Historical Hate Narratives

The Symbolic Politics of Vojislav Šešelj’s Hate Mongering

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“Reality in itself, in its stupid existence, is never intolerable: it is language, its symbolization, which makes it such. So precisely when we are dealing with the scene of a furious crowd, attacking and burning buildings and cars, lynching people, etc., we should never forget the placards they are carrying and the words which sustain and justify their acts.”

- Slavoj Žižek

“Ceux qui peuvent vous faire croire à des absurdités peuvent vous faire commettre des atrocités"

- Voltaire
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Abstract

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) is the dominant approach for explaining extreme ethnic violence, but it has some serious shortcomings. In this thesis, I will argue in favor of Symbolic Politics Theory (SPT) instead. In the first chapter I will elaborate why SPT offers more insights in the reasons for ethnic conflict than RCT. In the second chapter historical hate narratives - a specific element of SPT - will be highlighted. I will analyze how historical hate narratives work and will pay specific attention to the interaction between history and hate in these narratives. The third chapter presents a case study of Vojislav Šešelj, an extreme Serb nationalist. First, I will show what impact his historical hate narratives had in wartime Vukovar and Zvornik. Second, I will analyze a number of historical hate narratives that did not always have a direct impact, but show how Šešelj manipulated history to evoke feelings of hatred, fear and revenge.
Introduction

“What would be funnier than an answer to that question of 'yes, we still slaughter, but we have perfected our methods of slaughter, no longer do we use chakijas [knives] but rusted shoe spoons so that one couldn’t know if the victim died as a consequence of tetanus or of the slaughter.'”

This was the answer of the radical Serb nationalist Vojislav Šešelj to the question “do you Četniks still slaughter?” He considered his answer ironical and an example of black humour, but it perfectly fits with his other inflammatory and denigrating speeches.

Šešelj was the leader of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and the Serbian Četnik Movement (SČP). He led a paramilitary group called the Četniks – referring to the Serb faction that fought in World War II – during the war of the early 1990s following the break up of Yugoslavia. As a result of the trail of violence that Šešelj and his men left behind, he currently resides in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia’s (ICTY) Detention Unit, located within a Dutch prison complex close to The Hague. Šešelj is indicted for multiple crimes against humanity and violations of international laws, including direct and public denigration through hate speech and encouragement to commit violence through inflammatory speeches. It is this encouragement and denigration – though not limited to speech – that is the focus of this thesis.

Whereas the ICTY tries to establish the guilt or innocence of Šešelj, I will analyse how Šešelj fabricated historical narratives with which he manipulated his followers and evoked feelings of hatred towards other ethnicities. In other words, the mechanisms of these narratives, the used techniques, and the interaction between hate and history are central to this research. The main question to be answered is thus “What impact did Vojislav Šešelj’s historical hate narratives have in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s?”

2 ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Vojislav Šešelj (IT-03-67), Third Amended Indictment (07-12-2007), ¶10(b)(c), 17(k). [Hereinafter: Šešelj Indictment].
3 Although hate and hatred are used interchangeably in both literature and everyday use, I applied the Oxford Dictionary distinction: hatred is used describe a very strong feeling for a particular person or thing, whilst hate is used when discussing this feeling in a general way. Cf: Sally Wehmeier (ed.), Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (7th edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 7.
Although this question is strictly demarcated by geographical and temporal limits, I will also draw some conclusion for the impact of historical hate narratives in ethnic conflicts in general.

Hate narratives is a term coined by the Turkish historian Halil Berktay. This concept, however, has never been thought through thoroughly. As a result it has not been applied to its full potential. 4 An important question to be answered is how this notion differs from the concept of hate speech – a topic on which much is written, albeit mostly from a legal-historical perspective. The biggest difference is, that hate speech – depending on the context – can consist of one word (“kill!” for example), whilst historical hate narratives have a more complex structure, relying on historical claims (either true or false) to evoke, encourage, amplify and sustain feelings of hate. All historical hate narratives would most likely qualify as hate speech, but not all hate speech is a historical hate narrative. The focal point is thus the use of historical references to evoke hate in order to achieve certain goals. These historical hate narratives can have a devastating impact in both the outburst of, and the developments during ethnic conflicts.

The importance of myths and symbols in ethnic conflicts is the focal point of Symbolic Politics Theory (SPT). The most fervent advocate of this theory in the last decade is Stuart J. Kaufman, but his ideas have roots in the works of political scientist Murray Edelman, professor of law and political science Donald L. Horowitz and anthropologist Zdzislaw Mach. The basic assumption of Symbolic Politics Theory (SPT) is that people act in accordance with the most emotionally potent symbol evoked.5 These symbols can be evoked through narratives, monuments, artefacts, events, commemorations, and so forth. Even the kissing of a baby by a nationalist politician could be seen as symbolic politics.

However, SPT is not the dominant approach in studying ethnic conflicts: Rational Choice Theory (RCT) is. Simply put, RCT “suggest[s] that human behaviour results from rational individuals seeking to maximize their utility functions.”6 In other words, people engage in ethnic conflicts because it is a rational thing to do based on security concerns, economic deliberations, or other interests. However, RCT faces some serious shortcomings;

4 This statement is based on the available literature, in which I only found references to Berktay’s concept in the works of Benjamin Lieberman and Thomas de Waal. They provide no reference to where Berktay coins this notion and do not elaborate much on his concept. Turkish nationals who helped me with Berktay’s publications in Turkish could not find a well developed elaboration of this notion.


most of them relating to the incapability of RCT explain why ethnic conflicts do not occur to in many instances. This is not to say that RCT is useless – on the contrary, but to argue that a different approach will shed light on other less rational aspects of ethnic conflict.

SPT on the other hand has strong empirical foundations, provided by Kaufman in a number of case studies. Although Kaufman provides insights in the general workings of symbolic politics, he does not sufficiently show how symbolic politics work ‘on the ground’. This is what I want to do in this thesis. Šešelj’s historical hate narratives are a great case study to do so, since these narratives are full of potent symbols and have had devastating effects on the lives of people.

Therefore, this thesis has the following outline. The first chapter is a justification – or better perhaps, a plea - for the Symbolic Politics approach. I will denounce other theories on extreme ethnic violence which have lost much of their value. Since RCT is the dominant approach, I will discuss both its merits and its shortcomings. This chapter tries to answer the question why SPT is a more vital approach for studying ethnic conflicts than RCT, and should be seen as the basis for the subsequent chapters.

In the second chapter I develop a typology of historical hate narratives to be able to study Šešelj’s historical hate narratives. To arrive at this typology, I analyse both the working of narratives in ethnic conflicts, the way hate works, how history is abused and for what reasons, but above all how history and hate interact in such narratives. I take an interdisciplinary approach towards this problem, drawing on scholars from a number of disciplines, such as history, political science, law and psychology. The typology that follows at the end of this chapter forms the methodological basis for the final chapter.

The third chapter is by far the most important section of this thesis. In it, I analyse Vojislav Šešelj’s historical hate narratives. Šešelj is indicted for the impact of his narratives in the towns of Vukovar and Zvornik, and I will analyse what he said and what happened as a result to show what the impact of historical hate narratives can be. In addition, I scrutinized 400 records and analysed those in which Šešelj’s manages to abuse history to the extent that it evokes hate amongst his followers.
I. A Plea for Symbolic Politics Theory
1.1 Theories of extreme ethnic violence

When it comes to explaining extreme ethnic violence, RCT is by far the most dominant approach. According to political scientists D.P. Green and I. Shapiro “the rate at which rational choice studies are being conducted and published is so rapid that anyone who sets out to conduct a fully comprehensive evaluation of the literature might never finish.” Even though they wrote this in 1994, it still applies. Therefore I selected a number of authors whose work is considered to be leading in this field.

In the following sections I will discuss both RCT and SPT, and analyse their respective strengths and weaknesses. But before doing so, I will briefly summarize other theories of extreme ethnic violence, which have either lost much of their appeal in the last years or decades, approach ethnic conflict from a one-dimensional perspective, or fail to explain why in some cases ethnic conflicts do not happen.

First there is the idea of ancient hatreds or the primordialist position, which argues that ethnicity is a fixed characteristic rooted in heritable biological traits or centuries of cultural practices. These traits are seen as inalterable. Ethnic conflicts are the result of events and conflicts that date back centuries. The most well known exponent of this theory is Robert D. Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (1994). Kaplan’s main argument is that there has been a continuous state of violence in the Balkans. This, however, does no justice to interwar reality in the former Yugoslavia, where intermarriage between ethnic groups was very common and Sarajevo, for example, was known for its pluralistic attitude.

The primordialist account fails to explain variations in levels of conflict over time and place. In addition, the disputes that ignited the conflict in Yugoslavia were above all a product of the twentieth century and did not stem from medieval, let alone ancient times. In ethnonationalist mythology ethnic groups might have existed for millennia, but in reality these identities were adopted in the nineteenth and twentieth century based on a shared language, religion and historical mythology. Even if violence is indeed partly driven by violent emotions, these emotions are no constant: they rise and fall. Analyzing these dynamics is a requirement for understanding how these passions can be calmed.

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A second theory is the **instrumentalist approach** that focuses on *manipulative leaders* – an aspect also found in both RCT and SPT. Protagonists argue that ethnicity is merely a tool, which is used to obtain ends (often material ones). This top-down approach sees the impact of manipulative leaders as the main cause for violent outbursts. However, there are numerous conflicts where the hostility or violence ‘boiled up from below’. Rather than assuming that manipulative leaders are the cause of conflict, we should examine the historical and situational effects to be able to explain why these manipulative leaders succeed in the first place.

A third is *economic rivalry* - also an **instrumentalist** approach, which holds that the competition for scarce goods and resources provides enough incentive to engage in warfare. But, why resort to war? Even if economic ties are severely under tension, countries can split up peacefully (e.g. Czechoslovakia). Moreover, economic rivalry does not explain ethnic conflicts that result from other than economic motives (Palestine, India-Pakistan). Economic hardship might contribute to ethnic war, but it fails to explain why people mobilize for political action. Since this argument is an element of many RCT studies I will elaborate on it below.

Some more sophisticated explanations combine a number of the foregoing theories. These are categorized as **constructivist** and are part of RCT. Even though leading RCT scholars David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild believe these represent an emerging scholarly consensus, Kaufman argues they do not provide a systematic general theory. A closer look at both of their theories will show the merits and weaknesses of both RCT and SPT.

**1.2.1 Rational Choice Theory**

**1.2.1.1 RCT Explained**

Lake and Rothchild argue that ethnic war is the result of a lack of trust, caused by information failures, problems of credible commitment and a security dilemma. These evoke collective fears of the future. If these three elements take hold, they can result in diminishing state authority, rising anxiety amongst groups, and eventually in conflict. The strategic dilemmas that rise from this lack of trust have their roots in a group’s fear for its existential safety and are hard to resolve. These fears are further fomented by ethnic activists and political entrepreneurs, who very well might have completely different interests than the groups they operate in. The dynamics of both the *intergroup* and the *intragroup* interactions produce a
situation that “can explode into murderous violence, even the systematic slaughter of one people by another.” These interactions are the basis of Lake and Rothchild’s analysis. ⁹

Considering intergroup interaction, the theorists argue that rivalry over resources (in the broadest sense) is often crucial for ethnic conflict. It is politicians who control access to these (possible) scarce resources, and therefore ‘politics matter’: it is the state which sets the term of the competition.¹⁰ However, in multiethnic societies different ethnic groups might claim these resources. To do so, they can either increase collective social wealth on a national level or focus on group specific benefits. In the latter case the economy is often distorted, leading to a situation where a majority and minority have opposing policy preferences. For example in Yugoslavia, the Slovenes and the Croats were unhappy with the system of federal redistribution. Not all rational choice theorists focus on issues of distribution. Another prominent approach focuses on relative deprivation, notably on declines in standard of living. For example, in both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union a decline of living standards took place in the years before the collapse.¹¹

Nevertheless, Lake and Rothchild admit, violence is a costly alternative for all parties involved. Economic and human resources are disabled or destroyed, and resources that could have been invested in economic growth are now invested in destructive ends. Therefore some sort of potential bargain that prevents violence and which leaves both sides better off than in the case of mutual aggression is likely to exist. And indeed, most of the time such different policy preferences are successfully negotiated (again, Czechoslovakia is exemplary).¹²

The question arises why in some cases the ‘rational’ choice of preferring a peaceful negotiation over violent conflict is not the outcome. Lake and Rothchild elaborate on thee issues to clarify this paradox: (i) information failure, (ii) problems of credible commitment, and the (iii) security dilemma. These are the three pillars of RCT.

Information failures occur when groups cannot get hold of, or share the information necessary to come to a peaceful solution for a conflict. Information can be either held private or can be misrepresented, leading to suspicion between groups and possibly to actual conflict. Misrepresentation occurs when groups by exaggerate their strengths and minimize their

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¹⁰ Lake and Rothchild, Spreading Fear, 9.


¹² Lake and Rothchild, Spreading Fear, 10-11.
weaknesses. Bluffing increases the risk of failed negotiations. Information failures can be prevented by skilful mediation by third parties.\textsuperscript{13}

Problems of credible commitment arise when ethnic groups cannot credibly en effectively reassure that they will keep their promises. This uncertainty makes groups fear that the other is really aggressive or malevolent. These ‘beliefs’ can be the basis of action for groups. Especially when a power shift takes place, ethnic contracts are no longer enforceable. Effective states or outside peacekeepers might be able to enforce ethnic contracts, which contain safeguards dealing with power sharing arrangements, electoral rules, etcetera.\textsuperscript{14}

The security dilemma is the third fundamental cause of ethnic conflict. In a situation of anarchy, states have to rely on self-help for their security. Therefore, they must maintain or even increase their military capabilities. When other parties see this as a threat, they might also maintain or expand their military capabilities. This can very well lead to spiralling arms race and hostility. This dilemma follows from the inability of the rivalling parties to know the intentions of the other party directly. Would they know that the other party’s motives were of a defensive nature, chances are that the arms race would not take place. In the end, such an arms race can eventually lead to a pre-emptive strike, because the first to attack might obtain military or strategic advantage. The possibilities for outsiders to mitigate this dilemma are limited.\textsuperscript{15}

The second interaction studied is intragroup strategic action. Hard rationalist Russel Hardin argues that ethnic war can be understood as a function of an individual’s rational pursuit of personal security. Individuals make a rational decision in joining groups, because if the group as a whole succeeds in its objectives all of the group members, including the individual, will benefit from these activities. In other words: it is in the individual’s interest to join or identify with such ethnic groups, either for material gains or for security and comfort.\textsuperscript{16}

The soft rationalist approach, on the other hand, assumes that the values of extremist groups are the main causes of ethnic violence. Rationality in this approach refers to the “the rationally calculated pursuit of any consistently defined goals, including those defined by a

\textsuperscript{13} Lake and Rothchild, \textit{Spreading Fear}, 11-13.
\textsuperscript{15} Cf. Lake and Rothchild, \textit{Spreading Fear}, 17-18.
nationalist ideology.” Behaviour is thus explained through an appeal to nationalist values, i.e.: extreme preferences lead to extreme politicians.¹⁷

A process of ‘ethnic outbidding’ forces moderate politicians to take a more ethnically determined stance to compete with political extremists. The result is social polarization. According to security specialist Michael E. Brown it is obvious why these politicians resort to nationalist and ethnic appeals: “For many politicians, tearing their countries apart and causing thousands of people to be killed are small prices to pay for staying in or getting power.”¹⁸ However, by itself political and social polarization do not lead to violence per se. Belgium is a good example of a strongly polarized society that succeeds in conducting politics in a peaceful manner. Lake and Rothchild argue that this is because Belgium is “robust enough to prevent significant information failures, problems of credible commitment, and security dilemmas from arising.”¹⁹

Finally, Lake and Rothchild also discuss non-rational factors. Political memories and myths can be manipulated in such a way that they justify dominance of one group over the other, stimulate feelings of revenge and sustain group hatreds. In times of scarcity and threats, the emotional power of ethnic attachments is able to grow and group belonging becomes an important feature of everyday life. Nevertheless, they take the position that information failure, problems of credible commitment, and the security dilemma lead to collective fears of the future. Each one is by itself sufficient to cause the outbreak of ethnic conflict, although they often concur. Ethnic and political entrepreneurs polarize societies when they see a possible gain. Polarization is subsequently increased through political memories, myths and emotions. “Combined, these forces create a devastating brew of ethnic rivalry and violence.”²⁰

The foregoing very briefly introduced the most important elements of Rational Choice Theory. It provides a number of leads to study ethnic violence, but in many instances RCT is inadequate to explain violent outbursts and even more often it fails to account for cases where no ethnic violence occurred. A critical review of the theory is thus necessary.

¹⁷ Kaufman, Modern Hatreds, 21-22.
¹⁹ Lake and Rothchild, Spreading Fear, 19-20;
²⁰ Ibidem, 20-23.
1.2.1.2 RCT Criticized

First of all, central to the security dilemma is the assumption that the involved parties are willing to compromise to avoid war, but a lack of trust prevents such a compromise. Empirical evidence, however, shows that a security dilemma arose because sides openly expressed the objective to dominate, rather than from a self-defensive arms race under an emergent anarchy. Instead, it can be argued that groups base their goals and expectations on culturally embedded interpretations of history. Fighting is chosen over deliberating, because neither better information nor strong commitments would be able to change this cultural identity. 21

Political scientist Beverly Crawford provides insight in the role of cultural identity in the competition for scarce goods. There is quite a difference between a conflict over resources between interest groups and ethnic (or cultural) groups. Interests are “malleable and multiple” and open to negotiation and compromise. Cultural identity, on the other hand, is “fixed and non-negotiable.” When the battle for resources is linked to an identity component, the dispute will be difficult to negotiate, increasing the likeliness of violence. She believes this is especially apparent in the former Yugoslavia, where federal states weakened and thus created incentives for political entrepreneurs “to play the ethnic card.” Crawford sees strong institutions as mediators in conflict that promote social integration rather than politicizing cultural identity. 22

Rational choice theorists thus have “their causal chain backwards”: it is not anarchy that leads to the security dilemma, but the other way around. Put very simply, In Yugoslavia the government fell because the republics armed themselves. Anarchy was perhaps the result of the pre-war period, but not its cause. In addition, actual events did not match RCT expectations: there was no war between Croats and Slovenes, nor did Macedonia take up arms against Serbia in spite of their historical qualms. 23

A second problem is the idea of self-interest, which surprisingly ends up depending on the manifestation of group norms. Hardin argues that groups form instrumentally because

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individuals seek security. If this would be a purely rational occurrence, it would be rational for individuals to switch groups when they are on the weaker side, and moreover, for opponent to let them make this switch. In other words, at some point it might become rational for an individual to ‘betray’ ethnic relations. The idea of group self-defence now becomes problematic. Apparently, group norms are effective enough to prevent individuals from switching sides. This is supported by studies showing that collective interests are a more potent motivator for committing violence than individual self interest. Even if we take the position that group norms support ethnic violence, this does not seem rational. Instead, it would be more rational to bolster norms that would reject such violence. Rationalist theorists fail to explain why groups ‘prefer’ violent norms and pre-emptive mobilization, rather than opposing norms.\(^{24}\)

Crawford further undermines the security dilemma argument by explaining how it is incomplete in four ways. First, the formation of ‘politically relevant culture groups’ is seen as a given. Group preferences are assumed, not explained. Second, the assumption that central authorities function as the institute that mitigates and prevents conflict is unwarranted. Third, the security dilemma cannot explain how it is possible that cultural violence occurs in developed societies with a decent functioning central authority and sufficient checks to live up to social contracts. Fourth and finally, the security dilemma does not explain why institutions weaken in the first place, or even collapse.\(^{25}\)

The argument that ethnic wars stem primarily from economic concerns has a rather poor empirical track record and fails to explain why ethnic mobilization occurs in general. Moreover, other studies have found that ethnic groups assemble under nearly all economic circumstances. Statistical studies support this conclusion. Demands for group autonomy are intensified by ecological stress and cultural differences, rather than political or economic discrimination.\(^{26}\)

For example, the relative deprivation approach argues that in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia the living standards plummeted in the years before collapse. Even though this argument has some value, the pattern of violence that should result from it (areas that suffer more are more likely to show violent outbursts) is not explained. Besides, for example Armenia and Georgia faced conflicts while their economies where growing in comparison

\(^{24}\) Kaufman, Modern Hatreds, 21-22.


with Russia’s, Transnistria was more industrialized and wealthier than the part (Moldova) it tried to succeed from. The economic argument does not explain these differences.27

In addition, the economic argument is troubled by logical inconsistency. In general, fighting an ethnic civil war is not economically rational, let alone if this economy is a fragile one and is most likely to face destruction. On the contrary, one would expect peaceful ethnic mobilization. Economic risks most often easily supersede probable gains, with the exception of aspiring profiteers. In the Yugoslav conflict the distribution of economic goods was one of the most important triggers for conflict. Nevertheless, it appeared rather quickly that conflict would lead to a distorted economy: trade, production, infrastructure and human capital would be destroyed. A look at post-war Yugoslavia illustrates that, except for a few profiteers and looters, in effect everybody lost economically from the war. Even though elites make use of ethnic oppositions to realize economic gains this does not mean that the conflict is therefore fundamentally about economic differences. The instrumentalization of ethnic distrust and antipathy only works when these feelings were already strong.28

Soft rationalists focus of extremist politicians as the principal causes of ethnic violence. Even though Kaufman believes this explanation ‘works’, this is only because it assumes group norms and hostile attitudes, “which is most of what the theory is meant to explain.”29 Even if the theory works, it does not explain what it claims to do.

The main weakness of RCT is that it fails to deliver empirical verification. Rational choice theorists are eager to come up with “universal theories of politics”, but this is exactly the root of the theory’s weakness, it “demands a level of rigor and simplicity not found in the real world.”30 These universal aspirations lead to a number of methodological defects: a misapplication of statistical techniques, omitting of measurement errors, or interpretations that are based on a small number of case studies. In a sense, RCT is more of method driven approach than a problem driven one. Theories are developed post-event which is “little more than an exercise in curve fitting.” Data that leads to a theory cannot at the same time be used to test the theory. In addition, rational choice theorists often show a lack of interest in competing explanations; provide slippery or vaguely operationalized predictions; show bias in

27 Kaufman, Modern Hatreds, 18-19.
29 Kaufman, Modern Hatreds, 22.
30 Green and Shapiro, Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory, 6; Mann, Dark Side, 26.
evidence selection; and evidence is projected from a theory rather than gathered independently from it.\textsuperscript{31}

In the end, much of the criticism comes down to the question: “Shouldn’t reason have led them down different paths?”\textsuperscript{32} Nevertheless, this does not mean that RCT must be abandoned. Green and Shapiro insist it should be rethought fundamentally instead. Most of the scholars who are critical towards RCT note that the theories also provide some valuable insights. These are: the way elites mobilize ethnicity for their own political or economical gains; the mobilization of hostile groups; information failure and the lack of credible commitment can contribute to the worsening of ethnic security dilemmas; and the weakening of institutions as a reason for ethnic conflicts. It is now time to turn to the Symbolic Politics Theory to explain why this approach is better suited to understand extreme ethnic violence.

1.3.1 Symbolic Politics Theory (SPT)

1.3.1.1 SPT Explained

The fundamental assumption in SPT is that people act in accordance with the most emotionally potent symbol evoked.\textsuperscript{33} There is a complex relation between the ‘web of myths’ and corresponding symbols that collectively define what it means to be part of an ethnic group. This is called the ‘myth-symbol complex’ of the ethnic group. A myth is understood to be “a belief held in common by a large group of people that gives events and actions a particular meaning.”\textsuperscript{34} The accuracy of the myth is irrelevant. A symbol is an “emotionally charged shorthand reference to a myth.” Basically, myth-symbol complexes are “mythologized narratives” of the culture and history of an ethnic group.\textsuperscript{35}

Edelman is one of the first scholars that made an attempt at an elaborate analysis of the workings of symbols in conflicts. He argues that sense perceptions can be manipulated with the help of symbols. Edelman focuses mostly on ‘myths’ that provide symbols with meaning. Myths in this sense “have the role of giving events and actions a particular meaning – typically by defining enemies and heroes and tying ideas of right and wrong to people’s identity.” The importance of myths makes language forms crucial for the construction of

\textsuperscript{31} Green and Shapiro, \textit{Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory}, 33-46.
\textsuperscript{33} Kaufman, \textit{Modern Hatreds}, 25.
\textsuperscript{34} Edelman, \textit{Politics as Symbolic Action}, 14.
beliefs. Through language, myths and metaphors are able to mould our perceptions of the world. Metaphor can be used to understate situations, thus delicately avoiding what one does not want to see, and subtly draw attention to what one wants to believe. Politicians who skilfully apply metaphors are able to persuasively present a certain view on reality.  

According to Horowitz, symbols are invoked to indicate future treatments of discrimination and preferences. These symbolic claims are not limited to multiethnic societies, but in these societies symbols are “excellent indicators of malintegration.” Symbols are used to affirm the legitimacy of politics to the public, especially when this legitimacy is contested.

An important aspect of symbols and their use, according to Horowitz, lies in their ambiguity. This is one of the reasons that symbols are so effective in ethnic conflict. Through symbols ethnic claims appear as ideas that are widely accepted, thus masking elements that could otherwise be perceived as controversial. Meaning is blurred intentionally with the help of symbols in order to blend subgroup oriented claims with universals. The problem with these symbolic claims is that they are not very responsive to alteration or compromise. This is also where symbols diverge from purely material interests. The latter can be measured both relatively and absolutely, but status is always relative.

Political anthropologist Zdzislaw Mach sees human beings as *hominæ symbolicae*: beings that construct their identity and express their thoughts and feelings through symbols. He argues that symbols are potent markers that are both emotionally loaded and constitute the very basis for human thought (and everything related to it). Mach also stresses the ambiguity of symbols. The meaning that is attributed to a symbol is highly context dependent. Traditions or conventions might have encoded the symbol with a number of potential meanings, but these are only activated through its actual use. The amalgam of different symbols in a text combined with the social context determines what potential meaning will be preferred.

An example of such a text is myth. Past events play a central role in these myths, even though the reconstruction of these events does not always do justice to the truth. But for myth this does not matter, according to Mach, “what does matter is the symbolic story conveyed by

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the narrative.” Myth enables individuals and groups to overcome the unwelcome relative truth that plays a central role in academic history, and instead provides them with a realm of absolute truth. In turn, this ‘mythical knowledge of the past’ also offers individuals and groups a fitting identity. It is a crucial component of this identity and has a strong potential to justify and legitimize actions in the present.  

Sociologist and one of the founders of the interdisciplinary field of nationalism studies, Anthony D. Smith supports Mach’s argument. ‘Ethno-symbolists’ are able to use symbols to give nationalism its dynamics and intensity. Moreover, these ‘modern nationalist intelligentsias’ are able to reconstitute national identities in every generation with the help of these symbols.

Political scientist Johan M.G. van der Dennen argues that the most devastating aggression is a result of mankind’s capability of creating “mental monstrosities” that justify violence, such as utopian ideologies, superiority doctrines, or historical imperatives. These mental monstrosities are evoked by manipulative leaders, that use ethnic symbols to act as a sort of mnemonic device to imitate “cues that originally invoked a genuine kinship” and as such ask for a response by the group to defend for example the ‘fatherland’. Much of these practices are further strengthened by what could be named the ‘religious nature’ of ethnic ideologies. Homage to the ethnic group is paid through a number of ‘religious symbols’: monuments that serve as were they temples, relics such as battle flags, an mythical history that sometimes resembles theology. Obviously, it is not only a myth-symbol complex that defines what it means to belong to an ethnic group. But it is one of the key features, and plays an important role when it comes to a group’s interpretation and reflection of social situations.

Kaufman provides an example of how this myth-symbol complex works. The 1389 Battle of Kosovo Field plays an important role in Serbian mythology. The central meaning of this myth is “the martyrdom of the Serbian nation in defence of Serbian honour and of Christendom against the Turks.” ‘Kosovo’ is the shorthand reference to this myth. Evoking

41 Mach, Symbols, 58-63.
this symbol is usually intended to remind Serbian listeners to emotions related to the myth.\textsuperscript{44} In sum, the Kosovo-myth and the related symbols are part of more nationalist myths and related symbols – i.e. their myth-symbol complex – which defines for the Serbs what it means to be a Serb.

The foregoing shows ethnicity can become such a dominant and omnipresent force exactly because it draws from so many sources:

“If cleverly cast, an ethnic or nationalist appeal can claim that the ethnic warrior is fighting simultaneously for self-respect (identity), self-interest (material goods), clan survival, clan territory, the propagation of the faith, and country; and if the fight is successful, the warrior will have achieved immortality (through martyrdom and the defense of the progeny) even in death.”\textsuperscript{45}

Even though ethnic loyalties are created, such attempts are only successful when the symbolic claims appear as credible and relevant.\textsuperscript{46} Symbolic claims, however, are often highly psychological and emotional - an area which is almost completely disregarded by most rational choice theorists. Such claims are related to emotional motivations. It has to do with prejudices and is often loaded with exaggerated fears of group extinction. At the same time, empirical studies have shown that individuals rather maximize differences between groups, than maximizing the benefits of their own group. This also explains why groups would prefer to face violent conflict, if it results in harming or weakening a rival group. Conflict is not about economic interests, but rather a battle for status, domination, and survival.\textsuperscript{47}

Emotions are more powerful than is often assumed. Psychologists Susan T. Fiske and Shelly E. Taylor argue that emotion is more likely to ensure action than a rational cost-benefit calculation. Emotions alter preferences and change the priority attributed to goals. It can very well be argued that, depending on the situation, emotions are very likely to be the basis for a decision. Even more so, recent findings in neuroscience show that it is emotions that motivate people to act, rather than rational calculations. In a recent article, Kaufman draws on a number of studies which show that people do not adjust their behaviour in rational way, but

\textsuperscript{44} Kaufman, \textit{Modern Hatreds}, 16.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibidem, 25.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibidem. 25.
that emotions are decisive for people to set priorities among competing goals. This supports the core assumption of SPT, namely that people make decisions based on the symbol that has the biggest emotional appeal. 48

Symbolic politics thus refers to any political activity aimed at stirring up emotions rather than concentrating on interests. Stakeholders carefully select and blend to accomplish a certain state of mind in their audience. They trigger sentiments that remind people of their values, recall ideas, evoke emotions and mobilize to action. Practical examples of this manipulation of symbols are flag waving, references to heroes, and even the kissing of babies. In war time, they choose symbols that (re)emphasize the nation’s greatness and portray the enemies as evil. The combination of cognitive and emotional effects makes symbols so potent. 49

Ethnic groups are especially vulnerable to the practice of symbolic politics, because ethnicity is emotionally laden, and characterized by the widespread use of myths and related symbols. If these myths and symbols appeal to ethnic issues and at the same time target an out group with feelings of hatred, anger, or aggression, they are able to motivate people to fight. Symbols convince people to be part of an ethnic movement; myths blame the out-group for (real or conceived) misfortune. 50

It is important to realize that is not only the myth-symbol complex that is a cause of ethnic conflict. Kaufman concludes that there are six causal variables for explaining extreme ethnic violence: ethnic myths justifying hostility, fears of group extinction, opportunity to mobilize, extreme mass hostility, chauvinist political mobilization, and a predation-driven interethnic security dilemma. 51 For this thesis, the ethnic myths justifying hostility are by far the most important. I will elaborate on this issue in the following chapter.

The foregoing is a summary of the most prominent SPT ideas. The consequence of the symbolic politics approach is that we need to analyse the historical myths that provide symbols with the potency to mobilize people, evoke fears in them, and lead them to commit horrible atrocities. The advantages of SPT is that it is able to explain a number of phenomena that RCT cannot, such as the prominence of purely symbolic issues, the efforts of politicians making symbolic appeals and why they convince people to support them, even if this goes

50 Kaufman, Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice, 50-55.
51 Ibidem, notably page 58.
against their material interests. But SPT is not without criticism either. Since Kaufman is the most prominent SPT adherent, I will deal with criticism on his work.

1.3.1.2 SPT Criticized

Kaufman’s standard setting work was applauded by most reviewers, and some of the criticism that was generated was rebutted in a subsequent article. Nevertheless, some criticism still stands. First, I will deal with a number of reviews of Kaufman’s book, and second I will discuss a correspondence between Kaufman and international security specialist Arman Grigorian that resulted from the article “Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence” by Kaufman, published in *International Security* in 2006. Kaufman expanded his theory in this article and provided two extra case studies, concerning Sudan and Rwanda.

Some minor criticism was that more research needs to be done on the “sociological wellsprings of ethnically charged mythmaking.” For example, this would come down to researching what kind of history is taught in schools, and whether myths are part of popular culture or classroom teaching. Political scientist Crawford Young argues that reflection is needed on the particularity of the cases studied by Kaufman, to see whether Kaufman’s thesis holds in areas with different constitutional arrangements. It can be argued Kaufman broadened his scope in the 2006 article in which he studied the conflicts in Sudan and Rwanda.

More fundamental criticism comes from political scientist Dipak K. Gupta, who argues that Kaufman’s explanatory variables are too aggregated, which might make the operationalization of the used terms rather difficult. His example is Kaufman’s understanding of ‘opportunity’, which can include a wide range of political and social situations. Chaim Kaufmann, associate professor in international relations, has a similar remark on Kaufman’s work. Chaim Kaufmann argues that Kaufman does not properly define the operational limits of what exactly qualifies as symbols, nor does he make a distinction between symbol and structure. As a result, SPT remains unfalsifiable.

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56 For the sake of clarity, I will refer to Chaim Kaufmann as ‘Chaim Kaufmann’, and to Stuart J. Kaufman with ‘Kaufman’.

This conclusion is not justified. Kaufman indeed does not set strict boundaries, because the ambiguity of symbols and the all encompassing nature of mythology make it almost impossible to clearly define the limits of symbolic politics. But, SPT is not about what constitutes a symbol, but what kind of effect the mobilization of these symbols can have. This reduction of SPT to the definition of symbols does no justice to Kaufman’s well-researched case-studies that are applauded by every other reviewer cited in this section. Finally, Chaim Kaufmann blames Kaufman for not making a clear distinction between ‘symbol’ and ‘structure’, but what he himself understands to constitute these terms remains unclear as well.

Professor of International Affairs Charles King questions the assumption that something like an ‘ethnic war’ exists in the first place. He wants to make a clearer distinction between why actors hate (a psychological issue), and why they commit mass killings (an issue for social scientists and statesmen). King argues that the manipulation of symbols itself is not sufficient to raise an army, but that leaders and state institutions are necessary to perpetrate violence. King misses the point. Kaufman does not argue that the manipulation of symbols is in itself a sufficient cause for ethnic violence, but a necessary one. Leaders and institutions might provide opportunities to engage in violence, but there are also numerous accounts of bottom-up committed violence as well.

A more interesting and elaborate critique comes from Grigorian, who commented on the 2006 article by Kaufman. This resulted in a debate between both scholars. Grigorian accuses Kaufman of making some elementary academic mistakes, but Kaufman rebuts these allegations successfully. Grigorian’s criticism consists of three main elements (design flaws, sins of omission, and sins of commission) and some minor remarks that will not be addressed.

Grigorian’s first argument (design flaws) is that Kaufman’s empirical test is not fit to actually demonstrate what SPT implies. Grigorian states that conflicts aren’t caused by myths and narratives, but that these accompany conflicts: i.e., conflicts cause rallies around historical symbols, not the other way around. Grigorian adds that hate and contempt are instrumental, since the mobilization of these emotions can increase group cohesion and morale. Grigorian does not rule out the possibility that hate can cause conflict, but he argues that Kaufman should rule out reverse causality.

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59 Grigorian and Kaufman, Correspondence, 180-191.

60 Ibidem, 181-182;
The second argument (*sins of omission*) is that Kaufman fails to include evidence that could disconfirm his theory. According to Grigorian, Kaufman’s case studies are incomplete. In Sudan for example, Kaufman neglects the failure of negotiations on southern self-determination as a cause for ethnic conflict. In the Rwanda case study Kaufman does not say enough about the origins of the 1994 conflict. Grigorian questions Kaufman’s explanation that the genocide in Rwanda was not rational because the perpetrators would not benefit of their actions. He accuses Kaufman of arguing with hindsight and a lack of evidence concerning the knowledge on the strategic futility of their undertakings of the perpetrators at that time. In other words, according to Grigorian, Kaufman does not convincingly show that these conflicts would not have happened without the myth-symbol complexes of the respective ethnic groups.  

The third argument (*sins of commission*) states that Kaufman misinterprets evidence and relates concepts to his theory even when they are not related. Grigorian claims that Kaufman’s theory is inconsistent, since Kaufman argues that ethnic conflicts are caused by both the result of ethnic groups’ hate narratives stemming from their myth-symbol complex, as well as the competition for territory and status. An SPT scholar might argue that the latter is also the result of certain narratives, but according to Grigorian this is missing in Kaufman’s theory. More generally speaking, Grigorian questions whether culture is the problem. At the end of this argument, Grigorian accuses Kaufman of a monocausal approach towards ethnic conflicts, stating that Kaufman claims that security is never a concern.  

In the same article, Kaufman rebuts the points made by Grigorian. Kaufman starts with reemphasizing that the dependent variable throughout the article is extreme ethnic violence, and not the causes of the initial dispute. Kaufman does not deny that material causes can be at the basis of ethnic politics, but takes the these disputes as a ‘given’, and is interested in why some of the cases lead to extreme violence. The same goes for security-driven mobilization: it is not logically impossible, it just is not what happened in the cases studied. In addition, Kaufman argues that the security dilemma strongly depends on the amount of control a group wants or believes to need over its competitors, i.e. the intensity of these dilemmas depends on the range of the predatory motives - an argument that has been long established in literature. 

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63 Ibidem, 186, 189.
Grigorian furthermore claimed that Kaufman rejected security as a concern in ethnic conflicts, and solely focused on irrational hatreds. In his article, however, Kaufman discerned six causal variables, including the security dilemma. In addition, Kaufman’s argues that theories that focus solely on structural and material causes are not fit to explain extreme violence. When Grigorian says that the competition for territory and status contribute to the eruption of extreme violence, he implicitly acknowledges the very core of SPT: status is above all a “purely symbolic, nonmaterial good.” Grigorian’s claim thus seems to be misplaced.⁶⁴

Considering the ‘sins of omission’ Kaufman points out that in the limited space of an article, one cannot include all potentially relevant historical details. More important however, Grigorian fails to prove that the elements that are missing would undermine the argument in the article.⁶⁵

Another complaint of Grigorian is that of causal order: he asserts that hostile myths are the result of a conflict, rather than its cause. Kaufman acknowledges that myths could very well be the result of a history of conflicts. However, in the cases under scrutiny, the myths existed well before the outbreaks of violence. More so, Grigorian misses the point, since the hypothesis of SPT is “that the probability of violence varies with the degree of hostility in the myths.”⁶⁶

Kaufman furthermore rebuts the argument that the mobilization in southern Sudan was simply the result of a defensive response. The problem with Grigorian’s analysis is that he insists on a mono-causal explanation. Kaufman does not dismiss the defensive responses, but notes that there are many more elements in play. Not all ethnic groups mobilized, and this can be explained by the myth-symbol complexes of the respective groups.⁶⁷

Grigorian also objects the irrationality of the Hutu’s. Grigorian states that Kaufman’s argument considering perpetrators knowing what the outcome would be was made in hindsight. However, Kaufman convincingly shows that the decisions made by the perpetrators were irrational. Evidence shows that the Hutu’s in Rwanda wished to retain power, but scattered their forces to kill unarmed civilians and at the same time allowed their adversaries,

⁶⁴ Grigorian and Kaufman, Correspondence, 187-188.
⁶⁵ Ibidem, 188.
⁶⁶ Ibidem, 188.
⁶⁷ Ibidem, 189.
the military superior Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), to drive them out of the country without any notable opposition. This was all but rational.\textsuperscript{68}

None of the arguments have undermined the fundamental assumptions of SPT. Most of them are either based on wrong assumptions or interpretations and it is therefore not surprising that most authors applaud Kaufman’s achievements.

1.4 Summary

Rational choice theory faces a number of shortcomings, of which two are fundamental: choosing conflict over peaceful negotiations is not a rational thing to do and RCT fails to explain why in some instances ethnic conflicts do not occur whilst the RCT preconditions are actually in place. SPT deals with these shortcomings by arguing that it are not rational deliberations that make people ready for hostile actions, but potent symbols that evoke feelings of anger, hate and fear. Ethnic entrepreneurs who manage to mobilize these feelings have a strong instrument for manipulating their audience. In the next chapter, I will analyse one specific element of Symbolic Politics, namely historical hate narratives. The first paragraph of the following section will provide a bridge over the gap between SPT and historical hate narratives.

\textsuperscript{68} Grigorian and Kaufman, \textit{Correspondence}, 189.
II. Historical Hate Narratives
2.1 Bridge: From Symbolic Politics Theory to Historical Hate Narratives

One of the consequences of the symbolic politics approach is that we need to analyse the historical myths that provide symbols with the potency to mobilize people, evoke fears in them, and lead them to commit horrible atrocities. The goal of this thesis is to analyse a number of those myths, more specifically what I call historical hate narratives. Before elaborating on this concept I want to bridge the gap between the theory and this specific element, by showing why historical hate narratives are an element of SPT that deserve our special attention. In the remainder of this chapter, I will work towards a typology of historical hate narratives.

In SPT, one of the necessary preconditions for ethnic wars are myths justifying ethnic hostility. The core assumption of this aspect – and fundamental to SPT – is that people are sensitive to ethnic symbols and ready to pick up arms when a myth-symbol complex legitimizes animosity towards an out-group. An example of the foregoing is again the Serbian myth-symbol complex. The Serb martyrdom in the Battle of Kosovo – fought against the Muslim Ottomans – was used by the political elite of the 19th and 20th century, transformed into the slogan “Only unity saves the Serbs”, and subsequently used for instigating fear for, and legitimizing violence against Bosnian and Kosovo-Albanian Muslims.69

These myths often have an historical character, focusing on the wrongdoings the group faced in the past and evoking resentment and rationalizing revenge. In many cases, one of the groups was actually dominated by the other group at some point in history, which makes the dominant group anxious about possible revenge and the dominated group ready to take this revenge. Existential fear is the key in these situations, and fear is an emotion that can be intensified through narratives that try to provide interpretation of the situation. These narratives can be made up, as the Serbs do when they compare Albanians in Kosovo with the Ottomans: the first never dominated the Serbs. Narratives are crucial for a group’s interpretation of a situation, perhaps even more than the situation itself. Narratives highlight the (real or conceived) threats of other groups and mobilize groups to prepare for battle.70 Let me re-emphasize that it is not only hostile narratives that lead to ethnic conflict, but they do play a very important role. The foregoing clarifies the link between SPT and historical hate narratives. I will deal with how narratives work in the following section.

69 Kaufman, Modern Hatreds, 30-31.
70 Ibidem, 30-38.
2.2 Narratives and Identity

In ethnic conflicts, cultural heritage is of particular importance. Ethnic groups often use physical manifestations of this heritage (monuments, temples, artefacts, relics) to define their identity. These artefacts evoke national and historical imagination, and at the same time canalize feelings and emotions shared among the group. Possessing of heritage provides authority. The battle for this is a competition for ethnic groups to create or strengthen a ‘fitting’ identity. For example, in the Yugoslav war of the 1990s, rival groups not only claimed historic rights to territories and cultural sites, but also used symbols and names referring to belligerent factions in World War II, such as Ustaša (Croat) and Četnik (Serb).

In this competition for identity and heritage, narratives propose a reading of a certain situation, designate threats (either real or conceived) and are able to call for a collective mobilization towards the destruction of these threats. National “hate narratives”, a term coined by historian Halil Berktay, centre on themes of betrayal and victimization, and can be seen as mass expressions of fear and prejudice. These narratives often deal with a national struggle and recall attacks from, and treason by other nations. These stories display hatred of enemies of the protagonist nation, which are ‘inherently and irredeemably bad’. Removal, disappearance, or destruction of the hated group can resolve the problems created by it.

The interaction between groups and their narratives is both complex and dynamic. For a group to exist it is crucial that it manifests itself in the individual's everyday experience. A person’s way of thinking, relating, knowing and feeling is influenced tremendously by a person's belonging to a group. Individuals externalise their representation of the group they belong to (e.g. by wearing the same clothes, expressing the same thoughts, using the same words) and at the same time they experience other individuals of the group doing the same. As such, the community becomes inter-subjectively real. Narratives play a crucial role in this process. They situate an individual's actions in a wider context of his or her social

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surroundings and provide an instrument to understand the world: it shows how the part (individual) fits into a larger whole (group).  

Submersion in groups tends to decrease the focus on personal identity. Individual norms are overtaken by group norms and can cause people to partially lose their awareness of themselves. They are no longer able to evaluate their own actions properly in the relative anonymity the group provides. The individual does not operate as him or herself, but as a member of a group. This deindividuation and the subsequent loss of self-awareness have a strong effect on normally internalized controls as shame, guilt, or fear and make activities otherwise regarded unthinkable possible. Narratives do not only reinforce intragroup feelings of similarity, they also provide interpretations for the social context, and help a person submerge in a group.

Even though national hate narratives account for several of the salient features of ethnic cleansing, they do not constitute the one and only cause for such violence. According to historian Benjamin Lieberman narratives are nevertheless crucial for ethnic cleansing. Borrowing Norman Naimark’s terminology, Lieberman argues: “they make them burn more quickly, and far more intensely. “National hate narratives do not simply start fires of hatred (...): they make them burn more quickly, and far more intensely.”

From the foregoing, the following elements need to be included in the typology: themes of betrayal and victimization, fear, prejudice, situating the individual in a larger (historical) context, and solutions how to deal with enemy group.

2.3 Hate in narratives

To understand the hate component of historical hate narratives, I will briefly discuss the definition of hate. Next, I will draw on social psychology to explain the mechanisms of hate. Finally, I will analyze several cases of hate speech in front of the ICTY and the ICTR, to distil some important lessons on the workings and consequences of hate in speech and writing.


2.3.1 A definition of Hate

Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language defines hate as “intense hostility toward an object that has frustrated the release of an inner tension” and as “a habitual emotional attitude in which distaste is coupled with sustained ill will.” Its online counterpart includes the following entries for hate and hatred: “intense hostility and aversion usually deriving from fear, anger, or sense of injury”, “extreme dislike or antipathy” and “prejudiced hostility or animosity.” From these dictionaries, we can derive that hate is an attitude that consists of intense hostility towards an object (either human or not) that has frustrated (and thus has a history with the person who hates) the release of an inner (already build up) tension.

Social scientist Gordon Allport describes hate as “an emotion of protest directed always toward real or imagined obstructions that prevent one from reaching objectives that are positively valued – i.e. loved” and “an enduring organization of aggressive impulses toward a person or class of persons […] composed of habitual bitter feeling and accusatory thought.” Ballard and Mcdowell conclude from this that “hate is an attitude. It is a judgement about an object or person(s), which reflects a negative assessment or dislike.” However, in contrast to anger, “hate implies a colder, deeper, steadier negative emotion, lasting a long time, felt to be a reaction to a long accumulation of objectionable, hate-deserving acts.” Ballard and McDowell furthermore cite Rueben Fine, who argues hate is first of all a response to frustration: “a primary psychological force, engendered by indoctrination and frustration, which is carried along from one generation to the next, reinforced by myriad social pressures.”

Sternberg and Sternberg discuss recent definitions of hate, proposed by renowned psychotherapist Willard Gaylin and psychoanalyst R.W.J. Dozier. Gaylin sees hate as an intense emotion, or a passion, that distorts perceptions and causes quasi-delusional thinking. It requires an object to attach to. The choice of this object is not necessary rational, but more

81 Ballard and McDowell, Hate and Combat Behavior, 230.
often “dictated by the unconscious needs and the personal history of the hater than by the nature, or even the actions, of the hated.”

Hate is only possible if there is something or someone to hate. It is an emotion that is sustained over a significant period of time, which occupies the individual through much of his life. It is always obsessive and often, though not always, irrational. According to Sternberg and Sternberg, hate can be an adaptive and rational response, for example if an enemy is on the verge of destroying everything you have. Feelings of hate are not detached from other emotions, but are reshaped and intensified by other, such as the longing for revenge. Thus: “hate is a complex aggressive affect that is chronic and stable, unlike rage or anger. Its primary aim is the destruction of the object of hate.”

Another aspect of hate is its historical dimension. First of all, as political scientist Roger D. Petersen argues, “[h]atred prepares the individual to act on historical grievance.” The function of hate is to try to tell a coherent story that links “observable structural change, belief formation, emotion and action.” Hate thus increases the need for “historically framed violence.” Slogans often heard in ethnic conflicts are referring to these old scores: take back what belongs to the group, make right what is wrong, or provide a sense of fulfilment.

From the foregoing we can come up with the following definition of hate consisting out of eight aspects. Hate is an (i) emotion of intense hostility, that is always (ii) targeted at an object that causes (real or perceived) obstructions to the subject. It is an (iii) enduring, but not necessarily chronic, emotion, that is (iv) reinforced by both social pressures and other emotions. The (v) choice of target is not necessarily rational, but it can be. The (vi) perceptions of the targeted object are prejudiced and (vii) engendered by indoctrination and frustration. Hate has a (viii) historical dimension, which increases the need for historically framed violence to settle old scores.

These elements should provide a basic understanding of hate and at the same time make an analysis of the mechanisms of hate and notably in hate narratives possible. They will be reflected in the typology at the end of this chapter.

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85 Sternberg and Sternberg, Nature of Hate, 16.
86 Ibidem, 16-17.
2.3.2 Mechanisms of hate
The psychological mechanisms that cause hate are complicated, but I will clarify some of it in the following section. The focus will be on those mechanisms that help us understand the working of historical hate narratives and that can be used in the typology. I will draw on three authors who elaborate on this issue. The first is philosopher, political theorist and social analyst Leonidas Donskis, who discusses forms of hate and relates these to imagined demonic enemies. Second is a book that very well might be standard setting work on the issue by renowned psychologist Robert J. Sternberg and psychometrician Karin Sternberg.

2.3.2.1 Hate and Imagination
Donskis argues that we can only understand hate if we realize it is inalienable from the tendency to prefer abstract ideas and images of ‘enemies’ over human individuality. Only then can the outbreak of violence and terror be seen as a logical and unpreventable “continuation of the ever-lasting struggle of good and evil.” This troubled imagination transforms human beings into “infidels, agents of evil, demons of darkness, or world-conspirators.” What it comes down to, is that “[w]e hate those whom we are unable to understand, and whose existence demands to reconsider, inventory, or even discard our concepts, ideas, and images. Therefore, we hate those who are a threat to our mental security and certainty.”

The transfer of hate to the imagination is crucial. Instead of relating two or more (flesh-and-blood) human beings, the subject starts fighting perceived villains. The more the hate increases, the more it seems to lose touch with reality. Even more so, according to Donskis, only by rejecting the world as it is our troubled imagination can make us hate so passionately and intensely. Hate is the manifestation of the takeover of imagination over reality. Dialogue makes people conscious of the thoughts and feelings of others, but when someone distances himself from another human being that a vacuum is created, in which hate manages to take root. Hate is chosen over dialogue, not because it is always grounded in history or culture. More often is instigated, or even artificially created. Manipulation and brainwashing are simply necessary to make sure hate lasts.

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89 Donskis, *Forms of Hatred*, 4.
90 Ibidem, 4-6.
Facets from the foregoing that need to be incorporated in the typology are the imagined or mythical enemies that are situated in an historical (ever-lasting) struggle. Also, narratives which create a distance between two human beings is created in a manipulative way without any basis in reality can also be considered historical hate narratives.

2.3.2.2 The Nature of Hate

One of the questions Sternberg and Sternberg ask themselves is how intense hate can develop. They point out that the ethnic groups in Yugoslavia had lived together peacefully for many decades, despite their ethnic differences and potential for conflict. No intense hatred between these groups had developed, until the collapse of the former Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina opened up for claims of the ethnic groups. It is, however, not only in Bosnia that such intense hate developed. According to Sternberg and Sternberg, the “one pattern that consistently appears in that while engaged in their power struggles, individuals develop an intense hate and often use every means available to foment hate in their fellow citizens in order to gain the support they need to achieve their goals.”  

Sternberg and Sternberg emphasize that there are many other factors than hate underlying massacres and genocides. Nevertheless, to understand hate, they introduce the duplex theory of hate. It characterizes various kinds of hate, and makes an attempt at explaining the formation of hate. The difference with existing theories (ranging from Freud to Zimbardo) is that they are “all-encompassing in such a way that they explain the formation of hate as well as various kinds of hate.”

2.3.2.2.1 The Triangular Hate Scale

Through a number of case studies, Sternberg and Sternberg developed a theory that encompasses three elements that constitute hate, the so-called ‘triangular hate scale’. The first element is negation of intimacy. This concerns the element of distancing in hate, which is characterized by the seeking of emotional distance. That what is hated is looked upon with repulsion and disgust. The hater therefore seeks (emotional) distance or disengagement from the hated. Often these feelings are reinforced by propaganda. It can be felt of groups without knowing the persons who make up the group personally (e.g. ‘infidels’).

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91 Sternberg and Sternberg, Nature of Hate, 6.
92 Ibidem, 13, 50.
93 Ibidem, 61, 71.
The second is *passion* in hate. In response to a threat, it expresses itself as intense anger or fear. Anger will lead one to undertake action, to approach the hated object, whereas fear will make one avoid the threat. This fight-flight reaction can be seen as an integral part of hate. Depending on the image of the enemy people have (dangerous, vicious, evil), they might decide to eliminate or escape the threat. The passion that concurs with these emotions is a potent motivator, and can become addictive. When passion is expressed through anger by an in-group that is in a position of strength, it is more likely to be both experienced as, and translated into action.\(^9^4\)

The third element is *decision/commitment* in hate, and is characterized by an attitude of devaluation of the targeted group. When the hater views the targeted group as barely, sub- or non-human, he is more likely to feel contempt for the group. The images of the enemies are produced through what can be described as ‘brainwashing’. The moulding of peoples’ minds takes places through institutions and media. At a certain stage, haters are likely to “adopt a way of thinking that tends to perpetuate their own feelings of hate. Perpetrators often engage in simplistic and often dichotomous thinking in targeting hated groups (good/bad).”

The three elements - *negation of intimacy, passion,* and *decision/commitment* – combined are most likely to move followers to action. These need to be included in the typology. The most well-known and striking example of a leader that combined these elements is Adolf Hitler. The negation of intimacy was a result of verbal and pictorial propaganda portraying the Jews as disgusting. Passion was aroused through Hitler’s personal performances at rallies, by mass demonstrations and parades, and numerous other accounts where Jews were depicted as evil (rapists of Aryan women, purveyors of death etc.). To complete the triangle, Hitler’s youth groups and control over both media and cultural artefacts gave the Nazi-government the opportunity do demand absolute obedience to hate based government policies.\(^9^5\)

### 2.3.2.2 Hate Arises from Stories
The second pillar of the theory is the principle *hate arises from stories*. The reasons for creating stories of hate are manifold. Stories are used to devaluate others in an attempt to find self-esteem. In such stories, those who create the story (‘the victims’) represent themselves as

\(^{9^4}\) Sternberg and Sternberg, *Nature of Hate*, 63-65

\(^{9^5}\) *Ibidem*, 71.
‘good’, whilst the hated object is portrayed as ‘bad’. Political psychologist Jerreld M. Post convincingly shows that hate-mongers use stories to project the source of difficulties on an external target. This provides a justification for hate and mass violence for their beleaguered followers. In this way the identification of friends and enemies is socially conditioned. Moreover, the identification of the self with the group is only possible thanks to the identification of the enemy, which leads Post to conclude: “Enemies, therefore, are to be cherished, cultivated, and preserved, for if we lose them, our self-definition is endangered.”

The importance of these stories is that they are associated with an anticipated set of events. It is these events that ‘will’ follow from the story, that evoke hate and not the images in the story per se. Many elements of the story are imagined, even though there may be elements of truth in some of the stories. However, as Sternberg and Sternberg argue, “[..] the power of stories is that their perception becomes, for the individual experiencing the stories, reality. The individual typically does not question whether a given story is true. For him or her, it simply is true.”

The plots of these stories consist more or less out of five steps: (i) the target (object to be hated) is revealed to be worth of hatred (often in an imagined past); (ii) the target plots actions conflicting with interests of the in-group; (iii) the target makes its presence felt; (iv) the target translates plans into action; (v) the target is achieving some success in its goals. Another element of the stories of hate is that there are two fairly stable roles: the perpetrator (who is to be hated) and the victim (who is the hater). People who do evil things tend to see themselves as victims of those they persecute.

Sternberg and Sternberg furthermore elaborate on common techniques used in stories to incite hate and some general aspects of the propaganda that underlies these techniques. The list of these techniques will prove to be useful when I analyse Vojislav Šešelj’s hate narratives. The techniques for generating propaganda that instigates hate: appeal to fear; glittering generality; transfer qualities to person to make them (un)likeable; oversimplification; bandwagoning; and name calling.

In sum, what we can conclude from this chapter on the mechanisms of ‘stories of hate’, is that the ‘storyness’ of historical hate narratives makes the stories plausible. The

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96 Sternberg and Sternberg, *Nature of Hate*, 83.
100 Ibidem, 131-132
techniques used in the stories and the anticipation that follows from it are important for the analysis in the next chapter and will be part of the typology. Now we have seen what psychologists have to see about hate and narratives, I will turn to a completely different perspective on hate narratives: that of legal officials.

2.3.3 Hate speech in Bosnia and Rwanda

A third interesting perspective on hate – or more precise, hate speech – is the jurisprudence on this topic developed by the Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Two cases are important: The Prosecutor v. Dario Kordić and Mario Čerkez (ICTY, IT-95-14/2) and The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana et al. (ICTR, ICTR-99-52).

Dario Kordić was the first person in the history of the ICTY to be indicted because of his role in encouraging ethnic hate. The case of Ferdinand Nahimana et al. is by far the most well-known case regarding this topic and a landmark in the jurisprudence on hate speech. In addition, the allegations are rather similar to the ones in the Kordić case, with the notable exception that Nahimana actually was convicted.

The jurisprudence produced in both cases is expected to play an important role in the proceedings against Vojislav Šešelj, which are still in progress at the moment of writing (2010). The results so far can provide interesting perspectives on the mechanisms of hate and hate narratives in ethnic conflicts. Not the legal reasoning or processes are of interest here, but the insights in the mechanisms of hate and hate speech.

The prosecution accused Kordić of perpetrating, executing and carrying a campaign of widespread and systematic persecutions. One of the means to realize this campaign consisted of “encouraging, instigating and promoting hatred, distrust and strife on political, racial,

\[101\] Both international tribunals were established by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council to bring to justice those who committed grave international crimes in the 1990s in the territories of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.


\[104\] Hollander, Hate Speech, 86.

\[105\] Ibidem, 72.
ethnic or religious grounds, by propaganda, speeches and otherwise.”\textsuperscript{106} The Trial Chamber did not consider encouraging hate in itself as a crime against humanity. As such, it did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Tribunal. \textsuperscript{107} This shows the judges reasoned that encouraging hate without direct incitement is \textit{fundamentally} different from direct and public incitement to genocide, which is punishable under article 4.3(c) of the Statute. Four forms of encouraging hate can now be distinguished: i) direct and public encouragement of hate; ii) direct and private encouragement of hate; iii) indirect (or unintentional) and public encouragement of hate; iv) indirect (or unintentional) and private encouragement of hate.

This distinction is not absolute, in the sense that there may be overlap between different elements (e.g.: public, semi-public, private). Of more concern is that (iii) and (iv) seem to be contradictory. However, one can argue that regular speech can turn into hate speech because of the way the receiver interprets the speech. Even though unlikely, it is \textit{not inconceivable} to imagine unintentional encouragement of hate – either public or private - as a result of readings from poems, songs, or books. The foregoing distinction is useful in examining how hate narratives can operate in different ways.

From the case against Nahimana I will analyze two concepts that are of importance for this paper: elements that constitute hate speech and the historical dimension of hate speech. Other aspects, such as responsibility and intention, or freedom of speech are also important, but for this paper they do not sufficiently contribute to understanding the mechanisms of historical hate narratives. For now, I will discuss only the elements that constitute hate speech. The historical dimension will be discussed in the section on the historical elements of historical hate narratives.

The judges attributed a number of characteristics to hate speech. The first is vitriolic language, arousing (public) hostility towards a targeted group. This group is often portrayed as innately evil. By doing so, the initiator generates fear, hate and anger, creating a climate in which violence becomes a serious option. Often, this violence is legitimized as a kind of pre-emptive strike.\textsuperscript{108}

The message is often disguised as a political analysis, where words are manipulated and texts are characterized by ambiguity. Even though the form may seem analytical, the tone is often inflammatory and threatening. Nevertheless, sometimes the messages also have a very

\textsuperscript{106}ICTY, \textit{The Prosecutor v. Dario Kordi}ć and Mario Čerkez\textsuperscript{\textregistered} (IT-95-14/2-T), Amended Indictment (30-09-1998) ¶37(c) [hereinafter: \textit{Kordi}ć Indictment].

\textsuperscript{107}Kordi}ć Judgement, ¶192; ICTY Statute , ¶1-5, 9.

\textsuperscript{108}Nahimana Judgement, ¶187, 206,242-243, 245,471.
explicit call for action. Sometimes the messages draw conclusions without proper evidence, creating an impression that is not necessarily in line with (historical) reality. Moreover, the utterances may show a striking indifference to massacres and dehumanize victims, creating a public message that these massacres and dehumanization are ‘normal’.109 These elements concur with the analyses of Donskis and Sternberg and Sternberg.

In addition, the judges recognized a number of fundamental principles from international jurisprudence on incitement to discrimination and violence. The principles are: purpose, context, and causation. These were subsequently used as a test to establish whether an act of hate speech had incited genocide.110

The purpose of a text can help establish whether the intent of the author was bona fide (e.g. historical research, the dissemination of news and information, the public accountability of government authorities). The actual language used, is a decisive factor for establishing the intent of the author.111 Context can be crucial for the impact of hate speech. In an already explosive situation, chances are bigger that a call for action will be answered.112 Finally, the element of causation was considered by the judges. The judges concluded that incitement was a crime per se, regardless whether it had the effect it intended to have.113 The latter, however, is not of importance to this paper.

Lastly, when it comes to constitutive elements of hate speech, a notable distinction was made by the Trial Chamber. The judges argued that a discussion of ethnic consciousness is not necessarily the same as promotion of ethnic hate. A debate which highlights ethnic privileges or restrictions can definitely have an impact, but it would be the result of “of the reality conveyed by the words rather than the words themselves.”114 On the other hand, the inaccuracy of the statement could be an indicator of intent to stir up resentment and ethnic tensions.115

The foregoing provides useful insights on what constitutes hate speech. Notably the remarks on context, purpose and the actual language is of great help to establish the workings of historical hate narratives and will included in the typology. Besides the constitutive

110 Ibidem., ¶1000.
111 Ibidem, ¶1001.
112 Ibidem, ¶1004, 1022.
113 Ibidem, ¶1029.
114 Ibidem, ¶1020.
115 Ibidem, ¶1021.
elements of hate speech, a second point of consideration is the historical dimension of many utterances of hate speech. This element will be addressed in the next section.

2.4 Historical narratives

An important aspect of hate is the stories told to instigate it. These stories often have roots in the past, or provide an interpretation of a nation’s history. The historical component of narratives is thus very important for the message of hate that is disseminated. In the following section I will focus on this dimension.

2.4.1 Historical truth versus twisted myth

The historian David Lowenthal’s analysis of heritage provides valuable insights in the reasons for distorting history in cultural repertoires. He notes that “debasing the “true” past for greedy or chauvinistic ends, heritage is accused of undermining historical truth with twisted myth.”

Lowenthal compares history to heritage, and understands history as the proper academic discipline compared to heritage as the distortive approach towards the past and its remains. Historical hate narratives fall into the latter category, so when Lowenthal refers to heritage his remarks have value for understanding these as well.

One of the foremost reasons to incorporate historical elements is to use them as justifications or motivation for present causes. The present is projected backwards, and the past into the here and now through legends and myths. But whereas history “explores and explains pasts grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes.”

The crucial difference between history and heritage is that historians know that they are not able to retrieve the past as it once was without bias or anachronism, but nevertheless “they strive to do so as far as they can”, whereas the truth in heritage provides us with a present set of principles. History produced in academia is open to general scrutiny. Even more so, testable truth can be seen is history’s most distinctive characteristic. Heritage is the complete opposite, rather a ‘declaration of faith’ than an account of the past that is open for scrutiny. Heritage might seem to share many elements with history, but it is not history. It

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117 I will refer to history that aims at meeting academic standards as ‘history’.
118 Lowenthal, Possessed by the Past, x. 109-112.
uses historical sources and traces, and even tells historical tales, but these are not meant to be critically analysed or scrutinized. ¹¹⁹

The recurring argument is that because heritage does not seek truth, but moulds the past to fit a particular partisan interest. This is the reason that it has more appeal than history. Heritage is more ‘serviceable’ because it shows (or wants to show) us a present that is in line with how we want it to be. The historian’s version of the past is too unpredictable and sometimes even “too remote to comprehend, too strange to be exemplary, too regrettable to admire, or too dreadful to recall.” Once again, this faulty interpretation of the past is not what makes heritage weak or open for scrutiny: bias and prejudiced pride are exactly its strength. ¹²⁰

Ethnic or political leaders can legitimate their power, status and policies by claiming they are responding to a historical or cultural imperative. Basically, as Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine argue, nationalist mythmakers use dubious arguments for two reasons: mobilization of support and the discrediting of antagonists. They cite Ernest Renan to illustrate this: “getting its history wrong is part of being a nation.” This does not mean that all nationalist ideas or policies are based on myths, but nationalist myths tend to propagate conflict, because of their focus on differences between groups, the exaggeration of threats, and diminish the role of the own group in the conflict. ¹²¹

Anthony D. Smith argues that ‘historical ethno-symbolism’ makes eight distinctive claims that scholars – notably historians – should scrutinize. These claims can be translated to more general characteristics of historical ethno-symbolism: (i) a sense of la longue durée, i.e. they deal with the formation of the ethnic group; (ii) three temporal elements of the ethnic group are included: past, present, future; (iii) it explains the ethnic basis of groups; (iv) the group relies on a strong cultural component, that is more important than demographic components; (v) the group shares myths and symbols that deal with its origin, its selection, often refers to a territory and provides an idea of a community; (vi) the group members understand their ethnic past regardless of efforts by academic historians; (vii) an important focus lies on the way the nation or ethnic group was formed in the first place; (viii) it shows the durability of ethnic groups. ¹²²

¹¹⁹ Lowenthal, Possessed by the Past, 117-121.
¹²⁰ Ibidem., 121, 129, 135, 143, 147.
¹²² Smith, Myths and Memories of the Nation, 10-19.
Another scholar that provides useful insights in this abuse of history is historian Antoon de Baets, who was the first to develop a theory on abuse of history, i.e.” its use with the intent to deceive”. The arguments that are interesting for this thesis are the motives for the abuse of history by perpetrators, because these motives often find their reflection in the form and contents of the historical narrative and at the same can hint at the disputable motives of those who fabricate the narratives.

De Baets discerns a large number instrumental motives for the writing of history, of which I have selected twenty motives that are important for studying historical hate narratives: document good and bad conduct as examples; apportion praise and blame; learn lessons from the past; explain identity; predict the future; pay tribute to heroes and victims of the past; demonstrate racial or ethnic superiority, inferiority or equality; show admiration, loyalty, chauvinism, idealism; satisfy resentment (envy, hate, revenge); settle scores; acquire group spirit; determine group identity and origins; construct social cohesion and identity; build ethnic groups, nations; build institutions; create acceptable ideological and political versions of the past; legitimize ideologies, practices, traditions, institutions, policies (including status quo, territorial expansion, and human rights violations); prove crimes, guilt, claims for reparation of historical injustices; prove innocence; seek rehabilitation. These are elements that are part of historical hate narratives as well, and can be indicators of malevolent intentions. Therefore they are elements that are a basis for the scrutiny of the historical hate narratives in the last chapter of this thesis.

Finally, I will turn to the judges in the cases of the prosecutor versus Nahimana, since they also considered the historical dimensions of hate speech. For instance, the chamber noticed that the history of ethnic identity and ethnic conflict had its roots long before the revolt of 1959 mentioned in the indictment. Nevertheless, the judges firmly stated that history could not be used to justify the violence of the 1990s. At the same this implied that in fact history was (ab)used to justify violence.

For example, a snippet from an article published in 1993 in Kangura newspaper stated: “Who can establish the difference between the Inyenzi who attacked in October 1990 and those of the 1960s? They are all the same.” Even though historically speaking, it is

124 De Baets, Responsible History, 26ff, Table 1.3.
125 Nahimana Judgement, ¶107-109.
126 Ibidem, ¶179. Inyenzi (‘cockroach’) is a pejorative used to refer to the Tutsi population. Other examples can be found in ¶357, 468, 488.
correct to say the Tutsi dominated the Hutu’s, the Trial Chamber rightfully noticed that the way “this history was presented [...] often suggests an intent to inflame ethnic resentment, calling on history as an aide in this effort.” On the other hand, some articles published present straightforward analysis of the actual distribution of privileges in Rwandan society. The possible impact of such papers, as was noted earlier, would be the result of the reality conveyed by the words rather than the words themselves. In many other articles the vitriolic language clearly showed the intention to disseminate a message of ethnic hate, rather than a correct historical analysis, and to arouse public hostility towards the Tutsi population.

The foregoing also shows that when dealing with hate narratives, the historical character cannot be neglected. It plays in important role in justifying present day ideas and actions, as well as making predictions for the future. It traces back the roots of ethnic groups, and thus provides a sense of the in- and out-group. The past it refers to does not need to be true. It can even be argued that this would only complicate matters and nuance the situation - thus decreasing the effectiveness of these narratives. In the final section of this chapter, I will provide a typology of historical hate narratives that both summarize and schematize the analysis presented in this chapter.

2.5 A typology of historical hate narratives: indicators and mechanisms

The table presented in this section will serve as a tool to both recognize and analyse historical hate narratives. It is the result of the analysis in this chapter, and represents elements from all three dimensions of historical hate narratives. It will be used in the following chapter to analyse what techniques Vojislav Šešelj applied in his historical hate narratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>INDICATES</th>
<th>MECHANISM / INTENSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vitriolic language</td>
<td>Emotions of intense hostility;</td>
<td>Target an object that causes (real or perceived) obstructions to the subject; Arouse (public) hostility towards a targeted group; portray out-group as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

127 Nahimana Judgement, ¶184.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References to past grieving</th>
<th>Enduring, but not necessarily chronic, emotion; old scores</th>
<th>Suggest intergenerational conflict; sustain hate; settle old scores; provide historical framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical references</td>
<td>Sense of <em>la longue durée</em></td>
<td>Justify present deeds; call for action; learn lessons from the past; create acceptable ideological and political versions of the past; legitimize ideologies, practices, traditions, institutions, policies; suggest intergenerational conflict; sustain hate; describe formation of ethnic groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotyping; name calling</td>
<td>Generalization; indoctrination; oversimplification</td>
<td>Reinforce views; ease understanding of complex situations; transfer qualities to person to make them (un)likeable; brainwash to evoke contempt for the adversary, dehumanize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation of intimacy; indifference to massacres; dehumanizing victims</td>
<td>Emotional distancing</td>
<td>Dehumanize adversary; evoke repulsion and disgust; create a public message that these massacres and dehumanization are ‘normal’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate pleas</td>
<td>Emotional appeal</td>
<td>Arouse either anger or fear and call for action (fight or flight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator ; Blame</td>
<td>Demarcation in-/out-group; Justification for hate</td>
<td>Identify the target; display historical injustices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversary plots actions/makes its presence felt/translates plans into action/achieves some success in its goals;</td>
<td>Interests at stake; warning</td>
<td>Evoke fear, (re)affirm the danger of the out-group to the in-group; Define who is to be hated and why; raise contempt for the out-group; satisfy resentment (envy, hate, revenge); prove crimes, guilt; legitimize pre-emptive aggression; legitimize responsive aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim; praise ; pay tribute to heroes and victims of the past; show admiration, loyalty, chauvinism, idealism; document good and bad conduct</td>
<td>Reasons for actions ; historical grievances; exemplary behaviour; bandwagoning</td>
<td>Define the in-group as a victim; justify self-defence; raise self-esteem of the group ; acquire group spirit; claims for reparation of historical injustices; prove innocence; set examples for ‘right’ behaviour; stimulate ‘copy-cats’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity ; conclusions without proper evidence ; disguised as political analysis</td>
<td>Lack of evidence ; simplification;</td>
<td>Present itself as an analysis to confirm certain ideas; make a(n) (implicit) call for action ; reinforce views; ease understanding of complex situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal aspects (past, present,</td>
<td>Coherence; threats ;</td>
<td>Historical framework;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future justification</td>
<td>reminds of past greatness or suppression; explains present day situation; warns for or calls to realize future perspective (avengers, heroes, victors)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin and territory</td>
<td>Appeal to communal values Gives the group a sense of belonging and coherence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial or ethnic differences</td>
<td>Cultural/Biological distancing Emphasize superiority, inferiority or equality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Case Study: Vojislav Šešelj
3.1 Introduction

Vojislav Šešelj is one of the most appalling persons indicted by the ICTY. He is accused of a number of atrocities and crimes against humanity, but has not shown any remorse so far. He frequently displays extreme nationalist rhetoric and breaches legal protocols more often than one can imagine. He is consequently obstructing his proceedings, making rude statements, and was recently accused (again) of “having disclosed information on 11 protected witnesses, including their real names, occupations and places of residence, in violation of the Trial Chamber’s orders in a book he authored.” Books that have titles like “In the Jaws of the Whore Del Ponte” (2004), “English Gay Farth Tony Blair” (2005) and “Hitler’s most Faithful Followers Helmut Kohl and Hans Genscher” (2006). Sadly, these titles are only few of many literary monstrosities Šešelj produced since his detention in The Hague.129

The reason Šešelj features in this thesis is because some four hundred examples of his nationalist rhetoric have been inventoried and analysed by Anthony D. Oberschall. These will form the basis for the analysis of how Šešelj has used historical hate narratives. Before turning to these, I will first present a short biography of Šešelj and the accusations he faces at the ICTY. Second, I will shortly discuss the sources under scrutiny, summarize Oberschall’s analysis and conclusions and explain how his method differs from mine. Next, I will discuss the impact of Šešelj’s historical hate narratives in Vukovar and Zvornik. Finally, I will examine a selection from the four hundred hate speech utterances by Šešelj that can be marked as historical hate narratives.

3.1.1 Vojislav Šešelj: A Short Biography

Šešelj was born in Sarajevo on October 11th, 1954. He graduated at the faculty of law at Sarajevo University. He was a brilliant student, and when he obtained his doctorate in 1979, he became the youngest PhD holder in Yugoslavia. He taught at Michigan University and

subsequently worked as an assistant professor lecturing on political science at Sarajevo University from 1981 to 1984.  

In the early eighties, Šešelj developed close bonds with Serbian nationalists. In 1984 the communist regime convicted him for counter-revolutionary activities and sentenced him to eight years of imprisonment. He was released in 1986, however, and moved to Belgrade. His provocative outbursts discredited his status within the academic community, but made him a rising star on the political scene. On the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo (28-06-1989) the chairman of the “Movement of the Četniks in the Free World”, Momčilo Đujić, appointed him a Četnik vojvoda (duke). A title he would frequently use afterwards.

When the Yugoslav Federation began to disintegrate in the late 1980s, Šešelj made his move. In 1990, he established the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) with a fellow Serbian nationalist. After some internal struggles, Šešelj formed the Serbian National Renewal Party, which he shortly after renamed the Serbian Četnik Movement (ŠČP). In the December elections of the same year he won almost a 100,000 votes. Officially, the ŠČP was banned by the Serbian Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the early months of 1991, Šešelj was appointed President of the newly founded “Serbian Radical Party” (“SRS”). In June of the same year, Šešelj was elected in the parliament and started his campaign for Serb unity and war against Serbia’s “historic enemies.” He even made threats to blow up a nuclear power station in Slovenia and retaliate on possible NATO air strikes with missile attacks on Italy, Austria, and Croatia.

Šešelj presented himself and his men as the successors of the nationalist Četnik faction of World War II. He propagated an ideal of Greater Serbia, with the so-called “Karlobag-Ogulin-Karlovac-Vitrovica” (KOKV) line as the western border, reducing Croatia to a minimum. Šešelj indoctrinated new SRS recruits with his extreme ethnic rhetoric, resulting in a number of atrocities in the towns of Vukovar and Zvornik. He surrendered himself – rather surprisingly – to the ICTY in 2003 because he felt the need to defend himself against the allegations. The proceedings against Šešelj have been slow ever since, delayed by for example a hunger strike and the already mentioned breach of protected witnesses’ identities.

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131 Šešelj Indictment, ¶2-3; BBC, *Profile*.

132 Šešelj Indictment, ¶4, 10(b); BBC, *Profile*.

133 Šešelj Indictment, ¶8(a), 9, 10(g), 20, 22 ; Van Hengel, *Het derde Servië*, 13.
3.2 Records of Šešelj’s Hate Narratives

3.2.1 The Documents: A short note on the sources

An analysis of four hundred instances of Šešelj’s hate utterances between 1991-1994 were presented to the tribunal by the Prosecution in an expert report and two addenda. The first addendum addressed some minor mistakes made in the expert report considering wrong translations, choice of words, et cetera. The second addendum included over 156 additional examples of Šešelj’s provocative outbursts.

The documents were compiled by Anthony D. Oberschall, related to the Department of Sociology of the University of North Carolina, emeritus professor and instructor in an international program in peace and conflict resolution since 2002. De original texts were translated by Biljana Belamarić, at that time a doctoral candidate in Slavic languages and sociolinguistics at the same university. They drew examples of Šešelj’s hate mongering from 44 volumes of Šešelj authored texts and videos featuring him. The presented selection was characterized by the following distribution of original sources: newspapers and magazines (31%), television (17%), radio (10%), speeches or statements (39%), and some unidentified (3%). The records are distributed by year as follows: 1990 - 12% (including two from 1989), 1991 – 29%, 1992 – 20%, 1993 – 22%, 1994 – 17%.

After submission of the reports, the judges had to rule on the admission of the expert report and on the status of Anthony Oberschall. The judges decided that Oberschall’s expertise was not propaganda, nor did he have any practical experience in Yugoslavia, and as such could not qualify as an expert on propaganda (within the rules of the Tribunal). This can be largely attributed to the sloppy submission of the required files by the Prosecution. For example, they failed to include a field of expertise for Oberschall. Nevertheless, the judges wished to hear him as a witness and allowed the Prosecution to submit the reports as regular evidence.

The Prosecution subsequently expressed the wish that the document and the two addenda would be introduced into evidence as an exhibit. Since regular criteria for the

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136 Ibidem, 3-4.

application of evidence in the ICTY applied, the judges ruled on the admission of these documents. The accused did not object to the admission of the reports and all three documents were admitted as evidence with a note from the judges that there is a distinction between legal admissibility and the weight the Chamber attributes to in the light of the entire proceedings.\textsuperscript{139} Since the case is still on trial, it is not yet decided what status the judges will attribute to Oberschall’s contribution.

3.2.2 Oberschall’s analysis
Oberschall’s expert report consists out of two elements. He elaborates on how mass media propaganda makes ordinary people accept and willing to participate in collective violence, and how Šešelj’s activities justified violence and coercion by the Serbs against non-Serbs. Oberschall’s analysis is largely based on his ideas on cognitive dissonance and a literature study on propaganda.

Oberschall’s content analysis is based on a similar approach in political science that studies deliberative discourses, common to the parliaments of (mostly) Western democracies. Content analysis is a method to consequently analyse a number of texts in a uniform manner, with the help of a ‘code’. This code of Oberschall consists out of two items: the propaganda technique and the relevant theme.\textsuperscript{140} The figure below shows the results of Oberschall’s work. The evaluation of these records led him to the conclusion that Šešelj propagated a “xenophobic Serb nationalism.”\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{139} ICTY, \textit{The Prosecutor v. Vojislav Šešelj (IT-03-67)}, “Decision Regarding the Admission of Evidence Presented During the Testimony of Anthony Oberschall” (24-01-2008) ¶2, 13, 14
\textsuperscript{141} Oberschall Expert Report, 38.
Up to this point, Oberschall’s analysis and mine might seem to be rather similar. Obviously, to some extent they are. Both of us try to grasp how it is possible that propaganda makes individuals and groups justify and commit violence. At the same our approaches are different on a number of points, I will elaborate on the five most important.

First of all, our point of departure is different. Oberschall strongly relies on his cognitive dissonance theory, while I start from Symbolic Politics Theory. Oberschall assumes a dormant crisis mind-set, ready to be woken up and amplified through propaganda. SPT offers a more nuanced and gradual approach, not taking such a mind-set for granted. It does not neglect existing historical tensions, but it focuses on how these tensions are translated into myths and symbols, and what the results of this process are.

Second, Oberschall’s analysis of how propaganda manages to evoke a crisis mind-set is limited. He discerns a number of techniques, but the discussion of the mechanisms behind these techniques is not very elaborate, whereas I have tried to clarify how hate and history
interact and reinforce each other in historical hate narratives. This explains why Oberschall’s analysis is perhaps somewhat broader, but less specific.

Third, when Oberschall focuses on Šešelj’s accusations based on the past, he only does so when it concerns past atrocities suffered by the Serbs. Šešelj, however, uses history in many ways to glorify the Serbs, justify present deeds, call for action, and denigrate other ethnic groups. In my analysis, this historical aspect is much more prominent and decisive.

Fourth, Oberschall analyses a large number of speeches, but fails to relate these sufficiently to actual happenings ‘on the ground’. Instead, he connects them to the techniques of propaganda outlined in his methodology. As a result, he lumps Šešelj’s hate mongering together in a thematic way. What I want to achieve, with the help of testimonies in front of the ICTY, is to show how these hate narratives work in practice and what their impact is. I will do so with the help of two case studies, namely Šešelj’s appearances in Vukovar and Zvornik and the instances provided by Oberschall. I intend to make clear what the consequences of historical hate narratives can be, and thus take a more analytical approach.

Fifth, Oberschall additionally coded 156 of Šešelj’s texts, but analysed them very briefly in an annex of only a few pages. I implemented these additional utterances and incorporated them in the analysis below. Let us now turn to Šešelj’s hate narratives and see how hate and history are intertwined in his narratives.

3.3 An Analysis of Šešelj’s historical hate narratives

Not all of Šešelj’s extreme speeches or writings had a direct impact, but some did have horrible consequences. First, I will discuss the alleged atrocities committed by Šešelj’s men in Vukovar and Zvornik, and analyse what Šešelj said shortly before the hostilities started. Šešelj’s men committed many more atrocities, but in the indictment those in Vukovar and Zvornik are directly linked to some of the speeches he gave, and are rather well documented. In addition, they clearly show signs of historical argumentation to justify hate. Afterwards, I will analyse some other hate mongering committed by Šešelj even if these did not directly lead to atrocities.

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142 In the indictment there is also mention of hate speech in Hrtkovci leading to forced expulsion of Croats and Hungarians. However, this particular speech has no historical elements and is therefore not analysed in this thesis.
Figure 2. Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Zvornik is on the border between Bosnia and Serbia. Vukovar is on the eastern border between Croatia and Serbia.

Figure 3. Šešelj (middle) entering Vukovar after Croat defeat.  

Figure 4. Šešelj with volunteers of his paramilitary group walk through Negoslavce, 5 km from the Croatian city of Vukovar in 1991. Left of Šešelj we can distinguish a man dressed in traditional Četnik style: a dark beard and a fur hat with the Serbian cockade.  

144 Derived from www.militaryphotos.net, 29 April 2010
3.3.1 Vukovar

Before the war for Croatia’s independence broke out in July 1991, Vukovar was a not too exciting, modestly flourishing town in the eastern part of Croatia, close to the border with Serbia. After the three-month siege by Serb forces in the autumn of 1991, the provincial town was almost completely ruined. Prior to the war, the Croat and Serb population were around the same size. The seizure of Vukovar, however, radically changed this ethnic composition.

Vukovar was of great importance to the Serb military leaders. The plan of the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) – de facto Serb forces – was to quickly capture Vukovar and move on to break through Croatian forces on the so called Osijek-Vinkovci line. This would establish a link up with other divisions and make it easier to conquer Western Slavonia and push further west along the Belgrade-Zagreb highway.

These plans failed immediately when JNA forces got stuck at Vukovar. The JNA’s initial goal was to take over the barracks in the town and at the same time prevent a possible counter-attack from behind by Croatian soldiers. Even though the Croats were outnumbered more than ten times by the JNA, the Croat military leaders in Vukovar managed to create an “urban defence maze” that withstood JNA attacks for over two months. The longer the battle lasted – and the more JNA troops were send to the Vukovar front – the more important the battle became for both the political leaders in Belgrade and Zagreb: “The JNA’s failure to seize the town despite its overwhelming force would be a dispiriting embarrassment to the federal cause, while the Croatian forces' prolonged resistance became an inspiration and rallying point for the troops and people of Croatia.”

It took the JNA three attempts to finally capture Vukovar, but the victory was a Pyrrhic one, according to the CIA, since JNA’s strategic offensive in Western-Slavonia was delayed for two months and JNA’s morale was even lower than pre-war. What is important is that during the second try of the JNA to capture Vukovar, the JNA introduced volunteer units into the war for the first time. These volunteers were recruited mostly from Serbian nationalist political parties and clubs, among them Šešelj’s SRS and SČP. The volunteers – even though

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149 Ibidem, 99-100.
often untrained – were highly motivated because of their xenophobic determination to fight the Croatians. However, this ‘quality’ made them ferocious soldiers, but also caused the complete lack of discipline and neglect of the laws of war and as a result “[t]heir use would become an ugly, ineradicable stain on the JNA’s escutcheon.”  

Most officers were not happy at all with the addition of volunteers to their ranks. Serbia had a long history of incorporating small and irregular bands for its defence. These units played an important role in Serbia’s wars of the late 19th and early 20th century. The bands became most widely known for their infamous atrocities and looting. The experiences of the early 1990s would prove to be not much different from earlier Serbian experiences.  

Šešelj’s SRS was of great importance to the JNA and the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) for finding and organizing volunteers and preparing them for battle. Many of these men would have easily been arrested only a few years before because of their strong nationalist attitudes and agitation towards the communist JNA. They even went so far as to belittlingly call their fellow JNA soldiers communists. Moreover, they had a hard time working together with each other and even with more moderate personnel. In addition, the CIA research states that “the volunteers exceeded most JNA soldiers in their drinking habits, both on and off duty, which made them even less subject to discipline.”  

Šešelj was indicted for having roused the morale of his men in such a way that it justified committing atrocities. Allegedly, Serb forces including volunteers recruited/and or incited by Šešelj, took four-hundred Croatians and non-Serbs from Vukovar and killed over two-hundred victims a week later. Their bodies were buried in a mass grave.  

Let us now take a look at what Šešelj actually said. The Prosecution accused Šešelj of making a speech to the volunteers and saying the following:

“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 Ustaša must leave Vukovar alive.”

150 CIA, Balkan Battlegrounds II, Annex 17, 191.  
152 Ibidem, Annex 17, 200-204.  
153 Šešelj Indictment, ¶20.  
This statement was confirmed by a Croatian doctor, Vesna Bosanac, working at the Vukovar Hospital. She regularly tuned into Serbian radio and heard Šešelj say that “Vukovar would be razed to the ground.”\footnote{ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Vojislav Šešelj (IT-03-67) Transcript 05-11-2008, p11422.} The indictment is further supported by a report of a press conference by Šešelj published in August 1991 in the magazine Politika in which he states that considering a number of areas, among these Slavonia where Vukovar is located, would soon be cleared of Ustaša.\footnote{Oberschall Addendum II, example 64.} In addition, not long before the Vukovar siege, Šešelj made the following speech:

“God bless you, heroes, volunteers. God bless you too. Brother Serbs, Serb Četnik heroes, you are going to the new war today. Today you are going to liberate Serb Vukovar and defend Serb Slavonia. You are going to join hundreds and thousands of our volunteers. You are leaving from all parts of today's reduced Serbia to restore the glory of Serbian arms and the Serbian army. You are going to cooperate with the Yugoslav army because it is our army. It is, first of all, our army in terms of the officer cadre and its fight for Serb territories.”\footnote{ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Vojislav Šešelj (IT-03-67) Transcript 12-12-2007, p2056-2057.}

Even though Šešelj rebuts that these statements were either provided by liars who were working for the CIA, or are not relevant, his arguments are childish, rude, and without any significant argumentation or evidence.\footnote{For an example of how Šešelj deals with testimonies, see: ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Vojislav Šešelj (IT-03-67), Transcript 08-11-2007, P1921-1922; Transcript 22-01-2008, p2592-2595.} But let us see how a Četnik volunteer responded to Šešelj’s speeches.

Goran Stoparic, a Serb volunteer, remembers how Šešelj described Četniks as patriots and how he was inspired by this view. The same witness, even though he could not exactly recall what Šešelj said, did remember how he felt after hearing Šešelj’s speech. Šešelj warned his listeners for the Ustaša and the threat of a new genocide – the witness paraphrased in his own words that the Ustaša “had risen like vampires from the grave”. The witness furthermore stated that what he derived from the speeches that this was actually the situation (the Serbs under threat of the Ustaša), and that he had to act upon it. He did emphasize, however, that it was not Šešelj’s speeches alone that convinced him that he needed to act.\footnote{Prosecutor v. Šešelj, Transcript 15-01-2008, p2314; Transcript 16-01-2008, p2440.}
When we relate these speeches to the analysis of historical hate narratives in the previous chapter, we see that Šešelj cleverly and shrewdly manages to evoke feelings of fear and hate with the help of a distorted view on the past. His consequent use of the term Ustaša for Croats is perhaps the best example. It refers to past grievances of World War II, in which the fascist Ustaša collaborated with the German forces and committed atrocities on Jews, Roma and Serbs. Šešelj is trying to evoke this history to both ‘warn’ his listeners of the dangers and remind them of past atrocities. He conveniently avoids mention the atrocities committed by Ćetniks, but I will come back to this issue later.

In the case of Vukovar, he consequently speaks about ‘liberating’ the town, implying that it was occupied by enemy forces in the first place. This plan was part of a greater project to restore Serbia’s old glory and territory. Šešelj is an extreme advocate of the ideal of a Greater Serbia, which includes large parts of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Šešelj thus mobilizes historical fears and wrongdoings to motivate people to respond to contemporary events. The references to these past instances are characterized by vitriolic language, stereotyping and negation of intimacy and as such show strong tendencies to not only show Šešelj’s individual hatred of the adversary, but also motives for other fellow-Serbs to start hating – or intensify already existing hate – towards (in this case) Croats.

### 3.3.2 Zvornik

A United Nations Commission of Experts was established to research the evidence of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and other violations of the international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia. They almost completely based their findings considering Zvornik on a report by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (BIM) in Vienna.

From the end of 1991 onwards, JNA troops started to assemble in the Zvornik region. At that time, Zvornik was a predominantly Muslim town of approximately 15,000 inhabitants. It lies on the west bank of the Drina River, and it was connected by a bridge to the even smaller Serbian Mali Zvornik on the opposite side. In the area surrounding Zvornik, military

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training exercises were held some two to three months prior to the attack. Only Serbs were invited. The Serbs in Zvornik got their weapons from the SDS, whilst the Muslim population managed to get a hold of weapons through private channels. Emotions were stirred up by the results of the independence referendum in Bosnia and its following declaration of independence (April 6th, 1992). Nevertheless, demonstrations for peaceful coexistence were organized only two days before the attack, in which members of all ethnic groups took part.\textsuperscript{162}

On April 8\textsuperscript{th}, 1992, the military attack on Zvornik commenced. The town was shelled from the Serbian bank of the Drina river. The ill-organized Muslim forces could not hold the town, and had to surrender within three days. Afterwards, hardly any military operations took place, only the fortress of Kulagrad south of Zvornik where some resistance fighters had gathered remained a focal point in the military campaign of the JNA. On April 26\textsuperscript{th}, the fortress was captured by JNA forces combined with paramilitary units.

Although the attack on Zvornik was led by the infamous Arkan’s Tigers, the Šešeljvici (translated as: Šešelj’s men) joined the battle in the second wave of attacks on the town. After its capture, numerous reports of massacres, killings, deportations and rapes occurred. Many of the paramilitary units were involved, including Šešelj’s men. A lucky coincidence saved the lives of many Muslims. The senior representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was in Zvornik during the Serb attack. He managed to evacuate hundreds of Bosniaks to Muslim-held Tuzla.\textsuperscript{163}

The Ludwig Boltzmann Institute analysed Šešelj’s unit that was involved in the capture of Zvornik. They were described as “bearded” men, a reference to the World War II Četnik beard style. Their berets showed a Serbian flag or a skull, or they wore traditional black fur hats with the Serbian cockade (see figures 3 and 4). Witnesses report the men to be drunk frequently, many of them being recruited criminals or so called “weekend fighters.” The Šešeljevici were accused of being particularly active in violence against civilians. They desecrated at least one mosque, and after the attack were responsible for lootings “wherever they went.”\textsuperscript{164}

Šešelj was indicted for a speech he gave at a rally in Mali Zvornik, where he allegedly said:

\textsuperscript{164}Cf. BIM, \textit{Ethnic Cleansing Operations}, §4.2.4 (n.p.).
“Dear Četnik brothers, especially you across the Drina river, you are the bravest ones. We are going to clean Bosnia of pagans and show them a road which will take them to the east, where they belong.”  

Šešelj tries to rebut this allegation by stating that he would never call the Muslim pagans, since they have the same religious foundation as the Serb Orthodox church. This, however, looks more like a tactic of Šešelj to divert the attention from what he actually said. One witness recalls hearing Šešelj speak at a meeting in Mali Zvornik:

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

Šešelj’s speeches here show the same elements as the ones that led to violence in Vukovar. This time, however, Šešelj is making references to the Ottoman rule of Serbia (1540-1804) and targeting the Bosnian population of Zvornik. Regardless of the fact whether Šešelj called them pagans or not, he makes very clear their place is not in Bosnia and Herzegovina (part of Serbia, in Šešelj’s opinion) but in the east – referring to Turkey as the basis for the old Ottoman Empire.

What is remarkable as well is the remark on ‘tit for tat’, i.e. a call for ‘revenge’ for the Ottoman rule of two centuries ago. Not only does this remark imply the wish for a military victory, but even more so the suppression of the defeated ethnic group. Šešelj thus draws on a political situation of almost two hundred years before to motivate his listeners to reclaim certain territory, and to take revenge on this ‘historical’ enemy for past grievances. He fits these remarks in the broader context of his quest for Greater Serbia, by mentioning that the

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166 A derogatory term for Muslims, basically meaning an uncultivated peasant.
Drina, the river that runs between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, should be the backbone, and thus the centre of Serbia.

Again, Šešelj makes an emotional appeal by referring to past grievances that date back centuries, and calls to restore Serbian territory according to his outlines for Greater Serbia. Instead of appealing to fears for the Ustaša militias, as Šešelj did in Vukovar, this time he calls for revenge and retaliation. Implicitly, he calls for ethnic cleansing by wanting to send the Muslims ‘back’ to Turkey. By calling them balijas, he generalizes the Muslim population and creates negation of intimacy. Moreover, by using these derogatory terms he emphasizes the superiority of his own ethnic group.

3.3.3 Other historical hate narratives by Šešelj

Some of the other records that Oberschall gathered qualify as historical hate narratives as well. In this section I will analyze how history was abused in order to stir up feelings of hate. I distinguished the following recurring historical issues Šešelj addresses: World War II – Ustaša atrocities and ‘colonization’; the glorification of the Serb past; traditional Serb borders; Muslim wrongdoings against the Serbs; and Artificial (non-historical) nations. An overview with a summary of the used records and examples can be found in Annex I.169

3.3.3.1 World War II – Ustaša atrocities and colonization

By far the most records deal with allegation of Ustaša atrocities and forced colonization during the World War II. Even though it is true that the Ustaša – practically a Nazi puppet government – led by Ante Pavelic committed grave crimes against Serbs, Jews, Muslims and Roma, the numbers mentioned by Šešelj are ridiculous and without any empirical foundation. A recurring number for Šešelj is for example that genocide was committed on one million Serbs.170

Tomislav Dulić, however, shows that “[a]ccording to the most extreme high and low estimates, Yugoslavia lost anywhere between 900,000 and 1.8 million lives during the World War II. The most reliable research, however, places the number at approximately one

169 I did not include records referring to the alleged Albanian migration into Kosovo during the World War II, which is mentioned in quite a number of records. Since I have focused on the war in the first half of the 1990s, these allegations do not fit in the timeframe of this thesis. It can be said, however, that the allegations of 360,000 Albanians moving into Kosovo are pure fantasy, no documents or census records provide any evidence for it. Cf. Oberschall Export Report, 26. Šešelj mentions these alleged migrations in Oberschall Expert Report, Records 24, 25, 104, 119, 167, 190, 195, 204, 209, 216, 219, 220 and Addendum II, Examples 8, 92, 152.

170 Addendum II, Examples 32, 46, 52, 61.
He furthermore calculated the number of murdered Serbs at 335,000. This is the number of Serbs that were killed in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) encompassing most of modern-day Croatia, all of Bosnia and Herzegovina and part of modern-day Serbia. Even though this is a large number, it constitutes around 17% of the total number of Serbs, against circa 75% of the Jews and Roma being murdered. In addition, not all Serbian victims were killed by the Ustaša. First of all, the Germans killed thousands of Serbs (approximately 50–100 civilians in retaliation for each dead German soldier), and even the Četniks themselves killed fellow Serbs who were considered supporters of Tito’s Partisans (communists).

This is just one example of how Šešelj distorted history to sow panic amongst his listeners. When we take a look at how Šešelj deals with the World War II past, we can distinguish a number of recurring issues. For example, he argues that the Croatian people should be punished for their crimes during the World War II. He is especially frustrated about the fact that the Croats have never repented for Ustaša crimes during World War II even though they “committed incomparably heavier crimes than the Germans.” Šešelj argues that even though the Germans killed in a systematic fashion, the Ustaša were worse because they “approached every Serb with a most zealous hatred and sought to torture him as much as possible before physically liquidating him.” They killed Serbs, just because they were Serbs. According to Šešelj, it is because the Croats were never punished for their crimes, that it is very likely the Serbs will suffer genocide again. The reparation issue even became a point in the Serb Radical Party programme.

Šešelj’s views on the sort of punishment diverge. Sometimes, he argues that the Serbs do not want to take revenge, but that a just punishment for the Croats would be loss of territories. Šešelj appears to be somewhat nuanced when he states that not all Croats are Ustaša and thus not all Croats should suffer the consequences of Ustaša crimes. He even argues, that the “the Serbian people never took revenge like this and the Serb people shall not take revenge in such a manner as to do the Croats the same as the Croats did to them.” Rather, the Serbs adhered to one basic value, “no matter how killed, harassed and humiliated [Serbia]...
was throughout history,” namely “that the Serbs never bloodied their hands with the blood of innocent women, children and the old.”

At many other instances, however, Šešelj is all but ‘nuanced’ and calls for revenge in the ‘classical’ way: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Sometimes this message is conveyed rather subtle: “If one state conducts certain measures towards you, you respond with the same measures.” But most of the time Šešelj does not hide his intentions in clouded messages:

“That poisonous snake, that’s the Croats. In the World War I they committed horrific deeds over the Serbs, in the World War II, they were almost forgotten, almost forgiven. This is the third time that poisonous snake has headed for us, and for the third time bit us on the heart. Now we need to smash its head so it never bites anyone again. […] today the Serbian hearts have stiffened, the Serbian eyes are tearing up, but those same eyes and those same hearts will shine with a heroic glow, because we, Serbs, have never throughout history, lived so that someone would degrade us, step on us, squash us, so that someone would abuse our women, children, elderly, so that someone would forbid us our Serbian name, serbian flag, the Serbian holy orthodox faith. The Serbian revenge will come very soon, the Serbian revenge is already starting.”

In many other records, Šešelj emphasized that the war crimes are not forgiven, and will never be. He refers mostly to the Jasenovac concentration camp, but also to ‘the Serbian slaughterhouse, the torn down houses, the burnt churches, the slaughtered Serbian children’ that will never be forgotten. Šešelj believes that the Serbs are not allowed to forget their history, because otherwise they will have to face it again. The Serbs cannot forget, but instead “all Serbian lands are turned towards the skies and crave revenge.”

Sometimes, Šešelj uses his message as a warning to the Croats. If they would attempt another genocide, the Serbs “shall revenge every Serbian life, and we [the Serbs] shall present our bill for the crimes of the recent past as well. Nothing shall remain unpunished.” Both current and victims of World War II need to be avenged, according to Šešelj. In many of the records the following line is included in capitals: “THE SERBIAN PEOPLE DOES NOT

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175 Obershall Export Report, Record 203.
176 Ibidem, Record 87.
177 Oberschall Expert Report, Record 120; Also see: Addendum II, Example 19.
178 Oberschall Expert Report, Record 122;
WANT TO FORGET AND FORGIVE ANYMORE.” In addition, he reminds his followers that the survivors of the genocide “have no right to forgive in the name of the slaughtered.” Šešelj very explicitly calls for action to ‘settle old scores’ – even up into Zagreb.179

What is really important in Šešelj’s hate narratives is what can be called the ‘blame game’: “Who started ethnic cleansing first? The Croats!” This justifies retaliation, or preemptive action. Especially, according to Šešelj, since the Croat actions were brutal and animalistic. At this point, Šešelj does not seem to make a distinction between Croats and Ustaša anymore. The victory of Tuđman in the Croatian elections is enough evidence for Šešelj that “the vast majority of the Croatian people are with the Ustaša movement”, comparable to their mass support to Pavelic’s regime: “We have no illusions regarding the Croatian national nature, we have no illusions regarding their ultimate goals” (being another genocide on the Serbs).180

An important aspect of these speeches that already can be seen in the last mentioned example of ‘the goals of the Croats’ is not only to call for revenge for past deeds, but also to warn the Serbs for the Croats for possible future deeds. Especially Tuđman is seen as direct threat, because he restored old Ustaša symbols and then, according to Šešelj, started beating up Serbs. The Serbs had to take action, otherwise they would be slaughtered again, just like in 1941 – in some instances Šešelj even argues that genocide against the Serbs has already started again, or in his words “against whom again a bloody Croatian hanging rope has been woven.” An especially strong metaphor Šešelj uses is that the new Croatian government led by Tuđman has brought their criminal knife and put it under Serbian throats again – something for which the Serbs need to protected.181 The knife represents the (partly true) stories of Ustaša slitting the throats of their adversaries with a knife during the World War II.

Besides this physical violence, Šešelj pays a lot of attention to Croat relocation of people by Pavelic during WWII – a decision made by both the German and NDH highest authorities to ensure a “more loyal population.”182 According to Šešelj, these relocated Croats not only were allowed to move into the best houses, but also were the worst Ustaša imaginable. They were intended to serve as “the pre-guards of the independent state of Croatia.”183 In an even more venomous statement, Šešelj says:

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179 Oberschall Expert Report, Records 183, 184, 185; Addendum II, Examples 14, 21, 37, 38, 42, 58.
180 Oberschall Export Report, Record 27; Addendum II, Examples 9, 46.
181 Oberschall Expert Report, Records 22, 120, 130, 183, 240; Addendum II, Examples 14, 39.
182 Dulić, Mass Killing, 263.
183 Oberschall Expert Report, Records 15, 68; Addendum II, Examples 90, 146.
“Concealed in rats’ holes and wolves’ lairs for fifty years the Croats sharpened their teeth and claws, nurtured poisonous snakes and waited for an opportunity to continue their crimes. With the appearance of Josip BROZ’s general, the Vatican’s choice and the new Ustaša governor Franjo Tuđman, they thought that the heavens had again given them a sign, they removed their carnival masks and attacked the remaining Orthodox population.[..] THE CROATS HAVE AGAIN GOUGED OUT OUR EYE.”

Not only were the Croats located in ‘Serbian’ lands to be pioneers of the Croatian state to be, they waited for fifty years to continue their crimes. The ‘gouged out eye’ refers to a myth told by Serbian people that the Ustaša soldiers would remove the eyes from the bodies of their victims. However, it is more likely that either the force applied by bullets in back of the head, or physiological processes after death, made the eyes pop out their sockets rather ‘naturally’. Nevertheless, Šešelj makes very clear that he does not believe that the Serbian people could ever decide to live together with the Croats after the World War II atrocities.

Finally, a number of Muslims were part of the Croatian Ustaša movement in the World War II. Šešelj warned them not to pick sides again. Even thought the Serbs, according to Šešelj, are and will remain very tolerant, the time of forgiving and forgetting is long gone. If the Muslims decide to join Croat forces, then “the Serbian revenge will be horrific, and then we’ll also make calculations for crimes from World War I and II.” The wisest thing to do for them is thus stay aside in the Serb-Croat conflict.

The foregoing shows that almost all elements found in historical hate narratives are used by Šešelj. Through vitriolic language Šešelj targets the object that is not only evil, but should be regarded as a threat. He thus legitimizes pre-emptive aggression by pointing out past grieving that have never been settled, and calls his followers to learn lessons from this. By stating that the adversaries have not changed over time, but rather have prepared for conflict all along, and that they are a natural enemy, he makes it an intergenerational and sustained conflict. By stereotyping the enemies, and portraying them as dangerous and

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184 Addendum II, Example 15. Original capitals. Also see Example 61: “It is a known fact that Ustaša leader Ante PAVELIC gave as a gift to his German colleague a bowl full of eyes gouged out of Serbs.”
185 This was pointed out to me by Tomislav Dulić in the spring of 2009.
187 Oberschall Expert Report, Records 137, 239, 244; Addendum II, Example 42.
aggressive animals (snakes, wolves) he dehumanizes the adversaries, making sure the Serbs are cautious towards their neighbours.

Šešelj recalls past atrocities, focusing on physical violence (throat slitting, gouged eyes) and thus evoking repulsion and disgust, but also legitimizing pre-emptive action and/or retaliation. The sum of all the allegations clearly defines who is to be hated, and why. He points out prove past atrocities, but exaggerates or distorts historical evidence, thus instead of a decent analysis of historical events creating an ambiguous analysis which always is in favour of the Serbs. They are always either victims or heroes, and the war crimes of the Četniks during World War II are portrayed as being acts of liberation and a struggle for democracy. Throughout many of the instances, Šešelj portrays the present as a possible repetition of the past, and warns for the future, thus – once again – legitimizing both pre-emptive and responsive violence. In other words, Šešelj ‘perfectly’ manages to apply historical hate narratives.

3.3.3.2 Glorification of the Serb past/atrocities

Although at first sight it might seem somewhat unlikely to relate the glorification of a people’s past to hate, I will show that Šešelj manages to relate the glorious past of the Serbs to hatred of other nations. Šešelj often argues that the Serbs had to suffer throughout the centuries, but that they always did so heroically. Neither the Ottomans, nor the Austro-Hungarians, nor the Germans managed to humiliate the Serbs. Moreover, Šešelj states, the Serbs have known a tradition of chivalry, only fighting their battles on the battlefield and never committing atrocities or spilling the blood of innocent civilians, women, children and elderly people. This claim is not supported by historical facts, such as the atrocities committed by Četniks during the World War II.

Šešelj claims that he knows very well what the Četniks did during this war: “The Četniks were fighters for freedom and democracy, fighters for the king and fatherland. And they carried the heroism and glory of Četniks remembers from the times of the fight against the Turks, the Balkan wars, and World War I.” He argues that the atrocities were either committed by individuals, or that the communists blamed the Četniks for deeds they committed themselves. As Dulić shows in his article, the atrocities committed by Četniks were definitely not individual exceptions, but in some cases even well organized deeds of

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188 Oberschall Expert Report, Records 121, 184; Addendum II, Examples 13, 38.
Šešelj calls for historical science to establish the facts, but it can be argued that he would most likely not recognize the outcomes of such research – unless if it was performed by fellow Serb nationalist scholars.

On multiple occasions, Šešelj tries to restore old Četnik glory, referring to them as freedom fighters with great heroic traditions that again resemble their glorious forebears. At many instances, Šešelj concludes his speeches by either proclaiming or singing a Četnik song that is about the resurrection of a free Serbia, loyal to God and king (referring to the first kingdom of Yugoslavia).\(^{192}\)

Šešelj furthermore proclaims the end of the Yugoslav dream. Enough blood has been spilt on the “altar of Yugoslavia” and finally a special chance has come to “get rid of Yugoslavia.” The Četniks “are ready for bloodshed, if necessary, but exclusively for Serbian countries, for Serbian territory, for Serbian people.”\(^{193}\) Regardless of the ‘Croatian genocide’, forced conversion to Catholicism and half a century of ‘communist dictatorship’, the Serbs were not destroyed. Instead, new and young generations of Četniks have grown up, who “refuse[d] to put up with the chains that their fathers wore for decades. The sun of freedom and democracy arises again over Serbia and Serbs need to show a maximal level of national concord and unity.”\(^{194}\)

The chains of the communist dictatorship made the Serbs live in slavery, instead of resemble their heroic forebears. Šešelj compares Tito’s reign with the Ottoman rule. The Serbs almost lost everything they had. The Serbs endured this slavery, instead of resembling the heroes known from epic poems, who fought wars against the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Wars and both World Wars. However, after fifty years of slavery, the Četnik movement was revived, so this heroic past could be restored in its full glory.\(^{195}\)

The foregoing narratives are based on two pillars: a tribute to heroes and victims from the past, and blaming others for repressing the Serbs and withholding them from achieving their goals and full potential. Šešelj in this way defines who are to be hated (in this case: Croats and communists) and why. Šešelj’s basic line of reasoning is that the Serbs have tried to make the Yugoslav dream come true, but it is because others prevented this from


\(^{192}\) *Oberschall Expert Report*, Record 109; *Addendum II*, Examples 6, 20.

\(^{193}\) *Oberschall Expert Report*, Record 8.

\(^{194}\) *Ibidem*, Records 142, 185, 196; *Addendum II*, Example 21.

\(^{195}\) *Oberschall Expert Report*, Record 196; *Addendum II*, Examples 5, 6.
happening, that the Serbs can no longer support Yugoslavia, but instead have to fight for an independent Serbia.

By referring to past glory and heroism by the Četniks, Šešelj wants to raise the self-esteem of the group. Serbs have been ‘in chains’ before and now is the time to follow the example of their heroic forebears for a free and democratic Serbia. These ancestors are used to provide examples for right behaviour, and stimulate ‘copy cats’. Innocent blood that was spilt during these ‘heroic deeds’ are cleverly masqueraded by Šešelj, by blaming them on individuals or other warring factions. Instead, Šešelj claims that the chivalrous Serbs must once again fight for their own right of existence, claiming both the role of the underdog and the victim – both of which are not much supported by the historical evidence.

3.3.3.3 Traditional Serb borders

Šešelj is a skilful and ingenious manipulator when it comes to defining the borders of Greater Serbia, and especially in drawing on historical references to do so. Greater Serbia is not exclusively a project of Šešelj, but has its precedents in many movements before him and can also be found in the discourse of many other nationalists (e.g. Greater Croatia, Greater Albania, but also in non-Balkan nationalist ideals such as Greater Netherlands).

Šešelj wanted the western border of Serbia to be the Karlobag-Ogulin-Karlovac-Vitrovica (K-O-V-K)-line, thus severely reducing Croatian territories. On the southern and eastern borders he included Montenegro, Vojvodina, Kosovo and parts of Macedonia. Bosnia and Herzegovina had no right of existence at all in Greater Serbia. Many of Šešelj’s claims are ‘historical’, but as we will see, he often distorts the actual historical facts as to make it seem historical. At the same time, he manages to create feelings of distrust and even hatred towards those who live in territories that ‘belong’ to the Serbs.

One of the shrewdest attempts of Šešelj to define the borders of Serbia in a historical way is by stating that anything Serbian, being territories, torn down churches or torched villages, and even concentration camps and mass grave sites should be included in Serbian territory. In this way, he expands the borders of Serbia to wherever Serbian victims fell, and manages to ‘blame’ the Croats for it: “We always start from the fact that the Croatian people exactly marked the borders of the Serbian state. It marked it with Serbian mass graves.”

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196 Šešelj Indictment, ¶9.
197 Oberschall Expert Report, Record 112.
There are two reasons for Šešelj to claim these territories for the Serbs. He again refers to the Croats that moved into Serbia under the rule of Ante Pavelic. Šešelj warns the Croats: if they want a state along those [being Pavelic’ intended] borders, they have to pay for it with “great blood.”198 He adds that the Croats were given territories and were never Croatian. The most used example is the city of Dubrovnik, which Šešelj claims to have been Serbian all along.199 However, when we take a look at the history of Dubrovnik and its composition, Šešelj’s claims turn out to be misplaced. Besides the long and diverse history of Dubrovnik, the 1991 Yugoslav census shows that the population of Dubrovnik consisted of 82.4% Croat against 6.7% Serbs. Earlier censuses only distinguished inhabitants on the basis of their faith, which resulted in the conclusion that Dubrovnik was an overwhelmingly Catholic town. However, most historians agree that we cannot say anything about the ethnic composition of Dubrovnik in those days because the ethnic composition of Catholics at that time is unknown.200 Whatever Šešelj’s claims are, they are not based on any substantial empirical evidence.

Besides ‘original’ Serb territories, Šešelj also sees reason to expand the Serbian borders in order to protect the Serbs living ‘abroad’ or close to the borders. These Serbs can not be left alone because of the “bitter historical experiences from World War I.”201 One of the important borders is the Drina river – separating Bosnia and Herzegovina from Serbia. Šešelj reassured the Bosnian Serbs many times that he “will not betray them or sell them, as the Serbian communists did since the war on!”202 In the end, it is not only where Serbs fell during wars or because of atrocities, nor is it only to protect Serbs that live as minorities in foreign territories, but to assure that “any territory where the Serbian people have been living since time immemorial” belongs to Serbia again.203

At the same time, Šešelj does not only see Croats as a threat to his plans for Greater Serbia. According to him, it is the West’s “goal is to bring Serbia to those borders which Adolph [sic] Hitler determined in 1941.” The underlying reason for the West’s motives, according to Šešelj, is that they – with the Germans leading the way - “simply [want to] destroy the Serbs as a people.” At some point, Šešelj even argues that the Serbs are not

199 Oberschall Expert Report, Record 110 ; Addendum II, Examples 13, 60.
201 Ibidem, Record 19.
202 Ibidem , Record 114.
203 Addendum II, Example 151.
fighting a war against the Croats, but against their ‘old enemy’, the Germans, for the third time in the 20th century.\textsuperscript{204}

The west might provide a threat to the Serbs, Šešelj nevertheless repeats his claims for a Greater Serbia are confirmed by the 1915 Treaty of London. Allegedly, in this treaty the western borders of Serbia were determined, providing a legal basis for Šešelj’s claims – according to himself, that is.\textsuperscript{205} By now, it should not come as a surprise that Šešelj is not telling the whole truth. Ivo Lederer elaborates that the Treaty of London was a secret treaty between Britain, France, Russia and Italy. It was intended to convince Italy to join the allied side, by promising it huge territorial gains. Some parts of Albania, and some ports and towns on the Adriatic coast were promised to Serbia and Montenegro in a minor part of the document, namely a paragraph attached to one of the articles. However, it was at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-120 and in subsequent treaties that the borders of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats (!) and Slovenes were established. This treaty obviously superseded any provisions of the London Treaty.\textsuperscript{206}

Although the hate in the foregoing claims might seem less explicit, there are still numerous elements of historical hate narratives that can be deduced or read between the lines, and some are actually obvious. There is strong tendency in the above territorial claims to refer to past grievances and wrongdoings, justifying violence in order to reclaim ‘Serbian’ territories. However, perhaps the strongest element in the above is the victimizing of the Serbs. Even though they have historical claims to certain territories, other (groups of) countries prevent the Serbs from gaining what is rightfully theirs. Šešelj thus reconfirms the danger of the out-group, arouses anger against these nations, and provides a historical framework for military operations. The Serbs have always had rights to these lands, but due to unforeseen circumstances, other nations took them. Now it is time to get them back, both because the Serbs are entitled to posses the territory, and to prevent further slaughter or other mistreatment of the own nation. Again, Šešelj’s claims are historical hate narratives.

\subsection*{3.3.3.4 The historical foundation of nations/ artificial nations}
Šešelj pays a lot of attention to the historicity of nations. The underlying argument seems to be that “[w]hen a historical and non-historical people clash, the non-historical people fall.” Even more so, Šešelj repeatedly argues that because those nations never had a state or never

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{204} \textit{Oberschall Expert Report}, Records 83, 176.
\item \textsuperscript{205} \textit{Ibidem}, Records 207, 208.
\item \textsuperscript{206} Cf. \textit{Ibidem}, p26.
\end{footnotes}
waged war, they will not be able to pose a threat to the Serbs. Šešelj firmly believes that the only historical people on Yugoslav territory are the Serbs. It are mostly the Croats, the Muslims and the Macedonian’s that are targeted by Šešelj, but also the Slovenes, the Montenegrins and the Albanians are victim of Šešelj’s speeches.

The Croats, according to Šešelj, might be a distinct people, they are certainly not a historical people. They have failed to create a state and maintain it. Šešelj recognizes that there was a Croatian state 900 years ago, but since they lost it, they have failed as nation. According to Šešelj, the Croats had not been at war since; overlooking two Balkan Wars and both World Wars in which atrocities were committed he – indeed - blames the Croats for. The only way for Croats to wage war, according to Šešelj, is when they would join an occupational army. Even more so, it is only because of the Germans that the Croatian state came into being in the 1990s, the Croats themselves did not put in an effort to realize their state. In another example, however, Šešelj argues it is because the Slovenes and Croats could no longer dominate the Yugoslav economy, that they were trying to create their own states (in other words, putting in effort). Regardless of these contradictions, Šešelj concludes, the Croats always felt inferior compared to the Serbs. But not only are the Croats not a historical nation, neither are they entitled to have an own state.

In addition, Šešelj states that Croatia did not exist, but that after the World War I there only was Yugoslavia. Although this might have been the colloquial name at the time, from 1918 until 1929 the official name was the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It was not until the royal dictator king Alexander I decided that the inhabitants should commit to a wider loyalty that the state was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia – thus also suppressing Serb national identity!

Another argument that Šešelj makes against the historicity of the Croats, is that one-third of the Croats were actually Serbs, converted to Catholicism. Even though during the World War II the Ustaša regime spared the lives of Serbs who converted to Catholicism, this policy was abandoned in 1942. At that point, some 200.000 Serbs were converted. As I wrote earlier, the 335.000 Serbs murdered during World War II constituted around 17% of the total Serbian population, which means that 200.000 Serbs converted to Catholicism.

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207 Oberschall Expert Report, Record 1, 208, 236; Addendum II, Example 44, 125.
208 Oberschall Expert Report, Records 110, 197,205, 222; Addendum II, Examples 18, 32, 44, 60, 125.
210 Addendum II, Examples 32, 60, 125.
211 Dulic, Mass Killing, 268.
constitutes a little fewer than 10% of the Serbs at that point – regardless of the fact if all Serbs remained faithful to Catholicism after the war. At the same time, as will see a bit further on, Šešelj blames the Muslims for not being a nation, but a religious community. If we continue this reasoning, it is hard to make an ethnic distinction on the basis of religious conviction alone. I.e., it is not Catholicism that makes Croats Croats, or converted Serbs Croats.

Šešelj argues that the Muslims, who became a constituent nation of Yugoslavia in the 1960s, are not a people, but a religious community – or at best: an invented nation. Not only are they not a people, they are actually former Serbs who became Turks over the centuries. In other words, the Serbs who during the Ottoman rule were ‘politically correct’ are the forebears of modern day Muslims.212 Again Šešelj uses concepts of religious communities and peoples however it suits him. Muslims and Turks are one and the same for him, and again, the Muslims are actually Serbs, they just have a different religion. However, as the more reliable historian Noel Malcolm shows, the question whether the Slavic Muslims were ‘really Croat’ – the Croats also claimed that the Bosniaks were actually Croat - or ‘really Serb’ before their conversion to Islam can best be answered by ‘none of the above’. If anything, they were Slavs who lived in Bosnia.213

Šešelj blames Tito for inventing the Muslim nation in his laboratories. According to Šešelj, the communists invented three nations from the Serbs (Macedonian, Muslim, and Montenegro) in order to prevent a Serb majority in the newly formed communist Yugoslav republic. Since they were invented by Tito, Šešelj predicted that would not exist after Tito either.214

Besides the Muslims, Šešelj repeatedly focuses on Macedonia, also a nation ‘invented’ by the communists. In fact, he states, all of Macedonia was always Serbian territory.215 Šešelj suggests to split up Macedonia between Serbia, Albania and Bulgaria, mostly because he does not want to have 700 000 Albanians and the same amount of Bulgarians living on Serbian territory. However, this immediately shows that Serbs are all but a majority in Macedonia (as Šešelj states elsewhere), because 1.400.000 Albanians and Bulgarians represent 70% of the 2.000.000 inhabitants. In addition, the 1991 census shows that 66.5% of the inhabitants regarded themselves as Macedonians, whilst only 2.2% classified themselves as Serbs.216

212 Oberschall Export Report, Record 188, 197; Addendum II, Example 125.
215 Oberschall Expert Report, Records 116, 126, 169, 217, 218, 243; Addendum II, Examples 6, 44.
Moreover, historians show that the claims of the artificial status of Macedonia are arbitrary. Even though Macedonia has known a rather unstable history as a geographical entity and its ethnic roots are disputed, the Serbs are the last who can claim Macedonia. Throughout history, Serbs were only a marginal part of the population. The Slavs in Macedonia mostly proclaimed themselves Bulgarian, but nevertheless Serb nationalists tried to prove otherwise from the nineteenth century onwards. The claims of the Serbs were actually the weakest. Linguistic and cultural links were limited, and it was an almost impossible task to prove that the Macedonians were actually Serbs. Therefore, the Serb nationalist tried not to prove that the Macedonians were Serb, but rather they wanted to show that at the least they were not Bulgarian. Eventually, the origins of the modern Macedonian nation can be traced back to the 1878 Conference of Berlin, which made Bulgaria a de facto independent state, while Macedonia remained a part of the Ottoman empire, resulting in two diverging developments in cultural, political and economic directions. Slowly, Macedonia developed an own political and cultural elite, thus laying the foundations of what would later become FYROM.  

What effects Šešelj’s views on the historicity of nations can have in practice, can be illustrated by the following. In a number of records, Šešelj recapitulates an event in Prohor PčinJSki, Northern Macedonia. Šešelj proudly recalls the events of that day:

“What Macedonia? There is no Macedonia. We were on the north of South Serbia yesterday, in Prohor PčinJSki […] A 46-person delegation of the Serbian Četnik Movement was at the famous Serbian monastery of Prohor PčinJSki yesterday. There we tore down what represented a great heresy, we tore down the pagan plaques that were attached to the walls of the temple and that were witness to an alleged formation of the parliament of that artificial Macedonian state and an artificial Macedonian nation. […] There isn’t such a nation anywhere in the world.”

Šešelj refers to his Četniks tearing down the plaques commemorating a peak even in the history of Macedonian nationalism. The monastery was the décor of a meeting of the Anti-Facist Assembly of the People’s Liberation of Macedonia on August 2nd, 1944. This assembly

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218 Oberschall Export Report, Record 110. Also referred to in Oberschall Export Report, Record 117; Addendum II, Example 3.
can be seen as the birth of the Macedonian Republic in the later Republic of Yugoslavia. Macedonian was decided to be its standard language. Šešelj thus denied this event by removing the commemorative plaques. The foregoing is another example, as Oberschall argues, “of the intimate link between words and violent actions in the falsification of history.”

Although Šešelj less often refers to the Slovenes, the Albanians (referred to with the pejorative Shiptars) and the Montenegrins, he repeatedly calls them artificial. They were no nations or states throughout history, and thus unable to wage a war against the Serbs. The Montenegrins and Slovenes were ‘invented’ by Tito, and since Tito reigned no more, it was time to revoke these nationalities.

A remarkable argument by Šešelj, is that since artificial nations cannot wage war, it can only be the Serbs who fight each other. He thus reduces the threat posed by others, and calls for a unified front amongst the Serbs. By glorying the Serbs as the only true historical nation, Šešelj tries to justify his claims for a greater Serbia. He seems to propagate that many other peoples were either originally Serbs (Croats, Muslims) or invented nations from the Serbs (Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins). In this sense, he portrays the Serbs as a victim of communist demarcations.

What this denial of other nations reasons for existence can lead to, is illustrated by the torn down plaques in Prohor Pčinjski. By legitimatizing the own origin and territory, Šešelj tries to provide a sense of belonging and coherence. At the same time, the emphasizes the superiority of the Serbs and legitimizes violence to reclaim what he considers to be Serbian. Again, Šešelj distorts history to provide his claims with arguments, in order to unify the Serbs and proclaim what was ‘rightfully theirs throughout history’.

3.3.3.5 Summary

The case of Vojislav Šešelj was intended to illustrate how historical hate narratives work in practice. The cases of Vukovar and Zvornik showed how Šešelj applied a number of mechanisms analyzed in chapter two in his speeches. He managed to generate hate through distorted historical claims. In both towns, this lead to horrible atrocities after the sieges ended. Numerous violations of international law were recorded, and Šešelj’s Četniks played an

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220 Oberschall Expert Report, Records 1, 117, 197, 208, 217, 218, 223; Addendum II, Example 6, 44.
important role in these events. These two examples thus illustrate the workings of historical hate narratives ‘on the ground’.

At the same time, there are numerous records of Šešelj’s public appearances – speeches, articles or interviews – in which he makes similar claims. These perhaps did not directly result in violence, but I have tried to show how Šešelj tries to manipulate his listeners to believe that Serbs are victims and that they need to prepare for action. The denial of the rights of other nations led to a desecration of national monument of the Macedonians. The denigration of these ethnicities also led to desecrated monuments and religious buildings. Šešelj has proven to be a master in crafting historical hate narratives that have a devastating impact.
Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to analyse the impact of historical hate narratives in ethnic conflicts. Part of this undertaking was making a plea for Symbolic Politics Theory as a suitable approach to study ethnic conflicts in general and historical hate narratives in particular. The focus was based on the crucial and unique interaction between history and hate. I developed a typology and used it as a tool to understand what Vojislav Šešelj brought about in Vukovar, Zvornik, and other places.

At the beginning of this research, I denounced a number of outdated or inadequate theories on ethnic violence, such as primordialism. The focus, however, was on the shortcomings of Rational Choice Theory, which basically claims that individuals are rational beings seeking security or material benefits. This rationality leads them to choose conflict over peace, because of three main causes: information failure, problems of credible commitment and the security dilemma.

As I have shown, there are a number of problems with RCT. The most important is that it cannot explain why in some instances ethnic conflicts do not happen. It furthermore has a weak empirical basis, mostly due to its universalistic claims and assumptions. It is seldom rational to choose conflict over negotiations when it comes to material interests. A different approach is thus justified.

Symbolic Politics Theory embodies this alternative. Its main premise is that people respond to symbols that evoke certain emotions. These symbols are characterized by ambiguity. Central to SPT is the myth-symbol complex that defines what it means to be part of a nation. Criticism on this approach provides useful suggestions, but does not break down the fundamental assumptions and arguments of the theory. Within SPT there are six causal variables for explaining ethnic war: ethnic myths justifying hostility, fears of group extinction, opportunity to mobilize, extreme mass hostility, chauvinist political mobilization; and the predation-driven interethnic security dilemma.

The ethnic myths justifying violence are of particular importance, because they also cause fears, hostility and chauvinism. Many of these myths have a strong historical character. The interaction between history and hate in these narratives is one of the key features in understanding how these narratives generate ethnic conflicts arise or intensify. Therefore, the
three elements of historical hate narratives – narratives, hate and history – were analysed separately.

Narratives propose a reading of a situation and help individuals understand the world around them. They ease group submersion and help individuals adjust their norms to group values. Narratives might not be the single cause of ethnic conflicts, they nevertheless make them more intense. This is also because many of these narratives evoke hate. I came to the following definition of this emotion: Hate is an (i) emotion of intense hostility, that is always (ii) targeted at an object that causes (real or perceived) obstructions to the subject. It is an (iii) enduring, but not necessarily chronic, emotion, that is (iv) reinforced by both social pressures and other emotions. The (v) choice of target is not necessarily rational, but it can be. The (vi) perceptions of the targeted object are prejudiced and (vii) engendered by indoctrination and frustration. Hate has a (viii) historical dimension, which increases the need for historically framed violence to settle old scores.

In addition, I analyzed the nature of hate with the help of Sternberg and Sternberg’s triangular hate scale (negation of intimacy, passion, decision/commitment) that moves followers to action. Exemplary for this hate scale is Adolf Hitler. The two psychologists also argued that hate arises from stories, because stories are associated with an anticipated set of events, make certain ideas plausible and in the long run can justify pre-emptive action.

With help of two legal cases I found a number of characteristic features of hate speech, of which the most important are the vitriolic language, and the fact hate these narratives can be disguised as a political analysis. These cases furthermore showed how to distinguish between an analysis that represents an actual political or social situation, and one that has some foundation in reality but is intended to evoke hate.

Finally, I elaborated on the historical component of hate narratives. It is important to realize that in historical hate narratives the author seldom seeks the truth. Instead stories are moulded so they fit partisan interests. The truth often proves to be too complex or not in line with the objectives of political and ethnic entrepreneurs.

With the help of the study of these three dimensions I developed a typology of historical hate narratives which I subsequently used to study the historical hate narratives of Vojislav Šešelj. This resulted in the conclusion that his historical hate narratives helped to motivate people to commit atrocities in both Zvornik and Vukovar, and to tear down plaques of a Macedonian national monument in Prohor Pčinsjki. In addition, the analysis of the records without a direct impact showed how Šešelj manipulates history to portray the Serbs as
heroes and victims, and blaming other ‘artificial’ nations for the Serb misery. He created an incentive for people to take action based on these narratives.

This implicitly answers the main question of my thesis. The impact of historical hate narratives in ethnic conflicts can be devastating. In Zvornik and Vukovar it led to hundreds of death civilians and numerous other breaches of international laws and human rights conventions. National and religious monuments and buildings were desecrated. In many other instances it is hard to say whether the narratives had a direct impact on events, but from some of the witness testimonies we can distil that Šešelj’s followers – including regular civilians – were intrigued by his stories and took many aspects of it for granted, thus providing ground for fear, hate and resentment to take root.

At the same time we have to realize that it is not historical hate narratives alone that cause ethnic violence. I have not tried to argue this at any point in this thesis. What I did want to argue is that they play a crucial, and sometimes decisive, role. This also opens up perspectives for further research. Šešelj is not the only radical nationalist, nor is the Yugoslav conflict the only where historical hate narratives were used. However, this thesis might provide the foundations for further research on the use of historical hate narratives in ethnic conflicts. The devastating effects of the manipulation of history justify such research, both to understand what happened and how to prevent such atrocities from happening in the future.
Annex: Records and Examples of Šešelj’s Historical Hate Narratives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record [R] / Example [E]</th>
<th>Keywords / Short description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[R] 12</td>
<td>Punish Croats; regain territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 22</td>
<td>Tudman; Ustaša symbols; expected slaughter of Serbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 24</td>
<td>Croatian nature; one million Serbs killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 27</td>
<td>Croats started ethnic cleansing; retaliation is justified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 68</td>
<td>Pavelic; population relocation Srem</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 87</td>
<td>Retribution; fascism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 88</td>
<td>Lack of apologies from Croats</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 98</td>
<td>No peaceful cohabitation possible; Jasenovac concentration camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 105</td>
<td>Unpunished crimes; repeated in 1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 120</td>
<td>Croats are a poisonous snake; Serb revenge; Serb glorification</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 122</td>
<td>Unforgiven Croats; revenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 130</td>
<td>Genocide will be repeated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 132</td>
<td>Serbs were killed just because they were Serbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 137</td>
<td>Muslims should not pick Croatian side (again)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] 183</td>
<td>Genocide will be repeated; Tudman; Ustaša knife; revenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 184</td>
<td>Serb suffering; revenge</td>
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<td>[R] 185</td>
<td>No forgiveness/forgetting; failure to destroy Serbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 192</td>
<td>Pavelic; population relocation Srem</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 203</td>
<td>Not all Croats Ustaša; moral superiority of the Serbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 239</td>
<td>Muslims should not pick Croatian side (again)</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 240</td>
<td>Ustaša knife</td>
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<tr>
<td>[R] 244</td>
<td>Muslims should not pick Croatian side (again)</td>
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<td>[E] 9</td>
<td>Tudman; Croat goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>[E] 14</td>
<td>Repeated genocide</td>
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<td>[E] 15</td>
<td>After 50 years Croats continue their crimes; Vatican</td>
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221 Records are derived from *Oberschal Expert Report*, Examples are derived from *Addendum II*. 
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Poisonous snake</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>No forgiveness/forgetting</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Million Serbs murdered; 1/3 of the Croats are actually Serbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Revenge</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Past wrongdoings to Serbs will not remain unavenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Serbs cannot wait for Ustaša knives like in 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Muslims should not join Croats; revenge threats towards Croats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Croats killed one million Serbs and are likely to kill one million more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Repent; Jasenovac monument; one million killed Serbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Revenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>One million killed Serbs; gouged eyes</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>Pavelic; population relocation Srem</td>
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<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Croatian crimes WWII are worse than German</td>
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<td>127</td>
<td>Genocide ; war reparations ; Germany ; Croatia</td>
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<td>146</td>
<td>Pavelic; population relocation Srem</td>
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</table>

### Glorification of the Serb past;

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<td>8</td>
<td>Only spill blood for Serbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Četnik glory shines again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>No humiliation by Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungary or fascist Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>Battle for survival</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td>Protect Serbian territories whatever the cost; liberation of the Turks</td>
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<td>184</td>
<td>Serb suffering; revenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>Freed from communist chains; get rid of Yugoslavia</td>
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<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td>Četniks fought for freedom and democracy; battle against the Turks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Serbians from epic poems as example</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Četniks unfolded flags of glory;</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Serbians are chivalrous people, unlike the Croats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Četniks should follow example of their forebears</td>
</tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Serbians of today worthy of their ancestors</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>No humiliation by Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungary or fascist Germany</td>
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### Traditional Serb Borders

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<td>19</td>
<td>Bitter experience World War I</td>
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<td>[R] 18</td>
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<td>Intergenerational conflict; Serb territories</td>
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<td>[R] 114</td>
<td>Drina as border; Communist betrayal</td>
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<td>[R] 176</td>
<td>Germans are the old enemy of the Serbs</td>
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<td>[R] 207</td>
<td>1915 London Treaty</td>
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<td>[R] 208</td>
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<tr>
<td>[E] 13</td>
<td>Dubrovnik not a Croatian town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Artificial (non-historical) nations**

| [R] 1 | Only historical people can wage war |
| [R] 29 | Croatia did not exist, only Yugoslavia |
| [R] 110 | Pagan plaque torn down; numerous artificial nations |
| [R] 116 | Macedonia belongs to Serbia |
| [R] 117 | Slovenes never had their own state; Macedonia pagan plaque torn down |
| [R] 121 | Croats are unhistorical people |
| [R] 126 | Communists tried to create Macedonia |
| [R] 153 | Macedonian nation does not exist; Split Macedonia |
| [R] 169 | Macedonia belongs to Serbia |
| [R] 188 | Muslims, Macedonia and Montenegrins are invented nations/people |
| [R] 197 | No other nations capable of war; no history of warfare or nationhood |
| [R] 205 | The Croats are not a historical nation |
| [R] 208 | No other nations capable of war; no history of warfare or nationhood |
| [R] 217 | Serbia was split up under communist rule to prevent Serb majority; |
| [R] 218 | Tito invented nations |
| [R] 222 | The Croats haven’t had a state since 1102 |
| [R] 223 | Tito invented nations to prevent Serb majority |
| [R] 236 | Historical people are stronger than non-historical people |
| [R] 243 | Macedonia was always Serbian |
| [E] 3 | Macedonia pagan plaque torn down |
| [E] 6 | Communists invented Macedonians, Muslims and Montenegrins |
| [E] 18 | Unhistorical Slovenes and Croats look for economical domination |
| [E] 32 | 1/3 of the Croats are actually Serbs |
| [E] 44 | Only the Serbs are a historical nation |
| [E] 60 | Croats lost their state 900 years ago; Croatian coast is Serbian |
| [E] 125 | Only Serbs are historical peoples; Croats are not; Muslims are not a nation |
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