

**Summary of Toni Barbará's presentation – Mareas Blancas
PIE Summer University 2024 – Mieres Asturias)**

Workshop "Defending Public Services to Defeat Neoliberalism"

Title: Fighting is Health Because Health is Fighting

1.- Presentation:

I intervene as an "older" long-term activist. Physician specialized in Internal Medicine and Public Health. Councillor and advisor in several legislatures in the government of the cities of Barcelona and Badalona. Founder of Dempeus por la salud, of Mareas Blancas de Catalunya and its state coordinators. Founding member of the PIE, (Rome 2004), of several Executives and coordinator for years of the Public Services Working Group of the EL

Currently committed to the same values and principles from the role of social activist

2.- Frame / Context.-

2.1.- A crucial moment in history, in a tremendous syndemic, following one another pandemic after pandemic, COVID-19 health crisis, Climate Crisis with current expression of extreme heat, humanitarian and socio-political crises, refugees, extreme poverty, gerontophobia, xenophobia, emergence of populisms of a fascist nature. A war and military crisis with dozens of wars underway, and with the maximum expression of horror in the Genocide perpetrated in Gaza-Palestine by the state of Israel with the active support of the USA and NATO. Crisis of a Third World War, of atomic weapons and lethal threat to the planet

2.2. I believe and propose that it is urgent and necessary to overcome old tactics that divide, fracture and block a decisive advance in the development of humanity and peace. It is time to "activate a new civil and civilizing strategy" capable of generating a powerful social and political bloc in the face of the aforementioned threats. Denying the majority to the discourse in the socio-cultural-political drift promoted by dominant "media", and with alienating results and social pathology Confront this neo-liberal narrative of imperialism and capitalism, with our positions and actions, in an active, frontal, and persevering way in the struggle against this revived neo-fascism

2.3.- Today it is essential to have a global, inclusive, panoramic, holistic approach, on a global scale, and one of the best axes to develop, for usefulness and reliability, according to my life of experience is the call to fight for HEALTH, which means, LIFE. In antagonistic contrast to death, violence, destruction, misery, hunger, suffering, inequality, patriarchy, injustice... which today are preached without shame by radical populist neo-liberal leaders, in a brutal expression that includes the demolition of social, democratic rights or universal, guaranteed, equitable, integral, solidary Public Services.

We are talking about Health with its determinants: work, education, housing, environment, culture, social services. And it is a matter of speaking it in an intelligible, ASSERTIVE, Emancipatory, Self-critical, firm, reasoned and wise way, in the words of the poet Gabriel Celaya... *"fiercely existing, blindly affirming"*

3.- Health and Health.-

3.1.- From the broad, transversal conception of Health, not to be confused with technicalities in health (of course including but not excluding the social dimension) or the interests of the market, health business sector and the pharmaceutical industry. Health "as that way of living autonomously, supportive and happy"

3.2.- What is happening in the field of health today? Globally and locally. Just to point out some concepts-script of the growing critical situation of recent years

Re-confirmed diagnosis of premeditated and unpunished demolition of the national Public Health Systems, following the same neoliberal global strategy with particular applications: Commodification of health, Submission to business and market objectives over social priority. Exploitation of workers in the sector, in degrees of precariousness and degradation of working conditions. Destruction of the Primary Care model that is based on knowledge, longitudinality, presence, humanity and empathy between the health team/patient (and as a citizen of the system), Introduction of new technologies (AI) in its most erosive version for the law and most lucrative for profit, Ongoing attack on Health Big Data with liberalization and lack of control of the medical records of the entire population,

What is the fundamental mechanism in this degradation? We have been warning, explaining and providing irrefutable experiences for years, even in this same space of the PIE. Unfortunately we were right in the alarm, and today it is publicly recognized by prestigious media as recognized as The Lancet, that the study followed in health systems that have been privatized has shown the worst results of all kinds, and especially in terms of cure, health and efficiency, receiving their operation with logic, Values and objectives of public services aimed at social rights They call it "**PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION**" and insist with all the force of their media and all the complicities of their ultraliberal policies, on the goodness and preeminence of this "mixed" mechanism that they adorn with all the adjectives of synergy, efficiency, empowerment, etc.

This "partnership" is not such collaboration but a real PARASITIZATION of public resources (generally scarce) to be derived, outsourced, delivered to the private profits of companies, foundations or concertations of a thousand types in an exercise of financial engineering that obscures the traceability of these resources to end up in profits of the market and the health business sector. It is the destruction of the public, it is deception of the citizenry whose contributions of work effort and taxes are usurped for the greatest benefit, IMPUNE, of the macro-companies dedicated to this formula of intolerable appropriation.

4.- So, what to do?

To close this space, we just propose "verbs" that by nature represent actions, changes, new dynamics and hope: **Learn – Listen – Correct – Reconquer what was won and now they take away from us – Make yourself understood**

The struggle for Health and Life is in this sense a Safe and Useful action. To turn in a plural and fraternal way to social and socio-cultural activism, as well as political activism, - To converge in the struggles, with the same objectives and the same enemies, To empower citizens as legitimate holders of "the public" and to develop legislation for social advancement (traditionally insufficient and also unfulfilled)... As the classic said to the classic question: Socialism compañeras.

He ended by recalling that "*when you fight, you run the risk of winning*". That the only conquest lost with certainty is the one abandoned and given for lost. That in the face of the disqualification that he points out to us by saying "*what you do is useless*" to respond that the struggle, that the tides, that the demands, that the mobilizations are precisely what is most useful.

Demonstratedly. Those of us who are already very old continue to call it the Revolution. Health and fight!!

Toni Barbará Molina Barcelona July 2024