

Who are we ?

● The International Workers Committee Against War, Exploitation, for a Workers' International (IWC) was set up at the World Conference held in Mumbai (India) on Novembre 19, 20 and 21 gathering delegates from 28 countries.

● The IWC was set up on the basis of the Mumbai Manifesto against war, exploitation and precarious labour which was endorsed by labour activist and trade union and political organisations officers from 46 countries (*)

● Its continuations committee is composed of labour activists from all political/ trade union backgrounds:

- Innocent Assogba (Benin),
- Alan Benjamin (USA),
- Colia Clark (USA),
- Constantin Cretan (Romania),
- Berthony Dupont (Haiti),
- Ney Ferreira (Brazil),
- Daniel Gluckstein (France),
- Rubina Jamil (Pakistan),
- Apo Leung (China),
- Gloria Gracida (Mexico),
- M.A. Patil (India),
- Mandlenkosi Phangwa (Azania),
- Klaus Schüller (Germany),
- Jung Sikhwa (Korea),
- John Sweeney (Great Britain),
- Mark Vassilev (Russia),
- Nambiath Vasudevan (India).

- (*) Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Azania, Belarus, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Korea, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, USA, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

MOROCCO

After the Tragic Death of 8 People in Taroudant: Natural Disaster or Political Disaster?

In this country, every time there is a flood or an earthquake, every time there is a “natural” incident or disaster, poor people – often young people – lose their lives.

But are these really natural disasters, or are they political disasters?

Several weeks after the tragic deaths of 40 young “clandestine” immigration seekers in the sea at Kenitra, this week there has been another (natural) tragedy in the Taroudant region in the south of the country, which has caused the deaths of at least 8 people, with several others missing.

Anger reigns among the population

On Wednesday 29 August 2019, the sudden rise of a river resulted in the death of at least seven persons (eight according to the latest information) and several persons missing, local authorities say. The incident happened at the end of the day in the community of Imi Ntirayet, in the douar of Tizert, province of Taroudant (South), where several families were gathered near a stadium built on the riverbed, according to press agency MAP.

Among the victims of this drama is a 17-year-old young man. According, again, to MAP, one of those surviving the flood was taken to the municipal hospital of Igherm, in serious-to-very-serious condition. Local sources, quoted by several media, currently announce seven people missing. However, no official communiqué has been published. The search continued this Thursday.

Who is responsible for this tragedy?

New infrastructures at the stadium were inaugurated by local authorities only this July, and several people had cautioned about its location on the edge of the riverbed. On the 15th of July, an Internet user warned “*Sudden*

rains in this mountainous region can sweep away and destroy everything along their way”.

The construction of a football field in the riverbed is equally at the heart of all the questions.

A government report opened discussion on the possibility of creating “*a central division in the Department of Homeland Security (Ministry of the Interior) in charge of the management of risks of natural disasters”.*

During the meeting, the government also looked into the “*regulatory supervision of public appropriation of hydropower”.* The government’s spokesperson, Khalfi, specified that the objective of the announced measures is that “*what happened at Imi Ntirayet never happens again”.*

The government and the government alone is responsible

While year after year hundreds of millions of Dirhams are taken from the national budget and used for paying the interest on the foreign debt, while year after year the government makes cuts in the social budget, while year after year public services deteriorate and are being destroyed by privatisation, and delegation is delegated, whole regions are deprived of infrastructures and facilities (hospitals, schools, sport stadiums and grounds, etc.) The government is responsible for this killing, the government and the government alone holds all responsibility for this tragedy.

The (Moroccan) newspaper the *Tribune des Travailleurs*, which is edited by activists and workers who are partisans of the International Workers Committee (COI-IWC) in Morocco, expresses its condolences to the families of our sisters and brothers who died in this tragedy, and demands immediate intervention so that those who are guilty of this incident are brought to justice. ■



ALGERIA

Yes to the Sovereign Constituent Assembly! No to Presidential Elections!

An interview with Abdelkader Bentaleb, activist of the Organisation Committee of the Internationalist Socialists of Algeria (COSI)

The last issue of your publication, *Minbar el Oummel*, asserts that the alternative is “presidential elections or Constituent Assembly”. Why?

The head of the army, who is exercising the “real power”, has just announced that presidential elections will be set for “15 September *at the latest*”. He has got the backing of the “panel” of personalities that he has named for “dialogue”. The main organisations and parties of the country that have come together in three distinct alliances (the “civil society”, the Forces of Change” and the “Pact for a Democratic Alternative”) put a liaison committee in place on 24 August, the objective of which is to harmonise their road maps for “*coming out of the crisis*”.

The only way to oppose these so-called “solutions”, which preserve the regime, would be the immediate election of a sovereign Constituent Assembly. But this path is being blocked by the very active participation in the process of “dialogue” with the regime by both trade unions (notably the Autonomous Trade Union Confederation, CSA) and the parties claiming to be workers' parties.

Yet the determination of the Algerian people remain intact, and their aspirations are reiterated every Friday: “*System, clear out!*” “*Let the People Speak!*” “*No to dialogue!*” There has been a surge in struggles based on social demands: the fight of the people of Biskra and other towns for the right to housing and against the rationing of water, and dozens of labour

strikes putting the general strike on the agenda.

The most favourable solution would be that the parties claiming to be workers' parties break with the framework of dialogue with the regime and unite to open the way to a sovereign Constituent Assembly and general strike, to do away with the regime. In broad terms, the resolution adopted on 24 August by the general assembly of the citizens of Bgayet (in Berber: Béjaïa), opens this perspective by explicitly coming out for a sovereign Constituent Assembly and by giving it the democratic and social content that is in keeping with the aspirations of the masses.

Have the initiatives for “dialogue” with the regime, such as the “Pact for a Democratic Alternative” that the Workers Party (PT) and the Workers Socialist Party (PST) participate in, prompted debate?

The leaders of the PST are between a rock and a hard place: between their active presence in the “Pact” and the action of their activists in favour of the Constituent Assembly and general strike. The pressure from many of the activists prevented the leadership of the PST from taking part in the 24 August meeting, but has not managed to bring them to breaking with the “Pact.” The leadership is trying to use cunning by asserting that, in the “Pact”, “*what unites us is more important than what divides us*”. But the activists of the PST know that the RCD and the UPC (two other parties in the “Pact”) are favourable to dialogue with the regime and to the agreements with

the World Trade Organization and the European Union, etc.

The Workers Party (PT) is also in crisis. First of all, the regime spawned a split at the summit of the PT, pulling away six MPs out of eleven and fifteen members of the central committee. This has indisputably been an attempt by the system to destroy the party. Among those who have refused to follow those six MPs, political divergences are beginning to express themselves. On one side, the leadership of the PT is participating in the “Pact for Democratic Alternative” and the 24 August meeting. On the other, prominent activists are ripping into the dialogue with the regime, and urging for the Constituent Assembly and the creation of popular committees. On one side, a leader has come out against general strike in the oil and gas fields, on the other, activists in the rank and file are for. On one side, a leader has stated to the press that “*the real meaning of articles 7 and 8*” of the Constitution allows for opening the way to a Constituent Assembly. On the other, there are activists who assert that the Constitution is null and void, precisely because article 7 (which recognises the sovereignty of the people) is cancelled out by article 8, which claims that this sovereignty is exercised through the presidency of the Republic, the popular National Assembly (i.e., Parliament) and other corrupt and rejected institutions. That, moreover, is the constitutional argument that the regime is using to convene the presidential elections. ■

Interview conducted on September 2nd, 2019