

In Dialogue

When the University Speaks:

On the Role of Neutrality and Responsibility Under Pressure

Olja Jovanović, Mila Bakić, Jelena Kleut, Nikola Koruga, Marija Radoman, Nenad Radulović, Milan Stančić, and Oliver Koenig

Over the past 18 months, Serbia has witnessed a sustained wave of student-led protests that began in response to tragedy and institutional failure and gradually opened into a broader civic movement. Following the collapse of the railway station canopy in Novi Sad on November 1, 2024, and the subsequent attack on students during a peaceful memorial gathering at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, faculties across Serbia entered into blockade. University buildings became sites of assembly, coordination, care, and public deliberation. Student plenums assumed responsibility for decision-making, while classrooms, corridors, and auditoriums were reorganized into spaces of collective life.

In this process, universities moved into a position of unusual public visibility. They became places where questions of legitimacy, democracy, autonomy, and responsibility were not only discussed but enacted. Many academic workers supported the students and their demands, while others struggled with how to understand their institutional obligations under conditions of political pressure, public delegitimization, and increasing financial and professional insecurity. The university, often imagined as a relatively stable site of knowledge production, became a contested public institution whose role could no longer be taken for granted.

This dialogue takes the Serbian case as a situated entry point into wider questions about the futures of democracy and governance. What happens when students begin to practice forms of direct democracy inside institutions that are themselves hierarchical and bureaucratic? What happens when universities are called to speak in public, while critical engagement is reframed as political bias? What becomes of academic autonomy when institutional survival, civic responsibility, and personal risk become inseparable?

The conversation that follows brought together university workers from different positions, disciplines, universities, and cities in Serbia. They speak as researchers, teachers, professional staff, activists, mentors, colleagues, and citizens. Their reflections do not offer a unified interpretation of the protests. Rather, they trace how the events changed their understanding of the university, of students, of institutional responsibility, and of their own roles within a society marked by democratic strain.

The dialogue took place in Belgrade in April 2026, in Serbian, and is presented here in English translation. The text has been lightly edited for clarity, while preserving the distinct voices of each speaker.

Participating in the Dialogue

Mila Bakić is Professional associate at the International Relations Office, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

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Nikola Koruga is Assistant professor at the Department of Pedagogy and Adult Education, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

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¹ Further details regarding the decision that resulted in Professor Kleut being denied promotion and, consequently, the termination of her employment at the university are available at: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2026-01-22-university-of-novi-sad/>

Co-Ideation and Editing

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Entering From Where We Stand

Olja Jovanović: I suggest we begin with introductions—who we are and why we are part of this conversation; what each of us brings to the discussion about the university’s role in society, whether personally or professionally; and the position from which each of us enters this discussion.

Marija Radoman: I’m Marija Radoman, and I have been working at the university for nearly fifteen years in various research positions. A few months before the blockade began, I became Head of the Institute for Sociological Research, and I think that perspective perhaps allowed me to see certain things more clearly: what it means to work as a researcher in a time of crisis, particularly for younger researchers and doctoral students, and what kinds of questions emerge under such conditions.

When I say “crisis,” I mean it in a broader sense. This current crisis has only brought to the surface challenges we have long been facing in higher education, especially here at the faculty: the role of researchers, their motivation to engage in public debate, questions about our social role, inequalities and hierarchies within the institution itself, and working conditions. That is one perspective that my position as a researcher has brought.

Very soon after the student protests began, our Institute team started conducting research, which offered another internal perspective on how the student movement functioned (Backović et al., 2026). We were in communication with various plenums in Belgrade, but also in other cities. That opened another issue entirely: how does one do research in a protest situation? This was research conducted with zero funding, in some ways activist in character, while at the same time we occupied a dual position—as researchers and as supporters of the blockades. That raised questions about how we positioned ourselves.

Plenums

Plenums are open, student-led assemblies that emerged during the university blockades as the primary spaces for collective decision-making. Organized on principles of direct democracy, plenums operate without formal hierarchy. Participants discuss proposals, articulate positions, and make decisions collectively, typically through consensus or majority voting. During the protests in Serbia, plenums coordinated activities within occupied university spaces and played a central role in shaping the movement’s direction.

Over the past few months, though, my freshest impression comes from having spent three months away at a university in Brussels. That was a turning point in perspective. During January, I followed events in Serbia obsessively, through every possible media outlet. Then, at one point, I simply stopped. For a month and a half, I read almost nothing, except what happened to appear on social media. Instead, I began paying attention to what was happening in the world—and the world is burning.

It made me think about what it means to view the situation in Serbia from the outside. In a way, I began to better understand those looking at us from elsewhere and asking: who are these people? I don't attach a positive or negative judgment to that; I simply take it as a fact. We have this internal story that we have to carry forward ourselves, because people outside often do not understand, do not see, and do not engage.

And then another important theme emerged for me—mental health. After a few weeks in Brussels, I realized I had been having nightmares for the previous year and a half—and in Brussels they simply stopped. And I thought: okay, now I understand the degree of stress under which we have been working and living. And still are.

Then, about ten days ago, before returning here, I felt panic—literally, irrational reactions. And I realized: this is fear, because I am returning to that same situation. Even though personally I would not say I have been especially endangered—my name appeared in the media a few times, in *Informer*² and the like—I did not feel personally threatened in any direct sense.

Mila Bakić: I'm Mila Bakić. I work at the International Relations Office at the Faculty of Philosophy, as a professional associate. People rarely think of us for these kinds of conversations, which says something in itself about the position of professional staff, who are neither teaching nor research staff.

What perhaps gives me a particular perspective is that, among other things, I organize events, and students tend to come to me when they want to organize something, or when we create things together—promotions, exhibitions, and so on. Because of my work, I have been, and still am, in contact with students from all ten departments of the Faculty, and I have supported many of their organizing efforts.

So when the blockades and protests began, I realized that more students actually knew me than knew many individual professors or researchers. They turned to me if they needed to ask something, from technical matters onward. They came to me because they knew me. And because I am not their teacher, there is never the possibility that I will grade them, which perhaps made our relationship more informal and fostered trust from the outset.

² *Informer* is a pro-government tabloid outlet.

That is my specific position—I knew students from all departments. And then, together with some people sitting at this table, once the students occupied the faculty and our Academic Council overwhelmingly supported them, we quickly began organizing employees in support of students. Again, because colleagues across departments knew me, I found myself in the position of someone initiating, organizing, and connecting.

Nikola Koruga: I can build on what Mila said. Since I work on education, and more specifically on utopia and critical thought, this whole situation felt surreal.

In theory, we know of occasional autonomous geographies where experiments with new social practices emerge, where resistance and creation are blended (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). But researchers often claim that you cannot apply a utopian idea at a larger scale; you can write about utopia, imagine it, theorize it—but not simply enact it. And then all of this began.

It was less than a year after I had defended my PhD, and it all seemed unreal, because for the first time we were witnessing, at the scale of an entire country, an experiment in direct democracy.

Education is always about the future. We educate people with the promise that something will change in their future—their social position, their possibilities, their role in society. What struck me most was that we had a generation not simply seeking a better future for themselves, but genuinely trying to improve the democratic environment and practice self-governance within the university. That was extraordinary.

I often think about my own critical position through what Giroux (2011) calls the “transformative intellectual,” or Gramsci (1971) the “organic intellectual.”

Especially since I come from a working-class background, that position has never felt natural to me. And suddenly all of it came together.

What is abnormal is the response. I still find it astonishing that any state would react with such immense repression to young people’s desire to contribute to democratizing society. Everything we have witnessed, especially lately, deserves not repression but admiration. It deserves recognition that something has gone wrong if we have arrived here.

Jelena Kleut: I’ve been thinking a lot about this question, and it is difficult for me to define my position. I can’t give a single answer, especially because I come from the Department of Media Studies in Novi Sad, which is oriented toward practical engagement and at the same time toward a media reality that was already devastating for the students we educate, long before all this began.

I like to say our department is a kind of Gaulish village within the Faculty of Philosophy, because many of us have biographies that are atypical for academia—people who were journalists, activists, and who have worked in all kinds of spaces. That shaped us, and I think we passed some of that energy to our students. We were constantly creating things with students and for students.

Gaulish village

A reference to the *Asterix comics*, in which a small Gaulish village resists Roman rule. The expression is often used metaphorically to describe a localized space of resistance within a larger dominant system.

And in a university context where work with students outside formal teaching—summer schools, workshops—counts for nothing institutionally, something you do purely out of commitment and by scraping together resources, we always invested deeply in that. It mattered enormously to us.

And it produced generations of students who gave that energy back—not only to us as teachers, but to society. Our students are engaged in newsrooms across Novi Sad and Belgrade. So professionally we were always attuned to what was happening socially, and close to students.

So in some sense, what has been happening over the past year and a half does not feel like a radical rupture to me in terms of extending that energy toward the department and students—perhaps unlike for colleagues who were not previously in such positions. For us, on day one of the blockade we were there, engaged. The first sink falls off the wall, students cry, “Professor, the sink fell!” and I go carry the sink.

And then there is repression, of course. For me, that became profoundly personal. Twelve people in Novi Sad were charged with calling for the violent overthrow of the constitutional order. Among those detained was my student Lazar Dinić, who ultimately graduated with me while in detention. Of the six now in exile, all but two were my students.

That is such a personal bond that, from the moment that happened, I no longer allow us to say of anything that it is impossible. Once that became possible, everything became possible. And at that moment this ceased to be only a professional struggle. It became deeply personal.

Milan Stančić: I’m Milan Stančić, a pedagogue, and I’ve been working at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade for more than fifteen years.

This first question was difficult for me. Professionally, I wouldn’t have said I explicitly worked on the social position of the university. But then it pushed me to ask: what is a university? And I realized I’ve worked on many adjacent questions—what role education has in society, how powerful education is in changing society, and how society shapes education. Classic pedagogical questions.

But even more interesting was the relation between the personal and the professional. I immediately remembered a neighbor from Niš asking whether we at universities had become “too political.” He asked me, “What of all that you’ve

been doing over the last year and a half are you doing as a citizen, and what as a teacher?" It was difficult to answer, because those roles have fused.

We have a long history of protest, when I primarily participated as a citizen, not as a university worker. But now it matters to me to appear in current protests also as a university worker. I speak from that fusion of the personal and the professional.

We all know in theory that one function of the university is its relation to society. But now it is tangible. We are living it intensely.

Nenad Radulović: I'm Nenad Radulović, assistant professor in the Department of History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš. Our story has been one of moving from supporting students—something my colleagues and I believed we should do—to being punished for it, almost losing the jobs we have trained for all our lives.

When the blockades began, I was still a doctoral student. I defended my dissertation during the blockades, with students' permission to use the building. I was then elected assistant professor and almost immediately risked losing the very department to which I had just been appointed.

Niš is a smaller place, which can be an advantage—our relations with students are more immediate. At one point, when porters refused night shifts, students called me and asked me to serve as night porter. I accepted without hesitation. The fact that they called me specifically meant they trusted me.

And I changed too. As an assistant, I kept distance from students. Formality. But during the protests I became closer to them. Students I once addressed formally, I now address informally. I offer support—transport to Belgrade, financial help, whatever they need.

Before, I would have said: I am the professor, you are the students; we speak about coursework, not politics. Now, after what we have lived through together, I believe it is part of my professional duty to speak with students about all of this.

Olja Jovanović: Listening to everyone, it strikes me how much we share.

I forgot to introduce myself. I am Olja Jovanović, a psychologist, speaking as a member of the Faculty of Philosophy and the broader university community. My work explores how schools (and universities) can reproduce marginalization, and how these same institutions can become sites of both individual and collective transformation.

The whole process we have lived through has unsettled some of my deepest convictions about the role and power of education in society. There were moments when education seemed fragile and powerless, unable to resist pressure or interrupt repression. But what unfolded in classrooms, hallways, occupied spaces, on the streets... taught me otherwise.

Education was taking place in all of these spaces. People were learning to ask difficult questions, to organize collectively, and to care for one another. This

experience has left me more convinced than ever that education matters because it makes it possible for new knowledge and new relationships to emerge—and sometimes, even change.

When Everything Became Possible: Images of Transformation, Repression, and Solidarity

Olja Jovanović: In our introductions, each of us has in some way sketched the context in which we live and work. Anyone listening to this opening might ask: What is happening there? Who are these students, and what kind of university is this? Which brings us to our second question: if you were to single out an event or a situation that, for you, paradigmatically represents the position of the university in Serbia—what would that event or situation be, and why that one?

Jelena Kleut: This was a difficult question for me too. But I would answer with a triptych.

The first image is the faculty under blockade, completely transformed into a dynamic place where every corner is alive, where students and faculty inhabit the space together. The faculty and the whole campus became a place that citizens came to visit, to check in, even to ask permission to enter—at first they could, later they couldn't. It's not like in some other cities where one casually passes through campus; in Novi Sad, you intentionally go there. It's a place students and professors inhabit. And suddenly citizens were arriving, bringing all sorts of gifts—from pastries to who knows what. So that transformation from within, and this altered public perception of the faculty—that is my first image.

The second image is the university under repression. The police entered the campus of the University of Novi Sad on September 5. What they used was not gas—it was poison. People were driven out; it was horrific. For me, that is a paradigmatic image of violence—literal physical violence. There are many forms of repression, but this was raw force.

The third image is deeply personal. It is the way people organized when I lost my job, carrying signs saying, “I stand with Jelena Kleut.”³ It was beautiful. A profound act of solidarity. It made visible how deeply we had become connected to people through all of this—that I mattered enough for them to stand outside their academic homes in support.

So: three images—our internal transformation, the attack on us, and our solidarity.

³ After 20 years at the University of Novi Sad, Jelena Kleut lost her job in January 2026 in an act of retribution for her public support of students. Further information is available at <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2026-01-22-university-of-novi-sad/>

Nikola Koruga: Mine is similar—the moment the police entered the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. That was a major turning point. It marked the end of autonomy and the beginning of intensified repression.

But the first image that comes to mind is something else, something I remember vividly. During the protests, people shared resources, food, and care with one another in spontaneous and collective ways.

And for the first time in my life, I felt profoundly secure—not in this state, but in this world. It felt as though there was no danger that, if I lost my job, I would go hungry, be abandoned, or end up trapped in those horrors of capitalism where people worry about their most basic everyday needs and security.

For the first time, I felt secure because I realized that we have enough of everything; we only need to learn how to share. And people were ready to do that.

It was beautiful too how the groups of citizens were organized to support teachers when they had no salaries. That sense that, through self-organization, we can actually do everything ourselves—that was enormously important to me.

During the protests, people would approach us and share their ideas. I remember one woman saying, “I came to share with you what I’ve been thinking about these days. I imagine how proud we would be if, instead of always sending some diplomat to represent us abroad, we could say: we do not have a single representative—we are all representatives of our country.”

She was a woman from the suburbs, not especially educated in the formal sense, yet she was captivated by the possibility that we might live differently—that “better” could mean solidarity and freedom.

Marija Radoman: My impression is somewhat different. I also had countless individual images, but I found myself thinking from a macro perspective: what have we gained from all this? Where are we now?

Despite all the dark images of repression, I always return to a conclusion that is, in the end, a kind of optimism, though it moves in waves—despair and optimism. What gives me optimism is placing these protests historically and politically. If you look back, we have been in a decade-long wave of protest: Savamala, Serbia Against Dictatorship, One of Five Million, Serbia Against Violence...

Recent waves of protest in Serbia

This refers to several major protest movements in Serbia over the past decade (see Figure 1): the Savamala protests (2016), sparked by the illegal demolition of buildings in Belgrade; Serbia Against Dictatorship (2017), following contested presidential elections; One of Five Million (2018–2020), a sustained civic protest movement; and Serbia Against Violence (2023), organized after mass shootings and calling for political accountability. Together, these movements form a broader context of recurring civic mobilization in Serbia.

These protests continue that history, but also mark a rupture. What makes them specific is the scale of mobilization and its duration. Their success lies in this grassroots, horizontal, directly democratic organizing—which began with direct democracy and eventually produced demands for early parliamentary elections.



Figure 1: Students and citizens gather at the Autokomanda intersection in Belgrade, Serbia, on January 27, 2025, during a mass nighttime protest illuminated by mobile phone lights (photo by Aleksa Stanković)

But I think that foundational experience remained long enough to become sedimented in us. If we speak of the university, it has entered at least some of its parts. Not all. But I don't think we can lose it anymore. The transformation has already happened.

That is why I am optimistic. I don't fear we will forget—we won't. It lasted long enough to change us. Students initiated it, and then we have taken it up and continue working within that wave of transformation.

What Does It Mean to Save the University?

Olja Jovanović: I wonder whether our choice of paradigmatic situations is shaped by the ways we ourselves entered this process.

I was outside the country when the protests began. I landed on March 15, during one of the largest protests in Serbian history—a protest invested with enormous hopes, which ended with the use of a sonic weapon against assembled citizens. Shortly after, came what is known as the 5/35 Decree.

The 5/35 Decree

The “5/35 Decree” refers to a regulation introduced in March 2025 that limited officially recognized research work to five hours per week, replacing the previous distribution of research and teaching within a standard 40-hour workload. Because research was formally counted as only five hours, academic staff who suspended teaching during the blockades could be paid only 12.5 % of their salaries. This reduction was presented as consistent with existing workload regulations.⁴

For me, the decree—and everything that followed—triggered a range of thoughts and emotions, but it also clearly emerges as a paradigmatic situation that captures the position of the university in Serbia.

On one level, it revealed the absence—or breakdown—of state institutions, rules, and procedures. Overnight, without public debate or any real possibility to respond, the conditions of a university teacher's work were changed. It may have functioned as short-term pressure through salary cuts, but in the long run it risks pushing us out of the international scientific community, as participation in international projects becomes increasingly difficult.

There was also anger—at the procedural logic of repression, where the law is reshaped to make repression formally legitimate, even though we all know it is neither acceptable nor normal. And then there was the silence of institutions that should have responded.

⁴ A position paper prepared by members of the university community on the impact of the decree is available at <https://www.pobuni.se/objava.html?id=41>

At the same time, a dominant narrative emerged: that there would be no university if we did not resume teaching. The sense of “to be or not to be”—not for us as individuals, but for the university itself—was very much present.

What stayed with me, however, was the relative silence beyond the university community. There was support for the students, but far less visible recognition of the university as a public good. That silence raised a difficult question: who needs the university? Those of us who work within it? The students who study there? Or the wider society?

And if the university is indeed a public good, how do we make that idea resonate beyond the university itself?

Jelena Kleut: That is so important, because I think that was the moment we—like our colleagues in primary and secondary schools⁵—felt alone.

The enchantment with collective strength, with student energy, began to crack. Support was no longer unanimous. The Decree started fragmenting collectives and dividing us.

And then that moment emerged: we must save the institution. But what does it mean to save the institution?

That became an open field of conflict. Some argued the only way to save the university was to return to teaching immediately. Others argued there is no saving an institution that bows its head and simply accepts necessity.

And suddenly we saw clearly the heterogeneous voices within the university.

Milan Stančić: My initial choice would also have been the Decree. It was the moment repression became naked. The regime became fully visible in its ugliest sense.

There had long been this image—imposed from outside and partly internalized—that we, university teachers, were somehow protected, untouchable. And then the Decree made it clear: everything is possible. Everything since—the legal changes, dismissals, existential questions, even whether the university will survive as an institution—seems to begin there.

The Decree opened our eyes in multiple ways. It exposed the regime’s relationship of power to the university. But it also exposed society’s relationship to the university.

And there too we felt alone. Even when people approached us at the Crossroad, somehow we still felt alone. We had our usual allies—students, the IT community, citizen assemblies, school teachers—but beyond that, broader

⁵ More information on the teacher protests in Serbia can be found here: <https://blog.eera-ecer.de/teacher-protest-in-serbia/>

reactions seemed absent. People said things like, “Well, they should lose their salaries if they aren’t working.” And so we felt abandoned.

The Faculties at the Crossroad

The "Faculties at the Crossroad" protests began on June 9, 2025, in front of the Serbian government. They were organized by the “University in Rebellion” (*Pobunjeni univerzitet*), and supported by other university initiatives, students, and citizens’ assemblies (see Figure 2). The protest consisted of a continuous blockade of a key crossroad in Belgrade (Kneza Miloš and Nemanjina), combined with demands to suspend the drafting of the new Law on Higher Education—seen as a prelude to privatization and loss of autonomy—to cancel the 5/35 Decree, and to approve enrollment quotas for budget places at all faculties founded by the Republic of Serbia that had not yet been published for faculties still in protest. The blockade lasted 17 days.



Figure 2: Participants in the “Crossroad” protest organized by Free Universities and Universities in Rebellion gather in front of the Serbian government building in Belgrade, Serbia, displaying banners supporting university blockades and academic resistance (photo by Marija Stojnić)

Still—for me, the Decree was the first moment when the regime's intentions towards universities stood fully exposed. And the Decree is still here.

Jelena Kleut: Exactly—we speak of it as if it were past, but it is still with us.

Nenad Radulović: Let me add something personal. My own contract literally contains the 5/35 Decree. I may have been the first person at the Faculty in Niš to sign a contract under it.

When salaries were slashed, our staff began wavering. Can we continue the blockades? Can we support students and return to teaching? The same discourse emerged: we must save the faculty. The inspection came. We must return somehow. Meanwhile, students were furious—why return now and destroy everything achieved through protest?

It was perhaps the greatest crisis we had experienced.

And I thought: what do I do?

I accepted that we might return to teaching online, but I told students that attendance would be voluntary and that no sanctions would follow non-attendance.

And then the freshest moment—last night. We arrived at the faculty around five, and the dean's email came: the government had revoked permissions for our programs in Serbian studies, Russian, and History. Students and teachers gathered spontaneously. We marched from our Faculty of Philosophy to the Faculty of Serbian Studies. A colleague carried the Serbian flag, and someone suddenly put the Faculty flag in my hands.

Prohibition of academic programs

In 2026, the Serbian government revoked the operating licenses of three departments at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš—History, Serbian Studies, and Russian Studies—with the intention of transferring these programs to the newly established Faculty of Serbian Studies in Niš. The decision was widely criticized as procedurally unlawful, as it bypassed established academic and institutional procedures.

And I stood at the head of that column, waving the Faculty of Philosophy flag, proud to represent what this institution is—against what others are trying to fabricate through poor arguments about “identity sciences.”

Why claim we do not deal with identity?

Why cast us as destroyers of identity while others claim they will restore it?

Mila Bakić: Of everything beautiful I have gained through togetherness—our organizing, the friendships I would carry to the end of the world—what first came to mind was messaging with our students who were detained yesterday, called in for police questioning.

One student had his interview rescheduled from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.—and tabloids published at 1:15 what he supposedly said in a statement that hadn't even happened yet. For me, that is an image of society's relationship to the university.

Then the 5/35 Decree, and perhaps above all the fear of what comes next, because we have already said: everything is possible.

The Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade is under greater attack than ever. We have long surpassed the 1990s. And yet we hold. There is still a majority on what I can only call the right side. I now truly see things as light and darkness. All our ideological differences—left, right, whatever—seem secondary. There is light and darkness. And never has it been easier to choose.

But we are under specific attack—attempts to remove administration, prosecute people, punish. And we don't know whether the government might change the law overnight. That is helplessness before the system.

And we learned from public reaction to the Decree that when we raised our voice, we felt alone. I don't currently know what our superpowers are—unless further radical moves by the authorities once again produce unity. Because even students with very different positions are united by this threat.

You hear them say, “A forced administration will enter this faculty over our dead bodies.” And that is important. Because even if not in the broader public, within the university there exists a community able to put everything else aside. There is an inheritance here. As Marija said—we continue defending the university together.

The Winter When We Learned to Speak

Olja Jovanović: Mila introduced the next question. When the context is such that we feel the university does not have broad support, when we recognize how the university is being delegitimized in public, and at the same time we believe that the university should speak and should respond—who is the university actually addressing in these circumstances? Who are our potential allies, or who constitutes the network the university can rely on?

Mila Bakić: This struggle is not my first social struggle. Although our students truly did mobilize the people, in the end we come down to a minority of those who are actually ready to risk losing, to defend uncompromisingly, to fight, to give their time—time they would otherwise spend with their families—to go in front of the court to support students, and so on.

Unfortunately, I think we can primarily rely on such communities and on what has remained of them. These are our teachers and comrades from primary and secondary schools, the Social Front, and then a number of activist organizations, regardless of earlier distance between students and them. Those people are there. They are ready to give their time and energy.

The Social Front

The Social Front (*Društveni front*) is a grassroots association of workers' collectives, trade unions, and formal and informal professional communities that emerged in the wake of the student protests in Serbia. It defines itself as a non-partisan initiative and does not intend to participate in elections. By connecting workers across different sectors and supporting collective action, the Social Front seeks to reclaim institutions appropriated by those in power and to restore their role in serving the common good.

Then there are citizens' assemblies that emerged as a product of student action. I also think there are broader groups within the population that support the student movement, and we saw that in moments when we moved closer to them—through public addresses, marches, and by being present where they were.

Citizens' assemblies

In early 2025, students called on citizens to organize themselves into citizens' assemblies (*zborovi građana*), mirroring the organizational structure of the student movement. These informal local assemblies across Serbia mobilized to support students' anti-corruption demands and to promote direct democracy.

So when we speak in a language that is not strictly academic, then we gather.

That is who we can address—those who are already self-organized and who feel that unrest, that they must do something about this country through solidarity with others.

Nikola Koruga: The first thing we learned is that we address one another.

For example, I learned a lot from Mila about anthropology while we were going through places across Serbia. And that is now a new approach to research for me in general—a different way of learning, of thinking about our own actions.

Another thing—we realized we cannot be self-sufficient and that we must make a huge effort to understand where we live. And that still surprises us.

But yes—I don't know—we will have to figure out who and how to address further. Because when you are fighting against a machinery that controls all the media and holds all the levers of power, sometimes you really don't know how to respond to that, no matter how much knowledge, creativity, will, or solidarity you have.

But the very fact that we turned to one another—I think that is already enough. Something new, somehow.

Jelena Kleut: And then, when you compare different periods before, you realize that now, to begin with, you have *a university that speaks*.

It speaks frequently, loudly, in forms that are entirely academic, but also in forms that are completely atypical for academia—for example, blocking intersections, or engaging in protest performances. We have now learned to do all of that (See Figures 3 and 4).

And the circle of people who speak has expanded. Before, you always had the same faces—partly the logic of the media, partly the logic of the academic community, which does not want to speak unless something is narrowly tied to our expertise. If broader social topics are involved—then no.



Figure 3: Professors stand in solidarity with students during a public march in Novi Sad, Serbia (photo: from Jelena Kleut's private archive)

Now new people have stepped forward who speak on issues concerning university autonomy and attacks on autonomy. That list has truly expanded.

So the question now is: whom do we count on? If we say “the rebellious society,” the question is what we want that society to do. Do we want them to physically defend the faculty from forced administration, or do we want something else? I think we truly did feel alone when we were left without salaries. But when you look at the network of solidarity that formed around that— I thought it would be impossible to create such a network, because it was a huge, structured, comprehensive undertaking—but it happened. We had an IT company in Novi Sad. They made an enormous effort to remain anonymous—even outside the IT blockade. They asked faculties to provide contacts of teaching assistants, because assistants were the most affected by salary cuts, and they supported them. There were many such things.

These people would come tomorrow to provide financial help, but it would probably be too costly for them to stand in front of police cordons. So now we must also weigh tactically when we call which people for what. But I am not sure we are alone. We do have something—we just need to distribute it wisely.

Olja Jovanović: When you mentioned that people started speaking, I immediately remembered a banner from one protest: “The winter when I learned to speak.”

It seems to me that this has also changed the image of the university. Previously, we were seen as someone who *speaks about expertise*. But in this process, *we acted through expertise*.

You’re there, working with people, doing what you know best—and people begin to realize that you actually do know something. That this knowledge is not elitist, not detached from reality, not unusable—as the dominant narrative often suggests—but something that helps. It helps you think, respond more thoughtfully, and consider the consequences of your actions.

If I go back to the question of *whom we speak to*, I think it is important to note that the student movement was not addressing only current political actors, but also those who are yet to come. In that sense, it seems to me that the university has also begun to speak to younger generations.

I always think of how high school students responded to the president postponing the elections: “Postpone the elections—we’ll turn 18 in the meantime and gain the right to vote.” That is the response of a generation—the generation that is now arriving at the university.



Figure 4: Students organize a protest march marking 11 months since the deadly roof collapse in Serbia, joined by citizens in public remembrance and protest (photo by Aleksa Stanković)

Mila Bakić: That's great that you mentioned younger generations. Among other things, I work on promoting our study programs. And now, in those few cities where we visited schools, there are questions that didn't exist before. Recently, in Kraljevo, we were distributing stickers that our students had made. Then a high school student approached me and asked, "Can I give you stickers that I made?" And that was very interesting to me—he had his own message and wanted to share it. There is a desire to be part of the change.

Nikola Koruga: Yes, and older generations too, I must admit. As an andragog, I know how difficult it is to change something among generations that follow traditional media, especially in this kind of heavily controlled media environment.

However, through conversations on the public buses, I notice that a significant change is happening. Even older citizens now understand that change is necessary and are beginning to listen to students.

So I do think that older generations are part of this change as well. Maybe not to the same extent as younger people. Perhaps they cannot be—or perhaps they are simply less visible.

Marija Radoman: There are also groups that are not visible. Literally not visible. They are absent from media coverage, their voices are not heard—and yet they are there, on the streets, supporting.

Neutrality Is No Longer an Empty Place

Olja Jovanović: Before our meeting, I looked at data from Carnegie International⁶, which show that in the last twelve months, in more than 67 countries there have been significant protests—many of them led by Generation Z, which is the generation we have and will have at universities. This raises the question of the role of the university in current circumstances. Although this question is very alive here right now, I think it is also a global question.

There is increasing pressure for the university to take a politically neutral position. For example, in the U.S., since the 2024 presidential campaign, the number of universities adopting neutrality statements has increased (see, e.g., Brewer & Young, 2025).

So the question is: how should the university position itself between neutrality and political action? Do you feel this as a tension?

Marija Radoman: I can speak for myself. I have always experienced my work as political, since my student days—but it feels intensified now. Especially now, as

⁶ See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Global Protest Tracker*, an ongoing database of protest events worldwide, <https://carnegieendowment.org/features/global-protest-tracker>

a faculty employee, I feel even more strongly that political action is part of professional responsibility. For me personally, there is no return to neutrality.

Now, “neutral” equals “ćaci.” It means you are on the other side. From my perspective, there is no longer that empty position of the authority of knowledge. What does it mean to speak from that position now? For me, it has become speaking from an engaged opposition—as a form of critical thinking. I think these events have truly changed us in terms of values. And that is a very positive thing.

Ćaci

“Ćaci” is a sarcastic slang term used during the Serbian student protests to refer to pro-government supporters, especially those perceived as highly loyal, politically engaged, or performatively expressing support for the authorities.

Jelena Kleut: It is difficult to compare globally. It seems to me that despite all the repression and horror, we are actually in a clearer situation. As Mila said—here it is now black and white. We despise neutrality. Not because we are so great, but because students pushed us into that realization. We are also playing a local political game. Just as Vučić⁷ tries to define politics as something he stands above—while everyone else is labeled “politicians,” thus framing politics as something dirty—we see a similar dynamic at the university.

Those who supported students are accused of political ambition. Meanwhile, there are universities deeply embedded in political and clientelist networks, where party membership determines grants and positions. So we are trying to redefine that political field—for ourselves and for society. And we refuse to be neutral.

We refuse to withdraw because someone says, “you are politicians,” on national television. We file lawsuits, we speak at protests—we continue acting. In that sense, I think we are in a stronger position than some universities elsewhere that are still searching for their response.

Mila Bakić: I think one difference is that many of those universities are private. We are funded by public money. Because of that, I believe we have a responsibility—not only to teach and do research, but also to give something back to society, whether through commentary or something stronger. Not everyone

⁷ Aleksandar Vučić is the president of Serbia (since 2017) and a central figure in the country’s political landscape. His government has been widely criticized for increasing control over the media, weakening institutional checks and balances, and responding to protest movements with various forms of political and administrative pressure. Further information is available at <https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/freedom-world/2026>

has to do everything, but this responsibility should exist. And when political change comes, we should retain that active role.

We should not wait for things to reach their worst point, but remain constantly active, as individuals already are.

Nenad Radulović: I will add to what you said at the end. If there are changes for the better, I think we should be an example to citizens; to represent a principle of how to act. To be a reference point that the authorities might turn to for advice on what to do next—because that is also our role.

It is very difficult when you are accused of dragging the faculty into politics. That is what they say about the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš—that we have become too political, that we have led students astray.

And now the authorities will “correct” that? They will create their own faculty so students can finally return to study? A complete paradox. So yes—the university should speak. Especially when the issues concern it directly.

Nikola Koruga: I was able to follow how the situation surrounding the student protests was developing in many other countries. At one point, the students asked me, “Is that because of us?” I do not think it is because of us. Just as we feel that we are confronting something deeply problematic, I believe that this broader moment has also reached a breaking point. Different societies, however, respond in different ways to the pressures and contradictions of neoliberalism.

It is problematic to see students as clients. Students have the right to complain if a professor says something they do not like—something that does not fit their ideological framework. If we say the planet is endangered, that is politics. If you present data on air pollution, that is politics. We cannot leave politics outside the university, no matter which theory we take—neutrality does not exist. I teach Paulo Freire, radical pedagogy, and he says that we teach illiterate adults not just to read words, but to read the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987)—to fight for a better position, to negotiate better prices for their agricultural products—and that is politics.

Milan Stančić: This topic brings me back to my earlier reflections about an expanded awareness of one’s social role, which Marija also hinted at. This is not something that emerged only from recent events—even before, I would not say that neutrality exists. I see teaching and education as deeply political acts: through the selection of content, methods, whose voices we give space to, and whose knowledge we legitimize or not—this already becomes an ideological and political act. The question is how aware we are of it. And I hope we are becoming more aware that it matters to act in that way.

However, it seems to me that the idea of neutrality is often placed under the umbrella of autonomy, which is quite strange. It is strange because autonomy is framed as protection from external pressures, and then neutrality is adopted as a way of protecting ourselves from those pressures. But in essence, neutrality does

not exist. Even if we choose to remain silent in the face of social anomalies, that is already a political choice.

For me, autonomy is something else entirely—it is protection that allows us to criticize society. In that sense, autonomy is opposed to neutrality—it should protect the possibility of political action. From my perspective, autonomy means being free to act politically, though not in a demagogic sense, but in the sense of recognizing problems, isolating them, offering critique, and opening space for dialogue. Being political in education shouldn't mean indoctrination, but providing a space where discussion is possible, where debate is allowed, and where we are protected in doing so.

Olja Jovanović: From your responses, I would say it is very important how the narrative around autonomy and neutrality is constructed, and consequently how justification is built for punishing or rewarding universities. If I look at the example of the previously mentioned 5/35 Decree, narrative about autonomy also played a significant role there. Questions were raised about the relationship between autonomy and financial dependence. There were messages such as, “If we pay you, you will behave according to our rules.”

Then it was necessary to address that “we” in the narrative—who actually funds the university, and what is the role of the government in that. Returning to the idea of the university as a public good, funded by citizens because they recognize it as an institution necessary for society, was a message that we, as a university community, tried to make visible.

It also seems important to think in terms of social interest versus individual interest. I see the university as a critical social actor, acting with the aim of protecting the public interest. Noam Chomsky (1967) would say that, as members of the academic community, society has given us the privilege of access to information, knowledge, and a space to speak, and we must be responsible for that privilege.

However, I think that the distinction between political and party-based action at the university becomes blurred in a context where ruling parties are not clearly separated from state institutions, which they only temporarily occupy.

Between Professional and Personal: Dilemmas of Practice

Olja Jovanović: My impression is that this undifferentiated field in which we act has produced tensions and dilemmas on a personal level. What does it mean to be a teacher, a researcher, a teaching assistant, a professional associate? What is the relationship between the professional and the personal? What tensions did you encounter in this process, and how did you deal with them?

Marija Radoman: I had quite a few ethical dilemmas, for example, when we conducted research. We finished the research, and I think I still haven't resolved

those dilemmas. We are in a dual position—as employees and as researchers—and we help, we have an activist dimension, and at the same time we produce something from it—papers, knowledge. Even though all of that benefits the student movement, I had an ethical dilemma: what should be used and what should not? Most of that material was not used, because I felt something would be compromised. Only fragments were used. That was a real tension for me. Then, at moments, I wondered: should I be doing research or going to protests and organizing? Seeing people like Mila in certain positions made me think—wait, these people are doing so much, what am I doing sitting at home writing academic papers? Everything was quite chaotic. I think these protests brought to the surface everything that already existed—hierarchies, inequalities, fragmentation—and perhaps even intensified them.

Jelena Kleut: I'm trying to think how many of those dilemmas there actually were—what exactly I was reconciling. Everything felt quite natural, and I didn't have many of them. There were small moments that displaced you. I remember when we blocked the court in Novi Sad to get those six people released from detention—a very unusual scene. We gathered in the morning, pressed up against the police (see Figure 5). One of my first-year students said, "Professor, this is my father." And we were all pressed together, pushing against the police. And the father said, "Good day, Professor," but all through shields and helmets. But it felt natural—we were with students in the classroom, then we walked with them, then we cleaned the faculty together, now we are with them here. I didn't have many questions like, "Where are the boundaries of my identity?"



Figure 5: Students face a police cordon during a protest in front of the Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) building in Belgrade, Serbia, on April 16, 2025 (photo by Aleksa Stanković)

Olja Jovanović: I'm not sure I would call it a dilemma, but for me it marked a point where my role as a citizen and my role as a teacher began to diverge. I was mostly in contact with students who were active in the protests—I would meet them at the faculty, on the streets, at the Crossroad. But as time went on, I started to think about those I didn't meet—who they were and why they were absent. As a citizen, I was present with those who were protesting. But as a teacher, I am responsible to all of my students, including those who remain outside my field of view.

Jelena Kleut: There were some very unusual stories. When we returned to teaching, I approached one student—I had no idea where she stood politically—I just wanted to check how she was. She told me she had her own “blockade experience,” even though she wasn't at the faculty—she was in a village near Subotica, organizing resistance there. She became a target of obscure Facebook groups, facing gender-based harassment. And I realized how my focus on the faculty made me unaware of such experiences. I'm not even on Facebook, and I barely use Instagram—I wasn't connected enough. Some student experiences remained completely invisible. I felt really bad that I didn't know what she had gone through.

Nenad Radulović: I'll share one dilemma I had. In November, a proposal appeared to establish a Faculty of Serbian Studies in Niš. We had just resumed teaching. For first-year students, it was practically their second class when they heard about it and asked what would happen. As someone working at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, I would naturally say: “Don't transfer there, that faculty won't be real.” But then I thought—these are freshmen; their parents invested money for their education. Now they would have to explain to their parents that they should transfer to another faculty to study the same thing because the government moved their program. And that new faculty is not good, but ours is? A financially strained parent would likely say: “Finish what you started; I don't care where.” Some students said they wouldn't transfer; some stayed silent. I told them: “You are students; your interest is to finish your studies. Think carefully about how you want to respond. This affects staff more, but you should primarily think about yourselves.” That was my dilemma—how to advise them in this situation.

What Remains: Practices, Structures, and the Future of the University

Olja Jovanović: To conclude—looking at everything, what practices, concepts, or lessons learned could help us think about the role of the university and of us as university workers and also be useful in other contexts?

Mila Bakić: This horizontal organization that emerged—which was not typical for academia except in individual cases—was one of the most important things that happened internally. I have three vivid images from the blockades, and this is one. During the largest protest in Serbia's history, hundreds of students from

other university centers slept at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. Staff organized shifts—some took care of food, others of different tasks. Early the next morning came cleaning. There was a scene where a full professor—whom I won't name—was holding a mop and asking a young researcher, “I've cleaned here—where should I clean next?” And she assigned him tasks. That was a million-dollar scene. Something beautiful—relationships between students, staff, everyone from technical staff to professors. But how do we maintain that outside such conditions? How do we remain a community? That is the question.

Marija Radoman: I think this is an excellent question, and we should really think about how to translate this experience into practice. For example, how could the “Open Assembly” continue in peacetime? Could we have monthly meetings where everyone is invited, with an agenda, parallel to student plenums? We need to create forms at the faculty level that will continue. Solidarity must be concretized. It doesn't have to be only in crisis—we can create shared events, actions, anything that keeps us connected.

Open Assembly

During the protests at the Faculty of Philosophy, groups of professors, researchers, and teaching assistants organized themselves into what they called the “Open Assembly” (Otvorena zbornica), a self-organized informal forum for discussion, coordination, and support for the student protests.

Jelena Kleut: Otherwise, it won't last. That's what I fear. If we just let it be, we will lose everything faster than we think. At the Free University, we had weekly meetings and addressed each other informally—everyone from academicians to assistants. But once we returned to faculties, hierarchy quickly returned. Even now, we are still coordinating actions, yet we've gone back to formal address. It shows how quickly things can disappear. That's why sustainability must be built now, not after everything ends. For example, the formation of unions at faculties—this could remain. Previously, unions were inert, tied to rigid structures. Now, people are truly connected, and these unions function across faculties. That could be a lasting space for collective work and organization.

Free University

"Free University" (*Slobodni univerzitet*) is a network of professors, associates, researchers, and other employees at the University of Novi Sad and other higher education institutions in Vojvodina, founded on the principles of academic honesty, dignity, equality, and solidarity. The network was created as a response by teaching staff at the University of Novi Sad to the student blockades that began in December 2024 and to the demands formulated at that time, bringing together university teachers, associates, and researchers who provided unreserved support for the blockade and the students' demands.⁸

Nikola Koruga: Yes, for me the union was also a very important element and moment—when we actually went on strike. But yes, direct democracy, I think, is what matters most. We learned something about solidarity during the war, when people exchanged what they had: I give you flour, you give me coffee; I give you oil, you give me gasoline—whatever someone was able to obtain. We learned how to share. But direct democracy... At first it was very difficult for it to take root among us, employees. I remember those early meetings of the Open Assembly—“How will we do this?” And I remember those first meetings across the entire education sector, and the students constantly trying to tell us: “You have three minutes, and we don’t need fifteen of you repeating the same thing—we’ve already heard it.” I think that was a lesson we had to learn.

Citizens’ assemblies are, for me, very important structures. At the beginning, they were very large, and I think they will become large again. Some people may not feel close to elections or formal political organization, but, for example, during the recent situation with farmers and milk, some assemblies reacted very effectively. A large number of people formed a group and began buying directly from farmers. So we see that direct democracy—the idea that someone makes small decisions every day, that when we sit together we can solve very complex problems, and even enjoy doing so... And we do not need large structures standing behind us. This did not emerge because students were radical utopians, but simply because they demanded that institutions already in place actually function. Since those institutions have not functioned for a year and a half, or longer—and are increasingly collapsing—we have no choice but to find ways to cope. We simply have to continue finding ways.

Milan Stančić: It seems to me that a common concept here is the concept of community. Clearly, togetherness was striking. That need for informal association—at the level of institutions, universities, even the nation more broadly. But something still feels missing. I am thinking of Hart’s ladder of

⁸ Further information is available at <https://suuns.info/>

participation (Hart, 1992). It feels like we have something like a ladder of involvement. If we translate this into the question of how to preserve the university, it is relatively easy to secure support—people recognizing its importance, coming out into the streets, writing about it. That level we can achieve.

But a higher level is when someone becomes actively involved in a shared struggle. That, to me, is a higher rung of participation, and I still do not know how we get there—how to motivate people, except through something that, unfortunately, seems to arise spontaneously rather than through planning. Usually, it happens when someone feels the sharp teeth of the system on their own skin, and only then realizes they need to get involved—that it is their struggle too. But often, by then, it is too late. Meanwhile, the system grinds us down continuously, slowly—we do not notice what is being taken from us, how our rights, freedoms, and autonomy are eroded. So one concept is certainly togetherness, and the other is more active participation in achieving shared goals.

Olja Jovanović: My thoughts go in two directions. One concerns the individual level, and the fear, as Jelena and Mila mentioned, that what has emerged might fade or be forgotten. In those moments, I return to a basic understanding of learning as a relatively lasting change. If learning has occurred—and I believe it has—we are unlikely to simply return to previous ways of thinking and acting. We have experienced that things can be different, and that experience opens up the possibility of choice.

For that reason, I am not particularly concerned at the individual level. What concerns me is the collective level. Will this learning spread, or will it remain limited to individuals and small groups? Will it endure collectively? Here, I agree with Marija—we need to move toward building structures. Over the past year and a half, we have developed new connections—between universities, faculties, and departments. The challenge now is to build structures that can grow out of these connections, without simply reproducing existing hierarchies, but instead enabling different forms of organization.

At the same time, this experience has shown how dependent such processes are on time and space. Without time to meet and think together, and without spaces in which this can happen, it becomes difficult to sustain the forms of collaboration we developed. We saw this once teaching resumed: without shared time and space, the potential for organizing quickly diminished.

Jelena Kleut: And we have to demand it. No one will give it to us. I've experienced this very directly... After that police intrusion, our faculty was sterilized of any sign of the blockades. If they saw a sticker, they would climb onto benches just to remove it. So at our faculty, every trace of the blockades has been erased, as if they had never existed. You cannot imagine it. Once, you were in that beautiful space, and now you walk in—and it's this awful, sterile place.

Now I find myself imagining those little corners of the faculty that I had enriched with cushions—I want that back. I want us to arrange it again.

Mila Bakić: Olja, that point you made really resonates with me. I'm wondering whether it is actually easier for us to organize and connect through these informal structures we created—the Free University and the University in Rebellion—rather than institutionally. In other words, whether it is easier to start from there and then think together about how to bring things back into institutional frameworks. Or perhaps not—I don't know. Right now, the student movement can no longer hold meetings at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, which they could do just two weeks ago. They lost that space. Students have lost the space they had—used by students from different faculties of the University of Belgrade—because this really was a shared home.

University in Rebellion

The “University in Rebellion” (*Pobunjeni univerzitet*) initiative is an informal network of teachers, researchers, teaching assistants, and other university workers associated with the University of Belgrade. It was established in early 2025 to provide self-organized support for the students' demands and to take an active role in the broader social movement. The initiative is guided by principles of freedom of thought and expression, academic and civic solidarity, independence from political parties, transparency, inclusiveness, and horizontal self-organization. It is committed to collaboration with other academic and civic initiatives that share its values and understands itself as a space for participatory learning, knowledge exchange, and the development of new educational practices grounded in critical thinking and solidarity.⁹

And now we are thinking about how to preserve what we achieved, how to continue developing it, even as we have lost what we had, because repression has increased.

Nenad Radulović: You spoke about what we have lost, but I would mention what we have gained—what students have gained through all this, at least at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš. It seems to me that the student voice, for example in the Faculty Council and other bodies, is now seen as much more important and is more valued. I can say this also from a student perspective, since I myself was once a member of the Council as a student. Back then, we were present only for the first two agenda items—those where students voted, such as minutes or reports—and then we would leave.

⁹ Further information is available at <https://www.pobuni.se/index.html>

Now students want to stay, and even if they do not vote, they can participate in discussion. They are invited to speak, for their voice to be heard. They themselves have become more interested in participating in faculty bodies. So I would highlight that moment—the importance of hearing students, what they have to say about all this. In a way, students have become equal members alongside us professors and other staff in discussions about important issues for the faculty.

Nikola Koruga: I think the student plenum must remain a control body over any authority, and that as a society we must understand something that the current authorities cannot—that there is no cult of personality. The plenum is a space people enter and leave as needed. Yes, there is sometimes apathy—fewer people attend—but when important issues arise, many people come. That is precisely what the plenum is for: a space, a forum, where whenever there is a need or an idea, people come and speak. There is no single person, like in a parliament. All those attempts to replicate political or state models within the university have proven not to work. The plenum, on the other hand, is a good control mechanism—it reminds us where we are, what we are, and what we could still become, precisely because it is open and flexible.

Olja Jovanović: Thank you all for taking part in this conversation. I have to admit—I didn't expect it to feel this meaningful to me. It allowed me to see things from different angles and to begin making sense of them at a more conceptual level—and in that way, it created a sense of regaining some control over what is happening.

I'm really glad we had this opportunity to come together, and I hope it won't be the last time—perhaps next time around different questions.

Mila Bakić: Next time when we meet, we'll be dancing *kolo*. (laughter)

Kolo

Kolo is a traditional circle dance widely practiced in Serbia and across the Balkans. Performed in groups, often at celebrations and public gatherings, it involves coordinated steps and collective movement, symbolizing community, continuity, and shared cultural expression. In this context, Mila refers to a widely circulated public statement by a PhD student who, speaking to a reporter from a pro-government tabloid, said that she would dance the kolo when they were arrested, anticipating the downfall of the current regime and the arrest of those aligned with it.

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