

INTERVIEW WITH NAXHIJE BUÇINCA

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Kohëzgjatja: 67 minuta

Present:

1. Naxhije Buçinca (Speaker)
2. Anita Prapashtica (Interviewer)
3. Emine Berisha (Interviewer)
4. Donjetë Berisha (Camera)

Symbols used about the comments in the transcript to support non-verbal communication

() – Emotional communication

{ } – The interviewee explains through gestures

Other symbols in the transcript:

[] – Additional symbol in the text to ease the understanding

Footnotes are editorial additions to give information about place, names and expressions.

Childhood

Emine Berisha: Ms. Naxhije, can you tell us about your childhood?

Naxhije Buçinca: My childhood was beautiful from birth up to a time, the break out of the Second World War. I was born in Ulqinj, on April 15, 1935, from Hodo, Hodo Beg Ulqini, my father, and Meleqe Lazoja, my mother. Until the war started, my family was a very happy one, a normal one, I was surrounded by love and maximum parental care. Since we were among those families that were economically well to do, we were rich, my brothers and sisters and I lacked nothing. But with the break out of the Second World War, which was a total destruction and was called world destruction, my family got in trouble. Not only my family, but all the families that had a good economic standing, were destroyed.

This is how my family got destroyed, because new systems and ideologies were built. From one democratic system, which then we could call democratic for real, we moved to a totalitarian system, I mean, a Communist system. We didn't belong in that system, because we acted very democratically, we were devoted, my family was devoted to the national cause and there was a moment and a climate in which as a nation we realized many rights in a democratic atmosphere. All that was interrupted by the arrival of the Communist system.

Therefore my family greatly suffered, it was traumatized, it experienced drastic economic losses, because we got robbed by this system, and we had to run away and leave our country to look for a roof over our head, because we belonged to another republic, unfortunately, to look for a roof that we thought we had till then in our homeland Albania. We were surprised, because even in Albania there was a totalitarian system headed by Enver Hoxha, and we were not welcome there. We were ideologically unwanted because we didn't follow that line, so we had to live illegally in Tirana for a long time. We could not use the name Alibegu,¹ because they didn't accept any social class or caste, since they eliminated classes. It was an imaginary elimination however, because classes did not disappear.

We remained anonymous as a family in Tirana. Thus my father escaped the Montenegrin Communist regime, because we had two enemies, ideology, but also, as a nation, we had the Montenegrins who didn't accept our activities for the [Albanian] national cause and our lives as a minority in Montenegro, not a minority within Ulcinj, but inside the Republic of Montenegro. This way we were between two fires, and we lived mostly illegally there too. However, the country's [Albania's] Secret Services was working like the ones in Montenegro because they had the same ideology, and they found out where we lived. My father was under "house arrest" and no one knew about him, because my father and my uncle were well-known

¹ Beg (great) or bey, Ottoman provincial ruler but also, when included in the last name, a sort of honorary title.

as Cafabeg Ulqini and Hodobeg Ulqini, my uncle was even a participant in the Second League of Prizren.² We were wanted as a family, and my father and uncle as activists. They found us, searched our home and arrested my father before my very eyes. This was the most horrifying thing, I didn't understand what was happening, I was in elementary school. However, I knew that something unpleasant was bound to happen sooner or later.

Upon the arrest of my father in Tirana they said, "You will be deported to Yugoslavia." Then they called it Montenegro, meaning, you have to go because you are not an Albanian citizen, you belong to Montenegro. So, they sent us to Ulqinj, and when we returned we fell in the wolf's mouth, we returned. We were anonymous and isolated even in Ulqinj, since everyone was afraid of this system and of the Albanians, and for the Albanians this was a very unpleasant time because they were a different nation, a different confession, and unacceptable to Montenegro, thus every attempt to show our identity was judged and punished.

Therefore I finished the elementary school in Tirana and I was due to go to high school, and it was a surprise that in 1948, after my father was deported to the prison of Podgorica, he was sentenced as a nationalist because he raised the flag in church... because we had a lot of tolerance, but he raised the Albanian flag in the Catholic Church, and for that action, for my father's actions but also because he was an Albanian, he was sentenced to death, for no other reason except that he was Albanian and he fought for his and his nation's Albanian identity. He was sentenced and executed in Podgorica. This was a big loss for my mother, for my family, and for all others who belonged to our family. Thus, we were very much isolated, and all our means of life were destroyed, every property was confiscated and destroyed to the maximum.

My mother had saved her jewelry, we lived off these jewels for a long time, and our uncles were in good economic standing. They would bring us food at night so we could survive this situation. Thus, we grew up with heavy traumas. The one who suffered the most was my elder sister because she was older, 18 years old, my brother was a bit younger than she. The other brother remained in Albania because he was wanted [in Montenegro] and he was 19 years old, they wanted to execute him too. He remained illegal in Albania the entire time until 2005, when he died at age 81. We didn't have any contact with him for 40 years until the borders opened.

Thus, all this life was sad. However, when my father went to... we were present at his trial, as a small child I sneaked in secretly, I didn't know what they were saying, I didn't know enough Serbian. But I remembered his trial, they said, "Smer, Streljanje," [Direction of shooting] that meant that the trial or the judge's decision was for him to be executed. So I went, and gave the news to my mother, she however understood the language, and the older ones understood what it meant. She got very upset, and she had the right to meet my father from a distance and my father gave her a message. So he said, "Don't get upset," and continued "please, now the children are in your hands, please, educate my children and orient them towards Kosovo." In 1948 the borders were completely closed and we were locked out and isolated from our motherland. "Educate them and orient them towards Kosovo, because our motherland now must be Kosovo."

Mother kept her promise, despite the fact that she was like all the mothers of the time, she had some education from the madrasa,³ a so called education, it was a religious education. She remembered those

² The Second League of Prizren was founded in 1943. It aimed at protecting the unification of Albanian populated lands which had been realized under Italian and German occupation during WWII. In Kosovo, in 1944, the League was responsible in good part for the expulsion of thousands of Serbs.

³ Muslim religious school, the only school where teaching could be conducted in Albanian until 1945.

words well and educated all of us. It was our duty, we were four of us, beside the brother who stayed in Tirana, the oldest brother, all four of us were oriented towards education. My older sister who finished Shkolla Normale⁴ in Tirana, while I finished elementary school, and she returned because they deported her to Montenegro, where she became a teacher and guided us.

As the eldest one, my sister continued our mother's duty, under my mother's guidance, that we had to get educated. How to get educated when we didn't know the Serbo-Croatian language! Despite the fact that we were among... 85% were Albanians in Montenegro, and we were close to each other, the borders with Albania were always open, but we didn't know. We were still young, everything was Albanian in that democratic period, if we can call it that way. We thought that they wouldn't let us get educated, it is a miracle how we fit in that combination. My sister, brother and I were educated in Albanian language. They gathered us from Ulqini, together with 15 other children from different villages, and sent us, but we couldn't go to Podgorica to be educated, not to Cetinje, not to Ivangrad...

Youth

[Part of the interview cut out from the video: the interviewer asks the speaker to talk about her youth.]

Naxhije Buçinca: Since we could not afford it, we told them we couldn't go. Not only we were the enemy of the people, but they called us "the children of the one who was executed," because my father was executed. There were other children from villages and together with them we somehow entered in that combination, so they sent us to the Shkolla Normale of Gjakova. It was such a pleasure (laughs) and it was a great surprise for the first time to know a part of my Albanian world in a completely separate territory. There we got educated along with my brother and sister, then Mitrovica. In 1954 the Shkolla Normale was transferred to the center of Pristina. We graduated in 1954, I graduated from the Shkolla Normale, the first generation, actually the second generation that finished the full four years of Shkolla Normale, because then they prepared staff fast by putting them through different courses, this was the first regular four year school where we were taught how to become teachers.

I had an interview with some Kosovo journalist who interviewed me, and I said, "I am going to be a people's teacher," and I returned to Ulqinj. But hostility awaited me there, all the men who didn't have any family in Ulqinj got the job, while they transferred me to the farthest place. That was a form of punishment, but it wasn't a great priority for me, because I was in a very picturesque place, it was a place near the lake of Shkodra, the center was Ostros, and all the residents knew me, whose daughter was I, which family I came from. It was a miracle, I was the first woman teacher, the daughter of Hodobegu came to Ostros as a teacher.

It was a great pleasure then, because I started to work on Albanian women's education, although literacy courses were not allowed, only health courses. Since they allowed health courses, I thought, what to do? I opened literacy courses parallel to health courses and I was successful, because we held them... they had great trust in me and we held courses in private houses. We also had health courses, but mainly in private houses, and I had eight centers in eight main villages, around which smaller villages gravitated. Thus, it was a great satisfaction because it was ethnically clean, I didn't have to use Serbo-Croatian language, even though the program was from the educational system of former Yugoslavia, the one created after the Second World War. Thus my work for women's education started in 1954.

I can say that this marks the sixtieth anniversary that I met Fahiri in the Shkolla Normale - a hand, a very good hand, not that he grabbed me, but we went along very well, we graduated together. He was a good

⁴ Teachers' training.

friend of my brother, and a kind of sympathy began there, I liked him as a friend and I never thought that we could get married and be a couple for life. However, I moved with great pleasure because I had so much trouble from the Montenegro State Security, especially when I got my first ID card, they kept me there for five or six hours, and I had to declare who I was. I said, "I am Albanian." "No," he said, "the time of being Albanian has passed, now it is not the time of Albania," meaning that time I experienced as a democracy, even though I didn't know it, because I was a child. He said, "There are no more Albanians, you are Montenegrin." I said, "Never, I am not, I was not and I will not be a Montenegrin," and he said, "What is your last name?" "You know well what's my name," I said, "My name is Alibegu, Alibegaj..." "No," he said, "your last name must be Alibegović." I said, "Never in this world will I add the 'vić' to my name," I said, "sorry, otherwise I will not take my ID card."

So, they were on the phone with... I don't know who it was, but I spent five-six hours there while my family was so worried because I was kept there so long, even though they knew, because when I started as a teacher, he said, "What family do you come from? You don't even deserve to go there, to Kraja, you don't deserve to be employed at all." So I didn't accept it, but surprisingly, I don't know why, I will try to show that ID card if it proves something, I have that ID card, however, it does say Naxhije Alibegaj, nationality "Albanian" and I have the date when they issued it to me. But I had many problems afterwards, many confrontations, and was under surveillance. Therefore, Fahri's hand came at the time when I had to leave Ulqinj for good. Despite that, my family suffered a lot, I too suffered a lot personally, so Fahri's extended hand was a lifesaver. However, I said, "I must continue my mission because Kosovo needs teachers, I will join my husband as a teacher," because he too was a teacher.

To illustrate this, during that time when we, it was the appropriate time, before the Second World War, my paternal uncle was a member of the High Council of Albania and he brought together all Albanian lands, he encouraged the Minister of Education to send about 460 teachers from Albania to all ethnic Albanian lands. This was before, during and after the war, when they were very concentrated in Ulqinj, even in the sandjak of Novi Pazar, back then we had a school named Naim Frashëri even in Kosovo. Because of what the Minister of Education did, my uncle gave him land, so he could build his villa. We were very grateful to the Minister of Education, Ernest Koliqi, who did everything for the Albanian lands that were outside Albania. This was a great priority for Kosovo and for all Albanian lands such as Montenegro, Tuz, all Montenegro, Ulqinj, Tuz, but also other lands that we thought belonged to Albania.

In the sandjak of Novi Pazar, Albanian schools opened because all these lands were ours and belonged to the territory of Albania. Thus a meaningful education began, but with the war starting, with the change of system, everything was destroyed and so they [Albanian teachers] left, some of them stayed, like we have professor Mehmet Gjevori, who worked 60-70 years for the cause of education, he stayed from before the war. He also created a family here. He had sons and daughters and grandchildren. Jeta is one of the journalists who is the granddaughter of Mehmet Gjevori. So, I think with the arrival in Kosovo, Fahri's extended hand gave me enough space and possibility, and yes space, for my need to work in the direction of girls' education. I mean, my focus was the education of girls.

I found here a very pleasant atmosphere because I was among thousands, however, every change you make, or every individual who thinks differently, or has a different culture, my main focus was always the human being, and thus we could collaborate even with those who had a different nationality from mine. Again, we came to an environment where Serbs were privileged, but here I had to fight, first because the other nationality was not a majority, here they were not a majority but a minority. They were privileged, I mean, we were discriminated, in Kosovo I found the same situation as in Ulqinj, because the system was a totalitarian Communist system, but the focus was a war against the majority of the population and programs were created for the elimination of Albanians in Kosovo.

Let's not list who the authors were, it was a big war for the Albanian identity to exist, thus it was also a war for education, because the biggest pain of the other side where we didn't belong, of that nation, was that Albanians remain uneducated. And this was a war, because when I got married, my wedding was in 1959-60, I didn't find a pleasant situation, not to speak historically, what happened here with the collection of weapons, the expulsion of Albanians, their expulsion under the pretext that this was not an Albanian land, that they were Muslims and they must go to the Orient, go the East. My brother in-law and my sister in-law are presently here, but 40-50 years ago they were forced to leave our land. Today they breathe somewhere far, but they have lived with us. Momentarily they are present during this interview.

My work still continued, I mean, the most essential, sensitive part was the education of girls, because we experienced a patriarchal mentality, then violence, especially permanent violence in the villages, we still have a fresh memory of the war in '99. For Albanians, this experience begun with the arrival of the Communist system. Their program was to empty Kosovo of all the Albanians. Thus, I had a favorable ground to complete the mission I had given myself since the earliest days of my education.

I told many stories of my childhood, the beautiful part of my childhood, but also the sad part. However, I remember something from my childhood that was pleasant for me, since we lived together with my paternal uncle and his family and my father, all one big family. I didn't experience my grandfather, but my grandmother yes. She was a woman with great authority and all her sons obeyed her, she had two sons and three daughters, but she lived with her sons. I was the youngest and the most capable, hence one day she said to me, "Go down there to fetch water for your uncle and fill up the pitcher with fresh water." I looked at her like that, "I don't fetch water for my father, why would I fetch it for my uncle." I believe that it was very hard for my grandmother and she was surprised, how could I have said that sentence, "I don't fetch water for my father, why would I fetch it for my uncle." Later, I did analyze how I was as a child, I myself didn't like authority, I was very anti-authority, I couldn't stand authority. And so she said, "Tonight you will pay for this." However, my mother thought it was cute that I refused and she was supportive, because I was the closest child to her, my uncle was someone distant in relation to my father, because I gave priority to my father. She winked at me like this {opens her eyes} "Go now, later this will be forgotten." My grandmother threatened me by saying, "When your uncle comes down to drink water, you will see what will happen to you." I ignored it immediately, I ran away to the neighborhood where my friends were, so this thing somehow got forgotten. She threatened like that, but it didn't have any physical consequence for the child. Oral punishment could always be used to discipline a child, and oral punishment was used.

I remember another sweet moment, I think about a small devilish part of my childhood. We had a mulberry tree in our yard, we called it berry tree, and I always wanted to pick the biggest mulberries. My mother, who was frying fish in the summer kitchen, saw me. I thought she wouldn't let me climb the berry tree, so I went behind her, it was in a corner of the house, it was easy to climb the tree from the street that was on that side, one climbed on the roof of her summer kitchen. That summer kitchen was improvised, and I didn't think whether I would hang on it or not, but all I wanted was to pick that biggest berry. So while I was making slow steps, a board collapsed under my feet near where my mother stood frying fish. She got scared and said, "What happened?" and I fell on my two feet, and ran away. She said, "Even if she was falling on her head, she'd land on her feet; always land on her feet." And I ran away, fearing she would scold me. "Come here, my child, thank God you fell on your feet and not differently, you didn't get hurt, don't be afraid I am not going to do anything to you." This was also a pleasant episode of my life as a child.

I mean, since those moments, I always hung out with boys, even when we played boys games, look what terms we used, "komitë dhe xhandarë," imagine, komitë means rebels escaping to the mountains, and

police. I was always the rebel. Then later all my friends called me, “Naxhi the boy,” because I played with boys all the time. But my girlfriends were always timid, no, you couldn’t play with boys, those were boys games. Finally they renamed me, “Naxhi the boy.” However, my brother was always near me, we were similar in age, there was only one year difference between us, and so whatever ability was needed, like running, or getting somewhere, I played that role. These were three episodes of my childhood that I remember with pleasure, and all these games took place in the forest, on the beach by the sea in Ulqinj. Those waves of the sea followed me in good and bad times, they used to put me to sleep and I am very nostalgic and I am very connected with Ulqinj, especially now. I am nostalgic and connected to Ulqinj because I go there every year and I have a small, modest house on the Big Beach, which I use every year.

I explained my childhood a little, but while growing up there is something in patriarchal families that stops the development of a woman as a member of society. I remember that my mother was the first woman who wore a bathing suit at the beach, you can imagine. This was our tradition, and people said that Hodobeg’s wife went to the beach, because some upper class women from Albania, Tirana, especially Shkodra, visited us. Those women visited us and like my mother they wore bathing suits, so when we continued, although we were under occupation, when we continued this tradition, going out like mother like daughter, it depended on the age I must say, relatively elder girls continued to go to the beach.

One day Drita Gunga, a close friend and a great activist, told me, hesitantly, because she was sick, she told me, “When I was in Ulqinj, I was a guest of a family,” and her friend told her, she accepted her in the family, and called her, “Drita, can we go out to the beach, go to the beach?” Her friend’s grandmother said, “Where do you want to go?” “We want to go to the beach to sunbathe and swim.” “Stay put, girl, stay where you are, what going out?” And she said, “Look Hodobeg’s Naxhi, Dilaver and Hinda, they are going.” “Do you know who they are? They are Hodobeg’s daughters. You want to compare yourself to them, you want to go to the beach? Even their mother went to the beach, so it is expected that they go to the beach.” This episode that Drita told me, I say it with regret, I wish her health, Drita Gunga, when she told me, can you imagine, I wasn’t even aware that others thought that it was acceptable for our family, that we were on the same level as the Europeans, and it was acceptable for others, that this was a new opening so other girls could join us to the beach. The issue was not only the beach, it was an opening for women to be equal to men.

Now I remember when Igo [Rogova] said that evening, at the promotion of the foundation for the education of girls Buçinca Couple, that the Buçincas were a model of gender equality, because now we deal with gender issues and we talk about it all the time. Yes, we talk, but we will see later whether it resembles reality or not, it has become fashionable to talk about gender equality. She presented us as a model, as a couple whose partners are equal at home and in society and everywhere.

I want to say that we inherited a patriarchal family even in that part of Ulqinj. I also found a similar patriarchal family in Vushtrri, which made me think that I was in the middle ages, but they had a civilization within the family, it wasn’t a secret civilization, it was anonymous, a civilized behavior in that city. This was imposed on me, however I continued to chart my way towards women’s liberation. I made a gesture that didn’t agree with the patriarchal mentality that they had, but I was supported by Fahri of course, because I felt nostalgia, in Fahri’s country, I felt nostalgia for the sea, and he said, “We have Sitnica.”⁵ When I went there, Sitnica looked like something very small, however, I satisfied my nostalgia... I swam in it. We went together, but we saw that there was not a single woman, I was the only woman, okay, a girl, the wife of a citizen born in Vushtrri. So I plunged into the water, I saw a sign with men younger or older than I jumping and making somersault in the waters of Sitnica. I measured the depth,

⁵ River that flows into the Ibar river at Mitrovica, the longest river flowing completely within Kosovo’s borders.

the water wasn't like that of the sea, it was sweet water, so I plunged to find out, as if looking at something strange that came from somewhere from above. I plunged as the sign showed, and I took the position that we call, "pigeon" pose, with open arms, it was wonderful because I had learned it at the sea, where I grew up. Everyone always talked about Fahri Buçinca's wife swimming in the Sitnica, and she dives from the board on her head, {shows the pose with her arms}. This too was also like an explosion, how shall I say it, whatever men did, women could also do.

I gave a sign, this was a sign for all and I had the support of my students. I was teaching them from elementary school and up. I had support, they liked everything. They were timid, but they liked every gesture that was done for the advancement of women, acceptable in the family and in society. But for some conservatives that was unacceptable, but I must emphasize that one man, hoxha⁶ Mikullovc, his son was the Director of the Grand Hotel before it was privatized, a manager, he spoke to me with outmost sympathy, he was for education, he did a lot for education, he said, "I like you gestures, I accept you." When you hear this from a mullah who is considered an authority, I mean, beside my husband, I got another big support from a generation that was not even close to mine. I mean, I was accepted by people who knew what progress meant and who respected education and respected progress. However, this influenced the family, it influenced mentality {turns to those present}. So mullah Mikullovc said this, didn't he?

This, this encouraged me to continue, regardless of gossip that follow these things with different implications. However, I said, "Time will tell that I was right." Was I right? Every day I tried to convince myself that this road I was on was the right road for the liberation of women from the backwardness of patriarchal mentality.

My marriage took place in '59-'60. On August 5, I gave birth to Genc. Genc made me a mother, it was an indescribable event for me. I created my family, in other words, I had a child, I was a mother. Although I suffered during my pregnancy, it was a sudden satisfaction when I became a mother. Later on, I thought to pause a little for three years. Then in '63, on February 1, I gave birth to Xheraldina. Xheraldina was born in such cold weather... in '63, it was February weather... at that time we didn't have vehicles, no taxi, these things. Carriages brought us to our destination, the hospital's maternity ward. I had difficulties while giving birth to Genc, the maternity ward in Vushtrri was not prepared for that. Thus, I gave birth in Pristina, so he says, "It is good that I was born in Pristina." He says to Xheri, "You were born in Vushtrri." But in '63 the maternity ward was prepared in Vushtrri, there was a midwife from Skopje and Fahri trusted her. The doctor who was her supervisor was Fahri's friend, she said, "There is no need to go to Pristina, she will give birth here." So I gave birth in Vushtrri to a strong and heavy girl, normal, weighing four kilograms like Genc, I had two children.

It was a pleasure when I had two happinesses, one that I became a mother and Genc made me that, and two, I wanted a girl and I got Xheri. It was my satisfaction as a family that I had two sexes, however to have two sexes in an environment with a patriarchal mentality was not so easy, because the mentality penetrates even in the family and in the attitude of its social circle. So Genc grew up in a specific society, and his friends visited him and he visited them. One day he noticed some kind of power, among other things, so one day he occasionally told Xheri, "Give me a glass of water." "Do you have hands, do you have legs? So go get it and never ask me for water." He stopped, it was a shock for him that his sister didn't listen to him, since he thought that all his friend's sisters not only served glasses of water, but they fixed their bed, and prepared tea and performed all these services, and, "She behaves with such arrogance with me for just a glass of water!" He thought like his friends, like a man, he had to be dominant in the relationship with her sister. And I couldn't explain to him gender equality theory, so in order to soften this

⁶ Local Muslim clergy, mullah.

situation, because this is a long process, he said, “Mother, she is a bit bitchy, that arrogance.” I said, “But leave it alone, she is in puberty now.” He said, “Do you know mother? I understood that she got in puberty, but when is she going to get out of it?” (Laughs) I was dumbfounded, really dumbfounded and surprised, a smile followed all this, so I said, “We will see, slowly, slowly this too will get regulated.” In other words, I was not able to explain gender equality, but tried to soften this, because this was the process, in other words my boy wanted to tell me that he had to be treated by his sister the same way his friends were treated by their sisters.

This was what was different in my family, and it was noticeable from the beginning. Gender equality began from the beginning, now we always talk about it, but before we never even mentioned gender equality, we didn’t even know what gender equality was. We knew that injustice happened to women, and that there were programs to correct this issue, because nothing could be fixed before a long time passed, many mentalities changed, and many different generations changed. Without education nothing can be attained. There is no change with programs and dry debates, because every established law which is approved now in free Kosovo, every law must have material support in order to be enforced, otherwise it stays unimplemented, without having any effect because the situation is... We were in a meeting of the Network [Kosovo Women’s Network] where Sweeds apparently conducted a poll to see what the Kosovar society had achieved in terms of gender equality, and whether the law had been implemented. Laws have been created, everything is beautiful, but implementation is the biggest problem for gender equality and for everything that concerns the social, political ideological, economic life of society, [the problem] is the non-implementation of the law.

Thus, both of them got educated, my son was more interested in astronomy but we couldn’t afford it, because back then he had to go abroad to study it. However, during a visit, my late brother said, “Uncle’s lad, I advise you, I don’t impose it, I advise you to become a doctor in the future.” Since he had respect for his uncle, he said, “I’ll take medicine.” He was an excellent student, excellent among all the excellent students in his entry exam, all his life, from elementary school through high school, [he went] without any Fours.⁷ He said, “I will go and register in the school of medicine in Pristina.” So he registered, because they had the entry exam then, and all his grades were excellent. He continued medicine without loving it much, but he had a sharp sense for diagnoses. He knew what was wrong with patients during his internship, he guessed it, I mean, he had a special sense, he could notice what was wrong, and with a very short explanation he could tell what was the person’s complaint and what kind of sickness he might have.

However, in 1986 everything followed, he graduated and got married, he now has two children like sun rays, Ermal and Lurni, both of them very good students, I must say excellent. And he never abandoned his profession, however, today he leads a very prestigious pharmaceutical company, Bosnialjek, from Bosnia, as the best manager in the region. This was not his thought, but the decision of the Sarajevo’s headquarters, they gave him to manage the branch in Albania, so he manages Kosovo and Albania and he is an excellent manager. He never abandoned medicine, because now he has to deal mostly with drugs, but he gives a lot to the different medical specializations and he sponsors doctors for the advancement of the profession that now he is not practicing, but he is still working on that issue. He is always ready to sponsor his colleagues, his young colleagues, to send them to participate in conferences worldwide, because they get acquainted with new things and new discoveries in conferences. However, the internet has contributed much to this issue, thus momentarily he is managing like an excellent manager.

I thought Geraldina should study literature, she had affinity for literature because since her early age, when she was five years-old, in ‘68, she learned a poem about Skanderbeg. Seven stanza, and she was only five years old, she remembered it all, practicing with me, because it was the 500th Anniversary of

⁷ On a grading scale from One to Five, where Five is the highest grade.

Skanderbeg and his figure. Five years old and she recited it wonderfully, a composer gave her a bouquet of flowers, greeted her for her talent, for how she recited her poem and said it very beautiful. She was creative, something I discovered later, when she started first grade and started to write. She loves animals, she dedicated her first poem to a dog, an animal, a creature very close to people. When she recited it, sometimes Genc said, "Come, write about the cat," he said, "you did the dog, come now, write about the cat." But she started to create seriously, and she has three or four publications, they are translated in English. Now, she has a publication, a poetry collection, but she is a bit lazy because she doesn't like to work much, she does work in that direction, but publishing... she remains anonymous, she is a poet like Ali Podrimja, they used to meet in Ulqinj, in the summer gatherings of Ulqinj where many Kosovar writers presented their works, and he said, "Naxhi, I included her as the only woman in my anthology because she is the only high level woman poet in Kosovo." I respect very much Ali Podrimja's point of view, he was our number one poet. I am sorry he is no longer with us, rest in peace, but his life, his work still continues. This was a huge compliment for me and I immediately transmitted that to Xheri so she would be encouraged to continue with her creativity. The book is ready, she does not want to publish it, only with the criteria she likes, but publishers, naturally, they have their own criteria, however, she is a very serious poet. She is very honest in presenting herself as a poet, she is not anonymous, she creates, she still creates.

She is the deputy director and cofounder of a very prestigious company, Television 21. She cofounded this company together with Aferdita Saraqini as the director, and she became the deputy director. Those two started the creation of this television and had a huge successes. They lead, have an excellent staff, she works with a team, but it was all Aferdita's, Xheri's, Florin's and Eugen's merit that this television achieved what it is today. Xheri is also a very good trainer for journalists. A few days ago she did some training for members of Parliament on how they should communicate. A person cannot inherit everything but one can learn, one can learn anything and succeed. When you learn, you become what is expected of you.

Both of them are successful, I love them very much. One more thing, I raised them... I raised both of their kids. I raised Genc's kids, and I raised Xheri's Ledri. Ermal is an architect, he has his own office together with his friend. Lurni is a senior at the American University of Kosovo (AUK), as you know, he is presently the first assistant of Isa Qosja, the director of "Three windows and a hanging." It is a very interesting theme, how the women who were raped during the war... let me not make any comments now... how these raped women remained anonymous, since they were raped by the brutal Serbian power, and they experienced a second rape by the environment in which they live. The film does not try to represent what they say, but how their environment accepted them. It is a privilege for Ledri to work with Isa Qosja, since all Ledri's family is involved in art. He is involved in contemporary youth art, hip-hop. He writes his texts himself, he always did. It doesn't mean that he gave this up, but he doesn't want to take part in concerts, he wants to create, or to make videos with his texts. I believe that in the future, when he finishes his Master's, because he is now attending Master's... He achieved his Master's because his GPA was 96, and he is working with the number one director in Kosovo, Isa Qosja.

We expect Lurni to become one... He is in media management, to become an expert. The two of them, the three of them are good, I raised them, I helped them (smiles). Not to say that they had their parents, their mother and father, also Xheri and Agron. But I helped with their upbringing, because today mothers and mothers-in-law are needed to help because the system of life has changed. After the war, everything has changed, because a woman who works cannot be devoted much to the family, but she has to be devoted to the work she does outside, to achieve what she thinks she needs to achieve. This way I was a helper, a

shoulder, sometimes I even had to steal time from Xheri, Genc and the grandchildren to dedicate myself to my main mission that was the education of Albanian girls.

Activism

[Part of the interview cut out from the video: the interviewer asks the speaker to talk about her activism.]

Naxhije Buçinca: As they say, my work was dedicated to the patriotic cause because we were in some way occupied by the Communist system. We were not equal even though we lived in equality, but I built this life even earlier, when I explained my childhood education. I continued, and when I arrived in Kosovo, in Vushtrri, I continued with my reactions where the rights of Albanians and my nation were abused. Thus I did not call it a political life, but I called it a life in which every person must defend one's nation, to defend the cause of that population to which one belongs, because it was abused, threatened, and discriminated in many ways. Therefore, I didn't say that it was my political movement, or my political action, as I accepted it as patriotic work, the duty of every member who experienced all that...especially after Milošević's rise to power.

Thus, I experienced some big disappointments as a result of my behavior in '68 when I celebrated, when I was in school, I celebrated the November 28, when one of my excellent students, Mirvete Badivuku Pantina, today a Ph.D., learned the poems of Lasgush Poradeci, "Bjenë Telat" [Fallen Strings]. It talked about November 28, the Independence of Albania which was independence for us too, but an unexperienced independence because we didn't dare even mentioning it, not even Albania or the flag. And in '68 I celebrated it in every classroom, the girls dressed up, Xheraldina also in '68 recited the poem about Skanderbeg. She was dressed in a red dress with the black eagle on the side. Also my students, headed by Myrvete, Myrvete Badivuku...went from classroom to classroom, without asking permission from the principal. The principal was a political person, he always followed politics and naturally he defended, don't mention the cause, he defended his position as principal. I paid no attention. It was celebrated there and we had...there were those who said, "What is this? How can you mention Albania?" and it became a municipal problem, it went even further to Kosovo [provincial level]. They formed a committee for differentiation [purging committee], because I was a member of the party, but interestingly some said, "You, who belonged to the party?" I said, "It was more difficult for us, because we were in the party, to defend our issues, our own cause. We were confronted with big problems and they fired me from work." As it happened.

The committee was formed, but Albanians too were in politics. They knew that what happened was not supposed to happen, and since we have intellectuals, they did their job. I had great support from the writer Azem Shkreli, I respected him as an artist. He aimed to have me fired from my job in every discussion. When you were fired from the party, you were automatically fired from your job. This was an undisputed help from Azem Shkreli whom I thank. Although he is not alive now, he is one of the excellent figures of our literature. And later we experienced other things.

I also reacted when the Milošević's regime was so cruel, that it had an impact on our educational system, eliminating everything Albanian, bringing in more teaching hours in Serbian than Albanian, it was 1981, when the youth mobilized, the youth was always revolutionary (smiles). Thus party meetings were held, differentiations [purges], all the things against our people. I defended, I openly defended our people, the students movement of 1981. Defending them at that time meant that you signed your own firing, for being arrested. However, there was a good part of Albanians who didn't belong to the leadership, [the leadership] was very cruel, and were also very strict. The organizers, including professor Emin Fejza,

whom I respect a lot, were the organizers of the students movement and of the youth of Vushtrri. That too went, that too passed, I was a deputy principal, so I was fired from my job, I remained without a job until 1986. I wasn't much bothered by this, it is interesting, because I expected that when you do a certain action you know there will be consequences. For me it was not a holiday, I continued my education in post graduate studies in pedagogy, that I had finished earlier in Pristina, I studied literature and language in the faculty of philosophy.

What this means is that Serbs were not at peace, they said, "This one was fired but she is studying." So they wanted to deny me this right to study. I continued, and in 1986 we were forced, we were under pressure, we were forced, my daughter was, Xheri was engaged. The intention was to move away from our close circle, as for our work it was really a small circle, so we moved to Pristina. I got a job in the elementary school Dardania for a month. It was there that that I didn't break down not thanks to my abilities, but to my creativity, because I was fired from work for three-four years. I continued with the same zest, I did the same thing and that is how got a full time job (smiles). The riots happened later, after 1981 came 1989, when the miners entered the mines, that was a splendid act that a miner could do for the cause and for what was waiting for them in Kosovo from 1981 on.

This event was registered in the history of liberation of Kosovo, I mean when miners protested in the depth of the mines against the violent policy of Serbia towards Kosovo and the Albanians of Kosovo. So while they were down there in the mines without food, without light, without enough air, I started organizing, I thought, we have to show solidarity, and within 24 hours I organized to stay in school without eating. All Albanians agreed, but there were also Serbs there but they stayed aside, being upset and waiting to see what was going to happen. We got organized, I was the initiator, myself and a secretary who helped me a lot, I can't remember her name unfortunately. She was a wonderful woman, a good worker. Then I wrote a telegram that was sent. . .It still exists at our television in 1991, it existed, and it was called "telegram to Radio Pristina." Naturally this activity was noticed by the Municipal Committee of Pristina, and so different hurdles began around the firing of the entire team that fought for our cause, that showed solidarity with the miners.

Besides that, I organized help for the children of the miners who were still in the depths of the mines, the children who were left outside, meaning the families without any income. It was March 8, when we met and proposed. . .not a single child was allowed to bring a carnation to the teacher or any of the modest gift they used to bring. The money would go to the children of the miners, it was decided to give a gift to the children of the miners. I mean, it was small help, I can say, a symbolic help of our support. In 1989, once there was also my mother there, my mother had come to visit from Ulqini, she knew about the problems that were following me, and I went to school. The principal was waiting by the door of the school and he forcefully said, "You can't enter the school." I said, "Allow me, today I will hand in the registry." He said, "Out, you have no right." It was a violent leadership, let me not mention their names, because they were in the service of the government who practiced oppression over the majority of Albanians and education in Albanian. So he said, "You can leave the school premises immediately, you can leave the school." Two teachers escorted me out, they taught in the morning shift, my shift was in the afternoon, with the fifth graders, the sixth graders etc. I turned proudly, and said, "It is surprising. . ." to the principal, two brothers were teachers of geography, I said, "It is surprising. . ." I think one of the brothers, Azem, "Surprising is," he said, "aren't you upset?" I said, "Why should I be upset, did I do anything wrong that they fired me? I would get upset. . . if I did something bad against my people, against a human being. I am not upset at all." The minute I opened the door, my mother from a corner went, "Did they get rid of

you?” (smiles). I said, “Yes mother. They got rid of me, but I don’t care that they got rid of me. I know why I am mobilizing, it is for our cause.”

So this was 1989, and our institutions became more aware and those in the leadership took a stand, they already began... that something terrible was happening in Kosovo, all the people of Kosovo mobilized, and they told me to complain, definitely. Zekeria Cana came, because he was in the Council for Human Rights, he got all the information, what did the police do when they left the demonstrations to return to work. Police tortured Mimoza. In the last promotion they had of the documentary for the Buçinca, she declared, “We were fired, but let our teachers return to school.” And what did the police do? They tortured Mimoza. It took her a month to heal. They also tortured the students.

Later it also happened that I had already fulfilled all the conditions for retirement, but I wasn’t going to retire before retirement, so the issue ended up in court. Two excellent judges performed their job well, that was good work, patriotic work. Within three months they returned me to school and what happened? They said, “You have the permission to go, today you must begin work. You won the court’s decision, and the court’s procedures.” Then, I went and approached the abusive ones who were still there. One of them had his niece substitute for me, his sister’s daughter. She had the registry in her hands and was heading to the classroom where I used to teach, because she was substituting me in all my classes. I said, “Can you give me that registry?” She said, “Please, can I teach only today?” Then I said, “Absolutely not, it’s impossible, not today, out of here {points the door with her finger}, the registry is mine.” What her uncle did to me, I did to her. I was sorry, but she wasn’t doing her duty, because she shouldn’t have accepted this job when someone had been removed for the national or the Albanian cause. Hence I said, “No, but you can stay anywhere in the halls, but you can’t enter the classroom, because this is my schedule.” I took the registry and entered, the children were very happy that I had returned to class after three months. Then I left, because by then I had 38 years of service, I mean, I was 55 years old, and at 55 I retired, I retired in 1991.

However, I was very connected with the cause of education even though I was retired, and they wanted to apply programs in the school I was teaching, and there was a rally against the programs that the Milošević government applied. So someone had to talk, had to talk in front of everybody, in front of parents, in front of students...in other words, they were closing the school. One part of the building was already divided, it was divided so that two-thirds of the building was reserved for 500 students and one-fourth of the building was left for two thousand students. So, I started my talk, because those in the leadership didn’t dare to interrupt my speech. Professor Pajazit Nushi was present, he listened from afar while I was talking with anger and very emotionally. So I stopped teaching, but never distanced myself from teaching, and so I retired in 1991.

The arrival of my third grandson Lurni was a great happiness for me. From there I went to the maternity ward of Glllogvc. When I saw in what conditions the maternity ward was, I organized help such as maternal slippers, I secured gowns, I secured sheets that they didn’t have, you can imagine. All that through the help of people, I always knew how to use donors’ help, even when it was small, but it did exist. So the moment I visited my grandson in Glllogvc, which is now called Drenas, I brought this help, and went straight to the respected doctor, whom I was very grateful to, Selim Krasniqi, the gynecologist. He was in pathological gynecology, he had an incident with Xheri, it was one of the incidents that I can’t mention, he helped Xheri when she gave birth to Ledri.

When I gave all that help, he was amazed by my gesture. Not that I did this for my grandson, because my grandson was being released, not that it was his birth, it was during my visit of my grandson that I saw in what condition others were and the maternity ward of Glllogvc was. All the young pregnant women didn’t dare to go to our central hospital, the main maternity ward in Pristina. But they gave birth in local

maternity wards, because they were afraid that something could happen. Even the doctors had forgotten the Hippocrates' oath, one worked under oppression, or there was the suspicion that births wouldn't end the way they were supposed to. This is what happened to my daughter-in-law Suzana, she is a very good ophthalmologist, I love her very much (smiles). When she gave birth to her second child, there was the daughter of Hajredin Ukella, whom I respected very much, he was a medical expert. So the baby was born... and there I saw the devastated condition of the maternity, she suffered after this, and we took the baby...

All this activity that I called more patriotic than political, however, takes on the characteristics and the nuances of politics, but politics in favor of my community, in favor of Kosovo, in favor of Albanians... and what they experienced every day. So, together with a group of women with whom I worked in school, we joined the Democratic League of Kosovo [LDK], we were received by late professor Fehmi Agani. This was not some kind of party for me, but it was a people's movement since it was the first registered party and it still exists. These were the last moments of the destruction of Yugoslavia. So the Democratic League of Kosovo was registered, I told you earlier that this was a people's movement, completely a people's movement. There, where the center of my activities was visible, there, where I was known for the school, the resistance, the removal from work, all this made me still active and engaged... don't let me say it, because I have never said it... engaged in politics. However, along with the oppression and the violence that was imposed on us, this was a politics with a precise program, in other words, it was a program without violence. You know the first President was Ibrahim Rugova, whom they called a pacifist, and we continued peacefully. Then other efforts followed, a stronger movement was needed to move on. Thus, the Liberation Army of Kosovo was formed, which bursted our movement and sealed, in other words, with international help, it sealed the destiny of Kosovo today.

I worked on women's empowerment without sparing myself. We had a President, however the President was not present because she went to Germany for her postgraduate studies, so as Vice President I led the Forum [Women's Forum in the LDK] until 1997, and there I finished my "political" life, if I can call it that way, because the patriotic part still continues. In 1993 another idea was born from different visits of women's organizations from all over the world, American, European, who said that a Women's Forum must... because women were under the party leadership's tutelage. Did we need another organization? There was Motrat Qiriazhi, there was Mother Theresa, only those two organizations, one was humanitarian and Motrat Qiriazhi was focused on education. So I got an idea and said, "Can we do something? Form an organization that deals only with women?" I thought all institutions were destroyed like the educational institutions, those of culture and art were destroyed, so together with Shukrije Gashi and Xheraldina-Xheri, we decided to create an association.

This was an idea I presented to Shuki and Xheri, we all agreed and they helped me in creating this organization called, Group of Artists and Education Veterans. We had our programs where the main program of the artists' group was art, while for the education veterans it was education. This was a great combination, because both fields of those associations were destroyed, and they are close to one another, without education we can't have culture. We established specific programs, and we worked in all Kosovo's communities, we also began in all ethnic lands abroad {counts with her fingers}, Ulqini, Skopje, I mean Macedonia, Preshevo,⁸ you know that it is still in the claws of Serbia, I am very rough when I say claws, but in all these ethnic parts... we established one contact, if not physical it was spiritual, we mobilized and were very successful. We created and executed about 120 events, exhibits, and different concerts in all these regions.

⁸ Municipality in Southern Serbia, where Albanians are demographically dominant.

Thus, the Artists's and Education Veterans' Group at that time did an excellent job, because they gathered all these artists in one place, then later through their contribution they produced a great deal in painting, poetry, and music. We had composers such as Pranvera Badivuku, or the painter Miradije Ramiqi, also a poet, we had poets such as Shukrije Gashi together with Xheraldina and education veterans such as Veronika Mjeda, Vera Dino and Fakeke Kusari, who followed me until 2006, Fakeke was my right hand in promoting the education of Albanian women. This was the transition of my life from politics as political language to civil society. This was a non-governmental organization. But our work never stopped because our intention was the liberation from Milošević's ruthless claws, and the violence he imposed on the Albanian population.

However, I told you all these 15 women were there, and they did all this work connecting, connecting in one place all these lands that we thought were ours, all the Albanian lands, not only physically but also spiritually. We were also in Albania, Albania maybe didn't have our problems, because these were Albanian lands inside former Yugoslavia. The problems of the Albanian women were of a completely different nature, the problem of the women in Kosovo and other ethnic lands that were all over, were completely different, because we were experiencing... at least they were free in their own country. They had social problems for the liberation of women, but they had it easier, and now they have it easier than we have it. We are free, a new country, but it moves with steps...we must move with safe steps, validate these safe steps with the politics that we conduct with those who are in decision making. I believe we don't have to lose our hope for what we worked for. We shouldn't get into a political analysis, because I don't like to do that, but I look at everything with a critical eye, how I can react, it is...I react where my social circle is. In the framework of my contribution, the focus I found in education, there, that was my politics, working for women's education and advancement.

Thus, I mean politics, I abandoned politics but not the work in the association, we continued in this NGO on the issue of the advancement of women, of women's position and their liberation from the chains of patriarchal mentality, and the heavy shackles of the Milošević regime. When we had discussions at the Forum, I noticed the "men" factor, I noticed..."Now we don't have time to think about women's position," something like that, "because we have a national goal." But our work for national liberation ran along parallel lines, I mean, we were one force realizing all the goals that we had, like men, like women, which we proved with the presence of women in the liberation war, in the KLA. I mean, we showed that we were capable to carry even weapons. But we practically worked with the pen, meaning, there was also a slogan with the pen, this slogan of Motrat Qiriazhi, "With the pen in Europe."

This was our concern, to liberate women from centuries old shackles with that pen, because it was an advancement, and to prepare independent Kosovo for equality, or for the higher education of women, for the liberation of women, in order to catch up with Europe, because we belonged to Europe, but unfortunately, we were the Balkans, historically the Balkans. Therefore, I thought it absurd when one of them was and still is a parliamentarian, I don't want to mention his name but he seems conservative, it is unacceptable that today when we have obtained the liberation of Kosovo..."Leave women's issues," because women's issues are women's problems, can you imagine that. But I wasn't surprised because a patriarchal family brought him up, and he thought that we could get to Europe that way. But it is obvious, that with this gender balance, not that we overdid it, we didn't overdo it at all when we talk and discuss, but it has become fashionable for men to say, "Yes, we too are for gender equality." When they entered the house, a woman was a woman, and a man was a man again inside the house. We talk the talk but we don't do what needs to be done for gender equality.

So my life begins now in a non-governmental organization that suits me very much, because I also are of an age that I don't want to deal with politics. My age didn't allow me, but I also never wanted to get

involved, to become active, so I can appeal to our women to be educated, smart and not be fired. Maybe we begin with a non-governmental organization, but slowly, step by step, this can become a springboard to move into politics, because when I said this to the President, I was very happy that the President gave me the Presidential medal for my merits, I was happy that a woman gave me that, I said to her that we will conquer, maybe it is harsh to say “conquering” but we can’t say “grabbing.” Aware of our strength, we will take all these posts, also decision making posts. And we will take everything, all institutions, but this is what Kosovo seeks today, it seeks Europe, we don’t do it for Europe, we need that this woman exists, we need to move forward side by side to men.

Mainly, my work didn’t end. I say this, after what happened to Kosovo, what was expected to happen to Kosovo in 1998, in 1999, it happened! It was not unexpected, because it included all Yugoslavia. The destruction of Tito’s Yugoslavia began with Kosovo, and it ended with Kosovo, as it happened. So what should we do as a group, should we deal with art exhibits? With what? So we, especially the Group of Education Veterans, focused on refugee shelter, that began in 1998, and it started when Drenica was badly attacked, Peja also with its surroundings. In 1998, and like that, I went to Ulqinj every year for three months, in 1998 together with a great woman... I say she was great, but I was the initiator of Anima, an organization in Ulqinj, Doctor Zylfije Gjoni Duraku, who did a lot for sheltering families from Drenica, from the surroundings of Peja. We sheltered families whose heads were women, because the men were at the front, or they had fled somewhere, for three months. When we saw that the heads of the households were men we didn’t shelter them. Our task was sheltering women and children.

We did a great job thanks to the organization Anima, but professor Mejreme was also with the organization Anima, she was originally from Ulqinj, three of us were from Ulqinj, including Fahri who helped us. He was always available with our car to help sheltering children and women, especially pregnant women. At the maternity ward, gynecologist Zylfije Gjoni played a great role. In the end, we decided, because I was also in Kosovo, to use the villas in Shtoj, because there are many villas in Shtoj owned by Kosovars. With one order, I don’t know how and where I got that courage (smiles) I said, “We came here...” everyone was on vacation while Kosovo was burning, in 1998 Drenica was on fire, especially Peja’s surroundings, Gjakova. I said, “We came here on vacation, all of you give us the keys of the villas, today the commission says so.” All Kosovars gave us their villas, they opened them to the refugees from Drenica, all of them were sheltered in all our villas.

The first example was mine, I had a family from Komoran and my villa was small, modest, it only had two rooms, however, a large family and all others were sheltered there. Muharem Gashi, Emine Gashi, gynecologist, Talat Gjinolli, all became part of this clique, Agron... Not to mention the others who were outside... on the hills by the sea, or behind, Lower Shtoj, also Upper Shtoj. And this way all these families were sheltered, we found foreign donors who had noticed that some women were sheltering Kosovars. This is what they said, not Drenica...but Kosovars. We collected money, we have written it all down, whom we gave to and how much. Fahri was always in charge of logistics, he was always able to soften tensions, and to give a shoulder to those family by standing by them. Then the time came and we had to go, I didn’t get a chance to go to Ulqinj, they expelled my family and me, so we went to Struga.⁹

As I have said earlier, I was mainly focused on literacy and the education of girls in rural areas. It wasn’t easy even before the war, now after the war the work that we did as a team - because I collaborated with a colleague of mine, a veteran in literacy, Fakete Krusani, who followed me all the time step by step, but mostly we had the support of my husband Fahri - wasn’t easy, but it was a satisfaction for us to directly contact persons who had been momentarily removed from school. Naturally, we had to get lists of displaced people, and we got this in the education section where they were identified, we had a list of two

⁹ Town in Macedonia by lake Ohrid.

hundred or so students, of which eighty per cent were girls who had abandoned school, but in the field we found a much larger number of girls who had abandoned school.

The first phase or the first step was to contact the families, and our job was on foot, [we walked] from house to house. We focused on a village and there we contacted the representatives of the village, then we were directed to the houses, to different neighborhoods, where we thought there were enough girls who had abandoned school. I told you, in our work the first step was to contact the families. It was a great surprise that when we contacted the families they received us very well, it was something that pleased me because where we went to convince and change the decision of the girls' parents, the head of household was mainly for leaving school, while his wife, the girl's mother, through gestures, tried to point to him, that he was the one, pointing at the father, who does not permit [education], but she was pro education. There were those others for whom it was convenient that girls stayed home, but mainly eighty per cent of the mothers were for education...because they weighed their life, what she had achieved without an education, and she didn't wish that for her children, her daughters.

So when we visited houses door to door, we met reactions, resistance, but before the war we motivated the heads of the household at one point because we were...before, before the war, we had jobs. Milošević's regime was so harsh, and Milošević's goal was to close schools, I mean, there were two main factors, there was illiteracy, but Milošević's plan was the Albanian cultural-educational genocide. No one wanted to send the girls to school. "All right," I said, "you are in the program that Milošević is imposing in Kosovo. He closed our schools, because he knew that you would be helping him by not letting your daughters go to school." "No," he said, "I am not in Milošević's program, I am against it. I love free Kosovo, I want to be free from this harsh regime." "Then," I said, "you are helping them with your words." While talking (smiles) and while...naturally we were very careful, we were tactful about how we talked to him. Finally we agreed that, "If letting my daughter go to school is helpful for the liberation of Kosovo, here she is, take my daughter" (smiles). What I mean is that we had to break everything with a hammer, little by little, this was a patriarchal mentality, not a little, but patriarchal enough, that a girl doesn't have to be educated, and add to that checkpoints, lack of security, there was no freedom of movement.

However, we secured an escort for those girls all the time during their schooling, therefore it was good that we agreed that the girls continued their education, although the deadline for the admission tests had passed. They normally had to take an admission test, but the deadline had passed for them to enter high school's first year. We had an understanding with the principals of the high schools when at one point we sent 37 girls, and it was about time, the end of October. We worked on an agreement, and they accepted the girls and those girls went to different schools. They finished high school and 22 of them went to university, we guaranteed scholarships for those girls from different local donors, all these girls whom we encouraged, whom we empowered with high school education, we secured funds from local donors. Galica Tours and Saraci Tours, which were there before the war, they gave girls a booklet with a photo, signed by the Education Veterans' Group, and when a girl showed that booklet, she didn't have to pay even 50 cents, dinars were in circulation then.

So, in one year we helped about 92 girls, 92 girls went to school, because there were drop outs even from elementary and high school in the municipality of Vushtrri. We did this in 67 villages of the municipality of Vushtrri. It was a difficult time because we had to talk with families and the heads of households, and often the heads of the households were men. Then we talked on the side and convinced the girls, because the inept signal that was given by the head of household, who was uneducated, was, "I don't agree." She knew the climate that reigned in the house about education, and we convinced her that she had to fight for her life, not to confront the parents, but that she had to convince them with different arguments that her life had to change from that of her mother's generation and other generations.

So we succeeded in sending about 910 girls to high school and then university. This was what concerned formal education, there we had access to formal education. Informal education was the eradication of illiteracy, we provided different courses such as...we opened an informal literacy center where English could be studied, also tailoring could be studied, and health, the health of young girls and young mothers. The English courses enabled the girls, if they graduated from high school, to secure a job later, because English was the first requirement to get employed, so girls were able to earn their personal means and with these very earnings girls gained independence. If a girl were economically independent and earned her money, she didn't need anyone to help her because in some ways, in some ways she won her independence, regardless of the fact that one must always answer to someone, especially to the head of the household, even if one earns money or for every act, one must always answer to the head of household.

Thus, we [educated] about 1800 girls, now I am talking about the period after liberation, after the liberation of Kosovo, which was destroyed completely, economically destroyed, because we witnessed the situation of Kosovo after liberation. We had problems because it changed...Many different changes occurred, now the schools were not eight grades long, they added a ninth grade. We had a problem right there, taking girls to ninth grade classes, because there were many centers in different points where girls had to go. Girls had to travel, they needed money for traveling, for example one Euro, so they could go and come back. They started to leave school, especially ninth grade. This was one problem, at that moment it was a very serious problem, and we started an awareness campaign for girls, that they definitely had to continue wherever they were, they must continue their education. What I mean, with the ninth grade, school was nine years long, then we had many problems, but thanks to local donors again we secured funding for the girls to travel for free (smiles), but later, luckily later, this issue was fixed.

It was the time when girls left school because they had to travel, they had to travel to another village or other centers, mainly centers that were in Vushtrri, in the city of Vushtrri. There were no ninth grade classes in the villages, but thanks to the system, thanks to educational sections, that we were free now, we implemented the new reform, I mean, that one girl could go till ninth grade. Ninth grade classes opened in every school that had only eight grades, and so we had no problem there, I mean, this problem was solved. Now we had a problem, our problem was that these girls had to continue their high school education, although in the beginning, before continuing, these girls had taken a break and had not gone to school, so they had lost a year in a few months, so again we focused on these girls who had stayed behind for half a year or three or four months and couldn't attend ninth grade. But with the support and understanding of the ninth grade, we managed to bring the girls in, so they could continue their ninth grade education, it was not eight grade any more, it was ninth grade. Now, the problem was, how to bring all these girls to high school.

I must say that in Vushtrri there was a gymnasium, also a technical school and a professional school, so we went to ninth grade in order to graduate, I am talking only about girls. So we found the means for girls' high school education. We found a class, there could have been twenty girls, ten girls, 15 girls... among them there were girls who said from the start, "I can't afford to get educated because I don't have the means." There were girls whose parents agreed, they agreed, but they didn't have the means. So we concentrated on making sure that these girls did not leave school, and the main concern about securing different means was transportation.

As I said, the same donors as before the war continued to fund these girls even after the war, in one word, it was the funds from donors that allowed them to travel to high school. We were very successful, I said earlier we registered 910 girls in school. When it came to non-formal education, about 1800 girls went through our center for non-formal education, and learned English, computer skills, and tailoring, even

tailoring...they all had to go through an examination committee. But we didn't have the authorization to issue diplomas to those girls, we only gave verification letters. So with those verification letters they continued their second level of English, computer skills, and they were accepted in the English course, computer skills or tailoring. They were accepted so they could continue and later they earned a diploma. At that time, permanent waves for hair, haircuts, and all this, was fashionable, but I didn't practice this much, even though I had offers, donations, my job was or my organization was specialized, I never accepted a single donation where formal or non-formal education were concerned. So this is how 1800 girls passed through the main center of formal and informal education.

The World Conference in Beijing was in September 1995, when women's groups from America such as the women's group STAR, STAR PROJECT, talked with women involved in activities, talked to women of Kosovo, they did not meet with party members, they met with civil society. It was the Women's Center, it was this STAR PROJECT that existed as a unit in Pristina, but also we of the Women's Forum, on the basis of the Women's Forum, which I led for three years, that I was elected to participate in the World Conference in Beijing. We were a non-governmental category, seven or eight women, the Women's Forum was financed by the Democratic League, while these other groups were financed by other international women's organizations, mainly American.

We had an opportunity to meet all the women from developing and transitional countries like ours, where the same political climate reigned. We found a lot of support, but we were in the non-governmental section [of the conference], but Hillary Clinton was, not momentarily, but with a delegation, in the governmental section. But we couldn't have access to that section of the conference because we were not accepted as a country, it was illusory to think that we had won, that we had won citizenship and separation from Serbia that fast. But Sevdije Ahmeti was one of the activists who was sponsored by Americans, and she had a rich documentation of what was happening to women and children. Because here the program was about the violence that was imposed by the harsh Serbian regime, the violence against women and children, and she had enough material and contacts with American collaborators who were interested in women and children issues in Kosovo, so, thanks to the actions of her friends and collaborators, she officially, publicly presented plenty of material at the World Conference of Women in Beijing.

In this non-governmental section, she conducted workshops and held many different sessions that were attended...there was a special workshop about Kosovo. Edita Tahiri was present there, while the moderator was Sevdije Ahmeti. Edita spoke in that workshop, Edi Shukriu also spoke, I guess we should have known how to behave, but we didn't know, it was something new for us (smiles). We should have spoken more about what was happening to women and children in Kosovo, as I was told by Julie Mertus when we returned to Kosovo. She said, "Your workshop failed." Surprised, I said, "Why?" She said, "Some women were supposed to talk, many women talked." We had much experiences as activists, we had daily experiences in the field. We should have talked more about concrete events than what was happening in Kosovo.

However, our voice was heard at the conference and the conference lasted one week. Our work continued... this was, we cannot say it was our political work, mainly we focused on the position of women in Kosovo at a time in which a woman experienced double violence because her child was killed before her eyes, her husband killed before her eyes. So the violence that a woman experienced during the Milošević's regime was indescribable.

And after the war of course we didn't stop working because there was the need after the destruction of Kosovo, the complete economic destruction, it was a catastrophe, there was the need to continue working with those girls' education, continuing their education meant their empowerment, not to be left

without high school education, and our goal was that those girls go to university. It wasn't easy because after a survey that we, our organization, conducted in 2005, sponsored by FDI [Foreign Direct Investments] from America, we understood that we no longer had problems with the patriarchal mentality. We were happy that the heads of the households had understood education, that girls' education was necessary, but another factor came up as a result of the survey that we conducted, interviewing heads of households in fifty villages, it came up that for about eighty-two per cent it was the economic factor.

We now had a greater concern, how to stimulate these girl and how to address economic concerns, this was the basis for education. Again local donors came through, we secured clothing for the girls because families were destroyed, especially villagers were completely destroyed, their houses, their wealth, everything they had, everything had gone flat. We also secured transportation means, clothing and education means, these three problems were covered so the girls didn't have any excuse not to continue education (smiles), we made it again. We saw that in some families the girl skipped school, because we followed, we followed her high school education all the time, we visited the families because she was not going to school. I monitored the girls, those that we brought to school, we monitored them all the time, how was their success going and everything.

When we noticed that some girls were missing school, or were absent for days in a row, we immediately took the address and went to their home, and while talking to the father he said, "I have only one Euro," he said, "one coin, but I have a son, and my priority is my son." And we saw how the girl was abused, independently from what her parents were thinking, as I said earlier, the [patriarchal] mentality had gone and it was a great pleasure for us. However, if he had one coin, he would give it to the son and the girl still would not...because they believed that she, the girl, the future of that girl was not in the family, because she would go to another family and would extend another family and it was not important whether he took care of her or not. But the boy, he will secure the head of household tomorrow or after tomorrow, in his old age, will secure his living, it was this in fact. So we reacted and said, "If you don't have money for the girl, we will secure clothing and transportation thanks to our local donors."

It was unbelievable, this issue of local donors, because we didn't have many businesses, we didn't have businesses throughout Kosovo, there were small businesses, however, whatever they were, they were able to support girls' education, to give their help, and to sponsor them. This encouraged us, this donors' reaction, because now, in the last five years, we have developed some businesses, even very big businesses with large profits. It made me think, why all these donors gave and gave money? Why couldn't we have an epicenter? That epicenter could be a fund, this was an idea that circled in my mind all the time giving me courage and donors' help encouraged me. A fund should be created for the girls' education, for all these girls in villages, because we were focused all the time, villages were our focus, because the bigger needs and bigger destructions were there, but there were also in the cities. However, even the girls with average economic condition were abused the same. They didn't go to school. For that category of girls we had to create the idea of establishing a fund. My husband agreed with me, and with his help we did miracles in the field, because he was always ready to support me, because he also came from the world of education, he was an academic by profession. However, the educational process never had...because he was an expert in demand, so I always had his support and even the good reputation that he had in the environment in which we worked. Our work didn't not only occur in the municipality of Vushtrri, but in all the region of Mitrovica, and the region of Mitrovica included Mitrovica, Skenderaj, and Vushtrri.

A very special occasion is when we had health training about basic women's and young girls' health, we had that in Vllahi, which is a village in beautiful Bajgora, with such a view, it was a pleasure to visit those places, they are so beautiful. I didn't visit Switzerland, but I think these parts are more beautiful than Switzerland, those views that I saw in Bajgore, Vllahi. So we invited young women and girls who didn't

complete high school, we invited them to our informal education center. The first day we registered nine girls who had finished eighth grade, but had not attended ninth grade. We were astonished, we got the list, we went and all followed courses of basic health for women and girls in the schools. We knocked on the principal's door, and I said, "Do you know that nine girls here in Vllahi are not attending ninth grade?" He said, "I am sorry I..." He talked to me and Fakete, the three of us came into the office, and he said, "We know that they are not..." He continued, "What can we do? They have to go to Mitrovica," he said, "to travel to Mitrovica." Those girls didn't have the means to go to Mitrovica, and those who know the area know how it is to travel to Bajgora and Vllahi. So we went, Fahri, Fakete and myself, Fahri knew well even those in the [education] department in Mitrovica, so he explained the problem. Then immediately, I don't remember who was the one who was in charge of education, undertook the first step, and can you imagine, after one month he secured the educational personnel and opened a ninth grade class. So now, when those who finished eighth grade in June, which were a few girls, it was necessary to create a parallel class, and for that it was required to have at least 15 students, but only nine were left without... So the parallel class opened the following year, and those nine girls, even though they took a one year break, continued ninth grade. In other words, those nine girls did not end up without a ninth grade education. So when they finished school, they could register to high school, because with only an eighth grade education one couldn't register to high school. This was a very special case, but which we completed successfully.

Feminism

Naxhije Buçinca: It is a wonder that every women's movement, I am talking about the environment I live, the environment where I live in Kosovo, every women's movement that we can call rebellion, the category of men say, "Ah feminists! They have special demands." I mean, the term feminist or the feminist movement depend on the environment where you live, because they crucify you as "feminist," because feminists ask for equal rights. I believe that feminism has to ask for additional privileges to gender equality. It must have this, feminism has goals, this is how I understand it! And it is a natural right that we must have, this movement must have special demands, because it is of a special nature, because a woman has reproductive capacity. She is a divine creature! So if she asks for extra rights, and if she has those extra rights, she is crucified as feminist. Here, for the smallest movement, if we demand the right to be equal to men..." Ah, you feminists!" in other words, it is an attribute that they take wrongly, they twist the feminist movement which throughout its history has been for gender equality.

In a country with the rule of law and laws that protect women, if you demand extra, I would say it is feminism. We know Virginia Wolf, "A Room of One's Own," I read it, but also Taslima Nasrin in the environment that... She is Asian, Taslima Nasrin, and she says, "Women Wake Up," it means you are asleep about your own rights, you are not fighting. But Virginia Wolf, you know she was English and her husband and her father-in-law helped her on the issue of gender equality, in the end she didn't succeed because she was marked as extreme feminist, so that she committed suicide when she didn't succeed in her fight for gender equality.

Here, when someone wants to tell you that you have too many demands, they call you a feminist. But I am not bothered by that, let them call me a feminist. However, in Kosovo we are fighting for gender equality. We are nowhere. Please, let us talk, we have meetings, now it is a focus, and our institutions don't deal with laws about gender equality, all that is discussed, so when a woman goes home, she is the same as one hundred years ago, and a man the same as one hundred years ago. No one gives you any rights, but we will fight, and we will conquer them, or just grab them. I don't think that "grabbing" is a harsh word, because we fight for gender equality with our strength, our energy. We don't think that we would move to a society where we will degrade men, where we will abuse these rights, abuse men's rights that belong to

us, but we are for equality, we even practice solidarity, it takes more than that to win since a woman is a divine being. I say divine because I have the right to say divine, because {counts with her fingers}: she knows how to manage a family, knows how to forgive, knows how to tolerate, knows how to protect her family. Historically the Albanian woman in Kosovo saved her family, and she was always the second or the last to be recognized, except when a child says, “Mother!” There isn’t a more beautiful and higher spoken word. . . .mother. And a man doesn’t have this attribute, and I am glad he doesn’t have it.

Feminist themselves. . . .yes, in these circumstances here I would consider myself that, I don’t want to fight only for gender equality, tell that to the men. But if they deny me and my fight, I will fight for what is denied, so let them call me a feminist. Let them call me a feminist. However, I am for gender equality, for equal rights, because a society only of women cannot exist, the society that exist, the world that exists cannot exist. . . .a men’s world. Because I think, we shouldn’t offend men but {counts with her fingers} women were never at war, always at peace, women were never involved in organized crime, women never abuse, don’t practice oppression. All these are attributes that we should celebrate because the epicenter of the evil that happen to us, I am sorry, but it is men! {counts with her fingers}: who organizes prostitution? What human being? Who is using prostitution? Men use it. I mean all these. . . .the epicenter of the evil that exist, let me not generalize men in all categories, but men are the movement of everything that is evil.

With regret I say that it is not. . . .when we say elementary rights are abused, we don’t talk about women. But if we speak about violations of basic human rights, if that is done by institutions, that a human being abuses another human being, if rights are denied, if the institutions do not care about violations of human rights, then that is worrisome. I think I am concerned about these rights, let’s not mention that I am at the end, at the limit of my life, it is the third phase because I am not going to live for two hundred years, not even one hundred and fifty years. My right to life, I mean, to live, has been denied. As a retired person, the right to benefit from the work I have done has been denied to me, it makes me explode sometimes when I say retired, that word kills me. I was denied the basic right to live, to exist. Let me not talk about other rights, I think every person in Kosovo could use those rights. But to use those rights, laws are needed.

We know that even the UN Charter forbids the abuse of individual human rights, but here even that is abused, because it doesn’t only matter that there are laws, but if those are not implemented, or funded. . . .For example, I mentioned gender equality, if you made the law for gender equality, and if that law is supported, funded, so it can be implemented, or if that law is paralyzed, meaning it can’t be implemented, I think that right is abused, but it would be even more tragic if institutions abused human rights. I believe we are heading there, I think we are getting liberated from a syndrome that man does harm to another man, or that we don’t pay attention to individual, private and civil rights.

We even had heavy insults from a hoxha that we must ignore,¹⁰ we have to ignore his statement. That was a drastic violation of my privacy, according to conventions he can’t do that, he shouldn’t dare. So where is the law now? When they insult a category and that category has equality as a human being, I can say that I am not calling it good, we can ignore it, but that ignorance must. . . .he said men came first from the matter from which he emerged, that he is in charge. They must react. So about human rights I think, I heard the ombudsperson, who said, “They are stepping on our institutions. . . .” he said, because he has all the documents and complaints that come from citizens. He said, “Our institutions are violating basic human

¹⁰ The reference is to Shefqet Krasniqi, the head cleric, or imam, at the main mosque in Pristina, who emerged in 2012 as an outspoken proponent of radically conservative social views.

rights, in order not to violate them we need a law, but the law must be applied, the law must function.” In a country where the law doesn’t function, we can’t hope that it can be authentic, but I think that this political class that we have today, I think they are working in that direction. Let see if they are going to achieve it, (smiles) naturally they are trying with rhetoric. What will be implemented of all that which we talk about and do? Because actions contradict what we have secured legally.

No, I think not, because they leave aside those women who here and there take...or who are spread in civil society, and they belong to civil society, they are few in number. Now, lately, since we have a woman President, I believe that she will care and she cares that activists will not be forgotten, because they still work. However, I know that the President was diligent, especially about the elderly women who contributed much for the national cause. On the day of March 8 I got a bouquet of flowers that made me very happy, because even though I am still active, we have not forgotten those of 1990s, of twenty years ago, we have not forgotten them because they are proving themselves and in their activities every day and even in the future. But at my age, it will come tomorrow or the day after that I may have... I have the right to retire. However, I think when I will not work, or if I won’t be able to contribute, to help in the environment where I live, I will feel as if I was not alive, as if I was not living. Therefore, all this work that I do gives me satisfaction and makes me feel alive. This is not just being physically alive, but my soul is alive, and my will for life, then I feel that I am still truly living.

My biggest achievement was that when I see my girls become doctors, lawyers, professors of literature, of all fields, there were two whom we sent to university and this was my biggest achievement. But I am not satisfied only with the achievement already highlighted. My achievement in my permanent work for the education of girls is the foundation for girls’ education. The Couple Buçinca, thanks to the excellent work of an organizing council, including our work of fifty years, my husband Fahri and I, was awarded on May 23 2013, when within two hours we raised 24,000 Euros. Together with Fahri, we go on a short vacation, but when we return from vacation, our work of lobbying donors begins, so that the Fund can function for five years, where donors will donate their funds for girls’ education. Seventy per cent of this fund will go exactly where it was established, where it was born, in Vushtrri. I think that this will be in 2013, where seventy per cent of the money went to the girls of the municipality of Vushtrri, and thirty per cent will be distributed to other municipalities. I believe that later on, hopefully this fund will have a longer life with enough funding, and move from municipality to municipality where they will receive... the girls who meet the requirements will have the rights to enjoy this fund established by the Board of the Foundation for the education of the girls, Couple Buçinca. Based on those requirements, they won the right to study.

War

[Part of the interview cut out from the video: the interviewer asks the speaker to talk about his war experience.]

Naxhije Buçinca: Practically I think that Kosovo went to war because a brutal police, plus military units, dominated Kosovo. The way they moved throughout Kosovo was very astonishing. When the Kosovo Liberation Army surfaced, they gave us the hope that something was moving in Kosovo. Upon the appearance of the KLA, the situation became even harder for the civilian population in Kosovo. It started in 1998, however until 1998, it was a closed war between national factions, it was like nothing, in other words. And Milošević said, “Look, look, Kosovo is completely quiet,” while in reality he was imposing physical and psychological violence on the Albanian population, especially women and children, every day. The beginning of the war on the front, where the biggest resistance was put up by KLA, and all of us were supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army, we even thought to take arms, even at our age, and go to fight for the cause of Kosovo and the liberation from the unprecedented violence practiced by the

Milošević's regime that started in Drenica in 1998. And here, in other areas of the center, in Pristina, it looked as if we were quiet, but we were not. Because it started there and the biggest resistance was there. So it happened what happened to the Jashari family, and for us it was a grave concern that it could happen in other parts of Kosovo. Thus Drenica began to empty out, the surroundings of Peja too, but mostly Drenica.

I am from Ulqinj originally, and I went to visit my family every summer. I was the initiator of the organization Anima, headed by a woman, a very courageous and strong woman, I had regular permanent contacts with her, she was Zylfije Xhoni Duraku. So they started to form the KLA, at a time when the war openly started, against unequal forces. The first were the occupiers, while the KLA and its ranks were fighting for liberation. And we, all the population, cheered for the KLA, and it was our biggest hope that we will get liberated and it happened at the end. So in Ulqinj, while in contact with Anima, the refugees started to move towards Albania, and they were displaced in Ulqinj in Montenegro. So hundreds of families found shelter in Ulqinj for three months. Zylfije Xhoni Duraku and I, and Doctor Mjreme Berisha, she too was from Ulqinj like I was, I lived in Kosovo for years. Mjreme was also in Kosovo, so the three of us got involved together with Fahri Buçinca, we got involved in sheltering the heads of households. We didn't accept families whose head was a man, we thought that a man should be at the front, so we focused on sheltering women and children. Some men declared that they were in the KLA ranks, some had abandoned their families, so those families who came whose heads were women, we worked on that.

We placed hundreds of women and children in the families from Ulqinj who accepted them open heartedly. Then when the immigrants arrived, because it was vacation time and it was time for the immigrants to come, Ulqinj had many immigrants in America, Canada, Australia and Europe, they approached our group to give material help, and that material help went to sheltering the children, clothing, and food. Thus for three months, with the Group of Education Veterans, Anima sheltered hundreds of children and women in Ulqinj. But it was needed... You know that Kosovars have many villas in the upper beach, and now those villas were shelters for people, because by us it was not... in parts of Kosovo, for example in Pristina, nothing happened. It wasn't a direct fight, the Serbian army and police with our members of KLA, and people were returning. We gave, Fahri and I, since we also had neighbors who we knew had villas, we gave an order, "No one can take the key with themselves. All the keys of the villas must be given to this committee." I was in that committee also, including Fahri, Zyli and Mjreme.

Everyone gave their keys of their villa. I can say I sheltered ten families in my villa, a teacher with his extended family from Komoran. In the villa of Muharrem and Emine Gashi the same, by Sahit Lipa also, those who were closest naturally. Talat Gjinolli and all of them opened their doors to the displaced from Drenica. So when we arrived, when we returned to the villas, the house-villas, and when we returned to Pristina, the war front was open in all Kosovo. We had nothing, we crossed the border of Macedonia, so my family and I moved to Struga with many other Kosovars. Also Albanians of Macedonia accepted us with open arms, we are very grateful for what they did during the war in Kosovo.

It was a horror what every child and every woman experienced, the trip towards displacement was one special horrifying story. We expected that every patrol we met, we thought that everything would end for us. My luck in my family was that I survived without any... naturally we had to pay at every check point, we had to pay money. We gave them money gladly, just to survive. Once when a police stopped us, he said, "Where are you going?"

Dreams

Emine Berisha: Naxhije, in the end do you have any dreams that you want to realize in the future?

Naxhije Buçinca: Yes, creating this Foundation was my dream. The first part of this dream was realized because this fund was created, but I must thank donors that it will have a long life. My dream is and it always was, and I am going to try to realize this dream even more, when our government and our institutions will go fifty-fifty. In the decision making positions we will always have women, but we only have thirty per cent rights in Parliament, but for me it is not even thirty per cent. My dream is that for our Parliament to have fifty-fifty, the same as in Germany, you know Germany is a strong country, it is the economic locomotive of Europe, with the prime minister Sismunt, it was her name, she brought fifty-fifty women in the German Parliament, and they were ministers, also fifty if we achieve to educate them in post graduate studies, to have doctors of science, even to exceed this fifty-fifty, to make it higher.

So this is my dream, that women, girls are educated, are educated and take civil society, which is a phase, as a springboard to move into our institutions, so women take part in politics. Because she hesitates, she hesitates because the nature of a woman is like that, she hesitates to take part in politics, that needs a long time, but I think that we will fulfill our intellectual potential, because we have many intellectual men, scientists and artists, and with their help women can achieve high decision making positions.

I am happy we have a woman President, even on that day when we promoted the Foundation for the girls' education Couple Buçinca, I was so enthusiastic to receive a presidential acknowledgement for my merits given by a female President.

Emine Berisha: Mrs. Naxhije, thank you so much, it was a great honor for us that you shared your time and told us different stories, and we thank you for your tireless work, and also for your hospitality.

Naxhije Buçinca: The pleasure was mine, because I didn't see any men in this team, but three beautiful, smart girls, and you agreed with every word I said, and you agreed that this is the truth; and that's what's I'm aiming to do with the Foundation.