Leaking Like a Strainer

The 4th of October, 2006 a small company was founded. The company’s goal was for all secrets kept hidden from the mass to come up to the surface. War crimes, swindles, discussions between politicians and how countries are run, all this should be available for everyone to see. WikiLeaks made a huge difference in worldwide politics. They told the truth for many people who could not do so themselves, but what impacts did leaking information make? Was it bad, or did this act make a positive change to the world?

The first argument that may spring to someone’s mind is that leaking confident information is illegal. When you take a job in either the US government or as an employee for a dictator, you will have to say a vow. In this vow, among other things, you promise to not tell any of the things you have seen, heard or read about your job. Giving this information to someone else is worse than breaking a promise. It is a promise made to the whole country. Old soldiers leaking information about a war they were in, is like a boy giving away secrets from all his friends.

Furthermore, when information regarding one specific event is published, many people may get an understanding of something that is done, only based on what happened, and not on what thinking of the background. The US was, after a leak about the Afghanistan war, looked upon as a country shooting on civilians for no reason. This is a crime against the human rights, but their goal with this was to save even more people from the slaughter. By shooting on a few civilians, they sent a message to Taliban that they would do anything necessary to get rid of them. Their hope was to scare Taliban into stopping the war and thus saving civilians, Americans and Taliban soldiers.

The last argument against leaking confident information is that when uncensored documents, regarding names of informants and spies in different countries, are published, then those people’s lives are at risk. In the film “The Fifth Estate”, a recreation of the history of WikiLeaks and the consequences of it, they show a situation where an American informative was quickly extracted out of the country because of his name being published and the risk of him being killed. This is based on a true story from that time, and a direct consequence of this leak.

On the other hand, we live in democratic countries and everyone should have the right to know how politicians in their country are leading them. People have the right to know what their leaders are doing. If all politicians’ actions were unknown, then they could do whatever they wanted. Candidates could promise whatever they wanted, and no one would know if they actually did those things. The president could order a summerhouse to be built, for him, in place and if anybody lived there he could just kick them out without anyone knowing.

Another argument for leaking is that since most people live in a democratic country and we have something called freedom of speech, we should be able to say whatever we want. A worker in a giant bank should have the right to say something if he discovers a major fault in the banks way of doing business. A soldier ordered to shoot civilians should have the right to tell this to his countrymen. Forbidding this by law is like forbidding a man to tell the police when he got robbed, or prohibit a man not to speak out if he found out that the company he works for is selling illegal products.

A third argument could be that when large companies, like Swiss banks or oil extractors, swindle common men for huge sums of money, then a co-worker at that company should be allowed to tell this. Swindled people have right to know they have been tricked. Why are we working against law and order with law and order? So many concerns are revolving around this, pushing the prises down because no one are allowed, by law, to say anything about their unfair trades or child workers, for example..

The last and most important argument, for leaking, is that if war crimes are not revealed to the mass, then they will keep happening and leaders will not face justice for what they have done. Human rights would never be followed if those who broke the laws were not taken. When the US ordered their planes to shoot on the local population, not a single American man outside the military would have known if it wasn’t for WikiLeaks and the soldier who gave them the film. Wars should be fights between armies or people that stand for these things. If you were just a shopkeeper walking home from work, then you shouldn’t have to fear being shot for something you don’t have anything to do with.

Publishing uncensored documents with names of people that may or may not be put to risk is not so very smart. Confident information should in small cases not be leaked, but if you make sure that the names listed or mentioned are either secure people or censored, then I think you should be allowed. Everyone have the right to know what leaders in their country are doing and at least if they do something illegal. Crimes of any sort should also be revealed so that they can be punished or learned from. Still one should publish information to reveal bad secrets, not because one wants to be a hero.