

## INTERVIEW WITH MUSA DOBRUNA

Pristina | Date: April 29 and May 8, 2015

Duration: 182 minutes

### Present:

1. Musa Dobruna (Speaker)
2. Jeta Rexha (Interviewer)
3. Donjeta Berisha (Camera)
4. Hydajete Dobruna (Speaker's spouse)
5. Pranvera Dobruna (Speaker's daughter)

*Transcription notation symbols of non-verbal communication:*

*() – emotional communication*

*{ } – the speaker explains something using gestures.*

*Other transcription conventions:*

*[ ] – addition to the text to facilitate comprehension*

*Footnotes are editorial additions to provide information on localities, names or expressions.*

## Part One

**Jeta Rexha:** Mr. Musa, please introduce yourself first, and then continue to tell us something about your childhood.

**Musa Dobruna:** Sure, my name is Musa Qazim Dobruna, my dad's name of course. I am the son of Qazim and Shefkije. My parents were a wealthy family, I can even say very rich. But very soon, after the capitulation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, they were impoverished to the lowest possible level, and we had to secure our bread in different ways. My father, given the very rich life during his youth and until the year of his marriage, didn't do any manual work, or he doesn't seem to have found it necessary – that is my opinion. And it turned out that during the days of poverty he found comfort in drinking. Time after time he even got into delirium, he did it... also in anger against the regime of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

In particular, the case should be told of his return from a village of Gjakova in a horse carriage, and he stopped in the center of the town. A group of soldiers with a photographer, call him what you want, it was a special camera, they did a documentary, and that documentary now remains in Yugoslavia's Cinematheque.<sup>1</sup> The script: he grabbed the gun from a Yugoslav soldier and pointed it at them, while the French journalist filmed and took a picture. Once I had the chance of watching the documentary, which was screened in the cinema of Gjakova at that time. But after the Second World War to show... the goal was to show our savagery towards... and to justify the actions after the Congress of Versailles. Everything that happened is well known. And the main action was the impoverishment of big families throughout Kosovo, and now I will talk about Gjakova.

My grandfather was a close friend, I would say a friend in terms of [having] close contacts, with Hasan and Jakup Ferri, the famous family from Northern Albania, Montenegro, Plav and Gusia. And his godfather was Hasan Jakup Ferri, also known as Has of Jakup Ferri, the grandfather of Rexhep Ferri, the academic. They used to make *konak*<sup>2</sup> in our *kulla*<sup>3</sup> in Gjakova, and later during his youth, a bit later,

<sup>1</sup> Yugoslav Film Archive (Jugoslovenska kinoteka) is a film archive located in Belgrade.

<sup>2</sup> *Konak*, in general, is a residence or lodging. Here, it refers to a guest room.

<sup>3</sup> Traditional, fortified Albanian house, tower.

the time for marriage came. And, it happened then, when the monarch-fascist regime, I would say the Karađorđević dynasty, implemented the Agrarian Reform according to the Serbian projects, I won't mention them, I am not a historian, the designers of those projects, but I know that at that time the Pašić's government implemented the Agrarian Reform and left us without land, like every other big families in Kosovo.

It left our family only so much as it needed to survive, the land had to be sold piece by piece, plot by plot to pay the taxes of the time, the duties. This happened, and at the time when I was grown up enough to understand things, I also saw that in the presence of witnesses he signed the paperwork that said he had received the request for tax payment and signed. But very soon he had to go to the government authorities of the time to make a declaration, why had he not paid all the taxes (laughs). It means they framed him with some paper there that he paid half or some part, he had paid it all, but... This has then caused the confiscation of our wealth. And the land was taken away, where to this date there are buildings, for instance, the farming cooperative in Skivjan and its adjacent buildings, and a clinic and an administrative building, all these have served for health, trade, education, culture in general, but on our own land.

It didn't last long, and the land that we used to work ourselves, the servant who worked there for a while, took it and registered it in his name and we didn't have access to it anymore. So we were left without... we lived on an income of day labor, as my father sold himself to support the family. This was very painful. I remember days with no bread. This was the goal of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Then he found a way to get out and do, let's call it a speculation, to go out to Albania to get tobacco, to sell it here, to sell it, and he used the opportunity to bring books from over there, he brought rose oil, and he brought other things as well, messages from there, the national-ethnic activity. And the event, I'll call it tragic, well it was tragic too, it happened that the caravan with books, tobacco, and rose oil, in the late autumn of 1937, our house was surrounded, and not only our house, but Çabrat street, from Hamka's neighborhood to Mulla Jusuf's neighborhood.

The gendarmerie and police who were guarding the town, that were keeping order in town, they entered and in uniforms, uniformed finance officers, bayonets, they were holding those bayonets like this {shows with hands}. They searched the house, but they did not find anything because the caravan had arrived about one hundred meters from the land of the house where they lived, and the head of the caravan was murdered. The others ran away, but they did fall in the hands of the gendarmerie of the time. I remember Shpend Halili, a handsome highlander, who came to visit my father few days after he was released from prison. They tortured him for a week as they knew [to torture]. It happened also that they broke him, they beat him like this, {shows with hands} when I brought him the sheets and blankets. The prison used to be by the bridge of Islam Beg in Gjakova, unfortunately that bridge doesn't exist anymore. It now only stands on a painting in the office of the Association of Antifascist Fighters of National Liberation War in Gjakova. There are others, too... Here, it's me in the beginning of *Çarshija e Madhe*<sup>4</sup> of Gjakova.

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<sup>4</sup> Literally Big Market, old center of Gjakova.

Close to the tower that still stands today, there is a museum, I am not sure whether it is an ethnographic museum, or an historic one in the old part of the town, close to the two *tyrbe*.<sup>5</sup> There's Emin's [*tyrbe*] and another *tyrbe*, whose name I don't know, and which is older than the *teqe*<sup>6</sup> of *Sheh* Emin.<sup>7</sup> *Sheh* Emmini was an educated man, he was an architect during the time of Turkey. He designed the building for his house, *tyrbe* and *teqe*, it still exists today. The mosque at the top of the market does not stand there any longer, it was demolished after the Second World War. I don't know, it could have... Just like Islam Beg's Mosque, which was before the entrance [to the city], before touching the Islam Beg's Bridge, there was Islam Beg's Mosque just in the center. And it has a special history of which I only know a detail.

As it happens nowadays, the *hoxha*<sup>8</sup> then, gathered, preached what they were interested in, religion. There used to be two educated *hoxha* – Hafiz Guta and Bajram Mulla Agani. Bajram Mulla Agani was the uncle of Fehmi Agani,<sup>9</sup> the grandfather<sup>10</sup> of the current Minister of Health and... I don't know what he is responsible for now.

It happened on March 21, 1942. My father brought food to cook a meal for the guests who were going to come, and the rest of it for the *teqe*. It was his turn to bring the food. My mother was a strong woman, and she told him, "Today with the wings of...a goose {moves hands}" as we say, "Clean the *namaxhe*<sup>11</sup> so I can make some bread for children." I mean, there is no flour in the *namaxhe*. "And you, *mori*<sup>12</sup>..." "Take it and prepare it yourself!" And when he said *mori*, she told him, "Look man," because she did not call her husband by his name (laughs), "Look man," she said, "these [children] are God and *teqe* to us because we brought them to this world." These words exactly, I am telling them faithfully. My father shouted a bit again, as men did in those times and he left all in anger.

After everything was ready, he came back together with a friend. He carried it with a man there, he took it to the *teqe*, the guests were waiting, he delivered it there and *Baba* – *Baba* is how one calls [the leader of] a Bektashi *teqe*, he was called Baba Hamëz – a man that has travelled the world. And he asked him, "What is it my son?" because he saw from his expression that he wasn't the Qazim of yesterday, but another person (laughs). And "No, nothing..." "Speak up," he said. "Well I had some trouble with Shefkie," because she was a Bektashi, too. "Why?" he said, "So and so..." "Well, she is right. She is right. First for the children, then what's left for here." And he calms down my father, father comes back, and the drinking started. I was serving, but my mother as well. They were speaking about

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<sup>5</sup> *Tyrbe* in Albanian, *türbe* in Turkish, is an Ottoman tomb, usually a mausoleum of notable people.

<sup>6</sup> *Teqe* in Albanian, *tekke* in Turkish, is a lodge of a Sufi order, in this case the Bektashi. It is inhabited by a Cheikh or *Baba* and by dervishes.

<sup>7</sup> *Sheh* is the religious leader of a Sufi sect.

<sup>8</sup> Muslim clergyman, muezzin.

<sup>9</sup> Agani (1932-1999) was a philosopher, sociologist and politician, one of the founders of the Democratic League of Kosovo. He was assassinated by Serbian troops as he attempted to flee Pristina disguised as a woman to avoid detection.

<sup>10</sup> Fehmi Agani is the uncle of the current Minister of Health.

<sup>11</sup> A wooden chest where the flour was kept and dough was kneaded.

<sup>12</sup> "*More*" adds emphasis, like "*bre*," similar in English to bro, brother.

the Antifascist National Liberation Movement, this happened after the antifascist demonstration that took place in Gjakova. “Do you know Sadik,” my dad was saying, “that even to this day when it rains or it is overcast, my ribs hurt from all the beatings I suffered from the gendarmerie?” He said, “Yes, there are few people who didn’t suffer those, but remember what I am telling you, this war that we are entering we will win it easily.”

All three took their glasses and drank up {pretends to drink}. But as he lifted his glass, Sadik thought aloud and said, “Then...” as he was lifting his glass, “And then...” They drank up, father said, “OK Sadik, but what was that ‘then’ about?” This is very important now, you can quote this, it is very important. “Then,” he said, “We will start another war, which we will win as well, but with a lot of effort.” It’s the last war that ended. “No, don’t Qazim [speaker mixes up names]... you Sadik, another war?” “Yes, {he nods} we will win it too.” Sadik Tafarshiku, after the Second World War, as the antifascist that he was, was appointed the head of World Affairs. Do you know what World Affairs are? Municipal, housing affairs used to be called World Affairs. Very soon after that he was sent to jail. He did... I don’t know how many years of jail, but after the jail his job was to distribute books in each village of Kosovo. He died late, and even to this day the Library in Ferizaj holds the name Sadik Tafarshiku.

My father had another friend. He was, let’s say it in old language, a *hafini*, or a spy (laughs), at the time of Turkey, the time of Austria, those few days that the First World War lasted, the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the time of fascism (laughs), and after the Second World War he was a collaborator of the State Security Service of Yugoslavia. He died in Rome as the imam of the Mosque of Rome, [he was] the son-in-law of the Shita family, [Vehap Shita](#)’s uncle [his aunt’s husband] (smiles), who took Vehap Shita off the list that was in the jail, where Pristina court house is today, the Municipality Court, where *Rilindja* was operating until lately, the printing house *Rilindja*. And instead of him, Fahri Hoxha was placed on that list, who was murdered on 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1944 together with Ganimete Tërbeshi, and another one or two Montenegrin women, they were murdered all together. This is just one episode of the antifascist resistance up to that moment.

[Political] activity went on continuously. I was engaged in maintaining the connection between the party leaders and all the families that had embraced the Antifascist National Liberation Movement throughout Gjakova, the whole Gjakova. There are many families, I registered about three hundred, I had exactly 316 families, which I kept connected with Hamdi Shehu, and later with Safete Nimona, whose cover name was Guseva and later, after it was compromised, she changed it to Lule. She also slept in our home, together with a Montenegrin woman, whose cover name was Fatime, both [stayed] at our place, and Nazmije Nimani was the third one, she used to come wearing *ferexhe*,<sup>13</sup> until they were compromised, and [their veil] came off..

It was a hard time, I had close collaborators: Fehmi Agani, may he rest in peace; Sami Bashota, may he rest in peace, he died in Finland, and we buried him in Gjakova according to his wish. He was

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<sup>13</sup> *Ferexhe*, a veil concealing all of the face except the eyes, worn by Muslim women in public.

persecuted after the Second World War for his nationalist ideas. As a teacher, he promoted figures of culture, including the forbidden Fishta<sup>14</sup> and other forbidden writers. Very often, he was taken away for informative talks,<sup>15</sup> and it's a well-known fact how they ended. At the end he had to flee the country and go somewhere abroad where in a way, his life ended... only he knows. I had many other friends, whose biographies I am not going to talk about because of the "deviations" they took after the informative talks they were subject to, as people who were in conflict with the ideas of the time.

In this family we have about 37 years of jail, not for let's say physical actions against the regime, except for my brother who was disappointed beyond belief after he was fired from his work. He went and made a Molotov and threw it at the Committee [of the Communist League] in 1984, the Committee of Gjakova. He was sentenced 14 years of jail for that. And then when the time came he joined the KLA, together with eleven of us from our family. Among them was Sokol. He is one of the top 30 highest leaders of the KLA as a military prosecutor. You may have seen him on Klan. He did not accept to get rich like many others, who used the wealth of this tormented country for their personal interests. Today he uses the apartment which I was entitled to as a fighter of Antifascist National Liberation Movement, and for merits that I was the youngest partisan, before I turned 14 {nods }... this is now another story (laughs).

## Part Two

**Musa Dobruna:** Contrary to Serbian historiography, it is said that around 1400 Serbian families were displaced from here, from the Plains of Kosovo and Dukagjini. The majority of the population are Albanians with Orthodox origin, at least only during these years after the last war of the KLA about thirty churches have been discovered throughout Kosovo. During that time three brothers of one family, among others, were displaced from the village, from which I have the name Dobruna. One stopped in Gjakova, one in Shtime, and the other one went to Turkey. My grandfather and father have maintained contact until 1937, '36, no '37... '36, with the one in Turkey... I remember the great guest, who now is precious from above... in 1936. After that every connection, every contact with them was interrupted.

The Shtime family, I must believe that it is the family that Hajredin Hoxha originates from, Professor Hajredin Hoxha. He used to lecture in sociology at the Department of Philosophy in Pristina until his death in Greece. In a symposium that was held in Novi Sad, he had the courage to say that Serbia did not liberate Kosovo, as Serbian historiography claims. Instead he said, "Serbia has occupied Kosovo," which he was very brave to say in the '70s. It was daring, but he said it. He said it because he was a

<sup>14</sup> Gjergj Fishta (1871-1940) was an Albanian Franciscan brother, a poet, an educator, a politician, and a national hero.

<sup>15</sup> Informative talks were a widespread practice throughout the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which involved inviting people suspected of political involvement to report to the police stations and respond to questions relating to their activity. A euphemism for interrogation.

well-known professor, and they called him for informative talks, as it happened to our people [to be called] by state bodies, bodies of physical abuse. That's it.

And my ancestors took as much land as they wanted, Skivjan, Dujakë, three kilometers along the river, no need to pray to God for rain or no. There was water, the land was good, and everything was good. They took a part of Bela Crkva, it is close to Rahovec. They took a village called Ujëz, close to Gjakova, it is close, above Ura e Shenjtë on the right, on the road to Prizren, the village of Dol close to Gjakova as well, and we currently have land deeds for over 13 hectares of wood lands, Oseki i Pashës close to Gjakova, Skivjan, Baballoq, Shishmuni i Rrafshit, and Raça and Moglica. So, speaking in... old jargon, we were some kind of feudal lords, we were feudal lords (smiles). We had our fiefs and the positive that came out of our family was that we hired villagers from Malësia e Gjakovës as servants, and we never made contracts with them. It was a written and unwritten rule, if the contract is not renewed after three years, the land becomes theirs. I value it as a positive action.

The family of Haxhi Hoxha, a descendant is Fadil Hoxha,<sup>16</sup> he is from the same village. The Dolsh family in Gjakova, they are from the same village as well. The Spahija family of Gjakova is from the same village as well. Then there is a family called Zarari (laughs). Do you know what the word *zarar* means?

**Jeta Rexha:** Trouble? Is it trouble?

**Musa Dobruna:** No! *Zarar* means loser (laughs), bankrupt, he who engaged in economic activity and failed. Or as it happens nowadays, he went bankrupt, like that *zarar*. And there are some other families, but mainly, these families are from the same village. I was lucky in 2003... in 2013, to go and see, they are beautiful lands, but must be worked by man's hands. There are two small lakes and a valley on the other side of the border, I mean, there on the Albanian state side. Their children, they get educated on our site in the Dol...Goden school. So... that's it (smiles). Then about the rest, after embracing the idea of the Antifascist National Liberation Movement, my father as a Bektashi, and the whole sect of Bektashi were in the Movement. And as I mentioned earlier Sadik Tafarshiku was a firm nationalist, and he died as one, but he read a lot. And after the jail time they gave him, he became a distributor of books in Albanian and as he used to say, "I still have a book to bring to the Luboten Peak" (smiles).

One of his examples as a passionate reader, he was reading Wilhelm Weitling<sup>17</sup> in Serbian, *Harmonije, Garantije i Slobode* [Guarantee of Harmony and Freedom], a tireless promoter of Marx's ideas. And talking about the issue of equality among people, he is a close friend of Lassalle.<sup>18</sup> You have not read

<sup>16</sup> Fadil Hoxha (1916-2001), Albanian Communist partisan leader from Gjakova, who held a number of high posts in Kosovo and Yugoslavia, including the rotating post of Vice President of the Federal Presidency, the highest leadership post in Yugoslavia under Tito, in 1978-79. He retired in 1986, but was expelled from the League of Communist on charges of nationalism.

<sup>17</sup> Wilhelm Christian Weitling (October 5, 1808 – January 24, 1871), was a German tailor, inventor and political activist who was described by Friedrich Engels as "the founder of German communism."

<sup>18</sup> The interviewee is referring to Ferdinand Johann Gottlieb Lassalle (1825-1865), a German-Jewish jurist, philosopher and socialist political activist.

these things. They belong to Marxism. Lassalle is a German enthusiast who by talking about total equality among people wants to help Marxism and the international laborers movement with Marx's ideas. And, in his time, he wrote to Germans in a newspaper about a complete equality amongst people. This is important for people even today, because there is not one, not a person...full equality would be unnatural. The following day Engels came out and said in an article, "Lassalle has done a bad service to the International Communist Movement, because there can be no total equality among people. But there can be total equality before the law."

There can't be total equality between me who, have entered the elderly age, and the young man who can dig this, and work it {shows the garden}, I can't even cross it twice (laughs). And both he and I to receive the same material existential goods! His needs for existence, for food, and other things are much higher than mine. And both he and I to get equally from the society, that's not right. Is it? I can't demand that, it is unnatural to demand a minister's salary. Independently of the contribution that I can make, he has much bigger duties for this nation. Isn't that so? For example, you have many duties and merits for doing this duty. My contribution is... only, but the contribution of the one in the mines, where he risks his life in the seventh or eighth shaft and digs mines for the good of the people, the good of the country, not of the people. I am talking... because this is an old language. For the wellbeing of the country, he must receive ten, twenty, thirty times more than I. This is it. This means that there will never be total equality among people, and the law acts over the harmony in nature and society, acts continuously, for another reason. That's it (smiles).

A mobilization of youth happened for the creation of the seventh and eighth Albanian brigade of Kosovo, let's not call it Albanian, of Kosovo - but it can be read, it's a known fact - and at the same time the mobilization of youth to go to war for the liberation of lands in Montenegro and Dalmatia, it's...this has to do with the murder in Tivar. Have you heard, haven't you? Not a murder, but mayhem! I am now talking about the wisdom of the nation, the skin feels that there is something wrong with this mobilization. Why should our sons go to liberate other lands, we liberated our country, and we wanted to organize a government here with these people. It happened that a crowd of people went out in a square of Gjakova to protest, Ali Tetrica, one of them, got his knife out and cut himself {acts as if slashing his throat with his hand}. The mobilization stopped. It stopped in Gjakova. And from Gjakova, Dervish Vula went and died in Tivar. One Gjakova man was murdered there. So the personal victimization of Ali Tetrica, who used to be in the Antifascist National Liberation Movement, who committed suicide, stopped it.

The demonstration of women of Gjakova against our sons going to Vojvodina started. It was the first demonstration ever in Yugoslavia. Some things always started in Gjakova. Unfortunately, Serbs didn't like us, but neither did Albanians. I am sorry! It is very hard to get employed in Kosovo institutions if it's known that you are from Gjakova, it won't happen. Maybe it's a wrong impression that I have, maybe. But it is hard. And Gjakova is left with seven beggars, who can hardly make their ends meet. Take my brother for example, he is one of thirty main leaders in KLA headquarters, and a war prosecutor. He lives in my apartment in Gjakova, which I received for my merits as a participant in the



Antifascist National Liberation Movement. My mother was the first one, yes she was among four or five women who were leading the protest against our sons going to Vojvodina. At the head of the protest was Sabrije Vokshi, a heroine. Have you heard about her?

**Donjeta Berisha:** Tell us something more about your mother.

**Musa Dobruna:** Excuse me?

**Donjeta Berisha:** Tell us something more about your mother.

**Musa Dobruna:** My mother, I told you in the beginning, was a strong woman ready to sacrifice. While my father, he had a very big soul. He was very generous. It seems like, they were on the same wave length. Regarding my mother, I will tell you about an event in the '50s. A pregnant beggar came into our home garden, she sat down and said, "Give me some bread." My mother went and brought a pot with beans, meat and bread, and gives them to her and she leaves. And my father came back after work. He didn't accept to become the President of the Council in villages, "I have no education, educated people are needed there." He had only finished primary school, but no. He came to eat his meal, "What's for dinner?" My mother answered, "What did you bring?" (Laughs). Because she prepared it earlier, hid it but... now she didn't want to admit, let's say, "the guilt" {does air quotes}, now, it wasn't guilt, but... And he sat down to eat, but unhappy with what he found. I don't know, at least I don't have the impression [that they were] rich people, he took things softly, accepted nicely whatever he had found (smiles). I want to say that they were generous.

Now a digression, I will go to the year 1941. It was announced that the war started in Yugoslavia. In the neighborhood where we lived, there was a mechanic. A Serb came, took a rifle and shot to signal that starting from today Gjakova is at war. It was a market day and the gendarmerie and paramilitary, there were paramilitary in those days as well, would kill people in the street. We didn't lock our gates, because when the crowd ran away, they found one door locked, the other door locked, but our door was open. We could do that because we had another gate to a wide garden, so people would be safe, and another exit on the other side of the street where they could run away. But, fortunately, the gendarmerie would not enter. They would find the gate locked and would leave it like that. They called them *dobrovoljac*, volunteers, yes they called them *dobrovoljac*. But fortunately for us, two Germans arrived on their motorbike and that stopped. The robbery of barracks started, as it happens after every war, or...

For the first time ever, at home we had five hundred kilograms of grain, corn, whatever you want to call it, which my dad took from the barracks. And it was the first time that he had it, the food on the horse... with a cart, he sat on corn. We took the same corn and milled it for ourselves. We got through that time, very hard days, but this is the greatness of our people, they didn't kill people in the convoy [of people leaving]... Serbs and Montenegrins who came from other parts of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, they took people's land, [the land] of the locals. And at that time a Montenegrin came from the other side of the border and asked my father, "You as a big family of the Gashi tribe, lead us and they won't harm us." And that is what happened, the convoy of tens of carts with animals, as they used

to be, would pass through, they had no money to compensate us, so they would give my father one rifle, each family. The rifles were placed underneath... the stuff that they had. And when they passed by the German guards, my father would give them one or two rifles, they would pat my father on the back, and the rest of the rifles, we'd keep them there. We would continue the road, we would take them as far as Deçan, the convoys of Montenegrins who came from Montenegro to our lands.

We then sold those rifles and worked our land, apples and tobacco. Later we would process that tobacco and sold it. But it was interesting that we hired two girls who made them into packs, and packed like that, three to five hundred kilograms of tobacco, we sent it to Sijenica. Do you know where Sijenica is? In Sandžak, Novi Pazar, Sandžak. But through Rugova mountains, through Peja, and there. They got through the area that was controlled by Chetniks.<sup>19</sup> One part of the tobacco was given to them, because everyone was smoking tobacco. Then, later, there were partisans, and [tobacco was given] to them as well, and they arrived to Sijenica where an activist of National Liberation Movement, otherwise a Muslim, Deda, was expecting them. I only know this name, I don't know his last name. He would come back from there not with money, but with sheep, horses, dairy, cheese and fresh cream as... barter. And sheep had to be looked after, we didn't have a town, but it happened that we had to bring the 25 heads of sheep to the field of *tyrbe* across Erenik in Gjakova for pasture.

Two days later Ismet Mula came. Do you know who Ismet Mula is? No. He used to be the director of the printing house *Rilindja*. His son used to have a photography shop close to *Dora*, he has an atelier downstairs, and he lives around here somewhere. Ismet Mula brought a letter, sealed of course. I was with my brother and he said, "This has to be sent to Fadil Hoxha. But you will get assistance from the first unit that you may meet on your way to the village of Deva." Asim Bluta came with me as well. Asim Bluta was one of the activists of the National Liberation Movement and I accompanied him to Deva. I was carrying the letter. We arrived there at dusk, and we knocked on the first door of a *kulla*, a partisan guard answered, because the Headquarters was there. He let us wait, he went to notify the commander, he came down the stairs, got us, and brought us to the floor above. We set down and he asked us to sing a partisan song for verification.

For verification, "Do you know a partisan song?" We sang the song about Hysni Zajmi who had been recently murdered in Plav, together with the master of the house where Hajro Shamanović was taking refuge. They liked the song and we got up to leave. The Commander said, "You can travel after dinner with the escort of the partisans." We had dinner and we left at night under the moonlight. We arrived from Deva to Babaj i Bokës, where we were directed to the Headquarters. The Headquarters of the Fifth Albanian Brigade was there, with Commander Shefqet Peqi. He took the letter, he lit a lighter, he read the subject and said... he folded it, "It's not for me. Fadil is in the war operations against the

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<sup>19</sup> Serbian movement born in the beginning of WWII under the leadership of Draža Mihailović. Its name derives from *četa*, anti-Ottoman guerrilla bands. This movement adopted a Greater Serbia program and was for a limited period an anti-occupation guerrilla, but mostly engaged in collaboration with Nazi Germany, its major goal remaining the unification of all Serbs. It was responsible for a strategy of terror against non-Serbs during WWII and was banned after 1945. Mihailović was captured, tried and executed in 1946.

German troops withdrawing from Greece.” That was it, and he went back to his business. We went and found a hut, we lied down tired and at sunrise we went to the village square, *loma* is where the grain is prepared, they were casting grain at the time. And we saw a superior telling the partisans about the state of affairs at the time. When I went there, I saw a friend of mine, his name was Skender Hoxha, and two Serbs, one of whom I had accompanied several times until recently - he knew Albanian as well as I - and another Serb, who later committed crimes in Gjakova.

And from there, in the meantime Asim Bluta had come and said, he told me that Fadil arrived and we need to go to meet Fadil. We went to the *kulla* of Jusuf Bajraktari’s grandfather. Jusuf Bajraktari is now an academic, a member of Academy of Sciences for history affairs. He used to be the director of the Institute of History until lately. That was my first meeting with Fadil Hoxha, and in the *kulla* I heard the conversation of the grown-ups, the adults. The master of the house was listening, and was following carefully all those present, among who were two partisans [wearing] Dibran flat *plis*,<sup>20</sup> *herka*<sup>21</sup> and black *tirq*.<sup>22</sup> But they didn’t say anything. The meal was brought, we sat down, the meal was rich, we ate. Once it was over, the barley coffee arrived, we used to drink barley then. The master of the house said to Fadil Hoxha, “Fadil, I see that you are not alone. You can’t trust these.” It was those two partisans of the Macedonian Brigade who kept contact with the brigades, with our partisan units. Fadil answered, “I had a case already in Ferizaj, Just like with you today.”

*[The following parts of the interview were conducted on May 8, 2015]*

### Part Three

**Musa Dobruna:** The embracing of the Antifascist Movement... by the masses, I am talking about Gjakova, not about other places, because I wouldn’t know, was so great, the fascists used to call Gjakova, “Little Moscow.” Italians called it “Piccola Mosca.” I will illustrate this with something else that happened in the ‘60s, the Fourth Plenum of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. But I will continue about this, afterwards... Emin Duraku with his friends, Hajdar Dushi, Xheladin Hana, Alush Gashi, Xhevdet Hamza, Enver Pula, Xhavit Nimani, with brothers and sisters, and many others throughout Kosovo, embraced it just as a war for national and social liberation, which later, with the changes in relations, took a slightly anti-nationalist course. Anti-nationalist is to be read as anti-Albanian, because the wind changed at that time. Schools opened, universities and Academy of Sciences, which were an obstacle for Serbian chauvinists. It was against the ideology of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which today runs Serbia’s state politics, even to this day. The president of the Serbian state must take on oath on the holy Orthodox book {he reaches his hand as if putting it on top of a book}, pro-Slav, call it as you wish. It’s their business! It is our business to work for ourselves, not

<sup>20</sup> Traditional Albanian white felt cap.

<sup>21</sup> *Harka* or *herkë* is a traditional Albanian garment, a winter jacket with short sleeves worn on top of the vest.

<sup>22</sup> Tight-fitting embroidered white flannel breeches with decorative braids at the bottom of the legs and on the pockets, traditional Albanian wear.

against others. However, this as such has cost us and has shrunk us to what we are now, because of some kind of excessive tolerance. Shall I start with the teachers?

**Jeta Rexha:** Yes.

**Musa Dobruna:** After the war started in Yugoslavia then, what was the Second World War to us, groups of citizens, who had gone to Albania during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia for whatever reasons, now were returning. A group of them were being led by Emin Duraku, Fadil Hoxha, Hysni Zajmi, Xheladin Hana, Hajdar Dushi, and another group of other teachers, Zeki Shehu for instance, Pajazit Nushi's uncle, they came and begun opening Albanian schools. This happened sometime in May '41, it was May '41. I remember that I registered for school when I was ten years old, for the first grade of primary school, and I was registered by Jusuf Puka. It is interesting to mention Jusuf Puka, because he was also my father's teacher (laughs). And he came, the registered students, they divided us into classrooms. The first letters, or characters as you wish, were taught to me by Haki Taha, who was afterwards murdered by Serbia's Secret Service, then Yugoslavia's. And they framed it as if he murdered Miladin Popović, which was not true. And then, the teachers changed as needed and as things turned out, Zeki Shehu was my teacher for a while, he passed away soon. And teachers were changing often. From all of them we learned that the Antifascist National Liberation Movement was a movement for national and social liberation of the people, without exception... independently of religion and ethnicity.

Historic fate wanted us to join the anti-Hitlerian, antifascist, anti-Nazi [struggle], call it what you please, and this means lining up the Antifascist National Liberation Movement on the side of the great allies, the United States of America, England, France and China at that time, the Soviet Union of course. Together with us, Serbs and Montenegrins and others were conducting their antifascist activities as well. The Communists had a vision and they used a critical moment in Gjakova, when the Italians arrived they opened six or seven brothels - I apologize for talking like this - and they used the dissatisfaction of the people towards these acts. And all antifascist groups joined us, including non-Communists. There were people who didn't like Communism, they didn't want Communism. Why? They identified it with Russia, it is Russia... We were harmed by them, and that's it.

Nevertheless, the people joined us, and the Communists, as good organizers, and I would say excellent propagandists, mobilized the people of Gjakova. I am convinced that there were no Gjakova citizens who fought against partisans, although they knew and they didn't like partisans. There were no armed activities. Now I am deeply convinced, someone can say that they may not agree, but all the movements that existed during the Second World War were Albanian. They fought their way for the Albanian cause. Even *Balli Kombëtar*<sup>23</sup> didn't have much influence in Kosovo. We had Zogists,<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Balli Kombëtar* movement was headed by Midhat Frashëri, and supported the unification of Albanian inhabited lands. After a failed attempt to join forces with the partisans in 1943, Balli Kombëtar continued to fight both the occupiers and the Communist resistance.

<sup>24</sup> *Zogists* were supporters of King Ahmet Zogu, royalists.

*Legaliteti*,<sup>25</sup> and independent intellectuals. Even the biggest spies, like Beqir Maloku for example, he was the commander of the gendarmerie, he knew how the wind blew in Gjakova, but he didn't do anything. They attempted an attack on him, both because he was a commander and a spy with a recognized career even during the time of Turkey, Fadil Hoxha with friends attempted an attack. But, he only got injured. He knew how the wind blew in Gjakova. Gjakova was all in the movement (laughs), and Italians called it "Piccola Mosca" – Little Moscow.

I would make a digression, after the Second World War, in the '60s, [going back to] when the Fourth Plenum of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, where the Yugoslav Secret Service, especially the Serbian one was unmasked. And I asked what we used to call an "operative," who is still alive, there were four at the table, two got up, he didn't smoke, but he kept chain smoking, so I said, "Ok Nuhi, what's the deal? When did you start smoking?" He said, "What is politics?" After I finished the work residency in the Secretariat for Internal Affairs, while serving in different centers of Kosovo, I retired and Dušan Mugoša, then the Political Secretary, the Chief Head of the Autonomous Province at the time, found out and told me to get back to the service, and, "You will go and serve in Gjakova." And now, the notes he gave, the grades he gave that he was giving, now, but he said, "I have worked successfully in all the centers, but there is no harder place to work than Gjakova." "Why?" "Because we never know who we are dealing with." It is... I don't know, it is an interesting population. They are very pragmatic, but in their powerlessness they have now been left with {lowers his hands towards the floor} a beggar's stick.

Currently, they gave the beggar's stick to Gjakova, although they had about three thousand people in the KLA, among them I had... there are eleven of us who have taken part, my sister's and brothers' children. I made this digression to show you what Gjakova is. Today Gjakova is downtrodden. This is my unstinted conviction. Gjakova used to have 27 thousand employees, today they hardly make it through the month. To me, the KLA leaders have betrayed Gjakova. They can say whatever they want. We hired two *havanxhi*<sup>26</sup> who were grinding the tobacco, that's how it was made (smiles), in a way... And we had two girls who packed it. They packed tobacco, usually around five hundred kilograms, my dad would load it and send it to Raushiq, close to Peja, and from there in a caravan, on loaded horses, he would send it to Sijenica. He would travel through the lands that were under the Chetniks, he literally corrupted them by giving them tobacco, because tobacco was scarce then. He would travel through partisan zones, and he had to give them tobacco, too, and with whatever tobacco remained he would arrive in Sijenica to meet a leader whose second name I don't know, but his name was Deda. He would exchange that tobacco for sheep, dried meat, dairy, horses, carpets and other things, but not money.

When he came to Gjakova, in less than two days, my brother and I would take the sheep to pasture. My father came with Ismet Mula and Asim Blyta and other activists of the Antifascist National Liberation

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<sup>25</sup> The Legality Movement was a nationalist pro-monarchic Albanian movement that was active during the WWII. It demanded the return of King Zog, who had fled the country upon the Italian invasion.

<sup>26</sup> *Havanxhi*, literally a dish-maker, craftsman.

Movement. I took the letter... Ismet Mula and my father returned, Asim Blyta came with me. On our way to Deva, we met a man, whose wife was behind on the horse. He asked us, "Where are you going?" Asim answered that we were going to so-and-so... the man who asked us knew him. And we continued the road, he went his own way. We arrived in Deva after sunset. We knocked on the door of the first *kulla* that we saw, a partisan answered. We gave him the letter, he said, "Show this to the commander." The commander came down the stairs, he took the letter, read it and said, "It's not for me." I folded it and he said, "Come upstairs." We sat down, there were two women partisans and one man partisan around us. They verified who we were, and to wrap this up they asked us if we knew any partisan songs. We sang it... immediately, a song for Hysni Zajmi and Šahmanović, Hajro Šahmanović, who were murdered treacherously in Plav. We sang the song, they liked it and we got up to leave. The Commander said, "No, you will first have dinner and then I will give you an escort and you will go to Babaj i Bokës."

The commander was Elez Isufi, my brother's teacher. Elez Isufi was Isuf Elez's son, he had taken part together with Ismail Qemal in the Albania's declaration of independence. We got up and took the road to Babaj i Bokës, at night under the moon, it was a beautiful autumn. We arrived in Babaj i Bokës and we addressed the commander of the Fifth Brigade, Shefqet Peqi. He came out, and as it happened with Elez Isuf, he lit the lighter {acts as if he is reading the letter}, "It's not for me. Comrade Fadil is in the operations against German troops that are withdrawing from Greece. They will come back tomorrow." And we went to rest. We entered another hut there, earth. We took a rest (laughs), we called it a rest. The following day we woke up kind of early and we went to the village square, they called it *loma*, the place where they cast grain in our way, and we saw a group of partisans. The commander, standing up, was reprimanding them that we took the rifles to fight fascism, but to get damaged as little as possible. It's not good to fight standing, *Tosks*<sup>27</sup> used to fight standing" (laughs), that's what it was like back then... little *Toska*.

As those words were being said, Commander Shefqet Peqi arrived and said, "We are at the verge of the final liberation of the homeland Albania, but our operations will continue in Yugoslav lands until the Nazi troops are completely expelled from the country. This is the order of General Colonel Enver Hoxha, our commander general colonel Enver Hoxha." He ended at this point, we rose, Asim came, "Let's go because Fadil is back," in the *kulla* of Jusuf Bajraktari's grandfather. He is an academic, he used to be the director of Institute of History. We entered the men's guest chamber, as they used to call it (laughs), and they call it today. Hysen Zherka, Ceni as we used to call him, met me because he was my friend. He introduced me to Fadil Hoxha and he continued the conversation with... the people present there. Among others there were also two partisans from the Macedonian Brigade, wearing Albanian clothes and flat Dibran *plis*, and black *harka* and *tirq*. The master of the house was quiet all the time. At mealtime we sat to eat a very rich meal, as Albanians know to serve when they want to give a reception to an honored guest. After the meal, the barley coffees were served (laughs), as they

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<sup>27</sup> Tosks are one of two major ethnic subgroups of Albanians (the other being the Ghegs) differentiated by their cultural, linguistic, social and religious characteristics, living in southern Albania.

advertise them now, and while drinking coffee, the master of the house took the floor and addressed Fadil Hoxha, “Fadil,” he said, “My son, I see that you are not alone. You cannot trust them.”

This was a chorus during the world war in Gjakova, and I want to believe in Kosovo too, that you cannot trust Serbs and Montenegrins. We liked and supported the Movement, but every time people thought of the common war with Serbs and Montenegrins, people had reservations. This then became the conviction of the whole Headquarters of the Antifascist National Liberation Movement, I am referring to Albanian Communists, Communists, Kosovo Albanians who continuously received information that the people are with the National Liberation Movement, but they did not like brotherhood and unity because of the too much suffering that Albanian population suffered in Yugoslavia at that time, during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After we had the meal and coffee, we took the road to Kruna where the Operative Headquarter for Kosovo was located in the Plains of Dukagjin. The Headquarter was located in the boarding school in Kosovo where boys who left Yugoslavia for Albania for whatever reason were educated.

On our way to Kruna, they got close to Deva. At one point some guy, Musa Efendia, he was a fighter of the National Liberation Movement... said to Fadil Hoxha, “Shall we go to Begu and have coffee?” Gani Beg’s Headquarter was there, Gani Beg Kryeziu who had completed the Military Academy of Yugoslav time, he was a superior military doctor. But he didn’t have his units, and he fought against Fascism. He collaborated with the Communists as much as he trusted them. Fadil answered to Musa’s proposal, “No!” “Why?” “He is upset with me. He sent me a letter, ‘Why are you taking my partisans?’” On the back of the letter, the same letter, he wrote, “I don’t have sterling to give them,” meaning that Beg sold out, he worked against Fascism with the support of the allies, Great Britain at that time, which sent golden sterling pounds to fund the Movement.

We had two metal buckets full of those in our house. It happened that my mother opened one without my father’s permission. At that moment my father came, “What are you doing?” “I am taking only one sterling,” they were golden, “to give it to our son when he gets married.” My father took it and put it back there, closed it and gave it to Gani Beg. We left Deva and arrived in Qafa e Prushit where the border was, there is a border there to this day with... the homeland (laughs). This is what Teki Dervishi<sup>28</sup> used to say, “The border with the homeland.” Fadil Hoxha’s horse got startled there because it saw a snake, there are many vipers over there on the rocky trails along the border. Musa Efendia stepped on it, we continued the road and stopped in Golaj. In Golaj, Fadil called Ibrahim Zherka, he died young, he was an historian who loved Fadil like his own son. He called, but no one answered and we continued the road. To make the trip easier, Musa Efendia asked again, “So Fadil, I also received a letter from Dem Ali Pozhari.”<sup>29</sup> “So?” “He sent me a letter, saying, ‘Will you spare my life if I will join you

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<sup>28</sup> Teki Dervishi, born in 1943 in Gjakova, was a writer, a publicist and a playwright. He was the editor-in- chief of the newspaper *Bota Sot*.

<sup>29</sup> Demë Ali Pozhari was a nationalist Albanian leader and fighter during WWII, who led successful actions and attacks against the partisan brigades. He collaborated with various nationalist organizations that were active at the time and with the occupiers, although he had a group of his own men.

with all I have?’” Fadil answers the letter, “No. If we ever meet, at the end we will be looking at each other down the rifle sight.” This, because Dem Ali Pozhari fought an armed fight against partisans.

But Fadil didn’t know one detail. When Dem Ali Pozhari with his gang set up an ambush, and found out that among the partisans there were no Serbs and Montenegrins, he withdrew, he did not fight. But where there were Serbs and Montenegrins, he never stopped his rifle. After the Second World War, on the eve of the end of Second World War, Dem Ali Pazhari escaped to Greece and then to Turkey and he died abroad. And again, another question now, to make the trip shorter, Musa Efendiu said to Fadil, “So have you [inc.] something else?” “I have received a letter from Ejup Binaku.” Ejup Binaku used to be the Secretary of the Fascist Party in Gjakova. And on the back of the letter he answered and said, “Come when you please.” Now the Musa’s logical question follows, he said, “We are at war with Fascism, Nazism. You refused two, but accepted that Ejup Binaku, the Secretary of the Fascist Party, comes safely.” This is where things change. Ejup Binaku is a person who between the two World Wars has helped as much as he could the young people who had left Yugoslavia for whatever reasons and went to Albania. He was committed to their education, employment and housing. I owe it to him, and Ejup Binaku comes safely.

We arrived in Kruna and they sent me to sleep in the room with Hilmi Agani, a professor, he was Professor Hilmi Agani later. After several weeks he... after he made sure that I was loyal, he told me, “I have to tell you something, but only if you give me the *besa*<sup>30</sup> that you won’t speak out, you won’t tell anyone.” I said, “I do.” “On one occasion, surrounded by Muharrem Bajraktari’s troops,<sup>31</sup> we had to hide two nights and three days in the bushes in Has of Gjakova, because he had large troops surround us. We hid two nights and one day,” he said “and we had quenched our thirst with wild fruits. And we got a message that Muharrem Bajraktari’s troops had withdrawn. We came back to Kruna, and on the way to Kruna, in the village of Cahan, Pavle Jovičević, who used to be the head of the Party in Operative Headquarters for the Plains of Kosovo and Dukagjin, gave him [me] a letter to send it to Kishaj, a village also situated in Albania, to wait for the reply and to come back, to return the reply. Even though he knew I was exhausted, tired, hungry, I accepted the duty, I went and fulfilled it and on my way back I stopped in leeward to rest. Not too long after, I heard someone’s footsteps approaching with others following, their bodyguards. I went and gave them the report, and returned to my spot. They brought out pies and meat, and started eating. They didn’t invite me to join although they knew I was exhausted, too.” “What is this?” “So you know,” (laughs) “just that.” To me this was the first indoctrination that cooperation with Serbs and Montenegrins is very difficult.

And then the withdrawal from Kruna to get closer to Gjakova happened, we got to Tropoja. We settled in Tropoja, and they sent me to sleep in a storage room for fabrics and different clothes, together with

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<sup>30</sup> In Albanian customary law, *besa* is the word of honor, faith, trust, protection, truce, etc. It is a key instrument for regulating individual and collective behavior at times of conflict, and is connected to the sacredness of hospitality, or the unconditioned extension of protection to guests.

<sup>31</sup> Bajraktari was a political leader and guerrilla fighter from Northern Albania, a supporter of King Zog, who during the Second World War took part in the royalist resistance of *Legaliteti* as an independent tribal leader against the Nazi occupation and communist partisans. He fled Albania in 1994 after the communist take over.



a Serb from Gjakova and a Shkodran. After we settled in, we went out, we went down to get our dinner. I had a tin bowl, a tin bowl that you carried here {he shows his belt}, for food and drinks and eating. I took it out and the answer in Serbian, “*Nisi na evidencija*, [There is no record of you] – You are not on the list of the first company, you’re on the second.” As I was obedient, I went to the second one, I reached my hand, and again, “*Nisi na evidencija*.” And upset, but without protesting, I returned to my room and I found there *baca*<sup>32</sup> Bajram with the Shkodran man, he noticed that there was something wrong with me and said, “What’s going on with you?” I said, “Nothing!” He said, “No, no, a devil got into you” (laughs). And I told him about the episode, “Get up!” he said. He took me by hand, and what age was I, I wasn’t 14 yet. He went to the kitchen, “Take out your tin bowl,” and put, tock! {does as if he is filling the tin bowl} he gave me food. And this lasted for weeks. Sometimes I would be followed, accompanied by Safete Nimani, sometimes Dragi Kirljeović, and sometimes Xhafer Vokshi, a member of Headquarters.

## Part Four

**Musa Dobruna:** In November 1944, the partisan hospital went on fire and we all got engaged with buckets and all we had. I and some German guy, he was an antifascist, a deserter of the German army, he was a good painter, we wrote all night long. In the morning, I met a man from Gjakova, Minush Xërxa, and I asked him, “Where are you going?” he said, “I am going back to the brigade.” “Will you wait for me a little?” “Yes.” I went to get food, and again they gave me none. From there I went to the Headquarters, I reported to the late Xhafer Vokshi and I told him, “I am going to the Brigade.” At that moment Pavle Jovičević came down the stairs.

He came down the stairs wearing a British military coat, long like this and pompous. He took my measure and said, “No. *Ne možeš!*” [You can’t!], because Xhafer told him I wanted to go to the Brigade. He checked me out and said, “No!” I said the last word to Xhafer, I said, “I am going.” This was on 8 November 1944.

We arrived together with Musa Batalli, who was my class mate, and two other partisans. We arrived in Bobaj i Bokës and sometime before sunset my father arrived with Sami Morina to inform us that there were no occupying forces in Gjakova anymore, and that the barracks were being guarded by Ethem Stublla, who had completed the military academy in Rome, once a commander of the Palermo garrison for two years. And we left, the Fourth Brigade was reorganized after the operations it had completed and we left for Gjakova on foot. The first snow fell, when we arrived in Ura e Tabakut... have you ever been to Gjakova? It is by the graveyards, there are two bridges. Jusuf Zherka mobilized us, he called us, we entered Gjakova singing *Bashkohemi shokë ne në çeta* [Comrades, let’s join in a band], and many other songs.

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<sup>32</sup> Uncle, respectful expression to address also older men who are not family relations.

The Operative Headquarters for the Plains of Kosovo and Dukagjin, after the reorganization of the Forth Kosovo Brigade, decides that Jahja Osman's company, his cover name was *Živko*, to enter Gjakova first. The composition of the company was nearly fifty-fifty Serbs and Montenegrins and Albanians. This was devilish on Serbs behalf, it was an excuse for them to say that Serbs liberated the land. But this didn't happen, they tried to do these kinds of things in Gjakova. In Gjakova they could complete all their duties according to their projects, the elimination of Albanians from these lands. The Yugoslav Secret Service, in other words Serbs, acted straight away. And it happened that they took the whole Gani Beg Headquarters, they jailed them and killed all the Kryeziu that happened to be there, that could catch at the time. And they killed them in a very barbaric way.

They sent Gani Beg to the jail of Srpska Mitrovica, the notorious jail was there in Mitrovica, and that is where his life ends despite the request by the British Government that he was not executed because he was their man, a British collaborator. It means he was a right-wing antifascist, not like Fadil Hoxha with his friends, with Emin Duraku, with Hysni Zajmi and others who were on the left, on the left side... because we had many great benefits from that Movement. What were the benefits of Albanians of Kosovo after the Second World War? And in general in Yugoslavia, but in Kosovo concretely: the opening of schools in Albanian language, the administration, which with much hardship, with many efforts, we achieved to make in Albanian language. The schools started, the Albanian *Shkolla Normale*<sup>33</sup> opened in Gjakova.

I completed the first and second class within in a year with a shortened program because there was a great need for teachers. I completed the third class as well, and in July of 1950 they sent us to the pedagogical course, the higher pedagogical course in Peja. On the day I graduated, it [the certificate] was presented to me by the great Zeqeria Rexha. Great because throughout his life, all his activity after the war was directed towards the education of people. And he said this, "Had someone ever told me in the year 1939 that in 1950 we would produce three hundred teachers at once, that person would have been put in a straight jacket. But here we are, we did it! And we will do other things as well."

And the other things were done with many sacrifices, from primary schools to the Academy of Sciences, and during that time, schools, hospitals were built. I mean, I think, and I am deeply convinced, that the resistance against the regime of that time was done in two ways: in an institutional way, by opposing the displacement of Albanians to Turkey and other countries, according to the agreement of 1937 between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Turkey for the displacement of the Turks from here, because they called Muslim Albanians Turks. The resistance was done by that political super-structure of the Albanian Communists of Kosovo. They opposed [the displacement] and the damage was much smaller that it would have been, had there been no Communists. I am saying this not to shut them up, the charlatans who speak against the Antifascist National Liberation Movement

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<sup>33</sup> The *Shkolla Normale* opened in Gjakova in 1948 to train the teachers needed for the newly opened schools. With the exception of a brief interlude during the Italian Fascist occupation of Kosovo during WWII, these were the first schools in Albanian language that Kosovo ever had. In 1953, the *Shkolla Normale* moved to Pristina.

for national and social liberation, but to tell them, “You have no right to rudely attack a very humane Movement, the Antifascist National Liberation Movement.”

It happened that in December 1943 Ismet Shaqiri came to our house. It was the end of November and he asked my father and mother, my mother was an activist for the Antifascist National Liberation Movement, and she knew very well to sing a lament when a partisan or an activist died. He asked my mother, “What is the state, the situation there?” “People,” she said, “is fully supporting us, but” I said this already earlier, “when brotherhood and unity is mentioned, there are big reservations about cooperation with Serbs and Montenegrins.” He ridiculed it, “We can’t tell people that we are not cooperating with Serbs and Montenegrins. Come, get your weapon and join us because together we are fighting against the common enemy, fascism, this evil that has ravished Europe.”

As those words were being said, my cousin Sylejman Dobruna arrived, he had come back from Germany to recover, he used to work in the mines of Ruhr in Germany, they were digging coal at that time. He introduced himself to Ismet Shaqiri, who said, “Very well, you have recovered and now it would be good if you came and become a partisan because we will liberate the country soon. We will organize our life like in Soviet Union.” My cousin, impulsive as he was, said, “Never!” “Never?” He said, “Like in the Soviet Union? I am a *kapuçkadër* in the mine.” *Kapuçkadër* means foreman in the old jargon. “The workers there, who are all prisoners, all Slavs - Russians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats and others -, they love me as if I were their father.” “How do they love you?”

“When I went there I organized a system of signaling, initially with a cable, I pulled a cable and at the end of the cave, where the coal was being mined, were the workers whom I was alerting that the commander was coming, go to work! I had made reserves at the entrance of the cavern, coal reserves, I covered them with stones, with anything, and we uncovered them. He came, but happy with the work, he would pat my back, increase the food, which was only bread and coffee, nothing else. And they say, they declare that, ‘After the war we won’t go back to the Soviet Union, because we are better here in the camp than over there.’” Ismet, impulsive as well, had not he been at our place, would have killed him. He said, “The life in the Soviet Union, I have not been there, they told me that it is not good.” This is where it ended.

The following day Ismet Shaqiri went to the Conference of Bujan<sup>34</sup> and there of course the Resolution of Bujan, you know it, you’ve heard about it? The Bujan Resolution, I am saying it in my own words is that, “The Albanian population of Kosovo and Dukagjini Plain and in general always dreamed to unite with the lands of the motherland Albania.” This is what it is about. There is a song, the anthem of the National Liberation Council that I know by heart. I don’t know if anyone else in Kosovo knows it.

**Jeta Rexha:** Can you recite it for us?

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<sup>34</sup> The Conference of Bujan (31 December 1943 – 1-2 January 1944) was a meeting of Yugoslav partisans in which a resolution was passed that promised to let the people of Kosovo decide democratically whether they wished to be part of Albania or of Yugoslavia after the war.

**Musa Dobruna:** Yes. I would appeal the composers to add the melody, I will only say the lyrics {Recites the anthem}.

*With you, National Liberation Council,  
To lead and unite us,  
With you, Albanian people rise today,  
And march to victory.*

Now chorus

*Rise you brothers, regardless of religion, country or idea,  
In our common fight against fascism.  
Rise all as time awaits not.  
Rise all Albanians for you love Albania!  
Today or never, with arms we should stand out,  
To oust the conqueror and gain our freedom.*

This is it. So the Antifascist National Liberation Movement was standing for national and social liberation. But soon the Yugoslav Headquarters made the proclamation, saying that the national question will be solved in the best possible way after the war. At that time the Conference of Yalta, Tehran, Moscow took place between... in which Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Stalin took part, these three decided that the European borders set in the Peace Conference of Paris, of Versailles, are not to be touched. This is a better answer to propagandists who don't know history, or who are tendentious, definitely tendentious in saying that Enver Hoxha and Fadil Hoxha sold out Kosovo. The European borders were not to be touched, and what happened - happened.

I mentioned earlier the institutional resistance against the displacement of Albanians from Kosovo. Discontent with the regime was great, due to the very slow economic development of Kosovo and in general in of the areas inhabited by Albanians. This caused the other resistance, and discontent grew after the imprisonment of people who were not happy within [Yugoslavia], and acted unarmed, but resisted and propagandized. They were for instance, my brother Sokol with Adem Demaçi, Kadri Kusari, what was his name, Ismail Dumoshi and others, others as well. In one occasional meeting that Fadil Hoxha had with the politically active [cadres] of Gjakova, the information leaked that political prisoners have the greatest merits for [giving] a stronger impetus to the development of Kosovo, because there was not a prison in Yugoslavia... ex-Yugoslavia, and I am not mentioning people, personalities, in which there were no Albanian prisoners. This!

In my family, my brother was in prison nine years. Sokol was sentenced to six and a half years, Muslim to eleven years. We were [taken in] only for a bit, they took me for informative talks twice, four hours each, but I don't know, they didn't imprison me. They most likely know the reasons. But as a family, we were a needle in the eye to the government. All participants in the Conference of Bujan had someone in prison. Some of them were murdered during and after the war. For instance Pavle Jovičević set up an ambush to Muharrem Bajraktari's troops. Hajdar Dushi, Sadik Pozhegu and some other partisans

were killed in an ambush. Xheladin Hana, he had been the director of the publishing house *Mustafa Bakija* and later *Rilindja*, he was killed in prison, under torture, in 1949. The efforts were superhuman, if I may say so, it required much work, and maybe trickery, too, but none of it helped. As a result of the Serbs' and Montenegrins' distrust of the Albanian Communists of Kosovo, of the leaders of the Antifascist National Liberation Movement, the Prizren Trial was organized. Have you heard about it?

**Jeta Rexha:** No, tell us something about it.

**Musa Dobruna:** The Prizren Trial was organized for the political assassination of accomplished Albanians, Albanian Communists with Fadil Hoxha in the lead. They prepared a file for each and every one and the politically active [cadres] of the province, they gathered, and on the agenda was the Fadil Hoxha problem. The file was this big {shows the size with his hands}, also others' [files]. What I will tell you now, are the words of Professor Ekrem Murtezaj, the academic, the words that Fadil said during a trip from Belgrade to Prizren. He [Murtezaj] used to be Fadil Hoxha's adviser in the Central Committee. "The moment of the session came, they sat down, the discussion started and each discussion was against me and my participation in the Movement... the Conference of Bujan, all of it. And at one point, I stopped, I thought 'I'm finished!' That is when I decided, this goes to the chairs of the session." He told Dušan Mugoša, "*Shok* [Comrade] Duç" in Albanian, because he knew Albanian well, "I'll have a couple of words with you alone." He gets up and goes, "This thing that you've organized is because I call mother *nanë*, and you call her *majka*. I am not going alone. I will not go alone!" I will end it as something that had a big influence on the efforts of our people against a, maybe it is too much to say, fascist regime! But that is what happened. Afterwards, other conferences happened as well.

In a party I attended, Fadil Hoxha was there with his friends from childhood, he had invited them to that party. This happened when Lini got engaged {he addresses his spouse}, in the '90s, when Fadil Hoxha was assassinated politically, they removed him. And he spoke to us, about our distancing from the big events of Yugoslavian country during that time... we were being ignored. On the other side, in the propaganda all over the world they always said, "Our politics, as realized in our relationship with ethnic minorities, was right, in Kosovo, in the relationships with Albanians." And surprisingly enough, after those declarations, the Secret Service of Republic of Serbia did its job: it jailed people, took them in for informative talks, then something very illuminating for me came to surface..

Speaking about his [Fadil Hoxha] life, during the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, he said, "I was working in the canteen of the military barracks of Gjakova and," he said, "My father, once a wealthy man, got so poor materially, that he would send his brother to check if [someone] could give us dinars to buy bread, salt, gas, petrol, because we didn't have electricity back then (smiles). And the time came when I could not stand life," he said, "I escaped to Albania." In Albania he completed the primary school in Shkodra, then he went to the *Shkolla Normale* of Elbasan. This happened during the time of King Zog. "One day, the school principal Aleksandër Xhuvani,<sup>35</sup> Aleksandër Xhuvani the Great, called me. "Take a seat," he said, "My son," he took a letter and said, "check what's written here."

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<sup>35</sup> Albanian philologist and educator, worked on the standardization of the Albanian language.

The Yugoslavian Secret Service sent Zog government a letter that says, ‘You have Communists who have escaped from Kosovo and they will make trouble for you. One of them is Fadil Hoxha.’” He said, “Well, I am going to school. What trouble am I making for you? I am just minding my own business.” “Yes, yes, yes, my son, just carry on with the work, carry on with studying.” And he took that letter {acts as if he is putting the letter in his pocket} and nothing. He was Aleksandër Xhuvani. This is why Kosovo youth escaped to Albania – to get educated or to find a better way of living. Here, I can just imagine, it was hell, hell itself.

## Part Five

**Musa Dobruna:** In the beginning of the ‘50s, there was, let’s call it a stand, because there were laws then, but people worked based on stands and not on laws to mobilize the working class in the Kosovo centers. At that time, around three hundred teachers and clerks went from Gjakova to all over Kosovo, to organize the education and administration here and there. And later, exactly in the ‘50s it happened again, for instance, when the great Zeqeria Rexha would issue/grant you a high school certificate, he who was most vocal against registering the Albanian Muslim population as Turks and sending them to Turkey for anti-Albanian reasons. This happened in the ‘50s: hundreds, thousands of Albanians were displaced from here. The effect of that mobilization of the working class was immense, because the influence of those Gjakovars was big in those centers. There was no center in Kosovo without teachers from Gjakova. And now, allowing to lift people without merits, to name them heroes who have fought against the Antifascist National Liberation Movement, is a big non-sense. And who? Those who, even though they saw that Germany was losing, lined up with the Germans, to fight against the partisans? This was the case with Shaban Polluzha for instance.

On one occasion, on 12 September 1999, I got into a dispute that I didn’t start. A civilian stepped in front of me by the Hotel Iliria, and told me, “Stop!” I stopped. “How can I help you?” He said, “Identify yourself.” I said, “I don’t see that you have the authority to stop me, to stop citizens.” He produced a card, on which PK was written in big black letters on a red background, PK. I read it and thought, Kosovo Police. This must be related to SHIK.<sup>36</sup> I had a verbal dispute with them. And to avoid the public, I entered the hotel via the parking entrance, they wouldn’t allow me to enter the director’s office, but I entered anyway. I told him... he calmed me down, I got out of there, and three persons were waiting for me there, with the dirtiest curses they had. And at one moment I said, “Poor me, after nearly 50 years I have to get the rifle and fight against evil,” I said, “I used to be a partisan.” He said, “Phew, my grandfather,” in a nasty language, “has beaten the shit out of partisans.” I said, “I have,” with the same nasty language, “of *Balli Kombëtar*” {shakes his head}, even though I was convinced that *Balli Kombëtar* wasn’t anti-Albanian, but it chose the wrong path. They did not line up with the greatest allies, with the United States of America.

<sup>36</sup> SHIK, acronym for Kosovo Information Service, an informal intelligence service that served Kosovo Liberation Army until the end of the Kosovo war.

[The phone rings] There was no center, whether big or small, where there were no teachers from Gjakova. That was it, all due to that organization. They used the stand for the mobilization of the working class, and within it they appointed teachers, clerks and others. My wife Hydajete was transferred from Peja to Rahovec, before she turned 17, 16-17 years old, she was working as a teacher. Then she was transferred by decree from here to Gjilan, together with her uncle Qamil Binxhia. She worked there as a teacher for five years. And the impression was that she was great. But over there, together with Qamil Binxhia and Hydajete, was also Miftar Vokshi for instance, Asim Vokshi's brother. There was Masa Kadia, Dervish Shehu, what was his name... a Suka guy, and many others. Mynyr Sanasi for instance, they sent him to Kaçanik to run the course for increasing the capacities of staff in accounting, finances. I will tell you an anecdote now, while he was drinking there with the locals, his friends with whom he cooperated, as they were drinking, they asked him, "Come on, tell us who is smarter, you in Gjakova, Gjakovars, or we from Kaçanik?" Mynyr Sanasi answered them, "No, you are smarter than we are." "How come?" "Your houses are under the ditch, and your fields are above the ditch" (laughs). Kaçanik gets flooded often. An anecdote...

**Jeta Rexha:** How did you meet Ms. Hydajete?

**Musa Dobruna:** Excuse me?

**Jeta Rexha:** With your wife, how did you meet her?

**Musa Dobruna:** It's a bit sad, but it's a matter of my determination. When the *Shkolla Normale* of Gjakova opened, there were three to four girls altogether in the entire school. The Committee decided to invite the political active [cadres], as we called them then, Xhevdet Hamza was late to arrive, and as soon as he got there he said, "I only have a couple of sentences to say. You realize that people are not sending their daughters to school. And I am telling you this, if you look at them with the eyes of youth," it was like that then, but it continues nowadays as well (smiles), "I am not only going to expel you from school, but I will jail you. Is it clear?" This was the end. And I obeyed my parents and found my life companion. I didn't experience the life of adolescence or youth. And we accomplished that the *Shkolla Normale* had more women than men. That's it. And this too is a result of the commitment of Albanian Communists.

There is another very important thing, but for Gjakova. A *Shkolla Normale* for housewives [home economics] was organized and opened. They came from all over Yugoslavia, 95 per cent of them were Serbs, Montenegrins, then from Bosnia, Macedonia, and others, others, from Vojvodina, and others. The intention was to marry in Gjakova. None of them got married in Gjakova, they didn't make it. One got married to a Serb, but even she divorced after a while. This is, this is peculiar of... I am talking about Gjakova during those times. The *Shkolla Normale*, the school for teachers, was built on the grounds of the barracks. The foundation was laid first and then we, the students of the school, got organized to go and make plaster, to carry bricks, sand. And the *Shkolla Normale* was built. At least twice a week Xhavit Nimani, Zeqeria Rexha, Fadil Hoxha, would come to see how the work was going

on. And, this happened in 1946 and lasted until 1953 when the *Shkolla Normale* of Gjakova, transferred to Pristina, and the work continued then.

Do you know something very interesting that happened? The Serbian hegemonic tendencies caused that most of the subjects in the *Shkolla Normale* at that time and in the Higher Pedagogical course for adult students were lectured in the Serbian language. Then Ali Hadri<sup>37</sup> found a way to organize a students' strike. We boycotted the classes. Fadil Hoxha, who was in Belgrade and was not allowed to come to Kosovo until very late, as it happened with a group of people, they just wouldn't allow them to come to Kosovo, found out... and he addressed the students, asking them to go back to classes. They called us, we went there and this is what he said, "Keep quiet, and study. When you become [teachers], these who have come from Belgrade will return to their places and you will carry on the work. Were they not here, we would be forced to bring people from abroad to teach school to our children." [He addresses his wife] Ramadan's words, excuse me. One professor, who was next to him, asked, "What is Fadil Hoxha saying?" "He is saying so-and-so..." "Yes he... yes, *da, ima pravo*, he is right, he is telling the truth. When you become [teachers], you will give lessons in your language." And students got back and the work continued. At that time, he ousted Zeqeria Rexha from here because he was vocal in the fight against the migration of Albanians from here, and the registration of Albanians of Muslim religion as Turks.

*[The interviewer speaks about the Kosovo Democratic League, the beginning of the story is not recorded according to the speaker's request]*

It was established as a movement for the rights of Albanians in then Yugoslavia. Fehmi Agani was offered to lead it, but he did not accept because he was invited very often to the Secretariat for Internal Affairs for informative talks, and he was almost excluded from the University education system, and he didn't want it. But he was the brain and the heart of the Movement, the Kosovo Democratic League, which got registered in the federal bodies at the time and acted legally. Ibrahim Rugova was chosen by chance. But Ibrahim Rugova was an intellectual, the man who has proclaimed the Kosovo cause in the world. I said it earlier, he has spread the geography of the Albanian world in the world, and the Kosovo cause. For everything that has happened, within the Democratic League, they were there... there were those people who have infinitely respected Fehmi Agani. But nowadays, he is rarely mentioned.

Changes have happened there, but we are humans and (smiles), we might change a bit (laughs). As Friedrich Nietzsche says, "Only the one who changes stays in touch with me," in a positive context, of course. The mentality of these people of ours changes as well. Slowly, but surely, it will change and we will make it (smiles). So. With Fadil Hoxha's initiative the statue of Hysni Dobruna was erected, the picture is there {he points at the picture}. He was one of the partisan commanders of the companies during the Second World War. As a clerk, he used to work in Vucitern [Vushtrri]. He went out as a partisan from there. He was a wise man, even when he was young he never argued with friends. But when the time came, he took the rifle and went to the woods. And he got murdered on his birthday, on

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<sup>37</sup> Renowned historian, the first director of the Institute of History of Kosovo.



16 October 1944, in Junik. After the Second World War, with Fadil Hoxha's initiative, the statue was erected. I even have the picture of when Fadil Hoxha unveiled it.

And after the KLA war, they removed his statue in Junik, and replaced it with the name of a KLA hero. We made a verbal request, and I will also sue the municipality. They removed his statue and nobody knows its whereabouts. The Mayor says, "Hooligans removed it." Well of course hooligans removed it, but have you done anything to find it. I will sue the municipality! This is a pity for another reason. They are taking off the names of schools bearing the names of heroes of the Antifascist National Liberation War: Emin Duraku, Hysni Zajmi and others. A woman, a clerk in the Kosovo Embassy in The Hague, was telling me that in a village near Malisheva, they took off the name of Emin Duraku, and replaced it with a name of some fighter there. It doesn't even cross my mind to underestimate the KLA war and it would be stupid of me to do so. However, is Junik not going to build any institution other than the ones named after KLA heroes? Isn't this erasing history? It can't be! {Shakes his head} But, what can we do.

## Part Six

**Musa Dobruna:** After the war, with the order of Xhevdet Hamza, the Secretary of the Committee at the time, a verbal decision was taken that I don't go to serve military service, given that I used to be a partisan. And I left it to the official bodies to sort that thing out. And in 1955, the Military Court in Niš rules my sentence. However, the sentence was left to the competencies of the Mayor of Gjakova, for him to decide on the sentence. And a family friend calls me here, a well-wisher I meant to say, Qamil Zenuni and tells me, "Read this: 'Go to the military.'" I tore it and it happened to me that I went and completed military service. I endured very difficult things there. I was being followed by the collaborators of KOS,<sup>38</sup> the military KOS. But I worked very hard. I didn't allow... they had their suspicions, but they had taken it from the mobilization office in Gjakova that I was a dangerous man. They communicated this to me after I completed the military service. They gave me the card, but the superior told me, "Look what it says." I told him, "Gjakova knows me. What is written here ... {shakes his head} has no importance to me." And we parted there.

I came to Gjakova and I couldn't find a job. They wouldn't give me a job. But I was hiding, I was being cautious of my father in case he... One day, "Are you not going to school?" I said "No." "What do you mean 'No'?" I said, "Well, I don't have a job." "How come you don't have a job? Why?" I said, "They told me to submit a request," I said "I didn't join the military service voluntarily. I have my position." I used to be a school deputy principal. Upset with what he had heard, he went to the Mayor and told him, "Are you the Mayor," or is it "Sami Zhujai?" "Why?" "Because I have some business to finish." He picks

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<sup>38</sup> KOS, acronym for the Counterintelligence service, a Yugoslav security service founded in 1946 from the remnants of OZNA. See footnote 43.

up the phone {he acts as if he is listening to the phone}. “Prepare the decree and appoint him to a school!” And I began working in 1957. No, in...1954-55. Sorry, can you correct that?

The theory book for third grade, the introduction of the book read, “Our ancestors, the Slavs, came from Carpathia in this century.” The member of the Committee came to check how was everything going, because I was a substitute teacher. He said, “Is there any trouble?” I said, “Yes.” “What kind of trouble?” “This book! I won’t do this unit.” He answered, “Don’t get yourself into trouble like Ibrahim Rugova... (Laughs), Ibrahim Zherka who has made a big deal of this in the Committee.” We are not Slavs. Maybe OZNA<sup>39</sup> went out and collected all the books, anywhere they disappeared. That unit was never thought again. Again, we in Gjakova did it. {He picks up a book from the table} And later this happened as well. {He places the book in front of the camera}. The author is Radovan Zogović. Quotations... in the introduction he says, “1001 thanks to the authors of these verses.” He completely unmasks the anti national regime, the monarchical-fascist regime of Karadorđević Yugoslavia. And this guy is a Montenegrin, Radovan Zogović, a friend of Esat Mekuli. The UDB<sup>40</sup> collected this book as well from book stores and... I had bought six copies, I gave away five, and kept this one. It’s in two languages, here “*Došljaci*”<sup>41</sup> – “*Ardhësit*.”<sup>42</sup> Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo are settlers (smiles). So.

I have engaged in activities to eradicate illiteracy, of women especially. I have learned writing and reading together with my mother. During that time I ran across *Bleta Shqiptare* [Albanian Bee] a temporary magazine, a compilation of all the numbers over a year, two or three. Within it there was Helen Keller’s biography. Born blind and deaf, the daughter of a very wealthy American, when she was eight years old, they hired a pedagogue for her, the pedagogue was requested to teach her the Hebrew alphabet and common nouns and proper nouns. She learns all these, and at the end, what is God. According to the convictions at that time, pedagogy claimed that God is a supernatural power that created the stars, the sun, the moon, the earth. And on earth, after it created all the existing material goods, he created man as the dearest creature. “All right” she said, “you have eyes to enjoy the beauties of the nature,” she said to her pedagogue when she was twelve. She answered, “Yes.” “I don’t. You have ears to listen to the symphony of the birds in the woods in nature.” “Yes.” “I don’t. You said that God is almighty, why did he allow me to be like this, I am not like you.”

She blamed parents and circumstances. “You have all these abilities, the senses to enjoy all these, I don’t have them.” She said, “It is my parents’ fault and circumstances. Why did it allow the parents? You said it is almighty, and you have said and you have spoken of life. The man is born, develops, grows old, and dies. Why die? And why not live forever and always young?” Now, let’s say the pedagogue’s logical answer was, “The world would be very small and wars would happen, conflicts among people, like crimes.” “Ah,” she said, “God Almighty, why does he allow that? And why does he allow wars? And if people breed so much, why doesn’t he create another world? You said that he

<sup>39</sup> OZNA, acronym for Department of National Security – Yugoslavian security service notorious for the persecution and establishment of a regime comparable to the KGB terror in Russia.

<sup>40</sup> UDB, acronym for State Security Administration that used to be the secret police of Yugoslavia.

<sup>41</sup> *Došljaci*, Serbian for settlers.

<sup>42</sup> *Ardhësit*, Albanian for settlers.

created all of this in just seven days.” And the teacher went to her parents and said, “There is nothing else that I can teach her. She knows more than me.”

Helen Keller died in the '70s, a Doctor of Philosophy, in 1903. She died as a High Commissioner of the United Nations for assistance to people with disabilities. Since then, I don't believe anymore. And there is another reason why I don't believe, because Islam was brought here by the Ottomans under the threat of the sword and gunpowder, and I have not seen any answers from Turkish cultural or state circles. Why? All the other nations around Albanians were allowed to get educated in their own language, but not Albanians. I have no sympathy for the Ottomans, or Islam. I am sorry if I am hurting your feelings. So.

**Jeta Rexha:** Mister Musa, what do you think have been your greatest achievements and how much did your dreams come true?

**Musa Dobruna:** Dreams... One of my dreams has been and continues to be the education of my children, who have completed their education, and of the future generations. Nothing else. This is my dream (smiles). And Halil Matoshi may object, but I want national union. I am not a nationalist who hates other nations. We are the poorest nation in Balkans. We are the first nation that has embraced Christianity, because we were slaves of the Romans. And many great personalities have emerged from those Illyrians, who have left their trace in time. There was Diocletian, whose palace still stands in Split, for instance. Thanks to the engagement of Ramadan Sokoli, a researcher from Shkodra, we find out that the composer of the first hymn ever which is sung in Catholic churches to this day was an Illyrian, Niket Dardani. And then it all happens, one thing after the other, the Roman Empire is divided between the Eastern Empire with Constantinople as the capital and the Western with Rome as the capital. Everything that happened later in history is common knowledge (smiles).