

### Levantine Arabic transcript:

نحنى على أيامنا صار الدخول على الجامعة عن طريق المظلات، كل واحد يعمل دورة مظلة يدخلو الكلية اللي بدوها. بسورية بفترة من الفترات طبعا نحنى كاققتصاد موجه أو كحكم لحزب واح. طبعا الحزب الحاكم عنا هوي الحزب البعث العربي الاشتراكي من سنة 1963. بيعتمد على التخطيط للمجتمع ككل. فضمن التخطيط للمجتمع، بيتنم التخطيط للطلبة فدائما في عنا مثلا نحنا انشئت منظمة طلاب البعث بالنسبة للأطفال الصغار للابتدائي، و اتحاد شبيبة الثورة للمرحلة اللي بعدها و الاتحاد الوطني لطلبة سوريا. فكان دائما يعني مثلا الشيبين المنتسبين لاتحاد شبيبة الثورة باستطاعتن بدون النظر بالمجموع. هلا نحنى الدخول على الكليات الجامعية بتنم عن طريق العلامات اللي اخدينا بالبالكوريا. فصارو يعملو دورات للمظليين الشيبين يروح يعمل الواحد دورة بالمظلة و يسقط بالمظلة مثلا اذا حب يدرس طب، يدرس طب، و يكون هوي مانو مؤهل ليدرس طب أو مانو مؤهل ليدرس الفرع اللي هوي في. أساسا نحنا النظام التعليمي عنا ما بينظر لمؤهلات الطالب ما بينظر غير على الورقة اللي كتبها بي ضمن ايام الامتحان بالبالكوريا، و هي ما بتشكل و لا عشرة بالمية من قدرات الطالب، يعني ممكن نحنا ناخذ فيا بالنسبة للعلامات بس ما هي كافي، يعني كلية الحقوق بدها انترفيو بدها مقابلة، هلا بانكلترا اللي زرتها انا و درست فيها بمرحلة من المراحل ببريطانيا، كلية الحقوق ما بيدخلها أي انسان، كليه الحقوق اهم الشئ الشخصية و القدرات و الشخصية و الانسان المعلومات، قدرته على التعبير و قدرته على الفهم بينما عنا كلية الحقوق كان يدخلها الانسان اللي مانو مجمع علامات. حتى المحامي هون يعني ما هي بريستيج، يعني ما كثير الواحد بيفتخر انو محامي لانو نحنى صاير عنا المحامي عبارة عن شخص يعني مثل ما يعني، يشبه ب... مع احترام للمحاميين كلن، مثل معقب المعاملات لانو نحنا عنا حتى القضاء و المرافعات ورقية، يتم على الورق، و امور يعني كلياتنا بتعتمد على الورقيات.

### English translation:

In our times, getting accepted to the university came through parachuting. Everyone who did a parachuting course [for the army paratroopers] would get into the university of his choice. In Syria, during a certain period of time ... naturally we are market-oriented<sup>1</sup> and we have one-party ruling [in the country]. Of course, the ruling party here since 1963 is the Baath Arab Socialist Party. It depends on planning for the entire community, and, as a part of planning for the community, they would plan for students. Thus, we always had things ... like, for example, Vanguard of Al-Baath was established for young kids at the elementary level. And the Syrian Youth Union was established for the next stage, and the National Union for Syrian Students. There was always, for young people who belonged to the Syrian Youth Union ... they could, regardless of their GPAs, [get into any university they chose].

Now, getting accepted by colleges is determined by marks achieved on the *Bakaloria* [examinations]. So they [students] started taking youth parachuting courses for young people,<sup>2</sup> and they would jump with the parachute ... for example, that if he [a student] wanted to study medicine, study medicine, and he doesn't have the qualifications to study medicine, or is not qualified to study in the school he wants. In the first place, our educational system doesn't look at the student's qualifications. It looks at the paper he wrote during the *Bakaloria* examination days, which doesn't even represent 10% of the

<sup>1</sup> He means here that they have a state economy, rather than a market economy.

<sup>2</sup> Those who are part of the Syrian Youth Union.

student's qualifications. Perhaps we can depend on the scores for it, but [scores] aren't enough. I mean, law school usually requires an interview. In England, where I have visited and studied before at some point, law school didn't accept "anyone." In law school, the most important thing is personality, personal capabilities, and the person's general [level of] information, his expressive and comprehensive abilities. While here, law school accepts any person who has scored poorly. Even a lawyer [career] here isn't prestigious. I mean, one cannot be very proud because he is a lawyer. Because a lawyer here has become just someone who.... I mean, he is almost like, with all due respect for lawyers, like a "paperwork pursuer" -- because judicial prosecutions are papers, they are done through papers only, and these things, I mean, only depend on paperwork.

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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