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# The Chilean Movement

Camila Farias



Demonstrators face the police and military in the city of Santiago, Chile, on 19 October 2019 | Pablo Rojas Madariaga/NurPhoto/PA Images.

The Chilean movement is a social movement that occurred in Chile in October 18, 2019. It was a social eruption that caused many Chileans to come together and end the generational inequality. Chile has been living under the same constitution that was made during the dictatorship regime in the 1980's. It has been 30 years that Chileans have endured the inequality of the economy, health, and educational system. This movement started in Santiago when some students did not want to pay the subway fare, claiming that it was too expensive and unnecessary since people's wages were low and stagnant. They made it a point that it is hard to pay a fare on a daily basis if salaries were not increasing.

Since that altercation many Chileans started getting angry at everything their parents and grandparents had to tolerate since the regime. This movement isn't only about inequality on education, health and the economy. It was also protesting the inequality of the indigenous people known as the "Mapuches". The Mapuches's flag is shown on the left. The Chilean people wanted to voice the issues the Mapuches have endured by protesting their rights and freedom since they are the true natives of Chile.

Every day since that altercation at the subway station in Santiago there has been protest. Some peaceful and some violent. These protest kept going and going until the President Sebastián Piñera, a right-wing Republican spoke out apologizing and claiming that he will increase pensions, have better health coverage, and higher taxes for the rich. As well as pay cuts for politicians. Many Chileans weren't convinced and continued to protest. They wanted the old constitution to be thrown out and to create a new one that is written by the public. Congress came to a conclusion that they are going to hold a ballot in which Chileans will vote if they want a new constitution. Of course, more than 78% of the population voted in favour of a new constitution. Currently, there is another ballot in which Chileans have to vote on who is going to draw up the new constitution and that it will be presented around 2022.



A million or more Chileans took to the streets on Oct. 25. The New York Times.

I went to Chile in December 2019, two months after the movement started. The movement did not end when I was there. It continued throughout the next year 2020. I stayed at my parent's hometown and I witness the destruction of commercial retail companies. However, small businesses remained opened and stable. In my parent's hometown, I witness the police roam around the streets. People would create a bonfire at night and start protesting against the police. At one point I had to run because the people who were protesting against the police were coming my way. And honestly, getting caught and grabbed by a police is worse than being thrown a gas bomb. I've heard stories of protestors getting caught by the police and they weren't pretty. During my duration there it was pretty calm but protestors continued to be vocal and to make sure that they were not quitting and will continue to fight this inequality.



A gathering in Peñalolén, a neighborhood outside Santiago. The New York Times.



Plaza de Dignidad (Santiago, Chile) Military in their tanks hosing and throwing gas bombs at protesters.  
Camila Farias.

Street Art, The Joker. Plaza de Dignidad (Santiago, Chile)  
Camila Farias.

I visited Santiago, which is the capitol of Chile. I went with my older sister. My sister and I roamed around the streets and would take photos of the street art. Which were mainly political. We passed the Plaza of Dignidad which is a place where all the protest starts and where everyone meets. We passed through it the first time and there was peaceful protest and once we went back. The military came out with their tanks and started hosing and throwing gas bombs. I was at a good distance away from the hosing. However, the gas bombs were so strong it stung my nose and eyes. My nose stung so bad and my eyes were so watery I could barely see where I was going. There were older women who had a spray water bottle that has a lemon substance and they would spray it at protestors who couldn't breathe and see and that spray would cause a cooling affect. It did bring my vision back but all I could think about is how did the protestors who were at the frontlines get affected by the gas bombs since I was at a really good distance away from it. But like I said I would rather endure that than be caught by the police. Being there, it was definitely an adrenaline rush. However, I felt a sense of pride that the Chilean people were so united and wanting to make a change in the country overall. The current generation and younger will no longer tolerate the 30 years of the dictatorship regime.



Street Art. "For a 2020 with dignity and a new constitution".  
(Santiago, Chile) Camila Farias.