This is a book that could do with a long-winded subtitle. The title, though not inaccurate, is simply inadequate to describe the contents. This book is much more than a simple explication of, or a commentary on, the well-known Mass Media Declaration (unfortunately, this knowledge usually does not extend beyond the title and the controversy that surrounded it). First, it is an analysis of the New International Information Order debate, with special emphasis on developments in UNESCO. Secondly, it is a contribution to the field of international law of communication. Thirdly, it is an attempt to revitalize the discourse on ethics and mass communication.

The discussion of the New International Information Order debate with reference to UNESCO is undoubtedly the most topical. The author offers unique insights into the diplomatic processes that led to the adoption of the Mass Media Declaration in 1978 by the unanimous consent of all 146 of UNESCO's member States. He was intimately involved in the process in various capacities: as a member of the Finnish delegation; as president (and spokesperson at UNESCO debates) of the International Organization of Journalists; and as one of the experts deployed by UNESCO in the tasks of drafting the Declaration and of engaging in the 'quiet diplomacy' of building consensus. In this discussion, as throughout the book, the author makes clear his espousal of a position in favour of the Declaration and the New International Information Order generally, or perhaps more accurately, against the laissez faire doctrine of communication principally propounded by the U.S. government and industry spokespersons. However, the author's skill in letting the documents speak for themselves (the text contains copious quotations and is supplemented by 191 pages of appendices covering a wealth of relevant documents, both official and unofficial), clearly makes this book an extremely valuable academic contribution. In fact, in relation to UNESCO, Nordenstreng's treatment far surpasses everything that has been written on the subject.

International law pertaining to mass media is an obscure subject, particularly neglected by those in the fields of communication and journalism. Part Two of the book, written by Nordenstreng and Lauri Hannikainen, a legal scholar, is a useful overview of the international law affecting mass media content (a valuable appendix listing and classifying international instruments concerning mass media has been
included), as well as an attempt to bring it closer to the centre of
the field of communication research. What is lacking, however, is
acknowledgement and discussion of the problem that pervades much of
international law -- unenforceability. A good example is provided by
one of the most contentious provisions of the Mass Media Declaration,
that concerning the right of correction -- it did not make it to the
final document, being one of the many sacrifices made at the altar of
consensus. The surprising fact, given the amount of heat that was
generated, was that an international right of correction already exis-
ted in international law. A Convention (a more powerful document than
a Declaration) on the International Right of Correction was adopted by
the United Nations General Assembly in 1952 and entered into force in
1962. Few countries have bothered to ratify it, no one seems to know
about it, and, to the best of this reviewer's knowledge, not a single
attempt has been made to exercise a 'right of correction' deriving from
international law. The furor created by the attempt to include it in
the Declaration is evidence enough of the value of that particular
piece of international law -- not much more than that of the paper it
was printed on.

The natural question then, is whether neglect is not the most ap-
propriate scholarly response to a field of study with miniscule impact
on the actual operations of media enterprises. The author's implied
answer (he does not ask the question, having taken international law at
the face value of conventions and treaties) is that international law
provides the universal or common basis for developing codes of ethics
for mass media in societies differing in socioeconomic organization and
ideology. This is in line with what is perhaps the most reasonable
rationale for the existence of public international law, where 'rights'
and 'wrongs' deriving from principles of law complement other factors.
For example, a World Court adjudication on the illegality of mining
Nicaragua's harbours, though meaningless by itself, can be a powerful
complementary factor in the mobilization of public opinion.

The discussion of the need for universal ethics in mass communi-
cation is most interesting because of the author's attempt to identify
the broadest possible base for consensus, extending even to parts of
that anti-New International Information Order, anti-UNESCO manifesto,
the Declaration of Talloires (also included as an appendix). By con-
necting the issue of universal journalistic ethics to the 'social
responsibility theory' of the press, most commonly associated with the
[U.S.] Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press (and also to a
certain extent, the Kent Commission), the author provides North Ameri-
can readers with a useful 'handle' on the subject.

In sum, it is contended that the Mass Media Declaration was "a
symptom of overall socio-economic-political tendencies," and a manifes-
tation of the greater importance assumed by mass media in international
relations today. The adoption of a set of comprehensive, though vague,
guidelines for mass media by the international community is of historic
significance and demonstrates the existence of a "common ground of
universal values" derived from international law on which an international code of ethics for mass communication can be constructed. Such an universal code is of vital importance to international order, especially in the face of nuclear annihilation and other global problems.

From the book itself it is clear that an universal code of journalistic ethics is not on the verge of being accepted by all the world's journalists. Even if such a code were to be adopted, experience with press councils at the national level leaves little room for optimism. To quote two scholars from the GDR cited in the book, "In the last instance the class-bound conditions of [journalistic] work doom [general international regulation] to remain a utopia" (p. 235).

This points to the major flaw, or more properly the major omission, of the book. The reader who gets caught in the flow of Nordenstreng's argument may end up with the impression that preparation of a common ground for an universal code of journalistic ethics was one of the main objectives of the New International Information Order. If this was actually the case, it would be difficult to resist drawing an analogy to a mountain labouring to bring forth a mouse, and half-dying in the process. From examination of early non-aligned movement resolutions it is clear that the objectives of the New International Information Order were more significant (Jankowitsch and Sauvant, 1977; Samarajiwa, 1984). What we may have here is an after-the-fact rationalization.

In terms of the principal objective of supporting the struggle for a New International Economic Order, the UNESCO campaign has been, on balance, a failure. In fact, it may even have been counter-productive in that an excuse was provided for beginning the process of destroying the United Nations system. The extent of the failure is indicated by the remarkable lack of dissension there appears to exist within the Western Bloc over the U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO. What is particularly sad is that an initiative that was intended to win over Western public opinion to the cause of restructuring international economic relations, resulted in turning public opinion against itself and all that was associated with it. Given the failure of the UNESCO campaign, the author attempts to make something of what was achieved. This is not a bad thing in itself, but one does wish that he would have drawn on his resources as a participant of the process and as an astute analyst to evaluate the strategy and tactics adopted by the Third World proponents on the New International Information Order, as well as by the Soviet Union and its allies. It is not only journalists who have to be educated, as stressed in the book, but also Third World and other policy makers involved in negotiating communication and other issues in international fora.

Though Nordenstreng has denied readers of the benefit of his analytical skills on the above question, he has provided anyone who wishes to engage in further analysis with a rich source of material.
The book is worth buying just for the factual data it contains. But it is much more than that, being an excellently written and thought-provoking contribution to the field of international communication, as well as the study of international law and ethics.

REFERENCES
