

Oral History Kosovo

INTERVIEW WITH MINIR DUSHI

Pristina | Date: October 29, 2018

Duration: 48 minutes

Present:

1. Minir Dushi (Speaker)
2. Erëmirë Krasniqi (Interviewer)
3. Kaltrina Krasniqi (Interviewer / Camera)

Transcription notation symbols of non-verbal communication:

() – emotional communication

{ } – the speaker explains something using gestures.

Other transcription conventions:

[] - addition to the text to facilitate comprehension

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

[The interviewer asks the speaker to tell us about his family and his early childhood memories. This part was cut from the video interview.]

Minir Dushi: I come from a family, an old autochthonous family from Gjakova known by the last name Behdushi. My family was wide, my father had five brothers, and we all lived in a house together. There was harmony and much love among us. My father was the head of the family, everything went through him first. While my grandmother was known, Azize Hanmi, Azize Hanmi, she dealt with housework, she had daughters-in-law, she had four daughters-in-law to organize housework. Stop it [addresses the camera], stop it, I don't know what to say.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Continue, continue.

Minir Dushi: So it doesn't matter? No, I'll continue, but I don't know what to say...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: What was your mother known for?

Minir Dushi: My mother, my mother.... My family worked in sewing *zhguna*.¹ They made *tirqi*,² *herka*,³ *japongja*,⁴ *jelek*.⁵ This was our tradition. My mother was a housewife, she didn't go to school. While my father went to *Ruzhdie*⁶ school of Turkey then, he could write in Turkish and Albanian. I have a letter from him in one of my books.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Where did you finish school?

Minir Dushi: Elementary school, I finished a part of it in Gjakova, my birthplace, two or three grades in Serbian language, then schools, then schools in Albanian were formed, and I continued the fourth and

¹ An old Albanian term for coats and capes.

² Tight-fitting embroidered white flannel breeches with decorative braids at the bottom of the legs and on the pockets, traditional Albanian wear.

³ Traditional Albanian wear part of male attire.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Jelek*, traditional vests with embroidered ornaments.

⁶ Turk.: *Rüştiye*, means high school, otherwise *maturë*, maturity.

fifth grade in Albanian, I think. Then I continued studying at the lower gymnasium of Gjakova where I finished, I finished... it was called *semimatura*,⁷ *gjysëm-matura*.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Was it a four-year school, or eight?

Minir Dushi: No, four-year school, *semimatura*, it means half, yes. It was the year 1946, then I won the right to continue to a higher grade, in middle school, middle...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: *Shkolla e Lartë Pedagogjike*⁸ or something...

Minir Dushi: Then I registered in the technical school in Niš. At that time, there were no technical schools in Kosovo, in fact, the technical school was formed that year, the machinery department in Mitrovica. But I was in the field of electrical engineering.

When I went to Niš I did not speak Serbian, I learned it there. It was a very serious school, I gained a lot of knowledge, I learned the language after a year. So, I finished my studies at the University of Belgrade, Mining Faculty, in time, without any problems.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Mister Minir, can we go back to when you were in elementary school, tell us what....

Minir Dushi: When?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: What was the educational system like, why were schools in Albanian formed then? You said that it was in Serbian, then it was formed in Albanian language.

Minir Dushi: In Albanian...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: How did it come to that?

Minir Dushi: Ah?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: How did it happen so that you had education in Albanian?

Minir Dushi: Yes, after the liberation, it started, the development of education started in Kosovo. Then, so, except middle schools, meaning professional middle school, which was *Shkolla Normale*⁹

⁷ *Semimatura* was the old set of examinations given to students after the fourth year of elementary school.

⁸ *Shkolla e Lartë Pedagogjike*, The High Pedagogical School, was founded in Pristina in 1958 as the first institution of higher education in Kosovo. In 1974, the academic staff of the Figurative Arts department of the High Pedagogical School founded the Academy of Fine Arts within the newly established University of Pristina.

⁹ The *Shkolla Normale* opened in Gjakova in 1948 to train the teachers needed for the newly opened schools. With the exception of a brief interlude during the Italian Fascist occupation of Kosovo during WWII, these were the first schools in Albanian language that Kosovo ever had. In 1953, the *Shkolla Normale* moved to Pristina.

established in Gjakova. But I, as I said, continued in Niš. And gradually different schools were being established, different courses in Kosovo. But then I was done with everything, after I came as an engineer, in 1958 I came as a mining engineer in Trepça Mines Combine, it wasn't a combine back then, it was Trepça, Trepça enterprise, from that...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Mister Minir...

Minir Dushi: Since that year, '58, I continuously worked at Trepça Combine. In '61 *Shkolla e Lartë Teknike*¹⁰ was established in Mitrovica. Back then, the competent Executive Council of Kosovo appointed me as the director of *Shkolla e Lartë* in Mitrovica. I worked there for five years, five years...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Mister Minir, can we go back to your life story that had to do with the National Liberation War and...

Minir Dushi: Yes, yes, I'll go back to that. But I'll just finish this... so after five years, as an engineer, they assigned me to Trepça Combine, the establishment of the Institute of Lead and Zinc in Zveqan, it was established in 1965. I was the director of the institute for twelve years at Trepça mine. I worked in the University at the same time.

When the University of Pristina was established, I was chosen as the first prorector of this higher education institution. I worked as a prorector for two years, and then at the University, at the University... I think I was the only qualified staff in Kosovo who worked concurrently in produce at Trepça and also at Combines... also at the University. I had two jobs, I was passionate about science, but also about produce, so I fulfilled both positions.

After the University, as I said, other faculties were established, but as prorector, I established the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy. Initially with headquarters in Pristina near the Technical Faculty, then after two years, it was transferred to Mitrovica. In Mitrovica because there were Geology, Mining, Metallurgy and Technology. I was there for two mandates as a dean, as a dean and as a member of the Home Committee for the establishment of that faculty for a year.

And then why did I go back to Trepça? In 1978, I went back to Trepça, I worked on the re-establishment of the University, but on other levels... of the Mining Institute, the Institute of Lead-Zinc as we used to call it, but in other basis, as a scientific institution. The one that was established in '65 wasn't very scientific, on a scientific basis under the law on scientific activity.

Two years, after two years after the demonstration of...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: '68...

¹⁰ High technical School, a vocational high school which provided students with basic training in engineering in absence of a bachelor program in Kosovo prior 1970s.

Minir Dushi: '81, '81.¹¹ UK [University of Kosovo] was current to take a person from produce and appoint them rector.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Why, can you tell us about that?

Minir Dushi: Because social science was very developed, and politics wanted to stop it, they wanted to produce, more produce. And I was appointed as rector at the University in '81, in the most inadequate time, hard, after student's demonstrations. However, I am content because I finished my duty successfully, very successfully and without big troubles, [I didn't] fire professors from the University and... I only changed the workplaces of two people, and the others didn't touch at all, that's how the politics were.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Where did you, where were you during the Second World War?

Minir Dushi: During the Second World War I was in Kosovo, in Kosovo, and I was in the *SKOJ*¹² organizations, member of *SKOJ*. Being a member of *SKOJ*, even though I was very young, not even 15 years old, I wanted to go to the Bajram Curri partisan line in Malësia of Gjakova. I was a teenager, as they call it, but I wanted to and I went there.

I went to Gri, Gri village, there was the operational partisan headquarters of Kosovo, commander Fadil Hoxha.¹³ I stayed there for a month, then the winter offensive started, as it's called, back then, the Germans would come against the partisans, they were gathered... this, in Gri, and the Perlat Rexhepi battalion from Shkodra. While in Gri there was another group of partisans, sorry not in Gri, but in the branch, but... they headed to Malësia, and since I was young, as I said, 15 years old, Fadil Hoxha, the commander invites me, he says, "Look, you have to go back to Gjakova..." I was against that, "I won't go back to Gjakova I want to stay a partisan." "But look," says Fadil Hoxha, "the offensive is coming, we don't have resources to face them. We will all go. That's why you have to go today because a group of partisans and the janitor go to Gjakova today."

There was no snow that day, it was morning when this conversation happened. When the group of partisans wanted to leave at 12 o'clock, there was Emin there, he was, he was called Emin, he was the main janitor. There was Petrović, a Serb from Gjakova, then there was Hysni Dobruna, there was another one, I don't remember who. We left for Gjakova, and there was snow up to here {touches over

¹¹ On March 11, 1981, a plate was broken at the student canteen expressing dissatisfaction with poor student conditions, after which many students joined flipping tables. The event sparked a widespread student-led demonstration. The demands for better food and dormitory conditions was emblematic of the Albanian demand for equal treatment in Yugoslavia.

¹² *Savez Komunističke Omladine Jugoslavije (SKOJ)* - The League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia.

¹³ Fadil Hoxha (1916-2001), Albanian Communist partisan leader from Gjakova, who held a number of high posts in Kosovo and Yugoslavia, including the rotating post of Vice President of the Federal Presidency, the highest leadership post in Yugoslavia under Tito, in 1978-79. He retired in 1986, but was expelled from the League of Communist on charges of nationalism.

his stomach}. I had a small Italian *shiniell*,¹⁴ I remember that the ice on it was this thick {shows two fingers thick}.

We got to Ponushevc, and there was a base in Ponushevc where we stayed the night, actually during the day, because partisans only moved at night, not during the day. We stayed there until night time, at night, we left for Gjakova, the whole group. We went to Gjakova, there were a few partisan's bases in Gjakova, I stayed the night, the next day the snow was the same, my family looked for me a lot. My father came to Malësia to take me because I was a child, then they found out where I was, and they came to pick me up and my father wanted to take me home. I caused so much trouble to my father, *auu* {onomatopoeia}, I apologize to him in my book, I wrote it, yes.

And then my paternal uncles, my father had a store in Pristina, in Pristina, manufacture,¹⁵ a good store, but he moved around a lot. They said, my uncle and father, uncles and father, let's take him to Pristina, nobody knows him there. And I came to Pristina, I lived there for two years...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Where was your store here in Pristina? Where was it?

Minir Dushi: At the fountain, at the covered *çarshi*, the fountain, some traces of the fountain still remain today, it is below Reznici Printing House, if you go that way, you can see it, yes. And I stayed here until '45 or something, then I went back to Gjakova and started with my studies, when I finished *semimatura* and those, I went to Niš, what I talked about earlier.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Can you tell us more about Pristina and Jews, because last time you told that you remember when the Skanderbeg Unit came and deported them.

Minir Dushi: Eh, I forgot that I have it [refers to the microphone]. A Jewish boy called Jak, worked at our store, that Jew. He was very nice, but back then we used to put goods outside to be seen, we used to put some handkerchiefs, and when the villagers used to come, "How much does this handkerchief cost?" "This is 100 lekë."¹⁶ He used to say, "120 lekë." "Jak, why are you telling them that?" "We are used to give a higher price, so we can give a discount." Then he would say 100 lekë (laughs). This is how it was, yes.

I lived in Jewish houses, in two houses of Jews, one of them is still there, it would be good to take a picture of it, it is near the library, the national library, old library...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Hivzi Sylejmani...

Minir Dushi: Is it called Hivzi Sulejmani now?

¹⁴ Russian: *Šinjel*, a long coat made out of wool, part of the military attire worn by the Russian and German army during the First World War. Later, the term was appropriated by the Yugoslav People's Army.

¹⁵ The speaker uses the term to refer to textile stores in pre-socialist economy.

¹⁶ *Lekë* is the official currency of Albania.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: That's how it used to be called back then...

Minir Dushi: Yes, there was a, yes the lib... the house. I witnessed when the Jews were being taken that night, when they gathered them, because I was at home. A paternal uncle of mine came every Monday for Tuesday's market day, on Wednesday morning he would leave for Gjakova. Also, the paternal uncle was there that night when suddenly the door, we had a door with a hammer knocker, they came and knocked hard, *dd, dd, dd* {onomatopoeia} to this day I can't forget it. Then, yes, *bim... bom, bom bom* {onomatopoeia} they knocked the door down and they entered.

When they come in the hallway, my uncle got out and they said, "Go inside." They were actually SS Albanians, that regiment...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Skanderbeg...

Minir Dushi: Skanderbeg, yes, and they... they took all the Jews, the house was left empty. They took them as they were, in their pajamas. We were left [speechless]... It was horrible.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: How many of them were?

Minir Dushi: That family, it wasn't a big family. They had three or four kids, also the mother and father. One of them was my age, a boy who tried to hide somewhere there and they found him, they took him and beat him up and sent him to prison, or...

On Saturdays, Jews don't light fires, and they always asked me on Saturdays to light the fire, the oven, because they don't. And Uncle Salomon was a man with a beard up to here {touches his stomach}, when he would wake up in the morning, he would read the Bible¹⁷ *ba, ba, ba, ba*, I would hear him upstairs, my room was downstairs, he wouldn't stop, only when he ate and when he slept, it was horrible. What else can I say?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Do you have other stories about Jews and their shops, did you have, did they have shops where your shop was?

Minir Dushi: Yes, of course. We... it was the main *çarshia* of Pristina. My neighbor was, was, were people from Pristina, Batalli, Qamil Batalli that was known...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Writer.

Minir Dushi: As a teacher, yes, Qamil Batalli. Over him there was Shehi, their last name was Shehi, they made *qeleshe*,¹⁸ they were from Gjakova, they made *qeleshe*. While on the other side below me, there was also a neighbor from Gjakova, Jahja Dibra, Jahja Dibra, a trader, he was very well equipped.

¹⁷ The speaker mistakenly says Bible instead of Tora.

¹⁸ *Qeleshe* means fez, a flat-topped conical red hat with a black tassel on top, worn by men in some Muslim countries.

In front, there were Serbs in front, a Serb actually, a man, a Serb, a gentleman from Pristina. He had two boys, very well-behaved, their daughter was married to Dhimitër Folani from Albania, teacher from Albania, Dhimitër Folani, he was known, yes.

And there was this effort to get along, I used to greet him, I forgot his name, their father, but he was a trader, very serious and...

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Where did Jews live? Was there a part of town where they were more concentrated?

Minir Dush: No, I don't know that, but their houses were, were, how do I say... I know two houses where I used to live, but... others I don't know. Their synagogue was also....

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Where was it?

Minir Dushi: There at... listen, you know *Çarshia*, you know *Çarshia's* mosque, in front of it there were all traders, shops, all of them. Where now is the monument...

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Brotherhood and Unity.

Minir Dushi: Yes, yes. There were a lot of shops, extremely, because Pristina was mercantile town and the goods were sold a lot. Somewhere around there was the synagogue, but I don't remember. What else do you want?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: What did you sell in you shop, did you sell *zhguna* and these...

Minir Dushi: No, *zhguna* in Gjakova...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Yes, what about here in Pristina?

Minir Dushi: Here we did trade with manufacture [textile], the shop we had. Yes, yes, there was a Master Faik, a little further from my shop, further... Master Faik, he was also from Gajkova, but he came here a long time ago to work with *zhgunexhillëk*¹⁹ they call it, to sew *zhguna*, he was a very good man, so he moved to Turkey. Now do you want me tell you, these aren't very... I went to Turkey to look for him, among others, to look for Master Faik. They told me that Master Faik is in Bursa, in Bursa.

I went to Bursa and I parked in the center, I went outside and some kids hid and were talking in Albanian with each other. "Kids, where are you from?" "We are Albanians." "Yes, but where?" "We live here." One of them was more grown up. I said, "I'm looking for Master Faik, have you heard of him?" "Valla..."²⁰ he said, "I'll take you to the shop of people from Pristina, he might know." "Let's go." He

¹⁹ The craft of making *zhguna*, which in translation means coats.

²⁰ Arabic, *w'allah*, literally means I swear.

came, he comes along and accompanies me, we go to the shop. When up... Bursa is somewhat an open city, from upstairs he says, I introduced myself, and I recognized them, they were in fact from Gjilan. Very well-known.

Two-three professors from their family taught at the Technical Faculty, but I can't remember their last name now, Nexhat Orana, Orana, Orana's shop, yes. After he said, "Valla..." He said, "As far as I know Master Faik is not here, but in Istanbul." "I didn't find him there." Now the boy who came with said, "Do you want me to accompany you to see Ottoman's mausoleums? I'm ready with..." "Yes." "Come on."

They were very imposing, the first Ottoman, they had those huge *türbe*,²¹ extremely imposing. But also, he... I was with my wife, that boy left. When I saw some children were coming after us. At some point we sat to rest, when those children *tt-tt-tt* {onomatopoeia} "We are Albanian, we are coming after you because you are speaking Albanian," yes, et cetera.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: This is the '50s migration of Albanians in Turkey, so a part of traders went at that time.

Minir Dushi: Yes, yes, yes. At that time, migration was... especially in '56, some cousins of mine who lived here, migrated to Izmir, Izmir. I went to visit them and looked for Master Faik that I mentioned. There were a lot of people from Pristina in Izmir, a lot of families who... back then when they migrated two or three trains, but they couldn't take their goods with them. The house, they could sell the house, but left other things here. That's how it was.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: How did you go back to Gjakova? Do you wanna talk about Gjakova or do you wanna still talk about Pristina?

Minir Dushi: Aha, no I told you about that.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Can you tell us more about this market, this covered market where was it?

Minir Dushi: Covered bazaar...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Excuse me, covered bazaar?

Minir Dushi: Covered bazaar was there, and traders were there a little more... it's called *Kapalı Çarşı*²² in Turkish...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: *Kapalı*.

²¹ *Türbe* in Turkish is a tomb, usually a mausoleum of notable people.

²² Turk.: *Kapalı Çarşı*, means covered bazaar. Pristina used to have a covered bazaar which was destroyed in the beginning of the 1960s, it stood where Brotherhood and Unity Square is today.

Minir Dushi: Covered bazaar, covered bazaar. There were many shops there.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Can you describe how the city has changed since then?

Minir Dushi: I remember Pristina well, and I know a lot of signs, where the old was, and the new came, a lot. The changes are fundamental. It was a Turkish city but not very developed, quite developed but... whereas when the time for us to develop came, it changed fundamentally, these buildings were at the time, where the National Theatre is, there used to be a mosque without a minaret, yes. In front of that I remember there was, I remember that's where Koxhaxhiku lived, they were known, a known family in Pristina, big traders,

While this building that was ruined and rebuilt now, called Union [Hotel]...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Union, yes.

Minir Dushi: It existed back then, it was, it was a cinema, I watched a few, a few movies there...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Wasn't it always a guesthouse?

Minir Dushi: What?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Wasn't it always a guesthouse?

Minir Dushi: Yes, it was a guesthouse upstairs, but downstairs there were concert halls and....

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Oh, downstairs.

Minir Dushi: Yes, yes. There were two brothers Shasivari, they used to say it's theirs. They were people not so... because they dealt with... they collaborated with the occupier. I don't know what happened to them.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: What about the other parts?

Minir Dush: What?

Kaltrina Krasniqi: The other parts...

Minir Dush: All the other buildings were demolished, I don't know any that are still there. *Korzo*²³ used to be there, I remember *korzo* well, there used to be a bookshop, it was one of my brother's-in-law, a little more distant, Shllaka's from Gjakova, he lives in Kukës, in Kukës, in Kukës. I remember that, that bookshop...

²³ Main street, reserved for pedestrians.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Where was it?

Minir Dushi: It was the main bazaar, not bazaar, the main road, the main road, I wrote it here... street... Pristina, UÇK Street I think, now it's old like it used to be and buildings are built on the sides. It was called Divan Yoli Street, Divan Yoli Street, why? Because the king passed by there, Sultan Hamit II, he came to Kosovo to visit, to open a *medrese*,²⁴ actually the Islamic university, that building today...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Ministry of...

Minir Dushi: Health, that was built at that time, that is Turkey's building, he opened it and then passed by Divan Yoli Street, that's how people who have been in Pristina for a long time call it.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Where was the center of Pristina back then?

Minir Dushi: The city's center was approximately where the National Theatre is today, from there downwards was the main street, you see the shops that... everywhere people frequent the most beautiful street in the city, that is the case with Pristina, Gjakova, Mitrovica, in Prizren where the fountain is, and like this. That was there...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: What about where the university and the cathedral are today...

Minir Dushi: What?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Where Lakrishte is today, what used to be there?

Minir Dushi: Where the university is?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Yes, what used to be there?

Minir Dushi: There used to be barracks. It was the entrance to the barracks, they were almost here where we are, the entrance, an entrance for the barracks. While where the rectorate is now, there were the guards, the military, do you understand?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: What kind of building was the rectorate back then?

Minir Dushi: I don't know, military, but it's that one today, we just built them, I had the honor of changing those and yes. And the whole space where the university is today used to be barracks. As a kid, I went inside the barracks many times, secretly, because my uncle was in *logor*.²⁵ My uncle was

²⁴ Muslim religious school, the only school where teaching could be conducted in Albanian until 1945.

²⁵ Serb.: *logor*, work camp. *Logor* also can mean concentration camp.

taken to *logor* because he was a partisan, and he helped the partisans and it was... I went to bring him bread or something. These are very distant conversations. They shot them here, there is a sign where they shot them all.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Where?

Minir Dushi: At the Institute of History, there, there is the sign, there's a small memorial at the... there...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: The other day you told me that the Jews were shot at Tauk Bahçe that's why...

Minir Dushi: Jews, when they took the Jews, a few Jews. There was Buk the Jew, Buk the Jew was wealthy, they used to say that he gave money, and they took him and shot him at the Jewish cemetery.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: What happened with Jewish property after they took them?

Minir Dushi: I don't know, I don't know, some sold them, what do I know, but most of them were left like that. Now I'm going to tell you one more thing, seven-eight years ago, a Jew from Israel came, he was a Jew...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: From Pristina?

Minir Dushi: No, no, from, from Sarajevo. And somebody told him, "I'm a mining engineer, I worked in mines and like this, and they bring him to me," and he says, "I came, I am..." Like this, like this, "I went to the Jewish Cemetery where they used to be in Novobërda." I said, "*Valla* I don't know, I don't know." But then I heard they found some long-looking cemetery, it's not called Jewish Cemetery, but *Kaurr*²⁶ Cemetery, *Kaurr* Cemetery, they found it the next day (laughs).

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Can we...

Minir Dushi: You see these photographs? The ones you took?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Yes, yes we know.

Minir Dushi: One of them is 12 years old, one of them 18 years old, so you have it there...

Kaltrina Krasniqi: One more question about your childhood period...

Minir Dushi: Period of?

²⁶ Originally a persian term *gavur*, used to refer to members of Orthodox faith and other non-Muslims. Deriving from *gavur*, *kaurr* is a derogatory term used to refer to Albanians of Catholic faith. For a long time, the Jewish Cemetery was referred to as the *Kaurr* Cemetery to denote the non-Muslim belonging.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Childhood, when you were a kid.

Minir Dushi: Oh, childhood.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: In Pristina. Were there women in public life?

Minir Dushi: Were there?

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Women.

Minir Dushi: Women?

Kaltrina Krasniqi: In public life.

Minir Dushi: No, no, I don't remember. I can tell you one thing, similar to this... Sorry, is it okay? A customer came to our shop, he was rushing, "Why are you rushing?" "Do you know how to get to?" "What?" "At Shyqeri Begu's Mill..." That was far away *he he* {onomatopoeia}. From my shop to Shyqeri Begu's Mill, you know where it was? Here at the ProCredit Bank, in the center, there are still some signs of Shyqeri Begu's Mill.

There was the corner of Pristina, corner of Pristina, "Do you know how to get to Shyqeri Begu's Mill?" "Aiii {onomatopoeia}, where you have to go..." (laughs).

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Okay.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: What was the name of your shop? Did it have a name?

Minir Dushi: No, manufacture shop. Back then they didn't even write last names, but you knew. This is Batalli's shop, this is Jahja Dibra's shop, this is Beg Dushi's shop, do you understand, that store where they make fez hats...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Were there shoe repairman?

Minir Dushi: A?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Were there shoe repairman?

Minir Dushi: No, the bazaar was well-organized. Every city in Turkey's time was organized, for example *zhgunaxhitë*, *kallajxhitë*, *qeleshxhitë*,²⁷ manufacture²⁸ were in Gjakova, they were all set.

²⁷ *Qeleshxhitë*, craftsmen who made *qeleshe*. Whilst, *qeleshe* means fez, a flat-topped conical red hat with a black tassel on top, worn by men in some Muslim countries.

²⁸ The speaker uses the term to refer to textile stores in pre-socialist economy.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: What is manufacture?

Minir Dushi: What?

Kaltrina Krasniqi: What was it?

Minir Dushi: Manufacture is sold in meters, in meters...

Kaltrina Krasniqi: The material, the fabric and these...

Minir Dushi: Yes, the fabric and these, a manufacture like this.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Where did you get the fabric?

Minir Dushi: From Italy, back then Italy was here. They brought goods from Italy, there were a lot of goods in Albania from Italy *auuu* {onomatopoeia}, they were good and cheap.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Were you scared of Italians?

Minir Dushi: No, not scared of Italians. They were soft, soft people.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: How did it happen that you went back to Gjakova? When did you know you were safe to go back?

Minir Dushi: There was built... look, when the partisans came there, there was no trade, it was closed, they took all the goods. There was no reason to stay here for, I thought I should go to Gjakova and continue going to school because there was no other perspective. No, traditionally we did trade, but we saw that it was dying out, so I continued school, so I managed to go to school, I achieved the most. Like this. Is there anything else?

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Yes...

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Yes, I can ask you how was it at that time, I mean the lifestyle changed completely from commerce to education. How was that new life, because a new state, it changed...

Minir Dushi: Back then it was, life's orientation was to work in commerce, and with coffee, café owners, how do I know, with trade, with trade, do you understand? Yes, today it is completely different, diametrically opposite. I remember a thing in Gjakova, Haki Taha, you know who Haki Taha was, do you?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Was he...

Minir Dushi: The one who killed Miladin.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Miladin Popović.²⁹

Minir Dushi: Yes. he was my teacher in Gjakova, he was a person, of course, a patriot and appreciated education. I remember he used to gather the café owners in Gjakova with white hats, fez hats and went out for celebrations. *Eiii* {onomatopoeia} there are a lot of things to be said here, but I don't know if I can help you with anything, I don't know.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Yes, yes, a lot. Thank you very much. How was life in Gjakova when you went back, just stories, simple...

Minir Dushi: In Gjakova, in Gjakova, there was the place of commerce, but the sales were in Pristina, so the distribution was done in Pristina. In Gjakova you worked to live. There were a thousand shops in Gjakova, *Çarshia*,³⁰ the big *Çarshia*, the small *Çarshia*, but they were very... well-known, well-known. As I said, they were well-organized. Manufacture here, the other crafts here, like that.

It's interesting that all the Serbs from Gjakova dealt with, with... they were incorporated in crafts. All the Serbs were *teneqexhinjë*,³¹ *kallajxhi*,³² *opongaxhijë*³³... they did not deal with commerce.

Kaltrina Krasniqi: Why?

Minir Dush: Because there weren't, they were two big houses that dealt with commerce... as I said *opongaxhijë*, four like that, these are also café owners, café owners. That's what Serbs in Gjakova used to do, but there were a few Serbs.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: How did you find your family?

Minir Dush: What?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: How did you find your family when you went back in '45 or '46 to Gjakova?

Minir Dush: I didn't have any problems, or you mean in what condition?

Erëmirë Krasniqi: Yes, in what condition...

Minir Dush: They were in good condition, they dealt with commerce, then they started...

²⁹ Miladin Popović (1910-1945) was a Communist leader from Montenegro who worked in Albania and Kosovo alongside Albanian Communists and was assassinated in 1945.

³⁰ Literally small market, old part of Gjakova.

³¹ *Kallajxhi*, craftsmen that worked with tin, tinsmith.

³² Similar to *kallajxhi*, *teneqexhi* worked with tin, but produced different amenities.

³³ *Opinga*, similar to moccasins, made out of rubber or bovine leather, mainly used by the villagers. *Opongaxhijë* (pl.) are the craftsmen who made *opinga*.

Erëmirë Krasniqi: There were no victims during the Second World War?

Minir Dush: No, no victims, but the partisans came back then, the values of the time were such that it declared them capitalists. They took the goods, they took all the goods. But it turned out, as the people say, “The partisans took our rifle and left us the cannon.” So education, education. They took all of that, but they also have, they gave us the cannon, education, we all got education, it was very progressive.