



Latest Tweet

Please wait while our tweets load.

[If you can't wait - check out what we've been twittering.](#)



[+](#) Share | [f](#) [my](#) [g](#) [t](#)

[Publications](#)

[Policy Pamphlets & Reports](#)

[Strategic Briefings](#)

[Backgrounders](#)

[Letters](#)

[Conversations](#)

[Editorials](#)

[Policy & Research Areas](#)

[Regions](#)

[Britain](#)

[Greater Europe & Eurasia](#)

[European Union](#)

[European Neighbourhood](#)

[Russia & Eurasia](#)

[The Americas](#)

[North America](#)

[Latin America](#)

[Middle East & Africa](#)

[Middle East](#)

[Africa](#)

[Asia Pacific](#)

[East Asia](#)

[South Asia](#)

[South East Asia & Australia](#)

[Themes](#)

[Democracy & Development](#)

[Environment & Economy](#)

[Global Security & Terrorism](#)

[Transatlantic Relations & Defence](#)

[Events](#)

[Future Events](#)

[Past Events](#)
[Campaigns & Projects](#)
[Affiliated Projects](#)
[Worldview](#)
[Global Power Europe](#)
[YPFP London](#)
[Greater Surbiton](#)
[APPG](#)
[Media Centre](#)
[Online Shop](#)
[Recommended Reading](#)

Email List

Sign up here and keep up to date by joining the HJS mailing list

Email

Sign up

[HOME](#) > [Policy & Research Areas](#) > [Regions](#) > [Greater Europe & Eurasia](#) > [European Neighbourhood](#)

Chomsky's Srebrenica Shame - and The Guardian's...

By Marko Attila Hoare, 21st November 2005

'The lady doth protest too much, methinks.'

Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 2

In the realm of politics, there are those of us who wear our hearts on our sleeves: proud of what we stand for, we are not afraid to state our positions as clearly as possible, so there is no danger of misunderstanding; we call a spade a spade, and are ready to face the music. On the other hand, there are those who are embarrassed by their own position: they dissemble; muddying the waters so that what they really think is vague and hidden; when confronted by those who recognise them for what they are, they lash out in

fear and shame, denying what everyone knows to be the truth.

Two very interesting parallel cases were highlighted in the *Guardian* newspaper on 17 November. It was reported that David Irving was arrested in Austria for the crime of Holocaust denial. Irving is well known as a Holocaust denier and Hitler apologist, yet when accused of this by the historian Deborah Lipstadt, he attempted to sue her for libel, resulting in his crushing courtroom defeat. Yet he apparently remains ashamed to accept the label that he has inevitably earned. According to the *Guardian*: 'Mr Irving has said he does not deny Jews were killed by the Nazis, but challenges the number and manner of Jewish concentration camp deaths. He has questioned the use of large-scale gas chambers to exterminate the Jews, and has claimed that the numbers of those who perished are far lower than those generally accepted. He also contends that most Jews who died at Auschwitz did so from diseases such as typhus, not gas poisoning.' In other words, lacking the moral courage to say proudly 'Yes, I deny the Holocaust!', Irving seeks refuge in the claim that he is merely concerned with the accuracy of details and interpretation. Thus, the Holocaust denier does not merely deny the Holocaust; he denies his own denial. Of course, no rational person would accept such a plea at face value.

On the same day (17 November), a new twist emerged in another saga of genocide-denial: the *Guardian* printed a grovelling apology to Noam Chomsky for a none-too-flattering interview with him carried out by the award-winning journalist Emma Brockes, published by the *Guardian* on 31 October, in which Brockes cites Chomsky as having said that the Srebrenica massacre of 1995 was 'probably overstated' and was not even an actual massacre. Chomsky prides himself on being a resolute champion of freedom of speech; on this ground, he has defended the right of Holocaust-deniers to publish what they want; and condemned Britain's libel laws. Yet faced with Brockes's exposure of his position, he and his circle of fans retreated from their pro-free-speech position, and organised a campaign of denunciation of Brockes, bombarding the *Guardian* with letters of complaint, and eventually bullying this spineless newspaper into issuing an unequivocal apology and retraction.

In his letter of complaint to the *Guardian*, published on 2 November, Chomsky writes: 'As for her [Brookes's] personal opinions, interpretations and distortions, she is of course free to publish them, and I would, of course, support her right to do so, on grounds that she makes clear she does not understand.' Yet as a result of the Chomskyite campaign against Brookes, the *Guardian* readers' editor reported on 17 November: 'The *Guardian* has now withdrawn the interview from the website.' Just fancy that ! More shamefully still, the *Guardian* also apologised for having published a letter by Kemal Pervanic, a survivor of the Serb concentration-camp Omarska, alongside Chomsky's on 2 November. Pervanic said he was 'shocked by some of the views of Noam Chomsky in the article by Emma Brookes's.' Yet in the words of the *Guardian* readers' editor's grovelling piece of self-criticism: 'While he has every sympathy with the writer [Pervanic], Prof Chomsky believes that its publication was designed to undermine his position, and addressed a part of the interview which was false... With hindsight it is acknowledged that the juxtaposition has exacerbated Prof Chomsky's complaint, and that is regretted.' So much for respecting the right of a concentration-camp survivor to state his opinion.

The irony is all the greater, as the Brookes interview revolved around Chomsky's defence of the writer Diana Johnstone, allegedly on the grounds of supporting freedom of speech. In 2003, the left-wing Swedish magazine *Ordfront* published an interview with Johnstone, which repeated her revisionist, genocide-denying views of the Bosnian war. This provoked massive outrage on the part of members of *Ordfront*'s editorial board and readers, leading to resignation of the editor and a public apology by the magazine for the pain it had caused to Bosnian genocide survivors. Johnstone's Swedish publisher apparently withdrew its agreement to publish her book. This, in the eyes of Chomsky, consisted of a violation of Johnstone's 'freedom of speech', though nobody had prevented her from disseminating her views through other magazines or publishers; indeed, her book has been published in the UK by Pluto Press, and her articles are available all over the internet, should anyone wish to read them. Nor, it should be said, was Johnstone murdered, tortured or driven out of her home, like hundreds of thousands of Bosnian citizens in the 1990s, whose rights

Chomsky has never got round to championing. But assuming the right of a Western author not to have her writings rejected by publishers on political grounds is a more worthy cause than the right of Balkan *untermenschen* to life and limb, it remains to be seen whether Chomsky's fellow left-wing libertarians will engage themselves in defence of Brockes as forthrightly as they did in defence of Johnstone.

What was it about Brockes's interview that so rattled Chomsky? Chomskyite ire focussed on the question-and-answer headline that introduced the interview:

Q. [Brockes]: Do you regret supporting those who say the Srebrenica massacre was exaggerated?

A. [Chomsky]: My only regret is that I didn't do it strongly enough.

This was a paraphrase, rather than a literal quotation, and one that was written by the newspaper rather than by Brockes herself, and for which she therefore cannot be held responsible. Nevertheless, it accurately summed up the essence of the matter: Chomsky had supported Johnstone, who claimed that the Srebrenica massacre was exaggerated. In his open letter to the *Guardian* of 13 November, Chomsky claimed it was simply a matter of defending freedom of speech: 'The truthful part is that I said, and explained at length, that I regret not having strongly enough opposed the Swedish publisher's decision to withdraw a book by Diana (not 'Diane,' as the *Guardian* would have it) Johnstone after it was bitterly attacked in the Swedish press... In the interview, whatever Johnstone may have said about Srebrenica never came up, and is entirely irrelevant in any event, at least to anyone with a minimal appreciation of freedom of speech.'

Chomsky therefore claimed his defence of Johnstone's freedom of speech had been misrepresented as denial of the Srebrenica massacre. Indeed, Brockes's portrayal of Chomsky's alleged denial of Srebrenica was at the heart of Chomsky's complaint. According to Brockes, Chomsky claimed 'that during the Bosnian war the 'massacre' at Srebrenica was probably overstated.' Brockes elaborated thus on Chomsky's style: 'Chomsky uses

quotations marks to undermine things that he disagrees with and, in print at least, it can come across less as academic than as witheringly teenage; like, 'Srebrenica was so not a massacre.' Chomsky's outraged response was that 'with five minutes research on the internet, any journalist could find many places where I described the massacre as a massacre, never with quotes. That alone ends the story.' The *Guardian* readers' editor accepted the validity of Chomsky's complaint, and threw in an apology to Johnstone for good measure: 'Ms Brockes's misrepresentation of Prof Chomsky's views on Srebrenica stemmed from her misunderstanding of his support for Ms Johnstone. Neither Prof Chomsky nor Ms Johnstone have [sic] ever denied the fact of the massacre.'

The big question is, of course, does Chomsky really deny the Srebrenica massacre? Or, if he does not deny it outright, does he put such a spin on it that he denies it to all intents and purposes?

Johnstone, for her part, denies it to all intents and purposes. Her book, *Fools' Crusade: Yugoslavia, NATO and Western Delusions* (London: Pluto Press, 2002) puts the words 'Srebrenica massacre' in quotes (p. 106). She then goes on to argue: 'In trying to understand what happened at Srebrenica, a number of factors should be taken into account.' These are, she argues, that Srebrenica and other 'safe areas' had 'served as Muslim military bases under UN protection'; that the 'Muslim military force stationed in Srebrenica - some 5,000 men under the command of Naser Oric, had carried out murderous raids against nearby Serb villages'; that '[Bosnian President] Izetbegovic pulled Naser Oric out of Srebrenica prior to the anticipated Serb offensive, deliberately leaving the enclave undefended'; and that 'Insofar as Muslims were actually executed following the fall of Srebrenica, such crimes bear all the signs of spontaneous acts of revenge rather than a project of 'genocide''. Furthermore: 'Six years after the summer of 1995, ICTY forensic teams had exhumed 2,631 bodies in the region, and identified fewer than 50. In an area where fighting had raged for years, some of the bodies were certainly of Serbs as well as of Muslims. Of these bodies, 199 were found to have been bound or blindfolded, and must reasonably be presumed on the basis of the material evidence to have been executed.' She concludes:

‘War crimes ? The Serbs themselves do not deny that crimes were committed. Part of a plan of genocide ? For this there is no evidence whatsoever.’ (pp. 109-118).

To sum up Johnstone’s position on Srebrenica: she blames everything that happened there on the Muslims; claims they provoked the Serb offensive in the first place; then deliberately engineered their own killing; and then exaggerated their own death-toll. She denies that thousands of Muslims were massacred; suggesting there is no evidence for a number higher than 199 - less than 2.5% of the accepted figure of eight thousand. And she eschews the word 'massacre' in favour of 'execution' - as if it were a question of criminals on Death Row, not of innocent civilians. It is as if she were to claim that less than 150,000 Jews, rather than six million, had died in the Holocaust; that the Jews had provoked and engineered the Nazi killings; that these killings had been 'executions'; and that the Jews had then exaggerated their death toll. She is ready to excuse the Srebrenica killings as retaliation for Oric’s earlier killings of Serb civilians - but does not mention that Oric’s crimes took place long after the war had already begun and Serb forces had begun slaughtering Muslims all over Bosnia. She does not mention how Srebrenica became an ‘enclave’ in the first place: through Serb aggression against, and conquest of, East Bosnia in 1992, and the killing and expulsion of the Muslim population that this involved - against which the Srebrenica Muslims were temporarily able to hold out as an 'enclave'. All in all, this can reasonably be called denial; insofar as it is not complete denial - she recognises less than 2.5% of the massacre - it is an apologia for the Serb forces. The *Guardian* readers’ editor’s claim that ‘Neither Prof Chomsky nor Ms Johnstone have [sic] ever denied the fact of the massacre’ is, therefore, at least half untrue.

But what about the other half, i.e. Chomsky ? An open letter to *Ordfront*, signed by Chomsky, Tariq Ali, Arundhati Roy and others, stated: 'We regard Johnstone's *Fools' Crusade* as an outstanding work, dissenting from the mainstream view but doing so by an appeal to fact and reason, in a great tradition.' In his personal letter to *Ordfront* in defence of Johnstone, Chomsky wrote: ‘I have known her for many years, have read the book, and feel that it is quite serious and important.’ Chomsky makes no criticism here

of Johnstone's massacre denial, or indeed anywhere else - except in the Brockes interview, which he has repudiated. Indeed, he endorses her revisionism: in response to Mikael van Reis's claim that 'She [Johnstone] insists that Serb atrocities - ethnic cleansing, torture camps, mass executions - are western propaganda', Chomsky replies that 'Johnstone argues - and, in fact, clearly demonstrates - that a good deal of what has been charged has no basis in fact, and much of it is pure fabrication.'

In the same letter, Chomsky makes much of an allegedly positive review of Johnstone's book in a British foreign-affairs journal: 'I also know that it has been very favourably reviewed, e.g., by the British scholarly journal *International Affairs*, journal of the Royal Academy.' He then continues, with his own idiosyncratic logic: 'I don't read Swedish journals of course, but it would be interesting to learn how the Swedish press explains the fact that their interpretation of Johnstone's book differs so radically from that of Britain's leading scholarly foreign affairs journal, *International Affairs*. I mentioned the very respectful review by Robert Caplan, of the University of Reading and Oxford [sic]. It is obligatory, surely, for those who condemn Johnstone's book in the terms just reviewed to issue still harsher condemnation of *International Affairs*, as well as of the universities of Reading and Oxford, for allowing such a review to appear, and for allowing the author to escape censure.' The essence of what Chomsky is saying, is that Johnstone received a positive review in a respectable scholarly journal, therefore her book must be good.

There are, first of all, a number of distortions in Chomsky's claim: *International Affairs* is the journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, not of the 'Royal Academy'; the RIIA is a para-governmental think tank, not a scholarly institution, therefore it makes no sense to describe *International Affairs* as 'Britain's leading scholarly foreign affairs journal'; the reviewer was Richard, not Robert Caplan; and his review of Johnstone's book was far from being as positive as Chomsky suggests. Caplan wrote: 'Diana Johnstone has written a revisionist and highly contentious account of Western policy and the dissolution of Yugoslavia... Yet for all of the book's constructive correctives, it is often difficult to recognize the world that

Johnstone describes...The book also contains numerous errors of fact, on which Johnstone however relies to strengthen her case... Johnstone herself is very selective.'

Indeed, Caplan was overly polite in his criticisms of what is, in reality, an extremely poor book, one that is little more than a polemic in defence of the Serb-nationalist record during the wars of the 1990s - and an ill-informed one at that. Johnstone is not an investigative journalist who spent time in the former Yugoslavia doing fieldwork on the front-lines, like Ed Vulliamy, David Rohde or Roy Gutman. Nor is she a qualified academic who has done extensive research with Serbo-Croat primary sources, like Noel Malcolm or Norman Cigar. Indeed, she appears not to read Serbo-Croat, and her sources are mostly English-language, with a smattering of French and German. In short, she is an armchair Balkan amateur-enthusiast, and her book is of the sort that could be written from any office in Western Europe with access to the internet.

The quality of Johnstone's 'scholarship' may be gauged from some of the Serb-nationalist falsehoods she repeats uncritically, such as the claim that the Serb Nazi-collaborationist leader Draza Mihailovic formed 'the first armed guerrilla resistance to Nazi occupation in all of Europe' (p. 291) - a myth long since exploded by serious historians (see for example Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: The Chetniks*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1975, pp. 124, 137). Or Johnstone's claim that Croatia in 1990 'rapidly restored the symbols of the dread 1941 [Nazi-puppet] state - notably the red and white checkerboard flag, which to Serbs was the equivalent of the Nazi swastika' (p. 23) - a falsehood that can be refuted by a glance at any complete version of the Yugoslav constitution, which clearly shows that the Croatian chequerboard - far from being a fascist symbol equivalent to the swastika - was an official symbol of state in Titoist Yugoslavia (see, for example the 1950 edition of the Yugoslav constitution, published by Sluzbeni list, Belgrade, which shows the Croatian chequerboard as a Yugoslav symbol of state on p. 115; or the 1974 edition published by Prosveta, Belgrade, which shows the Croatian chequerboard - in full colour - at the start of the text). It would require an entire article to list and refute all

the numerous errors and falsehoods in Johnstone's book; Chomsky praises it because he sympathises with her political views, not because it has any scholarly merit.

Perhaps it would be unfair to label Chomsky a Srebrenica massacre-denier simply because he praises uncritically Johnstone's massacre-denying book and endorses its conclusions. A fuller picture of Chomsky's views on Srebrenica, however, can be gleaned from his interview with M. Junaid Alam of *Left Hook* on 17 December 2004, where he states that 'Srebrenica was an enclave, lightly protected by UN forces, which was being used as a base for attacking nearby Serb villages. It was known that there's going to be retaliation. When there was a retaliation, it was vicious. They trucked out all the women and children, they kept the men inside, and apparently slaughtered them. The estimates are thousands of people slaughtered.' The key words here are 'retaliation', 'apparently' and 'estimates'; the slaughter 'apparently' took place; the thousands killed were mere 'estimates'; they were, in any case, simply 'retaliation' for earlier Serb crimes. Note that while Chomsky raises doubts about the fact and scale of the killings, he is absolutely categorical that they were retribution for earlier Muslim crimes - the slaughter *apparently* took place, but if it did, then it was *definitely* retaliation. Read carefully, nothing that Chomsky says actually contradicts Johnstone's massacre-denying claims cited above.

Chomsky then goes on to compare the Serb behaviour favourably with that of the Americans in Fallujah: 'Well, with Fallujah, the US didn't truck out the women and children, it bombed them out.' Chomsky does not mention the thousands of Bosnian women and children raped and murdered by Serb forces in other parts of Bosnia; nor those blown to bits by the Serb shelling of Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns, choosing instead to focus on the sparing of the women and children of Srebrenica. Johnstone, too, makes much of this: 'one thing should be obvious: one does not commit 'genocide' by sparing women and children'. In fact, the Nazis began the systematic extermination of Jewish adult males in the USSR in 1941 before they began the systematic extermination of Jewish women and children, and the Nazis, unlike the Serb forces a half century later, were not being restrained by the

democratic Western media.

Chomsky again compared Serb behaviour at Srebrenica favourably with American behaviour at Fallujah in his article 'Imperial Presidency' (*Canadian Dimension*, January/February 2005, vol. 39, no. 1), where he wrote of 'Srebrenica, almost universally described as 'genocide' in the West. In that case, as we know in detail from the Dutch government report and other sources, the Muslim enclave in Serb territory, inadequately protected, was used as a base for attacks against Serb villages, and when the anticipated reaction took place, it was horrendous. The Serbs drove out all but military age men, and then moved in to kill them. There are differences with Falluja. Women and children were not bombed out of Srebrenica, but trucked out, and there will be no extensive efforts to exhume the last corpse of the packrats in their warrens in Falluja. There are other differences, arguably unfair to the Serbs.' Not quite massacre denial, it is true; more of a massacre minimisation - since Chomsky nowhere recognises the figure of eight-thousand Muslim dead, it is entirely possible that he reduces the massacre to the fraction suggested by Johnstone, and therefore denies it to all intents and purposes. And he is certainly at pains to contrast 'the Serbs' favourably with the Americans.

One might criticise Brockes for not giving a more nuanced portrayal of Chomsky's vague yet complex view of the Srebrenica massacre - were it not for the fact that Chomsky is notorious for the deliberate use of obscure and confusing language, designed to muddy the waters as to his real views, and the use of verbal trickery aimed at confusing his opponents. Take his 2001 exchange with Christopher Hitchens over the question of whether the US bombing of Sudan's pharmaceutical factory in 1998 was a crime equivalent to 11 September:

Chomsky stated: 'That Hitchens cannot mean what he writes is clear, in the first place, from his reference to the bombing of Sudan. He must be unaware that he is expressing such racist contempt for African victims of a terrorist crime, and cannot intend what his words imply.'

Hitchens replied: 'Since his [Chomsky's] remarks are directed at me, I'll instance a less-than-half-truth as he applies it to myself. I 'must be unaware', he writes, that I 'express such racist contempt for African victims of a terrorist crime.' With his pitying tone of condescension, and his insertion of a deniable but particularly objectionable innuendo, I regret to say that Chomsky displays what have lately become his hallmarks.'

Chomsky then pulled his sleight-of-hand: 'Hitchens claims that I accused him of a 'propensity for racist contempt.' I explicitly and unambiguously said the opposite.'

Given such word games and obfuscation, Chomsky should hardly complain when an earnest interviewer fails to interpret his well-camouflaged position as he would have it. Had he so wished, he could have avoided the entire imbroglio with Brockes by telling her unambiguously: 'I recognise that several thousand Muslim civilians were massacred by Serb forces at Srebrenica in 1995'. Yet one rather suspects he wanted to have his cake and eat it: to put forward a 'position' that was compatible with those of the outright deniers, like Johnstone, but that nevertheless allows him formally to deny being a denier himself.

Instead of taking responsibility for his own insincerity and double-talk, he chose to punish the messenger - Brockes. He has then failed on two occasions - his letter published in the *Guardian* on 2 November and his open letter to the *Guardian* of 13 November - to state categorically that the massacre occurred in the way that it is understood to have done: as a massacre of several thousand innocent Muslim civilians by Serb forces. Nor is it true what Chomsky claims, that 'with five minutes research on the internet, any journalist could find many places where I described the massacre as a massacre, never with quotes.' I have not yet discovered a single text on the internet in which Chomsky describes Srebrenica as a 'massacre'; if such a text exists, it is not as easy to find as Chomsky claims. Chomsky's actual position on Srebrenica must remain an open question until he can actually bring himself to speak and write in plain English - for which nobody should hold their breath. Under these circumstances, the *Guardian* readers'

editor had no need to issue its apology, and had no right to impugn the journalistic professionalism of Brockes. It is to Brockes, not to Chomsky, that the *Guardian* should be apologising.

The outrage of Chomsky and his fellow-travellers over his portrayal as a Srebrenica massacre-denier is particularly ironic, given that several of these fellow-travellers are themselves overt Srebrenica deniers. Chomsky is notorious for having gone on record in 1977, in an article co-written with a certain Ed Herman, as claiming that Khmer Rouge atrocities were being exaggerated by the Western media ('Distortions at Fourth Hand', *The Nation*, 25 June 1977). Recently, the same Ed Herman founded a 'Srebrenica Research Group' to propagate the view that the Srebrenica massacre never happened. In his essay 'The Politics of the Srebrenica Massacre', Herman writes that 'the evidence for a massacre, certainly of one in which 8,000 men and boys were executed, has always been problematic, to say the least'. Herman concludes: 'The 'Srebrenica massacre' [note the quote marks] is the greatest triumph of propaganda to emerge from the Balkan wars... But the link of this propaganda triumph to truth and justice is non-existent. The disconnection with truth is epitomised by the fact that the original estimate of 8,000, including 5,000 'missing' - who had left Srebrenica for Bosnian Muslim lines - was maintained even after it had been quickly established that several thousand had reached those lines and that several thousand more had perished in battle. This nice round number lives on today in the face of a failure to find the executed bodies and despite the absence of a single satellite photo showing executions, bodies, digging, or trucks transporting bodies for reburial.'

In this way, Chomsky's close collaborator Herman unashamedly holds a view that Chomsky is outraged to have attributed to himself. Both Chomsky and Herman are regular contributors to the website 'ZNet' - a haven for neo-Stalinist die-hards, several of whom are outright Srebrenica deniers. The publication of Herman's above-cited article was greeted with uncritical approval by ZNet blogger David Peterson, who praised its 'powerful analysis'. The same Peterson then reacted with outrage when Brockes attributed the same Srebrenica-denying view that he himself endorses to his

comrade Chomsky, describing her interview as 'lies, smears and more lies'. Just fancy that ! If to deny the Srebrenica massacre is shameful - which it is - why do Johnstone, Peterson and Herman do so ? But if they really think that the Srebrenica massacre did not happen, or was vastly smaller and more justifiable than is usually claimed, why should they be so outraged at Chomsky being described as a denier ? The answer brings us back to where we began: the Chomskyites and ZNet people are, at heart, embarrassed by their own position. In this, too, they resemble the controversial British historian recently arrested in Austria.

In this debate over whether or not Chomsky denied a massacre, it is important not to lose sight of something more damning and much less controversial: that Chomsky quite openly denies that genocide took place, either in Srebrenica or in Bosnia as a whole, and makes no bones about putting the word 'genocide' in quotes - this despite the fact that an international tribunal, established by the UN, has convicted a Bosnian Serb general of aiding and abetting genocide in Srebrenica. Indeed, the genocide-denial of Johnstone, Chomsky and their circle goes far beyond questioning the Srebrenica massacre. Chomsky was among those who supported the campaign in defence of *Living Marxism (LM)*, the lunatic-fringe magazine that accused the news agency ITN of fabricating the existence of Serb concentration camps in Bosnia, on the basis of the writings of Thomas Deichmann, an amateur journalist and supporter of the Serb-nationalist cause. Deichmann claimed the camps in question were merely 'detention centres', and - although he had never visited them himself - presumed to know them well enough to claim that the pictures ITN had taken of them were deliberately intended to 'mislead' the Western public as to their true nature. ITN sued *LM* for libel, and the magazine was unable to produce a single witness who had actually seen the camps at first hand, whereas eye-witnesses such as Vulliamy testified as to their true, horrific character. *LM*'s resounding defeat in the libel trial has not stopped Johnstone, in a recent commentary on the Chomsky-Brockes affair in the left-wing American magazine *Counterpunch*, from repeating *LM*'s already discredited lies: "The issue raised by *LM* had to do with the way photographs taken at Trnopolje camp, by focusing on a thin man on the other side of a wire fence which in

reality did not surround the Muslim inmates, but rather the ITN crew itself, was used to create the impression that what was happening in Bosnia was a repetition of a Nazi-style Holocaust." The campaign against Brockes has therefore simultaneously become a campaign to rewrite the history of the Bosnian war to deny that genocide took place.

Chomsky's denial that genocide took place in Bosnia, even after it has been established in international law that it did, and even after *LM*'s lies about Serb camps were exposed as such in a British court, marks him down as a revisionist in the mould of Irving; the general thrust of Brockes's exposure of him was therefore bang on target. In pandering to him, the *Guardian* has besmirched its own reputation and insulted the survivors of the genocide. Ironically, it was *Guardian* journalists such as Vulliamy and Maggie O'Kane who were in the forefront of bringing the genocide to light in 1992. That the *Guardian* - with this proud record - should have chosen to betray Brockes, its own journalist, by apologising on her behalf to an unabashed genocide-denier, means that this newspaper is now collaborating in the revisionist re-writing of the history of the Bosnian war.

© 2013 The Henry Jackson Society, Project for Democratic Geopolitics. All rights reserved.

[Web Design](#) by Byte Art