

Guardians of Power

The Myth of the Liberal Media

David Edwards and David Cromwell

Pluto  Press
LONDON • ANN ARBOR, MI

Contents

Acknowledgments	viii
Foreword by John Pilger	ix
1 The Mass Media – Neutral, Honest, Psychopathic	1
Pulling The Other One – The Corporate ‘Free Press’	1
Outlawing Social Responsibility	2
Of Big Brother and ‘Auntie Beeb’ – The Propaganda Model	4
The Convenient Rise of Professional Journalism	9
A Note About the Structure of this Book	12
2 Iraq – The Sanctions of Mass Destruction	13
Blair’s Big Bad Lie – The ‘Moral Case for War’	13
Effectively Terminated – The US–UK Genocide in Iraq	15
Media Complicity – The ‘Pilger-Baathist Line’	19
Burying the Effects of Sanctions	21
<i>Observer</i> Editor Roger Alton and the 83-year-old War Veteran	25
Three Remarkable Emails from Nick Cohen	28
3 Iraq Disarmed – Burying the 1991–98 Weapons Inspections	32
Find Me a Way to do This	32
‘Fundamentally Disarmed’ by 1998	33
Pushed or Pulled? The Art of Truth-Reversal	37
No Particular Answer – Media Lens and BBC <i>Newsnight</i> Editor George Entwistle	41
Serious and Current Threat? – The Sludge of Mass Destruction	44
4 Iraq – Gunning for War and Burying the Dead	47
The Message from America	47
Falling into Execute Mode	50
A Larger Man and a Stronger Prime Minister – The Fall of Baghdad	51
Outdoing Saddam – The US–UK are ‘Absolutely Accountable’	53
Necessary ‘Dud’ – The <i>Lancet</i> Report	56

Our Data Have Been Back and Forth	58
The Charnel House – A Simple Question from a Couple of Amateurs	63
All Hail Democratic Iraq! – A Tragi-Comedy	65
Democracy Born and Still-Born – A Tale of Two Elections	68
'He Wants Democracy' – Media Lens and BBC <i>Newsnight</i> Editor Peter Barron	73
5 Afghanistan – Let Them Eat Grass	76
Normalising the Unthinkable	76
In The Land of the Blind, the One-Eyed Lion Is News	80
Killing as a First Resort	82
Bombing it Better	85
Outside Looking In – Media Lens and the BBC's Director of News, Richard Sambrook	90
6 Kosovo – Real Bombs, Fictional Genocide	94
Iraq And Kosovo – The Forbidden Parallels	94
Lights out in Belgrade – The Media Line Up	95
Pure Invention – The Kosovo 'Genocide'	96
Questioning Racak	100
Pernicious and Anti-Journalistic – Media Lens and the BBC's Andrew Marr	104
7 East Timor – The Practical Limits of Crusading Humanitarianism	109
A Toothless Moral Crusade	109
No One Gave a Damn – The 'Blessing' of the West	111
Impoverished Territory – The Calculations of Realpolitik	114
8 Haiti – The Hidden Logic of Exploitation	117
Conquering Paradise – The Logic of Exploitation	118
Haiti's Big Surprise – Aristide	120
Media Silence on Washington's 'Double Game'	124
Aristide Toppled – The Disputed Elections	125
9 Idolatry Ink – Reagan, the 'Cheerful Conservative' and 'Chubby Bubba' Clinton	132
Will the Real Paul Wolfowitz Please Stand Up?	132
Reagan – 'An Extraordinarily Successful Presidency'	134
Killing is Not Enough	138
Nicaragua – The Threat of a Good Example	142
Reagan's Legacy in Central America	145

Clinton – The Bitter Ironies	148
Dimbleby Dumbs Down	152
10 Climate Change – The Ultimate Media Betrayal	154
Uninhabitable Planet?	154
The High Cost of Buying Time	155
Global Climate Catastrophe – Mustn't Grumble!	157
Put a 'Hog' in it – Liberal Media Greenwash	158
Neither do I, Too! – The Fossil-Fuelled <i>Guardian</i>	161
Dead Planet's Society – The Mystery of the <i>Guardian's</i> Post Box	167
The <i>Guardian's</i> Readers' Editor Serves up a Liberal Herring	170
What is our Problem?	171
11 Disciplined Media – Professional Conformity to Power	172
How do you Shoot Babies?	172
The 'Gushing' Phenomenon	174
Trained for Timidity	178
Hell, the System Works Just Fine!	182
Making a Difference – Why We <i>Can</i> Influence the Media	185
12 Towards a Compassionate Media	188
West is Best – How Media Compassion Radiates 'Outwards'	188
So What Would you do? The <i>Guardian</i> Editor Bowls a Googly	190
The Netizens are Coming!	192
Towards a Compassionate Mass Media	196
Honest, Compassionate, Non-Corporate	199
The Media is not Just Another Issue	201
13 Full Human Dissent	204
The Reality Filters	204
Life, Liberty and Happiness – The Corporate Versions	208
Enlightened Self-Interest – The Curious Qualities of Kindness	210
Towards Full Human Dissent	215
Resources	218
About Media Lens	229
Index	231