

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

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"This is hardly a time for glossing over realities; we need to talk frankly... We need to examine the situation from all angles and revise our budget. All of us, including elected officers, will have to accept major sacrifices, but at the same time we must assure our members that our services will become more effective than before. We will have to calmly examine the reasons behind the departure of some of our members, staying realistic but not panicking. We must not allow ourselves to compromise

"Some of you would like union life to be less arduous. There are concerns and you are asking yourselves some questions. I am very aware of what is happening, but I will not let myself be distracted from the realities of union life. I will be there when unions call on me to help them with negotiations. I will defend the positions that have historically characterized our conventions. I will not budge one iota."

Marcel Pepin, CSN Confederal Council (4 October 1972)

Comrades,

These were the words with which Marcel Pepin, one of the CSN's great presidents, opened the Confederal Council of October 4th, 1972 after tens of thousands of members left the CSN. In the years that followed, our movement suffered other defections, driven by a corporatist, simplistic trend that turned its back on the fundamental meaning of our efforts and the kind of union movement that we advocate.

Today we are facing our most difficult times since that period. But almost 100 years of history remind us of the need to continue to promote a syndical and social vision aimed at transforming workplaces and society overall so that workers, and the population as a whole, can make progress.

More than ever, we must not veer from our path or distort our mission. We must continue to devote all our time and energy and the resources that we share within our confederation to achieving this goal.

Why, then, did some 22,700 members in the health and social services sector decide to leave us in the votes imposed by the Couillard government last March? What happened to make members of unions affiliated with the CSN for decades decide to join other unions? After all, we seemed to have all that we needed, including our built-in democratic processes, to deal with problems, adjust our approach if need be, and make the appropriate changes if members criticized how we deliver our services.

Let me digress for a moment. You have undoubtedly noticed that no other union organization was invited to the opening session of this 65th Convention. This is not common practice for us. Certainly, there have been times when the president of the FTQ, for example, didn't participate in our convention. For those of you attending a convention for the first time, you should know that the presidents of the FTQ and CSQ have always been invited to speak to CSN convention delegates,

and they did in fact speak at the 64th Convention in Québec City. I myself spoke at the FTQ convention earlier this year.

We decided that it was better not to invite them to our triennial meeting this year because of the particular context resulting from the recent votes in healthcare and social services – and because it is preferable to be on our own. It is clear, though, that if we are to halt the dismantling of Québec's social State, then the way we must mobilize socially is by uniting in action with all other union and grassroots forces. We must not wage this battle separately, in isolation from one another – too much is at stake. We will have no choice but to resume discussions with these two pivotal unions at the appropriate time, at which point we will defend the viewpoint of our members. End digression.

In the meetings I've attended recently, I expressed that the voting results had sent a shockwave through our organization. And I'm weighing my words, here. This is not CSN's first crisis. In the very bitter battles we have waged, often against adversaries that were stronger than us, we have sometimes fallen; we've sometimes lost. We have endured many attacks aimed at weakening the CSN and its members. As I said earlier when I quoted comrade Marcel Pepin, the CSN lost close to one third of its membership between 1972 and 1976. Another harrowing episode in our history was the dispute at Manoir Richelieu – marked in part by the presence of an infiltrator in our ranks, and by bosses colluding with the government to take advantage of the situation to weaken us even further.

Each time, we dug deep within ourselves to pull together and resist. We never relied on evasion or equivocation.

Again today, we have to take full account of the results, analyze all aspects of the situation, and draw up an honest, unflinching assessment of the services we offer, our mission, and the steps we take to achieve our goals. We must do it openly and honestly. As I've said on numerous occasions: both in drafting this assessment and in proposing solutions, nothing is beyond question or criticism.

We must, of course, draw on the lessons learned from this attack to prevent future losses, and most importantly, to strengthen union engagement, presence and actions of the CSN and its members. The loss of thousands of our members weakens the entire movement. I would like to reassure you that we are already thinking through and taking action to establish the conditions that will enable the CSN to continue to play its role to the fullest extent, in workplaces and in society more broadly.

In this raiding campaign, we were up against corporatist and profiteering organizations that often presented a sad image of the state of unionism. Are the cost of insurance plans or the level of union dues really the main reasons why workers decide to organize or join a union? Has the union movement in healthcare and social services become so distorted?

If arguments like these have found fertile ground in our ranks, it's because we have a lot of trouble explaining and promoting the value of the kind of unions that we advocate and the services that we offer at all levels of our organization. We can denounce the other

unions and their campaigns all we like, but so long as we don't recognize this difficulty, we can neither correctly diagnose the situation nor take the right steps to deal with it.

We have an obligation to try to understand why, for example, nurses, professionals, and technicians in this sector chose to leave our organization in favour of unions whose role is limited to defending only the most basic interests of their members.

We do have to defend members' interests. We have to do it. It's what we do day in, day out. But our activist work is not limited to focusing on the interests of one category of employees, especially not by pitting them against all the others for the sole benefit of a minority. No, we have to advance collectively. We also have to act in the interests of the greatest number. Unions must always aim for solidarity, not division. "The progress of each depends on the progress of all," said Marcel Pepin.

We have chosen out of solidarity to pool our resources and support those who would not be able to advance otherwise. It's what we do at the CSN, bringing together workers from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life. That's the meaning of our confederation: offering professional services, a professional defence fund, equalization payments, and fair internal taxation.

How would it be possible to organize CPEs, private residential centres, or units of fewer than 20 or even 10 workers if all that existed were unions that only represented one (or a few) specific employment categories?

Some of them boast about how militant they are. But this raises the question: how do their struggles help *others* to progress, and not just their own members? If they are truly militant, I invite them to join our ranks. The autonomy they would be afforded by joining the CSN would allow them to pursue their struggles on behalf of their members, while also participating in the organization's project of openness and solidarity as well as concretely supporting other unions in their collective bargaining. The labour movement would be made better off as a result. Indeed, autonomy and solidarity are two of the CSN's greatest strengths.

Corporatist unions have long since revealed their limitations by isolating their advocates and dividing workers. Nobody in this room here thinks that this kind of unionism will reverse the rollbacks in healthcare and education, or do a better job of defending workers' interests in complex free trade agreements, for example. Because it's the CSN's kind of unionism that you have chosen and by which you stand.

However, a form of corporatism is also present in our own ranks. This is why it's our duty to always keep in mind that although every union must meet its members' needs in accordance with their realities, the CSN's distinct brand of unionism goes further and makes it possible to wage battles that wouldn't be possible otherwise. I'm referring here to battles waged by unions for their members' working and living conditions, as well as the vast social and political mobilization that led, for example, to the *Pay Equity Act*, educational childcare services, the Québec Parental Insurance Plan, and — years earlier — the anti-scab law.

That said, we need to analyze the results of these votes in depth in order to act accordingly, and we need to do so promptly. These results require us to question the very meaning of our mission. We must do it with the courage necessary to identify the reasons that led to such disappointing results. There is the rise of individualism, which ends up strengthening particular interests. There is the idea of unions as insurance policies rather than forces of change. We will have to take a good look at ourselves—at what we may have missed along the way.

Carrying out this exercise openly implies taking into account the debates and results of decisions we as a movement made regarding jurisdiction over these classes of personnel, including the decisions made at our 62nd convention in 2008. For more than 50 years, we have tried to create a space in which technicians and professionals working in healthcare and social services could feel comfortable practicing a kind of unionism that constantly needs to be reinvented. In light of the voting results, we are forced to admit that we have failed. We can't eschew our obligations; there are questions that need answering.

We also have to wonder about the reasons that drove thousands more of our members in Classes 2 (paratechnical auxiliary services and trades personnel), 3 (office employees), and even 4 (technicians and professionals) to have chosen CUPE or Local 298, two organizations that do not offer their locals a level of autonomy comparable to ours, although we represented a majority in those categories.

To what extent are the services we're responsible for delivering to our affiliated unions in danger? Is the turnover of union staff representatives too high in some places? Was there not enough stability? Did the quality of services suffer as a result?

We also have to consider the state of local union life and intervene if the situation demands it. Did the absence of a robust union life or the attitude of certain local representatives with respect to their own members and their institutional role contribute to the exodus of members who found it simpler to change their affiliation than to choose an executive committee that would do a better job of representing them and their opinions?

Is it the case that some people simply feel like "change for the sake of change," as if all unions were identical? Though victories are rare in the context of the syndical crisis we're undergoing, especially in the public sector where the effects of under-funding and budget cuts have been felt for over 25 years, did some people simply say to themselves, "All in all, why not just switch unions?" Did they tell themselves that they had nothing to lose by joining organizations that promised lower union dues and cheaper group insurance?

Were the results of the last round of public-sector bargaining perceived as the CSN's failure, when it was the Common Front that negotiated the agreement that was reached?

That agreement certainly didn't meet all the expectations of government employees. We remain convinced, however, that the tremendous mobilization of public-sector union members, despite the limits imposed on them by the Essential Services Act, managed to force the government to offer more than it had originally set out in its budget. It may not have been the agreement of the century, but the Common Front had thought that it would

be impossible to win more. The CSN has always played a leading role in the Common Front, including every stage in this round of bargaining. Our unions did a remarkably militant job of mobilizing during this period. I can confirm that without our interventions up to and including in the final moments of negotiations, the settlement would have been inferior.

It's a fact that the main criticisms levelled at this agreement came from within our own ranks. In workplaces and meetings as well as on social media, the CSN and its spokespeople were criticized more heavily than anyone else. The comments were often incisive, even provocative. Any worthwhile analysis of the vote's results and their causes cannot decline to examine this phenomenon.

There are some who may be in for a rude awakening when they realize that the autonomy they held so dear in the context of the CSN is no longer possible in their new organizations. They may also come to understand why union dues are lower there when they notice the lack of decent services. They may realize that cheap insurance plans have consequences when they discover that their coverage is severely limited.

This is not what's important right now, though. I repeat: we need to take an unflinching look at our organization. It's our responsibility to do so in collaboration with all concerned parties, unions included, in order to make the right decisions that will bring about change at all levels of our movement with a view to reversing the situation we're in.

The process that lies ahead requires that the CSN work actively, starting now, to support the members and unions that have chosen our organization. Together with the two federations involved in healthcare and social services as well as the central councils, we have to make sure that these members and these unions receive the services they expect from their federations and central councils, and that they get answers to the questions they're asking.

I would go even further. We have to take a hard look at our entire movement. We mustn't delude ourselves. Outside the healthcare sector, union life is not always sufficiently dynamic to meet the challenges facing us and to withstand the attacks on us in the workplace and society. One of the barometers of union life is members' participation in their general meetings. There's no getting around the fact that involvement is not always as high as it should be.

What are the reasons? There may be many: are CSN campaigns too disjointed, which might discourage members? Is union work so bureaucratized that local representatives are cut off from their rank and file? Are services inadequate, leaving members dissatisfied? Etc.

The relevance of the labour movement is constantly challenged by right-wing employers and mouthpieces. This is nothing new. But the attacks are now more virulent than ever. Workers, including our members, are engaged members of society just like everyone else. They are part of society and some of them may be open to anti-union arguments. After all, votes for the PLQ and the CAQ came from all sectors of society.

Unions may have lost their virtue in the eyes of some people, but it is our duty to show why they are still worthwhile and necessary. This is how you should interpret the resolution on union life that will be presented to you later today. How do we maintain a legitimate, democratic union life that corresponds to the new realities of our society and the labour world? Union life transcends our organization. It is a necessity. And our local general membership meetings, stimulated by an active union life, reflect this. These meetings are a source of strength for unions. They are host to the debates that ultimately result in a more cohesive, united union, giving it the strength to face the boss or the government. They are where solidarity is expressed through rallying the solidarity that then guides our action.

It is also the setting for exercising autonomy, one of the fundamental principles that we cherish and that emboldens us. Allow me to cite a passage from our *Statement of Principles*:

This autonomy is enhanced by a constant concern for organizing solidarity with other components of the movement. Unions that are free and at the same time responsible for their decisions and actions are what this movement's democratic workings and solidarity are founded on.

It is thanks to this autonomy that unions can develop their own perspectives. They do so by building solidarities within our movement that will enable them to make progress while participating in the advancement of other unions. Dynamic union life in the CSN therefore also means ceaseless activist work to strengthen local autonomy as well as the solidarity across our movement.

In confronting employers or governments, the CSN's solidarity is its best chance at success. Make no mistake about it: the autonomy of affiliated organizations, unions, central councils, and federations has nothing to do with being independent per se. The decisions made by one have an impact on all the others.

We have to get down to work as soon as our convention finishes in order to assure workers that the CSN is *the* union organization that's best able to help them move forward. In a speech given 30 years ago, comrade Gérald Larose, who presided over our organization in the '80s and '90s, reiterated that the composition of the CSN had helped build "an overall balance of power that can be brought to bear in large part because the CSN includes the broadest range of all categories of employees in the most sectors of the economy. It is this representational dynamic that gives the CSN the moral credit it has in collective bargaining." And I would add: is the source of solidarity that gives the CSN its strength.

As we will see later when we review our struggles over the last three years, our members—with the support of the labour movement—waged daily battles against arbitrary decisions and fought tirelessly for more dignity and respect. Once again, it is an issue of democratization: the democratization of our workplaces.

Democratization takes multiple forms. Often through disputes, sometimes through a process of concerted action, but always with the spirit and determination to break free of

alienating and oppressive conditions. We advance inch by inch. Sometimes we run into roadblocks, sometimes we even take a step back. That's when we have to rely on our solidarity to recover and keep on going.

This is what the comrades at the Rivière-aux-Rats sawmill near La Tuque did. A few years ago, they took action to save their mill and their jobs. They did not make concessions lightly when it came to working conditions. Any concession they made, they made in the highest interests of union members. Once the matter had been debated at their general meeting, they rallied around objectives that they pursued relentlessly. They had to take on more than their employer. Another union tried to take advantage of what it thought was a favourable situation to raid them. With the support of all the CSN's resources, these workers did not lose sight of their goal. Recently, they sought to benefit from their employer's new financial situation. Today they have succeeded, having won catch-up pay raises.

The 400 members at Olymel in Saint-Simon waited almost 10 years to see justice. The resulting settlement includes \$9.5 million and a new collective agreement for the twenty-odd workers who will resume work in the new warehouse. Would such an agreement have been possible if they had belonged to a different union? I doubt it. Just the legal expenses would have turned off many organizations, or else they would have passed on the costs to union members.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the CSN, I salute the determination and relentless efforts of our members in their fight to obtain more respect.

The CSN is not the only organization that fights for workers in Québec and Canada. What makes us different is *how* we do it. And the two unions I have just mentioned illustrate the CSN's way of doing it.

The CSN is a close-knit movement. Union autonomy, member participation, and solidarity are fundamental values that guide our action. At the CSN, no union is ever alone. A battle for respect waged by workers becomes the battle of all CSN unions.

This solidarity manifests itself concretely in the means and resources deployed in support of workers: in their establishments, vis-à-vis their employers; with other unions in a given region, on the central councils; with unions in the same occupational or sectoral category in the federations; and with every union in the CSN as a whole.

Together, we give ourselves the means to move forward and to support the struggle by pooling our resources. Thanks to the solidarity among all members of a central union organization active in all spheres of work across all regions, extraordinary progress has been possible in Québec workplaces and society. But we are currently going through a difficult period.

During the past three years, Québec has been having a rough time. The impact on public services and social programs has been dramatic. The regions have suffered. Workers, too, because of increasingly widespread employment precarity, lower unionization rates, and the effects on working conditions resulting from cutbacks in the main public systems.

Women have been particularly hard hit by austerity. Advocacy groups and grassroots organizations have been weakened by the restrictive policies of the Liberals under Philippe Couillard. In slashing their funding, the government threatened the very existence of some groups. The poorest and most vulnerable in society were subjected to yet another overhaul of social assistance, and the government rejected the need to raise the minimum wage to a level that would let people escape poverty.

Unions in Québec also came under attack, and the results of the votes imposed in healthcare and social services left them even more battered.

At the end of the 64th Convention in 2014, we expected the Couillard government to take advantage of its majority in the National Assembly to impose its vision of Québec society. But we never foresaw that it would bulldoze the foundations of our social State that underpin one of Québec's distinct features—thanks to which other countries consider it to be a model in a number of areas, such as educational childcare services and the entire social safety net. It's a fact that our public services and social programs helped us weather the 2008 financial and economic crisis better than many other societies. Our wealth is more fairly distributed here than in many other societies. But since the election of the Liberal government, things have been changing, and for the worse.

Remember Philippe Couillard's election campaign pledge to promote social dialogue? That dialogue never happened. There was only a long, plaintive monologue built around neoliberal dogma about reducing the deficit, balancing Québec's budget... in a nutshell: slashing, compressing, cutting, shrinking.

The newly elected Liberal government shamelessly implemented a program very close to the CAQ's. Given the disparity between Liberal discourse and action, we ought to have revived the slogan used against the Charest government in the fall of 2003: "I never voted for that!"

The strongest opposition to austerity didn't come from rival political parties. It came from the street, as early as summer 2014, when the government attacked the bargaining system and pension plans in the municipal and public transit sectors—gains negotiated and agreed upon in good faith between municipalities and transit corporations. In the end, the adoption of Bill 110 demonstrated that the wishes of the mayors of Montréal and Québec City had won out over workers' aspirations for better labour conditions. Because the balance of power is now skewed in favour of municipal governments.

We continue, however, to work as a union to overcome these new obstacles. A number of unions in the Fédération des employées et employés de services publics, including drivers for the Québec City transit network (Réseau de transport de la Capitale) and municipal employees in the Mauricie, did a particularly good job of holding on to their gains and making progress, despite the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. They demonstrated that you must never give up: this, too, is the CSN way.

We participated in the development of *Reject austerity*, a union and community collective born out of opposition to the policies announced by Couillard and his team. Humbly, it is

nonetheless with great pride that I can confirm that the men and women of the CSN enabled this mobilization to reach new heights across Québec's regions. To help the opposition movement grow, we devoted considerable resources to the anti-austerity campaign—more than any other organization.

In doing so, we continued to play our role, on the basis of the CSN's principles and the means at our disposal. We brought attention to issues arising from the measures methodically applied by the Liberals in Québec City to satisfy the dictates of their natural allies: employer associations, credit rating agencies, and all the other predators in the business world. May Day 2015 certainly stood out in the provincial history of International Workers Day when demonstrations, rallies, and all forms mobilization spread simultaneously across every region of Québec. Unprecedented!

We didn't succeed in making the Liberals back down. We shouldn't kid ourselves: conditions were certainly not ripe to rein in a majority government like that at the beginning of its term in office. Above all, don't forget that between the two of them, the PLQ and the CAQ garnered the support of a large percentage of electors. The right wing is comfortably settled in power at the National Assembly, and the Liberals can point to this as a source of legitimacy.

In a formidable display of popular education, however, we did manage to unravel the double discourse of the Couillard Liberals, exposing the dangers involved in their proposed measures. They stopped talking about "rigour" and admitted that what they meant was austerity. They also eventually admitted that their drastic cuts did have an impact on the quality and accessibility of services for the population. None of this was due to a lack of precision on their part. It was, at its core, a lie—there's no other word for it.

Because as soon as they launched their slew of reforms, surpluses began to accumulate as early as the 2015-2016 budget year. Before transfers to the Generations Fund, more than \$6 billion had been stashed away at the expense of the population and of workers in public services, whose workloads have grown steadily heavier.

It seems obvious that the primary goal of the Couillard government was not so much to achieve "sound management of public finances" as to divert the State away from its historical mission. His government could very well have balanced the budget over a longer period of time, as the Ontario and Canadian governments have been doing.

The Couillard government should have sought to balance Québec's budget by looking for new sources of revenue, notably through fairer taxation and by encouraging the creation of good jobs. But the government made other choices, opting instead to gradually lower corporate taxes: for more than a dozen years, governments have reduced tax rates on investments and profits without any significant effect on corporate investment. Again, just recently, employers' contributions for funding the enforcement of the *Labour Standards Act* were reduced. And of course tax evasion has never been tackled seriously... As we've said before: we are faced with a government that has sided with employers.

And what about us? What do we want? We demand more democracy, more justice, and more fairness. We want men and women to have better lives, better living conditions, and better daily working conditions. In society and in factories, warehouses, stores, hospitals, hotels, businesses – everywhere! As workers, but also as engaged members of society

It's possible to do things differently. It's possible to improve the quality of life for the population as a whole, to make sure that no one is left out.

There are choices underlying the decisions that are made. The problems we face day after day that interfere with the possibilities of improving our fate are not inevitable. They stem notably from anti-social policies voted on in Québec City and Ottawa. They might also result from arbitrary decisions in the workplace – a stubbornly blind refusal to change conditions in favour of fostering family-work-study balance, or to pay decent wages, to give but a couple examples.

The employers who promote precarious employment and unequal treatment, who often flout basic occupational health and safety rules, are the same ones who always want lower taxes – a way of making ordinary taxpayers shoulder a larger share of funding for public services and social programs. Through their associations, employers call on the State to offload its responsibilities. In doing so, they intervene in favour of austerity measures and support the cutbacks. The interests of these employers, bankers, and financiers are in perfect harmony with those now in government in the National Assembly.

This is not the Québec we want. It's the Québec that we oppose and will continue to oppose on the basis of our values, our principles, our vision of society, and the solidarity that unites us. The CSN is an organization characterized by struggle, and our activism is central to the balance of power at play in workplaces, and which figures in defining the role of the State. This is the significance of the work we will be doing during the 65th Convention, with the Manifesto and action plan that will be presented to you.

The manifesto and action plan are the fruit of a process of consultation with unions stretching from October 2016 to mid-February 2017. Close to one quarter of our unions – more than 400 – responded. We had two basic goals in launching this series of consultations: we wanted to involve unions in discussing policy direction and plans of action for the next three years, and we wanted to improve our democratic processes. We also emphasized that this process was part of the anti-austerity campaign that we have undertaken in opposition to Philippe Couillard's Liberal government.

We proposed nine demands, categorized into five themes: (1) ensuring lifelong income security, (2) developing the economy and creating good jobs, (3) fighting climate change, (4) consolidating our public services, and (5) strengthening democracy.

Virtually all these demands have been debated and voted on at previous conventions or decision-making meetings. But the consultation process did allow us to validate that they are still relevant today. The Manifesto was developed around these fundamental demands, which were supported by a very strong majority of the unions consulted.

If we want to make a difference in the next election, spark debate, nurture people's thinking, and intervene effectively to bring about change, then we need to reach an even wider audience. This is all the more true due to the fact in the majority of cases, the consultations were limited to union executives or union councils. The action plan that will be presented to you was put together in this spirit.

It's not true that we will turn in on ourselves and limit our action to negotiating collective agreements. *Of course* labour relations remain our movement's priority. But the CSN has always extended its action to the social and political realm, because living conditions can't all be improved through collective bargaining with a single employer, even when that employer is the government. As I often say, a teacher becomes a citizen at the end of the work day.

What is certain is that if Philippe Couillard's Liberal Party is re-elected in the next general election in October 2018, it will let market forces decide what tomorrow's jobs will be: precarious, atypical, underpaid, without any vision of economic or regional development. Alternatively, or additionally, it will establish abhorrent procedures for deciding working conditions, as it has done in the construction industry, for government lawyers, for the municipal sector, and for public transit workers.

It will continue to dismantle Québec's social State. It will continue to endanger social programs and all public services. It will continue to aim for a zero deficit, accentuating the austerity spiral and turning it into a permanent reality, thereby threatening to create a social deficit for future generations.

And then we will be isolated in the battles we will need to wage: municipal employees, SAQ workers, and public hospital laundries all threatened with privatization; workers in manufacturing at the mercy of globalization; and all the others left on the margins of and by the economy that is emerging at the expense of good jobs.

This is why it is essential to promote the core unionism of a central labour organization like the CSN and to develop syndical and political prospects based on the realities of workers in their workplaces, in utmost solidarity.

Comrades,

We will continue to hold debates. We will conduct them in the CSN's style, meaning that once opinions are expressed and ideas debated, and policy directions decided on a fully informed basis, we will rally around the decisions made. Because it's when we stray from these basic values that we run into problems.

Clear vision means looking ahead! It means scrutinizing the horizon to identify the struggles to be waged. It means identifying with whom we want to wage these battles.

Sharp focus means having both feet firmly on the ground in reality. Sharp focus means looking in the right direction.

Sharp focus means being clear about what our targets are.

Clear vision, sharp focus! It's a demanding program, but also a stimulating one, one that can gather together people's hopes and desires and unite the forces that want change.

This is not the first time since 1921 that we and our movement have faced problems. We have overcome others, together and in solidarity. There's too much to be done to just sit and wait. We have to go back into action and take up the battles that lie ahead. Our movement has suffered a shock. Sometimes shocks can be good for us, when we have the courage to look directly at what has happened and face the facts. When we have the courage to analyze the causes and effects.

We have this courage. It's part of our movement's DNA. Members at all times have repeatedly shown unflinching courage: when they won employers' respect through very bitter strikes; when they forced governments to back down; when they took to the streets in their tens of thousands to confront, oppose, defy.

In the CSN, today's members will prove the equals of yesterday's activists, just as they were for those who went before.

Have a great convention!

Long live the CSN!

