

IN DEFENSE OF JULIAN ASSANGE

**EDITED BY TARIQ ALI AND
MARGARET KUNSTLER**



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If there is one takeaway from these shared experiences in truth-telling and courage, it is a note of extreme caution: never doubt the mendacity and cruelty of the state. It will make pariahs and outcasts out of those who will someday be recognized as heroes.

—Michael Ratner (1943-2016)

EXCERPT

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Excerpt

INTRODUCTION

I am unbroken, albeit literally surrounded by murderers, but the days when I could read and speak and organize to defend myself, my ideals and my people are over until I am free! Everyone else must take my place.

I am defenceless and am counting on you and others of good character to save my life . . . Truth, ultimately, is all we have.

—Julian Assange, in a letter to Gordon Dimmack from highly restrictive confinement in Belmarsh Prison, London, 13 May 2019.

“History,” Friedrich Engels once wrote, “is made in such a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, of which each in turn has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant—the historical event.”¹

Let’s start at the beginning. The birth of WikiLeaks in 2006 came just three years after the Iraq War was unleashed by the American Empire using 9/11 as the pretext. This brutal assertion of US military power to overthrow

¹ Letter to J. Bloch, London, September 21, 1890.

disfavored regimes took place despite some of the largest protests in world history. Millions marched in North America and Western Europe to try and stop the war, but to no avail. Other wars followed and the liberal media beat the war drums for them too. Fake news was manufactured with ease and often one got the feeling that foreign coverage in Euro-America was little more than the reprinting (sometimes without editing) of the same State Department handouts. TV networks that occasionally offered space to critics of the empire were brought under firm control.

As the new wave of imperial wars became normal, the media, which in a flurry of misleading, half-baked news and images loyally provided justifications at the start of each war, quickly lost interest. “It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils,” D. H. Lawrence once wrote, “that really determines our lives.” Events in far-away countries no longer intrigued a majority of the public that, hurrying onward with the current, felt no concern in what was and is really going on in Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Palestine, or Syria. The top-down Islamophobia has been effective.

There is, however, a more fundamental shift taking place in the Western world. There is a growing disconnect between the political structure of the American imperial state, and its various satrapies and protectorates in Europe on the one hand, and the social, economic, and political realities of the twenty-first-century world on the other. The fact is that the financial oligarchic system that typifies the West and its global protector requires very little democracy. That is why, when opposition erupts, it’s defined as “populist” and anti-democratic. The less democracy the better for many of our rulers. After all, the most dynamic capitalism today (China) is governed by a single-party state. The West doesn’t have to go quite as far as this, but the model is appealing to many billionaires. The bulk of mainstream media is an essential pillar of the new order.

It was these intersecting currents that produced WikiLeaks. “Publish and be damned”: the Duke of Wellington’s famous words were

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the motto of a few newspaper editors in the last century. WikiLeaks did precisely this and Private Chelsea Manning, a cyber expert in the intelligence wing of the US military, put her life at risk by leaking secret documents that detailed atrocities and tortures (still ongoing) from her post in Iraq to Julian Assange and his WikiLeaks colleagues. It was this that made the outfit world famous and much admired. The liberal papers in the West published extracts from WikiLeaks and, later, Snowden. But they soon retreated as the pressure from the secret state became intense.

Manning was arrested, Snowden was forced to seek asylum and refuge in Putin's Russia, and Assange was subjected to a slanderous campaign to discredit his character. In addition, in Sweden, he was accused of sexual assault and misconduct by two women he had stayed with, which he has always strenuously denied. Swedish prosecutors (both women) fell out on the subject—the chief prosecutor of Stockholm dropped the case, but it was reopened later by another prosecutor. Many believed this was a ploy to lock him up so the US could extradite him. He remained in Sweden for the duration of the initial investigation, and then, when given permission to leave the country, went to Britain to work on the Iraq War Logs release. In November 2010, Sweden issued an international arrest warrant to question Assange—in circumstances where he was offering his testimony anyway. Assange voluntarily presented himself to the UK police that December. After a week in jail, Assange was put under house arrest, taking up residence in the Norfolk countryside. He said that he would voluntarily return to Sweden if the government there guaranteed he would not be delivered to the Americans. The Swedish government declined to give such a reassurance, saying it was a matter for their courts, not a political decision. The UK Supreme Court finally ruled in favor of his extradition to Sweden in May 2012, prompting Assange to seek asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy, which he entered, in disguise, in June 2012.

While Rafael Correa was president, the Ecuadorian embassy felt like liberated territory. Though the cramped space, lack of sunlight and access to health care, as well as various threats to his life and work by a number of people, including governmental representatives in the US, were ever present challenges, Assange was given unlimited access to the Internet and freedom to receive visitors. He got along well with embassy staff. Not to gloss over some disputes, such as Ecuador cutting off Assange's Internet in October 2016 over fears of his alleged interference in the US presidential election, this relatively benign treatment came to an end with the election in 2017 of Correa's successor. Lenín Moreno, despite his name and appearance on a left ticket, capitulated on every level to pressure from the American Empire. The embassy became a prison: Assange's Internet access and visitations were severely restricted, surveillance intensified, and his health rapidly deteriorated. He was in no doubt that Moreno had been asked and had agreed to expel him from the embassy.

The US demand for extradition was no longer a secret by November 2018 when, to the embarrassment of prosecutors, hidden charges against Assange came to light in an unrelated court filing. On April 11, 2019, with permission from the Ecuadorian government, British police entered the embassy and dragged out Assange. He was immediately served with a provisional US extradition request for prosecution for his work with WikiLeaks—the very reason for which he was granted asylum in the first place and about which he had warned since 2010. He was convicted for breaking bail and sent to Belmarsh, a high-security prison in southeast London while the US perfected its extradition request. That same day, programmer and data privacy activist Ola Bini, a friend of Assange's, was arrested in Quito, Ecuador without charges for allegedly hacking the Ecuadorian government. Held for 70 days in what he described as “inhumane conditions,” Bini was released on June 20, but at this writing, he is not permitted to leave the country. One need not overspeculate why Bini was targeted.

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The superseding indictment announced in late May 2019 against Assange includes numerous charges under the Espionage Act. He now faces 175 years in prison if extradited to the US. If we lived in a world where laws were respected, Assange's charge of failing to attend a bail hearing (a minor offense) would have resulted in a fine or a short prison sentence followed by release and a return to his native Australia. But both the UK and Australia are, effectively, viceroys that will generally bow deeply to US demands. The secret and not-so-secret state in both countries work closely with (or under) their US masters. Why do the Americans want Assange so badly? To set an example. To incarcerate and isolate him as a warning to others not to follow the WikiLeaks path. After being pardoned by Obama following seven years of imprisonment and significant mistreatment in American military prisons, Chelsea Manning was re-arrested and temporarily thrown into solitary confinement once more because she refused to testify before the grand jury that indicted Assange. Released after two months, Manning again refused to cooperate with the second grand jury and, at the time of writing, is back in jail after just a week of freedom. Since the Russian and Chinese intelligence agencies are pretty much aware of what the US is up to in most parts of the world, the threat posed by WikiLeaks was that it made its information available to any citizen globally who possessed a computer. American/European foreign policy and its post-9/11 wars have been based on lies, promoted by global TV and media networks, and often accepted by a majority of the North American and European population. Information contradicting these lies challenges the stated motives for war—human rights, democracy, freedom, etc.

WikiLeaks has been exposing all this by publishing classified documents that shine a light on the real reasons behind military interventions. It is an astonishing record. Since its inception WikiLeaks has published more than 2 million diplomatic cables and other US State Department records, which if printed, the WikiLeaks cofounder has stated, would

amount to some 30,000 volumes. It truly “represents something new in the world.” This is where the Internet becomes a subversive force, challenging the propaganda networks of the existing order. Assange and his colleagues made no secret of the fact that their principal subject of publication was the American Empire and its global operations. The response of US institutions has been hysterical and sometimes comical. The Library of Congress restricted Internet access to WikiLeaks. The US National Archives even blocked searches of its own database for the phrase “WikiLeaks.” So absurd did the taboo become that, like a dog snapping mindlessly at everything, eventually it found its mark—its own tail. As Julian Assange pointed out: “By March 2012, the Pentagon had gone so far as to create an automatic filter to block any emails, including inbound emails to the Pentagon, containing the word ‘WikiLeaks.’” As a result, Pentagon prosecutors preparing the case against US intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning found that they were not receiving important emails from either the judge or the defense.

The British government is insisting that it will follow the law. We shall see. Diane Abbott, the shadow home secretary and a leading member of Jeremy Corbyn’s shadow cabinet, said in Parliament on the day of Assange’s arrest:

On this side of the house, we want to make the point that the reason we are debating Julian Assange this afternoon—even though the only charge he may face in this country is in relation to his bail hearings—is entirely to do with the whistleblowing activities of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. It is this whistleblowing activity into illegal wars, mass murder, murder of civilians, and corruption on a grand scale that has put Julian Assange in the crosshairs of the US administration. It is for this reason that they have once more issued an extradition warrant against Julian Assange . . .

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Julian Assange is not being pursued to protect US national security, he is being pursued because he has exposed wrongdoing by US administrations and their military forces.

In January 2018, three doctors performed an intensive psychological and physical examination of Assange, then still in the Ecuadorian embassy, and determined “that his continued confinement is dangerous physically and mentally to him, and a clear infringement of his human right to healthcare.” After his May 2019 visit to Belmarsh Prison, the UN special rapporteur on torture, Nils Melzer, reported that Assange “has been deliberately exposed, for a period of several years, to progressively severe forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the cumulative effects of which can only be described as psychological torture.” Melzer continued:

In 20 years of work with victims of war, violence and political persecution I have never seen a group of democratic States ganging up to deliberately isolate, demonize and abuse a single individual for such a long time and with so little regard for human dignity and the rule of law ... The collective persecution of Julian Assange must end here and now!

On May 30, Assange was moved to the hospital wing in Belmarsh for treatment of drastic weight loss and other problems with his physical and mental health. Unable to engage in a normal conversation, he could not appear via video link to the Westminster Magistrate Court for his initial extradition hearing, which will now take place in February 2020. In this fragile condition, Assange now waits for the courts to decide on his extradition to the United States, as UK home secretary Sajid Javid has already given the request his thumbs-up. If the court rules in favor of it, Assange

could then appeal to the High Court, and from the High Court to the Supreme Court, where the tides of his fate end.

Amnesty International has decided that it will not adopt Assange as a prisoner of conscience. If anyone fits the bill it's him, but the fact that it's the US, Britain, and Australia nexus that must be confronted worries the bureaucrats who head Amnesty. Might their money be cut off and bank accounts frozen? Whatever the reason, it's a disgrace.

On a more optimistic note, in late July the DNC's lawsuit brought against WikiLeaks, Assange, the Russian government, and the Trump campaign on April 20, 2018 was officially thrown out. Rejecting the DNC's contention that Assange and WikiLeaks illegally "furthered the prospects" of the Trump campaign by publishing and disseminating allegedly Russia-stolen materials, Judge John Koeltl granted no small victory in our momentous project to defend First Amendment rights. The judge ruled that the prosecution of Assange would render "any journalist who publishes an article based on stolen information a co-conspirator in the theft." Onward.

* * *

The following are some of the most significant challenges we face in our global mission to support and defend Julian Assange.

I. A Decade-Long Character Assassination

The US espionage indictment against Assange shows that he has been the victim of psychological operation warfare—rumor, disinformation, and false news—designed to destroy his reputation and defame his character. While Assange and his lawyers have consistently maintained that the primary reason he sought protection in the Ecuadorian embassy was to avoid extradition on espionage, the media has insisted otherwise, downplaying the threat from the US. For seven years, while Assange remained in the embassy under worsening conditions, this big lie provided the

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corporate media with a blind from which to issue myriad attacks on Assange. Segments of a contribution by Caitlin Johnstone appearing throughout this anthology explore and debunk the accusations designed to isolate Assange and mute the opposition to US efforts to close down national security journalism. This character assassination greatly hinders the public's understanding that his persecution under espionage charges will open the door for anyone, anywhere around the world, to suffer the same fate.

II. Swedish Rape Allegations

Another reason for the lack of support for Assange, especially in the US and the UK, is the rape investigation in Sweden. The manipulation of the Swedish sexual assault investigation began in 2010 in the immediate wake of WikiLeaks' release of Chelsea Manning's cache of damning US war secrets. Two of the lesser allegations have been dismissed because the statute of limitations has run. The most serious accusation, that Assange did not receive prior consent for unprotected sex from his partner, is again under investigation. One of the reasons for the heated criticism of Assange was the belief that his primary motive for fleeing to the Ecuadorian embassy was to avoid the rape investigation rather than to escape extradition to the US, which, it was widely contended, was never a serious threat.

The recently unsealed US indictment dispels that assertion. In addition, documents secured by Stefania Maurizi, a well-respected Italian journalist and contributor to this anthology, under a series of hard fought FOIA requests concerning the Swedish allegations, reveal that: 1. The UK advised the Swedes against interviewing Assange at the embassy to carry out the first stage of the investigation even though Sweden had carried out extra-territorial interviews in the past; 2. The UK attempted to dissuade Sweden from dropping the investigation in 2013, and wrote to the Swedish prosecutor, "Please do not think that the case is being dealt with as just

another extradition request”; 3. A cover-up was implied because both UK and Swedish prosecutors destroyed some of their email exchanges during the course of the investigation.

Included in this collection are an article and an unpublished letter from Women Against Rape which more fully discuss this issue. At the time of writing, the Swedish prosecutor has decided to reopen the investigation, though Assange has never been charged and may never be. It should be noted that not only were the allegations dismissed once, but the prosecutor who took over the case and reinstated the investigation successfully filed for the original European Arrest Warrant without the imprimatur of a judicial authority, despite the seeming requirement in the treaty then in force, because the UK authorities decided that the word of the Swedish prosecutor was sufficient.² This time carefully following the law, the prosecutor applied to the Swedish court for an arrest warrant and was surprised when her request was denied. For now, Sweden will not seek Assange’s extradition. As Craig Murray astutely noted, “This is a desperate disappointment to the false left in the UK, the Blairites and their ilk, who desperately want Assange to be a rapist in order to avoid the moral decision about prosecuting him for publishing truths about the neo-con illegal wars which they support.” Assange’s lawyers always believed that it would be easier for the US to extradite him from Sweden, which has rarely, if ever, refused a US extradition request. There would be a benefit in Assange finally facing those accusing him of sexual assault in a court of law, if that is what they want and it is warranted by the investigators, but it now seems unlikely that this will ever happen. Even if the case did go to court,

² The UK treaty currently in force clarifies the requirement of the necessity for judicial oversight. It also requires that the accused party be charged with a crime, and that an investigation is not sufficient. These changes were made after the UK Supreme Court decision in the Assange case, designed to protect against individuals being extradited in the same circumstances in the future.

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Swedish law often dictates that such hearings are held in private, so the public might be denied the possibility of hearing the evidence presented.

III. Redactions and Reckless Endangerment

Perhaps with the intention of undermining the revelations of WikiLeaks disclosures, politicians and media have regularly focused on one assertion concerning WikiLeaks' practices, namely that its publication of uncensored materials has been irresponsible, reckless, and harmful to the national security of countries and innocent individuals named in the documents. This narrative began after WikiLeaks released the Afghan War Logs without redacting some source names, something even WikiLeaks' staunchest supporters, including a number that appear in this book, criticize to this day. After much pushback, the organization dedicated itself to carefully protecting the names of innocents in its subsequent disclosures. But the controversy burgeoned again in 2011 following a breach of WikiLeaks' full, unredacted trove of Cablegate files, which the organization had originally been releasing with numerous media outlets over the course of months. A blame game ensued between WikiLeaks, which unintentionally kept an accessible yet hidden folder on its server containing the Cablegate files, and *Guardian* writers David Leigh and Luke Harding, who published in their book, *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy*, a password to the files Assange gave them that they allegedly believed was temporary. Both parties are clearly responsible to some degree for the unwanted release of the documents but, predictably, WikiLeaks suffered disproportionate condemnation and its name and work have since been smeared by the lie that they nefariously endangered innocent people—that Assange has blood on his hands. One clear fact remains, however, and will be repeated throughout this text: there exists no evidence that WikiLeaks' releases have caused the death or persecution of a single individual—globally. Even the Pentagon has confirmed, after review, that no

one has been killed as a result of being named in the documents leaked by Chelsea Manning.³

Assange and his colleagues have argued before that complete transparency, the publication of raw, unredacted files, would generate a far greater good than leaving decisions about what is in the public interest, and subsequently published, to journalists, a circumstance prone to benefiting and protecting governments and corporations. This original element of WikiLeaks' philosophy, one which it has not entirely adhered to itself, is a contentious issue, including among fervent supporters of Assange and WikiLeaks' mission. What are indisputable, however, are the truths that the organization's disclosures brought to light. As Glenn Greenwald remarked at the time:

As usual, many of those running around righteously condemning WikiLeaks for the potential, prospective, unintentional harm to innocents caused by this leak will have nothing to say about these actual, deliberate acts of wanton slaughter by the US. The accidental release of these unredacted cables will receive far more attention and more outrage than the extreme, deliberate wrongdoing these cables expose.⁴

IV. Russia, Assange, and the Clinton Loss

Another aspect of Assange's limited support in the US may be that the ideological divide between those in the US and other Western countries and the developing world is not sufficiently acknowledged. Assange's

³ Ed Pilkington, "Bradley Manning leak did not result in deaths by enemy forces, court hears," *The Guardian*, July 31, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/31/bradley-manning-sentencing-hearing-pentagon>.

⁴ Glenn Greenwald, "Facts and myths in the WikiLeaks/Guardian saga," *Salon*, September 2, 2011, https://www.salon.com/2011/09/02/wikileaks_28/.

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global perspective is shaped by a cosmopolitanism that is more commonly found among those who originate or reside outside the US. In her contribution to this anthology, Margaret Kimberley, editor and senior columnist at Black Agenda Report, touches on what she calls a “naïveté” of Assange about the American view of the world. He is more concerned with the international aspects of US policy and less concerned with American domestic issues. He is less acquainted with internal North American history than he might be. His interest in who is elected to be the US president is colored by this.

Many American liberals cannot forgive Assange for, in their mind, helping Donald Trump become president of the United States in 2016. The accusation is that Assange was Russia’s surrogate. But this claim does not stand up to closer examination. Consider the charges concerning Hillary Clinton’s private server: her emails were revealed through a *FOIA request* filed in 2012 by the nonprofit Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW). They were made searchable by both WikiLeaks and by the *Wall Street Journal*. The Podesta emails were retrieved as the result of a simple spear-phishing operation—and not by WikiLeaks. No elaborate collusion by a cartoon criminal mastermind, Trump, or the Russian government, was needed. As journalist Chris Hedges points out in these pages, James Comey himself said that WikiLeaks probably received the emails via an intermediary. In general, WikiLeaks merely receives information from sources. As for the DNC documents, WikiLeaks was not the only publication to allegedly communicate with Guccifer 2.0 and receive and publish the material. The Intercept, Politico and others did as well, and the Hill openly admitted to communicating with Guccifer 2.0. But it was Assange and WikiLeaks that were the focus of the Mueller investigation, and only Assange and WikiLeaks who were sued by the DNC.

The finding that the DNC documents were hacked from seven separate accounts by agents of the Russian state rests on the assertions of private

cybersecurity companies, CrowdStrike, Fidelis, and Mandiant, rather than of the FBI, which was denied access to the DNC server. As will be discussed in this anthology, no factual basis has been supplied for the accusation that Assange knew the DNC emails derived from a Russian source, and especially not the Russian government. Assange himself has repeatedly stated that the leaks came from an individual, not from a state actor. In July 2019, CNN reported that the embassy was Assange’s “command post for election meddling,” where he collaborated with Russians to ensure Trump’s victory in 2016. But in what is now a Russiagate media trope, the outlet presented only circumstantial evidence. Regardless, WikiLeaks’ explicit goals include exposing the deceptions of both governments—US and Russian. Its mission has always been to publish what is true and important for the historical record.

A common refrain by Assange critics is the contention that he released the Podesta emails on the spur of the moment, immediately after the release of the Trump *Access Hollywood* tape in order to counter its public impact. However, according to Stefania Maurizi, who worked on the release, the disclosure was not a sudden decision but was planned some time in advance. Assange, like many others in the early part of 2016, did not believe Trump had a chance of winning. He has also said publicly that he disdained both of the 2016 presidential candidates. But because the releases were helpful to Trump, and because there exists an expressed hostility between Assange and Clinton, many have inferred that Assange intended to help Trump win. Clearly a number of factors were at play in Trump’s surprise victory. But to place significant responsibility at the door of Assange for the defeat of Clinton, widely regarded as a lackluster candidate who was handicapped by being seen as “inside the beltway” and responsible for major campaign errors, including describing Trump supporters as “deplorable” and failing to campaign in key Midwestern states

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where a working class vote was critical to the Democrats, seems wide of the mark.

* * *

The various contributors to this book together confront these challenges—albeit with different emphases and occasional disagreements. For instance, Craig Murray’s essay on the Mueller Report’s distortions and failures to fill information gaps about the DNC leak argues that an *insider leak*, not a *Russian hack* preceded WikiLeaks’ publication of the emails, while Caitlin Johnstone, though sympathetic to the holes Murray underlines in the Russiagate narrative, contends that neither theory presents conclusive evidence. Other differences arise elsewhere in the collection concerning Assange’s sexual dealings in Sweden, his political ideology, and WikiLeaks’ publication methods. It’s important to note however that these disagreements do not override that which unites the contributors’ writings, activism, legal interventions, art, diplomacy, reporting, and speeches: namely a clear desire to defend Julian Assange.

The anthology is broken into five sections. It begins with Assange’s expulsion from the Ecuadorian embassy, including what immediately preceded and followed: Chris Hedges, Noam Chomsky, Alan MacLeod, Charles Glass, and Geoffrey Robertson describe the urgency, the dangers, the precedent of his persecution, and the shameful response of mainstream media; Katrin Axelsson and Lisa Longstaff set out their position as participants in the organization Women Against Rape who simultaneously reject Assange’s extradition; Kevin Gosztola outlines the Democratic Party’s responsibility in Assange’s current situation, while Margaret Kimberley puts Americans criticisms of the publisher into better context. Daniel Ellsberg and Matt Taibbi establish the implications of the Espionage charges against Assange; Vivienne Westwood confronts the misrule of law

that is Assange's plight; and Pamela Anderson describes the upsetting circumstances she encountered when visiting Assange in Belmarsh Prison.

Next, we meet Assange during the time he felt compelled to take up residence in the Ecuadorian embassy. We learn of the details surrounding his confinement from Fidel Narváez, one of the former Ecuadorian ambassadors under Rafael Correa, followed by Julian Assange's appeal to Correa for asylum; we hear from Srećko Horvat, John Pilger, Sister Teresa Forcades, and Angela Richter on their bittersweet meetings with Assange; and Ai Weiwei's 2015 interview unlocks the mind of the imprisoned WikiLeaks visionary.

Following this are the philosophical underpinnings of WikiLeaks, beginning with Assange in his own words in 2012 under house arrest in the UK. Slavoj Žižek underscores the revelations of nefarious and bloody connections between private corporations and state agencies brought out by Assange, while Franco "Bifo" Berardi ponders WikiLeaks' foundational premise of combatting state secrecy; Sally Burch contextualizes the persecution of Assange within the war for a people's Internet, and against surveillance capitalism; Nozomi Hayase mines the anti-imperial and democratizing potential of WikiLeaks' scientific and revolutionary journalism, and Geoffroy de Lagasnerie applauds Assange and his organization for developing and adhering to utopian principles.

The last section of this book covers the legacy of Assange and WikiLeaks: Patrick Cockburn waves off the irrelevant coverage of Assange and uncovers the vital contributions of his work to governmental and corporate transparency; Jennifer Robinson unpacks the opportunities for justice that Assange gave to the planet, while Naomi Colvin spotlights the heroic operations and influence of WikiLeaks in 2010–2011; Mark Curtis shifts the focus from US disclosures to those of the UK, and, following the espionage charges, John C. O'Day discusses how the corporate media

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designates who is, and who is not, a journalist; Craig Murray dismantles the Russiagate scandal that implicates Assange, and Renata Avila dives into a personal who-and-what of the publisher; Stefania Maurizi and Natália Viana both recount their journalistic work with WikiLeaks. After hearing from the optimistic outlook of the late Michael Ratner, Assange's widely respected defense attorney, the collection ends with the 18-count superseding indictment against Assange—disturbing yet essential reading for its potential to crush press freedom around the world.

This book is the initiative of Colin Robinson at OR Books. It has been assembled and edited with the critical input of Teddy Ostrow. Its aim is simple. To declare our solidarity with Julian Assange and the WikiLeaks publishing organization. The contributors are many and varied. What unites them is the view that Assange must be defended against the secret state and its friends. Punishments meted out to Manning and Assange will fail in their objective. As long as the West initiates and supports the wars of recolonization (of which Yemen is the latest example) there will always be those who will resist in all ways they can. Providing information to the citizens of this world has become a dangerous act, but it cannot be stopped, as every authoritarian regime understands. The courageous people who provide this information must be defended. It is impossible to foresee who next in official circles or secret state institutions, disgusted by what is going on, is going to say: "Enough! No more. I'm going to tell the truth." That precedents exist, not least the vital and extraordinary work of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks, is not unimportant.

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