

Oral History Kosovo

Interviewer: Do you ever think about the war? How did it...

Narrator: Me?

Interviewer: Yes.

Narrator: I think about it because I experienced it. During the war, I gave birth to my oldest daughter, when I gave birth, I gave birth to my oldest daughter in the state hospital. Not many people dared go to the hospital. I don't know where I got the courage to go. But when it comes you don't have time to think where you're going. I always wanted to go to, to Vranjevc, there was Nënë Tereza also for births, they were done there. But I don't know it started and directly, it was my first pregnancy and I didn't dare, because more severe cases were taken from there to the hospital, and in the hospital, they would not give you service when they saw where you were coming from.

I went directly to the state hospital. I went around 08:00, and until 11:00, no one even considered that I was giving birth. No one, at all, no one spoke Albanian. I stayed in the hall, it was a quiet cold September, quite cold. I was a little scared, a little nervous, you know, you feel the cold. At some point they came, when they saw me there. They took me, "Why are you here?" I said, "To give birth, I didn't come to hang out here." They looked at me, they said, "There's no time." When they noticed that, it was time to give birth to my daughter, they took me to the room.

There was a nurse or a doctor, I don't, what was she? I don't know. I heard her talking in Albanian. I said, "Please," I said, "Can you stay close because I can't speak Serbian." I understood it a little, but not much. She said, "Yes, don't worry," she said, "At all." And I never saw her again, she didn't come, my daughter was born, even if I went to Nënë Tereza, there wouldn't have been any complications. They didn't ask, I heard them saying, "Cut her," they said, "Who cares." You know, like this. They cut me a little, but there was no need, they didn't cut me any more, and my daughter was born and they took her. Because back then they didn't let them near like now, they took my daughter, I just heard her crying and I didn't see her anymore.

They left me uncovered, I was freezing. It was so cold, at that time, you're cold, even if it's summer. Oh God, I saw her, I said, "Bring that near me," I couldn't reach the blanket. I couldn't move, "Come on," I said, "Bring that blanket near me." They did, how do I say it, they gave us some bad, black blankets as

aid and it was soaking wet. It wasn't good, it made it worse, four hours like that. I don't know how I didn't get any serious illness from that, but maybe God takes care of you when you have no other options. They took me from there and took me to a room, or where did they take us? I didn't get to see my daughter until the next day, I couldn't wait for that moment. Not only did I not see my daughter, but they had also told my family that, "She needs a lot of medicine, infusions, because she is very sick." They didn't let anyone come in to see us.

They, I feel sorry because they spent a lot on medication, but they didn't give me anything, not even a paracetamol, let alone anything else, I didn't need, I didn't need it. Until the next day I didn't have water to drink, they didn't want to because they were all Serbs, they didn't want to... When the inspection came in the morning, they were scared, and then they would come and fix our beds, check up on us. Then they checked how wet I am, how... and friends among each other, those who had come earlier that had something to drink. One of them, I forgot her name, gave me a box of Plazma [cookie brand] and a juice, I think it was blueberry juice, you know, I am in... She gave it to me and I drank it, from evening until morning, only that.

The next day when they brought my daughter, God, it seemed like I knew which one was mine, she had black hair, very beautiful. When they brought... because they put them in a big, like a table, they put all the children there. They all had their numbers. Her face was ice cold, because she was fully uncovered, ice cold. I held her near me, but she didn't drink, she didn't drink at all, she slept immediately. Then I felt bad for her that she didn't drink. I thought, are they feeding her? They fed them. I felt bad when they took her from me.

You know, they left them with us for a half an hour, until it was their time. I stayed there for two days, I didn't want to vaccinate her there. They said, "They're giving them something bad, harmful, they're harming them for sure." And I didn't accept, I said, "I don't want to give her the vaccine, I'll do it later." They took her to the medical center and they gave her the first vaccine. Those two days seemed so long, no one was taking care of us. We were still in their hands, we had to do whatever they asked us to do.

Interviewer: Which year was your daughter born in?

Narrator: My daughter was born in 1970... '97, 1997. A day before I turned 25 years old.