



Distant Voices

John Pilger

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Throughout his distinguished career as a journalist and film-maker, John Pilger has looked behind the 'official' versions of events to report the real stories of our time.

The centrepiece of this new, expanded edition of his bestselling *Distant Voices* is Pilger's reporting from East Timor, which he entered secretly in 1993 and where a third of the population has died as a result of Indonesia's genocidal policies. This edition also contains more new material as well as all the original essays - from the myth-making of the Gulf War to the surreal pleasures of Disneyland. Breaking through the consensual silence, Pilger pays tribute to those dissenting voices we are seldom permitted to hear.

Distant Voices Details

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Author : John Pilger

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Nux says

The main reason I bought this book (and Noam Chomsky's "Rogue State") was because I was fascinated and wanted to know what 'actually' happened in Timor. Having heard a third hand account from friends who went there as the "Observers" at the time of the Public Opinion's Poll time, I found some of the stories just didn't match... hence the book(s). I'd have to say that it's an eye opener and quite a horrifying account of what the military can do... and how 'filtered' the news actually came to the rest of the Indonesians. Or how one-sided were the stories that came back... Some things just don't match up. Though after I read this I discussed the book with a very good friend whose uncle was involved in the army and was assigned there... and sadly, it seemed like us Indonesians really are not what I have always thought of all of us to be... we are no gentle people afterall when it comes to war. Whatever the reason, whatever the provocation, "We" are not un-capable of comitting a massacre(?!). The three stars given are actually only for the Timor part of this book, as to be honest I have hardly read the rest of the journalism stories that he's written in this volume... maybe I should, maybe I will... one of these days, perhaps.

Lysergius says

I get the distinct impression that throughout his distinguished career as a journalist and film-maker, John Pilger has tried to look behind the 'official' versions of events to report the on the truth the age we live in.

The centrepiece of this new, expanded edition of his bestselling "Distant Voices" is his reporting from East Timor where (at the time of writing 1993) a third of the population had died as a result of Indonesia's genocidal policies - supported of course by the US.

This edition contains new material as well as all the original essays - from the myth-making of the Gulf War to the surreal pleasures of Disneyland. Breaking through the consensual silence, Pilger pays tribute to those dissenting voices we are seldom permitted to hear.

A must read for anyone who wishes to see beyond the lies fed to us by the media.

Kevin Tole says

It's kind of strange how it is at the same moment a little dated and at the same time bang up to date. The same problems; the same circumstances,; just different places and different people.

Pilger is a valid voice chipping away at the pillars of the establishment and one of the few voices out there making a coherent (though generally ignored) plea in the darkness for both the left and humanity in general. His writing is always interesting.

This covers a broad range of subjects and is like Heroes.

Mark Colenutt says

Pilger has written many books and they are all important works. I have singled this one out as it is a good start to his work and the world that surrounds us. It not only covers issues in Britain, his adopted home, and Australia, his native land, but more importantly international events, many of which Pilger has witnessed first hand. Special place is given to East Timor which was visited by Pilger and there is a revisit to Cambodia.

Pilger's documentary 'Year Zero' about the Pol Pot regime made his name. Pol Pot was in fact allow to die in relative peace in the jungle not so long ago. He was obviously nicer to his people than Saddam Hussein. The West of course always hunts down dictators and genocidal maniacs.

If you have not read much quality journalism then this will answer you prayers. Many articles in this book are also found in other works of his such as 'Hidden Agendas'. Pilger's documentaries as well as speeches are enlightening, empowering if not depressing revelations of how the West has really gone about dealing out democracy around the world.

Pilger is up there with Chomsky.

Debbie Cleaveley says

A journalist whose work I have admired and been inspired by for many years. Essential reading on things that should be headline news but rarely are.

Stef Rozitis says

This one is hard to put a rating to and three is pretty parsimonious of me. A lot about the book is still relevant and well worth reading even after all this time. Some of the earlier sections contain repetition with two or more articles written about the same thing so that you get overloaded and they lose punch (but they are very punchy articles to begin with). I would love to dismiss a lot of what Pilger says as paranoia and go back to a more naive and secure view of the world, but sadly a lot of this stuff is corroborated widely enough, essentially unless you are determined not to you can tell he is telling the truth.

At times his language is sort of sensationalist (but then he is a journalist), and he talks a lot about people (mostly men, mostly I dare say white men) who he really admires (although there is one tribute to his parents, mainly focussing on his mum). He gratuitously describes every little girl as "pretty" and every young woman as "beautiful" (oh please) and he verges on narcissism at times as well as constantly promoting his movies in a braggy way (I dare say they are probably excellent documentaries for all that).

There is much about his voice that irritates me, but the substance of what he is saying is very important and the way he finishes on racism (against Indigenous Australians) in this country is particularly astute. I remember growing up in the 90s, hearing names like "Khmer Rouge" and "Pol Pot" bandied around and now thanks to Pilger I know more about what all that was about. And yet there is not just 90s stuff, the first half

of the book holds many observations that are chillingly true and relevant for today. Since neoliberalism is a project that is not completed and not yet inevitable, it is past time we read and were informed by long-time critics such as Pilger.

Another plus is that he is equally critical of left and right-wing extremists. None of what he says is about wings, it is about human rights. So a lot of excellent observation and analysis and some irritating traits. But more good than not.

Julie says

A real eye opener into what's really going on as regards the foreign policies of the British and US governments.

Teri Cooper says

Smashes open some pretty grim patches of Australian inequality like a watermelon off a bridge. This book should be added to the high school curriculum to give the other side to the sanitised version taught in schools...at least, it was 25 years ago when I was still in school! Top read.
