

## Atrocity, memory, photography: imaging the concentration camps of Bosnia – the case of ITN versus *Living Marxism*, Part 2

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Part 1 of this article detailed the controversy surrounding the 1992 television image of Fikret Alić and others imprisoned at Trnopolje camp in Bosnia, demonstrating how doubts about its veracity were unsustainable. Part 2 explores the historical, political and visual context in which the particulars of the controversy are located. It explores what is involved in the concept of a ‘concentration camp’, as well as the nature of the Nazis’ concentration camp system and the implications of this for the memory of the Holocaust and our understanding of contemporary atrocity. Then documentary evidence about the war in Bosnia is introduced in order to understand the significance of Omarska and Trnopolje in their wider context. Following that, the general question of the relationship between pictures and policy, and the specific question for the relationships between photography and the Holocaust, is considered to illuminate the larger questions of how particular atrocities are represented. Finally, the article concludes with some thoughts on the politics of critique and intellectual responsibility in instances where criticism becomes historical denial.

### Introduction

The photograph of prisoners – especially the emaciated Fikret Alić – behind barbed wire at the Trnopolje camp, in the Prijedor region of Bosnia, became one of the iconic images of the Bosnian war (Figure 1). The photograph was taken from the August 1992 news reports of Britain’s Independent Television News (ITN) journalists Penny Marshall and Ian Williams that covered both Omarska and Trnopolje. The photograph attracted considerable media attention and provoked much political response because of the way it evidenced the Bosnian Serb authorities’ ethnic-cleansing strategy that lay at the heart of the war.<sup>1</sup>

The image of Alić also drew the ire of those who saw it as an example of the demonization of the entire Serbian people by the Western media, for the purposes of making US military intervention necessary and inevitable. At the forefront of this attack was an article written by Thomas Deichmann, ‘The Picture that Fooled the World’, published by *LM* (formerly *Living Marxism*, edited by Michael Hume) in February 1997. Deichmann and Hume, who alleged that Marshall and Williams had fabricated the images in their reports so as to link the situation in Bosnia with the Nazi Holocaust, stepped up their criticism of ITN after the news network sued *LM* for libel. Despite losing the libel trial in March 2000, supporters of *LM* and its argument have continued to propagate the view that the ITN reports were inaccurate.

In part I of this article, I analysed in detail the ITN reports and the *LM* claims, using the available ITN videotapes, all *LM*’s articles and arguments, and the full transcript of the libel trial (Campbell 2002). I demonstrated how Deichmann and Hume developed their



**Figure 1. Penny Marshall, ITN, 6 August 1992**

case by focusing on the material specifics of a fence, and showed how their case, even in its own limited terms, was erroneous and flawed. Important in this regard was the way Deichmann's and Hume's testimony in the libel trial was markedly different from the account of Trnopolje's allegedly benign conditions given in the original *LM* article.

Neither the way Deichmann and Hume backtracked from some of their original allegations, nor *LM*'s failure to prove its case against ITN, has prevented further criticism of the ITN reports. This provokes an important question: why does this case continue to matter for those who still argue *LM*'s original position? I have to this point showed how *LM*'s overall strategy has been to isolate details from their context, then use arguments about those details to make larger claims that run contrary to better documented interpretations of that context, while denying that they are motivated by wider political considerations concerning responsibility for the violence of the Bosnian war. This makes clear, as I argued in the conclusion to part 1, that what matters for *LM* and others is the way this dispute enables the potential link between Bosnia and the Holocaust to be cut, the meaning of the Bosnian war to be diminished, and the responsibility of those who perpetrated the ethnic-cleansing campaigns to be denied.

Countering *LM*'s strategy involves re-historicizing the argument by insisting on the importance of context and the wider issues that help identify the way in which specific details have been read. In this article, part 2 of the argument, I therefore move beyond the case to an exploration of the historical, political and visual context in which the specificities of Alić and others detained behind barbed wire at Trnopolje are located. In particular, because *LM* asserts that Omarska and Trnopolje were not concentration camps, this article examines what is involved in the concept of a concentration camp, as well as the nature of the Nazis' concentration camp system and the resultant implications for the

memory of the Holocaust and our understanding of contemporary atrocity. I then bring to bear some of the documentary evidence about the war in Bosnia in order to understand the significance of Omarska and Trnopolje in their wider context. Because *LM* asserts that the ITN pictures changed the direction of Western policy and led to the immediate introduction of military forces, I explore the question of the relationship between pictures and policy. I then use some of the literature dealing with photography and the Holocaust to illuminate the larger questions of how particular atrocities are represented. Finally, because *LM* has been engaged in an act of historical denial, I conclude by examining the politics of critique and intellectual responsibility. This is particularly important when, as in this case, the rhetoric of 'free speech' becomes the overriding issue, at the expense of larger political considerations related to the substance of the case and its context.

### **Interpreting Alić: concentration camps and the memory of the Holocaust**

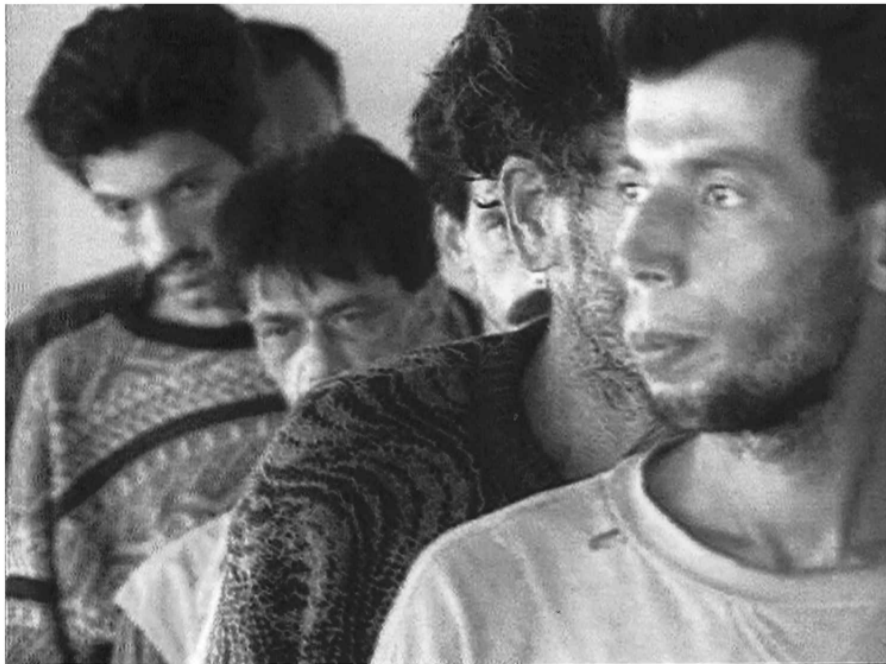
Much of Deichmann's and Hume's case against ITN was directed at how the ITN reports were themselves covered by the media after the original broadcast. In particular, they wanted to highlight the way the print media, especially in Britain, but also worldwide, took the image of Alić from the ITN report to be evidence for the idea that genocide was under way in northern Bosnia. Because the *Daily Mail* used the single image of Alić under the headline 'The Proof', and the *Daily Mirror* employed the same photograph to sustain its banner of 'Belsen 92', *LM* held the ITN journalists responsible for the way the story developed (Campbell 2002). Deichmann (1998a) argued these reports of the ITN reports were a 'media riot' incited by ITN: 'if ITN did not call the Serb-run camps at Trnopolje and Omarska in northern Bosnia concentration camps, where did the whole world get the idea that they were?' (p. 102).

It is important to keep in mind that the image of Alić and others at the fence in question comprises, as noted earlier, but a small fraction of each of the ITN reports. The first half of each report deals with the camp at Omarska, a place of no concern to Deichmann and Hume. When the subject switches to Trnopolje, there are many more shots of the camp than the sequence of Alić at the fence. It is important to keep this in mind as it means appreciating that the shots involving Alić did not originally exist in isolation, as though they were single, still photographs.<sup>2</sup> Some of those shots became photographs, first, when ITN producers in London – as distinct from those with the crew who went to Omarska and Trnopolje – used them as visual captions to frame the full reports. Secondly, they became photographs when other parts of the world's media extracted them from the ITN reports. Finally, the Alić image has become a still photograph through the controversy promoted by *LM*, which has focused on particularities at the expense of the context of the image. In so doing, Hume and Deichmann have found themselves caught in a dilemma of their own making. While they have been keen to isolate the Alić image and the question of the barbed wire, they have strenuously objected to others' efforts to probe specific details of their argument. Indeed, on a number of occasions during the trial they protested to ITN's barrister that it was illegitimate to single out individual paragraphs or break sentences down and protest about one part and not the other, despite the fact that their strategy for criticizing the ITN reports depends on isolating one image from the many in the report to focus upon.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the image of Alić that *LM* and others extracted, although recognized by the ITN crews as being very strong, was not the sequence the producers regarded as the most powerful. Discussing what they had witnessed at the two camps on the journey back to Belgrade, the consensus amongst the two ITN crews was that the sequences from Omarska, rather than prisoners at Trnopolje, were thought to be the most shocking. Following the maxim

that television stories have to begin with their strongest images in order to grab the attention of the viewers, both the ITV and Channel 4 reports began with Omarska and its terrified prisoners (Figures 2–4).<sup>4</sup>

Despite these considerations, Hume insisted the specific character of the fence at Trnopolje was important: ‘men behind chicken wire is not an image that would shock the world in the same way that men behind barbed wire – those component parts of that image which pressed the button which convinced the world that they were Nazi-style concentration camps. The barbed wire was an absolutely essential part of that.’<sup>5</sup> The jury in the trial showed they doubted ITN bore the responsibility for this link, when they directed a question to Hume: ‘As Ian Williams and Penny Marshall’s reports show the low fences clearly as well as the barbed wire fences, couldn’t it be argued that if anyone is trying to mislead anyone it will be the tabloids, who only used the still of Alić behind the barbed wire fence in their reports?’<sup>6</sup> While the jury helpfully identified the range of images shown in the ITN reports, they along with *LM* overlooked an important part of the stills of Alić used by the press. Those front-page images showed Alić from head to knees, surrounded by other inmates. In so doing, it is clear that half if not two-thirds of the fence he is behind is made of chicken wire.<sup>7</sup> On this basis alone, the isolation of barbed wire (as opposed, for example, to the condition of the inmates) as the material basis for the link to previous concentration camps is unwarranted. In relying on the most specific of details – and often opaque claims about them – *LM*’s argument opens itself up to refutation by other specific details.

Nonetheless, for Hume, this got to the nub of the issue he and Deichmann were raising,



**Figure 2. Prisoners queuing for staged lunch at Omarska. Penny Marshall, ITN, 6 August 1992**



**Figure 3. Omarska prisoners leave staged lunch. Ian Williams, ITN, 6 August 1992**

the point that he wanted ‘everybody to understand more than anything else’. As Hume declared, ‘this article that I published, written by Thomas Deichmann, was not about – its primary purpose was not to enter a discussion about what this camp (Trnopolje) was, *it was about what the camp was not*, a Nazi-style concentration camp, which the world took it to be on the strength of those ITN reports. It is about what the camp was not. It was not a Nazi-style concentration camp.’<sup>8</sup> As Deichmann argued, Trnopolje might have been ‘awful’, but it was not ‘a place like Auschwitz and Belsen where mass extermination is [*sic*] taking place’.<sup>9</sup>

This argument reinforced a theme prominent in *LM*’s propagation of this story in the time after ITN issued a libel writ. As Hume wrote, ‘the issue is not about the existence of camps during the war in northern Bosnia . . . *LM* has never denied the existence of the camps or accused ITN of “fabricating” their pictures. Nor is the argument about whether or not Trnopolje camp was a pleasant place; as we have always made clear, there is no such thing as a “good” camp and everybody at Trnopolje would undoubtedly have rather been elsewhere’. Leaving aside the issue as to whether or not Hume accurately describes the entirety of Deichmann’s article and its subsequent iterations, in which the conditions at Trnopolje and ITN’s veracity were very much a central issue, this focus on what was meant by the term ‘concentration camp’, and its link to the Holocaust, came to be one of *LM*’s overriding concerns. In Hume’s words, the specific issue here was simply: ‘was the world right to interpret the ITN pictures from Trnopolje, centred on the image of Fikret Alić and other Bosnian Muslims behind barbed wire, as proof that the Bosnian Serbs were running Nazi-style concentration camps?’ (Hume 1998a). After all, Hume (1997b) argued, ‘there is



**Figure 4. Omarska prisoners returning to barracks after staged lunch.**  
**Ian Williams, ITN, 6 August 1992**

a difference between a camp such as Trnopolje, however grim, and a real concentration camp like Belsen or Auschwitz'.<sup>10</sup>

One of the ironies of this case is that when it comes to understanding what a concentration camp supposedly is, and whether or not Omarska and Trnopolje could be so named, ITN and *LM* have more in common than Hume and Deichmann cared to recognize. Testimony in the libel trial made it clear that nearly all the ITN players in the production and transmission of the reports from Omarska and Trnopolje – from the crews at the sites, to senior executives in London, and all the producers in between – thought long and hard about whether the term could and should be applied. During the lengthy night-time drive back to Belgrade from the camps, Marshall and Williams in particular debated the issue, and came to a firm conclusion that the term 'concentration camps' should not be used.<sup>11</sup> Their view then prevailed during the editing of the reports, and their eventual transmission.<sup>12</sup> Above all else, their reasoning for this insistence was that however bad the conditions were at these Bosnian Serb camps, they did not approach what the ITN journalists took to be the historical example of concentration camps – those run by the Nazi regime. The ITN journalists thus worked with the same historical memory later invoked by *LM*.

Although Deichmann could not have been aware of this debate (given that he never spoke with the ITN journalists prior to the publication of his article), his original article did note that neither of the original ITN reports used the term 'concentration camp'. Deichmann nonetheless persisted with the idea, as quoted above, that if the rest of the world did not get the idea from these reports, where could they have obtained it? For this reason, Deichmann and Hume have been keen to hold ITN journalists responsible for a

perceived failure to ‘correct’ all subsequent interpretations that have taken the camps to be concentration camps.

As we shall see, the idea that the Bosnian camps had to be identical to the worst of the Nazi camps before they could legitimately be named ‘concentration camps’ confuses a number of important issues. Of course, to say that Trnopolje, or the ‘even grimmer’ Omarska (as Deichmann described it), are identical in all respects to Auschwitz would be an historical travesty. We can endorse the general sentiment of Elie Wiesel’s statement – in his foreword to Rezan Hukanović’s memoir of life in the Bosnian camps – that ‘Omarska was not Auschwitz. Nothing, anywhere, can be compared to Auschwitz’ (Hukanović 1997: vii).<sup>13</sup> But that should not prevent us from probing into what is obscured in the idea that only places of industrial death like Auschwitz qualify as ‘real’ concentration camps.

The first thing elided in such an argument is the historical circumstances in which the term ‘concentration camp’ first appeared. During the Boer War in South Africa, British forces under Lord Kitchener conducted a scorched earth policy to deny the Boers support and sustenance. The destruction of the economic and social infrastructure this entailed meant that vast numbers of the civilian population were made into refugees. Seen by the British as a humanitarian response to the problem of the displaced population, but understood by the Boers to be part of the scorched earth policy itself, thousands of people were detained in what was first known as ‘the concentration refugee camp’ system. Starting in July 1900, there were eventually 46 ‘concentration camps’, as they became known, in which more than 116 000 people, mostly women and children from the families of Boer fighters, were imprisoned. In addition, there were up to 60 camps for indigenous Africans, and numerous prisoner of war camps. But in the concentration camps conditions were especially poor, and nearly 28 000 civilians died, leading many to call them ‘death camps’ (Royle 1998: 54, Nasson 1999: 220–224).

The term ‘concentration camp’ thus came into being long before the Nazi regime came to power in Germany. This was something that Himmler, of all people, recognized when, as the end of the Second World War and Germany’s defeat approached, he allegedly adopted a ‘humane’ outlook in which he expressed a desire ‘next time’ to have concentration camps which followed ‘the English model’.<sup>14</sup> Nor were concentration camps a product of British colonial practices alone, for around the turn of the century the Spanish in Cuba operated *campos de concentraciones* to detain insurrectionists in the colony, and the Americans in the Philippines (not to mention at home against their indigenous population) did likewise (Agamben 1997: 106). When the Roosevelt administration decided in early 1942 that all Japanese citizens and residents in the United States should be detained, they attempted to make it clear that they were establishing ‘relocation camps’ or ‘evacuation centres’ rather than concentration camps (Drinnon 1987: 6).

For the Roosevelt administration, the reference to concentration camps had to be resisted because, by this time, it was a reference to the Nazi regime. However – and this is the second thing obscured by *LMs*’ insistence that only Auschwitz and Belsen qualify as real concentration camps – the Nazis’ concentration camp system was a complex structure that had been in place years before Auschwitz was established. Indeed, there were concentration camps in Germany *before* the Nazis came to power. In 1923 Social Democrat governments interned thousands of communists in camps, in addition to building *Konzentrations-lager für Ausländer* to house East European refugees, amongst whose number there were Jews (Agamben 1997: 107).

The pervasive and politically indiscriminate nature of the concentration camp – the fact that it finds a place in many polities at different times – indicates that the camp has a particular function in the constitution of modern political order. In Agamben’s terms, the

ubiquity of the camp manifests the political space of modernity itself. That is because the camp appears when the foundational assumptions of a nation-state – especially the links between land, order and the entailments of identity (such as ethnicity, nationalism and race) – are in crisis, and the authorities resolve to deal with this crisis by making the ‘health’ of the nation a focus for their powers. In this context, those who are deemed ‘unclean’, ‘unfit’ or ‘anti-social’ are subject to disciplinary practices that culminate in their detention in camps to ensure the body politic from which they are removed is socially secure (Agamben 1997).

The system by which people were stripped of their humanity and removed from the body politic has nowhere been clearer than under the Nazis, a process which began formerly when the first concentration camp of that regime, Dachau, was established in Munich in 1933. As Gutman (1994: 8) argues, the camps ‘were conceived as an “iron fist” to circumvent the law as dictated by the regime’s changing needs. Initially the camps served as instruments of terror and “reeducation” to frighten, deter and paralyze the Nazis’ opposition, primarily members of left-wing political parties and others with liberal views.’ Once the Third Reich had consolidated power, some of its leading members argued the camps should be abolished. However, they remained, but their purpose and operations evolved, and the camps became instruments of the regime’s racial-ethnic social policy. From 1936–37 to the first half of the war years, the camps housed criminals and others who were seen as social misfits (and categorized as *Volksschädling*, ‘pest harmful to the people’), with Jews prominent in the wake of *Kristallnacht*. By 1939 the regime had established six relatively small camps. Once war broke out, members of the resistance in Nazi-occupied areas were sent to the camps, along with increasing numbers of Jews, and the camps were used as a source of labour for the war effort. In March 1942 the camps became the bureaucratic responsibility of an SS economic office, which emphasized the importance of prisoners required for war labour. Throughout the war the concentration camp system mushroomed in size and complexity as the Germany military made gains in Poland and the Soviet Union, so that by 1944 the Nazis had established 20 large concentration camps, with 165 satellite labour camps clustered around them (Hilberg 1961: 33, Gutman 1994: 8–9). None of this diminishes the overall horror of the Nazis’ concentration camp system. It does, however, indicate that an understanding of its complexities and evolution is required for the horror to be properly understood.

In addition to the historical nature of the camp system of which it was a part, Auschwitz was a complex structure which resists *LMs* ahistorical reductionism. Although it has become the place which symbolizes the Holocaust – hardly surprising given that more Jews died there than anywhere else – Auschwitz ‘had not been created for its ultimate role’ as a killing centre (Hilberg 1994: 81). Established in May 1940, Auschwitz comprised of already existing buildings belonging to the Polish army, in which mostly Polish inmates were housed. In the winter of 1940–41, I. G. Farben chose the site to establish new industrial facilities, encouraged by the easy railway access and the prospects of cheap camp labour. As the Nazi invasion of Russia continued, Auschwitz was readied for the expected influx of hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners of war, for which the nearby site of Birkenau was to be the major centre (Hilberg 1994: 81–82). However, the combination of setbacks on the battlefield, as well as the January 1942 decision to deploy all Soviet POWs to the armament industry, meant that ‘Auschwitz-Birkenau became quite literally a site in search of a mission’ (Van Pelt 1994: 148).

Although one can hardly speak of the Final Solution as a ‘fortunate’ decision, it was fortunate for those who ran Auschwitz and wanted a supply of people to replace those being redeployed. Jews came on transports instead of Soviet prisoners, with many being put to work in the industrial factories, while the less able-bodied were killed. The Soviet prisoners



also paved the way in the gassing of the Jews. Some 850 prisoners, most of them Soviet POWs, were killed in a September 1941 experiment to test the lethality of prussic acid (Zyklon B). After another experiment in December 1941, which used the Auschwitz crematorium in the already existing mortuary, the camp authorities were convinced this was the most humane method of extermination for victim and perpetrator alike.

As a result, two peasant farmhouses in Birkenau were converted into gas chambers capable of holding approximately 800 to 1200 people each, and began killing operations in March and June 1942. The mortuary in the base camp where the first experiments were conducted became Crematorium I, and tens of thousands of Jews were killed during its year in operation, with many more murdered in the former houses known as Bunkers 1 and 2 (Hilberg 1994, Piper 1994: 160). These were the only gassing facilities at Auschwitz-Birkenau until the spring of 1943, when the purpose-built Crematoria II–V, each with gas chambers attached, began operation (Piper 1994: 164–165). By the time Himmler ordered their demolition on 25 November 1944 (something not achieved until Crematorium V was dynamited on 26 January 1945, the day before the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau), these facilities were the place where more than one million people were exterminated (Piper 1994: 174, 176).

However, even at the height of the Nazi genocide, Auschwitz-Birkenau – a complex of camps and villages covering some 17.9 square miles – was more than a site for gas chambers (Hilberg 1961: 564). Arendt (1994: 89) described it as ‘by no means only an extermination camp; it was a huge enterprise with up to a hundred thousand inmates, and all kinds of prisoners were held there, including non-Jews and slave laborers, who were not subject to gassing’. Auschwitz-Birkenau might be incomparable with respect to its crucial part in the genocide against the Jews, as Wiesel and others rightly note, but many elements of Auschwitz are regrettably comparable to other parts of the broader concentration camp system. Understanding that Auschwitz-Birkenau’s ultimate role was not originally part of its plans, and appreciating that its killing operations were not the totality of its functions, does not diminish its pivotal place in understanding the Nazis’ genocidal project. Recognizing that extermination as the Final Solution was not a fully developed enterprise in place from the beginning of the Nazi regime – that this point was reached via ‘the twisted road . . . which was neither conceived in a single vision of a mad monster, nor was a considered choice made at the start of the “problem-solving process” by the ideologically motivated leaders’ – does not relativize our understanding of this period and make the Holocaust no more than another atrocity (Bauman 1991: 15).<sup>15</sup> To the contrary, being aware that, as a consequence of this tortuous path, places such as Auschwitz-Birkenau often changed in character and function only magnifies our revulsion. That so many could be killed so quickly in one place as a result of a series of bureaucratic decisions insulated from their consequences should stand as a warning in other circumstances.

This complexity is lost on the protagonists of *LM*’s argument against ITN. Deichmann gives a revealing example of this. After Channel 4 screened Ian Williams’s report from Omarska and Trnopolje, various people were interviewed. One of them was US Congressman Tom Lantos, himself a survivor of Nazi camps in Hungary (something not noted by Deichmann). Deichmann (1998a) scorned Lantos’s statement that the Bosnian camps were ‘Nazi-style concentration camps, minus the gas chambers’ as ‘surely a contradiction in terms’. Deichmann’s objection is that only the presence of gas chambers warrants a facility being termed a concentration camp, even in Nazi Germany. On that basis, the vast majority of the Nazis’ concentration camps could not be so easily described, as only *six* were extermination centres with gas facilities (Hilberg 1961).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Bergen-Belsen – despite Deichmann and Hume’s mantra about places such as ‘Auschwitz and Belsen’ being

the only 'real' concentration camps – was not an extermination centre with gas chambers. Sited near Hanover, and originally a German army camp for wounded POWs, it became the site for an internment camp in the fall of 1943, and a place run by former Auschwitz officials when that death camp was closed. In 1944, amongst other developments, Spanish Jews had been transported to Bergen-Belsen with their government's consent after the German authorities described it as a favoured 'residence camp'. It was also a transit point for Jews from Hungary selected by their community to be saved.

None of this is intended to suggest that Bergen-Belsen was anything other than a site of organized criminality with deplorable conditions that in the end became, as with all Nazi camps, part of the Final Solution. This inhumanity was more than evident when large numbers of Jews began arriving in Bergen-Belsen in the first months of 1945, having been transported back to Germany from concentration camps in the east that had been liberated by the advancing Soviet army (Hilberg 1961). However, noting what was originally behind Bergen-Belsen, and the changes it too underwent during the war, reinforces the notion that concentration camps are not static entities. Accordingly, without wanting to suggest that Trnopolje was in the least synonymous with Bergen-Belsen, it is worth reflecting on the fact that as camps such as Bergen-Belsen were elements in a larger system, and that their precise nature varied depending on circumstances, any variations in the conditions, nature and purpose of a place like Trnopolje do not prevent it from being legitimately understood as a concentration camp.

All this means that, if one pays reasonable attention to the complexities of the historical record of the Holocaust, it is not possible to say that there is a singular meaning to the phrase 'Nazi-style concentration camps'. In particular, it is not possible to reduce the meaning of 'Nazi-style concentration camps' to the crematoria of Auschwitz. The purpose-built gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz, which existed for little more than 18 months but exterminated more than a million people, represent neither the totality of that camp nor the full extent of the camp system's horrors. It must be stressed that calling attention to this situation cannot be understood as that form of historical revisionism which seeks to diminish the significance of the Holocaust – not least because the evidence for these propositions comes from historians dedicated to documenting the truth of the Nazis' crime of genocide against the Jews. Instead, calling attention to this situation needs to be understood as integral to the preservation of the memory of the Holocaust, for the fact there were no gas chambers at most of the Nazi camps cannot diminish the horror of the system.

### **Belittling Bosnia**

Various contributors to *LM* have written of their overriding concern for Holocaust memory in their questioning of the visual representation of Bosnia's camps. Just prior to the opening of the libel trial against his magazine, *LM*'s editor Michael Hume identified an 'unhealthy obsession with the Nazi Holocaust' in contemporary society (Hume 2000). Hume's argument appeared to invoke a number of ideas and examples drawn from Peter Novick's historical account of the development of Holocaust memory in post-war America. But Hume failed to appreciate one important aspect of Novick's argument.

In highlighting what has been at stake in the question of whether the Holocaust is unique – and identifying how this question has been the subject of sustained debate amongst historians of the Holocaust and Jewish scholars – Novick discusses what is at stake in this claim. To begin with, Novick (2000: 9) takes a historian's view to challenge the idea of uniqueness itself:

Insistence on its uniqueness (or denial of its uniqueness) is an intellectually empty enterprise for reasons having nothing to do with the Holocaust and everything to do with 'uniqueness'. A moment's reflection makes clear that the notion of uniqueness is quite vacuous. Every historical event, including the Holocaust, in some ways resembles events to which it might be compared and differs from them in some ways. These resemblances and differences are a perfectly proper subject for discussion.<sup>17</sup>

The contributors to *LM* have effectively declared such a discussion off limits with respect to Bosnia. Hume has declared that discussing any possible affinities between Bosnia and the Holocaust – a process he regards as equating every civil war with the Nazi genocide, and which another contributor (Heartfield 1997: 20–21) derided as plundering the Final Solution 'to lend *gravitas* to petty concerns' – is one form of historical revisionism (the other being Holocaust denial).<sup>40</sup> According to Hume (2000), 'anything that suggests that the slaughter of six million Jews should be compared to today's local conflicts can only serve to belittle the unique horror of the Holocaust itself'. Deichmann has articulated nearly identical sentiments: 'Anything which suggested a comparison between Trnopolje and, say, Auschwitz would not only have dangerously distorted the truth about the Bosnian conflict – a civil war, not a war of genocidal conquest. It would also do a grave injustice to the victims of the Nazi Holocaust, by belittling the scale of the century's great atrocity' (Deichmann 1998a).

An important conclusion can be drawn from Novick's argument in relation to the statements of Hume and Deichmann. In Novick's (2000: 197) view, the claim for uniqueness, though sometimes defended simply as an assertion of difference, has to be understood as a judgement about the pre-eminence of the Holocaust in the historical register of atrocities. This prompts Novick (2000: 257) to pose a question: 'By making the Holocaust the emblematic atrocity, have we made resemblance to it the criterion by which we decide what horrors command our attention? Is the (quite unintended) result that horrors which don't meet the criterion seem insufficiently dramatic, even a bit boring?' This consideration certainly functions in *LM*'s argument cited here, where – contra Novick – the effect of asserting the sanctity of the Holocaust is *intended* to put in their place, down the historical register of atrocity, the crimes committed in places such as Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo. As a result, *LM*'s talk of uniqueness and incomparability leads to what Novick (2000: 15) calls 'the *evasion* of moral and historical responsibility'.

There are a number of reasons which permit us to argue that *LM*'s intention was (contrary to its professed purpose), not to honour Holocaust memory, but to use the Holocaust's uniqueness for its specific political aims of diminishing the import of contemporary atrocities. First, Hume's and Deichmann's impoverished understanding of the specificities of the concentration camp system in the Holocaust (as explored above), shows that they are more concerned with the 'mythic' power of sites like Auschwitz than an appreciation of how their historical qualities aid memory.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, they assert that the war in Bosnia was of a particular character (a 'civil war' brought on by the actions of Muslims), and then normalize the significance of any atrocities committed during that time (as being atrocities akin to those found in all wars, and thus horrific but lacking distinctiveness), without betraying any awareness that they are engaged in a highly charged politics of representation, where the nature of the war itself has become a site of conflict, in which their representations are promulgated exclusively by those who want to evade any Serbian responsibility for ethnic cleansing.<sup>19</sup> Thirdly, they fail to recognize examples that greatly complicate their rendering of any linkages between the war in Bosnia and the Holocaust as being only to the benefit of the Muslims and detrimental to Holocaust victims. These include the way both Serbia and Bosnian Serbs cast themselves as victims of genocide and a new Holocaust such that

they should be regarded as ‘the Jews’ of the region, and the way in which leading Jewish organizations in the United States were happy to actively promote the link between Bosnia and the Holocaust in calling for a response to the camps and their atrocities.<sup>20</sup> Finally, *LMs* intentions are clear from the way they have sought to publicize accounts of contemporary atrocities which suggest they were certainly not genocidal (as in the case of Rwanda), and perhaps did not even occur (as in the case of the murder of nearly 8000 at Srebrenica).<sup>21</sup>

### **The Bosnian Serb camp system**

The effort to belittle the nature of the Bosnian war, by rendering the Holocaust totally incomparable, and eliding questions about the historicity of the concentration camp generally, has obscured the meaning of the Bosnian Serb run camps in the Prijedor region of northern Bosnia. The way the debate over the ITN reports has focused on conditions in a single camp, Trnopolje, means the larger political context in which that camp operated has been overlooked. Just as Auschwitz has a particular history in an overarching system, so too does Trnopolje. To say as much is not to suggest that Auschwitz and Trnopolje are in any sense equivalent. Nobody can credibly suggest, for example, that any of the Bosnian Serb camps were constructed for the purpose of extermination by industrial means. At the same time, neither should we regard the Nazi camp system and the Bosnian Serb camp system, before we consider the larger context of the latter, as so radically different in all their respects as to be totally incomparable. Indeed, following Agamben’s understanding of the place of the camp in the constitution of modern political order (discussed above), the function of the camps in the ethnic-cleansing strategy of the Bosnian Serb leadership would be expected to have considerable affinities with the logic of the Nazi camp system.

Contrary to arguments that wish to show Bosnian Serb paramilitary activities as a defensive, uncoordinated response to the April 1992 independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is evidence which shows that the Bosnian Serb leadership took the initiative for political separation from others in their community: as early as 1990 Bosnian Serb paramilitaries were being established, and by the fall of 1991 one Serb Autonomous Region and four Serbian Autonomous Districts, in which Serbs were either the majority population (or at least in a plurality), had been unilaterally declared within Bosnia and sought military support from the Yugoslav army (Bennett 1995: 183, Silber and Little 1995: 208–221, ICTY 2000a: paras 45–58). These initiatives were located in strategic areas – forming an arc from northern Bosnia to eastern and western Bosnia – that were meant to link Serbia proper with Serbian areas in Bosnia and Croatia. It was principally in this area that ethnic cleansing operations were to be conducted (United Nations 1994).<sup>22</sup>

The administrative district of Prijedor was part of, and important to, those strategic areas. Human Rights Watch (HRW), drawing on the UN Commission of Experts, as well as its own investigations and interviews, reported that as early as 1991 a Serb-only shadow administration for the Prijedor region had been established. In a move that paralleled developments in other areas declared to be Serbian Autonomous Districts, this led to the formation of the ‘Crisis Committee of the Serbian District of Prijedor’, perhaps as early as February 1992. While many communities in Bosnia established crisis committees to manage their affairs in the context of conflict, and not all crisis committees were instruments of ethnic cleansing, the Crisis Committee of the Serbian District of Prijedor had a particular remit. As HRW summarized it, the role of the Crisis Committee was ‘to organize the takeover of the town by Serbs and to eliminate the non-Serb population through a systematic “ethnic cleansing” campaign coordinated with Serbian and Bosnian Serb army

and paramilitary units' (Human Rights Watch 1997).<sup>23</sup>

In each region where ethnic-cleansing operations took place, camps were established as part of the process. According to the UN Commission of Experts – Annex VIII of which contains the most detailed source of evidence, much of it corroborating the camp system from a variety of non-partisan sources – there were 677 detention centres and camps throughout Bosnia during the war. Nearly half of them (333) were run by the Bosnian Serbs, 83 (12%) by the Bosnian government, 51 (8%) by the Bosnian Croats, 31 (5%) by both Bosnian Croats and Muslims, five (1%) by private parties, with 174 (26%) being unidentified (United Nations 1994: Annex VIII B part 1/10).<sup>24</sup> This makes it clear that all parties to the war used detention centres – indeed, the first camp officials to be found guilty by the ICTY were two Bosnian Muslims and one Bosnian Croat in the Čelebići case (Delalić *et al.* 2000). However, in addition to operating by far the largest number, the leadership of the Bosnian Serbs comprised the only body to pursue a particular pattern or policy in which the internment of civilians in camps was integral (United Nations 1994: paras 227–231).

In this context, it is important to appreciate that the Bosnian Serb camp system was a *system*. That is, the camps run by the Bosnian Serb authorities during the war in Bosnia, and especially in 1992, were organized together so as to serve a larger political and military strategy. As the indictments for genocide issued against the Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadžić, Momčilo Krajišnik and Ratko Mladić by the ICTY prosecutors make clear, the operation of 'camps and detention facilities', in which 'tens of thousands' of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats were held, was integral to the strategy of creating 'impossible conditions of life, involving persecution and terror tactics, that would have the effect of encouraging non-Serbs to leave . . . the deportation of those who were reluctant to leave; and the liquidation of others' (ICTY 2000a,b).<sup>25</sup>

Events in Prijedor conformed to this general pattern. Once the Crisis Committee had taken the reigns of local power at the end of April 1992 (a process in which Duško Tadić had a role), at least four camps were opened for the Prijedor region: Omarska, Keraterm, Trnopolje and Manjača. These camps were located in existing buildings modified for their new purposes. Omarska and Keraterm 'were places where killings, torture, and brutal interrogations were carried out' as part of the effort to eliminate and remove the non-Serb leadership. Trnopolje had a different function: it was 'a staging area for massive deportations of mostly women, children and elderly men, and killings and rapes also occurred there'. Manjača, while referred to as a POW camp by the Bosnian Serbs, contained mostly civilians (Human Rights Watch 1997).<sup>26</sup>

According to the ICTY indictments against the commanders of the Omarska camp – the trial of whom began in the Hague on the exact same day as the libel trial against *LM* opened in London – 'more than 6000 Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Croats and other non-Serbs from the Prijedor area' were 'unlawfully segregated, detained and confined' in the camps at Omarska, Trnopolje and Keraterm. Conditions at Omarska and Keraterm are described as having been 'brutal and inhumane', while conditions at Trnopolje are detailed as 'abject and brutal' (ICTY 2000c).<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the ICTY indictments, the ten parts of Annex VIII of the UN Commission of Experts report contains vast details about the four camps in Prijedor. Two things are worth drawing attention to for the purposes of this section. The first is that, in line with the idea of an organized policy of ethnic cleansing, and consistent with the ICTY's charge that people were segregated and then detained, it is clear that the civilians sent to the camps were divided into three categories according to their place in non-Serb society, and detailed

lists of the people who comprised these categories were drawn up and used (United Nations 1994: Annex VIII B part 5/10).<sup>28</sup>

The second point of particular interest to this argument is the evidence contained within Annex VIII as to the way Omarska and Trnopolje were effectively sanitized *prior* to the visit from the ITN journalists. This sanitization was possible because the journalists had to travel to the camps under Bosnian Serb military escort, via whom advance notification was obviously provided (United Nations 1994: Annex VIII B part 5/10). Dr Idriz Merdžanić, the Bosnian doctor detained at Trnopolje, testified at the libel trial that conditions at Trnopolje had improved in advance of ITN's first visit to the camp.<sup>29</sup> All this indicates that conditions at the camps were actually worse than portrayed in the ITN reports. Changes were also evident *after* the ITN journalists visited. Most notable were alterations to the fencing at Trnopolje. According to Annex VII, 'reportedly the barbed wire fencing was removed in early August, in response to the first visits by international journalists and the ICRC. With the removal of the fencing, Trnopolje gave the appearance of an open camp. However, guards with automatic weapons reportedly made patrols around the camp limits' (United Nations 1994: Annex VIII B part 5/10).

This means that media reporting subsequent to the original visit of the ITN crews – as Penny Marshall herself noted when she went back 5 days after her visit – recorded a camp very different from that which had existed a matter of days before. As a result, accounts like that of Paddy Ashdown, the then leader of the British Liberal Democrats, which described Trnopolje's status as an open refugee camp and is much cited by *LM*, cannot be used as evidence for the way Trnopolje was prior to the journalists' first visit (Deichmann 1998b: 30). Most importantly, such observations pay little heed to Trnopolje's place in the system that was ethnic cleansing. Even if, as was undoubtedly the case, some people made their own way to Trnopolje, they did not freely choose to go there. They ended up in Trnopolje because military forces engaged in ethnic cleansing had made their home environment dangerous and uninhabitable. Camps like Trnopolje thus functioned as collection centres as well as places of detention, from which people were transported in large convoys out of Bosnian Serb-held territory – as the ethnic cleansers desired and required.

As part of the ethnic-cleansing operations, these four camps helped the Crisis Committee to reduce the non-Serb population of Prijedor from more than 50 000 in 1992 to little more than 3000 in 1995, and even fewer subsequently. While precise calculations about the number who actually died in these camps are difficult to make, US State Department officials, along with representatives of other Western governments, have estimated that between 4000 and 5000 people perished at Omarska (Human Rights Watch 1997). A member of the UN Commission of Experts testified during the Tadić trial at the ICTY that their number was in the thousands, but she could not be precise, despite the fact that Serbian officials confirmed there were no large scale releases of prisoners sent there (Scharf 1997: 129). A member of the Crisis Committee, Simo Drljača, who served as chief of police for Prijedor, has stated that there were 6000 'informative conversations' (meaning interrogations) in Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje, and that 1503 non-Serbs were transferred from those three camps to Manjača, leaving 4497 unaccounted for (Human Rights Watch 1997). No detailed estimates are available for camps in Prijedor other than Omarska. These four camps in Prijedor operated for less than a year, and were closed down in response to the international outcry that followed the broadcast of ITN's report, but new facilities served similar roles during the second wave of ethnic cleansing in the area during September 1995 (Human Rights Watch 1997).

While the nature and scale of the genocide in Bosnia did not (fortunately) match the mass extermination policy which the Nazi regime arrived at after travelling its 'twisted

path', genocide is determined by the meaning of how the foundation for life of a target group is destroyed, and not the actual carrying out of murder or the number of victims.<sup>30</sup> In this respect, the role the Bosnian Serb camps played as part of a systematic targeting of non-Serbian communities as a collectivity they intended to destroy conforms to the international legal understanding of genocide, something recognized by the indictment for genocide issued against the commander of the Keraterm camp, as well as the Bosnian Serbs' political and military leaders.<sup>31</sup> If we understand the camp to be an extra-legal space integral to the constitution of political order, when that order is in crisis or its sense of self is in the process of being made through violence towards others, then the place of a network of camps in an ethnic-cleansing strategy based on an exclusive and homogenous understanding of political community is only to be expected. This means that while Auschwitz and Trnopolje might be radically different places in the context of our established collective memory of the Holocaust, they are not quite as different as they first appear if an appreciation of their historical circumstances and the logic of the systems of which they are a part are fully considered.

### **Pictures and policy**

Even before they were taken, ITN's pictures had an impact on conditions for the prisoners within Omarska and Trnopolje, insofar as the camps were prepared in advance for the arrival of the journalists with their Bosnian Serb military escort. Once broadcast, the reports were instrumental in getting ICRC access to the camps, and set in progress a chain of events that culminated in the closure of these two camps some months later. But did ITN's pictures achieve more than that? Central to *LM*'s case is the argument that these pictures had a direct impact on Western policy, providing the moral justification for military intervention. For Deichmann, the reports spurred NATO into planning a military operation in the Balkans. For George Kenny, the Bush State Department officer turned *LM* ally, the ITN reports were a turning point that 'led straightaway to the introduction of Western troops' (Heartfield 1997: 21, Kenny 1997, Deichmann 1998b: 31).

The ITN reports certainly caused a public outcry and received much attention in policy circles (see Scharf 1997: 37–38, Holbrooke 1998: 36). However, much as the Bosnian government and many of its supporters might have wished action was forthcoming, the policy response of the Bush administration and its European allies was long on public indignation, short on specific actions and devoid of any military plans for intervention. That is because, as Mark Danner has observed, 'the pictures from the camps thus confronted Bush officials with the challenge *not* of how to deal with the reemergence of concentration camps in Europe but rather how to withstand the political pressures from the televised images of them' (Danner 1997 (emphasis added)).

As a result, the Bush administration, and later the Clinton administration, went to great lengths to avoid describing the Bosnian war as genocide.<sup>32</sup> The policy initiatives that sprang forth in August 1992 testified to the way US strategic doctrine serves to delay for as long as possible sending in the troops; indeed, both the Bush and Clinton administrations consistently stressed there would be no military deployment until a peace deal had been agreed by all parties. This was in line with the European and UN priority accorded to a negotiated settlement as the way to resolve the Bosnian war.<sup>33</sup> As a consequence, when US troops did finally reach Bosnia in 1996, it was as part of the International Protection Force (IFOR) to secure a ceasefire and implement the Dayton agreement and its *de facto* partition of Bosnia.<sup>34</sup>

All this was obscured by the apparent flurry of activity the ITN reports engendered. In response to the media clamour in the wake of the ITN reports, President Bush noted his personal revulsion, called for the ICRC to be granted access to the camps, and pledged to get the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution calling for the application of ‘all means necessary’ to ensure humanitarian relief convoys reached distressed civilians. Other governments made similar noises. UN Security Council Resolutions 771 and 780 – calling for all governments to submit substantiated evidence of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, and establishing the UN Commission of Experts – were passed (Scharf 1997). It is important to note, though, that the last part of Bush’s call for force has been mistakenly read as appealing for something much larger. The *Sunday Times*, in an article which interviewed Penny Marshall, claimed that ‘within 20 minutes of the report being re-broadcast on American television, George Bush promised to press for a United Nations resolution authorising force’, leaving out the qualifier about such force being in the service of aid shipments only (*Sunday Times* 1992). ITN itself seized on this report of its report, using the claim about Bush as the centrepiece of a newspaper advertisement calling attention to the industry accolades awarded to Penny Marshall and Ian Williams for their coverage. In turn, *LM* used the ITN advertisement to underscore its point about the political impact of the pictures.<sup>35</sup>

The ITN reports are seen by some as a rare instance of the ‘CNN effect’, the commonly asserted thesis that instantaneous, worldwide video means policy makers have to change course to address the demand to do something caused by the public uproar which flows from the depiction of atrocities (Gow *et al.* 1996: 6–7). But as Nik Gowing, formerly diplomatic editor of Channel 4, and the correspondent whose interview with Radovan Karadžić in 1992 set in train the trip of Marshall and Williams to Omarska and Trnopolje, shows, this thesis is rarely substantiated. In the case of Bosnia, Gowing (1996: 84) argues, ‘sound-bites and declarations of horror or condemnation were usually misread in TV and newspaper reporting as signals of a hardening of policy – that they were not. They were what one official described to me as often “pseudo-decisions for pseudo action”’. Gowing argues that ITN’s camp story was one of those rare moments where television unnerved governments and forced ‘policy panic’. However, this is not to suggest that overall policy with respect to how the USA and its European allies saw their role in Bosnia changed. Many statements were made and UN Security Council resolutions were passed, but none of the consequences alleged by *LM* to have followed did follow. As a result, the image of Alić at Trnopolje might be thought of as an ‘icon of outrage’ whereby the outrage ‘may stir controversy, accolades, and emotion, but *achieve* absolutely nothing’ (Perlmutter 1998: 28).

### **Pictorial memory and the politics of forgetting**

Nonetheless, it would be an overstatement to say that the ITN reports achieved absolutely nothing, for they were part of the process of drawing attention to the ethnic-cleansing strategy in Bosnia, a process that culminated in the involvement of the ICRC in the better management of the people detained by the Bosnian Serbs, as well as the closure of those specific camps some months after the ITN broadcast. However, the reports might be said to have achieved nothing if by ‘doing something’ one meant a response, especially a military response, proportionate to the crime of genocide. This situation poses a serious challenge to the commonly assumed relations involving pictures, memory and policy.

Despite the consciously expressed intentions of the two ITN teams reporting from Omarska and Trnopolje, the images which constituted their reports (especially the isolated



frames of Alić at the fence) invoked and were read from within the historical memory of the Holocaust, as previously manifested in photographs such as that of Margaret Bourke-White's Buchenwald image, discussed in Part 1 of this article. Deichmann and *LM* naively assumed that if the world read the ITN reports in such a way only ITN could be responsible for that reading. However, as Susan Sontag has argued, it is simplistic to assume that an image, in and of itself, can provoke a particular reaction the possibility of which did not exist prior to the production of that image. As Sontag (1990: 17) writes, 'a photograph that brings news of some unsuspected zone of misery cannot make a dent in public opinion unless there is an appropriate context of feeling and attitude'. The appropriate context, for Sontag, is one in which an event has been identified in a particular way and named accordingly, such that there can be evidence (photographic or otherwise) which constructs that event. In this sense, 'the contribution of photography always follows the naming of the event. What determines the possibility of being affected morally by photographs is the existence of a relevant political consciousness. Without a politics, photographs of the slaughter-bench of history will most likely be experienced as, simply, unreal or as a demoralizing emotional blow' (Sontag 1990: 19).

In the case of the ITN reports, there were two streams of thought concerning concentration camps that enabled the politics through which the images were read. The first, and more immediate, stream involved the accounts and allegations of practices involving camps in Bosnia that were circulating freely in the international media. Reported by journalists such as Roy Gutman of *Newsday* and Maggie O'Kane of the *Guardian*, the testimony of those ethnically cleansed from the Prijedor region provoked attention in the weeks prior to the ITN crews taking up the Bosnian Serb challenge to come and see for themselves (Gutman 1993).

The second, more generally and more importantly, was the collective memory of the Holocaust that had developed in the post-Second World War period. Given that one of the central themes to this collective memory is the Holocaust as a unique event of exemplary evil, which the world had promised would 'never again' be allowed to occur, it would seem to follow logically that any contemporary atrocity read from within the terms of that collective memory would be constituted as an event demanding an immediate and robust response. In these terms, it would follow – as *LM* alleged – that the Holocaust-like representation of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia would have laid the groundwork for, and resulted in, an intervention the likes of which should have been deployed in response to the Nazi genocide.

However, as we have noted above, no such response was forthcoming. Indeed, what response there was to the Bosnian camps story by Western governments involved much talk but little substance. Moreover, what talk there was was designed to actively avoid the obvious consequences of accepting a Holocaust-like representation. Here, then, we have a conundrum – the images are read in a way that appears to make a particular response likely if not inevitable, yet that predicted response fails to occur and is instead actively avoided. How might we begin to explain the way in which images taken to be so powerful and historically resonant do not result in the expected outcomes?

One way of understanding this conundrum is to appreciate that Holocaust-like representations of contemporary atrocity do not simply draw the past into the present so that events in the present are reconfigured as though they were like the past. If anything, representations of contemporary atrocity have the opposite temporal effect – they draw the present into the past, and make instances of contemporary atrocity artefacts of history that cannot be affected by responses in the present. According to Zelizer (1998: 210), 'our memory bank of atrocities thus works backwards in time – using the past to stand in for

the present. Ultimately it reaches the first major killing fields to have been extensively and elaborately depicted in photos in the daily press – the concentration camps of World War II – and it is those killing fields that are replayed in discussions of contemporary atrocity’.

This means that when we see images of atrocity in Bosnia that call up the memory of the Holocaust, we are seeing more of the Holocaust than we are of Bosnia. This was evident when Alić and his Muslim counterparts behind the wire at Trnopolje were taken to be contemporary manifestations of the *Muselmänn* in Bourke-White’s Buchenwald photograph. And when we see the Holocaust rather than Bosnia in these contemporary pictures, the political questions of responsibility and the way that responsibility should be enacted are removed from the present to historical discussions of the past. It is for this reason that Zelizer argues that the photographic memorialization of an event like the Holocaust has developed to such an extent that its capacity to be readily invoked in relation to contemporary atrocities in fact ‘undoes the ability to respond’ (Zelizer 1998: 221). Akin to Novick’s argument that an insistence on the uniqueness of the Holocaust can unintentionally (though in the case of *LM*, intentionally) effect an evasion of moral and political responsibility with regard to injustice in the present, Zelizer’s account means that ‘we may remember earlier atrocities so as to forget the contemporary ones’ (Zelizer 1998: 227).<sup>36</sup>

The potential impact of particular images is thus a good deal more problematic than that assumed by impoverished accounts of a causal relationship between pictures and policy. The political transparency thought to flow from the ubiquity of the media in contemporary society has led many to assume that past failures to respond to crimes against humanity stem from a prior lack of depiction. It is often assumed that if only we had at the time been able to witness pictorially the Armenian genocide, Soviet gulags or the Chinese famine associated with the ‘Great Leap Forward’ – not to mention the Holocaust – then the course of history might have been different. To a large extent, the genocides of Bosnia and Rwanda debunk that comforting thought (Zelizer 1998: 206–207). Carried out under the noses of the international community and in the full glare of the international media, the systematic campaigns to annihilate people because they belong to a specific group demonstrate that any remaining ideas about the progress of history are ill founded. Even more troubling is the possibility that the proliferation of media images of atrocity which recall the worst events of the past not only fail to induce a sense of responsibility, but magnify the gap between representation and responsibility because of the ubiquity of those images. As a result, the production and consumption of these images might have become a substitute for responses directed at the crimes themselves (Zelizer 1998: 239).

### **Concluding reflections: free speech and the responsibility of intellectuals**

As this two-part paper has sought to demonstrate, examples like the ITN reports of the Bosnian camps raise profound issues about atrocity, memory, imaging, responsibility and response in the contemporary era. Sadly, none of these was substantially engaged by the public controversy that circulated around the production and interpretation of the ITN reports. In large part that is because, once ITN and its journalists had issued libel writs against *LM*, Deichmann and Hume, the battle over the Trnopolje images became a *cause célèbre* for various public intellectuals who wanted to reposition the debate as being a media story primarily concerned with ‘free speech’.

While there are interesting and important questions to debate about the justice of English libel laws, focusing on that as the principal issue, to the exclusion of others, in cases such as the television coverage of Bosnia is profoundly one-dimensional. This paucity is

evident in a number of the statements issued in support of *LM*'s position. In Germany, a statement organized by Deichmann's journal *Novo*, and signed by Pierre Bourdieu, Peter Handke and Peter Singer amongst others, expressed concern about the power of images and cited what it called the 'particularly scandalous example' unearthed by Deichmann. Yet the assorted luminaries signed up to a naïve realist view of images and their effects, as was obvious in the claim that Deichmann had come across evidence which 'proved that a famous picture showing emaciated Muslims behind a barbed wire fence was a distortion of reality'. This attitude then lapsed into form of relativism common to many understandings of the Bosnian war, with the statement declaring that 'the fact that there were camps in former Yugoslavia run by all factions involved in the fighting and where conditions were frequently bad, makes it all the more important to avoid encouraging a *false* or one-sided emotional atmosphere' (*Die Zeit* 1997). There were other, similar protests, and in Britain numerous well-known authors wrote to the *Spectator* deploring ITN's position as 'media bully' (*Spectator* 1997).<sup>37</sup>

However, the extent and intensity of the debate that has centred upon the *LM* versus ITN clash over the last 3 years shows that free speech has been anything but curtailed in this instance. One of the paradoxes of this case is that ITN's libel suit in effect secured a public space in which *LM* could claim the moral high ground in a David vs. Goliath battle and promote their cause (Glover 1997). *LM* has effectively lobbied the intelligentsia in Britain and Germany for support, turned the issue into a media story, and helped Deichmann secure the repeated publication of his central arguments. In the process, they have attained a level of public speech that was free and well beyond their previous reach.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, it is very difficult for an issue such as the politics of Alić's image to be engaged solely on the register of 'free speech', as though its historical, political and visual context could be rendered irrelevant. Indeed, as the intellectuals' statement from Germany quoted above makes clear, as soon as an issue is engaged (as with the reference to the Alić photograph being a 'distortion of reality', and the war in Bosnia being a conflict of equally shared culpability) a number of substantive claims are adopted and a substantive position produced. In this context, rendering a controversy such as that surrounding the Alić image principally in terms of a media story and a question of rights, means the controversy itself is effectively *depoliticized* in terms of the specificities of the image's context, and becomes *repoliticized* as a symbolic clash of contending commitments divorced from the specificities of the image's context. This means that while the 'free speech' defence gives the impression of being a wholly non-partisan position, it necessarily (whether directly or indirectly) relies upon a range of substantive assumptions that favour some political arguments over others.

It should not be necessary to say this, but just in case this line of argument is open to misinterpretation, the position being sort forth here is *not* one of being *against* free speech. It is, instead, a cautionary argument about the problems that can arise from making free speech the *primary* locus of concern and resistance in political controversies. On the face of it, few should disagree with Said's (1994) contention that the intellectual is 'someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, [and] to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produce them)', and that efforts to silence those who raise such questions should be opposed. But, as Said makes clear, embarrassing questions and confronting orthodoxy and dogma are not ends in themselves. They are driven by an ethical commitment, articulated by Said in terms of a principle: 'that all human beings are entitled to expect decent standards of behavior concerning freedom and justice from worldly powers or nations, and that deliberate or inadvertent violations of these standards need to be testified and fought against courageously' (Said 1994: 9).<sup>39</sup> Much could be said about the

meaning of such a principle and its putative universality. But the point I want to make here is this: focusing on the right to ask embarrassing questions and confront orthodoxy can come at the expense of a principle like the one Said describes, and even result in the granting of legitimacy to a position which substantively contravenes such a principle. In the context of the Bosnian war, *LM's* attack on ITN is a prime example.

To appreciate what is involved in this, it is worth examining a prior but related case, that of Noam Chomsky's unrepentant defence of Robert Faurisson in the early 1980s. Towards the end of 1979, Chomsky, along with some 500 others, signed a petition in defence of Faurisson circulated by Chomsky's friend Serge Thion. As the petition made clear, Faurisson, who was a professor of French literature, had since 1974 'been conducting extensive independent historical research into the "Holocaust" question' (quoted in Barsky 1997: 180). Not surprisingly, especially given the quotation marks around the Holocaust, Faurisson's work had become the subject of public controversy, especially as his central thesis was to question the existence of the gas chambers in the Nazi camps (see Fresco 1980). Among the critics were 34 of France's leading historians, who published a declaration in *Le Monde* that defended an individual's right to imagine and interpret whatever he/she liked however he/she liked, but denounced Faurisson's work for calling into question something that was beyond doubt.<sup>40</sup>

Chomsky's defence of Faurisson, and his contempt for Faurisson's critics, was literally founded in ignorance, for Chomsky declared he had not read the book or any of the resultant debate it provoked in France. Indeed, he proclaimed he had nothing to say about Faurisson's work or his critics because he had no special knowledge of the topics covered, though he did somehow see fit to venture that Faurisson was 'a relatively apolitical liberal of some sort' (Barsky 1997: 182). Those remarks came in an essay Chomsky wrote about the affair, which he then gave to Thion to use as he wished. In the end the essay, entitled 'Some Elementary Comments on the Rights of Freedom of Expression', which dealt with the distinction between supporting someone's beliefs and allowing them to be expressed, was published as the preface to Faurisson's book. In the face of further criticism of his position in France, Chomsky argued he had not intended his remarks to be published as a preface, and tried to halt its publication (Vidal-Naquet 1992: ch. 2).

Chomsky defended his blind support for Faurisson on the weak grounds that he had signed petitions in favour of Salman Rushdie without reading *The Satanic Verses*, thereby conflating a work of pseudo-history designed to deny a key historical event whose author is subject to public opprobrium, with a work of fiction whose author has been sentenced to death by the religious leaders of Iran (Barsky 1997: 180). Moreover, Chomsky's absolutist concern with free speech cannot easily be ensconced in the politically neutral vacuum he claims to inhabit. After all, the original petition for Faurisson gave a clear indication of the substance of Faurisson's views with its reference to 'the "Holocaust" question'.

None of the above makes Chomsky into an intellectual who questions the existence of the gas chambers.<sup>41</sup> These questions are posed because they illustrate a worrying intellectual tendency associated with an absolutist view of free speech that re-emerged with *LM's* case against ITN. Importantly, the Faurisson imbroglio notwithstanding, Chomsky lent his support to *LM's* case against ITN and its journalists. Once again, he did so on the grounds of free speech trumping all other concerns. Once again, also, he appears to have done so from a position of ignorance, for he later qualified his support for Deichmann and Hume on the grounds that it was 'evil' if *LM's* reporting 'dishonored the suffering of those in the Bosnian War' (Dodd 2000).

Had Chomsky recalled the parallels between the Faurisson controversy and the *LM* argument, he might have noted some strong affinities and recognized that the banner of free

speech, in the absence of a more thorough political analysis of the positions being defended, can be an empty gesture short on responsibility. Faurisson's argument against the gas chambers was based on a technical analysis of material specifics for which his career as a professor of twentieth-century French literature did not prepare him; Deichmann's argument about the camp at Trnopolje was based on the material specifics of a fence and supported by prejudicial and weak sources of evidence (even though, contrary to initial impressions, it did not ultimately seek to question Alić's imprisonment in miserable conditions). Faurisson argued that most of Auschwitz's victims succumbed to a protracted typhus epidemic; pro-Serbian authors have alleged that Alić was in fact a Serbian petty criminal named Slobodan Konjević whose poor condition at Trnopolje resulted from a tuberculosis infection (Burns 1996: 94). Faurisson's expressed desire was the search for the truth, in the name of which he called for the opening of archives and public debate; Hume similarly argued that *LM* wanted no more than for ITN to show its video rushes publicly so the court of popular opinion could judge their claims. (The fact that the High Court jury, having been led for days through the rushes in almost excruciating detail by *LM*'s barrister, determined that Deichmann's case was not proven, failed to shake the naïve view that a simple viewing would out the truth.) And in each case, the testimony of survivors, be they Jews from the camps or Alić and other survivors from behind the fence, was dismissed as no more than lies.

What is also interesting and significant about the cases of Faurisson and Deichmann is the fact that each was able to promote his arguments through the activities of politically marginal groups which are nominally 'left wing'. However, the left-wing moniker is in many ways seriously misleading when it comes to *LM* and its allies. That is because *LM*'s particular brand of intellectual critique – surprisingly, given that the magazine was previously called *Living Marxism* and associated with the Revolutionary Community Party in Britain – has more in common with right-wing libertarians than socialist progressives. Indeed, after it closed as a result of losing the libel trial, *LM*'s major figures ran an organization called 'The Institute for Ideas', which parades under the slogan 'Ban nothing – question everything' (*The Guardian* 2000c). The idea of 'banning nothing' encapsulates a libertarian economic and social agenda, in which *LM* has been openly allied with well-known neo-conservative groups in the USA such as the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute and the Cato Institute, among others (see Monbiot 1998, *The Guardian* 2000d).<sup>42</sup> The idea of 'questioning everything' signifies their absolutist faith in free speech and the right to cause offence regardless of the topic and its larger context.<sup>43</sup>

On the surface of it, this total commitment to questioning everything would seem to intersect with Said's notion of confronting orthodoxy and dogma as the hallmark of the intellectual. However, the libertarian heart of this particular critical strategy has been used to call into question both the occurrence and significance of historical events in which huge numbers of people have been the victims of oppression, something which runs counter to the ethical commitment Said allies (at least in theory) with this commitment to critique. As noted previously in this paper, in addition to exculpating those guilty of genocide in the Prijedor region of Bosnia, this involves denying that there was a massacre at Srebrenica,<sup>44</sup> or that genocide occurred in Rwanda. Above all else (though this is not *LM*'s position), the libertarian ethos has been behind the grossest instances of Holocaust denial.<sup>45</sup>

The relationship between historical revisionism and historical denial is often complex, and the two are regularly conflated. This is evident, for example, in Deborah Lipstadt's extreme statement that even denial of the Holocaust's uniqueness – something that might be the outcome of the normal process of historical revision through scholarly inquiry – is 'far more insidious than outright denial. It nurtures and is nurtured by Holocaust denial' (quoted in Novic 2000: 330–331n). In turn, those who insist that the Holocaust is so unique

it is the only true genocide are said to deny the existence of genocides other than the one perpetrated by the Nazis.<sup>46</sup> But there can be little doubt that what masquerades under the banner of ‘historical revisionism’ is often a case of historical denial. This is not something that those who wish to question events like the Holocaust, genocide in Bosnia or genocide in Rwanda care to admit and actively resist. Instead, they insist on the label of ‘revisionists’ on the grounds that historical revisionism is a legitimate scholarly practice.<sup>47</sup> Of that, there can be no doubt. History can and should be heterodox, and – although this is itself a matter of heated debate – we live within an intellectual climate in which the naïve empiricist defence of an extra-discursive domain of historical fact is no longer defensible. However, no amount of scholarly clashes should obscure the way in which, through a concordance of evidence from multiple sources, the actuality of particular events and things is established through narrative.<sup>48</sup> This means that, as the French historians responding to Faurisson have made clear, historians are constantly engaged in historical revision of the interpretations of major events. What historians are not engaged in, however, is revising the interpretation of major events to the point where they say that documented events did not take place or established things do not exist.

This sense of historical denial presenting itself in terms of historical revisionism is commonplace in relation to the wars that accompanied the collapse of Yugoslavia. In the case of *LM* and the Bosnian Serb-run concentration camps in the Prijedor region, arguing that ITN ‘fooled the world’ with its 1992 reports is part of an overall argument which attempts to revise the understanding of the Bosnian war by denying the nature, extent and purpose of the violence in the Bosnian Serbs’ ethnic-cleansing strategy. At its most grotesque, this argument turns the world upside down and proclaims that in Omarska and Trnopolje, ITN ‘visited two surprisingly casual and humane locations’.<sup>49</sup> Given such statements, it is not surprising that those promoting the Serbian cause have eagerly embraced the arguments of Deichmann and Hume. Likewise, it is noteworthy that, while Deichmann and Hume were always keen to argue that ITN was responsible for correcting subsequent interpretations of their images which they might not have intended, nobody from *LM* has ever contested the use pro-Serbian sites have made of their material.<sup>50</sup>

Similar sentiments and strategies extend through to the war in Kosovo, where human rights abuses committed by Milošević during the 1990s are overlooked completely or denied outright, and NATO’s bombing campaign is derided as a ‘hoax-begotten war’ launched after the Western media ‘fabricated a “genocide”’ and Western governments accepted and promoted the ‘lies’ about who was responsible for the emptying of Kosovo (Irvine 2000, Mostert 2000, Bissett 2000). These quotes come from three stories about Kosovo which demonstrate well the way in which the libertarian ethos of some on the so-called left has merged with the neo-conservatism of the right, under the umbrella of an alleged concern for free speech and fair reporting, all in the service of a particular partisan position.<sup>51</sup> Taken from the right-wing US group Accuracy in Media (AIM) and the left-wing ‘cyber-revisionist’ site Emperors-Clothes.com (producers of the *Judgment* video attacking ITN), they appear on the official website of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’s Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their position is echoed by Chomsky’s sometime co-author Edward S. Herman, who links the Western media’s performance in Kosovo to a ‘disinformation’ campaign that began with ITN’s ‘fabrication of a ‘death’ or ‘concentration’ camp at the Trnopolje refugee centre in 1992’ (see Herman and Peterson 2000, where Deichmann’s original *LM* article is explicitly cited).

What unites these odd political bedfellows is a shared distaste for military intervention they characterize as ‘imperialism’. From the ‘left’s’ perspective, this taps into the well-established antipathy for US power; from the right’s perspective, it comes from the

libertarian credo that ‘noninterventionism abroad is a corollary to noninterventionism at home’ (Antiwar.com 2000).<sup>52</sup> There is, of course, much to criticize with regard to the use of US power, the international community’s wholly inconsistent concern for genocide in the post-Second World War period, and the international media’s often less than critical reading of official policy. However, to take this as the overriding issue, to the exclusion of all others, with respect to crises such as Bosnia or Kosovo produces distortions that in many ways mirror the original complaint. Indeed, for the ‘anti-imperialists’ of the left and right their stance has been determined by prior ideological commitments rather than the open-minded critical inquiry they claim to pursue. As Ian Williams writes in his justifiably caustic review of the American left’s view on Kosovo, ‘their politics was Procrustean, in that the line came first, and then reality had to be extended or foreshortened to fit it’ (Williams 2000: 144).

Intellectuals of the left often make much of the idea of ‘speaking truth to power’, of ‘taking an alternative and more principled stance’ (Said 1994: 71). As Said notes, while state practices are often the problem, ‘this is not always a matter of being a critic of government policy, but rather of thinking of the intellectual vocation as maintaining a state of constant alertness, of a perpetual willingness not to let half-truths or received ideas steer one along’ (Said 1994: 17). In Said’s formulation, this intellectual vocation involves a particular approach:

In all these instances the intellectual meaning of a situation is arrived at by comparing the known and available facts with a norm, also known and available. This is not an easy task, since documentation, research, probings are required in order to get beyond the usually piecemeal, fragmentary and necessarily flawed way in which information is presented. But in most cases it is possible, I believe, to ascertain whether in fact a massacre was committed, or an official cover-up produced. The first imperative is to find out what occurred and then why, not as isolated events but as part of an unfolding history whose broad contours include one’s own nation as an actor. (Said 1994: 73)

In the case of the attack on ITN’s reporting of Omarska and Trnopolje, any sense of this intellectual vocation was abandoned. Deichmann, Hume and *LM* isolated a single image from two long news reports, made claims about the specifics of a fence at a single camp, and used partial and partisan sources for support. Because what really mattered to them was how the Bosnian war should be remembered, they then offered one-sided and unreflexive readings of the war, and invoked an ahistorical understanding of the Holocaust as the governing standard of all atrocity. Along the way they made claims that were just plain wrong – such as the idea that the USA and its allies used the ITN reports to intervene militarily in Bosnia in August 1992. Then they dressed the resultant controversy up as a media story with ‘free speech’ as the rallying cry.

This cocktail managed to mobilize many otherwise respected intellectuals in the service of a political argument – the historical denial of Serbian responsibility for an ethnic-cleansing strategy that perpetrated widespread suffering in Bosnia – that few of *LM*’s supporters thought it necessary to probe. As a result, people proclaiming a commitment to truth and justice systematically obscured the historical, political and visual context within which the reports of Omarska and Trnopolje were located. All the while, the larger conceptual conundrum of how visual representations that actively invoked the past disabled a political response in the present went unexplored. If the visual representation of atrocity is part of a process of remembering to forget, the more important question is how can we develop representational forms that will be part of a process of remembering to respond?

Being alert to the ‘half-truths’ and ‘received ideas’ of which Said speaks means travelling a path very different to the one taken by *LM*. It is a path in which disclosing the logical assumptions, historical complexity and political effects of various games of truth are integral to the intellectual vocation. This paper has attempted to do that in the context of the controversy surrounding the ITN reports of the Bosnian concentration camps. The increasing prevalence of a ‘Procrustean politics’ amongst the so-called left with regard to human rights abuses in distant places – especially Bosnia and Kosovo – means that a renewed sense of intellectual responsibility is required if we are to understand and represent both the horrors of the Holocaust and those contemporary atrocities which seem to recall the worst excess of the past in the violence of the present.

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### Notes

1. Segments of the ITN reports of Omarska and Trnopolje have been shown to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) as part of the prosecutors opening statements in a number of cases, including the trial of the Omarska commanders and the trial of Slobodan Milošević. See BBC News On-Line (2000) and United Nations (2002).
2. Cross-examination of Penny Marshall, *Independent Television News Ltd, Penny Marshall, Ian Williams and Informinc (LM) Ltd, Michael Hume, Helen Goldberg*, 1997 I No. 139, High Court of Justice, Queens Bench Division [hereafter cited as *ITN and Informinc Ltd*], Day 6 pm, 58–59.
3. Cross-examination of Thomas Deichmann, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 9, 7.
4. Evidence of Andy Braddel, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 4 am, 23.
5. Cross-examination of Michael Hume, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 8 am, 44.
6. Cross-examination of Michael Hume, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 8 am, 45–46.
7. Other examples of the Alic image also make this clear. On the front cover of Hukanović’s (1997) memoir of life in Omarska and Manjaca, we see Alic’s torso from below the chin to just above the navel. In front is the fence B one strand of barbed wire, atop the chicken wire.
8. Cross-examination of Michael Hume, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 8 am, 43.
9. Cross-examination of Thomas Deichmann, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 9, 6.
10. See also Hume (1998b)’s statements and the identical view in Deichmann (1998a).
11. Testimony of Ian Williams, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 2 pm, 43; Cross-examination of Ian Williams, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 3 pm, 60; Cross-examination of Andy Braddel, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 4 pm, 66; Cross-examination of William Dunlop, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 5 am, 31; Evidence of Michael Jeremy, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 7 am, 73; Evidence of Stewart Purvis, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 8 am, 2.
12. The closest either report came to using the term was when Penny Marshall began her voice-over, with a scene of the group entering Omarska, by saying ‘The Bosnian Serbs don’t call Omarska a concentration camp’. Marshall had also given a telephone interview to ITV’s lunchtime news in London on 6 August 1992,



- recorded in Budapest before she had seen any of the rushes and begun compiling her report for that night's news bulletins, in which she said the scene the crew had witnessed 'was reminiscent of something very sinister indeed'. Cross-examination of Penny Marshall, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 6 pm, 60–62. In their respective live interviews after their reports were originally broadcast, both Marshall and Williams were careful to describe what they had and had not witnessed, and careful to say that no matter how appalling the situation, they could not conclude Omarska and Trnopolje were sites of mass execution of extermination camps. See Stewart (1992) and Murnaghan (1992).
13. Wiesel goes on to say, however, that 'what took place at Omarska was sufficiently serious to shake the world's conscience and to justify international intervention and international solidarity'.
  14. Adolf Eichmann reported these comments to Red Cross delegates inspecting the Theresienstadt concentration camp in the last months of the war (quoted in Arendt (1994: 234). Theresienstadt, a camp in Czechoslovakia, is infamous as the site for a 1944 Nazi propaganda film (*Der Führer Schenkt Den Juden Eine Stadt* [*The Führer Gives a Village to the Jews*]) designed to portray for the international community the favourable conditions in which inmates were allegedly kept (see Margry 1992). The opening sequences to the ITN reports of Marshall and Williams, with the Omarska prisoners being paraded in a staged manner for the cameras, recall this film.
  15. Bauman acknowledges Karl Schleuner as the author of the concept of 'the twisted road' of the Holocaust, a process in which the physical extermination of European Jewry emerged 'inch by inch, pointing at each stage to a different destination, shifting in response to ever-new crises, and pressed forward with a 'we will cross that bridge when we come to it' philosophy' (see Schleuner 1970).
  16. They were all in Poland, sited at Kulmhof (Chelmno) – that was the first, starting in 1941, using gas vans rather than chambers – and Belzec, Sobibor, Lublin, Treblinka and Auschwitz-Birkenau. All but Auschwitz-Birkenau used carbon monoxide; only Auschwitz-Birkenau used hydrogen cyanide in the form of Zyklon B. Auschwitz-Birkenau and Lublin were concentration camps before they became killing centres; the other four sites, all under the control of the Higher SS and Police Leaders, 'were more exclusively death camps. They were built as killing centres and had no non-Jewish inmates. Except for very minor industrial activity in Treblinka and Sobibor, they were not linked with war production' (Hilberg 1961: 573–574).
  17. Some of the debate about this claim can be sampled in Novick (2000: 195–199).
  18. I use the idea of myth here advisedly, but with great caution. It is *not* designed to suggest in any way that historical knowledge about Auschwitz is fabricated, or that claims about the pivotal role of Auschwitz in the Final Solution are false. Instead, this usage follows Robert-Jan Van Pelt's invocation of Barthes's argument that mythification involves the evacuation of historical contingency from narrative. Van Pelt – widely regarded as a historical authority on Auschwitz, and who has been a witness against the historical revisionism of both David Irving and Fred Leuchter – argues that 'banished from the world of description, analysis, and conclusion, Auschwitz has become a myth in which the assumed universality of its impact obscures the contingency of its beginning' (Van Pelt 1994: 93).
  19. For a general discussion about the politics of claims about the war, see Campbell (1998b). The same representations motivate *Judgement*, the video that claims to have proof of ITN's 'fabrication'. The video's narrative begins by claiming that the Bosnian war commenced in 1992 when 'Islamist fundamentalists had started a secessionist rebellion' (Israel 2000a).
  20. On Serbian invocations of the Holocaust, see Campbell (1998b) and Cohen (1996). This linkage is active and on going, as the Serbian Unity Congress's Jasenovac War Crimes Project makes clear (see <http://www.suc.org/Jasenovac>, visited 28 November 2000). That *LM* should not recognize Serbian invocations of the Holocaust is quite remarkable, given that in helping to promote the Serbian Academy of Arts photo exhibition in 1993, which allegedly showed Serbian victims of a contemporary genocide conducted by Croats and Muslims, they were party to the linkage on behalf of the Serbs. The Serbian Network has archived the *LM* article at <http://www.srpska-mreza.com/library/lm53/LM53.html>. For a discussion of the Jewish groups linkage, see Novick (2000: 251).
  21. On the Rwanda case, which preceded Deichmann's article on Bosnia by more than a year, see Foster (1995). The article prompted considerable protest, including strong criticism from the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Jerusalem (see Simons and Crawford 1996). As with their later arguments about Bosnia, *LM* regarded Western intervention as responsible for the conflict. *LM* also argued that what occurred in Rwanda was not genocide because it could not be compared to the Nazi Holocaust. For a short response to *LM* see McGreal (2000). For a detailed analysis of the machinery of genocide in Rwanda, see Human Rights Watch (1999). For *LM*'s take on Srebrenica, see Ryan (1996). Contrary to the myth of empty graves, subsequent exhumations around Srebrenica have uncovered and identified 4454 bodies. For an account of the early exhumations and the political hurdles that had to be overcome, see Rhode (1997). The painstaking and harrowing process of exhumation is graphically presented in Peress and Stover (1998). The most comprehensive account of the work is provided by Manning (2000).
  22. For a discussion of the way ethnic cleansing operations proceeded, see Campbell (1998b).
  23. Further details of the Crisis Committee's operation have been made public following the release on 23 March 2001 of the previously secret indictment against Simo Drljača, Milan Kovačević and Milomir Stakić (see <http://www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/kov-ii970313e.htm>, visited 31 July 2001). The indictment for genocide was unsealed after Stakić was transferred by the Belgrade authorities to The Hague for trial in March 2001. He will stand trial alone as Drljača – who appeared in both Marshall's and Williams's 1992

- television reports discussing the camps at Omarska and Trnopolje – was killed while resisting arrest by S-FOR troops on 10 July 1997 (see [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri\\_036\\_1\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri_036_1_eng.txt), visited 31 July 2001). Kovačević was successfully arrested in the same operation, but died of natural causes while in custody at The Hague 1 month after his trial had begun (see [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri\\_087\\_1\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri_087_1_eng.txt), visited 31 July 2001). For an analysis of the structures of ethnic cleansing in Foča, which reveals similarities to Prijedor including the use of a crisis committee and detention centres, see Human Rights Watch (1998). Likewise, details of the campaign in Zvornik are contained in the report of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (1994).
24. With respect to the UN Commission, it is worth noting that the history of the Commission illustrates how its argument and conclusions cannot be dismissed as being in the service of great power interests given the obstacles thrown in its path by the UN Security Council (Scharf 1997: 44–49).
  25. Details of the camps in the Prijedor region are given below.
  26. Details of the camps and their conditions are most easily obtained from the excellent Institute for War and Peace Reporting case files on the Omarska and Keraterm trials underway at the ICTY – which involve indictments against Miroslav Kvočka, Mladjo Radić, Milojica Kos, Zoran Žigić, Dragan Kolundžija, Duško Sikirica, Damir Došen, and Dragoljub Prcać, all of whom are in custody in The Hague (see [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?tribunal\\_omarska.html](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?tribunal_omarska.html) and [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?tribunal\\_keraterm.html](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?tribunal_keraterm.html)). As reported there, the Keraterm trial concluded in October 2001 when Došen, Kolundžija and Sikirica accepted the evidence of their authority, changed their pleas to guilty, and received jail sentences ranging from 3–15 years. In the Omarska trial, which concluded in November 2001, Radić and Žigić were found guilty of being directly involved in violent crimes and sentenced to 20 and 25 years prison, respectively. Kos, Kvočka, and Prcać maintained their innocence, but, because of their positions of authority in the camp, they were found guilty of participating in persecution and sentenced to between 5–7 years.
  27. See also *The Guardian* (2000a), where it is reported that the prosecution stated that this was the first trial to deal with a ‘system of concentration camps’. For further details of Keraterm, see the indictment of the camp’s commander in ICTY (1999), which lead to his conviction.
  28. See also the corroborating report of Helsinki Watch, discussed in United Nations (1994: Annex VIII B part 5/10). Ironically, *Judgment* provides direct evidence of this systematic policy, because the commandant of Omarska is taped by the RTS crew (at 12:11) discussing the three categories of prisoner with Penny Marshall.
  29. Evidence of Idriz Merzdanic, *ITN and Informinc Ltd*, Day 7 am, 15–16.
  30. A good overview can be found in Orentlicher (1999). Only one in five of the criteria of genocide in the Genocide Convention of 1948 is concerned with direct killing – ‘80% of the legal definition of genocide thus devolves upon *non-lethal* policies and activities’ (Churchill 2000).
  31. I have discussed the politics of this international legal understanding in Campbell (????: 99–109). The August 2001 ICTY conviction of Radislav Kristić for genocide as a result of his responsibility for the Srebrenica massacre is a landmark decision that confirms the applicability of the concept to the Bosnian War (see <http://www.un.org/icty/krstic/TrialC1/judgement/index.htm>, visited 2 August 2001). However, sustaining an indictment for genocide has proved a difficult task for prosecutors in other ICTY cases. In the case of Goran Jelišić, the self-proclaimed ‘Serbian Adolph’ who was commander of the Luka camp in Brčko, the Trial Chamber sentenced him to 40 years in prison for crimes against humanity. However, the trial judges, acting on their own initiative rather than at the defence’s request, acquitted Jelišić of genocide, arguing that while the ‘material element’ of genocide could be established, the ‘mental element’ – the intent to destroy a group in whole or in part – was lacking (see [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri\\_156\\_1\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri_156_1_eng.txt), visited 24 July 2001). The Appeals Chamber ruled on 5 July 2001 that the trial judges were wrong in both law and fact to acquit Jelišić of genocide, given that the available evidence provided a reasonable basis to conclude that the destruction of the Muslim group in Brčko was the defendant’s intent. However, the Appeals Chamber decided not to overturn Jelišić’s acquittal of genocide, on the grounds that the tribunal lacked the resources to restart his trial (see [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri\\_228\\_3\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri_228_3_eng.txt), visited 24 July 2001, and Riedlmayer (2001). In the case of Duško Sikirica, commander of Keraterm camp, this time in response to a defence motion, the Trial Chamber acquitted the defendant of genocide, although he was still tried and convicted of persecution (see note 57). On the genocide acquittal, see [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri\\_226\\_3\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri_226_3_eng.txt), visited 24 July 2001.
  32. According to Richard Johnson, who headed the State Department Yugoslavia desk from 1990 to July 1992, the reason for avoiding the term is obvious: ‘Senior US government officials know that Serb leaders are waging genocide in Bosnia but will not say so in plain English because this would raise the pressure of US action’ (Johnson 1994).
  33. The various diplomatic initiatives and their assumptions are the subject of Campbell (1998b: ch. 5).
  34. For a detailed account of American unwillingness to commit forces until the summer of 1995, see Daalder (2000). The advertisement, which appeared in the *Guardian* on 23 March 1993, is reprinted in Hume (1997a: 9).
  36. See also the important discussion in Huyssen (2000: 24), where he argues, ‘The global circulation of the Holocaust as a trope at once decentres the event of the Holocaust and certifies its use as a prism through which we may look at other instances of genocide. The global and the local of Holocaust memory have entered into new constellations that beg to be analysed case by case; while Holocaust comparisons may rhetorically energize some discourses of traumatic memory, they may also work as screen memories or simply block insight into specific local histories’.

37. One prominent voice came from the BBC correspondent John Simpson, who went into print to praise Michael Hume's arguments about the perils of war reporting that is not 'objective', criticize ITN's libel suit, and argue the *LM* line that ITN's reports were pivotal in the 'Nazification' of the Serbs (Simpson 1997, 1998). Simpson is careful to note that 'ethnic cleansing, the siege of Sarajevo, the massacre at Srebrenica were disgusting crimes initiated by the Serbs'. But he also proffers the view, clearly designed to minimize his mistreatment, that 'Fikret Alić, the most skeletal of all the prisoners, was just as thin weeks after his release'. (A counter-description of Alić some months after his release can be found in Vuillamy (1994: 202). Simpson's sympathy with much of the *LM* position would explain why he was wanted by Diechmann and Hume as a witness for them during the libel trial. However, at the pre-trial hearing, the judge ordered that the case would be fought on the facts surrounding the filming of the ITN reports, and would not be extended into a larger debate about the potential problems with the 'journalism of attachment' or the UK's libel laws (see *The Guardian* 2000b).
38. In addition to the repeated coverage in *LM*, Deichmann repeats his original argument in Deichmann (1997, 1998b, c).
39. Sadly, Said's interventions on the question of human rights abuses in Kosovo have failed to live up to his own principled argument (see Cushman 2000: especially 147, 156).
40. Part of the historian's declaration is quoted in Lipstadt (1993: 17). Her account of the whole 'gas chamber controversy' can be found in chapter 9.
41. As Vidal-Naquet (1992: 73) concluded, 'to be sure, it is not the case that Chomsky's theses in any way approximate those of the neo-Nazis. But why does he find so much energy and even tenderness in defending those who have become the publishers and defenders of the neo-Nazis, and so much rage against those who allow themselves to fight them?'. Perhaps one answer lies in Chomsky's undisguised contempt for French culture and intellectuals (see Fresco 1980, Barsky 1997: 196–199).
42. In what can only be described as a cruel but delicious irony – given the substance of Deichmann's allegations against ITN – a number of prominent *LM* associates produced a documentary highly critical of the environmental movement, 'Against Nature', which aired in late 1999 on Britain's Channel 4 (home of the news that broadcast Ian Williams's report in 1992). After numerous public protests about the outrageous nature of many of the claims in the film, the Independent Television Commission, which regulates Channel 4, ruled that the station had to apologise for the documentary, especially for the way in which it 'distorted by selective editing' (see Monbiot 1998).
43. This would be consistent with Chomsky's position, especially that part of his 'left-libertarian' thought preoccupied with free speech (see Barsky 1997). Interestingly, though, it has no overt link to its namesake, one of Chomsky's early sources of intellectual inspiration was an American journal called *Living Marxism* (Barsky 1997: 36–37).
44. In addition to the references in note 21, see Israel (2000b).
45. The infamous Institute for Historical Review (IHR) in California – where Robert Faurisson and David Irving, among others, have lectured in support of the notion that the gas chambers did not exist – was founded by the leader of the Liberty Lobby, Willis Carto, and operates with a business license in the name of the 'Legion for the Survival of Freedom, Inc'. For an overview see the papers at the Anti-Defamations League's site: [http://www.adl.org/frames/front\\_holocaust.html](http://www.adl.org/frames/front_holocaust.html), The Nizkor Project report: <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/orgs/american/adl/embattled-bigots/background.html>, and Lipstadt (1993: ch. 8).
46. 'While neo-Nazis deny a single genocide, exclusivists deny many' (Churchill 2000).
47. See the discussion in 'Are 'Revisionists' Holocaust-deniers?' <http://www.nizkor.org/features/revision-or-denial>. Visited 18 October 2000.
48. Given the importance of narrative to any understanding of the historical record, the issues involved here are more complex than this rendering grants. For a discussion of the relationship between narrative and time-space specific events in the history of the Bosnian war, which expands these concerns a little, see Campbell (1998a).
49. The quote comes from a description of the video 'Judgment'. <http://www.emperors-clothes.com/Film/astunmin.htm>. Visited 10 October 2000.
50. For example, the Serbian Network highlights the ITN vs. *LM* story on its home page, and maintains pages with some of the original *LM* articles. <http://www.srpska-mreza.com/lm-f97/lm-f97.html>. Visited 28 November 2000.
51. Project Censored at Sonoma State University in California provides another instance of 'free speech' as cover for partisan arguments about the Balkans. Ostensibly dealing with stories supported by 'solid, verifiable documentation', but suppressed by the mainstream media, Project Censored has promoted accounts that exculpate the Serbian regimes of war crimes. In 1998, for example, they named the Deichmann/*LM* story as one of the year's top 25 censored stories. Recently, they have highlighted stories focusing on the 'bogus' nature of the war crimes in Kosovo said to be Milosevic's responsibility (see Phillips and Project Censored 2000, especially ch. 6).
52. Antivar.com – which advertises the anti-ITN video *Judgment* on its home page – makes clear its political heritage; as a subsidiary of the Centre for Libertarian Studies, it actively supports neo-conservative Republican congressman like Ron Paul of Texas, who is described as 'the leading opponent of American imperialism in Congress today'.

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