That the Western model of journalism is viciously underdemocratic and helps perpetuate crimes across the globe in its own way to meet certain ends forms the narrow of war-reporting scholarship on the critique of international communication structure (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, 1980; Peri, 2007; Stack, 2010; Tumber & Palmer, 2004). With the announcement of ‘war on terror’ by George W. Bush, not only were severe fissures in world politics witnessed but institutions of journalism—otherwise supposed to be the guardians of truth—were dramatically changed in their functionning, becoming carriers of military propaganda and key participants in inflicting death and destruction. Journalists, believed to bear the ‘responsibility of conscience’ (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 179) and inform the public, moved away from the ideals and intentionality, active conduits of governmental lies and half-truths. As warmongering tendencies continue, is there a hope for change?

With New Wars, New Media and New War Journalism: Professional and Legal Challenges in Conflict Reporting, Stig A. Nohrstedt (Professor Emeritus in Media and Communication Science at Oreference University, Sweden) and Rune Ottosen (Political scientist and journalist, and Professor of Journalism at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway) offer an important contribution to this body of knowledge. Investigating the Scandinavian media—Norwegian and Swedish in particular—for their coverage of NATO-led armed interventions in the Middle East, Nohrstedt and Ottosen argue that Nordic media have been a passive receiver of military propaganda and that journalists lack critical thinking in reporting legal issues surrounding the so-called humanitarian interventions. In New Wars the analysis is based at multiple levels but what remains consistent throughout calls for making the practice of war journalism function more like academia by bringing critical thinking to the vocation as far as covering of wars is concerned. The authors express their concern at the very outset, “the working condition of journalists and the general public’s right to information” (p. 7). In the introduction Nohrstedt and Ottosen lament the “lack of legal competence” (p. 14) within the media profession; for them this very fault line makes journalists an easy target of war propaganda. Hence, New Wars poses a fundamental question: “Why did the media promote the explanations and the rhetoric of the politicians without critical questioning?” (p. 23). At the heart of New Wars is the subject of “critical questioning” (p. 23) that addresses both the arenas—academic and professional. It tries to build a case in favour of critical questioning and show how the absence of this essential ingredient of journalism has perpetrated crime in its own way and brought dishonor to the profession. This is why the principal calling of New Wars is the plea for “radical reforms in the field of journalism education and professional learning such as the integration of international law, international politics, and peace and conflict research into the syllabuses” (p. 162).

In Chapter 2, Nohrstedt and Ottosen focus on the systematic attacks on media houses and journalists by NATO forces and how Western and Scandinavian media have been adopting criminal silence on such incidents. They cite instances to demonstrate their argument: the bombing of Serbian television in 1999 and Al-Jazeera offices in Kabul and Baghdad in 2001 and 2003 at the behest of the U.S. and its Nordic allies, in gross violation of the Geneva Conventions. The authors argue that the television stations were bombed because the U.S. and allies could not tolerate the line of reportage that highlighted grim façades of war that its media tried to hide. Nohrstedt and Ottosen envisage how atrocious an attack on a media house could be: “What would the reaction be if the Taliban decided to send a mission to Atlanta to blow up CNN because of its perceived anti-Muslim character?” (p. 63). The authors call war correspondents an “endangered species” (p. 11) because journalists continue to be killed across the world in volatile regions by government forces and insurgents. Seventy-nine journalists were killed in 2016 alone, and among them more than 60 were stationed in volatile zones across the world (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2016). For Nohrstedt and Ottosen this is a “serious problem” (p. 11) for democracy.

In Chapter 3, New Wars offers an alternative to war journalism in the form of a peace journalism model that...

REFERENCES


Peace journalism has been developed from research that indicates that often news about conflict has a value bias toward violence. It also includes practical methods for correcting this bias by producing journalism in both the mainstream and alternative media, and working with journalists, media professionals, audiences, and organizations in conflict. This concept was proposed by Johan Galtung Other terms for this broad definition of peace journalism include conflict solution journalism, conflict

License URL: [http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca/)