

# **The West's Leftist 'Intellectuals' Who Traffic in Genocide Denial, From Srebrenica to Syria**

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**There was no wave of mea culpas from the 'anti-imperialists' who denied the Bosnian genocide after Ratko Mladic's guilty verdict this week. That's because conclusive evidence, even criminal convictions, won't stop those war crimes deniers, who are now actively whitewashing Assad's war crimes**

Twenty two years after the Srebrenica massacre, Ratko Mladic has been [convicted of the crime of genocide](#) and sentenced to life imprisonment in the final case of the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal at The Hague.

Among those in attendance at The Hague was Fikret Alic, survivor of the Serbian-run Trnopolje concentration camp. In 1992 a photograph of Alic's emaciated figure, published on the [front cover of Time magazine](#), shocked the world, leading to international shock and condemnation of the atrocities unfolding in Bosnia.

Five years after that infamous photograph, a now defunct British far-left magazine known as LM (formerly Living Marxism) ran an article defending the concentration camp by one Thomas Deichmann. The article, headlined "The picture that fooled the world," claimed that reporters from the British ITN TV news company had deliberately misrepresented the image of Alic, stating that the concentration camp was a "collection center for refugees" who were free to leave "if they wished."

Not only was this an outrageous, unsubstantiated lie (and has echoes of the claims the Nazis made about the show camp of Theresienstadt) but it was a direct attack on the survivors of Serbian crimes against humanity.

ITN successfully [sued LM for libel](#) and were awarded £375,000 in damages, which bankrupted the publication and put it out of business.

However this was not the end of the story. The reporters involved in the fraudulent LM article refused to back down, and they were defended by high profile individuals such as celebrated left-wing academic Noam Chomsky.

In a 2006 interview, Chomsky [reiterated](#) the claim: "It was a refugee camp, I mean, people could leave if they wanted," and in 2011 condemned the [libel case](#) against LM, in an email exchange in which he also said that referring to Srebrenica as an act of genocide "cheapens the word."

A book published by Edward Herman and David Peterson called The Politics of Genocide, which claims Serb forces "incontestably had not killed any but 'Bosnian Muslim men of military age'" carries a foreword by Chomsky and an endorsement by Australian journalist John Pilger.

Wednesday, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia concluded that genocide was committed in Srebrenica, and that it had been orchestrated by Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb

general.

But nobody should be expecting any retractions or apologies from Chomsky or Pilger, men for whom genocide denial has become a point of pride.

Today, Chomsky, Pilger and a slew of other notable left-wing academics, journalists and bloggers are applying this same war-crimes revisionism to the war in Syria.

Earlier this month, the UN Security Council-mandated independent investigative body set up to investigate chemical weapons attacks in Syria, the OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism, found the [Assad regime culpable](#) for the [sarin gas massacre in Khan Sheikhoun](#) on April 4 2017.

In the days that followed the attack, eyewitness accounts, [on the ground reports](#) and open source investigative methods built an accurate picture of events. However, the unsubstantiated conspiracy theories have flourished – and, no surprise at all, they emanate from the same old places.

Two of the most widespread and [thoroughly debunked](#) theories were spread by MIT professor Ted Postol and Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Seymour Hersh.

While Postol's theories gets even the most basic facts about the attack [wrong](#) and were clearly nothing more than a series of desperate attempts to poke holes in the growing body of evidence collected about the attack, Hersh relies on testimony from one unnamed source that cites the existence of a mysterious rebel munitions depot that Hersh was unable to provide a location for.

These arguments were not only demonstrably false, but lacked any credibility to begin with. However, that didn't stop the glowing endorsements from [Chomsky](#) and [Pilger](#).

These conspiracy theories were promoted, propagated and publicly defended by The Intercept's [Glenn Greenwald](#), [Ken Klippenstein](#), [Max Blumenthal](#) and [Gareth Porter](#).

The problem isn't just that people like Chomsky were wrong or that these conspiracy theories were riddled with falsehoods, or in the case of Hersh's single anonymous source, clear fabrications and distortions of reality. The problem is that after conclusive investigations and war crimes tribunals Chomsky et al refuse to retract, correct or apologize for their endorsement of what clearly amounts to the historical revisionism of war crimes.

Chomsky's record, Postol's MIT tenure, Hersh's awards brought and still bring an erroneous air of credibility to these cooked up conspiracies, which are then dutifully disseminated to the masses via their disciples in the blogosphere like pro-Assad Twitter personality [Benjamin Norton](#).

Prominent left-wing journalist George Monbiot [tweeted](#): "Part of the problem is that a kind of cult has developed around Noam Chomsky and John Pilger, which cannot believe they could ever be wrong, and produces ever more elaborate conspiracy theories to justify their mistakes."

The ludicrous parade of unscientific, immoral conspiracy theories from Bosnia to Syria are presented by their defenders as critical assessment of a 'White House narrative'. However, the refusal to retract once these conspiracies have been conclusively disproven often belies a far more insidious motive; to minimize the crimes of regimes hostile to the West, even in the case of genocide, to justify their an anti-imperialist narrative that sees the United States and Britain as the [most evil countries](#) in the world.

This narrative clearly falls flat when presented with conclusive evidence and criminal convictions for the perpetrators of the Srebrenica genocide. The same standard of evidence of war crimes

committed by the Assad regime [is available](#), yet if we can learn anything from the war crimes revisionism in Bosnia, it's that these same voices would rather stand by their endorsements of false claims rather than apologize to the victims that their endorsements smeared.

It's acceptable for journalists and academics to get things wrong, it's human nature. It is never acceptable to continue to propagate and endorse these things after they have been proven to be falsehoods. That is the point at which bad reporting becomes war crimes denial, and in the case of Srebrenica, outright genocide revisionism.

After decades of instances of this nature from Chomsky, how is he still seen as a credible voice in the media, and why is he still tapped as an expert in anything remotely touching war crimes? The words of all of the aforementioned journalists should be thoroughly disregarded so long as they continue to refuse to retract endorsements for theories that ultimately defame and attack victims and survivors of crimes against humanity.

Standing outside of the court Mr. Alic told reporters: "Justice has won, and the war criminal has been convicted." Unfortunately for Mr. Alic, and thousands like him in Bosnia and Syria, those who defame them by writing apologia and revisionism for the unspeakable crimes they suffered continue to do so free from shame or remorse - or consequences. We, both within the media and as its readers and users, owe these survivors more.

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