

At the end of October, a referendum was held in Chile to decide whether the constitution imposed by the Pinochet military dictatorship in 1980 should be repealed and a new constitution drafted in a broad social dialog.

This referendum was preceded by months of protests against the reactionary policies of the current government under Sebastian Pinera. Workers, students and even small entrepreneurs protested repeatedly against increases in fares, tuition fees and other forms of shifting the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the population.

The government also legitimized its measures by referring to the constitution, which deleted all social protection rights for the population that had been expanded under the government of Salvador Allende.

The FIR recalls: The "Chicago Boys", who as advisors for Pinochet after the CIA-supported coup against Allende on 11 September 1973 massively influenced the development in Chile, had created the model example of neoliberal economic policy with the constitution introduced in 1980. The consequences were devastating for the Chilean people over the next four decades.

It is significant that even with the end of military dictatorship, this constitution was not repealed. Apparently, the economic profiteers of the Pinochet dictatorship continued to be so powerful politically that they would not allow any change to it.

The wide protest actions that shook the country in recent months forced the government to consider changing the constitution. As a way out of the situation that the government could no longer control, Sebastian Pinera announced a plebiscite on the constitutional process, in which he hoped to be able to retain at least some of his positions of power.

The result of the plebiscite was a great victory for the democratic and antifascist forces of the Chilean people. Almost 80 % of the voters voted in favor of suspending the Pinochet constitution and drafting a new one. However, what is at least as important is the result of the second referendum question. Nearly 80% of the voters voted in favor of all deputies of this Constituent Assembly being elected by direct popular vote and not half of them being elected by

Parliament. This is a great victory for direct democracy. This means that the progressive forces not only have the possibility to reach the majority of the deputies, but also that a blocking policy by the reactionary forces, which could block progressive decisions with one-third of the seats, can be prevented.

For this, it is important that the democratic and anti-fascist parties and groups join forces in the spirit of the former "Unidad Popular" and put up common candidates for this constitutional conference, so that the influence of the reactionary forces in this assembly is kept as small as possible.

The FIR congratulates its Chilean member organization and all democrats to this victory and wishes much success on the way to the democratization of the country.

FIR (Fédération Internationale des Résistantes - Association des Antifascistes)