

## **"Fake" Camp Claim Demolished**

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Prosecution corrects expert witness's belief that ITN's footage of Trnopolje camp inmates was faked.

Prosecutors in the case against Radoslav Brdjanin last week cross-examined Paul Shoup, the history professor who was called by the defence to give an assessment of the origins of the Bosnian war and the influence of both sides' propaganda.

Defence lawyers were hoping that Shoup would show the court that the common perception of the Bosnian war – that the Serbs were the aggressors and the Muslims were the victims – was not necessarily the case.

But rather than prove to the court that propaganda was used equally by all sides, Shoup provided an example of just how one can be manipulated by it.

Brdjanin is standing trial on genocide charges and is accused of orchestrating the ethnic cleansing of Bosanska Krajina. Since the indictment claims that the defendant "played a leading role in the takeover of power, in particular with respect to the propaganda campaign, which was an essential component of the plan to create a Serbian state", the accused's responsibility for this propaganda campaign is a key issue for both prosecution and defence.

Claiming that the western media unfairly demonised the Bosnian Serbs, Shoup reawakened an old debate about video footage taken by the British television network ITN at the Bosnian Serb-run Trnopolje concentration camp in 1992.

The footage included images of an emaciated Bosnian Muslim named Fikret Alic, who was filmed standing behind a barbed wire fence. These images – the first showing the Serb-run camps in Bosnia – shocked the world and earned the Bosnian Serb leadership condemnation around the globe.

However, five years after the footage was aired, a German reporter from the monthly *Living Marxism* magazine claimed that the film was staged. Calling the image "the picture that fooled the world", Thomas Deichmann alleged that ITN reporter Penny Marshall had stood inside the camp, and that Alic was in fact outside.

This allegation by Deichmann, who did not visit the camp during the Bosnian war, was refuted by the scores of journalists who did – but his story was seized upon by Serb nationalists and others who refused to accept that such camps ever existed.

Echoing Deichmann's claim, Shoup told the court, "The individual in question was in fact outside the barbed wire and the location was not a concentration camp, but a relocation centre," he said.

Prosecutor Joanna Korner didn't mince words when she cross-examined Shoup.

She asked him if he was aware that ITN had sued *Living Marxism* for libel following Deichmann's assertion that the network had faked the images, and that the London High Court had ruled in its favour, forcing the magazine to pay 600,000 US dollars in damages.

Shoup said that he had heard about the suit, but that he had thought it only addressed the issue of whether Trnopolje was a concentration camp or a relocation centre. He said he didn't realise that the court had determined that ITN did not fake the images.

"I have been misled," Shoup told the court. "I was fooled if that was the actual case."

Under subsequent questioning from Korner, Shoup admitted that he had never seen the ITN footage, and that he had drawn his conclusions that the image had been faked both from the Dutch NIOD report on Srebrenica, and from a documentary by The Emperor's Clothes, an alternative news website that openly professes its admiration for former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic.

Although she undermined Shoup's account of how the western media demonised the Serbs, she appeared to agree with much of his other testimony.

"They [the Serbs] were pretty hopeless and ineffective in the way they waged their propaganda battle," Korner said.

"In the international community, yes, I agree with you," Shoup said, before pointing out that within Republika Srpska, RS, the propaganda was very effective.

Korner showed Shoup a Serb propaganda video that the prosecution had only just entered into evidence – an unusual move given that it has already rested its case, and the defence is in its twelfth week.

The video, which appeared to be a Serb-made documentary, showed Bosnian prisoners in the Manjaca camp wearing caps of a type associated with the Serb "chetnik" forces. The prisoners were shown telling reporters that they were being well treated.

Shoup said that the video was propaganda material and that the prisoners' accounts were not sincere.

"The minute I saw the chetnik caps, I did not believe a word of what they were saying," Shoup said.

Next in the video, the then Serbian information minister Velibor Ostojic appeared, fiercely denying that any such concentration camps existed.

"The prisoners are treated according to the Geneva convention and all prisoners are truly fighters and opposed to the Serbian army," Ostojic said on the video. "The Serbs are the ones who are in concentration camps... around 14,000 have been detained... 320,000 Serbs have either been moved [or] fled their homes."

Later in the week, the defence called a witness who worked as a journalist in Banja Luka during the war. The witness, known to the court as BT-94, had previously testified for the prosecution, providing the court with a painstakingly precise diary, including transcripts of media reports from the early days of the war.

"Why did I have to write so much?" BT-94 lamented to the court, joking about the apparent importance of his diary for both sides of the trial.

When testifying for the prosecution, BT-94 recalled how Brdjanin repeatedly stated that Bosanska Krajina could only tolerate a maximum of two per cent of non-Serbs among its population and that non-Serbs needed to be deported or liquidated.

In his diary entry on May 5, 1992, BT-94 described Brdjanin as the mastermind behind the ethnic cleansing campaign – a statement that bolstered the prosecution’s case – but under questioning from Brdjanin’s defence lawyer, John Ackerman, he appeared to have altered his view.

“Now, with hindsight, I wouldn’t say so,” BT-94 said.

The witness could not directly link Brdjanin to the notorious Bosanska Krajina camps. However, he did tell the court that the defendant once said, “If the Germans and the Russians have camps, I don’t see why we should not have camps.”

Seemingly in an effort to determine the witness’ wartime sympathies, Judge Chikako Taya of Japan asked BT-94 if he saw the war as a conflict between three religions.

“Unfortunately yes,” BT-94 said. “I think it is a great tragedy how every religion says don’t kill and don’t steal, and yet the religious communities made as many mistakes [during the war] as the media did.”

The Orthodox church played the most dubious role, BT-94 alleged. He cited Bishop Micevic as an example, telling the court that he had been photographed wearing a machine gun, and claiming he was a protector of indicted fugitive Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb leader.

“Some of the clerics who spread this hatred should be prosecuted as well,” BT-94 said. “Just like the representatives of the media who contributed to the spreading of the hatred.”

There have been no indictments of that kind so far in The Hague’s history, although a precedent has been set at the Rwanda tribunal. In June 2000 the Belgian broadcaster Georges Ruggiu was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment after his Kigali-based Radio et Television Libre des Mille Collines was found to have openly called for genocide.

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