

= Emin Xhinovci =

Emin Xhinovci (also spelled Gjinovci , Djinovci and D?inovci ; born c . 1959) is a retired Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) insurgent and restaurant owner from Mitrovica known for his striking resemblance to Nazi leader Adolf Hitler .

He immigrated to Germany in 1993 and settled in Düsseldorf , where he started an import @-@ export business . In 1997 , he returned to Kosovo and later joined the KLA with the intention of helping separate the region from Yugoslavia . During his time as a guerrilla , he came to be known by the nickname " Hitler " because of his likeness to the Nazi leader . Following the Kosovo War , he settled in Mitrovica and opened a string of Nazi @-@ themed restaurants that angered some NATO peacekeepers and were quickly closed . Xhinovci firmly believes that he is Hitler reincarnated and resorted to portraying the Nazi leader full @-@ time in his public life , posing for pictures with locals , peacekeepers and tourists and charging between 20 and 80 euros per photograph . He is well known throughout Mitrovica , and his five daughters are referred to by locals as " Hitler 's children " . Xhinovci always carries a copy of Hitler 's autobiographical manifesto Mein Kampf with him and is frequently paid to attend events such as weddings and funerals . He is the subject of a short documentary film directed by independent filmmaker Alban Muja , titled Germans Are a Bit Scared of Me .

= = Early life , emigration and guerrilla activity = =

A Kosovo Albanian , Emin Xhinovci was born in Kosovska Mitrovica in 1959 , in what was then Yugoslavia . In 1993 , he moved to the German city of Düsseldorf , where he started an import @-@ export business . He left Germany in 1997 and returned to Kosovo to " fight for the motherland " as tensions between Albanians and Serbs increased .

Xhinovci joined the Kosovo Liberation Army (Albanian : Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës ; or KLA) in 1998 , and fought against the Serb @-@ dominated Yugoslav Army (Serbian : Vojska Jugoslavije) with the goal of separating Kosovo from Yugoslavia . Xhinovci earned the reputation of a " fierce fighter " and commanded the respect of local Albanians . His comrades gave him the nickname " Hitler " due to his uncanny resemblance to Nazi leader Adolf Hitler . Xhinovci told journalist Una Hajdari : " People have called me Hitler since my army days . They say I look a lot like him ? unlike the English guy who plays him in that movie , " apparently a reference to Charlie Chaplin 's role in The Great Dictator .

Serbian police documents from 1998 indicate that he was suspected of participating in the kidnapping and execution of nine Serb mineworkers at the Bela?evac coal mine , near Obili? . In 1999 , Xhinovci was wounded in battle and airlifted to Germany for treatment . While in hospital , he grew a toothbrush moustache which attracted the attention of hospital staff .

= = Controversy = =

= = = Nazi @-@ themed restaurants and bars = = =

Following his experience with the German hospital staff , Xhinovci realized that he could capitalize on his resemblance to Hitler . He went to great lengths to enhance his physical likeness to the Nazi leader ? regularly clipping his moustache , dying his hair jet black and imitating Hitler 's signature hairstyle . When the war in Kosovo ended , Xhinovci returned to Mitrovica and opened a bar called Bar Hit and Jet , known affectionately among Kosovo Albanians as Pizzeria Hitleri (" Hitler 's Pizzeria ") . The establishment proved controversial among western peacekeepers who had occupied Kosovo following the withdrawal of Yugoslav security forces in June 1999 . In one instance , French NATO troops took down a sign carrying a swastika from the entrance to Xhinovci 's bar , much to his displeasure . One French commander told reporters that he was disgusted with Xhinovci 's actions and said that his troops were forbidden from entering the bar , which juxtaposed Nazi

imagery with portraits of Xhinovci in KLA uniform . Asked why he enjoyed dressing up as Hitler , Xhinovci responded : " Everyone who is against the people who carried out bloodshed against [Albanians] is a friend of mine " , apparently referring to the German @-@ led Axis occupation of Yugoslavia , when German forces turned a blind eye to Albanian raids on Serb @-@ populated areas of Kosovo . He conceded that Hitler had gone " too far " by killing women and children , but said that it would be " a good idea to eliminate all those who thirst for our blood " .

Within several years , Xhinovci was forced to close Pizzeria Hitleri because local KLA commanders felt that it would tarnish the organization 's image . Like many in post @-@ war Kosovo , he encountered great financial difficulties and relied on his KLA service pension and financial assistance from relatives in Western Europe . Once his financial situation stabilized , Xhinovci opened a restaurant and named it Jehona after his oldest daughter . All of the restaurant 's receipts were stamped with a black swastika in the upper left corner . The restaurant closed a few years after its opening for reasons unknown .

= = = Hitler impersonator = = =

Following the closure of Pizzeria Hitleri and Jehona , Xhinovci has resorted to walking around Mitrovica dressed as Hitler and posing for pictures with locals , tourists and NATO peacekeepers , charging between 20 and 80 euros per photograph . Some days , he earns as many as 200 euros posing as Hitler . Besides posing for photographs , Xhinovci attends various events , including weddings and funerals , and greets attendees with a Nazi salute . " [This] sometimes has an undesirable effect because people who 've come to pay their respects to the deceased often wish to speak with me and take pictures , " Xhinovci explains .

Xhinovci has come to believe that he is Hitler reincarnated since he began dressing as the Nazi leader . He carries numerous pieces of Nazi paraphernalia around with him , including Nazi @-@ era Reichsmarks , swastika @-@ emblazoned buttons , scarves embroidered with swastikas and other Nazi imagery , as well as a copy of Mein Kampf . He has business cards featuring a swastika and the word " Hitler " printed in bold . Locals and peacekeepers alike do not seem to mind Xhinovci 's Hitler impersonations , especially as many Kosovars are too preoccupied with the country 's crippling poverty and rampant corruption to give his actions much thought . On the contrary , many passersby ? including some NATO peacekeepers ? stop and greet him with the Nazi salute . One local told Vice News : " I have a lot of other things to worry about in my life . I might look at him if he walks by , but that 's it . " Locals apparently believe that his way of earning a living " shows great enterprise " . " People respect me , " Xhinovci explains . " The young and old [...] men , women and children . Everyone greets me with " Heil Hitler " . Xhinovci 's five daughters , referred to locally as " Hitler 's children " , are not bothered by their father 's Hitler impersonations . Xhinovci reportedly attends parent @-@ teacher conferences dressed as Hitler and says that teachers and other parents do not mind his appearance . He says that every time he goes to pick his daughters up from school he is surrounded by children who want to talk with him and take pictures . " Girls like to touch my face . They think it 's a mask . They pull my hair and ask if they can kiss me on the face . When I 'm out of the house with my family , people stop to talk to me . But my wife is not a jealous person ? she doesn 't mind . "

Xhinovci is unable to return to Germany because of his appearance , as the country has a series of laws which prohibit Nazi symbols , uniforms , slogans and forms of greeting . He has expressed a great dislike of Serbs , and says that he would have to carry a concealed handgun every time he wished to visit the Serb @-@ held section of Mitrovica . Xhinovci says that he is greatly disappointed with post @-@ war Kosovo , as he believed that reconciliation between Albanians and Serbs would have occurred after the conflict . When asked if it was difficult to portray Hitler , Xhinovci responded : " It is easy . I find myself in Hitler 's character because he fought against my enemy . The enemy of my enemy is my friend . Yes , Serbs are my enemies . " About his physical similarity to Hitler , he says : " I am not a dictator like him , but it is of great financial benefit that I resemble him . "

Xhinovci is a controversial figure in some Kosovar circles . Kosova Aktuell , a Pristina @-@ based

German @-@ language newspaper , called his actions " scandalous and unacceptable " .

= = In popular culture = =

In 2013 , Kosovar filmmaker Alban Muja created a short documentary film about Xhinovci titled Germans Are a Bit Scared of Me , which chronicles Xhinovci 's everyday activities and follows him around Mitrovica as he interacts with locals .