

Declaration

Thailand: Neither martial law, nor state of emergency, nor coup d'état! Democracy and social justice

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For a month now the “Redshirts”, mainly workers, peasants and the poor of Thailand, have been demonstrating in Bangkok demanding the resignation of the government and early elections. The current crisis is rooted in the 2006 coup d'état which overthrew the democratically-elected government of Thaksin Shinawatra. The current government of Abhisit Vejjajiva is illegitimate. It was set up by the army following a change of alliances in Parliament. It is the expression of the traditional elites of Thailand: the army, the bureaucratic elite and the monarchy.

After a month of demonstrations and crisis, the government has sought to muzzle the opposition, by declaring a state of emergency in Bangkok and the neighbouring provinces. Warrants for the arrest of the principal leaders of the “Redshirts” have been issued. The “people’s television channel (PTV)” which is very popular among the “Redshirts” and 36 independent Internet sites, which did not relay governmental propaganda, have been closed. At the same time, the ASTV television channel of the “yellow shirts” (reactionary royalist forces), continued to transmit its calls for hatred and violence against the demonstrators. Once more the Thai elites showed their true nature, at the service of the powerful and well-born.

These measures did nothing but increase the determination of the demonstrators to fight for more social justice and democracy. They were still several tens of thousands in the streets of Bangkok on Friday and Saturday to demand the resignation of Abhisit and early elections. On Saturday, the army savagely repressed the unarmed demonstrators, some firing live bullets. Official sources speak of 21 deaths and more than 850 casualties. The majority are “Redshirts”. This is the worst repression Thailand has known since the coup d'état of 1992.

Today the “Redshirts” are fighting to put an end to several decades of “Thai-style democracy”: the concentration of the powers in the hands of the army, the high bureaucracy and the monarchy, who accept the result of the ballot boxes only when it is favorable for them.

The Fourth International is in solidarity with the fight for social justice and democracy of the “Redshirts”. The repression of the demonstrators in Bangkok has not dented their determination. Abhisit, the person responsible for the blood bath, must resign and call legislative elections as soon as possible.

There must be an end to repression, the censure of the media and the denial of democratic freedoms. The rights to organise, freely associate, strike and demonstrate must be respected.

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