. The danger is that he could be accused later in the US of espionage or spying and sentenced to death.

We all owe very much to Julian Assange. The world public became aware of many human rights violations through the courageous publication of the war crimes of the US and many other disclosures on corruption, injustice and violence and could set the right "mental course" for changes. That he helped Edward Snowden to flee in a very skilful way is not forgotten. Many noted media have their sources in the publications of Wikileaks.

I urge you: Support Julian Assange! Do everything that he will be treated as a journalist and not criminalized!

I experienced the DDR (East Germany) as a child and youth. For us, Amnesty International was a new hope, an organization that champions active engagement in favor of the persecuted and those who bring about peaceful changes for more democracy, freedom and equality. In the fall of 1989, I was very active in this sense. Therefore, I turn to you. Do not be intimidated by reproaches of nearness to Russia or the like. Do not make yourself into a plaything of geo-political power interests of any kind. Use your power as Amnesty International. Show your courage!

Julian Assange has long deserved the Nobel Prize for Peace, police protection and a "good life" like all of us. AB

Thanks for the competent analysis by Jens Berger on the international reporting in the case of Assange. The reporting of the "quality media" is outrageous which is hardly surprising. Again and again, they cite the "dirty bathroom" as the reason for booting Assange from the Ecuadorian embassy. Hartmut Niemann

The arrest of Julian Assange teaches us again that the decent and upright in this world have no chance and those who go too far are put to a test... News reporting should not join in the malicious choir of the mainstream press... Byorn Ehrlich and G. Rittmann

<http://nyc.indymedia.org/en/2019/04/127621.shtml>