

# When evil is consistently lent a voice; Rever and partner find space in a South African paper

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The naysayers of Rwanda’s development gains who try to undermine RPF legitimacy cannot stand certain incontrovertible facts : the RPF/RPA was the politico-military force that stopped the 1994 genocide against Rwanda’s Tutsi, then ushered in an era of stability and economic progress. So they attempt to confuse by downplaying economic gains, supporting schemes to destabilize the country, and rewrite history through the denial, revision, and trivialization of the Genocide.

Judi Rever and Benedict Moran’s extremely long article in the *Mail & Guardian* of South Africa is one among such attempts. It relies mainly on a bunch of anonymous “witnesses” and on hearsay.

“Their (witnesses) sworn testimony to a UN court contradicted the dominant story about the country’s

brutal descent into violence, which depicted Kagame and his RPF as the country’s saviors” Rever and Moran claim. But the “testimonies” they cite are from genocide perpetrators, rejected by ICTR prosecution years ago. One wonders how far down the drain *The Mail & Guardian* “newspaper” is willing to see its reputation go to give space to notorious genocide deniers like Rever.

In his review of Rever’s book, scholar Jos Van Oijen notes that while she uses a different version of the myths propagated by genocidaires or RPF dissidents citing fictitious killings that for instance supposedly took place in Gabiro, all the different versions have one thing in common : The witness, presented under the pseudonym of Christophe, never himself witnessed any crimes during the eight months he claims he had

spent in Gabiro. In other words, Rever's central charge is based on pure hearsay.

Van Oijen notes further that although one of Judi Rever's supposed key witnesses – an “anonymous” former RPF soldier – claims that these crimes were still being committed as late as 1996, Journalist Nick Gordon who at that time went to Gabiro to take a look found “only three primitive army barracks, and nothing remotely resembling a death camp.”

As we wait for the *Mail & Guardian's* “investigative skills” to materialize and unveil that the “top secret” testimonies are no secrets at all, and have been in the public domain for years, one is compelled to consider the irony of the situation. First, these self-styled “experts on Rwanda” are contradicted by Susan Thomson, another fiercely anti-Rwanda negativist who emphasizes that “legal and scholarly evidence to support a claim of a double genocide is nonexistent.”

Second, even their charge relating to the downing of the plane is demolished by the repeated failures of France's politically motivated court proceedings “to bring the needed evidence to indict the RPF”. They failed in their attempt to rewrite Rwanda's history, because the truth wasn't on their side.

Some in the French political establishment, dating from the government of Francois Mitterrand, had a

political motive to deflect attention from their own implication in the genocide against Rwanda's Tutsi. They relied on testimonies that turned out to be crude fabrications, doctored or that contradicted their theories; and have as a result had to shamefully keep quiet.

Oblivious to the absurdity, the essayist Sam Broadway has attempted to bully the corporate media into joining the genocide denialist bandwagon. In Broadway's view, the media onslaught on Rwanda following Rusesabagina's arrest was “fair” but it should have included a revision of the history of the genocide. “Mainstream reporters and their editors have been extremely selective in their recounting of the events of 1994,” claims Broadway, promoting the revisionism of Filip Reyntjens and Judi Rever as “valuable contributions to the world's knowledge.”

Ironically, Broadway does exactly what he is criticizing the mainstream and corporate journalism for doing : being selective. Broadway's intent is to tendentiously promote the allegations of Reyntjens, and his toxic, false views of the RPF while failing to inform readers about Reyntjens' role in the genocidal regime, particularly his central contribution to the framing and codification of the pre-1994 MRND discriminatory policies. Neither is the reader told of Reyntjens' devoted commitment to the defense

of genocidaires before the ICTR, and Reyntjens reliance on the perpetrators of genocide as the main source of his publications.

He also omits to point out that Reyntjens who has never set foot in post-1994 Rwanda lacks the slightest first-hand knowledge of today's Rwanda to claim any expert knowledge of the country or of the RPF's role in its rebirth. Neither does Broadway tell his audience about Rever's unhinged claims such as when she says that Jean-Paul Akayesu – whose trial was a pivotal moment in the history of the world as it was the first case to hold that rape and sexual assault may constitute acts of genocide– is “a moral and upright man.” Another of Rever's mind-boggling claims is that “the Vatican is infiltrated by the RPF.”

Broadway's references are indeed fringe academics and “journalists” worthy of getting lumped together with the fascist “Hutu Power” ideology groups. In fact, Broadway's in-

sistence that the corporate mainstream media joins the genocide denialist bandwagon stems from his deep-seated belief that cases like those of Rusesabagina “will never break the camel's back.”

Broadway is, in other words, acutely aware that these smear campaigns targeting Rwanda are not producing the desired outcome, and suggests that rewriting the history of the genocide may be more effective.

This is what revisionism and denialism lead to. The undeniable historical reality of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi has become the favoured target for some “critics” of Rwanda in their never-ending quest to push their long-debunked “double genocide” propaganda to then claim in turn that “the RPF itself not only triggered the genocidal massacres against the Tutsi, but that it also conducted another genocide against the Hutu.”

Evil truly walks the earth.