



VNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA

Investidura com a Doctor "Honoris
Causa" per la Universitat de València a
Nataša Kandić

Discurs d'acceptació

València, 31 maig de 2001

Address of Valencia University

**On the Occasion of Awarding the Honorary Doctorate of University of Valencia,
on 31st of May, 2001**

Nataša Kandić

Honorable Rector, dear Faculty members and all of you present here,

I am very grateful to you for recognizing, by such a high and noble honor, the work of mine related to the breeches of human rights in the territory of former Yugoslavia in times of warfare. I am also deeply touched by your hereby clearly expressed concern for the state of human rights in distant lands. That interest is not just a positive motive for all human rights activists, but also the right warning to all perpetrators that their deeds shall not be overlooked. Therefore, I thank you very much indeed. I would also like to extend my appreciation and gratitude to all of Spain. Your authorities, journalists, human rights activists and experts have monitored developments in ex-Yugoslavia in a politically relevant and highly humanitarian way. On numerous occasions I got convinced that foreign issues are dealt with in Spain with due respect for the facts, by immediate contacts with all related parties and based on the wish to help people in need.

I guess I am now supposed to tell you a little about my work, my convictions and my life. This I find somewhat more difficult than to talk about others, but I shall try my best.

Let me start with my relation with Barcelona. That is how my acquaintanceship with Spain got started. That city and its authorities had extended to me very significant support and we established a very close and fruitful relation. They had visited Kosovo in the second half of June 1999, right after the withdrawal of Serbian security forces and FRY military. Cover stories in all world media were full of horror

defeated ones are still so strong as to be the major source of violence and ethnic-based oppression. That is why the endeavor to protect human rights in the Balkans is far from being over. Finally, we got a democratically elected government in Serbia. The war has withdrawn into the heads of most stubborn or most disturbed persons. The defeat of it is still pending. That is why the Humanitarian Law Center, the NGO of which I am the Executive Director, engages a lot in publishing, lecturing and public debates.

Many think that I must be a jurist by education. My son sometimes jokes that I talk too much law, and I risk to be reported as an unauthorized para-legal. Actually, I am a sociologist by education and a social researcher by profession. It is my sincere hope that one day the sociological analysis of human rights breaches shall prevail over legal ones, which shall become a self-understandable routine, but I do not see it yet. I thought you might like to know this, as you are awarding me the honorary doctorate today.

What else? I am a manager, which I hate. I am a mother, which I like. I am quite Spanish by passion, but very restrained when it comes to sensitive issues of human rights. I am particularly happy that since several months ago understanding for my activities is growing in Belgrade, where I live, due to discontinuation of hostile nationalistic propaganda of the now fallen regime, which had systematically labeled me as a traitor of my own nation, which was not only unpleasant but also dangerous. I still cannot call it love, but hatred is hopefully past.

Again, thank you very much for your support and your cordial reception today. I love you all.