

Central Address at the Political-Cultural Meeting NO+ABUSOS¹ O'Higgins Park, Santiago, Chile, 27 October 2019

Dear Comrades, Dear Friends,

This is an historic moment. A whole people has joined the movement of evasion against the increase in the price of the Metro ticket launched by young students throughout the country.

From Arica to Magallanes. There is no commune, hamlet or village where citizens do not express their disagreement against abuse, injustice, impunity, corruption. Millions of Chileans are singing "Chile has woken up".

"Chile has awakened" is the concrete expression that synthesizes the diverse demands of our people to end a system that oppresses and systematically abuses us by denying our rights. It is the expression that expresses our desire to recover the essential rights that allow us to live in dignity, for which it is fundamental to recover the elementary rights extorted during the dictatorship and mercantiled for years by all the governments that have succeeded it, such as health, education, welfare, housing, the right to water and the right to live in a pollution-free environment. This is the end once and for all of the sacrifices that have been forced upon our people.

«Chile has awakened» is a cry for full respect for human rights. This means that young high school students will never again be systematically assaulted by the police and treated brutally as criminals by state agents. This means that social leaders will never again be murdered in strange circumstances without anyone ever knowing who the perpetrators are. This means restoring its dignity and recognizing its status as a nation to the Mapuche people, victims of the permanent militarization that has cost too many human lives, as a consequence of a lax state that refuses to achieve true justice and peace in the Araucaria area.

"Chile has awakened" and has done so as never before from Arica a Magallanes, with strength, conviction, joy and hope, for we have discovered that many of us have had enough, that many of us are weary; but also with mixed feelings, with the sadness and pain of having paid the price of twenty human beings murdered by the repressive regime of Piñera. This is an irreparable loss that the Chilean people must be able to make those responsible pay so that impunity in our country ceases to be a constant. The hundreds of people who were subjected to brutal repression, vexation and torture in the detention camps recalled the worst moments of the criminal dictatorship of Pinochet.

And it is useful to emphasize this, not to revive the pain of the families of those who were murdered during the week of mobilizations, but not to forget and to obtain justice. A people who live permanently by granting impunity to criminals and offenders is a people who find it more difficult to find peace and justice.

All those who have fallen during these weeks deserve our respect and gratitude. Our commitment to them is to continue the struggle to ensure that their death was not in vain.

The awakening of "Chile has grown weary" is not an allegory of unity and peace, as the government and the complacent press have claimed to shamelessly install it. It is not, as Piñera and some of the leaders of the old policy have said, a call to "national unity". Nor do these gigantic mobilizations, the most obvious expression of which was that of Friday, seek to obtain an arrangement "by the top", in the old fashions, between "four walls", "behind the scenes". The weariness of society is also the weariness of dubious arrangements on the backs of citizens. If we

¹ NO+ABUSOS that must be read «No más abusos» means «End the abuse» - Ndt

truly want national unity, we must first restore fundamental rights to individuals, otherwise everything will remain as before.

For the millions who have mobilized, it is an insult, a provocation that those who were the architects of this failed model claim to give us lessons. Today, the policy of targeting subsidies is in crisis. That is what we must end now. Continue with the transfer of public resources to finance immoral affairs that have created private “industries” in health, pensions, education, public transport, trade in water and rent subsidies that promote an indecent housing system. Chile needs a responsible state that guarantees fundamental rights to all the inhabitants of this territory. To all.

As a social movement, as a trade union, we will not give up our role as representatives of an important part of our country, and, in this sense, we reject the attempt of the government and opposition sectors to gain an understanding of the political phenomenon that has exploded in recent weeks, by trying to build a national agreement put forward by always the same. In this sense, we believe it is fundamental to move towards a change of the Political Constitution, change that must necessarily be achieved through a Constituent Assembly that began with the councils that stand autonomously in relation to power, allowing for the broadest deliberation on the part of those who make up our national territory and who are the expression of open multicultural change with the significant presence of a migrant population that requires, for the new social composition, a debate without prejudice or censorship imposed by the State.

“Chile has woken up” and it is our responsibility to all of us that they do not give us a sleeping pill as has happened so often. The government, the former apostles of consultation, the great means of communication are preparing their strategy. They are seeking a way out of this crisis from above, with contempt and disdain for us, the millions who are mobilizing us. The political and economic crisis is no less serious. It can get worse if this government persists in putting forward the same policies that have failed in recent years.

If we stop, if we give up, all this effort and the effort of the twenty comrades who paid with their lives for this revival will have been useless. We urgently need to put in place an immediate agenda of Fundamental Rights. A constituent assembly to guarantee the right to Social Security, which ends with the activities of AFP² and Isapres³. So that there will never again be a health and a retirement for the rich and a health for the poor. A Constituent Assembly to win back Public Education, decent housing, full respect for workers' rights to collective bargaining by branch. A Constituent Assembly that recognizes the diversity of our territory and respects the self-determination of peoples who demand their autonomy. A Constituent Assembly so that all of us can conceive the country we want, without constraints, without restrictions, respecting diversity, respecting the ecosystem and moving towards forms of greater justice and freedom that allow us to achieve the happiness that has been denied us for years by this cruel economic system that favours a few at the expense of others of the majority.

This week, we must stop Piñera. While the people are on the street, they are trying to implement a legislative agenda filled with traps that attack people’s rights. The attempt to reform the failed AFP system must be rejected. We must prevent and reject all the reforms that claim to consolidate the current model that, millions on the streets, we have called into question.

We call on the deputies to define themselves: either they are with the people who demand that their rights be restored, or they are to continue to maintain the current failed system. The time has

2 The AFP (Administradoras de fondos de pensiones) is the individual funded pension system which came into effect in 1980. Each worker is required to contribute at least 10% of their salary to these funds, plus management fees to be paid to these companies on a monthly basis and upon retirement – Ndt

3 The Isapres (Instituciones de Salud Previsional) are private mutual societies created by a law of 1981. These private mutual societies have the right to receive and administer the compulsory contributions (7% of the salary) of all workers who have opted for the private health system instead of the national health system (FONASA) - Ndt

come for them to stand clearly on the side of those who are fighting to make Chile a fairer, more united and truly democratic country.

For all this, we must continue to struggle because we deserve a more just country, free from mercantile conceptions and because we have a legitimate right to be truly happy.

That is why we will not rest. We call to remain alert. Not to give up. We decided that the three days of this short week are intense in mobilization: By strengthening from Monday the territorial councils, continue the protests in all public places. It is necessary to develop union assemblies to debate the current situation and end the week with the call for the blocking of workers for Wednesday, October 30.

Because we have had enough, we have united. Long live those who struggle

Santiago, 27 October 2019

[automatic trans. Reverso]