

RANKO RADOVIĆ

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Sunja

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Transcript of the interview is recorded on the following CD
SUNJA 3.

The interview was conducted in interviewee home in Sunja

At the beginning, I would like you to introduce yourself.

My name is Radović Ranko, I am a gymnastics teacher. Born in 1941, I am employed at the Sunja elementary school.

You were a teacher during the war?

Yes, I did not stop teaching even for one day. I was there, so to say, from the first day to the last. We were employed at the school, but were unable to work due to the situation. We were instructed to report in Sisak under the compulsory work service, so on June 22nd we were in Sisak. Shortly after it started, I am not exactly sure about the month or the day, but after about a month I fled with my family, we went to Sisak. My father is living in Sisak, and the school we were told to report in was also there, so at that particular moment I was in Sisak. During that period, up until the end of 1991, I would come back here from time to time, to check on our house. I was not here the whole time personally. There were problems with passing over, and so on, so I was not coming here often, plus I was under the compulsory work service and had to be at the school.

You were residing in Sisak until the end of 1991, and after that you returned here?

No, no. I was, as we returned already, I returned here but was staying at my wife's parents down in Stjepan Radić (street). So I would be staying in Sisak for a while, then go back here for a while, ***** it was all depending on whether or not we had to be at the school. You know, we would be working for a while, then stopped working, and so on, that is how the story went. We were not able to work normally at all, during the entire war, until the cease fire came into effect. After that, we came here in 1994, and from that time on I was here the whole time. I mean, I was here the entire time, but it depended on my work. In the beginning of 1992 I was here, in Sunja, I was commuting to Gušće school using the ferry, at the time of the bombardment...

You were using the ferry on a daily basis?

Every day.

With the children?

With the children, yes. We would travel to the ferry by bus, to here in Gušće, and after that we were in *****, depending on the situation.

What was the approximate number of children who were commuting?

Well, I would say it was about 300 students... I think

Commuting on a regular basis?

On a regular basis, after the so called peace was restored – but there were provocations at all times, so when something would happen, ***go *** It was a tough period for children, and for us as well because, you know how it is on the ferry, and *****,

Can you please tell me how life went on here after Sunja was attacked and when things got stirred up, in terms of coexistence, i.e. in terms of organizing communal life. Have you experienced any problems at that time?

I personally had no problems, because I was here the entire time. The only problem I had was that they mined my house two times.

Your house was mined two times?

Two times.

You mean, it was hit?

That I don't even count, these were mines, they fell on my house...

When did that happen?

The first time they mined it sometimes during 1991, or at the beginning of 1992, and the second time it happened in 1993.

Was there some kind of a procedure carried out the first time? Who carried it out?

It was. I mean, if this is about Mr. Praljak, I am glad to be able to say it in person... The first time they mined it, I considered it a normal thing and thought it was better not to say anything, because such was the situation back then, and when they mined it the second time... I mean, it was 1993 already, and so on, and the second time they crashed *****, ***** I never met Mr. Praljak, but I heard that, when my house was mined for the second time, he said that if ever again a Serb-owned house gets blown up in Sunja, then *****. I mean, he really did everything he could and after that I was at peace, as far as my house was concerned. I never had any problems, I was never beaten, nothing like that. This was the only thing, but I mean... looking at it from today's perspective, I think that it was normal at the time, it is... All sorts of people were here then, all sorts of people, not local people from Sunja.

You have the information that the people who did that to you were not from Sunja?

That I don't know, but I think... Listen, no one can say that, but the one who did it. I would also like to... Actually, I don't even want to know, because it is not good to burden oneself with some things. Everything that happened is in the past now. What I can say is that only a fool can do such a thing. I was here the entire time, I was with children, and I never faced any problems, you know, like I hear other people did in other environments and so on, and that is why I feel a bit... But like I said, maybe someone had too much to drink, or they were not from around here, or they were simply that crazy, I don't know.

You say that you got the information that Praljak reacted after your house was mined the second time?

Yes. He did react. I don't know if he knew about the first mining, whether he was here or not. That I don't know.

Just a second, are you saying that the mining happened in 1993?

That, the second one.

Is it possible that it happened before that? Praljak left Sunja during the spring of 1992.

Well it was around that time, like I said, 1992, 1993, before... In general, Praljak was still here.

At the time the second mining happened?

At the time of the second mining – I don't think he was here when it happened for the first time, they can look that up for you somewhere. I never did and never will burden myself with that, but at the time the second mining happened, Mr. Praljak was here, and people told me, of course, people I was on good terms with – because I was also a reserve officer, a captain, during the former state – and I was glad to have heard the information that he called for them and told them, he scolded them severely. I believe that he did take some actions, I did not want to talk about that or ask any more questions, but as a person I was glad that something was done about it. About what happened to me, but to other people as well, because of the entire situation at that time. After that my house was not mined again, and apart from that I never had any problems in terms of any kind of mistreatment or similar

Tell me how the other people were treated, the people who stayed and did not leave, did they live peacefully – to what extent...

Yes

...could people live peacefully at that time – or were there any incidents? Do you have any information on that?

I can tell you again... before that I often could not tell who was a Serb, and who was a Croat. ****all the stories, that is, of course*** people knew who is who and so on, but I ***think, with all the people I was living with in Sunja, the people who stayed, not many of them stayed, and now there is information that... I know some people, Serbs like myself, and I never heard any of them say, especially at the time when people were scared... Like I said, no one ever touched me, people would greet me, but I was scared all the same, because you hear all sorts of things. I have a family, had a family, and would talk to people, but we could only talk for a moment, plus we did not even dare to talk about that, but I never came across any information of Serbs in Sunja being mistreated.

Fine. And were the Serbs taken care of, people who were here, people who remained? Do you know anything about that?

I think that it was, as far as Sunja was concerned... As far as I know, they were more than well taken care of. I mean, if someone wants to talk about it... I know that all Serbs were receiving what I was receiving. I was employed at the school, I did not want to go there, to Caritas, but when things were delivered to school... Every one who came here got what they needed, there was that list and it never, I never heard, I mean... I was living here and I never heard anyone complain, or that someone was not able to get something because they were Serbs. I really

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did not hear any such things. Everyone was equal, everyone got what they needed, everyone who came in got food, clothes, and so on. And the children in school also, everyone was getting the same, it was not important whether they were Croats, Muslims, or Serbs.

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