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In today's [#vatniksoup](#), I'll introduce an American author and academic, Noam Chomsky. He's best-known for his long history as a political commentator and left-wing activist, and for his staunch criticism of the US foreign policy since the 1960s.

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Chomsky's antiwar activism started around 1962, when he was protesting against the US involvement in the Vietnam War. He started writing essays and eventually books, targeted mostly to the American "New Left" movement. His criticism towards US interventionism continued...

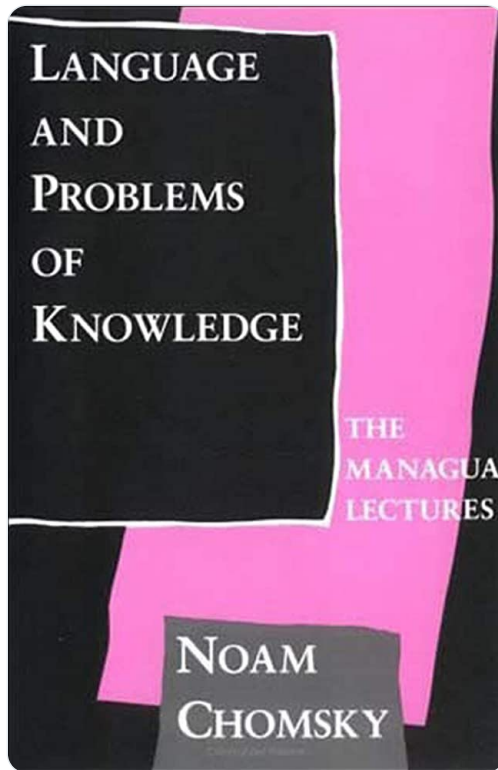
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...during the 70s and the 80s, resisting US involvement in conflicts like Nicaraguan Contra War and the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Since then, everything he does or says is shrouded with rabid anti-Americanism. He seems to consider the US as the "root of all evil", ...

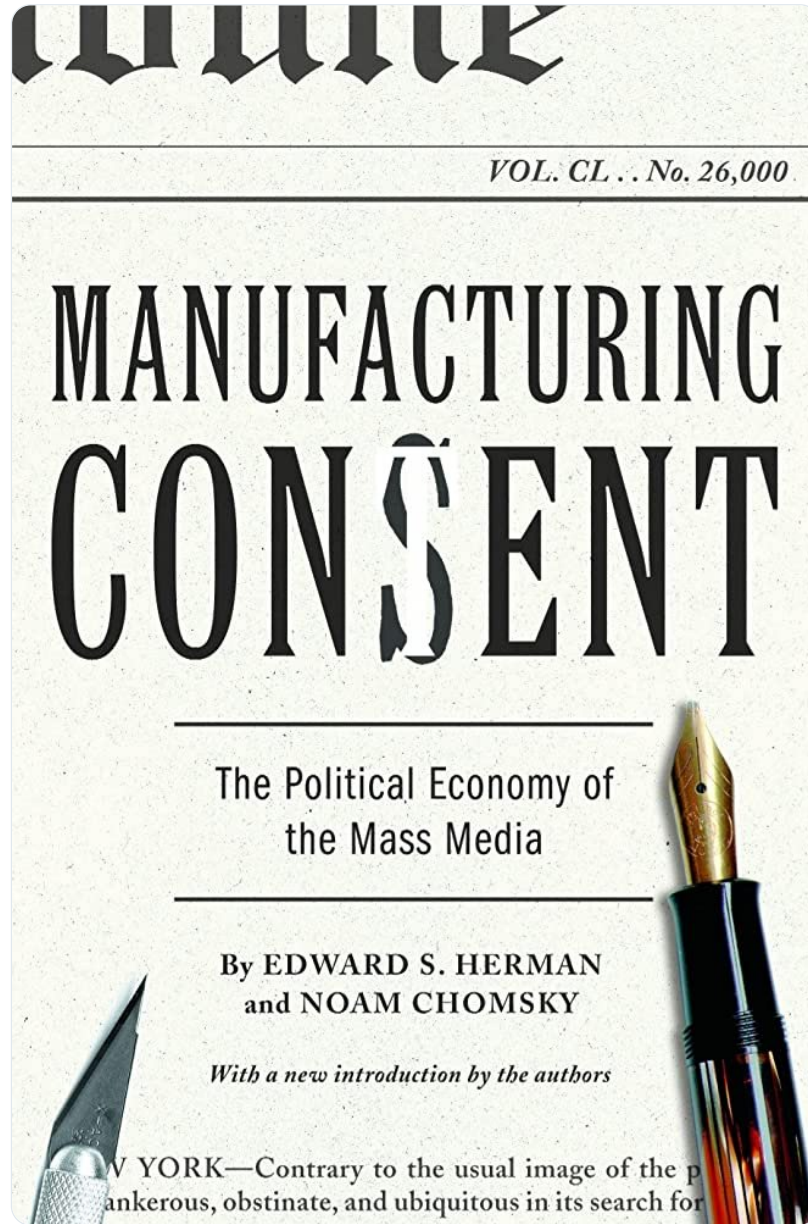
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...regardless of their involvement and role. He is the ultimate epitome of a "whataboutist", and there simply is no discussion which he can't turn into US bashing.

In 1988 he co-authored his best-known book, Manufacturing Consent. It outlines a propaganda model for...

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...understanding how the mainstream media manipulates people. He argued that the mass media in the US are "ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function".

In 2011 he told the journalist George Monbiot that calling Srebrenica Massacre a...

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...genocide "cheapens the word". He also denied a report by Ed Vulliamy on the existence of Bosnian concentration camps, stating that Vulliamy "got caught up in a story that probably wasn't true". But it wasn't the first genocide Chomsky had denied. He also criticized...

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On the same day (7 November), a row held emerged in another saga of genocide-denial. The Guardian printed a glowing apology to Noam Chomsky for a none-too-flattering interview with him carried out by the Jewish lawyer Pamela Erona Brookes, published by the Guardian on 31 October. It which Brookes told Chomsky as having said that the Srebrenica massacre of 1995 was "probably overrated" and "was not even an actual massacre". Chomsky prides himself on being a resolute champion of freedom of speech; on this ground, he has defended the right of Holocaust-deniers to publish what they want and condemned Brookes's "flak line". He based with Brookes's response of the practice, he and his circle of friends removed from their own free speech position, and organised a campaign of denunciation of Brookes, bombarding the Guardian with letters of complaint, and eventually bullying this spinless newspaper into issuing an impartial apology and retraction.

In his letter of complaint to the Guardian, published on 2 November, Chomsky writes: "As for her [Brookes's] personal opinions, interpretations and distortions, she is of course free to publish them, and I would of course support her right to do so, on grounds that she makes clear she does not understand." Yet as a result of the Chomsky campaign against Brookes, the Guardian readers' editor reported on 17 November: "The Guardian has now withdrawn the entire view from the website. Just to say that I have already said, the Guardian also apologised for having published a letter by Pamela Erona Brookes, a member of the Dutch concentration camp Chomsky, alongside Chomsky's on 31 October. Pamela's article was included by some of the views of Noam Chomsky in the article by Emma Brookes." Yet in the words of the Guardian readers' editor's glowing piece of self-criticism: "While he has every sympathy with the writer [Erona], Prof Chomsky believes that his publication was designed to undermine his position, and address a part of the interview which was false." With hindsight it is acknowledged that the juxtaposition has exacerbated Prof Chomsky's complaint, and that he regretted "so much for respecting the right of a concentration-camp survivor to state his opinion."

National newspapers

Guardian pulls Chomsky interview

What the readers' editor said

Stephen Brook

Thu, 17 Nov 2016 12:39 GMT



The Guardian has withdrawn an interview with academic Noam Chomsky from its website after he complained to the readers' editor over comments attributed to him about the **Srebrenica massacre**.

The US academic and activist had complained that the October 31 interview, published in the newspaper and on Guardian Unlimited, falsely portrayed him as denying that massacres were committed there during the Bosnian war.

Professor Chomsky complained in particular about the headline for the interview which read: "Q: Do you regret supporting those who say the Srebrenica massacre was exaggerated? A: My only regret is that I didn't do it strongly enough."

The Guardian's readers' editor, Ian Mayes, said today in a corrections and clarifications column printed in the paper, that no question in that form had been put by interviewer Emma Brookes to Prof Chomsky and that "the headline was wrong and unjustified by the text".

Part of the interview related to the academic's support for Diana Johnstone, whose book about the reporting of casualty figures in the war had been withdrawn from publication after controversy.

After the interview appeared, he told the Guardian that he supported Ms Johnstone's rights to freedom of speech and that he had never denied the fact of the Srebrenica massacre.

"Ms Brookes misrepresentation of Prof Chomsky's views on Srebrenica stemmed from her misunderstanding of his support for Ms Johnstone," the readers' editor wrote.

In her interview Brookes also stated that Prof Chomsky had placed the word "massacre" in quotation marks.

He denied ever having done so. The Guardian retracted the statement and apologised.

In an open letter dated November 13 on his official website Chomsky.info, Prof Chomsky attacked the Guardian interview as a "scurrilous piece of journalism" where the reporter had a definite agenda.



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