

## Plenum

On June 5<sup>th</sup> 2009, precisely at noon, the occupation of the Faculty of Philosophy in Tuzla began and the first plenum was held. More than four hundred students has in this way informed the University management that the situation at the university is dreadful and that something must be undertaken else the existence of the university would become questionable.

Previously, a local newspaper (Tuzlanski List) had announced that the „Husein kapetan Gradašćević“ Barracks would be privatized and that it was already being fought for by different construction companies, although the authorities promised to assign it to the university. At the same time, news spread that the Accreditation Community was soon to arrive and that, unless the Barracks is adjoined to the University, the University would be turned into a college since all basic qualitative and quantitative requirements were not met, most importantly the requirement of space. The uncertain future of our University was one of the main reasons of the protest.

Another reason was the constant increase of students paying tuition fees with a parallel decrease in the number of students whose education is funded by the budget. Besides, the costs of tuition fees have grown periodically during the past years as well. There was a number of other things the students would agree in considering as problematic, such as the incompetent management of the Student Union, that frequent and rapid admission rate increases resulted due to insufficiency of space in overcrowdedness, as well as the fact that working beside full-time studying is legally not possible in Bosnia, so that students who had to pay for education found themselves in an unenviable position.

All these problems had as an end result the creation of “Student Movement Tuzla” (Studentski pokret Tuzla), an informal group of more than thirty students.

At that point the occupation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb was in full swing, and had already affected cities in Croatia. Given that the Croatian students had the same problem with tuition fees, their revolt went not without notice in Tuzla. The innovative methods they used in their struggle attracted our attention as well attention. The media, the Internet in particular, allowed to remain informed about the plenum and the occupation, which at that point seemed as the best possible solution to present issues. Soon it was decided to occupy the Faculty of Philosophy in Tuzla, and call together a plenum on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June. In accordance with that, posters and flyers were produced, a declaration was written and the media was informed.

Having been announced before, most of the lectures were cancelled on the day of the occupation. Still, some of the professors tried to carry out exams, but they were precluded. Very soon, students gathered in the amphitheatre in order to establish the plenum. At the very beginning, the Student Union attempted to obstruct and to discredit the whole action, claiming that they were the only legitimate students’ representatives. The student expressed their attitudes toward the Student Union and their legitimacy with loud shouts and whistles. They left the assembly and the plenum began. After the theatrical argument, the Student Union representatives left, and with them the majority of

the journalists, so that the rest of the session went on without further disturbances. Two major goals were set: to adjoin the Barracks to the University and free education for all. The entire session lasted for several hours.

The second plenum was assembled on June 27<sup>th</sup>. It was attended by less than thirty students, most of which were part of the Movement. There were many reasons for such an outcome. We decided to organize this plenum at the Faculty of Economics, since we wanted to activate students from other Faculties, but also to show that we could occupy the whole autonomous space of the University. It was announced beforehand that there would be no occupation, only a plenum assembly, the management of the Faculty of Economy closed the building on that day on purpose, and informed their students of it with a note. Afterwards, we received permission from the rector, but it was too late. Besides, the plenum was organized in the middle of examination terms, and most of the students stayed at home to study. During the assembly groups were formed to easier perform tasks.

In the summer, the meetings of the Movement were held less often, and the number of those who attended dropped constantly. We tried to recruit new students, but most of them was already tired of other everyday protests, organized during that period by smaller informal groups. They demanded to move into the next year of studies without passing all the necessary exams, a larger number of exams they are allowed not to pass, as well as additional examination terms. We had not much success, and decided to share our experiences with other students from the region. This included our participation in the symposium in Zagreb in November 2009, in Belgrade in the international student meeting in February 2010, as well as in the roundtable in Slovenia in May 2010.

Members of the Movement have started a global internet raising awareness campaign about the past visa regime in BiH. The campaign was called “BiH Walled in Europe”, and was carried out in the streets of many European cities: Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Hamburg, Amsterdam etc in the forms of posters and flyers. It is important to emphasize that the declaration of the campaign was translated into 13 different languages. Furthermore, we have we have intervened with numerous texts in the media when one of our University professors was attacked by the father of a student. He demanded the entry of a passing grade for daughter with a pistol in his hand. The texts were published in several important online magazines, e-novine, buka.ba among others

All this was done primarily to promote the idea of solidarity, free education for all and to maintain the spirit of the plenum. The Barracks has in the meantime been assigned to the University, but only in written. Inside the building tanks and military trucks are still parked. Further interventions are still uncertain, but the plenum and Student Movement archives still exist, and will be available to younger generations, once they go beyond the prevalent state of lethargy.

## Plenum

5. juna 2009. godine tačno u podne na Filozofskom fakultetu u Tuzli započela je blokada fakulteta i održan prvi plenum. Preko četiri stotine studenata tom je prilikom dalo do znanja univerzitetskom rukovodstvu, ali i široj javnosti, da je stanje na Univerzitetu u Tuzli loše i da se nešto po tom pitanju mora učiniti inače će i samo postojanje Univerziteta biti dovedeno u pitanje.

U jednim lokalnim novinama (Tuzlanskom listu), naime, pojavila se vijest da će kasarna „Husein kapetan Gradašćević“ u Tuzli biti privatizovana i da se oko nje već bore građevinski lobiji, iako su vlasti ranije obećale da će biti predana Univerzitetu. U isto vrijeme, Univerzitetom je kružila vijest da uskoro dolazi Komisija za akreditaciju i da će, ukoliko se kasarna ne pripoji Univerzitetu, on biti zatvoren, odnosno pretvoren u koledž, jer ne ispunjava osnovne kvalitativne i kvantitativne uslove za rad, a na prvom mjestu je bio nedostatak prostora. Saznanje da je budućnost Univerziteta pod upitnikom, bilo je jedan od glavnih razloga za pobunu.

Drugi razlog bio je konstatno povećavanje broja studenata koji plaćaju školovanje, uz istovremeno smanjivanje broja onih koji se školuju na teret budžeta. Osim toga, školarine su proteklih godina povremeno bile rasle.

Bilo je i mnoštvo drugih razloga oko kojih se većina studenata slagala, kao što su poltronsko ponašanje Unije studenata, učestalo probijanje upisnih kvota što je dovodilo do prenatrpanosti uslijed manjka prostora, činjenica da rad uz studiranje nije moguć što je studente koji moraju plaćati školovanje dovodilo u nezavidnu poziciju itd.

Svi ti problemi doveli su do formiranja neformalne grupe od tridesetak studenata nazvane Studentski pokret Tuzla.

U to vrijeme, blokada Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu bila je već u punom jeku, a bila je zahvatila i druge gradove u Hrvatskoj. Budući da su i hrvatski studenti imali problem sa školarinama, njihova pobuna nije prošla neopaženo u Tuzli. Inovativne metode koje su koristili u toj borbi privukle su i našu pažnju. Mediji, a naročito internet, omogućili su informisanje o plenumu i blokadi koji su se u tom trenutku činili najboljim mogućim sredstvom za rješavanje gorućih problema. Ubrzo je donesena i odluka o blokadi Filozofskog fakulteta i sazivanju plenuma 5. juna. Tom prilikom izrađeni su plakati i letci, napisan proglas i obavješteni mediji.

Pošto je bila ranije najavljena, na dan blokade je većina predavanja bila otkazana. Ipak, neki su profesori pokušali održati ispite, što im je onemogućeno. Nakon toga, studenti su se okupili u amfiteatru kako bi uspostavili plenum. Na samom početku, predstavnici Unije studenata su pokušali diskreditirati cijelu akciju, tvrdeći da su oni jedini legitimni predstavnici studenata. Nakon što su im ti isti studenti glasnim zvižducima stavili do znanja koliko ih smatraju legitimnim, oni su napustili amfiteatar i plenum je počeo. Nakon te teatralne prepirke s predstavnicima Unije, veći dio novinara je otišao, te je nastavak zasjedanja protekao u najboljem redu. Zacrtna su dva glavna cilja: pripajanje kasarne Univerzitetu i besplatno obrazovanje. Cijela akcija trajala je nekoliko sati.

Drugi plenum je održan 27. juna. Na njemu je bilo mnogo manje studenata – oko tridesetak, od čega je većina bila iz Pokreta. Razloga za to bilo je mnogo. Odlučili smo ovaj put plenum održati na Ekonomskom fakultetu, jer smo htjeli aktivirati i studente s drugih fakulteta, pošto su prvom plenumu prisustvovali uglavnom studenti Filozofskog. Međutim, iako je unaprijed rečeno da neće biti blokade, nego samo zasjedanje plenuma,

rukovodstvo Ekonomskog fakulteta je namjerno zatvorilo fakultet na taj dan i o tome ranije obavijestilo studente. Mi smo potom dobili dozvolu od rektora, ali bilo je kasno. Osim toga, plenum je bio organizovan usred ispitnih rokova, pa je većina studenata ostala kod kuće učiti. Na plenumu su oformljene sekcije kako bi se lakše odrađivali pojedini zadaci.

Nakon toga, nastupilo je ljeto, sastanci Pokreta nisu više bili održavani tako često, a broj onih koji su dolazili na sastanke bio je u stalnom padu. Pokušali smo regrutovati još studenata, ali većina je bila sита svakodnevnih protesta koji su u to vrijeme organizovale druge neformalne grupe i grupice, a koje su zahtijevale bezuslovne prelaske u narednu godinu studija, veći broj ispita koji se mogu prenijeti u narednu godinu, kao i dodatne rokove. Nismo bili previše uspješni u tome. Odlučili smo razmijeniti iskustva sa studentima u regiji, pa smo učestvovali na simpoziju u Zagrebu u novembru 2009., zatim u Beogradu na međunarodnom studentskom sastanku u februaru 2010., kao i na okruglom stolu u Ljubljani u maju 2010.

Članovi Pokreta su također na Facebooku pokrenuli globalnu internet kampanju dizanja svijesti o tadašnjem viznom režimu u BiH, pod nazivom „BiH Walled in Europe“, koja je kasnije pretočena i na ulice nekoliko europskih gradova: Praga, Beča, Budimpešte, Hamburga i Amsterdama. Važno je samo spomenuti da je proglašena kampanja prevedena na 13 jezika. Osim toga, intervenisali smo i nizom tekstova u medijima povodom napada na jednog univerzitetskog profesora, kada je otac jedne studentice s pištoljem u ruci tražio upis ocjene za svoju kćerku. Tekstovi su objavljeni na nekoliko značajnih internet portala, među kojima su e-novine i Buka.

Sve ovo rađeno je kako bi se promovisala ideja solidarnosti i očuvao duh plenuma i ideje besplatnog obrazovanja. Kasarna je u međuvremenu pripojena Univerzitetu, ali samo na papiru. U njoj još uvijek stoje parkirani tenkovi i vojni kamioni.

Šta će se dešavati dalje, niko ne zna, ali važno je da arhiva svega što se dešavalo u vezi s plenumom i Pokretom postoji i da će biti dostupno mlađim generacijama jednom kada se otrgnu od sveopšte letargije.

Tuzla, April 2011.