

Opening words, *discurso de apertura*, CEISAL 2022 Helsinki, 13 de julio

Jussi Pakkasvirta

Chancellor Kaarle Hämeri, Your Excellencies, representantes del cuerpo diplomático, Dean of the Faculty of Arts Pirjo Hiidenmaa, Dra. Maria Clara Medina, president of CEISAL; distinguished guests, scholars, students, and friends!

Queridos colegas, Dear all, Finally, we meet here in Helsinki, in person! As the president of the conference committee, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the opening ceremony of the 10th CEISAL Conference on Latin American Studies, "*Uncertain Trajectories: Latin America after Globalization*" - "*Trayectorias inciertas: América Latina después de la globalización*". My name is Jussi Pakkasvirta, Professor of Area and Cultural Studies at the University of Helsinki, Chair of this 10th CEISAL conference - and one of the living ex-presidents of CEISAL.

Since 1996 CEISAL – an association in mature age of 51 years – has offered a dynamic conference venue for exploring and trying to understand Latin America through modern European lens. It has become a space where diverse, global voices on Latin America come together, and researchers in the field learn and share their ideas. CEISAL has always thrived on being inter- and multidisciplinary, welcoming a wide range of academic fields and research traditions.

Not everyone can attend in person this time, but a warm welcome to all of you who have been able to travel to Helsinki - as well as to those who will present their work virtually in symposia – even though this conference is not totally hybrid, as all of you know.

For me, personally, it is a great happiness to see so many of my long-time friends returning for this conference. And, perhaps, even more importantly, meet many new young and upcoming scholars attending our reunion.

Señoras y señores, cuando empezamos con mis colegas a buscar el título para este congreso, en el otoño de 2019, pensamos en algo general, pero también actual, para un congreso interdisciplinario. En ese momento no sabíamos cuán actual nuestro tema llegaría a ser: "***Trayectorias inciertas: América Latina después de la globalización***". La incertidumbre internacional es concreta, real – no hemos sentido este tipo de presiones – dijera yo – después de la crisis de los misiles de Cuba en 1962. Por lo menos aquí en Finlandia, con alrededor de 1340 km de frontera con Rusia – y con miles de años de historia compartida, muchas veces muy compleja y difícil. La globalización está igualmente frenada, es decir la hiper-globalización de los últimos 20 años, y el balance multipolar del mundo tiembla frente a una nueva fase de reorganización de bloques de poder. Vivimos trayectorias inciertas – después de la globalización – y, digo - la globalización en su última fase, hasta el momento. El futuro parece sombrío, oscuro. Un futuro de dos bloques, los dos con sistemas capitalistas: el capitalismo oriental y autoritario, y el capitalismo occidental, con sus problemas, pero en su formato idealista, democrático.

A pesar de toda la incertidumbre internacional, podemos estar hoy aquí tranquilos en Helsinki – y hay que estar tranquilos en momentos como estos, porque tener miedo, furia o rencor no sirve para nada.

Dear colleagues, today in Helsinki and at this very conference, we attendees can fully enjoy personal safety and academic freedom. At the same time, our Ukrainian colleagues and friends are being deprived those fundamental rights by a brutal military invasion, reminiscent of the darkest days of the 20th century. It is also sad that many critical Russian Latin Americanists have not been able to participate in the conference in presence.

Even though we strongly condemn Russia's present actions in Ukraine, we are trusting that reason, freedom, and peace will prevail in the end, - I will repeat - it goes without saying - that we also stand with our Russian colleagues, who are opposing the invasion despite the personal risks involved.

Here in Finland, of course, the last months have been extremely exciting for those of us working in international relations and political history. The decision by Finland and Sweden to give up their traditional policy of military non-alignment and to join NATO will start a new era in the Nordic-American relations—something for us to study in the future. At the same time, we learn about the complex international dynamics through the tradition of area and cultural studies, not only from a Latin American perspective – but also, at this moment, specially from Turkish and Hungarian quite strange attitudes, to criticize Nordic Countries.

For a small group of Finnish Latin Americanists, putting together a conference of this size, has not been an easy task. Therefore, I want to express my warmest gratitude to the conference's committees, both for the international and the national one. And especially, to the small core group of the organization, who has been working heavily during the last year (and especially during the last months). At this moment, I want to thank especially Riikka Louhivuori and Roosa Pöllänen, who really have made this conference possible in practical and logistical terms. Also, professors and my colleagues Florencia Quesada Avendaño and Eeva Sippola have done a great job. Eeva has been my left - and sometimes right hand - all along the process, as the vice-president of this conference. And, of course, I wish to thank all our undergraduate and master's students who are working in the next days as our conference assistants.

Organizing the CEISAL Helsinki 2022 conference would not have been possible without the help of our financial sponsors and many other active quarters. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the University of Helsinki, the Faculty of Arts, and to the *Federation of Finnish Learned Societies or Tieteellisten Seurain Valtuuskunta*; the *City of Helsinki*; *Instituto Iberoamericano de Finlandia en Madrid*, *Pelti- ja Rautatyö Loman Pelti*, *Tavastia Club*, and the Latin American Embassies in Helsinki. Also, the Spanish and Portuguese embassies have given their support in most hearty attitude.

Un agradecimiento especial para el embajador de España, Luis Tejada por abrírnos las puertas de la embajada para diversas actividades en las cuales hemos podido planear este congreso. También para la Embajada de México por el financiamiento para los materiales del mural del artista mexicano Alonso Bravo y a Florencia Quesada por proponer y coordinar todo el proyecto. Al mismo tiempo, un agradecimiento especial para la Embajada de Chile que ha hecho un inmenso esfuerzo para poder instalar una estatua de Paola Vezzani en el jardín del edificio de Ciencias Sociales en Unioninkatu 35. Lo pudimos hacer – ¡increíble trabajo en equipo encabezado por el embajador Rodrigo Olsen, Fernando Cacho, Ari Nisonen y Marjo Veitonmäki! La inauguración del mural y la escultura tendrán lugar hoy antes de la recepción en la Universidad.

Gracias a este apoyo de las embajadas y a los patrocinadores vamos a tener una muestra de arte latinoamericano muy concreta y permanente en el centro de Helsinki. Y quiero añadir que ya tenemos desde hace 14 años el busto de Simón Bolívar en el edificio de Topelia en la Universidad. Es decir, ¡somos el centro de América Latina de los países nórdicos! Que significará esto – lo podrán contemplar durante su estadía en Finlandia.

Dear Friends, after these words, I declare officially open the 10th CEISAL Conference in Helsinki. Queridas y queridos colegas, con estas palabras queda inaugurado el décimo congreso de CEISAL en Helsinki.