Oral History Kosovo

INTERVIEW WITH XUN ÇETTA

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Duration: 258 minutes

Present:

1. Xun Çetta (Speaker)
2. Anita Susuri (Interviewer)
3. Renea Begolli (Camera)

Symbols used in the transcript for non-verbal communication:
() - emotional communication
{} - the interviewee explains with gestures

Other symbols in the transcript:
[ ] - addition to the text to facilitate understanding
Footnotes are editorial additions that provide information about places, names, or expressions

Part One

Anita Susuri: Mr. Xun, can you give us an introduction and tell us something about your background and your family?

Xun Çetta: Yes, my name is Xun Çetta. I am from the village of Trubuhoc, in what we call the Lugu i Drinit, near Banja e Pejës. I come from a simple peasant family. Our roots are from the village of Isniq. Nowadays they call it Podgur, but we call it Reka, and that's where we come from. I was born in that village. My ancestors had left Isniq, let's say around 200 years ago, probably more. As a family, our life was mainly based on farming and livestock, both. As a child, like all village children, I grew up in those conditions, with the small differences among families.

I completed my schooling in the village of Tërstenik, at the primary school Rilindja, which still carries that name today, up to the seventh grade. The seventh and eighth grades I completed closer to home, because another school opened. That school was called Ismail Qemali, I think it still has that name. Then I completed secondary school in what they called the textile school, the School of Fine Arts in Peja. It used to be called Shaban Spahija School of Art, now I think it is called Odise Paskali School of Art. The Art School in Peja used to be Shaban Spahija, now it is Odise Paskali. After secondary school, I thought it would be best to go and complete military service so that it would not become an obstacle later when I returned to continue my studies.

Sometime around 1975, I left to go into the army. I served as a sailor, and being a sailor usually meant a long service, around 18 months. I don't know exactly by the end, maybe around 1977–1978, that's when I was released from the army. Right after that… actually, while I was still serving, my brother here was working on arranging things so I could enroll in further studies. Afterwards I enrolled in the Higher School of Physical Education in Pristina. I was part of the last generation of that Higher School. I had only two exams left before graduating, before entering the diploma stage. We had the fortune, or maybe sometimes I say misfortune, because at times I think it was fortune, since the greatest satisfaction even today is that I was part of those events.

Whether fortune or misfortune, in 1981 I was one of the organizers [of the demonstrations], one of those convicted, one of those who suffered imprisonment, and I was wounded in those events as well. That was my fate. Afterwards I was sentenced to 13 years. We went through the investigation here in Pristina for several months. Then they transferred us to Ljubljana. In Ljubljana…if I were to go into detail, there are many things, and often in other interviews I leave the worst parts aside as if they carried no weight. The inspector who mistreated me terribly, brutally, was Asllan Sllamniku. When all the investigations were over, he came and said to me, "Xun, I know what kind of head you have. After everything you've gone through, these days you'll be transferred to serve your sentence in Slovenia. It's far away, but it's better there than in the other prisons. Because if you go to the other prisons, I know for sure you won't return alive to this country, because I know your mind." Later, when he had to interrogate me again, I would tell him, "You knew my mind, yet you tortured me." I went to Slovenia and served my sentence until 1989. Towards the end of 1989 I was released, so eight years and some months. As for the family, before I go on…

Anita Susuri: Yes, I wanted to go back a little…

Xun Çetta: I figured you would stop me there. I come from a peasant family. My father, Mustafa Çetta, was one of the youngest members of the NDSH,[1] because his community at that time reacted strongly. You know, often I find elements from that time that we no longer have today, if one is self-critical or truly impartial. I mean, often I find qualities that were better back then… even under communism, there were elements that we do not have today. That does not mean everything was good, only good. They told him, "You must not declare yourself, nor register," because Mustafa, my father, was young. He was a sworn NDSH member, a good activist, but they said his recruitment as such a young man could compromise them. Still, he ended up in prison and served six months. There are people here in Prishtina who say, "He didn't give up even a single person," and he was released…

Anita Susuri: What generation was your father from?

Xun Çetta: My father was born in 1925. And for the years I'm talking about, naturally this was before '63, '64, '65, when the flag was identified. But before those years, in '44–'45, there was a terrible history. My father was identified as an NDSH member, while still very young. His brother, my uncle, Brahim Çetta, before the war, according to stories, according to oral tradition, as you also have this program on oral histories, everywhere people say, "Brahim killed many Chetnik[2] forces," supposedly with the help of a German officer, at that time during Nazi-Fascism. Now when you say "with his help,"

[1] Albanian National Democratic Movement, an anti-Jugoslav and anti- communist resistance movement in Kosovo active from 1945 through 1947. The full name would be Lëvizja Nacional-Demokratike Shqiptare LNDSh but NDSh is a short version.

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

I know myself that he had that opportunity. How could we have had the power to kill without some kind of support? For a long time people talked about it. You know, some would say it's not right to mention it because it was with the help of an officer. But I remember, when the Germans entered [Kosovo] and wanted to rule, they were eager to find people who were already fighting one another. Naturally, in your own land, why were they killed… but it is said he killed Chetnik forces.

When the time came after World War II, I mean, he was implicated through directives, I don't know exactly how. There was what was called the People's Police at that time, stationed in Gurakoc. One day they were ordered to take him, by force, and execute him at Kulla e Popit in Istog. The famous *kulla*[3]…you've read or heard about it. He was executed there, at Kulla e Popit in Istog. I want to connect this, because now I'm trying to build a bigger picture of all these figures, and I've read the material. This is a strange story. They crushed my father's brother, while my father was still underage. They gave my father the birthdate and year of my uncle Brahim, even though he was still a minor. Before the sorrow of his uncle's execution had even faded, they sent my father into the army in Travnik. They changed his date. So now my father has one date on his ID card and another on his military booklet, because I still keep them. I didn't bring these now, and many of the things you asked me to bring as materials,I have many documents in archives that I don't know if anyone else has. But I happened to come unprepared. I still preserve them.

One date here, another there. Why did they do this? Why did they want to…? NDSH, one way or another, they transformed it, period. They removed it, erased its traces. But at the end, after they executed his brother, this was still hanging over us. And the strangest thing is that my father was interrogated there about the brother they had executed and about the organization he belonged to. That's according to the stories my father always told me when I was young, and I remember them. Now I want to connect it directly to one of my own cases. When I went into the army, in '76, '77, '78, I was imprisoned for seven days over an incident involving a Montenegrin minority, something like that. During the military KOS[4] investigation, this part connects directly to it...

The KOS inspector asked me about my family. He described it to me as if he knew it better than I did, down between the Drini rivers where the roads… He knew it better than I did. He asked me, "How many uncles do you have?" I said, "I have five uncles." There were Rasa, Salih, for example, Salih, Selim, Osman, Imer, Muharrem, and my father. And one uncle… "No…" he said. "Are you sure?" I said, "I'm sure." I wasn't that young anymore, I was a soldier, mature enough. Right away I understood… I knew what they wanted to do to me, they wanted to convict me by connecting me to the uncle they had executed. Wherever it led, I said, "No, if it turns out I have other uncles, I don't know what you're

[3] *Kulla* (tower-house) refers to a traditional fortified Albanian stone residence, particularly characteristic of western Kosovo and northern Albania. Typically built between the 18th and 19th centuries, these multi-storey structures served as homes for extended families while providing protection during periods of conflict. They often featured thick stone walls, small windows and defensive openings, with an upper-floor reception room (oda) used to host male guests.

[4] *KOS (Kontraobav(j)eštajna služba),* Counterintelligence Service of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and later Serbia and Montenegro. KOS was formed in 1946 from OZNA, the wartime Department for National Security.

talking about." Then he said, "And one more thing…" I said, "Go ahead." He said, "Don't you have Brahim? Why aren't you mentioning your uncle Brahim?" That struck me. Then he said, "Have you ever heard stories about your uncle Brahim?"

So, what he wanted to know was whether our family had been raised with this story, whether there was still talk about the killing of my uncle. I said, "I don't know, but our Brahim is alive," and I played the role so well. He said, "Which Brahim?" I said, "My uncle's son is in Germany, an emigrant. He left for work three, four, maybe five months ago." Back then they used to hold courses and send people off as masons, painters, and so on. I said, "Brahim is in Germany." He said, "No, no," he said, "your uncle." I said, "No." "But have you never heard of an uncle of yours called Brahim?" he asked.

The man whose name today is on a street after the liberation of Kosovo. They questioned me at length about that name, just to test me… And in reality, my grandmother, my father's mother and the mother of that Brahim… all my childhood I remember her sitting by the stove, the floors in our house laid directly on the earth, packed dirt as they say, trampled flat. And I still remember today beans boiling on the stove while my grandmother cried, "Oh Serbia, oh Serbia, may flames consume you, you took Brahim from us leaving no trace of hi,." Because later they said how, when they searched for my uncle Brahim, after they killed him. They took photographs, clothes, whatever he had, even his ID card, and everything disappeared. What is worse, they erased him from the documents too. If you go now, you won't find Brahim Çetta anywhere.

Anita Susuri: They erased him completely as a person.

Xun Çetta: They executed him. And after the execution, they erased the documents, the traces.

Anita Susuri: They erased his identity.

Xun Çetta: Now, since you say there will be a summary made, I say this not by accident: after the last war in Kosovo, Serbia took the cadastral documents. They took whatever they could erase completely, and what they could not erase they calculated carefully. This connects with that. Because if you go now, you won't find Brahim Çetta, even though it is known he existed, with documents and registration, just like all my other uncles. They erased him because they killed him, and they erased him so that he would be forgotten, as if he had never existed. But history always investigates. Imagine now, in the twenty-first century, they thought that by taking those cadastral documents they could study carefully which names to erase completely and which ones to calculate. That's how I connect these things.

And then my own story continues with my studies. I was placed on a scholarship by the municipality in Drom 3 in Pristina. That's where friendships began, and we started forming groups, talking, not directly

at first, but gradually over time. Music did its part too. For example, when I listened to Shkurte Fejza[5] back then, it would make you rise to your feet. Then I remembered what the inspector had tried to do to me when I was in the army. I had spent seven days in prison back then. Then the stories of my family, then the stories of my grandmother. And there, little by little, quietly and without noise, we started seeing one another and understanding who we needed to get close to. We even have some of this written down. Then certain people connected with one another, matching up. We built a good organization to work, to function without disturbances, but with one spirit.

We kept ties in the student center, in the administration. The conditions truly were not good, though to be fair, they did meet some of our needs. I want to say what is true. Whenever there was a bigger protest or outcry, they improved things. There was one, Gani Shatri, who was very aggressive in the administration over conditions, and they would improve them. But when March 11, 1981 exploded, I was not the one who organized it, though I was here. I'm not saying I don't know who did, now I know. Because in our organization, in our indictment…our indictment had 21 students, led by Ali Lajçi,[6] Bajram Kosumi,[7] Musli Kosumi, Merxhan Avdyl, myself, Gani Vllana, and others, Gani Koci and the rest.

We were in one indictment of 21 students, but we were not 21 people from the same organization. Their political-juridical strategy was to gather us as if we were one organization, to strike us as a terrorist organization, and to open the case against 21 students. They would say here are three, there four, there five or six, some worked in pairs, trios, groups of four, and they put us all together and presented us as the organizers of the events of 1981. I don't know exactly how they organized it; it was organized by four people. I've said the names elsewhere, I won't go into them now and waste time. I was sentenced to 13 years. And when I went to serve them… this brings me back to what the inspector had said: "We're sending you there because it's better; maybe you can return alive. Nobody returned from the others."

When I arrived there… and here too I want to say this: believe me, when we got there they tied our hands, two of us, one sitting here and one there. In Belgrade they stopped us only long enough to have a quick bite each. We reached Slovenia at around 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. When we got there, they brought us soup, these dishes stacked one over another, sealed shut, with soup below and the meal

[5] Shkurte Fejza (1961) is a Kosovo Albanian folk singer known for her performances of traditional and patriotic Albanian songs. She began her musical career in 1974 with an appearance on Radio Television of Pristina and became one of the most prominent voices in Kosovo's folk music scene.

[6] Ali Lajçi (1955–2024) was a Kosovo Albanian political activist and politician, known as one of the leading student organizers of the 1981 demonstrations in Kosovo. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his political activities, of which he served ten. Following the Kosovo War, he served as Mayor of Peja from 2001 to 2007 and later as a member of the Kosovo Assembly. He was also one of the signatories of Kosovo's Declaration of Independence in 2008.

[7] Bajram Kosumi (1960) is a Kosovo Albanian politician, writer and former political prisoner. He was involved in the 1981 student protests in Kosovo and was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his political activities. He later served as Minister of Information in the Provisional Government of Kosovo (1999), participated in the Kosovo delegation at the Rambouillet Conference (1999), and served as Prime Minister of Kosovo from 2005 to 2006.

above, steam still trapped inside, they had prepared them for us, and then salad too. When they set them in front of us, we were stunned: food we had never even dreamed of. I had Sadik Buja with me, now deceased. I said, "Sadik, if they keep us like this, maybe prison won't be so bad." He said, "No, man, it's just the first day. Maybe it won't be like this again." But the whole time we stayed there, the food was like that, in Slovenia.

The privileges were completely different for ordinary prisoners, different from political prisoners, to the point that the prison administration would apologize to us. Sometimes we, the political prisoners, held meetings with the prison administration when they invited us. They would ask, whether we agreed or disagreed, "Bring us two more copies of *Rilindja*[8] because three copies are not enough, we are too many. We want more literature in the Albanian language," for example. Even the jurisprudence of Slovenia itself said, "We are aware that we are violating the law of the Republic of Slovenia with the political prisoners from Kosovo. Because you are under the treatment of Belgrade. Belgrade has ordered that you be transferred to all the republics so that you are not gathered together in one place. But we are violating the law of our republic because it is imposed on us. Political prisoners from Kosovo have a different treatment." So there were things they could not give us the same way they gave to others, but they wanted to make us aware that…

After that, it is true that the prisons in Slovenia were far more democratic than those in the other republics. Even though I found many things there too that shocked me, things that were terrible. For example, Niš, Stara Gradiška, and all the others. But even there I found some things… I found people who had almost none of the experiences of Slovenia. But Slovenia does not mean it was all that good either, because for example, here is one who was killed in prison in Maribor. Hajredin Bala was killed there. He was a bit aggressive, they say that with the iron used for ironing {gestures like holding an iron} he smashed a guard's face. Those kinds of situations impose themselves on you, and if someone is impatient and does not know how to calculate, they fall into the trap. They killed him. So it does not mean everything there was safe.

And then there is me myself, everyone knows this, many are still alive today. At three in the morning they brought special civilian forces from the city to maltreat me in prison and keep me down until the next day when the administration came. They beat me and left me as if dead. It was over a problem that Jungiq Stojan had set up for me. He was a Serb. The administration was exhausted by him, but that's a long story. So even there, Slovenia had much better treatment, but if the state, the hand of the Security Service, is there, and you have it in Kosovo today and everywhere, when it comes to the Security Services they are above everything. If God lets them loose, they can do good and they can do bad.

[8] Rilindja was the first Albanian-language newspaper published in Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia. Its first issue appeared on 12 February 1945 in Prizren. Initially published weekly, it became a daily newspaper in November 1958 and served as a major source of political, social and cultural information for Kosovo Albanians. Its publication was forcibly discontinued by Serbian authorities on 5 September 1990. It briefly resumed publication in 1999.

I mean, when the Service had them under their control, the director told me, “Xun, we know what Jungiq is doing, but it is in the hands of the Service, and whether they kill or spare someone, there is nothing we can do.” We have had such great experiences, I mean, even I myself was beaten. Why? Because that Jungiq set me up with a problem. Then another problem happened to me, to transfer me, but that is a long story to tell…

Anita Susuri: Before we continue with all of that and with the demonstrations of 1981, with everything that followed, because there was more or less a change in the system, with the differentiation, the imposition of curfews, and the imprisonments, which it seems to me were at their highest in 1981 with political prisoners…

Xun Çetta: Yes.

Anita Susuri: Yes, but there was also a protest before that, in 1968, and you told me you have memories from 1968, even though you were very young.

Xun Çetta: Yes, besides the memories I have as a child, I also gave my own paper in 1968, even though I am not of that generation. I was part of the staff, I was in Switzerland when they informed me, “You have a topic, Xun Çetta: establish contact with participants of 1968 in the diaspora.” There I gathered their stories as much as I knew and could. I did have those memories. But I will stop at what I personally remember as a child, and then connect it… I was a child in 1968, exactly. We used to say the meadows beyond the white river, and I was there herding cows.

There were two wooden sheds, as you call them. Two sheds, and between them there was an open trench, what you might call a catacomb or a deep ditch. I was afraid some cow or calf might fall in, and I would have to go after them. I would throw thorns there to cover it. I knew nothing, and suddenly the helicopters came. It was the first time I had ever seen helicopters so low. I could see the pilot himself like I see you now in front of my eyes, that’s how close it seemed. One came, then another, then another. I stopped there and thought, this is not something that happens often. Later, when we returned in the evening, they told us what had happened, and they named names and everything.

Not long after, my father came…the same one I spoke about before. “So, Xun, how are you? Are you alright? What’s new today?” I said, “I don’t know.” He said, “Were you scared?” I said, “You mean about…” {gestures upward}. He said, “Yes.” I said, “Yes father, something has happened.” He said, “Don’t be afraid, don’t be afraid. The students in Pristina have risen up for the flag, for that,” and he said it exactly like this, “for the same thing I was arrested some months ago.” I was young, but I knew about his arrest. There was a teacher there… and they accused him, not the teacher, but my father for influencing the school. I won’t mention names now, they are all known.

He said, “No,” he said, “now the time is coming when they will succeed.” My father said, “Don't you be afraid. They have no business with you here herding cows. They have no business with me sitting here. They are looking for others.” I said, “But whom?” We had some students back then, I still remember

them today. There was Ismail, Qazim, Nezif, and an Isuf from the village. I said, “Are they in danger, did they kill them?” He said, “No son, no. They know where to strike, they strike there, where…” and he described it to me in detail. He said, “May God let it pass.” And I remember those helicopters as if it were today, nonstop above our heads, circling there, then going off and coming back, that remains my memory.

Anita Susuri: What happened after that?

Xun Çetta: Then, in the evening. It was a Saturday market day in Peja, and the villagers came back from the market. They were saying, “You should have seen it, Xhemajl Gashi was there in the market,” Xhemajl Gashi passed away some time ago, “Ramadan Blaka was there too,” and him we knew, he had been our professor, our teacher, and now they were telling names and more names. Then the name of Zymer Neziri came up, it seemed they had seen him too… but Zymer was not known by our closer circle. Our immediate circle knew Ramadan and the others. And one of them said, “Zymer was there too, I think.” I was young there, but I understood. I knew very well that something big had broken out from… and I forgot what my father had said about Pristina, and I thought, there it is now, it has exploded. These are my memories.

Later, I recounted these stories in the book where I had my memoir – stories with participants of ’68 in the diaspora, where I live, I have all kinds of accounts. I have mentioned names too, but I won’t go further into them now. This is my own memory… and from there they wanted to push for mass displacement. Besides what was spoken in the houses. And the words of my grandmother, the words of my father …For me, somehow, they formed a kind of conclusion. If I speak differently now, that was the theme of 1968 for me.

Anita Susuri: And in your family, were you the eldest among the children?

Xun Çetta: I was the third son. I also had older cousins, but among my brothers I had one brother, Murat Çetta, the second was Muhamet Çetta, I was the third, then Rifat Çetta, and we had one sister, Fahrije Çetta. We also lived with an uncle who likewise had four sons and one daughter. And he had Brahim Çetta, the one I mentioned before, named after the hero, the martyr, however you want to call him. We gave him that name, we renewed it. He also had Ismet Çetta, Xhavit Çetta, and Fadil Çetta.

Anita Susuri: And when you continued high school in Peja, you said it was the Art School…

Xun Çetta: The Art School.

Anita Susuri: What kind of school was it?

Xun Çetta: That school was… it was called design, textile, architecture. I was in the textile sector, which meant drawing and painting. You had to make paintings. Back then the designer would take the type and shape it. In the Art School, that’s what we had. I never forget, for the first time there were these huge boards, and they made little handles on them so you could carry them like a bag {gestures

with hands as if carrying something}. Because there you had to pin your work with thumbtacks in order to draw. And whenever people saw us at school with those in our hands, those big boards, because everyone had to have their own, you would open it there and draw on it. With thumbtacks you'd pin the paper and make your work. That was the Art School, the textile department.

Anita Susuri: Was it your own wish, or how did it happen that you chose it?

Xun Çetta: No, I wanted it very much, but I didn't continue with it. Strange things have happened to me in life. I finished it, but I never continued much with art after that. Then, when I came to Pristina, I enrolled in physical education, which is the complete opposite. I loved physical education, and I still love it. Even today, at this age, I won't even name my age because I'm old now, I still have my half-hour of morning gymnastics regularly, every single day.

But when I fell into prison, it was no longer the sport or gymnastics you would do if you were free. Going to prison took that away from me too, just as I had moved away from drawing and textiles and gone into physical education. Then prison threw physical education away too, and I turned to publicism.

That means reading and writing. I believe I could present it to you, you've seen it. I have sent 500–600 page texts to the highest state institutions, telling them what I see: what you are doing to the state, not us. With the injustices you are doing to this country, you are rethinking the state, you are destroying it. Since you have an oral history program now, sometimes these spoken accounts are better than written ones. I never forget the Slovenians had the Slovenia Cest Affair,[9] just as we have our own affairs. For example, the Croats had MASPOK.[10] In that case Stane Kavčič was the victim of the Slovenia Cest affair. That's a history I used to know at my fingertips. When a person is given such matters, he reads the histories of other peoples as if they were his own.

Because he wants to… and when I defended Stane Kavčič to the Slovenians, I could see on their faces who liked it, though they stayed careful. I defended him a lot, very much. They slowly started watching me, paying attention to what I was writing. At first they did not want to give me the right to write. All these things I mentioned were written after they finally gave me that right. I got, I don't know how many days in solitary confinement, just to gain the right to go out and write and send to the highest

[9] Slovenian Road Affair (Cestna afera, 1969) was a political dispute between Slovenia and the federal Yugoslav government over the allocation of international loans for road infrastructure. The conflict arose when the federal government excluded planned Slovenian highway sections from the list of projects to receive funding. The decision prompted protests from the Slovenian government, led by Stane Kavčič, and exposed growing tensions over economic inequality, centralism and the autonomy of Yugoslav republics.

[10] MASPOK (Mass Movement) was a Croatian national and reform movement that emerged in 1970–1971, also known as the Croatian Spring. It brought together reformist Communist Party leaders, intellectuals, cultural organizations and students advocating greater political and economic autonomy for Croatia within Yugoslavia, as well as greater recognition of Croatian national identity. The movement was suppressed in late 1971 following intervention by Josip Broz Tito, resulting in the removal of its leading political figures and the imprisonment of numerous activists and students.

institutions of the state whatever I wanted. I was already convicted… What more could they do to me? I was sentenced, so if anything, I could only reinforce my punishment if I wrote something to them. But I wanted to tell them what they were doing.

In solitary confinement, on the third day, two men and one woman came and took me out. It's interesting. They said, "Xun, why are you victimizing yourself for nothing at such a young age? You are already a victim of these times, protect yourself." I said, "I want the chance to express to the highest organs of the state what I feel. And I have one question." They said, "Go ahead." I said, "How do you accept Edvard Kardelj[11] of Slovenia?"

"Edvard Kardelj is the architect of the socialist democratic republic," they told me. I said, "Okay. Then how do you explain Edvard Kardelj in a letter, because I have read Edvard Kardelj," I said. And it was exactly like that. He could have told me, "So you're reading Edvard Kardelj?" I read any work, no matter what it is. Even the darkest works, I like to read them, because I want to see for myself instead of just believing others.

I said, "I have read Edvard Kardelj at least three times. And the thing that left the strongest impression on me," I said, "is the letter from prison to Ivan Maček in Belgrade," back in the time of Serbia, the Serbo-Croat-Slovene state. I said, "It is the best book," I said, "and why now, so many years later, has the Socialist Republic of Slovenia brought me here, and why do I not have rights?" I saw that the woman bit her lip like this {gestures biting her lip}, signaling for him to answer. They turned away, I don't know what they discussed over there. Then they walked out the door. I was afraid, and I'm stretching this out, but what else could I do…

Anita Susuri: No, no, it's no problem.

Xun Çetta: They went out the door and left me with one of them. They talked, and talked, and talked. Then when they came back, they said, "Xun," they used to call me Çetta, "Çetta, be careful what you write, it is your own responsibility. We want to give you the right from today onward to send things officially. But protect yourself, you are young. Take the pillow and the blanket," because in solitary it was just wooden boards and a blanket, and one pillow, that's all you had. He said, "And come out," he said, "it is too much from tomorrow onward."

And from there on I started writing. The book of Riza is in a different way the source of those rights they later gave me… but the way I got them, by mentioning Kardelj and all that, after that I had a completely different treatment. A completely different treatment from the whole jurisprudence of Slovenia.

[11] Edvard Kardelj (1910–1979) was a Slovenian communist politician, statesman and one of Josip Broz Tito's closest associates. He served as Yugoslavia's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1948 to 1953 and held several senior government and Communist Party positions. He was the principal ideologue of Yugoslav socialism and one of the main architects of the country's system of socialist self-management and the 1974 Constitution, which significantly expanded the powers of Yugoslavia's constituent republics and autonomous provinces.

I had problems, of course. A Serbian guard framed me, one they called "gorilla." That's what they called him. He used to beat Albanians, take them into the bathroom, bloody them, beat them in prison, ordinary prisoners, not political ones. He beat them. And without giving explanations now, because to put someone in solitary they had to write a report explaining why. But he could take you into the bathroom, beat you, bring you back, and then force a cleaner to wash the blood, whoever was on duty… and the administration knew everything. He framed me with a problem when they brought those people I mentioned earlier. Special units had come from the city to maltreat me. The director himself told me.

Later another thing happened. I put him in the hospital because he set me up a second time: "Why are you listening to Radio Tirana?" He had those things in his ears, spies as they used to call them back then. He framed me again. This time he forced me completely. And on top of that, I remembered what he had done before. I put him in the hospital, and he was a guard. Then when the time came to transfer me, because I could no longer stay there, they gave me thirty days' punishment in solitary…

Anita Susuri: Because of that beating?

Xun Çetta: Because of the beating of him, the one he had imposed on me. Before that the police had beaten me, and now a decision had been made because I was listening to Radio Tirana. That's where I stepped in, now my chance had come. Do you believe it, the director Lorbar Emil called me to tell me, "The jurisprudence, which has had a good opinion of you because your conduct has been like this {gestures straight with hand}, those are your own views," they respected that. He said, "But they want to transfer you from here to Koper. Mr. Çetta, thank the jurisprudence, because they said, 'He must not be sent to Kapedon, the big prison, because anything could happen to him there.' The prison in Koper is small, restricted, and you will pass better there. One thing," he said, "I want to tell you." I said, "Go ahead."

"You are sentenced to thirty days. Now," he said, "the decision will come, the meeting will be held," they called it *Skupština* [Assembly]. He said, "Once you receive the decision, we do not want to prolong it. We want to transfer you immediately. And when the time comes to complete your thirty days," he said, "we will arrange it for you there." There was a man named Fisher, I've forgotten his full name now, he was the director there in Koper.

He said, "We want to speak with him. When the time comes for you to finish your solitary confinement, we will give you that decision there. You are sentenced, remember that," he said, "and we will make it possible for you once a month to go out into the city of Koper, by the seaside, with guards," he said, "to relax a bit because you have suffered, with guards."

And when the time came for me to finish… I went. They transferred me, they took me in one of those prison vans, the guards, the police as we called them. They took me there, questioned me, settled me in, placed me with others, and we began. Three days passed, maybe four or five, what they call quarantine, you know, just to stay one or two nights there before going among the other prisoners.

When I was being transferred there, I was received well. By then I had forgotten all about it. Then one of my psychologists, she was quite old, an older woman, a psychologist, said to me, "Mr. Çetta," she said, "I would recommend something." I said, "Go ahead." In her office alone, she said, "You should make a request to go out *spremstvo*," that's what they called it, meaning "under escort," "to ask if you can go out into the city accompanied by a guard," because, she said, "you are burdened and all that." Then I remembered the words he had told me before, and I said, "Yes, yes, but I don't know how possible it is." She said, "Take it." She gave me the form to fill out. I filled out the form. The meetings were now held publicly, in the presence of the prisoners and the prison administration. My request was brought forward.

The administration unanimously said, "Yes, because as it is, we are already violating the rights of the political prisoners from Kosovo," just as they had told me back there in Ljubljana. They said, "This is no violation at all, we'll simply assign him one guard." So they arranged exactly what had been promised to me there: "When the time comes for you to finish solitary confinement, you'll at least be in the city there…"

Anita Susuri: And did you go out into the city?

Xun Çetta: We did. We went out, we walked around, we sat down. I paid for lunch. The guard didn't want to let me pay, but I paid. Because we worked and got a percentage of wages. For example, if the salary for the work was 300 euros, you would get 30 euros, let's say. We worked there, the prison would bring in work, assembly jobs and things like that. I went out into the city with the guard escorting me, just as they had reminded me back in Ljubljana: "We have to send you like this, because it is better for you. We didn't send you to a big prison. In a big prison, the furnace would eat you up," that's how they used to put it. With the Slovenians I have only one regret: we didn't know how to behave toward them properly, both normally and politically. Because they had shown understanding for all our struggles, and I know that well. Later, the cultural association Migjeni even came to visit me in prison in Ljubljana, and then you…

Anita Susuri: From Albania?

Xun Çetta: No, from Kosovo. Sali Kabashi, Naim Maloku, Gani Bujqinca…well, Gani later, and there was also Boris Vuku from Slovenia, from that region they call Primorska, the coastal region, near Portorož, close to Koper. He was a member there.

They came to visit me in prison under the framework of those rights and such things. They had that possibility back then. They said, "We are from the Migjeni association, in contact over there." Then Franco Juri came to visit me too, an Italian minority member who later became ambassador to Argentina. Through him, little by little, I was connected from there to the Migjeni association, the same one where, as you may remember, Sali Kabashi and Naim Maloku were leading figures.

When I got out of prison after eight and a half years, almost nine, I spent my first night at Boris Vuku's place. I even have it in writing how he had arranged it together with a Dutch journalist. When I arrived there, I found that Jasha Zobec had also come from Zagreb, a well-known name. It was a very interesting first night. The second night I stayed with Naim Maloku in Ljubljana, then three or four nights there.

And there, both among the former political prisoners and with the Migjeni association in Ljubljana, all those solutions we had been arranging through Boris Vuku and the others became reality, because they had maintained good relations with the association.Then, when they wanted to sentence me, which is very interesting, they wanted to sentence me for that incident I told you about, to bring me to trial and sentence me again.

Anita Susuri: For the beating of…

Xun Çetta: Yes. But by then I was in Koper, while the court was in Ljubljana. The guards got ready, just like when they had brought me before, to take me there for trial. When I arrived there… there's even a photograph of it, I think it's in the book… Sali Kabashi was there, Franco Juri was there, and Boris Vuku had come too. They had arranged a lawyer for me, from Peter Čeferin. He was there to defend me because an injustice was being done to me. I was already sentenced, and now they wanted to…

The procedure began, but they didn't drag it out. They said, "Fine, until the future, because we still have other people to question about this case," and they left it at that. When I came out, the lawyer said to me, "Listen, this matter is over." "Why?" I asked. He said, "Because both the prosecutor and everyone else are saying that things are changing. There are doubts, so they're leaving it like this for now, until they see what the situation brings." And that's how it ended. There's a photograph of when they came for me, with the lawyer they had arranged to defend me in prison, all of them are there in front of the prison.

Anita Susuri: How many years had passed since you were in prison when that beating happened, after which you later got to go out walking?

Xun Çetta: It was around '86 or '87. I had been there since '81, so maybe five or six years. As for Ljubljana, when we were there, there wasn't much we could really say. There's something I wanted to mention about that, but I don't really feel like it. If Slovenia was like that, I also met people here and there who were allowed to go home to their families.

Anita Susuri: Really? There were cases like that?

Xun Çetta: Yes, in other prisons. I have names, some of them admitted it to me themselves. And I say, we need to tell those things too, not rush to paint everything only black. You can make it as dark as you want, because life itself is dark enough. But there are some things we shouldn't hesitate to

acknowledge. For example, I know people who studied while in prison. They slept with us, and then they went to their studies. Shefki Shatri, for instance, finished veterinary school.

Anita Susuri: And how was that possible?

Xun Çetta: It was possible. He was young, he did his work there, and the prison financed him to go and complete it. I can't speak badly about that. There was Arif Demolli too, a sharp writer. Strong-minded in every way. He was sentenced to I don't know how many years. He served his sentence with us. And he even went home to his family from there. Now I want to say this, if these are really meant to be testimonies, it's better for at least someone to know the truth.

Anita Susuri: Yes, yes.

Xun Çetta: Can anyone deny it? Never. Why? Because the Slovenians themselves said: "As much as we can, we will do everything. But we know very well that we are violating the laws imposed by the Republic of Serbia." They even had special rooms; if someone had committed a serious crime, his wife could come and stay with him in a room, as if they were at home. So that life would not be severed from the future, because today he is in prison, but tomorrow he will be free. They are trying to introduce that now in Kosovo too, I see it.

There were also people here who worked outside. They would go out to work, but the prison would take their salary. They worked in companies, there were even such cases. As for me, as an example, they gave me the right to go out. I was the only one sentenced to 13 years, a very heavy sentence. All my comrades would go outside the prison to work, still under the prison system but outside. They would leave the building. One worked in metal-dyeing, dipping iron into chemicals to color it. Another worked in agriculture. Fadil Blakaj worked there, dealing with production. They were practically in freedom.

For the first time, the administration gave me the opportunity to go out. I got ready, we had to line up. I used to have only a small window, and I would watch them from there when the workers went out. I myself only had the door opening and the work from one door to the next, what they called assembly work. A heavy and unsuitable sentence. Everyone there knows it.

When the administration granted me the right to go out, I was overjoyed. I went there and stood in line with the others, ready to leave and work outside. Then the guard looked at me and shouted: "Četta, *nazad*!" *Nazad* in Serbian means "back." I asked, "Why?" He said, "You cannot go out." "But the day before yesterday," I said, "the prison administration decided and gave me that right." "No, you can't," he said, and sent me back. The story is long and time is short. But I was deeply upset. They turned me back. So I dug in my heels and for five days I refused to work. Like this: sleeping, corridor, work, work in the room. A totally closed type of confinement. Then I said, "I won't work here either." The administration came, one after another. They said, "An injustice has been done to you. We know who

did it. We gave you the opportunity." But it was the black hand of those Services, the same ones I keep talking about. That's how it later came out with that Jungiq Stojan I mentioned. They never let me go.

Not a single day did they allow me to work in the open system. Requests were made for short trips into the city, others were allowed to go, and people went continuously. That's why it's better to explain these things properly, so later generations don't just hear explosions of half-truths. I've always said: prison is prison, no matter how you turn it around. Prison is bad, it takes everything from you. But it was different from the other prisons. Still, it wasn't some ideal prison either. We suffered there too. Hajredin Bala was killed there, killed in prison. That casts a dark shadow over Slovenia. Ten special guards came for me too, to abuse me in prison, in the middle of the night when there weren't enough regular guards. That too is a dark stain. The guards themselves admitted it, and so did the prison director.

That means, when the authorities put their hands on you, it is hard to escape them. It depends on how well you know how to calculate, but these events, they themselves do not even know how to organize and explain in detail how the system functioned. I have seen people even in positions who were better than my own close friend. Hand on my heart. Because you see it, you see that they dare to act like you, he is not there, leave it, but he dares.

I have seen Slovenes, man, exactly like an insert. One from the Directorate of Prisons of Slovenia told me. He says, "Xun," after they had given me the right to write, he says, "Xun, why don't you take a good insert about Tito," he says, "put it as a piece of writing and then twist it." And for a person from the directorate to tell you this, it is no small thing. You know, he says, "It is a mitigating circumstance to call one deed good, all of them are black," he told me. I said, "I do not deal with Tito, I deal with what is happening." "But within that framework, skillfully work on it yourself. Take one of his good deeds and then criticize."

He was looking at it, looking at it, and he had read a place where I had sent a letter, because they do not send letters without analyzing them. Where I say, imagine where the fate of Albanians is when Tito himself says, the one who has nine children, I am the godfather of the tenth child, I became godfather to each of them. Meanwhile in Kosovo they began to wipe out the birthrate, they have laws of segregation against our people. It is in contradiction with the very head of the state.

Now I had written it unconsciously, I wrote as my logic worked. Then, "Here I will take you as an example," he said, "how well you have done it," and he read it to me. "Do you know how good this is," he said, "this is convincing. You say Tito did well when he says I am the godfather of the tenth child whoever has them, and immediately you say to the Albanians you have made laws on how to stop the Albanian birthrate. Did you say anything else?" He wanted to make me say something else good about Tito and then it came to my mind. "Well, many, many things would have to be said," I said, "I hear cases where no one knows who to find one good thing about, but I see what is happening and what is being done." That means…

Part Two

Anita Susuri: Mr. Xun, we will continue with some of your stories, but beforehand I would like to return to some parts because I know they are important both for you to mention and also to document, because they show a lot about the arrest and everything that followed. First, I am interested, when you came as a student to Pristina, you said that this was the time when you got to know the groups and understood that these groups existed. If you can tell us in more detail how you came into contact? How did you find out about them?

Xun Çetta: Yes. Now to go into names, often very few escape without some name being forgotten, and then the one who is forgotten says, you mentioned them. But these burdens, it is better to leave all of them. It often happens to me, a person talks and talks and talks and my name is not mentioned. Could they not have gone through it without mentioning me if it had gone realistically? These things should not be put with names. A person says two, three, four names and finishes it, closes it. It does not mean he overlooked you.

Yes, at that time, as a family, as a base, we had to know whose family's son or daughter you were dealing with. That was the first step. For example, now, at that time I am speaking of, I was in a barrack with some students from Kabash of Prizren, in the dormitories I had friends from our area. There was one Muhamet Elshani, now he is dead, killed in the war. I do not practice that it is good to speak, but now people speak so much in the name of the dead, it has raised in me an aversion, it makes me shrink. It is easy to speak because he is not alive. But when it comes to speaking of the living, then people do not like to speak, neither good nor bad. Better, at least, it is good to speak of both weaknesses and values.

Muhamet Elshani, who was himself the third brother to be killed, today the memorials are all there near us. We went through a lot with him... on the 26th [March, 1981] we spent the whole night wandering when they would crush us. When we returned, we had a private apartment on Xhavit Mitrovica Street. We went there, but we did not dare go inside, because there... in the morning, we got up and from there we went out to the student center. At the student center we went out with Limani, and on the first and the 2nd [April, 1981], when I was wounded there on the 2nd [April]... Then there was a Naim Kelmendi who somehow has not been discredited to this day. He is alive, he has written and things like that.

Imagine now, they have started talking about the events of '81 with people who had a platform, but who were not authentic to the events. The microphone was never brought close, nor was the importance given, to the actual people to tell their stories, or even to interview them in writing. They would take... imagine now how I suffered when I saw them , on the television screen. A witness appears, one who testified against us, who was never even in prison, and he comes out to speak about '81. It is a scandal that a person feels in his soul. I am speaking about earlier years when no space was

given to you. Then others tell things that are completely peripheral. People... later, they begin taking big names. I would mention names, but they were not saying the core of it, only in passing. They had a public name, had become members of a party or something and it worked in their favor. You would sit with them, talk, but they would not speak of how things really were.

Later it happened to me with close friends who were now in parties, and they would tell me some things that are realities, but they did not say them publicly. Better saying them, we are free. Those days I lived in the dorms. To explain it better now, it would be easier to show it in excerpts, to tell something interesting. We had people, put simply, we had identified who was who, who was working, organized in groups of three, what they called "triplets." I was wary of them. What I realized, and I have said this publicly as well, was that one group of three never knew about another group of three, even if they happened to stay near each other or alongside another trio. They only kept an eye on each other from a distance, but they were not allowed to speak or know who was with whom. Why? Because it was strictly forbidden.

I separate myself from all of them when I say, listen, to work with my head in a bag and risk myself and not know who is above me, I do not practice that. It is a situation where you cannot act, but there are other forms. Then we began only when we found people from proper families. Then there was one family, two brothers who lived in dormitory number 5, Ahmeti and Isa Mehmetaj. Not far from my village, I knew them as a family, we worked with them. They are described, but here it is enough just to mention them, and in the statement about '81 that is there, they are there. For example, supposedly family people, there is no need whether they are members of a group. He lived in an apartment with Nuhi Berisha.[12] Nuhi Berisha did not have a name then, he became one later. But the stories, what was being said, were the things that brought you closer.

Then there was Fate Zymberi. I have never seen her again, ever. She was very fiery. She too came from a family that had been endangered as far back as Goli Otok[13] imprisonment. She was there, she kept her word on the 26th herself, and we held meetings. Then there was Teuta Hadri, whom I did not know directly, but I knew her through those days when I was trying to organize in women's dormitory number 1. Number 1, number 2 for women, number 3, number 4 for men, and there were the dorms. She made a fantastic account. When I read it, it was better than I could tell about the groups I had organized through the dormitories. The word now is about the illegal groups, the word is when '81 started, after March 11.

Anita Susuri: Before this, how were you yourself recruited, or how did you understand that these groups existed?

[12] Nuhi Berisha (1961-1984) was a prominent Albanian activist in the underground movement. He died in 1984 with Rexhep Mala in a shoot out with the police when their hideout was discovered.

[13] Island in the north of the Adriatic sea, from 1949 through 1956 a maximum security penal colony for Yugoslav political prisoners, where individuals accused of sympathizing with the Soviet Union, or other dissenters, among them many Albanians, were detained. It is known as a veritable gulag.

Xun Çetta: I saw all of them, I communicated with all of them.

Anita Susuri: You were in conversation.

Xun Çetta: I communicated with all of them. They would not dare say that they belonged to a trio group, but when we talked, "Work is being done, but it is being done quietly. All these are groups here, here and there." These were the topics we discussed. For example, I found it, it was being dealt with in dormitory number 5, and it was surrounded by workers inside who were working so as not to disturb us students. There was a guard at that time who watched day and night, his little shack like a hut. We gathered there once, even at his place. I will never forget when the guard of that building, the one who was watching it, got involved in political topics almost more than us students. It was as if you would think that this man is here, in the right place, as if they had deliberately chosen a guard of this nature to talk from...

It happened that the subject of Albania came up. He said, "Listen, Albania..." he was really praising it, and that is when I started to get suspicious. Suspicion can sometimes be self-destructive, but excessive trust also costs. I knew it even then, now I know it much more and I have written it day by day. Without trust there is no life, but too much trust also costs, and you have to find the middle to manage. And now I want to return to that part. He spoke about Albania this way and that way, and I stopped him. There were five, six, maybe seven of us there, and I turned and said, "Listen, there is something I do not like about Albania." He said, "Why?"

Now I wanted, as we say back home, "one hit, two dead." I said, "Well listen, in Albania, if the institutions catch you stealing, I have heard they cut off one finger. And second," I said, "if they catch you the second time, the second finger. The third time, your head is gone. Unlike us," I said, "if they catch us stealing it is normal, because they invest outside the state and here, they have done it." Now what I wanted to show was that I was against a system of theft, and here I wanted to say that here the value of a human is a human, on both sides. He understood exactly what I meant there. I said, "And for that reason, I do not know if I could live in Albania. Not because I would steal, but because I could not watch people, because we are human. To blacken someone for stealing a little from the state and cut off a finger, it is bloodthirsty," I said.

When we finished everything, that guard, who has a name, though I cannot remember it now, he would remember it today. If he had been sent with orders, he would remember even better. Then he stopped and said, "Xun," he did not know me before but there he learned my name, "Xun," he said, "you said one thing that struck directly at the state. Did you strike Albania with 'I could not live there, it is better here'?" I said, "I do not know." Again, I want to say that I did it on purpose. I said, "I do not know. I said what I thought." It is very interesting to analyze a guard speaking with students, all these kinds of situations.

Then jokingly, I have said even in conferences, for example, what the word *filter* meant: "Fadili asks Tito, give us a Republic." That means, when you said Fadili, it was a political position, you legalized it a

little, you relaxed the citizen that the Republic of Kosovo could exist. Filter: "Fadili asks Tito, give us a Republic." It relaxed people a little, they would go around repeating it. Then what is the word *bozhur*? It became a hit: "*Beogradska omladina želi uvek Rankovića*" [The youth of Belgrade always want Ranković[14]], *bozhur*. These would make...

Anita Susuri: You did these on purpose?

Xun Çetta: Yes, all of them, all of them. And you touched them, there you could see who belonged to the groups, the ones who did not dare, who wanted it, this one calm, and this one would tell other variants. I have talked about one case in Switzerland when we held the conferences for '81, we were exhausted, and I relaxed everyone with a story. I had heard this from my father, and it stayed with me. He said, "When an old man is close to death, he leaves an instruction to his sons, 'When I die, leave my cigarette box by my head.' Why? Because he had smoked a lot. Then suddenly the old man becomes ill. You know these kinds of stories. He becomes ill and they take him to the hospital unconscious. When they bring him there, they intervene, the help revives him. When he wakes up, he says, 'Oh my, I left it as a will to my sons to put my tobacco by my head.' When he puts his head down, he finds the cigarette box by his head.

He slowly unwraps it and lights his cigarette in the hospital room with the patients. As soon as the smoke went up, a nurse came in: "*Ko puši ovde*?" [Who is smoking here?] Now in Serbian. *"Ko puši ovde?! Šta pušiš izađi vani!*" [Who is smoking here?! What are you smoking, get outside!] She shouted. Then the old man said, "Oh no, for me, I have ended up in the prisons of the Serbs." Now this would carry weight for us, because for us these things had a double meaning. For us, yes, but for the Serbs as well. These are the kinds of stories that carried importance, and there were many of them. For example, when it comes to those events, since these are all stories, it is also good to go into the groups a little, to go back and explain how we were connected through names, through people; it is not something that can simply be said outright.

Anita Susuri: And you can also talk about the activities.

Xun Çetta: Of course. Let me tell you this other one too. It was the time when Yugoslavia became a non-aligned state, neither with the West nor with... just like today Serbia is playing a bit, neither with Russia nor with the United States, trying to break through, and then in the end it leans more sharply one way. We will leave those topics aside.

He said, "Look. When I looked up," he said, "forgive my language, 'there was a piece of shit up there, stuck to the ceiling as though someone had thrown it with mortar.' The judging panel turned around and said, 'Yugoslavia gets first place this time.' 'Why?' 'Because, not only did he know how to do it, but

[14] Aleksandar Ranković (1909–1983) was a Serb partisan hero who became Yugoslavia's Minister of the Interior and head of Military Intelligence after the war. He was a hardliner who established a regime of terror in Kosovo, which he considered a security threat to Yugoslavia, from 1945 until 1966, when he was ousted from the Communist Party and exiled to his private estate in Dubrovnik until his death in 1983.

how on earth had he managed to do it like that?'" The point of the story was not simply that someone knew how to take a shit—pardon the expression—but that they could do it on such an extraordinary level. Not like this [gestures towards the ground], but like this [gestures towards the sky]."

He said, "Look. When he looked," he said, excuse my expression, "there was a need that had caught him as if he had thrown it with mortar and it had stuck there." He said, "The evaluation group turned back. Now, they give Yugoslavia first place." "Why?" "Not only because he knew how, but because how could he even do his business like that." Now, this had the meaning not that he knew how to do it, excuse my expression, but that he knew how to do it so badly, not like this {gestures downward} but like this {gestures upward}.

Anita Susuri: These were in those leaflets...

Xun Çetta: All of these I always kept regularly, in conferences too, as a way to relax and as part of my charming type... Now, I return again to my friends. On March 11, 1981, I was not the one who brought out my close friends. Today, those who are... later I researched, because friends investigate, friends... It pains me, my friends...

Anita Susuri: But did you know that a demonstration was being organized?

Xun Çetta: That day, no, not at all...

Anita Susuri: But you knew that something was going to happen?

Xun Çetta: That something would happen, and that something should happen, is something else. But we need to look for the author who started it, from the trio where it came from.

Anita Susuri: Yes.

Xun Çetta: Because that word spread that the UDBA[15] had organized it, and that burned us. Even if UDBA had organized it, it would still have brought us out, because it had to. But now, when I research, I find four people in our indictment who were from the trio and came into prison on the 11th of March. There was Januz Januzi, Kadri Kryeziu, Ramadani I think, then Dobra, now Gashi, and one Rasim Blakaj, who did not end up in prison, and he was the first who broke the plate. It is not known who broke it first, who last, but he broke it. And at that time I did not want to believe Rasim Blaka, a local, two or three villages away from me, but when he described to me how Januz Januzi and that group had come….

[15] *Uprava državne bezbednosti* [Directorate for State Security] was the secret police organization of Communist Yugoslavia. It was at all times best known as UDBA (pronounced as a single word and not an acronym), and was the most common colloquial name for the organization throughout its history. Also known by the Serbian acronym SDB.

When he arrived, Januz Januzi said, “We can’t do it, the atmosphere isn’t right.” Then Rasim Blakaj said, “No, we can’t leave it like this, Januz, because we already postponed it the same way two weeks ago, saying the conditions weren’t right.” Now, I was observing this from a distance, not as part of the broader activity itself. So I understood it to mean that there had already been an earlier attempt, and that it had failed. He told me this directly, by name. For me to believe they had really come, I had seen Rasim myself. But the way he explained it to me was that he had come from the trio with a clear purpose, with prior intent, that is where the subtlety lies.

One day I called him. “Januz,” I said, “is it true that, this and this and this, is it true,” I said, “about Rasim Blaka?” “Yes.” “Rasim Blaka told you, ‘No, we are not leaving it like this, because that is how we left it the last time’?” He said, “Yes.” And now Januz Januzi, who was indicted and sentenced alongside us, was telling me this himself. I said, “That settles it.” Had I seen Rasim myself, had I witnessed it with my own eyes, that would have been one thing. But it is another thing entirely to trace the source. Then later, when I looked through the reports, the movements, the slight traces left behind, I saw that not everything said face to face was ever written down, not everything spoken in confidence found its way into the record. And that, to me, was the difficult part.

I told you, there were three groups that had been made into one group with a strategic political-juridical purpose, to frame us as a terrorist organization. “They are students, these must be eliminated,” because they called it the counter-revolution in Kosovo. Even today they are rivals with Ali Lajçi. The word rival is not bad if we know how to understand it properly and without jealousy, without grudges, without hatred, to manage it as it should be. Rival means competition, it is a normal thing. Now, it is said that Ali Lajçi had been at the cinema when he came and found us after we had already broken through, and there he joined in and took the floor.

Listen, I want to say, I did not see Ali when we were in the student center, in the cafeteria, I did not see him, he was not there. If he had been... because Ali was distinctive. He had a beard that no one else had {gestures with hands the shape of the beard}. He would walk with his fiancée, a couple that at that time was rare to see, a couple walking hand in hand, openly, he was meticulous. That means, Ali was not at the protest, not when it started on the 11th [March]. But when we fell back down, suddenly we saw Ali climb onto a transformer and start speaking. He came out as a striking figure when he spoke there, convincingly.

Listen, let us analyze things and explain them as they are. He made a boom {onomatopoeia}. Now they tried, no, there had been someone before him too, Ali had been coming from the cinema. These frictions are good for the public to know and for you who research. But what lifts me up, what moves me, is when he entered, “The blood,” he said, “ work is being done everywhere, now it is lit, now I am there.” The groups, because they were trios. One trio lights the fire, where are the other trios? They have the obligation to put on their clothes and join. He entered. Immediately he was there. Not the first night, no. On the 26th [March] we had already crossed over completely, in political terms. Until then, it had been purely social, a matter of seeking better conditions.

But Ali politicized it very well, he gave it force. “Go on, move forward, youth, do not stop, our time is coming. If we do not do it today, when will we do it? If we do not do it today, how will we make the future?” And it made a boom. We went out. Now many have claimed afterward that when Ali was arrested, ’81 became identified with the name Ali Lajçi. There were some clashes, some said that Hydajet Hyseni was the leader. These others wanted that more than Hydajet himself. Hydajet stayed quiet. But the people who worked... I have spoken publicly and I have it in conferences. I say Ali Lajçi is... I hate the word leader, but ’81 is identified with the name Ali Lajçi and the whole group, how we ended up, how we worked, how we acted, how we ended and were sentenced, and even today we are still working.

Now, the attempts for one to come in and another to come out, these have destroyed even the war. These have destroyed our creativity too. These have destroyed our conferences too, these have destroyed everything. A group gathers in every way to push these out, it does not work. I have said publicly and even called Hydajet out directly, I say Hydajet Hyseni must preserve the peak of patriotism, the peak of value, the peak of courage. He was in Switzerland in Lucerne, where I am today, Lucerne.

It was in ’81, when we started on the 11th, when we moved on to the 25th, and before the 25th things had already been organized there for the 26th, and then for April 1 and 2, and it spread across all of Kosovo. Ali only arrived on April 1 [1981], but Ali too was much like Ali. *Whoop!* {imitates a movement} Up into the tree. His photograph is well known; it shows him there. I'm not going to claim now that it was Hydajet in ’81. I've had disagreements with comrades over this as well. Someone might not say it openly, but they kept pushing their own version, and now that whole matter has subsided. These are the kinds of things we have among us, not just today but across generations. Put an end to them. Say what you have to say, and sometimes you already have more than enough, provided you can carry it on your shoulders. Stick to that; don't ask for more, because you have enough.

I tell Ali, “It's a big deal to leave Switzerland and come here, to get involved on April 1, to throw yourself into it and speak.” That's the pinnacle; that's everything. He left a country of luxury, left that comfortable life, and as soon as he arrived... Others spoke, but who else could have spoken the way he did at that time, for example? There were others there too. Ahmet Bllaca was there, and there was another one whose name I've forgotten now. There were three of them. But that doesn't matter; I'm focusing on Ali, because Ali was better organized, had strong oratorical skills, and much more besides. These are the kinds of nuances that sometimes matter among us. Then it's one group against another, arguing over whether you did something or didn't, and then they go around saying, “You included us, you left us out.”

One thing, I have said openly, the trio system was dangerous even though many say, “Xun, if it were not for the trios, we would not have functioned.” No, man, no. Start from the core, from the family dough, who it is and the person of that family, whether they want it. We talk, like I said, with t jokes...

we had many ways to communicate, whether they wanted it, did not want it, wanted it, did not want it. To come now and organize and do something, then the circle gets arranged to make it happen.

Anita Susuri: Yes. Mr. Xun, can you explain to us, for example, what you saw? What kind of violence was carried out during those days...

Xun Çetta: Yes.

Anita Susuri: From the 11th until the second, when it was at its peak...

Xun Çetta: Yes, yes.

Anita Susuri: How did all those days unfold?

Xun Çetta: First of all, I stop at the 26th [March], no, at the first [April]. On the first, as I said before, and even earlier, with Teuta [Hadri] there had been one from Junik, there had been one girl from Lubeniq of Peja, and there had been one who was there even when we wrote the slogans. Maybe now it comes to my mind, but I have them written down. When I entered Nis [dormitory no. 1], where I had made what they called a cell, I do not want to call it that today. Some kind of group of girls, because when there were girls and there was a male, the atmosphere would rise, naturally, it is all normal. When I entered, the door of Nish was blocked and I remained inside.

The very fact of a male being found there... I had to get up and go out above, in Nish, on the balcony above. That means, there I saw from the balcony the tanks passing. There I saw with my own eyes the military airplanes passing. *Vuuu* {onomatopoeia}, they would tear your ears apart. There I saw with my own eyes when a tank came and fired something inside, where the one who drives sits. It did not explode, nor do I know what it had been, but I saw that someone fired...

Anita Susuri: Someone from the crowd had thrown it…

Xun Çetta: Yes, yes, yes. These were not organized as students, but in passing I saw it. I saw it with my own eyes when he threw it, it did not ignite and it did nothing. But it means there was something there that could have ignited, I do not know. It was not that there was a crowd on that other side. Now, for the violence, when we came down, down there and to gather everyone together, it opened with violence. When I... violence from here. I am speaking of one, not of the 26th when there had been an order to close it, because that is another subject which I will explain, but in Nish on the 26th. All the dormitories were closed by us, not by the authorities, so as not to let anyone out, so that when the political figures came, as they did, for example Pajazit Nushi, as Azem Vllasi came, as Sanije Hyseni came, as they all came...

There now we wanted to open the doors, *hop* {onomatopoeia}, so that when they came they would see many of us. This was on the 26th [March]. I am now speaking about Nish. Now when I came down, some girls came out and said, “Someone lost his hand.” “Where?” She said, “That’s what they’re

saying." I thought maybe they had thrown something, maybe this one tried {shows with hands a grabbing motion} and lost his hand. Then there was...

Anita Susuri: It exploded in his hand.

Xun Çetta: Surely. Then there was the 26th [March], Isa Bala from Istog. They [the police] shot at us, he grabbed the charge in his hand, today he has no fingers. Now, about the violence and the wounded, it is very terrible, strange... not to... now, on the 26th when the dormitories were closed, also in Nish and in number 2, but in number 2 there was a completely different girl whom I did not have direct access to, only through her husband, to organize something. There Teuta Hadri says, "We are ready, we are only waiting for them to open the door." That means the door would be opened by our own people, not by the authorities, nor by the center's administration, not at all. When they opened it, then everyone exploded out on the 26th and we held it.

They came and spoke in detail. Azem Vllasi came to speak, Pajazit spoke, Sanije Hyseni spoke, many spoke a lot. We students, Ali took the floor with a few words, Riza Dema took the floor and read the statement, Fate Zymberaj, from the family I mentioned, the known one, read the statement. Then one Naser Berisha stood up, I think, though I think he died three or four months ago, I do not know. He addressed Azem Vllasi with one sentence, he said, "Excuse me, Azem, what are you looking for here? To calm us down," he said, "when Montenegro with 600,000 inhabitants is a republic, why are we not one with this many?" We were over one million, almost two. He said, "Are you in your right mind asking this from us?" The situation became very heated. Azem said a few words too, he threw out one phrase, "Look at who I am, look at what I drink, look at what cigarettes you are asking me to smoke," something like that, some kind of way of trying to calm us.

It got very harsh, someone slowly approached him with a flag in hand. He took the flag. The flag had been held by Trëndelina Labinishti, the daughter of an early activist and sacrifice. She had the flag that I had personally given her, and she says that herself in the interview, in the program. I personally placed it in her hand. Then they took it, they wanted to give it to Azem Vllasi to make him lead us. But when Azem saw it like that, he stepped back, "Go wherever you want, do what you want," over there. "If you are with us, take it and lead," they said. "I came to calm you down," and they pushed him... one came and said, "Then why did you come, Azem?" It was the first time I had seen Azem Vllasi up close, he was a known name. They physically shoved him. One student almost struck him there.

I saw it. I was a little closer... I grabbed him, "Azem, one minute, it is good that nothing worse happened." He said, "I saw it, by force here, huh?" I said, "Leave it now, walk slowly." I led him between dormitory 1 and the dorms, slowly, saying, "Keep going, because there is no one who can stop these people, maybe the police will stop them with blood, but it is good that you escaped, or..." because I could not say more at that moment... I moved him away, and after all these years Azem still remembers it. He thanked me and said, "I remember it like it was today." I had the chance later, when he was wounded, I went and interviewed him, asked him something, and he remembered everything.

Now when I came down to join the column, I left Azem and saw him off. As I entered the line, moving there slowly at the front, in the middle of the student cafeteria by the traffic lights, they came out and blocked us. “Turn back, there is no way to break through.” I saw one of them grab onto me {gestures toward the arm} to stop me. They attacked us with tear gas, and each agent tried to grab one person. That means I just threw him off {shows with hands how he shook him off}, “For what?” I do not know, and then the tear gas started flying. They ran, *uuuuu* {onomatopoeia}. They tried again to grab us. There I understood that he had tried to... when they throw tear gas, they grab and hold you, and then they keep you there and arrest you. I escaped, and we got out.

When we got out, we positioned ourselves at... I am speaking of the 26th [March]. Then we positioned ourselves between dormitory... no, yes, dormitory 4, the sports hall 25 Maji, which you know now where it is, it used to be 25 Maji, and the barracks behind us. There afterward, exclusively on the 26th, I had everything completely under my own control. Almost no one could do anything, not enter, not leave, not have anything happen without me being there. This is public knowledge. Then they climbed up... Minire Pajaziti, whose name I had been looking for and could not remember before. Minire Pajaziti is the one who wrote the slogan. Now these were not placards. The placards had been written on the evening of the 25th in the dormitories, in number 3. But these were not placards, these were slogans on large bed sheets.

I said, “Listen, someone go into number 3,” while we were protesting there and number 3 was right there at the windows. I said, “Bring out large bed sheets. Because I can see foreign journalists with their lenses focusing on us. If they are on bed sheets, everything will be visible.” Before I knew it, the bed sheets were opened. “But what do we write with?” They started writing with charcoal, charcoal from the fire we had lit on March 11. But it got wet and started smearing, it would not write properly. Before I knew it, someone ran to dormitory 5 and brought red paint that had been brought there to paint the dormitory. He brought the paint. Then they started.

One of them now was shouting, “Write, ‘Enver, Enver, we are ready whenever.’” But before they wrote it, they were shouting, and I want to say that on the 26th these people could say whatever they wanted. “Stop, what is this ‘Enver, Enver, we are ready whenever’? For what? Here write: ‘We are not Yugoslavs, but Albanians.’” When they put out that slogan, everyone knows it. That slogan was exclusively mine. “We are not Yugoslavs.” Because back then the strategy had been to create as much Yugoslav nationality as possible, and it is known that 500,000, or a very large number, had been registered in Kosovo...

Anita Susuri: They were registered as Yugoslavs?

Xun Çetta: Absolutely, absolutely, because that was their goal. And this wound of my father’s, may he rest in peace, he wanted, because I am moving a little from topic to topic, but I am connecting it somewhat. He wanted the Roma to register as Albanians. We had a certain Rrustem, who turned out bad later after the war, he left, he fled afterward because he turned out to be connected to Serbia. It is not good to speak, but this is real now. And register as Albanians, you know. I never forget, there was

one Roma man in the village, he said, “Well, Musa,” because my father was known in the villages there for everything, they speak of it, they have written it, they write it and speak of it.

For example, how he said to the politicians, “You have come, but Skanderbeg has died, yet he lives. Is there in this place a man who is alive but dead?” because that was the situation. He threw that at the Committee. It is known, others speak of it, not me. That means, there are things, different stories. Now I remember when my father characterized even the Roma, let them register as Albanians. He saw one of them say, his name was Rrustem, a *magjup*,[16] because it was an insult in another time, he says, “Well, Mustafa, if you guarantee me that right here you will give me your daughter for my son, then I will register,” and there it was difficult and they left.

Now I want to tell you, my father did this because he wanted there to be many Albanians, because as much as we could recruit, for example, *magjups* to make them Albanians, that much they were taking them on the other side to make them Yugoslavs. It was something unforeseen. Now when this happened, I removed the slogan, not “Enver, Enver,” but “We are not Yugoslavs, we are Albanians.” Because this did not clash with the state. Because we were Albanians. There was nothing wrong with that. Minire Pajaziti wrote it, she is the writer of it, but very few people say that anywhere.

Part Three

Xun Çetta: Now I can see clearly what was happening. After... When we wanted to go out on the 26th and break through, I took the flag from Trëndelina and gave it to a Jashar Ali Hajdari from Jabllanica of Peja. He was the oldest student, the most mature one. I gave it to him and we marched. Until they stopped us. Now we did not go out by the student cafeteria, but between number 3 and the women’s number 2, to get out to the fountain at Ulpiana. There they came out and told us, “You have an order, turn back in five minutes. If not, we have orders to shoot with bullets.” They turned us back.

About three people came from that side through the police, you know, citizens who happened to come. And I went out in front of them, the police could not do anything because they were coming alone. I said, “Do you know anything,” I said, “is there something down there?” “If you listen to me,” he said, “these people are telling you to turn back and I am telling you to turn back too. Because these ones here can be seen, but down there you have police like embers.” Fear entered us a little too, and we turned back. When we turned back, we positioned ourselves where we had been. I do not know anything until they... until they forced us all into the dormitories with tear gas. When... Now, there was no staying in the courtyard, everyone was looking to escape.

When they entered, the windows were boiling, they threw tear gas into the dormitory. I ended up in number 4, in number 4. Boom and boom and boom and boom {onomatopoeia}, they did that to us... I

[16] *Magjup* is a derogatory term used across various Balkan languages to refer to Roma, Ashkali, or Egyptian communities.

entered the clerk's office, where the clerk works. We went, there were some heavy tables, I do not know, three people could not lift them. We took one and placed a heavy table against the door, the three of us. Later the names came out of who they were. Now when the police entered with gas masks, whoever, they did not open them, they broke it. They hit and hit and hit, "*Otvori*!" [Open!] now in Serbian, "*Otvori, slomićemo*" "Open, or we will break it," I heard one of them say, "No, here is the clerk, no, the clerk is here." They left us.

They went around, you could hear them moving *ov, iv, ov, iv* {onomatopoeia}, with tear gas and gas masks, the students without gas masks, and those ones moving around. When I secretly went out to look through the window, it happened right where they were torturing them. Everyone had to put their hands like this {places hands behind head}, and go sit squatting between the barracks and number 4. I said, "What should we do, man? We are not going out." Only when it emptied, we saw them all sitting squatting, surrendered, hands like this {places hands behind head}. I said, "What should we do? We are not going out."

When they entered, they said, "If anyone is inside and does not come out, we will take them directly inside, we have business with them, come out," nothing, "Come out," nothing. When they found some who were hidden in wardrobes, who knows where in the rooms. And they beat them. You could hear the screams. Because he had raised the alarm, "Whoever is still inside and has not come out, come out!" Fear entered the ones I had with me, and maybe me too. He said, "Better we open the door and go out before they get here." While they were beating those others upstairs, we opened the door. We went downstairs. Believe me, when we came out, they nearly took us because they were saying, how did we let them go, because they hit differently, those ones. Hands behind us and we squeezed into the column. Anyway, not into the column, but into the crowd.

Now I lowered my head because I saw I had been noticed. The first one who stood up was one of the police, in civilian clothes. "Who is Naser Berisha here?" Naser Berisha was the one who had asked Azem Vllasi the question earlier that day. No one answered, I kept my head lowered like this {keeps head down}. They had taken Ali Lajçi there, that day they imprisoned him, whoever imprisoned him. We escaped. I had a blue coat that I took from the clerk and we got up. Now when they allowed us to disperse, he says, "These days, further orders," they dispersed us and then the order came for buses from each municipality to come and take their own students and close the center [the student center]. Now, not to go into other stories, but these are getting long. The center closed only in May. I had been wounded, because I did not tell at all how I was wounded...

Anita Susuri: How were you wounded?

Xun Çetta: On the 2nd, we, they had attacked us on the 1st. We stayed outside all night and went around that Niman, and the next day we got up and went to the center. As we were coming, those from the medical school, the secondary school, were living in the dormitories, the secondary school was where the ministry is nearby, the Ministry of Education, somewhere nearby. And the students came out, all the pupils and us too. When they came out and looked up there toward Kodra e Trimave, as

they call it, it was boiling there with flags and all that. Now we said, come on, let us go to the Student Center. When we went there, slowly we began organizing them. When we went, we found almost all of them ready, they only needed someone to lead them. Muhamet Pepshi from Junik was there, may his soul rest in peace, he is dead now. The police attacked us on that date, now it would be... the police attacked us, and then he picked up a brick, I saw him throw it right here at the policeman {gestures toward the eyes}, and he made him bleed. He got up and ran. They tried to catch him, he escaped because he entered the crowd, he passed through.

Then they faced some punches from the police as best they could, I saw them, I saw them, I was higher up. It went the way the second went, because on the 1st [April 1 and 2] we stayed all night. Now I am moving to the morning of the 2nd. We were awake all night. Now, to continue with the 2nd, then slowly we began gathering in front of the entrance to the sports hall up there, where the plaque of the martyr who was killed is also located. We gathered there and they took a Croatian bus, Viadukt. I even have it in the book there, which I found in the Kosovo Archive. They wanted to beat the driver. I went in, I said, "Stop, stop, what has the driver done to you? A Croat. It was known he was from Croatia," and I saved him. They broke the bus and destroyed it. Then they took a bulldozer, one of those with chains, that was being used for roadwork up there. They let it go, it went, I saw it with my own eyes, *uuuuu* {onomatopoeia}, when it reached the traffic lights under the student cafeteria, it hit a tank. It damaged the tank's tracks. No one was in the bulldozer, the excavator, as they call it. These are things we saw with our own eyes.

Then we got ready and now we wanted to march toward the city. We went down, and as soon as we went down, now it was April 2, it was the peak. News had come that all the workers were waiting for us, to join us. They had joined, they... they called it Dragodan, I could not remember, I said Kodra e Trimave, they came down from Dragodan. When they wanted to come out there, I said, "I do not know." They were in a line, our police came out, they were recognizable. One of them said to me, "Xun, please," he knew me from Istog. "Please, Xun," he said, "because they have orders to kill, special forces have come from Belgrade. Now, with us it is easier for you, with them it will be different. Once you pass us, you will be face to face with them." But now, even if I wanted to understand, because I knew him, I could not, because the crowd would not allow it.

Uuuuu {onomatopoeia}, we went and broke the cordon. That means, to tell the truth, our police also showed themselves not to be violent. We do not know how to explain these things in life, but I am speaking. A good person was good under communism, and is good today. A bad person was bad under communism, and is bad today. Even today he sells himself as if he is... these are social currents that are strange to describe. The police let us through. They could not kill us, at least. But when we came across them, they were not waiting. First in Serbian, "Move away." "No." *dum* {onomatopoeia}, they would leave you right there.

I do not know exactly what happened now, to tell you the truth. Some people want to say, "I was at the front," but it was not like that. When they saw that I was turning back, they broke us. But they moved

away, they saw that it was a little more violent there. Now, they were also marking people, because they could not kill all the citizens there. As soon as I turned back, I do not know anything, *bam, bam* {onomatopoeia}, here and here {gestures toward the leg}, and the one that completely caught my leg hit me in the heel, the bullet went into my heel and after ten days came out under my calf. That means, it touched all those veins. And my legs gave out immediately right there. Because now if someone tells me they wanted to kill you, they would have killed you, they know that...

Anita Susuri: You were wounded in three places in the leg?

Xun Çetta: No, the first bullet entered here and came out here {points to the leg}, but that one did not cause me the problem here. What caused me the problem was this one {points to the other leg}. This one caused me the problem, because this one made me collapse immediately. They grabbed me, *tub, tub, tub* {onomatopoeia}, and slowly carried me out like a corpse, and took me up to Kodra e Trimave. "Come on, where should we place him," over there, over there. We had an illegal apartment... I forgot to tell you where the Serb shot from his own house. Now we have the plaque, from there he killed the student over there.

Behind his house, we did not know then that he was with State Security. We had a nest there, there was a Binak Dini, there was a... I mentioned his name earlier. There was Osman Haliti, there were names and names. And now we worked illegally there, but we did not know that this one was State Security up in the house, right next to us, keeping us under control. Then one of them said, "No," he said, "Xun cannot be left here," he said, "because here we have been noticed by the one who shot and killed them there from the Delishbashiq house." Have you heard of the Delishbashiq house? From the Delishbashiq house they were shooting to kill here. Face to face.

Trëndelina, to whom I had given the flag then, on the 26th [March], shouted. She said, "Bring him to my apartment." She lived in an apartment in that illegal house, in their house. We went there, they started some kind of first aid, but it was difficult, there was nothing you could do. Someone came and said, "It has been noticed, State Security wants to come and take him, because it has been noticed that he is inside." Then Trëndelina organized it and said, "We will take him somewhere, I know someone up on the hill." They took me however they took me and brought me to a house. After I recovered, later after prison, I went and saw it, and I had brought gifts to that house. They placed me in a house with an old woman, an old woman who had one child.

Now, at that time I had heavy bleeding, because it kept pouring out, pouring out, and I lost consciousness. They called the ambulance and told them, "You must do everything possible to treat him there because the road is blocked by police." They called a second time, "Man, he is going to die because of the bleeding and..." Now, you do not die from bleeding if it had not hit your heart. I lost consciousness. When the ambulance took me, while going in the ambulance, a little before reaching the place where we had sent the bulldozer and up there on the hill, at the police checkpoint, "Stop," the ambulance.

They were checking, “What have you got?” I was all covered in blood. They started with me, as if to separate me. Trëndelina Labnishti had grabbed me by the arm, “He’s my brother, he wasn’t in the demonstrations. He got stabbed by a nail at home on the roof,” she said and kept saying, “this in his leg, the nail went in,” saying all kinds of things. Until they started hitting her too... they hit her twice because she would not let go of me. She made herself cling to me, held on and would not let go. They hit her twice and she held firm. I heard one of them say to her in Serbian, “*Pusti ga tamo, nema gde da ide*,” “Leave him there,” he said, “he has nowhere to go. There, in the hospital, in the hospital they have him in their hands,” and they let us go.

When we got there, another round of police questioned us. Trëndelina Labnishti stayed all night there, under arrest. When we got there, there were four rooms full of wounded people. There was one guy, he had been hit right here {gestures to forehead}, they had made a line across here {touches over head} and he was talking freely, just laughing. Later when we joked we would say, “How did he not know to put it right here,” {touches the middle of the forehead}, you know, we would joke like that. Things like that. These are very strange memories. My wounding is even more interesting, how I went back, how I visited that old woman, and how it brought back so many memories for me. Those are very interesting things. How I gave them the flag. But to go into that period now, after all these years, those are the most sensitive points that I have, for better or for worse.

Now I ask, where is Jashar Ali Hajdari, the one I myself gave the flag to. Now after prison was over and everything, I was looking for a photograph of Jashar Ali Hajdari, the one I had given the flag to myself. They tortured me for six months, day after day, in interrogation, “Do you recognize him?” Him with the flag like Skanderbeg. I had tried to make it so that when they brought someone in front of you, then they beat you and broke you, better to speak yourself. I would say, “Listen, if you bring this man and I recognize him, yes, I recognize him because he is a student and I had marked him out as the oldest student in the Student Center. But now whether he is from the Prizren district or from some other district, I do not know,” he was from Radavc, from Jabllanica of Peja. I had known him since high school, I myself had given him the flag. But I only wanted to say, if they brought him to me, I would know him, but by name, just by name, it would kill me because I would not know. But if I saw him, I would know him. To meet and not speak to him would be impossible.

Anita Susuri: I’ve seen him just by chance...

Xun Çetta: And that was it, it passed, everything was over. I said thank God I resisted well, I did not give anyone up. Because that was the battle there, not to give up my friends. They caught me for some others as well. They caught me for others too, and again it was like that, I do not know. Some that I knew, that they knew were relatives of mine, I would say, “Yes, I know them, they were there,” but I would evade what they had done, for example...

Anita Susuri: And at first, how did your arrest happen?

Xun Çetta: The arrest is another thing. You are touching on a subject that had accusations. Supposedly a fellow student had given me up. Because after I was wounded, I recovered somewhat. The Committee would come with the police to take me in the village, saying, "Pristina is demanding that he be handed over." And villagers who were in the Socialist League at the time would come to my father and say, "Mustafa, the Committee is asking for your son to be handed over, and they are asking to take him to Prishtina." And my father said, "Son, now make your choice: either leave the state, or do not stay, because they will make trouble for all the neighbors here." So I slowly went to Pristina. In Pristina, I came one night earlier, because if I were to be arrested they would have caught me at Gërmia, where later that ministry was built, in the center near Skanderbeg...

Anita Susuri: The department store.

Xun Çetta: The department store. There was a place there in front, now I do not know if it is still there, you probably do not remember it. When you entered the entrance and went upstairs, it was on the right side, people would eat and all that. I went there, to make it short and simple. The police came to me, there was a state of emergency, by order you could not go out without identification papers. "Good evening!" "Good evening!" Not just me, there were others too, you know. "Identification papers." I pulled out the papers and gave them. "Muhamet Çetta, right?" I had my brother's papers because my own name was being sought. At home the Committee was regularly at the door. Villagers would say as much as they could, "He does not have far to go, they will catch him." I was young, so I said, "Fine, I will go to Pristina, but with my brother's papers."

He looked at me, they said nothing. "Are you Muhamet?" They said, "Take your papers and come after us." *Përr* {onomatopoeia}, and now I understood why they had found only me. As I went upstairs, they were going down the stairs, one was behind me, the others were waiting for me. The window was open, but very high. I was wounded. I swear to God, when I jumped for the window, *pufff* {onomatopoeia}, and when I fell down there was one of those wire nets there, the kind for scraping shoes. There was a pit there, my shoes went through and the dirt fell down. A mesh, they called it a net. When I landed there, *bauu* {onomatopoeia}, everyone shouted, "What happened? He crashed."

I got up slowly, if I got hurt, I got hurt, because I still was not fully recovered. I went behind the center, behind Gërmia and all the way around, all the way in the back there were some stairs, and they are still there today. And behind there were packages where they used to throw things from the department store. I went behind four or five of those packages, pulled them close around me, and stayed silent. Then I heard the police say, "Where did he go, where did he go?" In Albanian now, these Albanian policemen. "Where did he go?" They were asking around, but I had vanished. When everything settled, I got up slowly. I did not dare go that way, so I went back to the apartment.

The next evening, this was total immaturity, I have to admit it. The next evening, a friend of mine says to me, and that is why they say he gave me up, "Xun," he said, "do you want to come," he said, "to see," he said, "the Student Center," the *korzo*, what they used to call the promenade, "it has split into Serbs and Albanians. Here the Serbs, there the Albanians." "No way," I said, we were not used to that then.

"No way." He said, "Yes," he insisted, just for me to go, so I went. We joined the line, walking up and down, and then that friend said to me, "Xun, you escaped," he said, "how did you escape last night?" It was suggestive, enough to make one suspicious, but I was not suspicious. "Even if you had horns tonight, you would not escape without being arrested." "Why?" I said. He said, "We have four inspectors in front, four behind, and I can see one on the side watching the whole situation."

Anyway, one more round. "Am I ready? Should I turn back?" When I turned, they had surrounded us. I said, "I am not leaving without making a run for it," I was sure I could escape. *Trrang* {onomatopoeia}, they stopped us. We stepped out. "Identification papers," *trrak* {onomatopoeia}. "Fine, and you?" "I do not have papers," that friend said, "I do not have papers." He said, "People without papers? And you, who are walking with him, come inside with us." That is where they caught him, supposedly he was the one who gave me up, but I still was not very suspicious. They took us, and I was certain. But now they took my papers. I did not have it like the other day when I escaped. They took the papers. I was sure that from the center until they got me inside, I would somehow escape, that is how I felt. They took me into the entrance where the police were back then, and I think it is still there today...

Anita Susuri: In Pristina.

Xun Çetta: I was still thinking on the stairs whether I should make a run for it, but it was pointless. Then suddenly I saw myself inside. When they called me in, they said, "Why are you carrying someone else's identification papers? That is one thing," he said, "do you know that you are wanted? That is the second. And third," he said, "do you know that your friend who is with you now could get into trouble because of you?" That was when I became suspicious. They had released him that night. Later that became a whole other story, how I verified whether it was true, how they had taken that friend and then released him. That UDB man, Zymer Zymeri, the one who put me in, he had the same name as that colleague, Zymer Zymeri, he was a giant, like a gorilla to look at. Now he is paralyzed and things like that. Later I questioned him myself in great detail.

He arrested me, and he had gone after this student to recruit him as an informant. The student got tired and went to Ismet Salihu, the professor. He said, "A professor is pressuring me. Either let me finish the faculty quickly and put me to work, or let me stay, because even if I finish a hundred faculties, I will never know peace..." Then he tells Vesel Latifi, I think he was an inspector, the professor. So Professor Ismet Salihu, who is well known, and Vesel Latifi connected quietly and then informed the other organs. They confronted State Security and told them, "This student has been touched, he is at risk from the Services because they are trying to make him a spy, they have arrested one of his friends," anyway, to make it short. They told him, "Listen, we are in a difficult situation. The small problems we need to eliminate, the big problems we need to reduce. This problem of yours, that the UDB has latched onto," UDB is what they called the inspectors.

He said, "It will be eliminated. No one will ever come to you again, you are free." And they let him go. "Since then," he said, "they never touched me again." Now, to verify this, because that same one who had arrested me had told me they had sung him the song there, that he had betrayed Xun. Now he

says, "Xun," Ismet Mjeku is alive, the professor is alive, this one is alive, the inspector Zymer Zymeri is alive. He said, "Yes, I have Zymer here because of my own matters." I asked them, and they all said the exact same thing, that it had happened like that. That means they had tracked him to make him a spy after I had fallen. So for me, even today they think he gave me up, but I would not say that. My fall [into prison] happened like this. After two days...

Anita Susuri: And the interrogations?

Xun Çetta: The interrogations were terrible. I am telling you, there were cases, they had told me before, but when it is happening to you, it is another thing to repeat it. I do not know, maybe there were nights when I had to walk without shoes because they would not fit. But what I do know is this one inspector, Asllan Sllamniku, when he tortured me without mercy, there was another one, Bashkim Kursani, and even he was ashamed to watch. He would pull him away and say, "Enough, you are going to kill the man." He would not beat me. Now it is very... if we want to connect these stories. Now he was softer, Asllan was harsher.

When we went to serve our sentence, after we had finished the investigation, the horror, not even to speak of it, there was nothing worse, brother. They would bring people in front of me. They brought Ali Lajçi in front of me, they brought Gani Koci in front of me, the ones we were sentenced with, and I would not admit them. Never once [did I admit them]... many people escaped because they did not admit them and did not accept it. The tortures were unimaginable. They would say, "Do you know we can slowly take you outside, tell you to run, and then kill you like a dog in the vineyards. Better speak." They said those kinds of things to others. I would not waste time. Time was being lost anyway, for no reason. This one would act good toward me, and I had the impression he was humane.

When I went to serve the sentence, I tell it as if you came out and said, "Xun, for me it was the opposite, Asllan Sllamniku would say, 'Are you stupid?' this and that, and I created a good impression of him, while this one was the one killing me." Now I, because a person gains experience. I came to the conclusion that they played strategy. You have five or six clients, as I call them now, victims, and he has to leave good impressions on you, so that you believe he was like this and the other one was bloodthirsty. On the other side, with us it comes out the opposite. One day, after some time had passed, and it was nothing because that was the time. This Shkelzen Gashi,[17] the analyst who works professionally, without hesitation socially sits with them. He had brought me the son of that Kursani, the inspector. The son had been a good boy. He had finished school and earned titles, but nowhere could he get a job, they kept pushing him aside, which I do not agree with.

[17] Shkëlzen Gashi (1981) is a Kosovo Albanian political analyst, researcher and author. He studied Political Science at the University of Prishtina and holds a master's degree in Democracy and Human Rights from the joint programme of the Universities of Bologna and Sarajevo. He has published numerous works on Kosovo's history, Albanian-Serbian relations and the representation of history in school textbooks. His publications include *Adem Demaçi – An Unauthorized Biography* (2010). He has also served as a political adviser to Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti.

Listen, you are the son of so-and-so, but that does not mean you should suffer for your father. Only if I see the symptoms in you, as inheritance. It did not sit right with me. Shkelzen Gashi brought him to me, he brought me Bashkim's son. "Xun," he said, "I heard my father was like this, can you tell me a little about him, I want to know, I do not want to go through life without knowing." I said, "Listen, I do not have good words because that is how it was, Asllan was like this, your father was like that, but there is another side of the medal too." He said, "What?" I said, "While serving the sentence, the real Asllan turned out to be your father, the one who tortured. And the Asllan who seemed harsh to me, turned out to be your father." You have to keep a reservation because they played a tactic. They thought one day things would change. Each of them made sure to have some victims who would speak well of them.

Maybe there were no changes at all. "So," he said, "with you he had a good experience." I said, "Yes, but I know the other side." Now to connect those too. After all these years I go to Jashar Ali Hajdari about the flag I had given him, I say, "Jashar, it is completely normal not to end up in prison. First, thank your friends that no one mentioned your name. Second, ask yourself why you stayed out. The photograph I was beaten for six months over, with your picture, the one I myself had given you the flag," all of it is documented, that I had it, later with photos and statements and everything. I said, "Do you want to know why?" "Xun," he said, "I cannot stretch this too long with you. Simply, we had one of our own UDB men inside," he said, "who told me, 'do not speak much, I was there, I was not there, I saw, I did not see. Keep quiet, I have to save you!'"

Kosovo is small, I said to myself, that is normal. I want to believe there was no evil from him. A UDB man can end up in the Service, fine, we are not a people of 20 million here. Everyone has someone. I took it lightly. He said, "And I did not fall. I," he said, "I still continue." I said, "Jashar, when the scholarly conference about '81 happened, your whole file should have come out, all the way up to there, and you should have said I had my own UDB man. It is a pity that people were tortured because of my photograph." "You are right, you are right." That passed too. Not one of the political prisoners, not one from those events, has even researched this piece or pointed it out. They just talk.

I get angry at my friends, I have done it. He is alive there, a history professor, still teaching. I do not put him in a negative light, he is a good man, naturally. Another thing, who brought the flag? The flag was brought by an Aziz Morina from Prizren and placed in what was called Zhitopromet, where they sold burek, right as you came out of dormitory 3, and out of the women's dormitory 2, right there, and it is still there today. It was called Zhitopromet, now the name... there they would get burek and food, the students. He brought it and left it there, right after the 11th. On the 26th that flag was raised. There is an address for who gave it to Trëndelina, there is an address for who gave it to Sharalia, there is an address for who verified it. Here no one researches those things.

One even more painful thing. I said it once, even with the name. Maybe I should not have. Now he is retired. One of our very good friends, a joy to be around. He did not go to prison quickly, he was not deeply involved, but after prison I wanted to rebuild the cells again in the Student Center, this was

1989. I went once, I went again, I made some places. One day when I looked, I almost wanted to mention his name, I already have before, but now it feels too much. “Oh Xun, I cannot believe I see you alive,” and he hugged me after prison. After a few days we enjoyed remembering old memories.

Four or five days later I met him. His head was lowered, eyes cast down, as I was walking into the Student Center. He was no longer the same man I had known. “Xun,” he said, “would you stop for a minute?” “I will,” I said. He slipped his hand into his pocket, pulled it out, and said, “I am UDB,” he said, “and all the time you were in prison, I was in the UDB.” Literally, just like that. No softening it into “Security” or anything of the sort, as some try to do. “In the UDB,” he said. “Do you know something, Xun?” “Go ahead,” I said. Forgive me, ladies, for the expression, but he said: “Short of doing to my own mother what can never be undone, I could not have done to you the harm I did, even though I worked there.” And even today, I swear by this water before us, I believe it exactly as it was. “That day,” he said, “I felt satisfied. But today,” he said, “I am more broken than ever, because they called me in. I was satisfied that day, because I knew you were still carrying on your work,” he said. “That gave me satisfaction.” And he pressed those words into my mind.

He said, “They called me and told me, ‘You are being warned because the political prisoner who came out of prison these days is active in the Student Center, and you have not made a single report.’” He said, “And Xun, I know all of it. Do you want me to tell you” in this room, in that room, people continue working there,” after ’89, I mean. So I could see the others who had become involved, because they too are part of what I know. He said, “Xun, not to drag it out too much,” he said, “you have two roads. Do you want never to be seen here again, or do you want to keep working and I ask to be transferred to another sector somewhere else? But I warn you, when they want you, you will fall [go to prison], and you will suffer worse than you suffered before. You escaped well, that I see you alive. But what you will suffer now...” Was there ever greater sincerity?

I thought about it and said, “Listen, never in my life, as long as you work here, will you see me here, and my heart is not broken because you are working. But yes, with Xun, but you are dealing with the people, with the fate of the people. Gather your mind and think about what you are doing. As for me, my heart is not broken, because you would not have done all that photographing legally if it had not been imposed on you,” I said, “you will not see me, I am leaving.” After a while I went once more to confirm, I said, “Can you,” I said, “those photographs…” because one of his cousins, or brother, had been taking photographs too, working for UDB, for UDB meaning for the state.

The state had its own photographer. I said, “You told me then that you had seen the photographs that interested me.” He said, “I will find them.” The matter went on, then he said, “No, by God, he says, ‘Serbia took them all.’” It failed. I felt very sorry about those photographs, I would have loved to find them. The procedure, how they tied us, and also them here {hands on head}, how he was holding the flag in front, the one I had personally given him, different photographs. But he knows I gave it to him and he admits it. We were tortured with those. I want to say, it is good now to go into those stories gradually and tell everything.

No one can now say, how could you carry those people in UDB and hold so much... Yes, man, yes, because this is the world. Just imagine yourself in his place, I have a friend I cannot harm, I am with flesh and soul for you. I am saying it openly, and he did that for me, and no one would have thought of it. If he had not told me himself, no one would ever have known he worked in UDB. He told it in the most dignified way. Then there is another case too, I told two places. Stop, change a little. Turn it around, shift your mind a little. There are things where people can understand more than if we are harsh. Or for example, you read someone's book and say, dark and black, leave it, you are darker for reading it. But it is not like that. I want to read and see the darkness myself, so that my mind is filled, either I see it, I know it, or I interpret it.

Some people, I hate those who say, "Oh, him, leave it, what is he talking about?" Right now I can show you the photographs, I have made some things public too. That means, I took Asllan Sllamniku, whom I called bloodthirsty, and I went to his house, and his son appeared there. I said, "Tell Asllan that an old friend he has not seen for a long time has come from out of town, and tell him to come out, not through the entrance door," I said, because people would see him, Peja is small and people know me, "but come out into the yard, that way." When he came out, his son said to him, "Father, a friend has come and is calling you outside." When he got up and came out with his son. His son was killed after the war, and now I am not the one saying this, but people, the KLA or whatever you want to call it, killed his son to show him what we can do to you when we have killed your son. Our service, SHIK[18] or whatever, got him into their hands, they got him into their hands. Bloodthirsty.

I had heard. When he came out together with his son, because now it was a bit dangerous, they could have been armed too, but I was very gentle and kind. When he came out, I took out, and even today I still keep it like this, I took out the camera, not a phone, this was 2008. I said, "You take a photograph of us when I tell your father what friend I am." He said, "With the greatest pleasure." When I said, "Asllan, I came to express my condolences for your son, I felt very bad," they were fully convinced now, the son too. I said, "I am Xun Çetta," and he went *trrang* {onomatopoeia}. I have the photographs.

He raised his hands and said to me, "God above and you on earth." I said, "Asllan, I felt bad that they killed your son. If I had power, which I do not, I would put that person before a court. With you, I would deal with many things from the past, and you have an opportunity to help this country by telling, by telling exactly how everything happened, where it went, and bringing things out. Otherwise, I am sorry, if a proper state ever becomes strong enough to bring you before court for what you have done, I will not be the one to do it." We agreed to meet again after a few days. When I called him, it was November 28, a holiday, they had started with the flag, and it was Eid. If you look today, November 28, a holiday, in 2008 it was Eid.

[18] SHIK (*Shërbimi Informativ i Kosovës*; Kosovo Intelligence Service) was an informal intelligence organization that emerged from the intelligence structures of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in 1999. Led by Kadri Veseli, it operated in postwar Kosovo without a formal statutory framework. Its activities and alleged political affiliations, particularly its links to the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), became the subject of public controversy. On 15 June 2008, Veseli announced the completion of its mandate and the organization's dissolution.

We held a festive ceremony in Istog. I wanted to come to Pristina. I called him, “Are you near the house?” “Yes,” he said, “but some people from Pristina are coming for Eid.” “Have they left?” “No,” he said. “All right, I will finish.” “All right, come.” I went slowly and parked the car near his house. As it happened, we also celebrated Eid, how they welcomed us with tulumba and those things. There was one mistake of mine there that cannot be forgiven, others told me this, and later I became convinced. I stayed inside with him for an hour and a half, until the people from Prishtina were about to arrive, and things like that.

“My friends told me,” he said, “Xun, very immature. Do you know he could have killed you right there?” His son had been killed, he was UDB. He could have said, “Enough, the victim has come to my house,” and that is logical. “Xun,” he said, “only God protects you.” I said, “By God, sometimes the way my heart is, that is how He brings things to me. Because even when they killed his son,” I accused him, though it is not known who killed him, but he was that kind of extremist. I said, “Even you who killed his son,” I said, “my heart hurt because I am who I am. I went to investigate many things, and with the flesh of my heart I offered condolences for his son,” this is how we spoke among ourselves.

There are things, if all these stories were released, if all of them were brought to light exactly as they are, there would be so much for days and nights, to speak, but the researcher and interviewer must be truly, strictly impartial, and reflect them gradually, in order to see everything that happened in this country. After the war is an entire period that, shortly before we started the program, I showed you some photographs. There are piles and piles of photographs, arguments, evidence, documents, we have all of them. Something happened to us, but thank God we are alive and free, without... the freedom to act for the country. Is something happening in Mitrovica today? Your heart tells you, who are you that you are not there?

We created a state, there are institutions, parties, what one says the other does not say. This one comes out differently, but if you come out realistically, “No, you are supporting that one.” In my life, I have never spent three days in any party, anywhere. But my life, every party, people I know, I have seen, I have worked with, I have acted with, they are and remain. The party is not small, let him know himself, he knows what he is doing there. The parties have turned people into earth. Because they liked to make names, but someone else to decide. When they saw that the party was withering, sometimes falling, falling, then they threw those people away, they were no use to them. Supposedly, I am doing work, I go to another party. It has the same soup.

For activists, naturally now there is political competition. Why did I run as an independent? Why did I say, may I never win? Put yourself in service, and with a free vote I offer myself to the people, and it comes out. Nothing is a problem. How could you, in the circumstances after the war, come out and say, I am taking votes as an independent, when the parties wanted to eat one another, when your friends, with whom you had been in war, in activities, in prisons, in everything, had positioned themselves in parties. But they do not want to hear about you even though they know you. There are some stories

where sometimes we are called to speak about stories, but when they are all connected, these are stories that are terrible for us to treat.

Part Four

Anita Susuri: Mr. Xun, I wanted to go back a little and ask you about the investigation part, because we were also talking about that. But I am interested in this part of the investigations — Were you in prison in Pristina or where?

Xun Çetta: In Pristina.

Anita Susuri: For how many, how many months were you in the prison of Pristina?

Xun Çetta: I was arrested in Pristina on June 6, '81, and until the investigation ended, it lasted about six months there, and as soon as we were sentenced, the order came to us, "You will be transferred to this prison, this one to that prison, this one to that prison." They only gave us a very short time to say goodbye to our friends. These ones were being sent to Serbia, these ones to Macedonia, these ones to Croatia, me to Slovenia. When we were dispersed, we could not even really say goodbye to one another. Because the bus would come prepared, if it came from Slovenia, it was a Slovenian bus, not from Kosovo. They took us with Slovenian police forces. When they came from there, Croatian, then Croatian.

And about the investigation, we could speak day and night. Sometimes I summarize it in three words. The most difficult situation was when you did not speak about a friend, while they were asking you exactly, and now weakness eats at you to admit it. This has always been true for a real Albanian. The earth would have covered him before he would admit it. But let me connect one insert to this. My father, may he rest in peace, had experienced six months for NDSH. He said, "Son, not today, but tomorrow, you will fall inside, because the whole Committee has risen to its feet. The police there. I do not know how you are behaving. Remember," he said, "when you fall inside, the more you speak about friends, the more work will come out for you. One name brings you one hundred troubles," and all of my father's words came true. "When they bring you the person you have avoided, they bring him in front of your eyes. Try in some way to dodge it a little, however you know and however you can, because you will be tortured more than when you have not spoken," and that is exactly how it turned out for me.

For example, people were brought before me, and I did not admit it. Now, to speak in detail, Ali Lajçi comes, number one, the pyramid of '81 for me is and remains him. Absolutely. We raised the slogan, but he was studying in Belgrade and moving around in Belgrade. It was a slogan addressed by UDB to break number one. The people swallowed things like that at the time. More or less, it worked. Ali comes before me in the investigation. He says, "Xun, yes, when they wanted to attack a spy, he came

down with students while we were talking with the professors," this is an insert that is good to elaborate. He says, "When he came, he asked me," he says, "'They have caught someone among us and want to beat him as a spy. I do not want a beating to happen here,'" and it was true, because they were throwing stones at the police from far away.

I had people to whom I said, "You, you, you... if you throw even one more stone, we ourselves will catch you and take you to them. Do not throw stones. We can work like this, surrounded as we are." There the slogans were written, there it was debated what should be removed, what should be raised, all of it. But we were surrounded there. They were throwing stones to create a reason to break us up, and I intervened several times. Other friends of ours tell this too. When they caught him to beat him, I did not feel good. I went and approached them. He did not know me, but there he knew me as Xun.

He said, "Xun, I swear to you I was wounded in '68," and he uncovered himself {gestures toward the chest}. He said, "I am a worker with the shock absorbers," or with some company, I do not know. He said, "They sent me to connect with the students so we could come out immediately." Now I do not know where this spy thing came from, but they had caught him to beat him. "You, you, you, if anything happens to this man, I have business with you, because I know you. Leave him alone. He must not leave from here, he must not feel threatened." I went slowly down below. It was about seventy meters down to where Ali Lajçi, Gani Koci, and I think Bajram Kosumi were, I do not know now, there were three of them. They were speaking with the professors. The professors, the whole staff, had come there to speak with us.

Now they recall it too. They say it well, there were professors who said, "you are right about everything, but protect yourselves because you are trying to become victims." Everything has other forms, we can do it differently, those are things I do not deal with, meaning that is where they differ. Now they were not here where we were working. When the slogans were written on sheets, when this slogan was removed, that slogan, where here, they were not there, they were with the professors over there. Now when I went down, Ali had been caught by them. I tell it honestly, "You beat me and I told you, for what I know you do not need to beat me."

When Ali Lajçi said to me in front of the UDB man, "Xun, admit it because we agreed that until Kosovo becomes a Republic we will not withdraw, you do not need to be beaten," he said that to me. He said, "I tried it," he said, "when he came, he told me that among us there is a spy and they are beating him, but I do not want anyone to be beaten inside," Ali says. "I told him, 'Xun, go and act as you know how.'" It is all in the indictments. Now when they returned, by all means not to beat him, by all means to have protection within us, to know who he was, the identification papers and all those things, doing that was not a problem. When I went back up, there is an insert I am saying for the second time, the first time I did not think I said it, because a problem had been ignited.

An Osman Halitaj came out, he is not Xhavit Haliti,[19] completely different but from the same village, Haliti Halitaj. I said, "Osman, has anyone touched him?" He said, "No, just as you left him, they are guarding him very well," he said, "but they want to beat Xhavit Haliti." Better that we say it here than later, when he became a name and things spread elsewhere. He said, "Why, where is Xhavit? I have known Xhavit since high school in Peja," now it was impossible for me not to know him. "Where is Xhavit Haliti?" He said, "There, there, there, they are beating him." When I raised my head upward, I saw them with iron rods, they bloodied him. He put his hands like this {places hands over face} and fell to the ground covered in blood, Xhavit Haliti. On the 26th, in that...

Now, taking what Ali and Gani said, that I had come saying there was a spy among us and they wanted to beat him, but we would not beat him there, UDB then took it, since Xhavit was beaten, and interpreted it as being about Xhavit. The indictment then says, "He was charged with beating the spies that we had thrown inside." Because Xhavit was beaten. I had nothing to do with it, because Xhavit never appeared, I never saw him, I did not see him at all that day. I did not see him in the morning when we were holding things with the professors, with these people, with the political factor that came inside to us, he was not there. I never saw Xhavit in the Student Center.

Anita Susuri: And what else did they charge you with in the indictment?

Xun Çetta: And they beat him too. But they charged me for writing the slogans, which is true, "We are not Yugoslavs, we are Albanians," for which I was the number one author, that is the truth. I do not tell them that I wrote them, but I say, "Yes, they were debated, they were written." They were written by Minire Pajaziti... I did not mention names anywhere, nowhere at all. But, "Yes, I was there." They accused me of organizing that day to go out for Tito's relay, to disrupt the relay...

Anita Susuri: On the 25th.

Xun Çetta: Yes. The relay was on the 26th, but on the 25th we organized, we organized it. We were in dormitory number 4, me, those two brothers I mentioned, Ahmet and his brother Isa Ahmetaj. Ahmet Mehmeti and Isa Mehmeti. There was one Zymeri, Xhevat Zymberi, and there was one Shaip, I knew him as Turjaka, but he turned out to be from Malisheva, Shaip Kastrati. At that time I did not know him, only through the activity. When we made the plan on the first floor to go secretly one day earlier and place the slogans and flags, on the stairs where the police caught me and I escaped from them, hiding there, that was where I had planned to take and hide the flags.

We made the plan. Someone came and said, "You are being watched," he said, "all the UDB men are following behind." We were on the first floor. We got up from the first floor and went out to the third

[19] Xhavit Haliti (1956) is a Kosovo Albanian politician and one of the founders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). A member of the People's Movement of Kosovo (LPK), he was active in its leadership during the 1980s and 1990s and played a significant role in the KLA's political and logistical structures, particularly in organizing and financing its activities from abroad. Following the Kosovo War, he became a founding member of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and served for several terms as Deputy Speaker of the Kosovo Assembly.

floor into Shaip Kastrati's room, the one introduced to me as Shaip Turjaka, I did not know, from Malisheva. There we finalized the plan. But that day, whoever starts something else before us, there is no confusion here, we have to join in, just as if something begins ahead of us. There is no confusion, we have to join. Here it should not happen that one says I did it, another says I did it. Whoever it is, the organization is not just us, nor just them, all of Kosovo was electrified by then. We were moving toward it, it was the 25th, let us not forget.

We had the whole plan in our hands, on the 26th it happened as it happened, it is clear. Then it ended. They did not let us inside, they did not let us approach the Student Center down by the canteen, they did not let us through between dormitory 3, as I explained earlier, how they did not let us. They told us, "You have five minutes to go back." They pushed us inside, they released tear gas, they forced us to surrender. Meaning, we failed to get there on the 26th. That charge I had too, and those I had organized, all of it is true. They are with names and surnames. They are alive, they write books, they are the ones we confronted, we did all of it. I had no need to mention names there.

They perhaps had data that I was one of the organizers for the 26th, to disrupt the relay with flags and slogans raised in the center and to raise them there as well. They just did not tell me that we had planned to take them there one day before and leave them there, and then go empty-handed to disrupt the relay. You know, they did not say that. The rest seemed to me that they knew all of it. How they knew, I do not know...

Anita Susuri: And from the group you said there were 21 of you, that group they sentenced...

Xun Çetta: Yes.

Anita Susuri: Which were the highest sentences? You said...

Xun Çetta: The highest sentences were 15 years, Ali himself got 15 years, Gani Koci too, and I think two others. Then it immediately dropped to 13. At 13 there was me, there was Jonuz Januzi, there were... then some got eight years, I will not mention names now. Then there were six years, six years I think Ramë Demaj got, there were quite a few. Meaning, the sentences were 15, 13, eight, six, four years, I do not think anyone in our group got four. Sentences do not define things, so to speak. If it had depended on how I thought I had held myself in the investigation, I would have gotten through with seven or eight years. It is not... it is not a given.

When they sentenced me to 13 years, the investigation was over by then, it was a closed process. Asllan Sllamniku called me, the inspector, the same one who earlier had told me, "We will send you to Slovenia, because if we send you to the other prisons, you will not come back to Kosovo alive, I know your head. Be thankful," he said, "I told you during the investigation that you would be sentenced to 13 years. Were you sentenced to 13 years?" It is true, I had forgotten a little, but it came back to me immediately. While carrying out the investigation he kept telling me... "Say whatever you want, you

will be sentenced to 13 years," the inspector said to me as he was finishing the investigation, and I was sentenced to 13 years.

When I was sentenced, when they told me that we would be transferred there and gave the reason, "Rejoice and be thankful, it is better in Slovenia than somewhere else. Did I not tell you?" He said, "No, man, this is no surprise. You are the ones who conducted the investigation, you are the prosecutors, you are the ones," I said, "you yourselves divided it..."

Anita Susuri: And how, for example, did he choose you specifically to send you to Slovenia as some kind of lighter form?

Xun Çetta: Like he said, yes.

Anita Susuri: I mean, why?

Xun Çetta: Well, I think these influenced it, but the UDB, listen to what it says, they are the ones, I do not... who is going to decide before them? I do not... Now, whether he meant it seriously, to me it seemed serious. Because he said, "If this one goes there with those heads, he will not return alive," because he had tested me, what he had done to me. He wanted to leave himself a reputation, as if to say forget what I did to you because I made it possible for you to go there. Now, how could you say he arranged it for anyone, it is absurd, because the UDB themselves made those decisions. There was no other system.

It is not the work of a UDB man, where the Ministry of Justice sends someone, they decide that, there is no question there. However they decided, that is how it went. There everything... safer. The smallest problem. But around him... another thing that was interesting, Asllani told me, he said, "Be careful when you go out," and he told me this too, "the dogs will come at you, do not be afraid," he said, "they are interested in putting fear into you," and that is exactly what happened (laughs). Meaning, they did nothing outside of the script, they did not do anything they had not already fully prepared and then carried out. That is how it happened. I will never forget, when we came out here and the dog jumped at me. I was getting into the bus...

Anita Susuri: When were you released or when?

Xun Çetta: No, no, when they wanted to take us, to transfer us from prison, hands tied, me the second one, and now to get into the bus. Before getting on the bus, the dog jumped at me. I remembered him, the one who had warned me. Only he had not said, "Do not be afraid because they are trained to terrify you." Now on the bus, could you even speak? For example there was Xhelal Ferizi on the bus, making noise here and there, "Take these handcuffs off." The police came, and he caused problems for those Slovenians. One came, "What do you want?" He was acting in some way... I leaned over and told him, "Xhelal, stop, these people have nothing to do with it, their only duty is to take you and hand you over. Whether they are good, bad, whatever... this one cannot take your handcuffs off, in the middle of all of

us, and leave you without them. Do not be repetitive." "I cannot carry them anymore, man." That was when I noticed...

They had sent him, Xhelal, to Koper to serve his sentence, and me to Ljubljana. When they transferred me for that problem I mentioned, I found Xhelal there. There we were recalling the whole road. He had been pretty harsh, almost approaching that same one I mentioned who killed Hajredin Bala, the one they say burned a guard with an iron. They had provoked him, and he felt bad about it and ruined himself. He was very aggressive. I call myself a little aggressive too, I learned it, everyone knows it, but I was never of brutal proportions. I always had a reason when I insisted. With things like that... and he kept doing it again and again...

There was one Minir Gajor in Koper, ordinary, ordinary, an ordinary criminal. He was almost cooperating with the prison administration in espionage and behaving well. When he attached himself to you, he would win you over, as they say. One day he says, "Xun," he says, "the prison director, Marian Putz," before him there had been one Fisher, then they replaced him, when I arrived it was Fisher and then another one came. He came directly from the UDB service, a secret service man, and became prison director. He says, "He told me about Xun, 'Do not deal with him.'" Meaning, do not bring me information because Xun is handled by the directorate, by the ministry in Ljubljana.

He knew me, they brought me there, he had certain criteria, they had formed their own opinion about him. For me it was clearly a good opinion, not to provoke me, not to trap me, not to fabricate things against me, only positive. Because I had formed my own understanding from what happened to me, from their dialogue, from being put in isolation, "We will make it possible, protect yourself. When the time comes to sentence me for 30 days, when those 30 days are over you will go out into the city." There were many signs I had, they had taken me under their care. "Look," he says, "you could watch over Xhelal Ferizi," meaning, to set some kind of trap for him...

Anita Susuri: To dig a hole for him.

Xun Çetta: To dig a hole for him, yes. And then immediately I connected it... I told his brother ten days ago, we met here, I did not know him, he was a professor, a great man. "Wow," he said, "really?" I said, "Ask your brother Xhelal, I saved him, because he would have suffered like Hajredin Bala, today he would not be here." "Why?" I said, "Because I saw it, your brother is fierce." He said, "Yes." "Your brother did things that should not be done. 'You are a prisoner, accept that, this other man is not to blame, neither the guard, nor the social worker, nor the psychologist, they are not at fault. Hold yourself, respect their duty, behave as if to set an example of how one should be.'" The rest, that is why they asked me to write whatever I wanted, I had no dealings with the directorate.

I said, "And your brother was different." He said, "Yes." I said, "Someone who collaborated with the directorate told me this, he told me, 'About Xun, there is nothing to say, the ministry has him in hand. They told him we know you, we understand you, write,' and he writes openly what he feels." They brought up many things, things I defended, because they dared not hear otherwise about him, their

leader, the victim of Stane Savic, and I spoke well. That is how the state works. When it victimizes you, it wants you, but it cannot because you are on duty. I am not a prisoner today, no one can do anything to me. I would even defend your Stane Savic, who wanted to keep Slovenian coastal revenues and not send them to the federation, because the federation would take them. Just as they were taking Trepça from us, I would tell them openly, publicly.

When they create the conviction of our sincerity, that you say it and argue it, what you cannot argue, for them it is completely normal, they do not see you... the rest are rules. I cannot tell them, why are you keeping me here, I do not want this, you did not bring me food properly, why are the irons cold in prison, for example, not that it happened, but as an example. To hate you because the guards heard you, these things do not work, they are low. His brother was like that. When I called him, I said, "Xhelal, if you do not control yourself and stop being so aggressive, you will suffer badly." "Why?" "Because I know," because by then they had told me they were watching him somehow.

In prison I had the longest sentence, whoever knows the history, it is even in the newspapers. The longest prison sentence in the history of Slovenia, 13 years political imprisonment, Xun Çetta. Because that is how it came to be, since the Republic of Slovenia existed, they had never had a political prisoner serving 13 years there. It is in the newspapers, it is known today, and they came to visit me and everything. He admitted it, he said, "That is how my brother is." "Fine," I said. I had strengthened him, I heard he is now in Norway or somewhere, I do not know. I had saved him, I said, "Enough," I said, "because I know."

But there is a difference because in Koper I suffered in some ways worse, because of the aggressive one. There somehow they turned things against me through another prisoner so badly, very badly... and there too I had an incident with a prisoner and they put me up in isolation. It passed well enough. They forgave some of it. From 25, I do not know how many days they had sentenced me to, they let me down and reduced it somewhat reasonably. But there I had attacked a Slovenian. He was one of those types, talking, working, setting you up, framing you.

For example, he would come and make his coffee, we had a place where we made our own coffee. He would make his coffee, leave it unwashed, and then go report, "Come see how he left it unclean," for example. To put you in a bad position... I did not do those things. Not only to me, he did it to other prisoners too, it was verified that he was that kind. One day I snapped and called the *dežurni*, as they called the officer on duty "What *dežurni*?" I said. "He himself should know what kind of filth you are." And I pushed him away.

Then with another ordinary prisoner for murder. There too I had a problem, because they had placed him there with intention. Meaning, assess what is good and take it as you see it, but those good people cannot be absolute when they also have the other tools that serve your darkness or the victims, because others work there too. Even the guards, man, I had guards too. There was one Mati, a Croat, even if you had your own brother as a prison guard, he would not have treated you the way that man did. A brother your mother and father gave you. And when he spoke, he spoke in such a remarkable

way. He had no ambition, no career, just a guard. But when he spoke, it was a pleasure to listen to him. Now that is something you should know how to value.

Anita Susuri: I also wanted to ask you about other former prisoners, were there other Albanians in Slovenia?

Xun Çetta: Yes, in Slovenia I was in the first round, there was me, Avdullah Hasan, Meta from Strellc, from the Committee Group of Deçan, there was Nezir Krasniqi from Abria, there was Halil Korliqi from Abria, actually he is from Rezallë, I mixed it up. Halil Korliqi from Abria, Nezir Krasniqi from Rezallë. There was Enver, Arif Demolli the writer who has died now, the author of I do not know how many works and novels. There was Fadil Blaka, there was Sadik Buja from Lipjan, Fadil Blaka from our municipality. Sadik Buja, there was Shefki Shatri from the municipality of Istog with me in prison.

Then the second round came. If I forgot anyone, let them forgive me because it is not deliberate, but I mentioned enough. Because they kept the groups small so as not to let all the prisoners gather and create some kind of disturbance, they spread us out as much as possible. And in the second round Ukshin Hoti[20] came, Shahini came, no wait, Kelmendi, from Llabjan of Peja, now the name... there came one Shaban Mulolli, or I do not know what they called him, from Llap. There came one little one, ah, now I am getting myself into trouble, they will say we forgot their names. And another group of friends, four or five of them.

These ones came after some years, after we had already been in prison, they came there. Then, during conversations, I later concluded that they sent Ukshin Hoti for retrial. He managed to get a retrial. Now, however things passed, when Ukshin Hoti came to Kosovo for retrial, he apparently insisted... This, if I conclude, others too, and the judiciary, and the organs know it, everyone knows it. He apparently insisted that I will not leave Kosovo alive again, "Leave me wherever you want." Then they left him. Ukshin, as is known, was a name, his persistence was strong. Then they took Ukshin Hoti and sent him to the prison where Sadik was, who is now also dead and the book was published about him.

They sent him in his place as a number, because they worked with numbers. Slovenia did not dare leave one number missing, because in Belgrade it appeared that there were that many political prisoners. That means, their competence was to keep the number the same. Now as a number, suddenly, as this Sadik tells us, he says, "They took me, they brought me," they said, "a case has come up for us to bring one prisoner here and send you to Slovenia, completely unexpectedly." And they brought him, they sent Ukshin there. We waited, but Ukshin did not come to us, he did not return because he stayed here. We are speaking about that, not about prison during the war when he disappeared, we are speaking about the prison of that time. He insisted, "I do not want to, I want to

[20] Ukshin Hoti (1943–1999) was a Kosovo Albanian political activist, professor, writer and political philosopher, known for his advocacy of Albanian national rights and Kosovo's self-determination. He was repeatedly imprisoned by Yugoslav and Serbian authorities for his political activities. In 1994, he was sentenced to five years in prison. On 16 May 1999, following his release from Dubrava Prison, he disappeared under unexplained circumstances. His fate and whereabouts remain unknown.

serve my sentence here [in Slovenia]," and they took that one and brought him there, and sent him [to Kosovo]...

Part Five

Anita Susuri: I also wanted to ask you something about your family, your contact with them, because Slovenia was quite far away...

Xun Çetta: Yes.

Anita Susuri: And maybe it was difficult for them to come.

Xun Çetta: I thank you very much, I thank you very much, because you are touching on some things as if you yourself had experienced them. I remember my father and mother. We belong to the Muslim faith, even though my name is Çetta, everyone thinks I am of the Christian faith; for me, beliefs are completely irrelevant, whether in a mosque or a church, I go freely, and when I write... my mother and father, during Ramadan, with cracked lips, would come to visit me there. Today, when I remember them, I feel like crying. Both worn down (cries), in those conditions, which we now have much better. And I see that life is dynamic, or I do not know what it is, the mouth has entered, we do not know, I am well. Before God above, I am well, with family, with wife, with children, with everything.

But when I think of the cracking of their lips during Ramadan, how many times they came to me in Ljubljana, how many times they came to me in Nova Gorica, how many times they came to me in Koper. There, tears are unavoidable. And I do not know why, how, with family or... not to speak of the advice, I had a strong father. We never saw a tear from my father in his life, my mother yes. Never! I have posted a video from when I came out of prison and came home, they came to see me according to our traditions, everyone, my father with a pipe, which they recently broke, I glued it back together and I keep it with a tobacco box, all in the cabinet. [He] with the pipe in his hand, I take the pipe from him, "Father, put it away," he takes the pipe back, "Do not bother me," you know, because he was that type.

The way he speaks to me when I came out of prison is remarkable. He did not know when it was death or when it was a wedding. He went everywhere in the neighborhood, in the area and in many villages there. You cannot write Mustafa Çetta, they called him Hoxha, Mustafa Hoxha. You could not tell whether he was at a funeral or a wedding. He was stable, he spoke. The advice he gave me there, when I remember it, oh God, oh God! You would think he himself was serving the sentence. I remembered the advice he had given me, "You have no way out without falling in. But when you fall in, avoid names as much as you can, the more you do that, the stronger you stand. When they bring him in front of your eyes, dodge a little and get through it. You may take some beating and so on, but it passes easier than becoming implicated," and all of his words came true for me.

Their coming was hard. Their coming... someone might say, “I am comforted because my family came.” Even then, I felt it was difficult. But now after their death, it collapses on me, because I have them before my eyes. Both of them fasting for Ramadan, my father smoked a lot. And during Ramadan, to come to you [for a visit] within Ramadan, which lasts 30 days, maybe two or three times he came to me. And those things are heavy, as heavy as can be. For brothers it is not a problem, a brother comes, young, he goes. He would even be dealing with something. Back then they dealt in business, go take a truck. They would come to buy something, on the way back they would stop. Those are different things. But parents? for my parents it was very difficult.

Anita Susuri: And what kind of transport did they have to get there? Was there a direct route or how?

Xun Çetta: By train, by train, by train. Their journey was always by train...

Anita Susuri: It must have taken a long time...

Xun Çetta: Then when they would recall to me how they suffered. Truly, fine, in Ljubljana it was different, more central. But in Nova Gorica we had it a bit more difficult. It was a prison somehow completely, I do not know how. When he came, he would tell me, “Not only did we come all the way here, but here what we went through, and there, and there.” Now when I remember them, now, man, you become, you feel troubled that it was so difficult to find, until he found the prison where it was. They would tell him no, go here, no, here, one address they gave him, for example. Those were difficult. To tell you the truth, now all of us were... he did not have money then to say, “We will get off at the bus station, take a taxi and take me to that place,” let us be honest. But, “Is it far?” “No, man, about three or four, two kilometers,” you know, their eyes were worn out looking and asking. It was not like now, that you get off at the bus station and normally a taxi takes you there. We can say whatever we want, they did not have it. He had money, but he stretched it as far as it reached, the ticket to come there. Other expenses, as you said and I said. They were that difficult...

I have it in the book, I had no choice but to bring the photograph when I sent it to my mother, now I even put that copy there, the one I brought her. I say, “Mother, a photograph for you,” but reading it today still makes me… because it is already published... when I sent the photograph exclusively to my mother, and behind the photograph I wrote some words. Those things were heavy. Hand on heart, for me it was not heavy, even though it is the peak. When I think of people who were married and left their bride without children. If he had one child, someone says it is more difficult, no, it is a little easier. Because the parent says, “He left me a child, the misfortune of the wife waiting.” Whether she waits or does not wait, again it is a completely different matter. But a wife without a child at home, and he sentenced to 13 years, and she waited for him with honor. That means there is a little...

Anita Susuri: You were married?

Xun Çetta: No, no, not me. I am speaking about others. No, I started talking...

Anita Susuri: I thought maybe I had missed that somewhere (laughs).

Xun Çetta: No, meaning, however difficult I had it, when I think about it, others had it even harder. I said, for me the height of difficulty was my parents, but when I think of the others, it seems different. Why? Someone else had left his wife without children, young, and if he was lucky, she waited for him, and when he returned, his wife was still there. Then others had a wife, a tiny child, a wife who gave birth two months after he fell into prison, for example. These are... surely you have stories, since you collect them...

Anita Susuri: Yes, yes.

Xun Çetta: I know, I know them all, I know them. I mean, when I think of those cases that were even harder than mine, in a way that comforts me. It is not now to dramatize that for me it was heavy, the case of the family. But I immediately turn it around, there were more difficult cases. Truly, imagine the father taking the mother, taking the young wife to see her husband, then returning, and so on. And I want to tell you one interesting insert. Slovenia had the law, as I said earlier, they would apologize to us for treating us differently from Slovenian laws, because we were under Belgrade's treatment.

They had a room where someone with a heavy sentence, who could not go out, because on weekends they let them go to their families, if they do not drink, do not come back drunk to prison, do not return late when it is time, if they are working. There are many factors under which the law lets you go. Now even if you had all those conditions, it was not applied because we were under that treatment, as I said earlier, I can bring you all the newspapers where they write about it. Now I am taking one case, there were two of them, yes two, Avdullah Hasan Meta from the Committee Group of Deçan. In prison, his family came, his brother with his wife. I am saying this now and I do not care at all if someone says, why are you speaking about family matters, he told us this himself. It is nothing, because the next day the visit ended and they left.

I said, "Avdullah, we should envy you, man, how good that your family came, your wife came, you stayed with her, you spent one night with her, you remembered, you relieved your longing, she goes tomorrow and comes again." "Leave it, leave it, leave it, leave it!" I said, "What?" "This was death," he said, "when my brother brought her," he said, "my brother left my wife with me and went himself to sleep in a hotel. This is hard for us. Never," he said, "again," let it be known, I say it publicly. He said, "My brother brings me my wife," he sleeps with his wife where the prison allows it, "and he goes to the hotel, and the next day comes and takes her," he said. This was never done again. I had honestly envied him. I thought, "they talked for one night, relieved their longing and everything." I am telling him, but he just said to me, "Leave it, leave it, leave it," he said, "this was bad. This did not feel good at all!" "Why, man?" "My brother went to sleep over there, man."

In a way, listen, we were patriarchal families, as townspeople, as villagers, in many things. It had troubled him a lot. He is still alive. I saw it, it had troubled his soul. He said, "This was difficult, Xun," even though it was a condition that could somehow be realized, he said, "it was difficult." With family,

it was not easy. With family it was heavy. It is not even something for us to boast about, those of us who endured it, but those who held us up should be praised, some of whom are no longer in this life now, some are still alive. Meaning, today it is very difficult to find someone who does that, who devotes himself so strongly that he falls, and does not care. There were great devotions there, great ones.

Then we had the other phase, my family was isolated from the circle of people who today speak without... “Oh Xun, do you remember when we were forbidden from coming to your house,” that is how it was. There is also something a little heavier, there were cases when people came to me secretly even after I was released from prison. I had to go somewhere else to meet them because they did not dare come. Naturally, those who did this were people who had jobs somewhere, were officials somewhere, I do not know now, family acquaintances. They did not dare come there.

There are things, I know, I want to wish you success. I felt very bad that I myself had not been informed that you have been working for so many years. To tell you the truth, before you told me, you do not have that idea to tell me, but somehow I myself had, I am a little, I will not say vile, I would never have been able to hold back without telling you, “No, man, there must not be anything in you, we have been active since 2015 and you did not know we exist. You are not of the nature of our program,” you know... I am telling you myself. You will have the chance, you will collect different stories.

Mainly those of a political character and the tendencies among one another, or the tendencies to appear and to be able to protect oneself. You are making a program, a duty, a work, not for us but for the future, which I believe will elaborate many things that have not been said on other televisions, have not been written. By God, even the opportunity to write oneself, for example, I did this in 2001 {shows a book}, now when I look at it I say how good that it exists, because people forget, they forget. You see some things, then the book came out, I had it there.

I mean, with you something remains that we ourselves in a book could not have said. Something remains in your program, in your broadcasts, as you gradually let yourself speak. And later I believe the editing will come too, because I have a great many videos. I have twelve gigas by one thousand, twelve hard drives of about one thousand gigabytes each. Now you know those things yourselves because you are young. I have twelve hard drives of material that could be systematized, maybe the time will come someday, if not by me, then later someone will separate it, this has value, this has value, it all comes together and is completed, something is made.

And now you, when you do all these programs that you do, a description can come out that even the state could not make, and thanks to donations, which is a great work. The international factor is needing to research a reality that we ourselves do not know how to bring to light. It finds forms to help things be clarified. I believe, I do not know now, sometimes you touch on things better, things I had forgotten, and twice you are putting me back on the road.

Anita Susuri: No, I also want to talk a little about the year ’89. You came out of prison, and the ’90s are another problem that begins...

Xun Çetta: Where I am completely...

Anita Susuri: How was this for you?

Xun Çetta: I partly told you after my release from prison how it happened at the Student Center with the friend who today I believe is good. Whatever he did, let it be on his conscience. I do not know under what circumstances... I worked. Then, on the day when it was held in the center, where Zahir Pajaziti Square is, further down where the throat begins, there was the Committee, the Committee. Not now where the Executive Council is, but now the presidency, the assembly. There we began with... Rrahman Morina[21] had gone to Belgrade and we were protesting here. To Rrahman [we were saying], “Come here, speak with us, do not go to Belgrade,” that was the form somehow. A protest.

Someone approached me, as if today [I remember], I do not know, but I know he was from the Service. Because I also saw two or three others from the Service whom I knew by then, moving around. One approached me and said, “Xun,” he said, “it is best,” he says, “do not take the floor.” I said, “Why?” He said, “I only wanted to tell you this,” he said, “because you are in sight now,” and he left. Now they were speaking there, and I approached a friend of mine and told him, this, this, this. Then he took out... those demands, they themselves can look now, they are not with me. With me are the demands of the organizing council, demand one, two, three, four, five, I keep them, because I have everything as a complete archive.

Among them I said, “Let us give support to the Slovenian delegation headed by [Anton] Korošec,” and they barely let me finish the meeting... “Korošec, you are with us, we are with you.” These demands to Rrahman, “Not to Belgrade, but come with us,” all of those are there, I have the writing, point one, point two, of the protest. I was active. I have the woundings when they happened in Peja, I have the places where they are buried, I have the photograph where I stand over the coffin when they want to lower it into the ground, when I want to say a word and they tell me, “Xun,” people know these things, “no, because it will turn out worse. This burial of our family member, we are sorry for it to be misused, you are in sight.”

I have the photograph with the coffin, the earth in front of me... and I say to him, “Can you read this?” He looked at it and said, “It seems a little harsh.” I am telling you precisely, for the first time I am telling you, but I will elaborate this later. It is somewhat similar to the speech when the teacher, the one whose funeral brought out the KLA in Drenica, was buried.[22] There is the photograph, there is the text,

[21] Rrahman Morina (1943-1990) had a career as an agent of the Ministry of Interior of SFR Yugoslavia, and later on as a party official in the League of Communists of Kosovo. He rose through the ranks and was in 1981 appointed as Kosovo's interior minister, and thereby held the top law enforcement office in the province.

[22] The reference is to Halit Geci (1945–1997), an Albanian schoolteacher from the village of Llaushë in the Drenica region of Kosovo. He was killed on 26 November 1997 amid clashes involving Serbian forces. His funeral, held on

it is similar. “The moment of war has come, with war, bullets, this, this, this.” The only difference is that I say, “I am afraid they are working on us so that we respond to violence with violence, to bullets with bullets.” And they said, “No, it is dangerous to read.”

And after some time, now that the time came, it is the same. Now listen, services that work take a little here, a little there, a little there, then they see what is happening, what is being done. Look, I know that well, one thousand percent. I would have liked to know who that person was who told me here, “Xun Çetta, I am saying this for your own good, no more. Because now you are in sight, to come out and take the floor,” the committee that was made for Rrahmon Morina for these things, “no more.” I did not come out. I have the photograph, the people there are known, the ones who told me, “You cannot read it, Xun, because it seems harsh and you are in sight now.”

Armend Daci, Osman Vokshi who was killed there in Kapeshnica, all of those, with photographs, with events. I am in one place where I come out talking with people and the police are behind me, and I am supposedly talking with someone like this. I would catch all of them, all of them... I am in one place where I stand by the man sawing wood, the entrance of Kapeshnica was like a nest of resistance. I am at the entrance of Kapeshnica, he is cutting wood, the sawman, with a motor, not by hand. I am photographed, I come out in front of him so they can capture the helmets of the police behind me here. All those photographs were taken, and someone would say, “How do you dare take them? Why?” Because the terrain was being watched, because Kapeshnica was blocked. You could not do anything. It is long if you want to get out and escape, but the main roads were all blocked with helmets. I am talking about the years ’89, ’90, ’91.

And now in politics too, I will say this, I was an unofficial mediator between Rugova[23] and Qosja.[24] Again I come back to those antagonisms that I trace, research, influence, I do not sit still. He said it, Diary number seven, Qosja confirms it, that he told me this, I told him that, and then he told me, “Now I am going to the Academy of Sciences, Doctor Zajmi is waiting for me there. ‘I stayed, and when I went the next day to Doctor Zajmi, he opened the conversation about Xun. A very exclusive man came to me, pure fire, I was afraid someone had sent him to me,’” he says I told him, “No, because he came to me at the Albanological Institute too, I was afraid like you, I almost lost heart. They told me UDB had sent him, but I knew him. He is a student of ’81, he has come out of prison, and now efforts are being made to reorganize,” he said, “I removed his fear.” You have Qosja’s Diary number seven.

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28 November 1997, marked the first public appearance of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), when three uniformed KLA members addressed the mourners.

[23] Ibrahim Rugova (1944–2006) was a Kosovo Albanian writer, literary critic and politician, widely regarded as a leading figure in Kosovo’s movement for independence. He founded the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) in 1989 and advocated a strategy of peaceful resistance to Serbian rule. He was elected president of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo in 1992 and served as President of Kosovo from 2002 until his death in 2006. In 1998, he received the European Parliament’s Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

[24] Rexhep Qosja (1936) is an Albanian writer, literary critic, historian and academic from Vuthaj, Montenegro. He was a professor at the University of Prishtina and director of the Albanological Institute in Prishtina from 1972 to 1981. A prominent intellectual and public figure, he has published extensively on Albanian literature, history and national identity. He is a member of the Kosovo Academy of Sciences and Arts.

With Rugova, now we are moving a little because... you have Milazim Krasniqi who should... he never told me, he said, "If you knew what words Rugova said to me about you," he said, "you would be amazed." I said, "There is no need," I said, "because I can imagine." Ibrahim Berisha, advisor to Fatmir Sejdiu, the president, says, "When you came, Xun, you did not speak to us, just 'Good day!' and you went into Rugova's office," he said, "we used to say this man is UDB because we did not know you," he says it today, today. He said, "Until Sabri Hamiti came out," he said, "No, man," Sabriu said, "he has just been released from prison, Xun Çetta. Our sister is married to his cousin," she was married and still is. They describe it.

Now I have told him, "I have it in mind to take a cameraman for some... I would like to give five or six minutes to some different scenes, leave them there, then I have sources, my own words, my speech when I spoke there and in Tirana and at gatherings, abroad and in the diaspora, the initiative for mobilization for war, the '90s, all of it, all of these you have. I also have these, because the years are passing." In this case, for example, here Qosja says quite a lot, "I feel bad leaving without saying some words myself." At one time I write about them, at another time he writes about me too.

A journalist comes and says, "We would like, we are making something, can you say two words about Xun Çetta?" Agim Vinca comes out with his convictions, then Milazim Krasniqi comes out, he should speak about Rugova. Ibrahim Berisha comes out and says... let that story be known. Another one comes out, who is known. Now meetings among the illegal, as they call them, though they were not illegal but among activists, there were many of those. But I said, approach this a little differently. I have said on TV the words, for example, that Qosja says to me about Ibrahim, and Ibrahim about Qosja.

I have said it and I say it again, Qosja says, "There is no place for me where there are people from the UDB services, I do not go there. I have nothing against Ibrahim," and then they tell Ibrahim this, this, this. He says, "When Qosja comes, his place is in the front row, I am beside him. But Qosja is not a politician, Xun. This does not mean that now I am doing politics, but some things have to be," he says, "do you know that Qosja is right that those people of the Services should not be there, but I am not free to work in this office," he says, "but they know inside, they work as much as they work," he said, and for me it was a little heavy too, he said, "later," he said, "do you know why?"

He said, I said, "What?" "We have to come together, patriots and non-patriots, and even the traitors they call from the Services do not ruin the work, until we become a fist and say no to Serbia. When we come out with one great 'No' before the world, no. The conditions come where when Rexhep Qosja comes, those people are no longer there without us even chasing them out, they leave by themselves, because now we have done it." Meaning, after it became massive, it was a populated movement at that time, the whole people were LDK.[25] I remembered, look how right Rugova had been. When I speak about this I do not like it, because somehow it now leans toward party politics, far from it.

[25] Alb. *Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës* - Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). The first political party of Kosovo, founded in 1989, when the autonomy of Kosovo was revoked, by a group of journalists and intellectuals. The LDK quickly became a party-state, gathering all Albanians, and remained the only party until 1999.

They know, if you ask them they say themselves, "No, man, what..." but this LPK[26] wing, some of them say LDK and... but to tell what it is, I remembered that Rugova had said, "We know, we have them inside, but we work more easily when they are inside, and through them they tolerate us, or maybe we are conscious of it. When we say no to Serbia publicly, then you will not find them there," and that is what happened. There are things that, now, Qosja, I told him this back then, somehow, "All right, all right, he will see how things turn out," you know. But in fact it turned out that way. To mobilize a people, you first have to leave them there, and have everyone say no. Because now these are only political topics, but within the framework of stories, and when I have said this somewhere, these are truths.

What remains for me is to find a cameraman, pay him and interview them, ten minutes with one, ten with another, ten with another, so something would remain for me. It is a sin to let me die without saying them. Just as Zekeria Cana[27] died, he died without saying some words he had to say, Adem Jashari[28] is not here now, not to speak of it. For example. Every day, not to mention names, every day people are dying without saying some things. Maybe they said them in interviews, but now I am stopping for myself, just give them the opportunity, whatever they know should remain there. Five or six minutes, eight minutes, they say it. There is no need to take more than twelve minutes from each, but fine.

One day I told Resul Sinani, who worked at RTK, I said, "Resul, where can I find a cameraman, I would do this. I will pay him. To take five or six minutes each from people mainly who," now it is bad to speak because it is God's work and health, but some are tired, some are tired.

Anita Susuri: I also wanted to ask you about the year '91, I think you went abroad...

Xun Çetta: Yes, yes. But now every time you ask me, I have to tell you very strange, painful things. Yes, yes, now it was the year '90, '89, '90, I had taken the initiative to gather all the military officers we had from patriotic families, who had grounding, and the people of the resistance of the underground, to bring them together and make a front, which would not come out publicly but would prepare in case

[26] A clandestine Albanian nationalist and political organization established in 1982 by several diaspora-based groups opposed to Yugoslav rule. The LPK played a key role in coordinating underground political activity in Kosovo throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It advocated for the unification of Albanian-inhabited territories and later became one of the main organizational predecessors of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), providing ideological direction, fundraising networks, and political coordination during the armed resistance.

[27] Zekeria Cana (1934–2009) was a Kosovo Albanian historian, professor and human rights activist. A researcher of Albanian history, particularly the history of Kosovo, he worked at the Albanological Institute in Pristina. During the 1990s, he became one of the leading figures in Kosovo's movement for the reconciliation of blood feuds, working alongside Anton Çetta. He was also active in defending human rights and documenting human rights violations under Serbian rule in Kosovo.

[28] Adem Jashari (1955-1998), also known as "legendary commander," was a founder of the KLA, celebrated as its foremost leader and symbol of Kosovo independence. He died in March 1998, together with his family of twenty - half of them underage girls and boys - in a shootout with Serb troops during a three-day siege of his home in Prekaz.

of need. If we failed in the political pluralism, as it was called then, we would have nothing else left except war, because the sources were exhausted.

I had called a meeting in the village of Tërboc, it was on November 23, I think it was the anniversary of the LDK. They came from Prizren, from Deçan, Klina, Istog, they gathered there. We talked, talked, talked, but whenever it came into question, they would say, "Xun, you are not in a party, which party is putting you up to this?" These are the topics that destroyed me. Here, because elsewhere... and another one would get up, one who was real, and say, "Gentlemen, I will take it concretely," he says, "I am LDK, but the party did not send me here. I came myself, because I know Xun's purpose, what he is thinking, and maybe that is where we will end up. What does it matter who sent you?"

Another would come out and say, "Listen," now this one from LPK, or how to put it, these organizations, you know them better, knowing them means knowing their struggle. He says, "Listen, listen, Xun is right, he has a project of preparation for war in case political pluralism fails and it is imposed on us too," he says, "but he cannot be trusted too much when he does not have a subject behind him to join with the other subjects," you know. The matter slowly fell like that, they left without making decisions. Now later we come out, because now I have verified that someone behind it... "Xun," he said, "an order came, sabotage it, do not do anything, we will do it when there is need." From there we go to another place, where secretly they make plans on how to mine these and do something to prepare, and here the people are still alive.

Then one comes out and says, "Xun," he said, "do you know that in our illegal organization we had an order, 'No, because this one is being pushed by so-and-so,' who is not with us, he is being pushed by them." It is my father with the pipe, as I said there, my father when he shouted at me and said, "Son, this is not your *oda*,[29] just because you are in the *oda*, the *oda* belongs to these people here. Listen to what they are telling you," meaning do not act brave, you know. Those who wanted to shut my mouth rejoiced at my father's words, "That is right, hoxha, that is right." One gets up and says, "Mustafë, forgive us, your son must not have his mouth shut only because he is in his own oda." These are stories, to see where we... on one side they rejoiced, "That is right, that is right," to shut my mouth in the name of that, "You are in your own house."

The other one, who is, again I am telling you as it should be, "Mustafë, listen, you cannot stop your son from speaking because he is in his own oda, he is equal to us when it comes to speaking." Here are... I had held it... and the police had noticed it. A man comes and says, "Xun, if you continue," just as they had told me here in the center, which I told you earlier, he says, "I am afraid you will fall soon." "Why, man?" "You are going around, organizing," he said, "and you will fall inside." "But how do you know?" "The data says so." It did not take long, when another very great, good man told me too, a professor we had, a school principal, a certain Ymer Kelmendi. He was a man to behold. "Xun," he said, "they are saying you are moving around. You have just come out of prison. Quite uncontrolled. The authorities

[29] A traditional guest room or men's chamber in Albanian homes, especially in Kosovo and northern Albania, used for hospitality, communal discussion, dispute resolution, and oral storytelling.

are on their feet, the authorities have everything now, shrink back a little. Because the boys are telling me," that was a second alarm.

After a few days my cousin came out to me, now he has a son who is a martyr, "Xun," he said, "you stood firm in prison, you made our face white.[30] You have stood firm these days, you made our face white. If you continue, you will fall into prison, you will blacken our face because the pressure on you will be heavier. This and that, just get out and flee," *euuu* {onomatopoeia}.

Part Six

Xun Çetta: The matter turned and twisted, and I went to Slovenia, to the socio-cultural association, it was still Migjeni. I stayed there, an Italian journalist from *Corriere della Sera* approached me. I left an interview. When those came, "Why did you go? You are forbidden to leave Kosovo. If you behave the way you are behaving," it is known, even when they interrogated me, "if you behave this way we will forbid you even from going from Peja to Pristina." I saw it, I saw it, it was boiling inside me, and I got up and fled with... first I went with my brother's passport, I crossed well. I did filming there, took projects, contacted the diaspora... the heads, all of them are on video, all of them, not one is lost. I came back here slowly, took some kind of program to realize as I had begun, the promise and everything. I started, continued a little, some would avoid me, some here, some there. They noticed, "Xun, you were abroad." I said, "No." "You were abroad, do not make us bring it all out with photographs and everything. You are forbidden, only here [in Peja], not even in Prihtina." As if I had thought, "It is forbidden." Then I did it the second time, preparing together with another person. At that time in Peja Kosova Turist would depart, or I do not know, no, no, a little different...

Anita Susuri: Kosova Trans?

Xun Çetta: It was something with turist. There they also gave the lists and did everything. We went slowly and took out two tickets. When I gave the passport... imagine, this also has meaning. Only when I took out the ticket did the friend with me notice that I was taking it out in someone else's name, because I had not spoken. Meaning, this is what I want to tell you, because it continued... when I told him, I am telling you now by name, Hivzi Morina, he went *prring* {onomatopoeia}. I could have told him, wait for me a little, because I had not told him anything, but it happened then. When we came out, the man vanished. He said, "Xun," he said, "for whom did you take out the ticket?" I said, "For myself," {gestures to keep quiet}, "shut it."

When the time came to travel the next day, I got on the bus, I looked, he was not there. I looked, that man was not there. The bus was about to leave, and I said, "Stop, someone is missing." "Why?" I said his name. He said, "No, he is on the other bus." I said, "But I have business with him, we took out the

[30] "To make our face white" is a traditional Albanian expression (*me na e zbardhë fytyrën*) meaning to bring honour, pride and respect to one's family or community through one's actions.

tickets together, we have the numbers, look." He said, "No, we made changes." He intervened and caught the other bus. He said, "We will meet along the road as we go," these drivers. Until there, nothing. When we went to Sežana, it was the border to cross into Italy. As soon as I entered Sežana, I saw the border guard, the policeman, he only read it, Hivzi Morina, "Yes," he did not look at the photograph at all. "Go take your bags and return." "Why, what?" "It is over." He did not look at the photograph at all, only the name. I knew this because when you are under some danger, you follow the situation. Nothing, man, just the name, "Go back."

The driver said to me, "Xun," he said, "from experience, they stopped you." "No, man." "Yes." I returned, and the bus went on. I stayed seven days in prison. What is interesting, they took me to prison in Koper, from where I had been released. I had been released proudly, with 13 years as a political prisoner I had a certain authority among the organs, with the guards and everyone. They took me to the border, they call them border guards, *graničari* in Serbian, the border. It was something low, meaning, for the border it was... When they took me for seven days [in prison] for the border, they did not respect themselves. But I twisted it on them immediately, "I am here as a consequence of you." "Why?" "Because you knew that Yugoslavia wanted to take a different road," it had not yet broken. I said, "Slovenia should have given me a passport then, so I could leave, and I would not have had to leave like this unnecessarily with other people's passports."

I organized a little and what I had began to return to me. Then the Security organs came to me, "Xun, this and this and this, we have a legal duty to return you so you can take out a passport, but the passport, we... What we can do is, when the seven days are over, go, flee wherever you want. After seven days we would have had to hand you over, but we see what the circumstances are," '91 was clashing. I said, "Yes, yes, but are you aware that you," I had information that exactly the brother of this Zymer Neziri, do you know Zymer? He was a great LDK activist.

He had been connected in the name of the LDK, because we had done major politics. They were issuing Croatian passports to activists who were in danger here, so they could leave, and those things are public now, they are known and seen more and more every day, the ones I knew. I said to the inspectors, "Why didn't you issue one to me, why didn't you give me a passport when you knew the Croats were issuing passports here, here, here." He just said to me, "We knew," he said, "we in the Service are alone, because the time has come when the Slovenians work differently, the Croats differently, others differently, because we have one state," he said, "but we knew," he said, "and you never asked for a passport."

I said, "I had no idea, but you knew I was going into the fire, to Kosovo, after all those years in prison, and over there it was boiling." For three or four days I did not dare, I stayed in Naim Maloku's house until we consulted, be careful because you are going to suffer. We knew all of this. They said, "Fine, when you finish," now it was the third day in prison that I had done. He said, "When you finish, I will come visit you and we will agree on what we can do about the passport." I have made this public too,

because people can say he went inside for meetings with UDB men, and those things, I make them public myself, I do not leave them for later so people say *uuuu* {onomatopoeia}.

He came, I was released, and as soon as I came out, *tak* {onomatopoeia}, he appeared in front of me. We went to drink coffee. "Xun," he said, "I asked about the passport. It is difficult for us to do it if the misused passport is caught. Why should we issue it to you," he said, "we can use the reason that you live in such-and-such a place, or that you have property, but you go to the association," because now they knew, "go to the Albanian cultural association Migjeni, get a document saying that you are a resident, that you have Slovenian property." That was easy for me. There I... we stayed in contact to see. I went, and when I went I said, this and this. There was Sali Kabashi, there was Naim Maloku, there was Martin Berisha, there was... this very year, no, by God, he was there too, Besa Çeku's husband, Gani Buçinca. Gani Buçinca was there. There were many activists there and they knew me.

When I went there I said, "This and this, I ate seven days in prison for the border," and I told them bluntly, "it is your own fault because I served my sentence here, but you did not issue me a passport while Croatia is issuing them," and so on. I said, "They told me, 'Go get a certificate from the association, come back, and we will see.'" Now, they did not guarantee it to me. *Trrak* {onomatopoeia}, they picked up the phone and called a man, Miftar Kukleci, or I do not know, from Isniq. We had escaped from Isniq and ended up there. They told him, "Come here quickly." He had several sheep, property, and a barn there in Slovenia. They said, "this and this," "We have a case, Xun Çetta is asking for you to sign that he is residing with you for a passport," in detail. He said, "Do not let him go."

It did not take long, he came inside. Everyone has that memory. All these people I am telling you about. "Oh Xun Çetta, come, I will sign that you are the owner of this place," you know, because he had properties. He said, "Not just a resident." I said, "Man, is it okay to write that I am a resident, so that it is," that was all they had asked of me. He said, "Of course it is okay! Come, because I will make it that you have property too," because he had bought property. He issued me that certificate, and I sent it to them. They said, "Go now, report a few days before, if you can." When they called me, the passport had come out. I have it in the book, public. When my Slovenian passport came out, after I had fallen at the border, because I had fallen.

These are heavy stories. And this too is a story, the man with whom I went to take out the ticket, no living person knew. We ate and drank until we took out the ticket, he had his own people there. He knows who it is about, and even today he writes to me, I do not get involved. Until the moment I took out the ticket, I had not spoken, let alone to others... when I entered the border, just the name, Hivzi Morina, because it had been reported that Xun Çetta was passing with Hivzi Morina. The matter was over. Without the smallest problem. And here too there was weakness.

Then an Ismet Limani, Krasniqi, found me, Ismet Limani Krasniqi from Carravik of Klina there. When I told him that I had fallen into prison, and had come out and was waiting for the passport, "Xun." Because when I had been with my brother, I had had major meetings, he was a great activist. "Xun," he said, "now you need money, tell me where to send you money. You get out, you have stayed several

days spending here and there, the passport costs." I was not asking anymore, but I was looking at my finances a little... I said, "Listen, I am not badly off, but send me 300 francs," you know, just that. "Yes, say how much you want and where. Look," he said, "because I know there is one post office that works, take a number there, give it to them, just inform them before the money comes." I got up slowly, went and took the number at the post office, gave it to him, he gave it from there, he sent me 300 francs from there.

I would not have been without it, but I also could not really say I was well. Ismet Limani sent me 300 francs from there. Now when I returned to give it back to him, he just laughed at me, "Do not stir up trouble," he said, "what would we have done to get you out of prison, for example," he said, "leave these things," and so on. There are stories, night and day, wherever you turn. Stories, then Adem Jashari in Tirana, that is another process, because I went to Albania in '91, '92, in '91...

Anita Susuri: Before going abroad.

Xun Çetta: No, just after, I, from Switzerland, so to speak, through... I mean, I spent New Year 1992 in Albania. I mean, I reported in '91, I think it was the fourth month in Switzerland, and New Year's night, because now I had... my name with Amnesty International, and immediately my papers came out. You know, positive, negative, as they say they could send you back. Mine came out immediately. Now I took the passport, no, it was called a refugee passport, it was written there. I took the passport, got permission, now, I could travel wherever I wanted. I spent New Year's Eve of '92 in Albania. There I have all kinds of stories. But now, to make it a little shorter, when we went, come on, come on, come on, come on... because I showed you the photographs here.

Imagine, I would buy food, and when I returned from activities, the potatoes had sprouted there. The onions had grown shoots. What I went through to get rid of the smell afterward, and so on, but for example. Yes, good, you found it right away. For example, here {shows a photo from his book}, the potatoes I had bought to cook with had sprouted, alone in the apartment because I was out doing activities, the onions had grown shoots. Meaning, it was an indescribable life...

Anita Susuri: How long did you stay in Tirana?

Xun Çetta: In Tirana then, no, I celebrated New Year's in Tirana and then I returned. Afterward I had started doing some activities, later I opened a place with some help, since I worked, I said maybe I could create the possibility of returning to Albania, closer. Others would say to me, "Are you crazy? People are trying to get to Switzerland and get papers, and you want to leave Switzerland and come to Albania, when we are trying to escape it ourselves." And then things went that way, I did not ruin the things accepted there, and here I started doing something. And here is where I wanted to get.

Here, then, the arrival of Adem Jashari, the talks, there was one from Macedonia, with a mustache and everything, he looked just like Adem Jashari. I had parted very badly with Adem over some matters, and when this man came to me, I went *fupp* {onomatopoeia}, oh how am I going to continue now, now

this one came solid, speaking well and all. Until later, someone told me, “This is not Adem,” because he was exactly the same, from Macedonia. As Albanians, you know, the matter was, the action, that each person should come illegally into his own terrain, touch the points and bring in two or three vans of weapons. Two or three this one, two or three that one. And he said, “But first touch the points.” I had now come and touched my own point, I did not know where to put the weapons, because all of them said, “As soon as you come, you will be caught, you are not needed.” It was not needed.

Now Adem, I have said this even to my closest friends, “By men, this man will die, he will never come out with a white face,” for me, he said, “this one who goes to seek will, did I not say, find only four people in all the villages because you must return and have them there. But war is not made with will power, whether you want it or not,” and he got upset, he really was harsh. And he came back to me like that, without a point, and he was right. He said, “You will bring no honor with this work. You were looking for them to wait for you with open arms and say come on, let us make war?”

After some days, after I had parted from him, that man from Macedonia came, until late, oh God, how was I going to continue now with him. He said, “Listen, he was right, but he wanted to strike you,” anyway, that was it and it passed. This is one thing, because now memories with the people you see in the photographs, with them, with President Veseli, with Naser Kuka, with the minister, this one was a minister of Albania {shows a photo from his book}, Alfred Sreçi, there at the loom, where women weave. Meaning, the meeting was not official, even though he was a minister, it was at the loom. Meetings with Sali Berisha... here there was not, meetings of all kinds. To tell all of these...

Anita Susuri: I wanted to ask you something very important, because you mentioned that you were single for a long time...

Xun Çetta: Yes, yes.

Anita Susuri: And how did you meet your wife? How...

Xun Çetta: Listen, I place my wife in a difficult position by speaking of this, because it does not sit easily with her. But what does it matter now—we are speaking plainly, and time has changed, though perhaps for her it still has not. I married rather suddenly, in circumstances far from ideal. Yet this is something I believed then, and still believe now for my sons, even if I cannot impose it on them: to marry into a family with roots, with what we call a firm foundation.Conflicts exist in every family. There are disagreements, tempers, moments when one understands and the other does not. But at least thirty percent, at the very least, of what holds a marriage together comes from the strength of the family behind it. In the end, that thirty percent becomes a kind of safeguard; it softens the quarrels, absorbs the blows. Even today, this is what I would tell the young. I chose a woman from a family where I felt more than thirty percent certain of that foundation. Because when it comes down to it, family remains family. And her family would not let me go without marrying her.

I had come in the year, when the demonstrations of October 1 happened, in ’97, when the book with Albin Kurti, Dugolli and the others came out, when the professor was beaten bloody, and those things are known. Now I had come from there here to organize, in the municipality of Istog the meetings that were held are all known, illegally. Now one of them says to me, “Xun, it is easy for you to start a war in Kosovo because you are single. Wherever I fall, may I not be killed.” I said, “I have a family.” He said, “Closer to the heart, by the name of God, we will not let you go without being married. Get engaged, have a fiancée. Do it, if you can, take her quickly,” since you want details. That is how my brothers and everyone came at me, saying, “It has gone on too long.” The years had passed, now I was 44, maybe somewhere around 45.

Since the time of prison, fate had followed its course; then exile came, and fate followed again. Eight or nine years passed in the diaspora, and still I remained unmarried. Then, little by little, we went to the first house. I was not entirely convinced at first, but I went there, by appearance, by impression, and I had heard good things about them. The family was from Istog, from my own municipality, a family with a name. One of them had been in the municipal assembly then, Hajzeraj, today known as Hajzeri. When the time came for us to meet, she did not want it. The woman, they said, had remarked, “I do not want mustaches, and I do not want thinning hair,” all of that, you know. And there I was, the very image of all of it. So in a way, she refused.

Then Ferati stood up and said, “Listen, my daughter is about seven years younger than him. Don’t make me rise and give my blessing myself, but this is the best chance you have, to put your own life at ease, and ours too, and to spare us all the trouble.” He pressed the matter hard. Even so, she did not accept; she stood her ground. Then, slowly, they turned to her uncle, a man named Elez Hajzeri, a striking figure, tall, with a white cap upon his head. When they told him, “This is the man asking for our daughter’s hand,” he exclaimed, “What? Is such a thing possible? Who would dare refuse…?” And so they leaned on him, little by little, the old man. To her, he was almost like her own father, for her father had died in 1990. Her uncle had become, in many ways, the closest thing to a father she had left.

He worked on her nicely... you want me to tell it in more detail because others tell stories and things too. He had worked on her well and brought the good news, yes. He said, “Well then, let him come once to meet.” I got ready and went slowly, she came. Now I had seen her once, and this was the second time. We were talking and, “Xun, I have decided to congratulate you, look where her mother is,” and the mother agreed, “and if that girl also says yes, because now you cannot take the word without her speaking too.” And now I am a little mischievous, mischievous in expression. I said, “Then why did you drag me around until now, and now what happened?” She froze. She said, “Uncle Elez.” Meaning, I felt a little bad, you know. I went inside there, “No, no, do not serve coffee,” you know, because we drink coffee in such circumstances. “Do not serve coffee.” And they nearly fell to the ground. Her mother felt bad, and my wife felt bad too. My wife, though at that time she was not my wife, I saw that it was hard for her. I had something completely different in mind.

Now this Elez, who had done everything for me, to tell you, it was as if I opened his grave and put him in it when I said, "Do not serve coffee." They froze because now we had stretched it... and I said, "Go out," I took Elez and we went outside," I said, "I want to call Sevdie and I want to tell her some things one after another, and she too has to tell me something." And I called her while telling him this. When I was a student, I was not exactly, as the photographs still show today, if a woman approached me, I do not know, word for word, I do not know how it entered my ears anymore from... I had had this and that kind of case, I had gone to Albania almost into cohabitation because I was single and did not want to marry, and so on. He did not like it at all, but he did this to me {gestures as if saying, fine, fine}.

I said, "Yes, yes, but I will not do this without telling the woman." He took off his *plis*,[31] "For God's sake, do not tell her," and I turned to him and said, "Elez, by my honor, I will not accept congratulations without telling her," and he nearly fell to the ground. We went back inside. "Come," he called Sevdie into the corridor where I was with Elez. "Sit down, my brother's daughter." "I am the one you know from the biography, and about the private things, you will hear words that as a student I was not exactly..." because now it was a matter of time too, but we had been swept away, as we think. "You will hear that in Albania I was almost in cohabitation, but I was not an adventurer. By God, in no place can anyone point a finger at me. But you are my future wife and I do not want to trouble you with something I have already told you myself, and if you have something to tell me, it is better to tell me, because I am not here to take…" forgive the expression, back then they would say unmarried woman, to check those traditions, whether she is or is not, you know, and that was how it was. Even though it is a pity that these things have to be told.

She turned to me, "My life has been like this and this, they asked for me for this one, no, for that one, no," people I knew. "It seems fate was," she said, "with you." "Do you agree with what I told you?" "Yes." "Do you give me your word that whenever someone starts whispering in your ear, you already have in your ear what I told you myself," I said, "and you will not deal with others?" She said, "Yes." We went back, and when we returned, we told them, "Serve the coffee." Elez got up, may his soul rest in peace, "Oh, congratulations!" He put the *plis* back on his head, he was happy because he had thought that when I told her, this matter would fall apart. And since you asked, you got more than enough. It is the first time I speak about it, and it is good to speak. Why not, that is how it was.

Today I am happy, my wife is there, she works in a children's nursery. She does not have many hours, 30 or 40 percent work. I have two sons, Dardan and Ilir. One is married and has a son who is twelve months old now, he has passed that now, he is 13 or 14 months, and he is like my light. I am delighted, when they send me videos and I take him like this to speak with him. Ilir is 22 and a little younger, he is unmarried. I have very good relations with them, but I cannot do much because you cannot impose many things on a son. They are free, but from time to time, I tap them {touches head}. My wife is more tolerant with them than I am, somehow I do not know, he does not think that it can cost us later. She does not worry much. We get along well.

[31] Traditional white felt conic cap, differs from region to region, distinctively Albanian.

I came by car, I do not dare take a plane at all. She knows that because she is from our municipality where we live there, and she said, she told me, "Stay until Monday, accompany me, we will go together." She came alone, and she is also going, stretching it out. For us emigrants it has become quite heavy, as each government, each official who comes cannot truly prove the kind of will that would satisfy us for the country. Not to do something for us, but to see that life is coming out of this country, and then surely we too would be welcome.

Part Seven

Anita Susuri: Mr. Xun, earlier you mentioned the weapons you tried to bring into Kosovo, to secure. How was all of this, and how did it lead to the war? How did you face it? For example, from '98, what happened, the killing of the Jashari family, since you also had a history with Mr. Adem Jashari. How did you experience all of this?

Xun Çetta: It is a whole chapter in itself, and I do not know, I am afraid it might pass without me speaking about it. Because when I open up, I do not know how to stop, I almost sound like a chatterbox to you. I would gladly have started with the '90s, there is a video insert, some say stop it because maybe it will come out, then they say Xun made us come out on video and we stopped it. But there is one part, and the rest are recorded in other forms. I took the initiative in '89, '89 to '90, and I failed to organize it. But I deepened this later when I went out, as we said, to the West. I began gathering all the subjects, what if political pluralism fails us and the political parties agree or do not agree, we cannot do otherwise except that war will be imposed on us.

We met with representatives of the LDK, representatives of the LPK, with representatives of the Christian Democratic Party, and there was Arbër Xhaferi's[32] party from Macedonia, the PPD, the Party, something like that, it was PPD. And we have all of them with photographs, recordings, videos that I had organized. We have eight meetings from the year '80, '91 now comes because I left in '91. I am continuing this from '89, '90 over there. We had eight meetings with them, not with the masses, but meetings with representatives, two from this one, two from that one, two from that one.

One was from the Party for Democratic Prosperity, Selmani was the surname, now he is a dentist or something in Macedonia, he left Switzerland. From the LDK there were, they changed, sometimes two were there, Skender Morina, Skender Shala with Nysret Krasniqi. From the Christian Democrats, sometimes Muharrem Pnishi came, no, Pjetër Gjoni would come sometimes, two or three people came

[32] Arbën Xhaferi (1948–2012) was an Albanian politician, journalist and intellectual from Tetovo, North Macedonia. He worked as an editor of the cultural programme at Radio Television of Prishtina until 1990, before returning to Tetovo in 1993 to pursue a political career. He was a founding member and longtime president (1997–2007) of the Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSH), representing the rights of Albanians in North Macedonia. He was also one of the signatories of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement, which ended the armed conflict in Macedonia.

there. We have them on video. Likewise from the LPK, sometimes Ali Ahmeti came, sometimes Musa Xhaferi, who later became, I do not know what happened there. All of them are on video, but now only as stories. We held eight meetings, I need to summarize a little. From the eight meetings, some came out saying that the party was not allowing us, the LDK, we need to get permission in Kosovo.

Some said, "We are ready, but you do not want to, you are changing your minds, you have taken measures," because the LDK had become massive, and this bothered them a little... because they had become massive. "We can do it, but we cannot do it on a mass scale if you do not want to," something like that. We had formulated it very well, that we should not have to wait for the will of the party leaders in Kosovo, because if we wait, we will not succeed. We must prepare as if one day they themselves will ask us to do it. And we must work. We organized eight meetings.

Things come out very clearly in those meetings. As we were speaking, one says, "Xun, can you stop the camera, I want to say something off camera," and that is recorded. And he says, "Listen, we want to accept as LDK, absolutely! We are not waiting for whether they tell us from there or not," he says, "but the weapons must be divided. The weapons must be sent proportionally, since we are the largest party, and these are smaller," to their activists. To tell the truth, these people of the LPK... you heard the name of the organizations, they insisted, "The weapon goes to the one who does the work, and we are the ones who do the work," you know, putting the LPK as more radical, and I did not like that, not me.

I would say, "No, man, we send them to the families whose roots we know in my district, families that you know want war when it becomes unavoidable. In your district, we send them to those people and then the weapons are distributed." Then Ali Aliu noticed it and joined in, he had been a high official. I even have a video where they try to explain what we are doing and he interrupts us, "Do not talk to us about those things, do not talk to us about those things, do not talk to us about those things." Even Azem Hajdari from Albania was in that meeting, in the diaspora. These are very broad topics. They did not want to talk about that matter. Later they said, "We are working. You have worked and you know what you are doing," but we had organized it, to tell the truth. We were at all the parties in eight meetings.

Then I went and held two meetings in the canton of Ticino, it is an Italian-speaking canton but in Switzerland. I have the recordings there too, on video, and work was done there too. When the readiness to do something was ignited, not publicly, they slowly began. Then the "Homeland Calls" fund came out, but this was later. Then there was a forum, the All-National Forum. Then the All-National Forum was transformed into the "Three Percent" [fund].[33] We had sanctioned where that fund would go. When the time came to finance us for war, then the calculation changed. When they made it, they wanted it for themselves, these others wanted it for themselves. These said, "No, we will

[33] The three percent fund was created by the Kosovo government in exile during the 1990s. All Albanians in the Diaspora and Kosovo were duty-bound to pay three per cent of their salary into this fund to finance Kosovo's parallel institutions.

not give it to them." Then we began within the framework of the village. In my district, we collected for the village, we were 80 people, 100 people, it does not matter, we have the meetings, the videos, all of it. The organization began within the framework of the village.

Then it was born, not within the framework of the municipality, I even had it there in the book. It says, "Xun Çetta proposes that we, who have taken the initiative within the framework of the village, since everyone has given 450 for the village, and to make it one thousand and also for the municipality, we add another 600 each. Because the village is within the municipality," all of this is written in the book. Then we went within the framework of the municipality, for the municipality. They gathered. We organized somewhere around 300 and something thousand, 400 thousand, at that time it was marks, marks. Now we had to transform it from the humanitarian association *Gurrat e Bardha* [White Springs] into funds for war. Just as later it had to be done from the Mother Teresa Humanitarian Association into something for the war. The statute was humanitarian.

When they themselves intervened, they even called war humanitarian and things like that. We made a decision, and the recordings are all there, that from today, this money that exists and the rest that will be collected until the day of Kosovo's liberation will go to the war. And there is Xun Çetta, there is Qazim Hajzeri, now in a way it falls to the family of my in-laws, but an old activist. There is one with the surname Kamberi and Sadri Ramqa from Studenica for the municipality, in the organization of money. Three of us took the money and materialized it, to buy weapons and send them to their destination in Kosovo. Me, Qazim, Sadri Ramqa, they are in the book and everything is known.

Now rivalries were born there, these are with them, those are with them. Association with association, this one with them, this one with them. For me, I said, I have never been in a party in my life, I am not. They caused me trouble all my life, when I wanted to do something, no, because this one is with them, this one with them. "Gentlemen, leave those things, I want to see who is making the war. Money has been collected." I will never forget one very strange case. Sali Çeku, now a hero, had come within the framework of his village there, and some others from the municipalities of Deçan, and they called me, "Xun, you have worked, now we are doing..." it has opened up now, everyone... "are you coming to the meeting?" I got up and went to the meeting. When I went there, I will never forget, I was in a diaspora place where they eat and drink in the evening, an Albanian club.

The meeting was held and they were discussing. Sali Çekaj was firmly for war. "Party does not come into question when liberation is in question, and this war is already here. I am not a party," he would say publicly. "When the war ends, I have two words to say to my party, the LDK," meaning he had objections. He got up, if we want to leave something that is true, that is what you work for. Xhavit Hoxha, the late one, got up, an activist, a good family man. Edmond Hoxha had only just fallen as a martyr. He got up and spoke, and spoke badly, and attacked Sali Çekaj as a pacifist, a committee man, "You were in the Committee." He really had been in the Committee, but that does not matter, that is why I say, you do not look at where a person was, but what he has done. They left nothing unsaid to

him, while the man was truly for war. I found myself in a bad position. Today people know it, both sides, both parties.

They slowly got up, and I heard it, "I will not allow you to get into these games, not you and not me. I am looking at who is the one to liberate this country now that we are in war. We began within the framework of the village, we came out within the framework of the municipalities, all of it went within the framework of the KLA, with agreement or without agreement, we came into contact with them. But the war must proceed more united than the way you are beginning." One got up, and I can say his name, he said, "Oh, Xun Çetta surprises me, a vertical activist supporting a committee man," about Sali Çeku. It was heavy, it was tasteless, as we say. And I got up, "What can I do if Salih turns out to be more devoted to liberating the country than you, who are accusing me because I am defending him?" Because I saw that he had come out in defense, he had said, "I come, there is no party and nothing, the war first, then we speak." I had formed that conviction. Not that I had come, but I saw the person. We had also worked before. And just as it happened, we came out successfully.

When I got up, now for me it was a somewhat bad position, because they had an LDK place about five kilometers farther away. From there they would go to that place. I would gladly go with them to consult. There are some stories. When I got up and went to that place there. I said, "Boys, it passed without anything worse happening. I felt bad, very bad, about how they attacked Sali." One got up, who is alive today and who will never remove his admiration for me forever, but he is not in my political points. I am not in a party, but even in principles he is not with me. But for me he melted, because, "Xun," he said, "you stepped in and prevented worse from happening," he said, "and you were very principled because it cost you more, since you are not in a party," and I do not know what... *tup, tup, tup* {onomatopoeia}.

"Listen," he said, "forgive us, we have a meeting." Only three of them got up, he with Sali Çekaj, to go to an office not far from there. They know what they did, I do not know. They apparently worked somewhere, fine. They immediately began organizing something. They come here, "Xun, what did you do? They left, go," he said, "they are sitting in such-and-such a place for organizing." I said, "Listen, why did you not tell me when you defended me there? I am not in whatever organization they are doing. We have our own organization within *Gurrat e Bardha* in Istog, and I do not take offense." "Yes, yes, but a little behind the back." "No, I am not..." that friend, who today has his conviction about me and never changes it, a good one. We are not on the same political line, but he never... he did not tell me that they were going to continue in such-and-such a place, in a narrower circle. I told him that afterward. Meaning, we tell the story of what could have influenced the time of war, the armament.

Now they were bringing them, here we have different photographs. We begin, for example, within the framework of medicines, gauze, and food. For Kosovo, because of the war. Here now, the photographs, actually here I felt sorry, the monograph was made. This is my brother here {shows a photograph in his book}, Murat Çetta, the truck from Ticino, the Italian canton, which came, came to us in central Switzerland, in Lucerne, unloading aid at the Mother Teresa Association for the war. Then here is a

meeting with former minister Xhafer Shatri and others {shows a photograph from his book}, discussing what was happening at those borders, Jashar Alija who published the book. All of these, I am only showing them like this so they can be seen as I speak, but I want to say that everything is both on video and in photographs. Everything, including the recordings. Here is Halil Geci, Gani Geci's brother {shows a photograph from his book}.

He says to me there, "Xun, there is a need to intervene because the worst is happening in Drenica." "Why?" "Because the rivals want to start among themselves, and we will pass into civil war and forget Serbia," Halil Geci is alive. I take it slowly, "Can I make this public?" I was writing at the time. I said, "No, I will not make this public because it creates defeatism, we are at war. But you tell me, I will keep it. I know how I will intervene there." Now when I speak, they say, "Xun, you are speaking as if you were competent. He supposedly immediately intervened there, supposedly fixed things," when I did not have access to them. But for me it was enough to raise the alarm that something was about to happen to us. We had almost begun slowly among ourselves, and he had fallen into trouble.

Here with Sejdi Veseli {shows a photograph in his book}, and these were from LKÇK.[34] These were more committed than all the others, you know. The LDK, Bukoshi's[35] self-government, the LPK, these were more fiery, more thoughtful, more committed. Individuals now in other subjects too, and now they did not compete with them because they saw it. I took this one and brought him to Nasir Kuka, and Nasir Kuka had an office, a private apartment that he took within the framework of Kosovo's representation. In order not to politically implicate the representation in this work, he took an office, a private apartment for matters of war, so that the diplomatic affiliation would not be implicated.

I take him there and we go slowly, we enter, "How can we help? The Homeland Calls fund belongs to the people, it must be given for the war, for the people who are making the war." They had found it, they had given them weapons. Then here with {shows a photograph from his book} Basri Musmurati, he had only just left. We go and discuss the situation he left here. Here with Sherif Konjufca {shows a photograph from his book}, likewise the situation was difficult while speaking at that time with Çani Mehmeti, may he rest in peace. It was such a terrible situation that... Here is a photograph, this man disappeared, Sadri Ramqaj {shows a photograph from his book}, whom I said had been assigned to the municipality together with me, Sadri Ramqaj and Qazim Hajzeri, he disappeared on us. Here is Jashar Alia {shows a photograph from his book} in the photograph...

Anita Susuri: He disappeared during the war in Kosovo?

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[34] Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo: Albanian *Lëvizja Kombëtare për Çlirimin e Kosovës* (LKÇK), a clandestine nationalist organization that emerged in the early 1990s as a radical offshoot of the People's Movement of Kosovo. It advocated armed struggle for Kosovo's independence and later continued as a small extra-parliamentary party, associated with figures such as Bahri Fazliu and Fatmir Humolli.

[35] Bujar Bukoshi (1947–2025) was a Kosovo Albanian physician, urologist and politician. He was one of the founders of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), alongside Ibrahim Rugova, and served as Prime Minister of the Kosovo government in exile from 1991 to 1999, leading its activities from Germany. Following the Kosovo War, he served as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Health and a member of the Kosovo Assembly.

Xun Çetta: Yes, in Albania.

Anita Susuri: In Albania?

Xun Çetta: He is still listed as missing; he went in[to Albania] for us. Later, he took the money to convert it into weapons in Bosnia, where someone there was supposed to guarantee its transfer onward to us. But there, some suspicious men intercepted him, took the money, and he vanished. We filed reports, lodged complaints, and pressured the Albanian prosecutor's office about the man we knew had taken it. Names were named, the amount of money he carried was known, where he had gone, the movements he had made. Yet no one ever pursued it.vAnd here now is Shukri Buja {showing a photograph from his book}. In fact, before all this, he had already been appearing on the front lines. And I said then, "Why is he here in Switzerland now?" They told me, "Naturally, he has come to organize himself, and then return."

Here then is Adem Grabovci too {shows a photograph from his book}, and the organization of our organizing council and of *Gurrat e Bardha*. Here is Muhamet Kelmendi {shows a photograph from his book}, he had split, in these two photographs he had split from the LPK, from his own organization. Because he had a somewhat different vision, but he wanted to cooperate with the institutions. All of these, and so many others we could talk about, are all things. At that time, my wife was pregnant. From time to time, now May had come… My wife was close to giving birth...

Anita Susuri: In '99?

Xun Çetta: In '89, in '99, because I got confused, '89...

Anita Susuri: No, I just wanted to confirm.

Xun Çetta: In '99, yes, I got confused. I was speaking on the phone with my wife, whether the birth was near or not. Some friends caught me and said, "Xun," just like they pushed me into marriage, "you cannot go to war here without being married, without being engaged." Anyway, I arranged the papers differently, went and got legally married in Albania, and then arranged the documents to travel and brought my wife over, and that's how I continued until the war. Then they said, "Xun, if you go and it happens that your first son is born, because the talks have started now, May, June, the war may end." "Fine." "Xun, come with us." So we went to Tirana. I even have the photographs with the people I went with.

I told them, "Look, I'll go under one condition: if you promise me that every weapon, if it's collective, the serial numbers, calibers, types—what's a sniper rifle, what shoots 300–500, what shoots 500–800—don't put me in charge of Albanian sniper rifles because they're no good. Whatever weapons there are, once they start being distributed, whoever carries them, the serial number stays on record, and until the war ends you are accountable." They said, "We'll do it like that." I said, "Then I'll go." I returned. And when I got there, within three days, God blessed me with a son. When my friends heard I

had arrived, at that time Xhafer Shatri was minister of information, and Shemsi Reçica, who had been with Ukshin Hoti and Ali Aliu in the same group.

They had heard I came, and that very night my eldest son, Dardan, was born. I had only arrived a day or two earlier. They had come as guests, saying, "Come on, you've just returned from war, tell us what happened." They were there, Xhafer Shatri and Shemsi Reçica. Then my wife went into labor. I went to the hospital with her, while the guests were still at home. I called my cousin's son, Fadil, and said, "Fadil, go to the house. I left guests there and my wife is in labor, and I'm at the hospital." He got in the car and went there, spent the whole night with Xhafer Shatri and Shemsi Reçica, while I stayed at the hospital.

Even today Shemsi Reçica jokes with me, saying, "Xun, back then when a child was born and guests were there, the child should be named after the guest." I said, "How would I make his name Shemsi or Xhafer when his name is Dardan?" And when my son was born… I don't want to start crying now, because when they asked me in another program, *Mirëmëngjesi Kosovë!*, and I told the story of my first son's birth, I burst into tears. Everyone there was shocked—the staff, the nurses, the doctors. I heard one of them speaking in German, saying, "You don't know this man's biography. It's not just because he had a child after so many years. He has a heavy biography, and he comes from a country at war."

It sounded powerful to me, and I cried, God… But those were tears of joy. There are tears of pain and tears of joy. Those were tears of joy. As I said before, I'm well now. As for the weapons, the methods of distribution, there was a lot of misuse, as much as you can imagine. For example, if you sent weapons, maybe by the time they got there, they'd already been traded. You couldn't track everything. But we took an initiative, though I don't want to speak too openly about it now, because it would create problems, that for two years we worked in a way that still can't fully be made public. The materials were sent… we organized a humanitarian organization to support specific institutions of the Kosovo state. We even had lawyers.

And there's one thing I always say. I say, "Prime Minister Albin Kurti, don't be afraid to take the example of the Homeland Calls fund and the Three Percent fund that were misused during the war. Yes, they were misused. But if those two funds had not existed, you wouldn't have been able to put even a single soldier's boot into Kosovo, let alone entire fighters." That's the truth. Many times I have refused to deal with state finances or association money. There was a moment when they brought money from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland to me, with the advice that I should carry it and turn it into weapons for villagers who had gone to Albania to get arms.

And I swear, it's all written down, even when I went to the toilet, I was thinking: "Why am I mixing myself up with money?" I came back and said, "Forgive me, can we cancel this contract? Let someone else take the money. I don't want money in my hands. My life has nothing to do with money. Because when I don't deal with money, I'm braver to speak, braver to demand accountability." So we canceled the contract, tore it up, and someone else took responsibility. Still, even then, when the money went through, there were some misuses. But overall, I stand by this: without those two funds and the

volunteers, then the municipalities, the villages, everyone contributing, there would have been no war effort. Yes, money was misused.

Whole villages collected it, and to this day nobody knows where some of it went. Some people disappeared with the money. We can't say all of it entered the war. Some say, "If there had been institutions, this wouldn't have happened." Maybe. But we know what happened everywhere. Yet, even with all the misuse, without those funds, Kosovo wouldn't have had even a single boot, cap, or shirt for a soldier, let alone the soldiers themselves, who crossed, risked everything, sacrificed, and gave their lives. That possibility existed because there was movement, there was support. Yes, it was abused. And abuse should not be legalized. If you build a state afterward, then hold everyone accountable for what they misused.

It was difficult for weapons to enter Kosovo. Then we had other difficulties throughout Albania. It was quite difficult to pass through someone else's yard without having to pay something. There was another thing, a horse that transported weapons could sometimes be sold two or three times. He sells it to you, it goes there, they unload it, then they sell it to someone else. The cases I know, in fact the ones I know myself, I know myself. Then I went once, others had also come in a group, from Tropoja as they say, the school, there are photographs. We cleaned them there in the grass, we cleaned them… dried hay, some kind of blankets there, that is where the soldiers slept until they received weapons, then we moved. With weapons, with everything, we knew about them there.

Now someone comes, looks, looks, looks there, someone familiar, an activist. He calls me and says, "Xun, can you come here?" I went. He said, "Get this man out of here or take him, grab him, and bring him inside." For me that was not a surprise, but I was wondering what was happening. I said, "Why are you saying this?" "No, don't make it a big deal. But now I'll go and report, you don't know who he is, who dares," and so on. After the war he wanted to confront me and say, they told me, who told you? Because there you have threads, threads. He went and told them, "Are you out of your mind? During the war this man…" then they changed it, they closed it.

It was not an easy process to bring weapons into Kosovo either. By God, even being armed and entering yourself, ambushes. And by God, I could see, I do not want to testify to anything for now. I could see as if there was, I don't know what, that my brother entered and returned as a consequence of many of the games being played. But I did not enter at all. There I did as much as I could, with weapons, with those things, with everything. Why? I was more than certain that if I entered, I would take the bullet from behind, not from the front, from the Serb. It is a bad conclusion, if we are moving toward a conclusion, but if we want to tell the story, things ultimately went the way they went.

But for myself, I would not have dared, because I carried information, I had disagreements with rivals, and I knew that if I entered, I would be shot from behind, killed in the war, and then they would sing songs about you, give speeches about you, as I said. It is hard to say, but I want to say that I am recounting and testifying more than I want only to open a small window showing that it was difficult. But in the end, glory to those who fell. Credit to Albania, which I have insisted on in many places. We were making war against Serbia on Albanian territory, and if you dare to chase us, then chase us. This

was my fear, that Albania would not give us space, because states are compromised internationally. Serbia was accusing over there, saying that terrorist forces were shooting at us. The international circumstances in Albania could have caught them, but they themselves saw what happened.

We must also thank some politicians of Albania who truly wanted to act, even if we do not see it, and who in some places helped, because Albania, mainly in the north, was entirely Kosovo in confrontation with Serbia. Worse things could have happened. We would be ungrateful toward all Western states if we did not thank them for what they did for us, in sheltering those who fled, in sheltering us before the war, all the offers for courses and education we had the opportunity to receive there. It is just that I did not deal with those things, even though they had offered me doctoral studies. They sheltered me, arranged things for me, first in a hotel and later I came to an apartment. We had the conditions free of charge as political refugees. So there has to be gratitude also to the internationals who gave, who acted, and who still help today.

For example, Switzerland, where I live, is still continuing the water supply system across wider territories of Kosovo, doing it exclusively itself. It dominates with water supply systems and other things too, but especially water supply. Look, I say somewhere, there are places that would still be drinking well water if it were not for Switzerland, which has not stopped, and even today, wherever there is a water supply system, it is helping them. Those other states help with something else, others with something else. The international factor in politics, we have it a little more passive in politics. In international matters and these things… in politics, it is known. Now here we do not want to politicize.

The question is that we do not want to let Serbia go that way and then have to make Serbia the favorite in order to keep things over here. And there, except with Kosovo a little. I fear it somehow, but not to the extent of despair, that we will capitulate, I do not believe that. I am optimistic that we will… even with what is happening now in the north. These are, as I said there too, one-sided forms to gain something at the expense of Albanians, because we are not going that way, but you are helping us. So on the other hand, now that we are accusing Albin, even though I am not in a party, I have other disagreements with Albin that would surprise you. But in this direction, when they accuse him, it seems ridiculous to me. They are not right, they have not been right.

I think Albin would do well, in the friendliest way, to show what we cannot give way on, and what we can, we have already given way; so that first they are sincere toward us and we toward them. Not everything should be “Okay, okay,” because in that way he also helps the internationals. I really say there, I do not know, but my mind tells me that he must not create some scandal that would radicalize the internationals against us, but he is opening the signal a little. You know what, we are international and we must be neutral between Serbia and Kosovo, but you continue building the state, build it, build it. We will now do it how… without unrest, I mean, with statements. I want to believe that here too we will get through, I am not saying completely, but relatively well. I am quite inclined to believe that.

As I said that day when a man came up to me there, listen, it is the guilt of 23 years of politics. We should have extended the municipal association throughout all of Kosovo; it would be different for you in Peja, different for me in Mitrovica, different for me in Prishtina, different for me in Prizren. That is

how Switzerland has it. You work accordingly… somewhere agriculture, somewhere industry, somewhere else we have slightly different laws, slightly different taxes. Someone lives here, but has his farm registered there where the tax is cheaper. But those things are calculated, they are allowed in democratic states. We should have created an association of municipalities where municipalities differ from one another. And within that association, link the association of the north too, why not. They are municipalities, equal to us.

Where the state pyramid is not touched. The constitution, the state, independence. Why not, man, you are a minority, act. When it comes to power, it is centered there. Even today they would not have treated us… no one went in this direction. They allowed the Serbs to barricade themselves in one place, the Serbs in one place. Barricades take you nowhere. No, they do not work. Afterward trouble breaks out. They could have done something, I am not dealing with that now. When I move into politics, it seems to me that I myself get lost because people… the stories, I think I have mentioned it to you three times, you are making me speak about something I had forgotten and I would have said, oh no, why didn't I speak? If you have anything else, I would really like you to remind me, I would be able to, because twice now I see that I immediately conclude when, huh…

Anita Susuri: But if we begin to speak, there is no end, it always has to be like this…

Xun Çetta: I said that in the beginning, I said that.

Anita Susuri: But we are always open, again, if you want to add anything…

Xun Çetta: I said that in the beginning, to tell stories day and night, it is difficult to reflect everything. Whether as an individual, whether as a capital city, whether as an event, whether as processes, whether as all of them. To clean all of them out completely. The worst thing is when you have them, you see them, that is how it comes to you. I am afraid that they are trying to make history only out of what is official, state-to-state agreements. This one, this one, this one, like this, like this, and it goes on. For everything that happened to these people to be forgotten, it does not work that way, that is a sin. Other countries suffer because they do not have a painful history. Now no one wants pain, I am speaking about painful things, but what they will be proud of, the way we have it, they suffer for it.

Imagine Switzerland, I do not like saying it, but they have William Tell like we have Skanderbeg. For example, neither his grave is known, nor his sword, nor where he was born. They say he is from such-and-such a place, and they go and visit there when they go. But you have nothing you can touch of William Tell. But he is Skanderbeg. They are able to imagine having something. We have everything, and we cannot bring it forward. For example, you have the sword, you have the clothing, you have this, you have everything. But you have living people today. You have them today. We do not know how.

Then, another bad thing, since you have devoted a summary word to political prisoners as a category of national resistance in the program. To tell the truth, I feel sorry, not a little but a lot, there are many friends who do not know how to implement and explore valuable things, looking at it as not them but us, no, not them, not us. Leave it, man, look at yourself. Bring out what you have, do not clash with them, it does not matter. Now I want, with the words I speak, they say, as much as they say, no with

Albin… with Rugova, man, leave who is what, because when they reach the final point, everyone finds his own place. Morally, you see it. And I want to say, more these, these, these… look at yourself, go as far as you can. Like with you now, let it be, speak, tell the story because those things remain. Do not accuse.

Anita Susuri: That is why we do these interviews…

Xun Çetta: Do not accuse, do not accuse anyone else. No one is to blame for me because I never dreamed of Kosovo's liberation, and now after Kosovo's liberation there are some who have been given space for certain wrongdoings from within the resistance. Now he almost crushes you to the ground, his mouth is full, you cannot shut him up. Is it known that he never dreamed that Kosovo would be liberated? It is not an accusation, but do not deal with him.

Anita Susuri: *Bac*[36] Xun, we would close here…

Xun Çetta: Yes.

Anita Susuri: If you want to add anything else related to any memory, we can also leave it open whenever you wish, we are here to add something.

Xun Çetta: For the second opportunity you gave us, I thank you. I am sure that when I leave, I will say *auuu* {onomatopoeia}, what did I talk about…

Anita Susuri: We are open…

Xun Çetta: What did I not say, for example. First of all, I thank you for the work you do. And I feel bad about myself, that I congratulate you this much, while I absolutely was not aware of the work you do, a colossal work. And I thank the foundations that help, and I would also make an appeal that now among us there are also some wealthy people and our private companies. Kosovo is poor, but some have become millionaires. Let them also slowly look at financing, not leaving it… I believe I would make a public invitation to those who have reached the stage of business, Kosovo is there, you cannot take all of Kosovo, but let them look in some way and invest here too. The illumination of a road of resistance of a nation through the centuries. Thank you!

Anita Susuri: Thank you very much!

Xun Çetta: Thank you!

[36] *Bac* is a respectful and affectionate Albanian form of address for an older man, especially in Kosovo; roughly "uncle" or "elder," without necessarily implying kinship.