

**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 November 19, 20, 21, 2016 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),  
**M.A. Patil** (India),  
**Mandlenkosi Phangwa** (Azania),  
**Sergio Pineda** (Mexico),  
**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.

**BURUNDI**

**A census? The working class has no ethnicity**

**Editorial from issue n° 122 of the *Tribune libre des travailleurs ikinyamakuru c'abakozi*, monthly magazine of the Workers' Party and Democracy-PTD "twungurunani"**

Imperialism is always on the lookout for ways to continue the demolition of the productive forces, starting with the working class and its organizations. On October 26, 2020, a nationwide census of civil servants began, as announced by the Minister of Public Administration. One hundred and nine (109) questions were asked to the workers in this census! Ethnicity, bank account, union membership, geolocation, personal and private e-mail, number of children and other children in care, brand of cell phone, amount of salary and other income resources ... this is but part of the scope covered by these questions. And remember that - in his first public broadcast - President Ndayishimiye had thrown out the constitutional requirement for public officials to declare assets at the beginning and end of their term of office, declaring that was "a matter of secrecy for each and everyone!"

In a heated press conference on last October 27, the union confederations, Cosybu, CSB and Cossessona denounced a census that violates the privacy of civil servants. For the president of Cosybu, Célestin Nsavyimana: "it is incomprehensible to ask civil servants which union they belong to, whether they are satisfied or not, what assets and sources of income they have... it is not normal". Besides, he added, "Your superior has no right to know". He states that these questions call into question privacy and trade union freedom. According to him, this is a violation of articles 19 and 37 of the Burundi constitution and ILO Conventions 87 and 98, which enshrine the right to organize and collective bargaining, freedom of association. There were many questions and concerns among workers. According to a teacher interviewed by the newspaper *Iwacu*, the issue of ethnicity is the most troublesome. For him, "To be recruited into the civil service as far as I know, you look at skills, not racial groups. That issue should be raised in politics, not in the workplace." Another woman worker from the Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi (ISTEEBU) was concerned about some "bizarre" issues, such as salary. "What do

they want our salary for? Should we think they want to take a cut, as they did for the elections?" she asked. The question about "the transfer" also frightened her: "If you are transferred, which province would you not like to go to?" She felt that it was a trick question. "I didn't want to answer this question, but my census taker forced me to."

In short, incredible. The worker, the civil servant in this case, is linked to their employer (the State) only through the non-individualized labour relations recorded in the Labour Code, the collective agreements and the general statute of civil servants. This reflects the government's determination to challenge the common references to workers that are an integral part of what constitutes the State, and a threat to the working class, which has always remained united in the face of the ethnic divisions that have torn the country apart and continue to wreak havoc.

These divisions, in a cyclical fashion, have been pushed to the point of ethnic wars against the workers, peasants and youth who are unified by the conditions of misery and lack of a minimum of democratic freedoms imposed on them by imperialism. These conditions are linked to the implementation of the policies of capital under the aegis of the powers that be, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Union, which impel policies of privatization-pillage of the various resources of the country and the repayment of the foreign debt.

The interests of the working class in this country demand the respect of its rights enshrined in the Labor Code, collective agreements, the general status of civil servants and the ILO Conventions that the government of Burundi has ratified. They called for the implementation of a comprehensive public works program to address unemployment and the widespread cost-of-living wage increases. They call for a break with imperialism through the renationalization of all services and sectors that have been privatized and the nationalization of all the country's wealth and resources. ■

## THAILAND

***“The people want a political reform, and the first step is to oust the military junta”***

**An interview with students from the United Front for Democracy at Mahasarakham University  
(in the north-east province of Maha Sarakham)**

**How did the mass movement for democracy begin?**

It began among students and young people. The military regime that has been in place since 2014 (1) imposed a dark period for the democratic movement. The "flash mobs" of February 2020 (2) gave new hope. The second stage of the mobilization took place in the summer of 2020, when new strata of students and youth mobilized, contradicting a common belief that youth were largely apolitical.

**Who participates in the movement?**

Students, young people, workers, "middle class" workers.

**What are the slogans?**

We demand the resignation of the Prime Minister, General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, and that the people be allowed to rewrite the Constitution, to restrict the power of the monarchical institutions.

**How did you organize in your university to form the Mahasarakham University United Front for Democracy?**

We cooperated between different student groups, and all these groups decided to work together in the United Front for Democracy. At the starting point of this grouping, there were politically aware students who had to fight extremely hard to express their views. At the university there was no space for debate and for our movement to express itself. We are young intel-

lectuals; we could not content ourselves with merely reading books and discussing in small groups. We aspired to do something that could shake up the elite, to win a better life.

**What are the popular aspirations regarding the government and the monarchy?**

The people are demanding political reform, and the first step is to oust the National Council for Peace and Order (the military junta). The junta must be excluded from political life and the Prime Minister must resign. The second step is to reform the monarchy, because the Thai monarchy controls all political life through the army, the bourgeoisie, the Buddhist clergy and the bureaucracy: its powers must be restricted, and the monarchy must be subject to the constitution.

**Are there any currents that demand the establishment of a republic?**

There are groups that are calling for a republic, but they are a very small minority in the movement.

**What are the consequences of the global crisis of the capitalist system?**

The consequences are massive layoffs of middle-class workers; and the prices of agricultural products are plummeting due to the effects of the global trade war and capitalism.

**What is the situation of wor-****kers in the informal sector?**

There is great concern because, for the government, there is no question of setting up any kind of welfare State that could give them rights, and the State leaves them in despair.

**Do the workers have trade union organizations?**

The trade union movement in Thailand is very weak, and in many cases the existing unions remain under the control of the bourgeoisie.

**What are the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Economic recession, layoffs and rising unemployment. All this increases the discontent against the government and feeds the protests.

**What is the situation in hospitals?**

The government has made cuts in public health budgets. ■

**Interview conducted by Dominique Ferré, November 15, 2020**

(1) In 2014, an umpteenth military coup put an end to the civilian government. General Prayuth Chan-o-cha became Prime Minister.

(2) "Flash mob": rapid mobilization announced at the last minute. In February 2020, a mobilization of this type swept across campuses, where the three-finger salute (inspired by the American science fiction films *The Hunger Games*) appeared, which became a rallying point for opponents of the military junta.