

39. Sergio Toledo

For me the issue of the process, the process of this pseudo return to democracy, was quite interesting as a person, also a trainer as a person and because it caught me in my twenties, that is, when I was 20, 21 years old, I lived practically all my life within a dictatorship. In other words, I was six years old in 1973 and therefore I lived my whole life within the framework, regulated by a military regime. Also, within a family that had a military background because my father was an Air Force officer, he worked specifically at the Air Force printing press, and you can imagine what it means to, say, live under a State that is run by the military and in your house, you also have a father, who is in the military. So a life within that framework. And then to the extent, to the extent that in my youth I incorporate other studies, other schools, whatever I know, I come to know, other truths that I did not have before I was 15 or 14 years old and I wake up to a world that, that starts to spin in your head.

And perhaps that too, coupled with the natural impulses of the human being. This of the sense of freedom, and what do I know. It became, let's say, in a slightly more powerful way in my this desire to achieve freedom. In personal terms, but also politically, and he caught me absolutely vulnerable, you could say. In other words, in my 13, 14 years I begin to know things. Then at 15 it already developed for me, they begin to appear on the guitar, they begin to appear in the songs, the music, Inti-Illimani, Quilapayún everything, everything, everything you can imagine and absorbing absolutely all of that. Then suddenly I join high school and I begin to learn about history from other perspectives and from other perspectives. And I begin to know that deeper story, getting my hands on books that you didn't have. And this is precisely led by history teachers or philosophy teachers, language teachers who are opening up a world for you. They also open up that world of the political for you a bit, to know a bit about political trends and political needs as well. And participatory processes. I am in a school where, for example, the participatory process was permanent, that is, not stable. No, they don't put us in a kind of laboratory and tell us to see, we're going to work based on projects, just as I was forming and suddenly becoming culturally enriched, because before that there was cultural poverty. So all these processes of search for democracy appear with great force from the age of 15, 16 years.

Situations appear in Chile, for example, such as the death of priests. Well, the persecuted, the tortured, the detained, the disappeared, there was a period when not much was said, but suddenly the information began to surface again and people began to open up that information much more and democratize it a little more.

Finally the plebiscite is held. She had an effervescence in terms of even effervescence in the media, because we never saw a strip, a political strip that showed the alternative, for 16 years. And then you began to see that it was possible, because there was one, it was a strip of more politics that offered you, offered you a new horizon, with colors. Many people from that time who had never voted in their lives did not know what it was. For them, for all the Chilean people, including the military, I think that everything that was happening was completely new. It was complex and in my house in particular it was a very, very delicate issue, because as a soldier my father had certain responsibilities and he had to fulfill them, because that's just the way it is. And he lost sight of home a lot, because he had to be on guard, as they call him there, every other day. So, he was out for a night. Then he would arrive, sleep and the other day he would go on and be out again for a night. And it was the case of almost all the military in the country

who were under a state, not of siege, but of permanent alert, guards for a full month and thus they were doing rotations. Therefore, it was a period for our family quite hard. In that sense, let's say.

And then my mother, I think it must have been her who was channeling this whole process within the family. And, well, I am the eldest of three brothers, we are three boys, and I am the most restless of all in political terms, the others watching from afar. I participated a lot in movements, student movements during 1985 and 1986, and my relationship within the family was quite complex in that sense. So. But as the older brother, and also looking a little at what was happening with my younger brothers, I felt the responsibility of trying not to involve them in anything and my subject was absolutely lonely and hidden in the background. But in the familiar way, let's say, it was a subject that, with this number of years apart, one can observe and with a little melancholy, let's say, see how they lived through all that. It was very hard. I don't know, maybe the last year, from the moment this possibility of opening was established. Everything that my father lived through fundamentally and, well, my mother, obviously.

The day of the referendum was an incredible day. The country moved. The country moved. My quartered father was assigned to a school, a school that they had to take care of and he had already been away from home for two nights. Two or three nights, I don't remember well. And well, my mother with her soul on a thread, as they say in Chile, right? In other words, with permanent concern, because I didn't know if this was going to work out or not, that my father was there with a gun in his hand. He evidently had to stand guard and I don't know what. I do not know how much. And with his three children there, one a bit crazy and the other two who were still small. So, it was quite a particular situation. And on the day of the plebiscite, well, my mother votes, I vote. My father understands that he votes in the place where he was working. But in my house we didn't talk much. No, not much was said, because I think it was precisely because it was known that there was one, that we had conflicting visions; With great respect yes, but conflicting visions. But we don't talk. And I remember that I was next to the television all day after going to vote. I was there all day, everything, all day, until the last minute. When Cardemil already recognizes, let's say, the triumph of the No. I understand that many people came out to celebrate at that moment, they were in the street, what do I know. But I couldn't because I was; deep down he was the man of the house, that day. I had to stay at home because I had to see my brother and support my mother. And my mother sleeping, suddenly I tell mom she won the No and her answer was, "That's great, son! I hope we are calmer now." It was all. That was her sentence and she then went back to sleep.

The next day I leave very early and I was in the Alameda all day. I walked the Alameda from end to end. Celebrating with joy with the people, the people of Chile, who were in the streets, who went to the Alameda that I walked, which was a gigantic feeling of freedom. I don't remember another moment before that when, indeed, the street, the Alameda, the most important road of Santiago, was ours. It was, it was from the town the one who voted, the one who voted No. One was with the police and hugged the police and they smiled. Some also hugged. It was an unforgettable life experience. In other words, that joy shared with a people. I know, expressing their joy, people with whom I worked in the Church, because I work a lot with parishes. People from the Chilean Church were also there, actively participating in the street with the others, greeting each other, looking at La Moneda from a place where we usually couldn't see it, because La Moneda was always under siege, let's say. The military or police did

not allow you to get close. It was a beautiful sunny day. A lot of sun I remember, a lot of water too. Because I don't know, people were throwing water everywhere, I don't know. The show was very beautiful. Y. A new door was opened, let's say. We do not know. Here came another new process. It was felt at that minute that Pinochet had been defeated. The cover of Fortín Mapocho said, "he ran alone and arrived on a second place". And now a new process began. The plebiscite was to say "we started a new process." That.