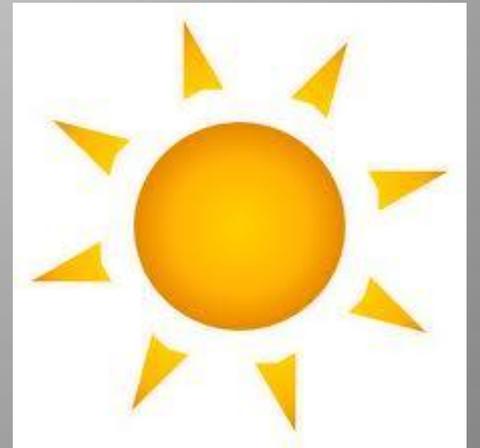


# Story of a small protest

*(and its failure at dawn)*



In the summer of 2010, the Berlusconi government, proposed a bill with heavy restrictions on freedom of information and significant penalties for journalists and editors

This law was immediately renamed by the media “*Gag Law*”



some pictures about the protests against the gag law

# What does the Gag Law?

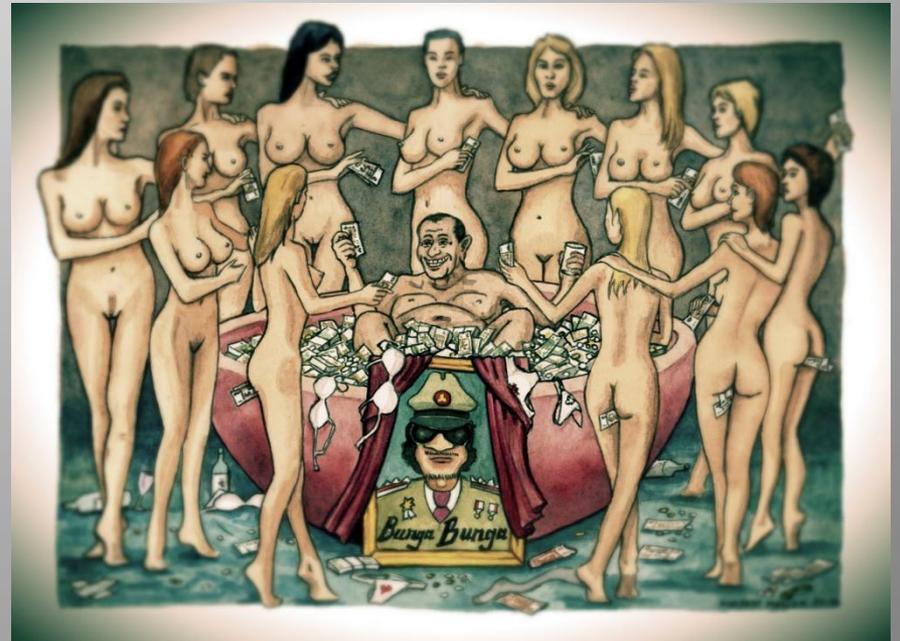
- for journalists who publish wiretaps: a month in jail and a fine of up to 10.000 €
- for editors: a fine of up to 450.000 €



# Why the Gag Law?

At that time, in Italy, the publication of some delicate wiretaps had exposed one of the subcultural aspects of our Prime Minister:

the phenomenon of  
BUNGA BUNGA



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**NEWS**

**Silvio's bunga bunga girls**

Published: Today

**THIS is Silvio Berlusconi's DENTAL HYGIENIST - accused yesterday of procuring girls for his infamous "bunga bunga" parties.**

Sexy Nicole Minetti, 26, was named in a sleaze probe by cops after Italy's Prime Minister allegedly bedded under-age girls.



Accused ... Nicole Minetti  
Rex

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The **Gag Law** also prevents access to the magistrates of the use of wiretaps, or in any case, makes the use of this means of investigation, extremely complicated – despite most of the mafia investigations are resolved thanks to wiretaps!





Throughout Italy protests start  
(here: Rome)



Venice



Naples: terracotta statues, typical of the famous cribs of San Gregorio Armeno

Even in my town, with my group of youth policy – GSEL\* -, we decided to organize a symbolic protest.



We live in Eboli, a small town in the south of Italy.

\*GSEL is an acronym for: Young people, Left, Ecology, Freedom

The mission of our protest is to raise awareness of the population of our city.

# How?

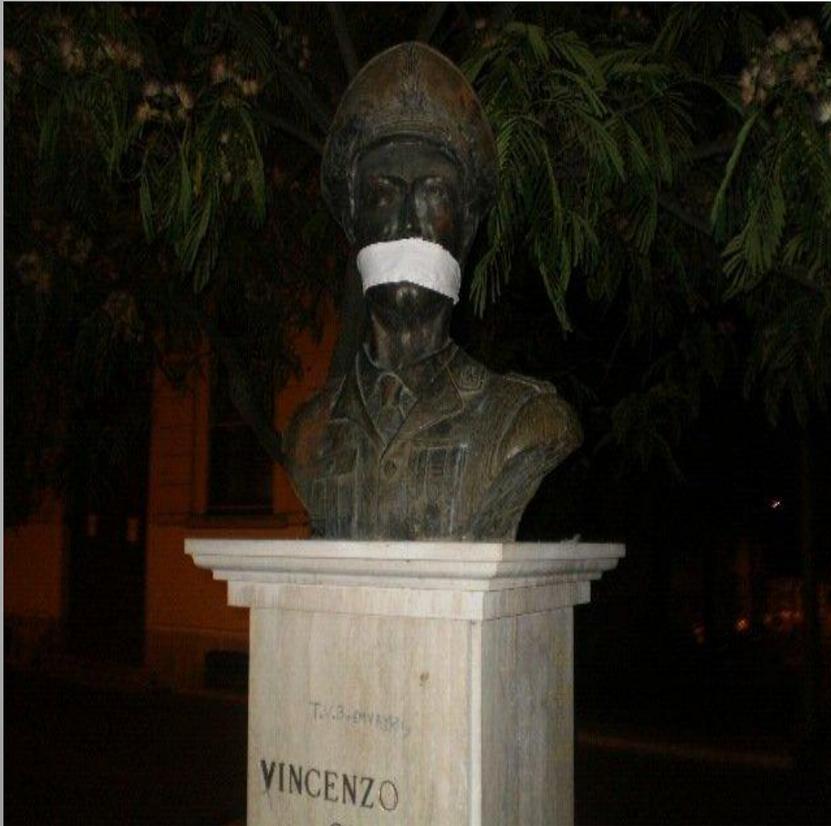
Putting a gag to all the statues in the city.



So we go out late at night, with gags cut from old sheets, and put a gag to all the statues.



War Memorial  
in Piazza della Repubblica



## Bust of Vincenzo Giudice

Died trying to save people from  
executions of SS

## Bust of Matteo Ripa

Introduced the art of engraving in the  
Chinese Kingdom and founded the  
Oriental Institute in Naples





## Bust of Carmine Calò

First victim of international terrorism. Died in 1998



Yes, really to all statues!



... even to Pikachu!

Well. All the statues are gagged.  
Now we wait for dawn to observe the  
reaction of the people...



...but things do not go as  
we had imagined.

# Observing the protest

- People pass heedless next to the statues gagged.
- The municipal police, during the morning, takes away gag on all the statues.
- Only one person gives a feedback to our protest...

He is a priest furious with us because we dared to gag even religious statues.



# Self-analysis of a protest

- 1) People are not interested in statues of their city. They do not know the story of those statues, so do not impress to see them gagged.
- 2) Only religious statues gagged have aroused an interest. But mostly the reactions were of disapproval.

# Self-analysis of a protest

- 3) The protest bothered the municipal administration. In fact, at another time these same statues had been covered by the flags of the football team, and no one had removed the flags for many days.
- 4) Many people do not consider the freedom of information a topic of great importance in the democratic life of the country.

# The statues and the city (1)

- the statues of our cities do not tell people anything. Their stories are told little and badly. So people do not have a bond with them and these statues can not be taken as symbols of a protest.



Writer, painter, doctor.  
Author of the book:  
*“Christ stopped at Eboli?”*

# A more secular religion (2)

- We think that religion, too, very present in the life of the country, must come to terms with the social and civic life of a community, surpassing its codes old and outdated.

In our city, 40% of the statues concerning religion. So we consider necessary that its are not taboo, and that its sanctity is defiled with the life of every day.



# The authority and the protest (3)

- The city administration should request a meeting with the authors of the protests, to listen to the reasons and eventually make them his own, using all the means in their favor to bring the discussion to their rooms and in those of the national government.



# Freedom of information (4)

- In the last ranking by Report Sans Frontier, Italy occupies 57 out of 179 nations.
- In the next slide, a report by Freedomhouse highlights the trend of press freedom in Italy. The freedom decreases when Berlusconi governs.



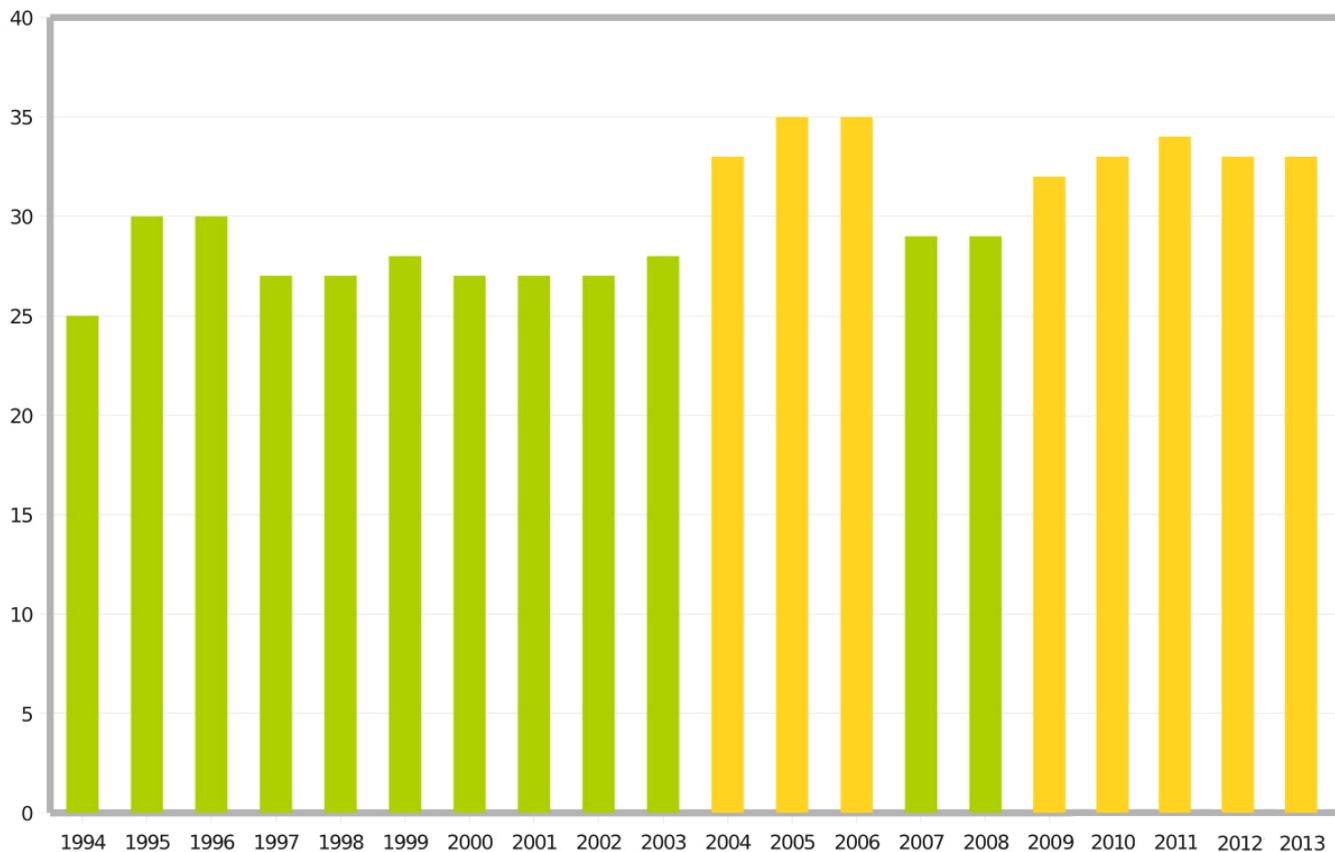
## Sintesi dei dati relativi all'Italia dei Rapporti Freedom House sulla libertà di stampa

Valori inferiori o uguali a 30 indicano un paese libero dal punto di vista della libertà di stampa.

Valori superiori a 30 e inferiori o uguali a 60 indicano un paese parzialmente libero dal punto di vista della libertà di stampa.

Valori superiori a 60 indicano un paese non libero dal punto di vista della libertà di stampa.

anno	punteggio
1980	Free (<=30)
1981	Free (<=30)
1982	Free (<=30)
1983-84	Free (<=30)
1985	Free (<=30)
1986	Free (<=30)
1987	Free (<=30)
1988	Free (<=30)
1989	Free (<=30)
1990	Free (<=30)
1991	Free (<=30)
1992	Free (<=30)
1993	Free (<=30)
1994	25
1995	30
1996	30
1997	27
1998	27
1999	28
2000	27
2001	27
2002	27
2003	28
2004	33
2005	35
2006	35
2007	29
2008	29
2009	32
2010	33
2011	34
2012	33
2013	33



# About Gag Law

- **Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE** responsible for media freedom

*"I am concerned that the Senate has passed a bill that could seriously hinder investigative journalism in Italy. Journalists must be free to report on all cases of public interest and should be able to choose how to conduct a responsible investigation. "*



- **The ONU special rapporteur on freedom 'of expression Frank La Rue**

*"The measure must be abolished or modified. If adopted in its current form may 'undermine the enjoyment of the right to freedom' of expression in Italy"*



# End of the story

- The first time the Gag Law has made its entry into parliament was 2008. Then 2010, 2011 and finally in 2013, only few months ago.  
It has never been approved. But the threat of its approval is still alive.
- The first few times there were large movements against the Gag Law.  
Today the news does not surprise us anymore. The protests have decreased. And as always happens after a protest, disappointment is strong.

# Local protests

- In recent years, with my group, we protested for:
  - The construction of a landfill in fertile fields for agriculture.
  - Construction of parking lots in place of a children's playground in the center of the city
  - The request for meeting spaces, now disappeared, for young people.
  - The request of a park of love, where the young lovers can find a little bit of intimacy

# National protests

- Against the gag law;
- Against water privatization;
- Against nuclear energy;

# A strong disappointment

- After all these protests, there remains only a big disappointment.

Because we almost always have lost.

- So many have turned away from our group.
- There are no more groups which are long meetings, while comments on the forums on Internet are multiplying.
- **Is still there some non-virtual group?**

# The role of intellectuals

- In the delicate historical context in which we live, there is constant need of keys for the interpretation of the world.
- Only intellectuals can provide new challenges to the daily battle against the “system”
- But what they’re talking Italian intellectuals, in these difficult days?



Umberto Eco, one of the most important Italian intellectuals, much appreciated abroad, writes a column in the weekly magazine “**L’Espresso**”, entitled “**The sachet of Minerva**”

**Here are the titles of some of the latest articles:**

- Yes, but what James Bond drinks?
- How is it that singer empathic?
- I'm on Facebook without my knowledge
- If you take the fine, you accused policeman
- Talk show, just screaming and fake fights

I leave you to imagine the contents of the articles.

# Conclusion

- The economic crisis has erased the possibility of our generation.
- We have no points of reference, in a world that is changing too fast.
- Our defeats are already too many. The disappointment is great.

However, it remains in us a deep desire to rebel

We need to find new forms of protest, new energy and new languages.

I like to think my generation, at this time, as that character in Brecht...



To Mr. K. asked what he was doing.

**“I’m working hard in order to prepare my  
next error!”**

Thanks for your attention