

Portugal: "We have done something extraordinary"

Wednesday 3 October 2012, by [GONCALVES Ana Carla](#) (Date first published: 15 September 2012).

This is the text of the speech made by Ana Carla Gonçalves at the end of the demonstration on September 15, in Lisbon, on behalf of the collective "Que se lixe a Troika. Queremos as nossas vidas!" (Out with the Troika! We want our lives!). This text was first published on the web site of the collective [1].

Comrades, today, we have done something extraordinary. We are doing it now. This demonstration is all of you who are here. It began with a call from a group of citizens from various sectors of intervention and various political currents, who wanted to contribute to a strong and broad mobilization against the Troika, the Troikists and the austerity policies that they are imposing on us. The strength of those who have taken to the streets across the country shows that, together, we can change what is wrong. We can do something extraordinary.

We are in the street, here, in Angra do Heroísmo, Aveiro, Barreiro, Beja, Braga, Bragança, Caldas da Rainha, Cascais, Castelo Branco, Castro Verde, Coimbra, Covilhã, Évora, Faro, Figueira da Foz, Funchal, Guarda, Guimarães, Lamego, Leiria, Loulé, Marinha Grande, Mogadouro, Moncorvo, Nazaré, Nisa, Odemira, Peniche, Ponta Delgada, Portalegre, Portimão, Porto, Santa Maria da Feira, Santarém, Setúbal, Sines, Tomar, Torres Novas, Torres Vedras, Viana do Castelo, Vila Real, Viseu, and also in the world, in Barcelona, in the United States and Canada, in Fortaleza (Brazil), in Macao, London, Paris, Brussels and Berlin.

According to the information that we have, nearly a million people have taken to the streets. We are at this moment in the streets, doing something extraordinary and with a clear message: we want our lives, without negotiation, without warm clothing, simply a dignified life.

It's extraordinary to show them that no, we are not resigned. We do not believe that the misery that they want to impose on us is inevitable: the misery of the lack of bread, lost housing, the misery of precarious work, of the work they steal from us, of the right to a decent job that is denied us; the misery of transport services, whose prices are increasing to the point where we can no longer pay them, and which we need to go to work or school - our public schools that they want to rob us of, just as they want to rob us of the right to be sick and to have decent treatment in the public health service that belongs to us.

And culture? And water? And all the rest?

This demonstration is the beginning of many other things.

We need a citizenship that is awakened and mobilized.

It is urgent that we take change into our own hands.

Our protest and our coming together can and should be expressed in all areas of our lives: at work, in the neighbourhoods, at school, at home.

Once and for all, we will show that we know how to unite. We will actively participate so that never again will anyone govern us badly.

It is urgent to disobey.

When there is no respect for people, when there are only taxes and lies, when there are only measures implemented in defiance of the will of the people and when non-elected institutions decide everything, it's time to say: no!

Every struggle and every battle will be vital.

We were already close to boiling point, but the absurd and very violent character of the communication from the country's Prime Minister and the disastrous and very serious measures announced by the Minister of Finance have exceeded our patience and our tolerance for political lies, social injustice and the destruction of the economy.

For this government, it doesn't matter that its policies only serve to cause misery. For this government, the lie is the reality. Their technical manuals and their theoretical models say that we have to be poor, we have to be cheap, we have to be delivered to the law of the jungle. That we must be sacrificed so that they - this abstract entity that can do everything with our lives - can meet a mandatory programme, which serves only to stifle the economy, increase unemployment and inequality, destroy common goods.

We will concretise our protest and demand in unison that this government of the Troika - this government that is more Troikist than the Troika - resigns!

But it cannot stop there.

We do not want to replace this government of the Troika by another government of the Troika, not even in a softened version.

The Troika does not help. The Troika does not save. The Troika crushes us, kills us, overwhelms us. The Troika and its austerity measures do not work. They do not work here, they do not work in Spain, they do not work in Greece, they do not work in Ireland, they do not work in Italy. They do not work in Cyprus. They do not work in Latvia. They have already been tested and have never worked. Austerity has never succeeded in the world and it will never work...

Our demonstration - our demonstrations - are a red card for all the austerity policies of this government, but also of every government that purports to implement such measures, even if it were to change their names and the way they were implemented, even if it made them completely insipid.

Today, we have come together to demand that the agreement with the Troika - cynically called protocol of agreement - be torn up.

Today, we say that we will not allow measures of austerity and pillage to steal our lives in order to save the banks, to increase the accounts kept in tax havens, to inject millions into the big economic groups.

United, we demand that, once and for all, the Memorandum of the Troika be refused, because it leads us to poverty, to bankruptcy, to chaos in our lives. And the rejection of European austerity is the demand for a different Europe.

And we are not alone. In Spain too, they are now shouting in the streets “Basta!” (“Enough!”). And tomorrow, the choir will be even more deafening: Greece, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, all the voices together to shout to the world that there are people inside the offices who have names and that they are enacting measures that enslave us and kill us, that govern against us, as if it was in our name.

People who as Father António Vieira would say “don’t come here to seek our good, but come here to seek our goods.” Tomorrow, we will be present in different actions of protest of Portuguese society. At this stage of our struggle, it is essential to give force to a general strike. A strike by which, everywhere, people from all sectors of work, office workers, precarious workers and the unemployed, will stop the country and say once and for all: “Enough is enough! We are not figures with which to inflate bank accounts. We have our lives. We are not a tame and quiet herd. Stop playing with us. Stop robbing us of our work and our dignity! »

And it is important that this is a popular strike. A strike by people, for people, who are threatened and subjected to blackmail to not stop working, as if they were machines. So we will make every effort to help build a popular general strike, driven forward by the trade unions with the population and civil society, which will be able to stop the whole country in a united way against this disaster that they want to impose on us.

But even more: it is our duty to resist. To do less would be to give up our lives. We must organize resistance. We must organize ourselves accordingly. At the local level, among friends and neighbours, with collectives, with organizations that exist and with organizations that will be created by the strength of our rebellion and our determination. We commit ourselves to support this strike, this resistance and this fightback, and to demonstrate, as we have done today, that people who do not agree on everything can unite for a cause. And today the cause is our lives. It is important that this struggle ignores borders and that it assumes, as today, an Iberian, European, international dimension.

On 21 September, in the evening, a State Council will be held, convened by the President. It is important that, on this occasion, we gather at Belem to remind them that we demand the resignation of this government and that we accept no ‘solution’ that follows the commandments of the Troika. Government: out! Troika: out!

Out with the Troika! Out with the Troikists! We want our lives! And we will have them, because today is the first day of our struggle.

Ana Carla Gonçalves

P.S.

* Translation International Viewpoint. <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/>

* Ana Carla Gonçalves is a spokesperson of the collective “Que se lixe a Troika. Queremos as nossas vidas!” (Out with the Troika! We want our lives!) in Portugal.

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.queselixeatroika15setembro.blogspot.pt/>