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Speech from the blockade of the “Rebel University” in Niš

Tijana Dimitrijević

Translated by Lina Dokuzović

In recent months, we have witnessed actions by the authorities that systematically undermine the reputation of our state’s educational institutions. They undermine us as teachers, collaborators, researchers. We are psychologically blackmailed — by inspections, threats, public targeting and attacks. On the front pages of papers and on national radio and television, we are represented as paid foreign agents, terrorists, enemies of the state. And our only "sin" is that we firmly stand by our students, who, as future bearers of the values we stand for, desperately seek not only justice, but also their country back.

That is why universities, as the last refuge of free thought, have become a target. We are existentially threatened. Regulation 5-35 is being passed, which destroys the importance of scientific work right before our eyes. It threatens enrollment quotas as if we were the main culprit in the uncertainty of matriculation enrollment.

That is why we are here today. Not just to protest – but to defend the very essence of what we stand for. To protect the

universities that are on life support. To demand the immediate withdrawal of the disputed Regulation 5-35. To insist on the dissolution of the working group for drafting the new law. For enrollment quotas to be announced immediately – because there is no education without students, just as there is no country without education.

This is not a wage fight. This is a fight for dignity. For knowledge. For the future. And that's why we won't stop. And our message is clear: the university will survive. The academic community will survive. And free thought will prevail.

The time of collective psychotherapy is passing, the time of change is coming. Our young thinking individuals have initiated changes by showing combativeness in a peaceful, dignified and above all intellectual way that cannot be stopped. Those young individuals will become intellectuals that will be enlightened enough to use their own reason in decision-making, educated enough to use their own knowledge in contributing to the progress of this country, and wise enough to never allow ĆACILEND to exist ever again.

I, therefore, invite you to join us, eyes wide open, never turning a blind eye to any injustices we may commit, never accepting an indecent offer if we may make one, never allowing us to put personal interests above the common good. And we promise that we will respect the views of the student edict, that morality, honor and honesty will be shown through our actions, and that solidarity will continue to live among us.