

50 Years is Nothing Except When it Makes Me Stop and Look.

Jose Hernan Cifuentes.

I grew up with the fire of a family embrace announcing the arrival of a new year in Chile.
I felt the years come and go like planets leaving the warmth of a New Year's Eve.
Nobody taught me how to celebrate half centuries, perhaps because they did not imagine
being able to live so many years, or maybe the wait was too long.
On 11 September 2023 I will be 50 years away from the land in which I was born, although I
didn't ask to be born on that day, let alone with Hawk
Hunters bombing the Moneda nor tanks occupying the streets of Santiago.

Here they call me 'the Chilean', synonymous with foreigner.
They tell me that my name and the way I talk sounds nice, it's bullshit, so as not to call me
a stranger.
And to who, who gives a shit where I come from and where I go, knowing that calling me a
foreigner
they can excuse empires, military coups, dictatorships, invasions and bankers.

Yes, I was born on 11 September 1973 in Chile and although I was baptised and educated as
a Christian,

I was condemned as a Communist for raising my voice against injustice.

And when my blood boiled upon seeing how they were making my brothers and sisters
disappear,
I was labelled an extremist.

And I have known prison, torture, oppression, banishment and exile, I couldn't return home,
say goodbye to my mother nor carry on speaking the language I was born with.

An 11 September 1973 in Chile, or a 9/11 as they would say in English, although with the
same blood and the same number of deaths as on 11 September 2001 in the USA,
the Chilean 9/11 never named, never recognised, always silenced.

But we are still fighting and we are still here.

Yma o Hyd

Jose Hernan Cifuentes
Former Chilean political refugee.