

CHILE'S STUDENT PROTESTERS

By Tim Padgett

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A charismatic, left-wing undergraduate, Camila Vallejo.

Resumen.

Tim Padgett señala que Chile pese a sus éxitos económicos muestra uno de los primeros lugares mundiales en desigualdad social. Esto es



CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS DE OPINIÓN
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES Y HUMANAS
UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA

producto de un modelo económico neoliberal extremista. Sin embargo, las grandes manifestaciones sociales (ecológicas y estudiantiles) han mostrado un país inconforme y una violenta represión policial a los estudiantes que exigen cambios estructurales en la sociedad chilena.

Abstract.

Billionaire President Sebastián Piñera was riding as high as the Andes when 2011 began and enjoyed a 63% approval rating. Chile widely touted as Latin America's most developed nation, but festering behind the fortunate façade were long unaddressed issues of inequality that belied Chile's First World status.

The real hot button, however, was— and during Chile's southern hemisphere winter, students took to the streets en masse to force Piñera to address their grievances about access to quality education. Led by a charismatic 23-year-old, left-wing undergraduate, Camila Vallejo, the uprising, has grown into a broader demand for structural change in Chile. It has also sent the rightist Piñera's approval rating plunging as low as 27% (currently 31%), while as many as 79% (currently 67%) of Chileans have said they back the student protesters.

Article.

Chile was riding as high as the Andes when 2011 began. Widely touted as Latin America's most developed nation, it had won global acclaim a few months earlier for the miraculous rescue of 33 trapped miners.



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Thanks in part to that feel good story, billionaire President Sebastián Piñera enjoyed a 63% approval rating. But festering behind the fortunate façade were long unaddressed issues of inequality that belied Chile's First World status.

Tens of thousands marched to protest Piñera's backing of a massive hydroelectric dam in pristine Patagonia, which seemed to symbolize the country's overindulgence of big business. The real hot button, however, was access to quality education — and during Chile's southern hemisphere winter, students took to the streets en masse to force Piñera to address their grievances. Led by a charismatic 23-year-old, left-wing undergraduate, Camila Vallejo, the uprising, which has witnessed violent clashes between police and demonstrators, has grown into a broader demand for structural change in Chile.

It has also sent the center-right Piñera's approval rating plunging as low as 27% (currently 31%), while as many as 79% (currently 67%) of Chileans have said they back the student protesters.

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