

12.6.2020

Dangerous Words of Vojislav Šešelj: On the Linguistic Road to Mass Violence

Abstract

With the trials of war propagandists by international criminal tribunals, the study of war propaganda and its relation to mass violence has gained undivided attention in conflict studies. One of such infamous warmongers is a former Serb politician Vojislav Šešelj, whose three speeches form the core of this thesis. With the help of J. A. Austin's speech act theory, a detailed micro analysis of Šešelj's propaganda reveals the effects it had on the situation on the ground in Vukovar, Mali Zvornik and Hrtkovci during 1991-1992. Instead of examining the bare details of mass killings that occurred shortly after his speeches, my inquiry looks at the aspects of mutual understanding, shared emotions between the speaker and the audience, and acceptance of beliefs or expectations proposed in the speech acts. As a result, new perspective on the peril of Šešelj's words in the context of wartime Yugoslavia is exposed.

Krkošková, N. (Nathalie)

STUDENT NUMBER: 6619673

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

BACHELOR THESIS 7,5 EC (GE3V18002)

THESIS SUPERVISOR: GERALDIEN VON FRIJTAG DRABBE KUNZEL

WORD COUNT: 7,235

Table of Contents

Introduction 2

 Theoretical framework..... 5

 Methodology and sources 7

Chapter 1: The Context of The Speeches 9

 Insecurities and Past Grievances Serving the Nationalist Cause of Milošević 10

 The Cyclic Relationship Between Propaganda, Religion and Nationalism..... 12

Chapter 2: Šešelj’s Intentions and The Audience’s Uptake..... 13

 Šešelj’s Intentions and Aspirations 14

 Vukovar (Croatia, 1991) 17

 Mali Zvornik (Bosnian and Hercegovina, 1992) 19

 Hrtkovci (Serbia, 1992) 21

Chapter 3: The Consequences of Šešelj’s Speeches 23

 Vukovar 24

 Mali Zvornik..... 26

 Hrtkovci 27

Conclusion 29

Sources..... 33

 Primary Sources 33

 Online Sources 33

 Books and Journal Articles 34

Introduction

“[...] I am being tried for atrocious war crimes that I allegedly committed through hate speech, while I was preaching the nationalist ideology of which I am proud.”¹ This was the statement of Vojislav Šešelj, the greatest hate and fear propagandist of the Yugoslav wars, regarding the charges that were brought up against him by the prosecution during his trial in 2007. He added that “[...]they [the prosecution] did not understand my ideology at all.”² During the more than a decade long legal proceedings, Šešelj apparently managed to get the judges to understand his nationalist ideology, because In 2016, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Trial chamber found him not guilty on all nine counts of crimes against humanity. They noted that Šešelj’s propaganda of nationalist ideology was not in itself criminal. Therefore, the most significant ‘propaganda trial’ in the recent history of international law was ended ignominiously.³ Following discontent with this result, the Appeals Chamber reversed the findings in 2018.⁴

Vojislav Šešelj, born in 1954 in Sarajevo, was the founder of the Serbian Radical Party (SRP) and former Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia. As many others during the time of Yugoslav war, his political party, too, had its own paramilitary group called the Šešeljevci. The military wing promoted Četnik movement’s militaristic traditions and actively fought at the frontlines during Yugoslav war. In 1989 Šešelj was titled Četnik duke, Četnik leader from World War II.,

¹ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 6 November 2007, transcript page 1683, lines 18-24, accessed June 9, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/071106ED.htm>

² ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 6 November 2007, transcript page 1684, line 1.

³ Richard A. Wilson, “Inciting Speech in International Law and Social Science,” in *Incitement on Trial: Prosecuting International Speech Crimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 8-9.

⁴ ICTY Šešelj, “The Appeals Chamber Judgement,” 11 April 2018, page 76-77, paragraphs 175-180, accessed June 9, 2020. <https://cld.irmct.org/assets/filings/Apeal-Judgement-11.04.2018.PDF>

with a directive to unify all Serbs into one state, the so-called Greater Serbia. In 1992, Šešelji's party became the second largest parliamentary party. As a talented doctoral student of mass psychology of fascism, he was ready to use propaganda for his radical nationalist ideology.⁵ He once proclaimed that propaganda functions "based on the fact that people are ready to uncritically believe anything they hear or see in the media."⁶ And he acted accordingly.

The person who has spent the most time on analyzing more than a hundred of Šešelji's speeches is Anthony D. Obershall, professor emeritus in the sociology department of the University of North Carolina.⁷ He compiled Šešelji's utterances from the years 1991-1994 for the purpose of analysis of the influence of war propaganda and the success of Šešelji's wartime mass communication during the Yugoslav Wars that was presented in an expert report to the Tribunal. Even though Obershall's expertise was not admitted in the court, he acted as a witness during Šešelji's trial and the reports served as regular evidence.⁸ His analysis was a great contribution to the study of propaganda, because it has exposed the core idea of propaganda: although it rarely causes anyone to behave one way or another, it does carry collective intentionality that might cause the change of social relations and make violence

⁵ Richard A. Wilson, "Instigating Prosecution: The Prosecution Case Against Vojislav Šešelji," in *Incitement on Trial* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 107-110.

⁶ ICTY Šešelji, trial transcript, 5 March 2012, transcript page 17157, lines 13-15, accessed on June 9, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/120305IT.htm>

⁷ Anthony Obershall, "Vojislav Seselj's Nationalist Propaganda: Contents, Techniques, Aims and Impacts, 1990–1994," An expert report for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. accessed on June 9, 2020.

http://www.baginist.org/uploads/1/0/4/8/10486668/vojislav_seseljs_nationalist_propaganda-_contents_techniques_aims_and_impacts.pdf

⁸ICTY Šešelji, "Decision Regarding the Admission of Evidence Presented During the Testimony of Anthony Obershall," 24 January 2008, pages 1-9, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/tdec/en/080124.pdf>

towards particular groups of people more acceptable.⁹ In order to prove his point he analyzed the techniques and effects of Serb mass media propaganda on the public. It provided us with a complex macro picture of the mechanisms behind mass media propaganda and Šešelj's contribution to it, however, his analysis of Šešelj's texts was very brief.¹⁰

Even though I support the above-mentioned core idea of propaganda and find the knowledge about the social motivation to accept or engage in mass violence very much applicable to this thesis, Obershall's analysis of individual speeches is rather limited. Moreover, rather than relating these speeches to what actually happened on the ground, Obershall links them back to the techniques of propaganda. My aim is to conduct a micro analysis of Šešelj speeches in order to show how his speeches operated in reality and what their impact was. Accordingly, I intend to rely on the framework provided by British philosopher John Austin, namely on his speech act theory that focuses on the semantic, intentional and interpretative components of linguistic communication.¹¹ As any approach to the analysis of textual propaganda, we should begin with the premise that words, in point of fact, are actions. I hold the opinion that Šešelj's propaganda is a worthwhile case study, as the degree to which his words contributed to mass violence during the conflict in former Yugoslavia remains uncertain, which is reflected by his controversial acquittal and the following partial reversal. The purpose of this thesis is thus to

⁹ Jordan Kiper, "How Dangerous Propaganda Works," in *Propaganda and International Criminal Law* (London: Routledge, 2019), 217.

¹⁰ Anthony Obershall, "Vojislav Seselj's Nationalist Propaganda: Contents, Techniques, Aims and Impacts, 1990–1994," An expert report for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, 18-38. accessed on June 9, 2020. http://www.baginist.org/uploads/1/0/4/8/10486668/vojislav_seseljs_nationalist_propaganda-contents_techniques_aims_and_impacts.pdf

¹¹ J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1962).

analyze Vojislav Šešelj's three most significant speeches, namely the ones held in Vukovar, Mali Zvornik and Hrtkovci in 1991-1992 and use them to expose the effects of propaganda on a micro-scale level. In my opinion, such analysis will bring a new perspective on the peril of Šešelj's words in the context of wartime Yugoslavia.

Šešelj, a very capable speaker who even represented himself during the trial, delivered hundreds of speeches during the Yugoslav war. In some cases, at some locations where he gave speeches, within weeks, and sometimes only days, non-Serbian civilian population was attacked, and mass violence occurred. My case study looks at three of those speeches. Moreover, these three speeches represent the complex picture of the Yugoslav war, as they were held in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia. For the purpose of my analysis, in the speeches I will be looking for specific similarities and differences regarding the claims of past grievances, religious and ethnical superiority and territorial aspirations. The main question to be answered is thus: Applying Austin's framework, what effects did Vojislav Šešelj's hate speeches have in Vukovar (1991), Mali Zvornik (1992) and Hrtkovci (1992) on the situation, violence and expulsions that followed?

Theoretical framework

The study of war propaganda became of interest to academic scholars since the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. After that however, the topic has lost its prominence in scholarly circles. It was the trials of war propagandists by international criminal tribunals, namely the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, that had brought it back to the center of violence studies. During these

trials, war propaganda was constituted a cause for mass violence, not only an incitement instigating violent ideologies.¹²

When using the term *war propaganda*, I refer to the intentional act of deliberately shaping perceptions, manipulating cognition, and directing behavior toward mass violence.¹³ I will use the term *mass violence* to delegate all the genocidal acts of ethnic cleansing, war rape, massacres and genocide.¹⁴ Establishment of the causal link between mass violence and propaganda was therefore a major shift in legal precedence, because since the Nuremberg Trials, war propaganda was considered an incitement to mass violence and has been an inchoate crime. Such precedent gave scholars the opportunity to investigate whether the causal link between war propaganda and mass violence does actually apply, systematize war propaganda and analyze its effects.¹⁵

Jean-Paul Akayesu was the first propagandist to stand trial for the Rwandan genocide. It was during his legal process when the principle of inciting speech calling for violence and/or killings was pronounced to be a crime. Akayesu was found guilty of incitement not because of his intent but rather because of the effects of his war propaganda.¹⁶ Thus, he was convicted based on his influence on audience that was rendered as effective incitement to massacres

¹² Jordan Kiper, "Toward an Anthropology of War Propaganda," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 38 (2015): 1, 129-130

¹³ Predrag Dojčinović, "Introduction," in *Propaganda and International Criminal Law* (London: Routledge, 2019), 4-5.

¹⁴ Anthony Oberschall, "Propaganda, Hate Speech and Mass Killings," in *Propaganda, War Crime Trials and International Law* (London: Routledge, 2012), 182-185

¹⁵ Kiper, "Toward an Anthropology of War Propaganda," 129-130.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

during the Rwandan genocide. In contrast, to highlight the major shift in legal proceedings, consider the Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher who had been said to have incited mass violence because he directly and publicly called for it.¹⁷ To illustrate the difference between these two cases even better, take into consideration the linguistic distinction of a speech act as proposed by J. A. Austin, philosopher of language best known for his theory of speech acts.¹⁸ Firstly, a speech act represents an expression (a locution) and secondly it represents a request or command (an illocution) that may or may not have an effect on audience (called the perlocutionary force).¹⁹ Streicher was thus sentenced based on what he declared and urged others to do (an illocution), and Akayesu was sentenced based on what his speech caused others to do (the perlocutionary force).²⁰

However, many scholars counter argue the direct causal link. Drawing on what J. L. Austin noted, it is only possible to claim that a speech has perlocutionary power if we can establish the relationship between the intentions of the speaker and the understanding of the listener. Logically then, the causal link cannot be established so easily and the speech act must be proven to have influence on the actions of perpetrators.²¹

Methodology and sources

The ICTY archives, that will form the core of this thesis, are the biggest source of information of violence in the former Yugoslavia. They have been constantly checked and re-checked and

¹⁷ Richard A. Wilson, "Inciting Genocide with Words," *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 36 (2015): 2, 285

¹⁸ J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, 98-107.

¹⁹ Wilson, "Inciting Genocide with Words," 308.

²⁰ Kiper, "Toward an Anthropology of War Propaganda," 132-133.

²¹ Kiper, "Toward an Anthropology of War Propaganda," 134.

this thesis takes them as authentic. As said by C. A. Nielsen, a historian from Columbian university who has worked as an analyst and external consultant for the Office of the Prosecutor in the Hague, “The Hague’s history of the breakup of Yugoslavia and the wars in the former Yugoslavia, provides an adequate draft for use in future monographs. I think that the quantity of accurate facts and explanations found in these verdicts far exceeds the number of errors.”²² Moreover, historical discussions regarding international trials have brought about many important insights into the underlying factors of armed conflicts.²³ Scholars have used the ICTY archives for all kinds of research, using not only trial transcripts, but also pictures or videos that have been presented as evidence during some trials.^{24,25} As noted by Vukušić, “[s]ome of the images the archives contain became iconic.”²⁶

However, there are some flaws that must be acknowledged when dealing with the ICTY archives. The archive is enormous in terms of documentation, but not all of the records are publicly accessible for various reasons, such as for the protection of vulnerable witnesses. Additionally, it must be acknowledged here that these sources are based on courtroom testimonies, and these are definitely not flawless. Testimonies must be weighted based on

²² Jelena Grujić Zindović, “Christian A. Nielsen: The Hague Tribunal has written a decent historical draft of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia,” *Koalicija za REKOM*, last modified February 2, 2016, <http://www.recom.link/sq/137750-2/>, accessed on June 2, 2020.

²³ Richard A. Wilson, “Assessing Court Histories of Mass Crimes,” in *Writing History in International Criminal Trials* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 1.

²⁴ Iva Vukušić, “Nineteen Minutes of Horror: Insights from the Scorpions Execution Video,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, 12 (2018): 2, 35-53

²⁵ Vladimir Petrović, “Power(Lessness) of Atrocity Images: Bijeljina Photos between Perpetration and Prosecution of War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia,” *The international Journal of Transitional Justice*, 9 (2015): 3, 367-385.

²⁶ Iva Vukušić, “The Archives of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia,” *History: The Journal of the Historical Association*, 98 (2013): 4, 627.

their veracity and importance, as people have different agendas to pursue and the quality of testimony depends on various factors.

Structurally, the thesis will follow the three components of Austin's speech act theory. Firstly, the context in which the speeches were given will be outlined. Thus, chapter one will provide us with a better understanding of the conditions in which Šešelj gave his speeches. In this chapter, secondary sources will be utilized to illustrate the historical background in which Vojislav Šešelj gave his speeches. Even though the Speech act theory clearly distinguishes between the expression of intention and the urge of a speech act, the locutionary and illocutionary aspects, Austin acknowledges that they may occur concurrently.²⁷ Therefore, chapter two will analyze the speaker's intentions expressed in the speech act and the audience's uptake of the request or command put upon them by the speaker, answering the question: "What were Šešelj's intentions and the audience's uptake?" Chapter three will be dealing with the causality of the speeches, the perlocutionary power of speech acts, responding to "What has happened because of Šešelj's speeches?" These two chapters will rest largely on primary sources, namely on the ICTY records. Nevertheless, secondary sources will be utilized as well to support my claims with relevant academic findings.

Chapter 1: The Context of The Speeches

For a speech act to be successful, as claimed by Austin, the audience must understand what the speaker is ordering them to do and then act accordingly. This depends upon the cultural environment and certain circumstances that influence a person when deciding whether the

²⁷ Wilson, "Inciting Genocide with Words," 310.

force of a speech act is convincing or not and whether they will decide to act on it or not.²⁸

That is why it is important to firstly analyze the historical framework in which Šešelj held his speeches.

Insecurities and Past Grievances Serving the Nationalist Cause of Milošević

During the 1980's, Yugoslavia was engulfed by socioeconomic insecurity. While economic crisis swept through Yugoslavia, constitutional crisis arose between leaders of the republics about the right to self-determination. As Kiper's work has indicated, in order to retain power, Serbian elites led by Slobodan Milošević decided to replace socialist brotherhood with ethnonationalism.²⁹ Similarly, Croats and Muslim Albanians demanded autonomy in Croatia and Kosovo. Fearful of territorial loss, Serb elites reached for help in their history. They have used the right moment to remind Serbian people of their history-long suffering and armed themselves with myths and symbols that maintained the momentum of their movement.³⁰

MacDonald proposes that the sense of victimization became the backbone of Serb national identity.³¹ The myth of battle of Kosovo, in which in 1389 the Serbs lost to the Ottoman Empire, was instrumental for Serbian territorial claims. It was allegedly the area of medieval Serbian kingdom and the seat of the Orthodox Church, and as proposed by Bieber, it also established a historical continuity between the medieval Serbs and the contemporary Serbian

²⁸ J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, 117.

²⁹ Kiper, "How Dangerous Propaganda Works." 221-222

³⁰ Vjekoslav Perica, "Flames and Shrines," in *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, (Cary: Oxford University Press USA, 2004), 130.

³¹ David Bruce MacDonald, "Introduction," in *Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian Victim-Centered Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 4.

nation, suggesting its everlasting presence.³² Additionally, according to Drezgić, the process of national mobilization was accompanied by re-traditionalization, re-patriarchalisation and most importantly de-secularization of public discourses.³³ Nation and religion were tightly entangled as religion served as a characteristic trait among 'among ethnically, culturally and linguistically closely related and hardly distinguishable ethno-national groups.'³⁴ Milošević once even explicitly said that Orthodoxy was the most essential component of the national identity of Serbs, and the Church itself shared the idea, seeing itself as identical with the Serbian nation.³⁵ It is reported that some Orthodox religious leaders blessed Serbian fighters when accompanying them into the field, resulting in more willingness on the soldiers' side to part take in violence as they felt united in identity.³⁶

A paranoia of being victimized by former enemies was also intensified by the Serb elites highlighting the Ustaša (Croatian Nazis) atrocities committed against Serbs in World War II.³⁷ Through the media, a sharp dichotomy between us and them was distributed to the Serbian nation by hate-speeches, creating an environment in which people accepted collective violence.³⁸ Serb officials used abusive labels with fear and hatred connotation in order to justify attacks on Croats as a revenge against the 'Ustaši', who had threatened their faith and

³² Florian Bieber, "Nationalist Mobilization and Stories of Serb Suffering: The Kosovo Myth from 600th Anniversary to the Present," *Rethinking History* 6, (2002): 1, 95-96

³³ Rada Drezgić, "Religion, Politics and Gender in the Context of Nation-State Formation: The Case of Serbia," *Third World Quarterly* 31 (2010): 6, 955-956

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 958

³⁵ Sabina Petra Ramet, "The Serbian Orthodox Church," in *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 113.

³⁶ Jordan Kiper and Richard Sosis, "Shaking the Tyrant's Bloody Robe," *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 35 (2016): 1, 39.

³⁷ Mohamed Badar and Polona Florijančič, "The Prosecutor v. Vojislav Šešelj: A Symptom of the Fragmented International Criminalisation of Hate and Fear Propaganda," *International Criminal Law Review*, 20 (2020): 2, 63.

³⁸ Oberschall, "Propaganda, hate speech and mass killings," 188.

sacred land of Serbia, in the name of the Orthodox Christian religion. They hid their acts of ethnic cleansing under the coat of reclaiming the former lands of the Orthodox Serbian Empire, also known as 'Greater Serbia'.³⁹

The Cyclic Relationship Between Propaganda, Religion and Nationalism

According to Oberschall, the most influential part of propaganda were hate speeches that delivered an ideology of antagonism and created an environment, in which collective violence was seen as a plausible resolution to the presumed Serbian problems.⁴⁰ As proposed by Oberschall, it was the religious and political leaders who made the most persuasive speeches based on elements of dehumanized portrayals, false Serbian heroism and reminders of enemy's atrocities.⁴¹

Therefore, such speeches were undoubtedly appealing to a sense of loyalty and religious togetherness that Serbian people sought when feeling threatened. Oberschall's argument is supported by Bugarski, who adds that language played an essential role in the conflict as 'an instrument for generating interethnic hatred and war propaganda.'⁴² The most important theater for the war of words was the media, TV especially. In the case of Serbia, the regime had complete control over the media, thus it was more effective in targeting the audience,

³⁹ Kiper and Sosis, "Shaking the Tyrant's Bloody Robe," 39.

⁴⁰ Oberschall, "Propaganda, hate speech and mass killings," 188.

⁴¹ Ibid., 193.

⁴² Ranko Bugarski, "Language, Nationalism and War in Yugoslavia," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 151 (2001), 69-70

because it did not have to compete in plural media environment.⁴³⁴⁴ Volčić even goes to say that even the cultural elite of Serbia tended to dismiss external media sources, which were available to them, as a reaction towards domestic turmoil and perceived threat, and focused instead on internal problems displayed in national media.⁴⁵

In sum, the elites exploited the situation of crisis and intensified hostility based on ethnic and religious differences. They utilized the state-owned media in order to inflame and mobilize nationalistic feelings in Serbia. They propagated hateful narratives regarding past misdeeds done to the Serb nation and consequently manipulated preexisting culture, denigrating and enhancing fear of the others. All of these actions contributed critically to the realization of collective violence. Šešelj's speeches were therefore given in such circumstances, in which Yugoslav society was undergoing sever changes that resulted in people's insecurity and fear that prompted them to embrace the threatened ethnonational identity, and act upon the proposed collective action that they saw as necessary and justified.

Chapter 2: Šešelj's Intentions and The Audience's Uptake

In this chapter I will be examining the illocutionary and locutionary aspects of the speeches given in Vukovar, Mali Zvornik and Hrtkovci. These aspects refer to the speaker's intentions expressed in the speech act and the audience's uptake of the request or command put upon them by the speaker. The work of Austin shows that a speech act proves unsuccessful when

⁴³ David Bruce MacDonald, "Slobodan Milošević and the construction of Serbophobia," in *Balkan holocausts? Serbian and Croatian victim-centered propaganda and the war in Yugoslavia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 67-68.

⁴⁴ Oberschall, "Propaganda, hate speech and mass killings," 189.

⁴⁵ Zala Volčić, "Blaming the Media: Serbian Narratives of National(ist) Identity," *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 20 (2006): 3, 319

the audience is unreceptive, noncommittal or confused.⁴⁶ Therefore, I will be looking at aspects of mutual understanding, shared emotions between the speaker and the audience and acceptance of beliefs or expectations, in order to show to what extent was Šešelj able to achieve what he intended to.

This line of actions was chosen based on pragmatics, proposing the fact that if multiple audiences interpret speaker S as having intended message G, then it is likely that S intended G.⁴⁷ Meaning of a speech act is construed between the speaker and audience, therefore, intentions are derivable from what the speaker says, as well as by the audience's uptake and indications taken from speaker's broader actions, such as plans, goals or desires. Having such insider knowledge will make it easier to discern intentions of Šešelj's speeches, the force it had on the audience and audience's uptake.

Šešelj's Intentions and Aspirations

Šešelj's biggest desire, as will be seen in his speeches, was the establishment of Greater Serbia. He was not the only one with this goal, as examined in previous chapter, it was Milošević's goal as well as the Serbian clergy's.⁴⁸ Milošević did not, however, publicly call for liberation of the proclaimed Serb lands.⁴⁹ Šešelj did, and he did it with the help of his political party, the Serb Radical Party. They disseminated the image of Greater Serbia as including the entire

⁴⁶ J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, 24.

⁴⁷ W. S. Croddy, "Meaning and Intention," *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12 (1988): 1, 1-3.

⁴⁸ Bojan Savić, "Where Is Serbia? Traditions of Spatial Identity and State Positioning in Serbian Geopolitical Culture," *Geopolitics*, 19 (2014): 3, 694-695

⁴⁹ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 7 November 2007, transcript page 1793, lines 19-24, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/071107IT.htm>

Balkan Serbdom in Bosnia and Croatia along the Karlobag-Ogulin-Karlovac-Virovitica line.⁵⁰ This particular phrase can be considered as his unique ‘mental fingerprint’, as proposed by Dojčinović.⁵¹ Every time some individual reproduces this phrase, it can be concluded that his mind has been cognitively ‘fingerprinted’ by the producer – Šešelj. Such realization helps us to investigate the audience’s uptake.

Šešelj and the SRP systematically worked on this strategic aim of ‘liberating’ what he said were the Serb lands. Operating as a Serbian ultranationalist propagandist throughout the Yugoslav wars, he used the media to spread his messages full of fear and hatred. In one of his public speeches, he proclaimed that: “We Serbs are in danger, Croat fascist hordes attack Serb women and children in our villages, planning genocide for the Serbs.”⁵² Šešelj even republished his speeches, interviews and articles in his books, which are still being sold and read at present Balkans, bringing with a lot of controversy.⁵³⁵⁴ It can be seen in this excerpt from one of his speeches, that he was ready to use force in order to achieve his territorial goal, it was his intention to stir up collective violence: *"Karlobag-Ogulin-Karlovac-Virovitica has to be our goal. [...] If the army is unable to move its troops from Zagreb to this line without a fight,*

⁵⁰ Savić, “Where Is Serbia? Traditions of Spatial Identity and State Positioning in Serbian Geopolitical Culture.” 695

⁵¹ Predrag Dojčinović, “Word Scene Investigations: Toward a Cognitive Linguistic Approach to the Criminal Analysis of Open Source Evidence in War Crimes Cases,” in *Propaganda, War Crime Trials and International Law* (London: Routledge, 2012), 95.

⁵² The Death Of Yugoslavia 3/6 Wars Of Independence - BBC Documentary (17'08"-17'26"), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6zTmgxW490>, accessed on June 2, 2020.

⁵³ Mladen Lakić, Anja Vladisavljević and Filip Rudić, “State of Denial: The Books Rewriting the Bosnian War,” *Balkan Transnational Justice*, last modified October 19, 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/10/19/state-of-denial-the-books-rewriting-the-bosnian-war-10-18-2018/>, accessed on June 5, 2020.

⁵⁴ Milica Stojanović, “Serbian Nationalists Clash with Activists over Srebrenica Book,” *Balkan Transnational Justice*, last modified February 6, 2020, <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/02/06/serbian-nationalists-clash-with-activists-over-srebrenica-book/>, accessed on June 5, 2020.

*then they should do this with force and with the bombing of Zagreb.”*⁵⁵ He even recruited thousands of volunteers to join his own paramilitary unit, known as Šešeljevci, that operated together with other Serb-led forces.⁵⁶ Šešelj presented himself and his men as the heirs of the nationalist Chetnik anti-Nazi movement during the World War II., as the war-makers. Dressing in a traditional Serbian hat and armed with a rifle, his rhetoric attracted thousands of young men who were prompted to serve in his cause. Šešeljevci were formed for the purpose of conquering territory along the KOKV line, intentionally. This paramilitary unit was deployed in many military operations, fighting on the front lines in Croatia and Bosnia, including the ethnic cleansing in Hrtkovci, Vukovar and Mali Zvornik. The fact, that he knew about the mass violence that was occurring and did not pursue any acts to halt it, as was showed at his trial, proves that his inaction was intentional.⁵⁷

Moreover, during his trial, Šešelj provided the Prosecution with colorful proclamations that hardened their assertions about his intentions and actions pursued. For instance, he stated that: “As far as I am concerned, I really would like all Ustashas to be dead because Ustashas are such an evil, they are even worse than Hitler’s Nazis.”⁵⁸

Now after reconsideration of Šešelj’s intentions to bring about violence, let us take a look at what Šešelj actually have said in his speeches. The analysis will follow the timeline of the

⁵⁵ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 7 November 2007, transcript page 1801, lines 8-12, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/071107IT.htm>

⁵⁶ Kiper, “How Dangerous Propaganda Works,” 227.

⁵⁷ ICTY Šešelj, “The Appeals Chamber Judgement,” 11 April 2018, page 72, paragraph 164, accessed June 9, 2020. <https://cld.irmct.org/assets/filings/Apeal-Judgement-11.04.2018.PDF>

⁵⁸ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 7 March 2011, transcript page 16624, lines 18-20, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/110307IT.htm>

speeches, firstly I will examine the speech held at Vukovar in 1991, then in Mali Zvornik in the spring of 1992, and lastly in Hrtkovci in 1992.

Vukovar (Croatia, 1991)

The following quote of Šešelj outlines the importance of Vukovar, a city on the KOKV line. "This is the key stronghold for the Croat fascists. When Vukovar falls, the fascist will be finished. My boys are volunteers, they know what they are fighting for."⁵⁹ It was August 1991 when the war between Serbia and Croatia broke out.⁶⁰ The capture of Vukovar was pivotal for Serbia due to its strategic position that would allow them to penetrate deeper into Croatia along the so-called Osijek-Vinkovci line.⁶¹ Šešelj visited his volunteers in Vukovar, who accompanied the Yugoslav People's Army and other paramilitary groups, in order to 'boost their morale' as he said.⁶² During a military meeting Šešelj have said:

"We are all one army. This war is a great test for Serbs. Those who pass the test will become winners. Deserters cannot go unpunished. Not a single Ustasha must leave Vukovar alive."⁶³

By knowing his intentions, one can discern that this was a clear call to enact violence against the Croats. Acting as a military commander, he highlights the unity between his paramilitary

⁵⁹ The Death Of Yugoslavia 3/6 Wars Of Independence - BBC Documentary (28'26"-28'40") <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6zTmgxW490>, accessed June 2, 2020.

⁶⁰ Håkan Gunneriusson, "The Events in 1991," in *Bordieuan Field Theory as an Instrument for Military Operational Analysis. New Security Challenges*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 79-80.

⁶¹ United States. Central Intelligence Agency, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Vol. 1*, (Washington DC: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, 2002), 99.

⁶² ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 7 March 2011, transcript page 1821, lines 24-25, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/110307IT.htm>

⁶³ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 7 March 2011, transcript page 1822, lines 2-5.

group and the regular army that were present at Vukovar. He is using historical hate narratives, referring to the past grievances of World War II., when the fascist Croats, the Ustaši, collaborated with the German forces and fought against the Serbs. Šešelj was therefore implying to his audience that Serbia was again threatened by fascism in Croatia. Moreover, he suggests that the soldiers and volunteers must take action against the past crimes committed on them by the Ustaši during the war, reminding them that they are victims of the past. In his speech, he is indicating as if the Vukovar territory was occupied by enemy and thus must be liberated, appealing to his plan of Greater Serbia and the territory enlargement.

Šešelj's words provoked an immediate reaction in his listeners. The soldiers began firing guns and singing anti-Croat songs, chanting: "Croats we shall slaughter you, slaughter you a bit but give you to the dogs more often," signaling that they had understood the task put on them by Šešelj.⁶⁴ A witness at Šešelj's trial named Goran Stoparic provides us with information about his feelings and thoughts after he had heard Šešelj's speech. His statement matches Austin's claim that the locutionary act, Šešelj's speech, may produce effect upon the feelings or actions of the listeners.⁶⁵ Stoparic had been deployed to the theater of war in Vukovar.⁶⁶ It must be noted that the witness says that he does not remember exactly what Šešelj said, because "it was always the same one [speech]."⁶⁷ Stoparic recalled that he felt the danger opposed by the Ustaši, threatening the Serbs with a new genocide. He concluded that "Listening to Mr.

⁶⁴ ICTY Šešelj, "The Prosecution's Closing Brief," 5 February 2012, page 53, paragraph 160, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/custom5/en/120205_p1.pdf

⁶⁵ J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, 12, 94.

⁶⁶ ICTY Šešelj, witness Stoparic, 15 January 2008, transcript page 2320, lines 9-12, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/080115IT.htm>

⁶⁷ ICTY Šešelj, witness Stoparic, 16 January 2008, transcript page 2438, lines 15-16, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/080116ED.htm>

Šešelj I concluded that that was actually the situation, and as a man, a Serb and a citizen, I had to play an active role.”⁶⁸ The witness even proclaimed that when Šešelj visited Vukovar, they had showed him corpses of a group of men killed in combat, because they “wanted to show off in front of Mr. Šešelj to commend ourselves.”⁶⁹

In sum, the force of the illocutionary act was to warn, order and persuade. Revisiting the witness’s statements, we can discern the power of Šešelj’s speech on both the feelings and actions of the witness. Stoparic felt endangered and prompted to act, joining the Serbian forces in order to fight his insecurity.

Mali Zvornik (Bosnian and Hercegovina, 1992)

The city of Mali Zvornik, a city in Bosnia and Hercegovina, was another strategic post for the Serb forces pursuing the borders of so-called Greater Serbia. Šešelj was one of the people who planned, prepared and executed the military operations along the Drina River, flowing through the city of Zvornik.⁷⁰ It was during the time the Bosnian Serbs were preparing for the attack, when Šešelj gave another speech:

“Brothers, Četniks, Četnik brothers, [...] The time has come for us to give the balijas tit for tat. [...] The River Drina is not a boundary between Serbia and Bosnia. It is the backbone of the Serbian state. Every foot of land inhabited

⁶⁸ ICTY Šešelj, witness Stoparic, 16 January 2008, transcript page 2440, lines 21-24, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/080116ED.htm>

⁶⁹ ICTY Šešelj, witness Stoparic, 15 January 2008, transcript page 2339, lines 7-10, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/080115IT.htm>

⁷⁰ ICTY Šešelj, “The Prosecution’s Closing Brief,” 5 February 2012, page 86-87, paragraphs 280-282, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/custom5/en/120205_p1.pdf

*by Serbs is Serbian land. Let's rise up, Četnik brothers, especially you from across the Drina. You are the bravest. [...] let us show the balijas, the Turks and the Muslims [...] the green transversal, the direction to the east. That's where their place is."*⁷¹

This speech has very similar elements as the one given in Vukovar. Šešelj is once again making references to past grievances, however, this time he is referring to the Ottoman rule of Serbia, that followed after the lost battle of Kosovo. Moreover, this speech is a great example of the cyclical relationship between religion, myths and propaganda, as Šešelj targets the Bosnian Muslim population of Zvornik and implies that they are occupying the territory of Serbia's holy land. Referring to the Drina river as being the center of the Serb land relates to the plan of Greater Serbia. Additionally, by calling the Muslims balijas, which is a derogatory word for Muslims, he is generalizing them and implying the supremacy of his ethnic group.

As described by a witness who has attended Šešelj's speech, five minutes after Šešelj left, a fight between Muslims and Serbs broke out. He saw one of man opening truck of his car, where had piles of wood, inviting the Serbs to use them as weapons by saying: "Četnik brothers, take this."⁷² Such rapid action following the speech illustrate the effect that the speech had on its audience very well. They felt empowered and prompted to take action, which they did. In addition, we can see that his listeners were using the Četniks appellation

⁷¹ ICTY Šešelj, witness VS-2000, 4 February 2009, transcript page 13994, lines 11-18, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/090204ED.htm>

⁷² ICTY Šešelj, witness VS-2000, 4 February 2009, transcript page 13996, lines 5-13.

between themselves, creating a sense of intimacy and unity, belonging to the same group and fighting for the same purpose.

In sum, interestingly, instead of evoking fear of the enemy, as he did in Vukovar, in this speech Šešelj is motivating his audience to reclaim their territory and revenge historical injustice done to the Serbian nation. He underlines Muslim offences against the Serbs and highlights superiority of the Orthodox religion and Serb ethnicity. In the witness account, it is evident that the speech appealed to the audience, which accepted both the request put on them by Šešelj underlined by the rhetoric of 'us versus them' and took the initiative immediately.

Hrtkovci (Serbia, 1992)

Part of Šešelj's campaign was to drive out Croats out of Serbia. Croats living on the Serbian territories were constantly terrorized, climaxing in the ethnic cleansing in Hrtkovci. At a political rally organized by SRP, on May 6, 1992, Šešelj gave a public speech to a large audience. Approximately seven hundred supporters of his politics appeared. The speech sounded as follow:

"In this village, too, in Hrtkovci, in this place in Serbian realm, there is no room for Croats. [...] Our message to them is: No, you have nowhere to return to. Serbian refugees will move into their houses. [...] The police will give it to them, the police will do as the government decides, and we will be the government soon. [...] We will drive them to the border of Serbian territory, and they can walk on from there, if they do not leave before on their own accord. [...] I firmly believe that you, Serbs from Hrtkovci and other villages

*around here, will know how to preserve your harmony and unity and that you will promptly get rid of the remaining Croats in our village and in the surrounding villages."*⁷³

In this particular speech, Šešelj's intentions are clear as day. He gives his listeners unequivocal instructions, posing a serious threat to the Croatian population of Hrtkovci and encouraging them to leave, either by their own, or by use of force. He addresses the Croat inhabitants as enemies of the Serbian people, evoking memories of the past military campaigns during World War II., in order to trigger and intensify the fear in the local Croat population. He was accompanied by his volunteers, the Šešeljevci, that were dressed up as the Chetnik forces during World War II. The illocution worked effectively on the Croat audience. Indeed, the Croats in the audience found these men frightening.⁷⁴ At the end of his speech, the Serb audience began shouting "Croats, go to Croatia", and "this is Serbia," marking a sign of acceptance to the task that was assigned to them in the speech.⁷⁵

In conclusion, Šešelj used historical hate narratives addressing the World War II. and the atrocities committed by the fascist Croats on Serbs, as well as the episode when Serbia was occupied by the Ottoman Empire. He prompted his listeners to take revenge for the past injustices done to them, while he was glorifying the Serb past. Moreover, he was promoting the idea of Greater Serbia, wanting to redraw the borders of Serbia so that the Croatian and

⁷³ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 7 November 2007, transcript page 1808, lines 3-21, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/071107IT.htm>

⁷⁴ ICTY Šešelj, "The Prosecution's Closing Brief," 5 February 2012, pages 150-151, paragraph 498, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/custom5/en/120205_p2.pdf

⁷⁵ ICTY Šešelj, "The Appeals Chamber Judgement," 11 April 2018, page 71, paragraph 162, accessed June 9, 2020. <https://cld.irmct.org/assets/filings/Apeal-Judgement-11.04.2018.PDF>

Bosnian territories would be seriously reduced. He situated himself and his audience in the role of Četniks, the freedom fighters and heroes in history.

Chapter 3: The Consequences of Šešelj's Speeches

After the analysis of locutionary and illocutionary aspects of Šešelj speeches, I will be examining Šešelj's perlocutionary acts, meaning the results of what was said in Vukovar, Mali Zvornik and Hrtkovci. It must be noted here, as Austin also acknowledges, that it is only the locutionary and illocutionary aspects of the speeches that are entirely controlled by the speaker.⁷⁶ Human agency as well as the context in which the speech act is performed are important aspects here, as listeners may or may not decide to act upon the speech act. However, the fact that the locution and illocution are essentially intentional and bear the meaning of a speech act, they are tied together with the consequences, the perlocution. A speech act is powerful not only because of its immediate psychological force on the audience, the illocution, but also because of its ability to induce social changes that consequently influence collective behaviors, the perlocutionary effects.⁷⁷ Austin points out that: "Unless a certain effect is achieved, the illocutionary act will not have been successfully performed."⁷⁸ The effects are the main topic of this chapter's inquiry. As Šešelj himself once proclaimed during Milošević trial: "Anybody ordering ethnic cleansing [would be] conscious that it will lead to additional crimes."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, 111-113.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁷⁹ ICTY Milošević, witness Šešelj, 15 September 2005, transcript page 44118, lines 17-19, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/050915IT.htm

In order to discern that a group's behavior was carried out because of Šešelj's propaganda, I will be looking for actions and words resembling those advocated and uttered by Šešelj. Consequently, I will rely on Dojčinović's evidentiary feedback loop, explaining that the receiver of a speech act justifies the act encouraged by the speaker using the speaker's own words. It might be done by repetition of the language used, dismissing concern for an out-group or justification of mass violence.⁸⁰

Vukovar

It was 18th November 1991 when Vukovar was captured by the Serb forces after 87 days of intense shelling. Šešeljevci were among the them, as Šešelj himself sent the orders that as many volunteers as possible should be sent to Vukovar. He explained his actions on TV: "The army did not have enough manpower to go around capturing each house because of desertion - that is what our men did."⁸¹ The Serbian attack on the city was portrayed as the liberation of Serbs who were allegedly massacred by Croats, reflecting that Šešelj's rhetoric fitted perfectly within the picture of Serb media propaganda. Pictures of Vukovar streets covered in blood were celebrated on the news as a victory for Serbia and Christian Orthodoxy.⁸²

At the same time, Croatian inhabitants sought refuge in the Vukovar Hospital. The Serb forces prevented humanitarian evacuations and summoned some hundreds of Croat soldiers and

⁸⁰ Dojčinović, "Word Scene Investigations: Toward a Cognitive Linguistic Approach to the Criminal Analysis of Open Source Evidence in War Crimes Cases," 95-96.

⁸¹ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 7 November 2007, transcript page 1821, lines 22-23, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/071107IT.htm>

⁸² Kiper and Sosis, "Shaking the Tyrant's Bloody Robe," 39-40.

civilians into detaining centers, the Ovčara farm and the Velepromet.⁸³ The detainees at the Velepromet warehouse and Ovčara farm were subjected to cruel treatment and torture, including sexual assault, resulting in mass killings. One witness testified that “[w]hen they heard Šešelj's statement about not one Ustaša leaving Vukovar, they understood this to mean that detainees should be executed, and that bloodshed would follow.”⁸⁴ Eventually, another testimony during Šešelj's trial would expose that Serbian military men at Ovčara, some of them Šešelj's volunteers, justified their actions as vengeance for the crimes against Serbs committed by the Ustaši. Consequently, a Serb veteran stated that he stormed Croatian homes and killed any Ustaši he came across in order to “eliminate the Ustaši threat and protect innocent Serbs.”⁸⁵ The behavior of the Serb soldiers serve as evidence for the feedback loop, as they exercised a type of brutality that they saw necessary and justified based on Šešelj's speech.

In other instance, a drunken Serbian paramilitary fighter was filmed when saying: “War will be over when we have our limits – Karlobag, Karlovac, Ogulin, Virovitica. All place(s) where Serbian people live must be free, you know. We must clean up with the Croats.”⁸⁶ As claimed by Dojčinović, the fact that the soldier used Šešelj's linguistic phrase ‘KOKV line’, signals direct evidence of a mental fingerprint. The perlocutionary effect was that Šešelj successfully prompted his listeners to justify mass violence on the Vukovar population by his own words

⁸³ ICTY Šešelj, “The Prosecution's Closing Brief,” 5 February 2012, page 43, paragraphs 127-128, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/custom5/en/120205_p1.pdf

⁸⁴ ICTY Šešelj, “The Prosecution's Closing Brief,” 5 February 2012, page 55, paragraphs 165.

⁸⁵ Jordan Kiper, “War Propaganda, War Crimes, and Post-Conflict Justice in Serbia: An Ethnographic Account,” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 17 (2009): 2, 578-579

⁸⁶ Kiper, “How Dangerous Propaganda Works,” 231.

and act upon them. Talking in numbers, in 1991, approximately 63% of Vukovar-area inhabitants defined themselves as non-Serbs. By October that year, almost 21,000 people were expelled.⁸⁷ The perlocutionary force of Šešelj's speech was successful in achieving the common goal of Croat-free Vukovar by, first, creating unbearable living conditions through constant shelling of the city, and second, by gathering the survivors in detention centers while using brutal force.

Mali Zvornik

The speech delivered in Zvornik was dated approximately mid-March 1992. The attacks on Zvornik commenced few weeks later, and on 8th of April 1992, the city of Zvornik was proclaimed Serbian and occupied.⁸⁸ After the Serb forces established control in Zvornik, the non-Serb, mostly men, population were arrested and detained in various locations: a slaughterhouse, technical school and other civilian buildings. Here they were subjected to cruel treatment and murdered. Other non-Serb inhabitants of Zvornik were expelled from the city.⁸⁹ Steps were taken to realize Šešelj's wish to make Zvornik a Serb city. Non-Serbs were banished from the municipal assembly, non-Serb property was re-distributed to Serbs, indicating the purpose of the violent acts against the non-Serb inhabitants of the city of Mali Zvornik.

⁸⁷ ICTY Šešelj, "The Prosecution's Closing Brief," 5 February 2012, page 44, paragraph 133, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/custom5/en/120205_p1.pdf

⁸⁸ ICTY Šešelj, "The Appeals Chamber Judgement," 11 April 2018, pages 58-59, paragraph 132, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://cld.irmct.org/assets/filings/Apeal-Judgement-11.04.2018.PDF>

⁸⁹ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 7 November 2007, transcript page 1837, lines 16-17, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/071107IT.htm>

In the case of Mali Zvornik, men were abused not only because of their ethnicity, but also because of their religion. Some Muslim detainees were forced to say Christian prayers or cross themselves; some were accused of having been on the side of the Ustaša during the World War II.⁹⁰ They were also forced to learn and sign Chetnik songs. Such actions outline that the perlocutionary force of Šešelj's speech succeeded in alienating the out-group based on their religion and in changing the social relations so that violent acts upon 'the others' were seen as justifiable.

To further demonstrate the influence of Šešelj's speech, there is evidence of soldiers calling the detainees 'balija', the same derogatory word that Šešelj used during his speech.⁹¹ In the following months, most of the towns along the Drina river in the Zvornik area were ethnically cleansed. The intent to erase any sign of Muslim presence in Zvornik was accomplished, based on the fact that the Serb forces not only expelled and murdered the inhabitants, but also destroyed Muslim religious sites, institutions and property.⁹² In 1993, Šešelj celebrated that Zvornik "where many Muslims used to live, is now flooded with Serbs. A population exchange took place spontaneously".⁹³

Hrtkovci

The events to a large degree mirror the instructions given in Šešelj's speech. Based on witness statements, the speech directly caused that some Croats living in the villages decided to leave

⁹⁰ ICTY Šešelj, "The Prosecution's Closing Brief," 5 February 2012, page 100, paragraphs 320, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/custom5/en/120205_p1.pdf

⁹¹ ICTY Šešelj, "The Prosecution's Closing Brief," 5 February 2012, page 102, paragraph 332.

⁹² ICTY Šešelj, "The Prosecution's Closing Brief," 5 February 2012, pages 106-107, paragraphs 345-347.

⁹³ ICTY Šešelj, "The Prosecution's Closing Brief," 5 February 2012, page 97, paragraph 308.

on their own, as they felt threatened. Others were harassed and intimidated by threats over the telephone or direct threats.⁹⁴ One witness heard that a Croatian doctor had ‘an unpleasant time’ because people said that “[t]hey didn’t want to be treated by an Ustaša doctor.”⁹⁵ Consequently, Croats holding some sort of prominent positions would be stripped off their job places, based on Šešelj’s inducement, because the Serbs arriving from Croatia were to take them.⁹⁶ Such situation on the ground reflects the actions proposed by Šešelj, and thus outlines the perlocutionary effect on the audience. Moreover, because of the fact that lot of people knew what happened in Vukovar and Zvornik, they took Šešelj’s speech as a ‘warning sign that could not be ignored’.⁹⁷

As proposed by Šešelj in his speech, Serb refugees arriving in Hrtkovci, fleeing from the ethnic conflict in Croatia, were provided with the addresses of local Croats by Serb officials. Croats who did not want to give up their houses were harassed mentally and physically. Local police told the Croats that they were not authorized to help them, or even assisted and protected the perpetrators.⁹⁸ Local Serb commune changed the name of Hrtkovci to Srbislavci, meaning ‘Glorifiers of Serbs.’⁹⁹

⁹⁴ ICTY Šešelj, trial transcript, 5 May 2011, transcript page 16971, lines 6-7, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/110505IT.htm>

⁹⁵ ICTY Šešelj, witness VS-61, 9 October 2008, transcript page 10555, lines 4-7, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/081009ED.htm>

⁹⁶ ICTY Šešelj, “The Prosecution’s Closing Brief,” 5 February 2012, page 155, paragraph 513, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/custom5/en/120205_p2.pdf

⁹⁷ ICTY Šešelj, “The Prosecution’s Closing Brief,” 5 February 2012, page 97, paragraph 308.

⁹⁸ ICTY Šešelj, witness VS-61, 9 October 2008, transcript page 10535, lines 9-14.

⁹⁹ ICTY Šešelj, “The Prosecution’s Closing Brief,” 5 February 2012, page 156, paragraph 515.

The effectiveness of Šešelj's speech can be seen in the decrease of numbers of the Croat population in Hrtkovci. In 1991, the village consisted of 40% Croat population. During the months of May and June 1992, the number decreased by 77%.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the anti-Croat campaign unleashed by Šešelj led to the displacement of at least 700 Croats. In the case of Hrtkovci, the perlocution was effective in the persuasion of local Serb population that the Croats were a threat, and in the persuasion of the local Croats that they did not have any other choice than to leave the village of Hrtkovci.¹⁰¹

Altogether, it should be acknowledged here that detecting perlocutionary force is the most difficult task when analyzing speeches using the Speech act theory. In order to accomplish the task of detecting the consequences of the speeches, I have made an attempt to demonstrate the causality based on the words and actions of people that reflect back on the speech. In consideration of this subtle point, I believe that it has been exposed to view that Šešelj's speech acts had its social force not only because of its instant psychological force, but also because of the collective conducts that originated in the social changes instigated by the speech acts.

Conclusion

The examination of Šešelj's speeches with the help of the three underlying concepts of Austin's speech act theory proved to fruit-bearing for a detailed micro analysis of propaganda. It has shown that Vojislav Šešelj used the right moment in history of the Yugoslav conflict,

¹⁰⁰ ICTY Šešelj, "The Appeals Chamber Judgement," 11 April 2018, pages 65-66, paragraph 149, accessed June 10, 2020. <https://cld.irmct.org/assets/filings/Apeal-Judgement-11.04.2018.PDF>

¹⁰¹ ICTY Šešelj, "The Prosecution's Closing Brief," 5 February 2012, page 153, paragraphs 508-509, accessed June 10, 2020. https://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/custom5/en/120205_p2.pdf

where people were prone to rely on the state-controlled media because of the crisis frame they lived in, in order to spread his propaganda full of fear and hatred towards the out-groups. Moreover, his speeches were undoubtedly appealing to a sense of loyalty and religious togetherness that Serbian people sought when feeling threatened. Šešelj's speeches in fact fit perfectly with the prevailing Serbian propaganda at the time, as he in his speeches used the same techniques of persuasion as the elites. Firstly, he relied upon the past grievances, the Ottoman domination of the Serb medieval kingdom and the atrocities committed on Serbs by the Croatian Nazis during the Second World War. As a result, he created a dichotomy between Serbs and 'the others' and therefore fostered the image of endangered Serb nation that must preserve its eternal presence, following the example of its predecessors. Šešelj used history in order to instigate fear of the enemy, as in the speech held in Vukovar, and prompt people to take revenge against the enemy and reclaim their territory, as in the case studies of Mali Zvornik and Hrtkovci. Secondly, with the help of religion and ethnicity, he promoted superiority of Serb ethnic group and religion, and thus appealed to a sense of Serbian unity, while creating ideal conditions for people to support the war and seek to find help in their religion. He also advanced an ideology of antagonism wherein Serbia would be better off without Croatian Catholics or Bosnian Muslims. Thirdly, the three speeches revealed that the plan of gathering Serbs into one state, the Greater Serbia, was on the top of the list of Šešelj's intentions, and that he was prepared to do anything that would bring him to this ultimate goal. It is also reflected in the fact that he rejected the possibility of compromise or non-violent conflict management in his speech acts that were held in different corners of former Yugoslavia, but they all resulted in violent deaths and expulsions of Croats and Bosnian Muslims.

The resemblance of the analyzed three speeches and the actions of his audience in these particular cases disclose how influential he was as a propagandist. Looking closely at these three cases in the framework of the Austin's speech act theory made it possible to shed much more light on aspects of mutual understanding, shared emotions between the speaker and the audience and acceptance of beliefs or expectations, than simply to the bare details of mass killings that occurred shortly after his speeches. In this way, this thesis gives ground to argue that Šešelj was able to achieve what he intended to. In Vukovar, the city was occupied by Serbs and ethnically cleansed of Croats. The Bosnian Muslims were expelled to the East of Bosnia from the city of Mali Zvornik and their properties and well as religious sites were destroyed. And lastly, in Hrtkovci, the local Serb population did preserve their 'unity' and got rid of Croats in their village and in the surrounding villages. It is clear that the actions taken in these cities were influenced by Šešelj's speeches.

More in general, these actions that were taken by Šešelj's audience and inspired and sparked off by his speeches underscore the dangers of vindictive speech.

This thesis has illustrated the benefits of the Austin's speech act theory for historical, micro-scale research in the field of hate speech and propaganda. It offers a useful theoretical framework for further research into vindictive and hate speeches not only for the purpose of history writing, but also for the possible prevention of future mass violence occurring because of such dangerous speeches. It also must be noted that Šešelj gave hundreds of speeches, and only a few received attention based on the fact that they either directly led to violence and

thus drew attention of many, or because they were re-published by Šešelj himself in his books or used against him during his ICTY trial. A research into his other speeches might shed light on events and places of military operations during the Yugoslav war that were neglected because of the complexity of the conflict and a vast number of nations involved.

Sources

Primary Sources

Prosecutor v. Vojislav Šešelj, IT-03-67. Accessed June 9, 2020.

<https://www.icty.org/case/seselj>

Prosecutor v. Slobodan Milošević, IT-02-54. Accessed June 9, 2020.

https://www.icty.org/en/case/slobodan_milosevic

Online Sources

Lacic, Mladen, Anja Vladislavljevic and Filip Rudic. "State of Denial: The Books Rewriting the Bosnian War." *Balkan Transnational Justice*, last modified October 19, 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/10/19/state-of-denial-the-books-rewriting-the-bosnian-war-10-18-2018/>, accessed on June 5, 2020.

Oberschall, Anthony. "Vojislav Seselj's Nationalist Propaganda: Contents, Techniques, Aims and Impacts, 1990–1994." the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

http://www.baginist.org/uploads/1/0/4/8/10486668/vojislav_seseljs_nationalist_propaganda_contents_techniques_aims_and_impacts.pdf, accessed on June 10, 2020.

Stojanovic, Milica. "Serbian Nationalists Clash with Activists over Srebrenica Book." *Balkan Transnational Justice*, last modified February 6, 2020, <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/02/06/serbian-nationalists-clash-with-activists-over-srebrenica-book/>, accessed on June 5, 2020.

The Death Of Yugoslavia 3/6 Wars Of Independence - BBC Documentary (17'08''-17'26''), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6zTmgxW490>, accessed on June 2, 2020.

The Death Of Yugoslavia 3/6 Wars Of Independence - BBC Documentary (28'26''-28'40''), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6zTmgxW490>, accessed on June 2, 2020.

Zindović, Jelena Grujić. "Christian A. Nielsen: The Hague Tribunal has written a decent historical draft of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia." *Koalicija za REKOM*, last modified February 2, 2016, <http://www.recom.link/sq/137750-2/>, accessed on June 2, 2020.

Books and Journal Articles

- Austin, J. A. *How To Do Things With Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Badar, Mohamed Elewa, and Polona Florijančič. "The Prosecutor v. Vojislav Šešelj: A Symptom of the Fragmented International Criminalisation of Hate and Fear Propaganda." *International Criminal Law Review*, 20 (2022): 2, 1–87.
- Bieber, Florian. "Nationalist Mobilization and Stories of Serb Suffering: The Kosovo Myth from 600th Anniversary to the Present." *Rethinking History*, 6 (2002), 1: 95–110.
- Bugarski, Ranko. "Language, Nationalism and War in Yugoslavia." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 151 (2001): 69–87.
- Croddy, W. S. "Meaning and Intention." *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12 (1988): 1, 1–11.
- Dojčinović, Predrag. "Introduction." In *Propaganda and International Criminal Law*, 1–24. London: Routledge, 2019.
- . "Word Scene Investigations: Toward a Cognitive Linguistic Approach to the Criminal Analysis of Open Source Evidence in War Crimes Cases." In *Propaganda, War Crime Trials and International Law*, 71–117. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Drezgić, Rada. "Religion, Politics and Gender in the Context of Nation-State Formation: The Case of Serbia." *Third World Quarterly*, 31 (2010): 6, 955–70.
- Gunneriusson, Håkan. "The Events in 1991." In *Bordieuan Field Theory as an Instrument for Military Operational Analysis. New Security Challenges*, 75–87. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Kiper, Jordan. "How Dangerous Propaganda Works." In *Propaganda and International Criminal Law*, 217–36. London: Routledge, 2019.
- . "Toward an Anthropology of War Propaganda." *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 38 (2015): 1, 129–46.
- . "War Propaganda, War Crimes, and Post-Conflict Justice in Serbia: An Ethnographic Account." *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 19 (2015): 5, 572–91.
- Kiper, Jordan, and Richard Sosis. "Shaking the Tyrant's Bloody Robe." *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 35 (2016): 1, 27–47.
- MacDonald, David Bruce. "Introduction." In *Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian Victim-Centered Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia*. 1–11. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018.

- Oberschall, Anthony. "Propaganda, Hate Speech and Mass Killings." In *Propaganda, War Crime Trials and International Law*. 171–199. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Perica, Vjekoslav. *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*. Cary: Oxford University Press USA, 2004.
- Petrović, Vladimir. "Power(Lessness) of Atrocity Images: Bijeljina Photos between Perpetration and Prosecution of War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia." *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 93 (2015): 3, 367–85.
- Ramet, Sabina Petra. "The Serbian Orthodox Church." In *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic*. 100–118. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Savić, Bojan. "Where Is Serbia? Traditions of Spatial Identity and State Positioning in Serbian Geopolitical Culture." *Geopolitics*, 19 (2014): 3, 684–718.
- United States. Central Intelligence Agency. *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Vol. 1*. Washington DC: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, 2002.
- Volčič, Zala. "Blaming the Media: Serbian Narratives of National(Ist) Identity." *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 20 (2006): 3, 313–30.
- Vukušić, Iva. "Nineteen Minutes of Horror: Insights from the Scorpions Execution Video." *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, 12 (2018): 2, 35–53.
- . "The Archives of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia." *History: The Journal of the Historical Association*, 98 (2013): 4, 623–35.
- Wilson, Richard Ashby. "Assessing Court Histories of Mass Crimes." In *Writing History in International Criminal Trials*, 1–23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- . "Inciting Genocide with Words." *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 36 (2015): 2, 277–320.
- . "Inciting Speech in International Law and Social Science." In *Incitement on Trial: Prosecuting International Speech Crimes*, 1–24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- . "Instigating Prosecution: The Prosecution Case Against Vojislav Šešelj." In *Incitement on Trial: Prosecuting International Speech Crimes*, 100–146. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.