

An Interview with The Federation of Anarchism Era

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Part One

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The Federation of Anarchism Era is an anarchist federation primarily located in Afghanistan and Iran. In this first half of a two-part interview, they talk about their perspective on anarchism and their on the ground experience with theocratic regimes. The group say they are well beyond their donation goals, and ask that people consider donating to other groups supporting local people.

This interview has been translated by a third-party, and then edited and cut for the purpose of readability. There may be some slight changes in meaning due to this.

What are the cultural roots of Iranian and Afghan anarchism?

Anarchism in Afghanistan has become more common due to the association of Afghans with Iran and Iranian anarchist artists, books, and articles that are translated in Iran.

It will be very important to identify art as well. Art is a special element in the struggle to create anarchism among the anarchists of Iran and Afghanistan.

Literature, music, cinema, and most of all, artistic texts, have played a special role in the formation of anarchist groups among us. In some ways, anarchism in these two countries may have arisen from a critical look at art and literature.

This is also the reason for our intimacy and teamwork. Iran and Afghanistan share a common language and common literary and artistic texts. In addition, in each of these two geographies, different languages with different cultures are also common. So, to some extent, knowledge and art pass through government borders.

On the other hand, the geographical proximity and the existence of common historical pains and strains, which have been brutally inflicted by internal and external systems on the nations and ethnic groups living in the geography of the Anarchist Union of Afghanistan and Iran, continue.

What are the ideological foundations of your anarchism?

We may not be able to talk about the word ideology or ideological values in the anarchism we are considering. As we can see in the discussions among ourselves, the members of the union have never believed in ideology. For this reason, we have no unchangeable or inflexible principles in the union. Of course, it is possible that if we don't take this seriously, the concept of anarchism may change and not remain what we want.

For example, our very serious opposition, based in power, will, and choice, or our disagreement with every idea leading to power or in the direction of power—such as capitalism and nationalism, pacifism and various mystical or religious attitudes—in keeping with the views that federations and anarchist self-organisation within federations like the union have always relied on.

From our point of view, ideology is similar to religion, and it makes a person unilateral: that is to say, it sees the open space of the world that we desire from one point, and stays away from other angles. Therefore, we are not based in ideology, and we try to take planning more seriously in our activities. As an example, our theoretical attitude is that our plans should be anarchist in practice, so that our forces can remain free in the scope of their minds. When a plan is proposed,

it is considered and everyone includes their opinion. The actors for this plan are selected based on their abilities, and they are mostly voluntary.

In this way, we can implement our goals in terms of human resources and structural bases and define everything else within the range of the plan and its needs.

This method is the answer for various reasons: for one, because it is limited in terms of time, and will soon show its good or bad results. Also, the people in the plan are not forced to pursue goals in all aspects of their lives that have been agreed upon in the union to promote the plan.

In fact, during every operation, there are specific methods that we temporarily use. These can keep the space of difference and change of thoughts among us. But intellectual and ideological foundations are not like that: they are limiting.

Most likely, anarchism is as old as the emergence of the first rulers in the history of human civilization. We really don't know who proposed the idea of rebellion and disobedience against the first rulers of their era. Is it possible that someone for the first time saw systematic and stratified oppression, called this authoritarianism, and advocated self-management?

Different ideologies, such as religions or other schools of worldview, have their creators. To find their roots, we should return to the point of view of the person who proposed any given idea.

For example, Islam is an ideology that was founded by Muhammad bin Abdullah and later found its followers. This is not the case with anarchism. We only know that anarchism has roots in ancient Greece from the point of view of lexicology, and that the word dates back to the first Greek city-state.

Another example is Plato, who is called the father of idealism.

Even if we consider idealism at the beginning and the emergence of an ideology against realism, proving that anarchism was created through idealism is a very difficult task, because another question arises: before this time, did anyone or anyone stand up against a powerful government to get their human rights?

Were the slaves who built the three pyramids of Egypt generation after generation all obedient and enslaved for the pharaohs? Did they not object to their working conditions, which they traded in exchange for some food to survive?

Anarchism is an element of rebellion, an element that should have a role in the origin of every living being.

Just as other animals show a defensive reaction against threats and injustices that they endure, in a completely instinctive and natural way, without a doubt, humans are also aware of their natural and social rights in the face of any kind of bullying and harassment. From this point, humanity started disobeying and fighting.

Today, anarchists believe that the co-existence of governments with war-mongering, factories producing weapons of mass destruction, and the displacement of millions of people is completely related. We anarchists believe that the destruction of the environment and mass-extinction are due to the direct influence of the destructive and purely profit-seeking policies of the government and capitalists, and we stand ready to fight against all of them.

Most likely, a few thousand years ago, anarchists also believed that in exchange for farming the land, they should not have to pay taxes to the tyrannical rulers or give themselves up to serve in the armies of the expansionist and excessive harvesters.

With these interpretations, it is not really possible to classify anarchism through the lens of other existing ideologies, but it can be said that anarchism is a fluid thought and methodology of

social-political struggle that intends to strengthen the will and power of the future. The people of the society should fight for a real revolution to take place, for classes to be destroyed, and for the conditions for liberation to be created.

Under these conditions, everyone can participate directly and freely in the management of affairs related to their personal and social life.

How does the structure of your organisation work? Who makes the decisions?

Just as we do not accept ideology dominating us, we also reject any decision that has a single point of reference. There is no decision-making authority in the Anarchist Union of Afghanistan and Iran except for the union itself, as a whole.

This explanation may make our point clearer:

A concept like the microcosm is much more visible in our activities than our large-scale decisions and long-term strategies. We are groups and individuals, each with specific characteristics of struggle; but according to our similarities, we wanted to work together in a network.

There may be differences among our thoughts and we may not even agree on them for a long time, but this cannot lead us to question our solidarity; because these differences are part of our will. Perhaps our policy in all dimensions can be summarised as the cooperation of volunteers who share commonalities.

We try to include everyone in the smallest activities, even in selecting a text for our social media accounts. Every text we write does not remain as it was in the beginning.

What does this mean? This means prioritising points of disagreement. We seek differences because we know that the motto “we are one, we are the same” is wrong.

From our point of view, which of course can be seen in our work, the world is made up of differences between specific territories. Small ones want more capability and capacity; so they try to enter into discussion, interaction and sometimes even opposition to acquire these abilities with one another.

Even opposition within a network of territories is acceptable, because interaction from this perspective does not just involve agreement.

The same attitude toward self-organised relations has led to the existence of different tendencies in the union, ranging from anarcho-egoist and anarcho-primitivist to anarcho-syndicalist and anarcho-transhumanist, etc.

We have briefly explained to you about the Union of Anarchists of Afghanistan and Iran, which is only part of the Federation of the Anarchist Era. Due to the situation in Afghanistan, we are now more focused on problems there: first, withdrawing all of our known forces completely. And once we overcome these problems, we have to focus on Iraq or Lebanon, and then on organising other parts of the region’s geography. Naturally, this takes a lot of time.

What niche does the Federation of Anarchism Era occupy among the other radical leftwing milieus in Iran and Afghanistan?

Anarchism Era has a much better situation in Iran, compared to the situation in Afghanistan. In Iran, the number of comrades is large, and from a historical point of view, anarchism has made critical and political space for itself.

In a way, it can be claimed that Anarchism Era in Iran has the necessary strength and capabilities for an anarchist movement and can reach stages where its activities can be distinguished from other protest movements.

Our Federation can clearly declare that it is an opposition that has a strong, active and militant social body in the entire geography of Iran. We see the seeds of anarchist organisation in different parts of Iran's geography, despite the severe repression.

According to conversations with some of our radical anarchist colleagues inside Iran, the atheism proposed by anarchism, and especially, the anarchists' response to the self-organisation of struggles under conditions of maximum suppression have attracted many of the eyes of the public, especially the youth. So much so, that the government is forced to create fake political currents. It is obvious that it will be open!

The people's struggles in December 1990 and November 2010 were completely leaderless, self-organised, hostile and with revolutionary and anti-capitalist demands. Over the course of these two general and public uprisings, the government sent regiments of some of its paramilitary forces called *Basiji* throughout the entire geography of Iran, with slogans in praise of the Shah Pahlavi government! They distort the direction of resurrection.

In examining the official statistics published by this totalitarian government, no other factor can explain the 8000 additional deaths in the fall of 2008, except for the massacre of November 2009. The monthly data show that in November 2010, about 6000 more deaths were recorded than in November 2000. Yes, the numbers are correct: they surely killed more than 6000 people to put down the uprising.

Perhaps it can be said that anarchism in Afghanistan takes a different path. In this way, the first step was placed on the dead body of the democratic government, known as the Afghan Islamic Republic. The death of this type of government has been felt.

Since the former government had visible inefficiencies, it is obvious that the young anarchists who are familiar with it have understood the world policies and the concepts of their speech well.

As we have mentioned, migration has become a common thing among the anarchists of Iran and Afghanistan, and many of them now live in different countries. Still, if we consider migration only in the case of Afghan anarchists, it is a little different: Due to the small population, almost most of them have emigrated, but they can also influence the existing movements in Afghanistan from outside and rebuild themselves in Afghanistan with a young and fresh force, which is the core of the Federation.

Emigration is the beginning of crossing political boundaries: the practical beginning of dealing with border laws. At first glance, it seems simple, but conceptually, it is deeply anarchist.

How to introduce immigration as one of the anarchist platforms needs a lot of research and thinking. However, there is no doubt that it is possible and doable by immigrant anarchists themselves, especially since we have immigrant anarchists from both Iran and Afghanistan.

Anarchism Era was able to turn into an anarchist network from both points of view. We have been in close contact with immigrant anarchists and with anarchists in two geographies. Though mostly based in Iran, the network of Anarchism Era also contains many other conceptual and geographical regions.

Perhaps the biggest strength of anarchism is its diversity in different aspects. This is something that is characteristic of a network, which changes the relationship from the vertical form of hierarchy to the horizontal and rhizomatic form.

Federation of Anarchism Era seems to be one of the first groups translating anarchist texts into local languages in Iran and Afghanistan. What challenges are there in translating anarchism for a new audience?

The translation of anarchist books and even criticism of anarchism has been mostly done on an individual basis. Most of the translators do not have a specific plan other than the goal of translating any given book. This is at a time when the communists have acted purposefully in both Iran and Afghanistan, and the parties have been able to organise the translation of Marxist and communist texts.

Age of Anarchism is the only anarchist site in the two geographies of Iran and Afghanistan that publishes content in different languages. The Age of Anarchism website has tried to ensure that content is not only in Farsi and does not have linguistic limitations.

In Iran and Afghanistan, though there are several different languages, we have not yet been able to publish anarchist content in all of those languages. Still, for example, we have Arabic in the geography of Iran, and there has been a need to publish Arabic texts for countries such as Lebanon, Bahrain, etc., which are mostly Arab themselves, as well as to provide anarchist materials in Arabic for the site, which is used both in Iran and for Arab countries in the world. That is why we have contacts from different countries. On the one hand, unfortunately, because the work of translating books and articles is professional work, this part of our activity may proceed slowly.

The lack of familiarity most of our colleagues have with different languages, including English, is a huge obstacle in the way of translating anarchist texts.

We can also include not having enough personnel in media fields as another of our shortcomings in the translation of texts. Such a force could follow new articles and many peer-reviewed analyses about anarchism and anarchist activities in our time. But because we mainly use volunteers from outside Iran and Afghanistan for security and other reasons in the media sector, naturally, we cannot use all the forces and power of the Federation in this sector.

Another goal is the return of interviews with members of Anarchism Era, plus some articles and memoirs written by them. We are also looking to create an anarchist text. In our opinion, our experiences gained over several years can be useful for other anarchists in other languages.

In fact, to reiterate, the challenge we are facing is our lack of familiarity with different languages, which prevents the translation from those languages into the target languages of Anarchism Era, and creates a similar obstacle in its own image.

Perhaps, you can consider the lack of creation of anarchist texts in the range of languages included in Anarchism Era and the unfamiliarity of the speakers of these languages with other languages in our network as other important challenges in terms of translation.

What are your experiences organising under authoritarian regimes such as the Iranian government or Taliban versus the previous Afghan government? What tips do you have for anarchists organising under authoritarian circumstances, especially with regard to political prisoners?

In authoritarian states, one of the biggest problems is that they deal with protesters and opponents under self-made and generally undefined titles, compared to the so-called democratic states.

For example, these authoritarians say: So-and-so woman has been arrested for the crime of seduction, or so-and-so has been accused of “disobeying” immoral things in society. These titles are specific and exclusive to the individual as much as the regulations of these states. As they are often rooted in religious beliefs, they are at times supported by the people, who might also guard silence about them.

In this case, sometimes even our associates do not recognize such accusations because they came out of this social context. In fact, authoritarian states do not share common legal systems with other countries, and this use of language also discourages expression by critics, protesters, and opponents.

From the indicators of such states in the Middle East, we can refer to their special definitions, or their own special narratives of religion: for instance, the Islamic Republic in Iran has its own narrative about religion. Likewise, the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan, as well as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, etc...

This method has increased these states' strength in the geographies under their control and, in the same way, it has reduced the possibility of cooperation and alliance between the revolutionary forces and those who support them.

Prominent weak points among opposition groups also originate from the same government policy. These opponents are busy with the special confrontations of the governments against themselves, and their battlefield is limited to the challenges and obstacles that the ruling government creates on its geography.

Even in dealing with religious rulers who are mostly Muslims, the possibility of dealing with mostly Muslim protesters is very limited, since the protesting forces are not only facing a religious and governmental approach. They are also trapped in their own special circle.

The solution and method of fighting against such a government is to build decentralised organisations. Only organisations that have a horizontal and shared structure can resist these governments.

This is what we call The Horizontal Formation:

A form of communication that includes cultural, ideological, linguistic, and ethnic boundaries in different sectors and geographies. As we have explained, our proposal is that every department and region face and centre on the specific methods of authoritarianism of its region. If every opposing force hidden in these regions has a relationship with other forces in other regions, the government cannot concentrate its repression, and will lose power.

To clarify this topic, we will give an example of the struggle with political Islam.

This movement has been able to grow a lot in Iran, to the point where we are sure that in the event of the destruction of the Islamic Republic in Iran, no other Islamic government will have the support of the people, and will not arise.

Let's see what kind of government Iran is currently preparing, and when it can reach the stage where there is no government. The important thing is that now the struggle against Islamic politics and political Islam has turned into a powerful movement that has reached the border of neighboring countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and trampled fundamentalism there too.

Opponents of authoritarian governments, especially the religious-Islamic type, will only weaken the ruling government and bring down the Islamic Republic if they participate with anti-authoritarian force in other regions.

Discovering the common point of religious authoritarian states, such as with the Islamization of politics, and trying to map its various roots in different political geographies can be a solution. This solution would only be possible by creating a horizontal and decentralised network. Such networks would exist in various territories, with specific forces who are familiar with the environment and capable of fighting against a specific type of enemy.

Such a network has territory and also has a relationship with fighting forces in other places.

Like the slogan of young protesters in Iraq, addressing the protesters in Iran: “We hit the tail of the dragon (Islamic Republic), but you hit its head.”

Of course, the political conditions of Iran and Afghanistan are not the same as other geographies and regions and we don't know about the complications of the social, political, and cultural conditions of our counterparts in other geographical areas, and even our plans and activities in Afghanistan are not the same as in Iran. Naturally, our federation's communication with communities, workers and ordinary people is done through virtual networks.

Although access to many pages, networks and software products is blocked, with the use of different VPNs this problem can be solved without difficulty until the foreign internet is cut off. Iran has such a plan. Of course, we have been interviewed several times on TVs and radios, which allowed us to extend our voices to Iran through satellite TV a few times, even if this was not enough.

In Iran and Afghanistan, as we are a new and unknown force for society, we are also unknown for the repressive security forces in Iran and Afghanistan. In this way, a negative becomes a positive. On the other hand, anarchists have an advantage in the field of self-organisation, where they regularly change their form of self-organisation so that the security forces cannot penetrate it. The Federation is focused on the growth of the anarchist movement itself, without creating an organisational relationship between us and the anarchist social body. That is, our field of work in the self-organisation of the anarchist body is both a movement and not a movement. After a period of time, the Federation will no longer play a role in the growth of anarchism in Iran, as we will have a self-organising and self-governing social body, with anarchist activists forming individual cores. In other words, in the case of being hit, only one person gets hit, unlike a political party, where the security forces can easily cut off the entire head.

Our propaganda and media work is done outside the geography of Iran and Afghanistan, and there is no need for the activities of our forces of Iran and Afghanistan in this field. Those who are more focused on practical work do not use the Internet at all. And because we do not have public activities in Iran and Afghanistan, our forces within this geography operate in a secret and unknown manner. The Federation recruited its forces at a time when the security forces were unaware of our activities, and once their attention was drawn to us, we basically stopped recruiting. As we said, in relation to Iran, the Federation has done its job and the Iranian government's attempt to attack us will not solve any problem for it. This is because the movement in Iran is not dependent on us and stands on its own feet. For example, we do not work in Afghanistan in the same way as we do in Iran, besides the fact that we are constantly changing the way we organise ourselves.

The diversity of anarchist struggles and its constant change makes the actions of anarchists unpredictable. The use of different fighting methods along with individual creativity has provided us with a variety of tactics, as a result of which the security apparatuses cannot put anarchists in a mould and framework for identification and confrontation.

Organisation and struggle with authoritarian regimes, especially religious ones, is very complicated and difficult—especially ideological governments like Iran. With continuous brainwashing and ideological and religious propaganda, it gathers its supporters in the form of military and paramilitary, information and security forces, schools, universities and all government and independent jobs, in all cities, villages, and mosques. They start assassinating opponents and opposing people inside and outside the country. Or with the thieves of the opposition activists

abroad, the regime forcibly returns them to Iran and imprisons them, tortures them, drains them of information, and executes them in most cases.

The greatest danger for the opposition is their presence in the countries around Iran, so that even flying over the air border of Iran is dangerous for the forces opposing the system.

In these 43 years, the Islamic government in Iran has executed at least tens of thousands of political prisoners, and also, at least several thousand political prisoners have been tortured and forced to confess on television, even when they did not join any uprising.

If we look at the number of mosques and religious places in Iran and compare this with the number of libraries and hospitals, we see the result of a religious, ideological and terrorist government and what its priorities are.

Number of mosques: more than 70,000.

Number of Imamzadeh shrines: more than 11,000.

Number of libraries: about 3500.

Number of hospitals: less than 1000.

According to the information published until 2014 in Iran, there are 16 information and security institutions that are still active, but the existence of parallel information institutions that respond to different sources and are more or less in competition and challenge with each other is one of the heels of Achilles. On the other hand, this shows how much such governments are forced to pay financial and human costs to suppress the people, and how much they fear the people. We are faced with an unbelievable level of security institutions and repression in the geography of Iran.

In virtual space, the Islamic Government of Iran has created a cyber-army, which receives support and money for every activity, for which 1000 billion tomans have been allocated this year. As a result, activity in the virtual world is both very important and not an easy task. In addition to this, the Islamic Republic has used Dutch servers several times to spy on opponents abroad. In other words, we are not safe from the danger of hacking and espionage of the Islamic Republic in cyberspace. In these 43 years, several hundreds of opposition activists have been assassinated and killed outside the country, and we are also facing the danger of kidnapping by the regime's security organisation.

The security institutions involved in the cybercrimes of the Islamic Republic were present in ten special projects, focusing on twelve countries of the world.

By using spyware, websites and messages infected with malware, they hack and provide fake copies of messenger software. They spy by sending contaminated links to Telegram channels and social networks, creating fake applications, and submitting them to the Google Store. These include a fake version of the "Mohsen Restaurant" application in Tehran, the spy application "Wallpaper" and a fake application for mobile security. Also, mobile phone information and the personal computers of more than 21,000 Iranian citizens were stolen. Apparently, only until February 2012, cyber-attacks under the support of the ruling regime continued against Iran.

One of the first cyber activities of the Islamic Republic was Operation INFY, known as "Iranian Prince," which dates back to the year 2007. It was aimed at spying on Iranians and targets in Europe.

But about the Taliban, it should be said that all of their oppressive actions in the last year have been a complete copy of the repressive actions of the Islamic Republic. Therefore, most of their future repressive actions can be predicted because we are familiar with the Islamic Republic's repressive actions.

The Taliban have admitted that they have carried out 1,500 suicide operations, and they intend to create a special suicide unit in the Ministry of Defense to use during special operations. This simply shows that when an Islamist terrorist group reaches political power, we need proper and secret self-organization, and that in both Iran and Afghanistan, we must change our fighting and self-organization methods.

Of course, it is true that the Taliban's military and intelligence methods are theocratic. As such, they are almost modelled after the Islamic Republic of Iran. But the agents of intelligence agencies from Pakistan and Arab countries are the trainers of these groups. That is, the methods and intellectual politics of the Taliban are produced and taught in Pakistan and Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, which will strengthen them financially and morally.

Prison is a factor that maintains tyranny; it is a roadblock to freedom. The fighter must break the prison to break the government and reach freedom.

The most important step for the abolitionist anarchist is pragmatism. First of all, we should know that contrary to popular belief, the government of the so-called Islamic Republic is very complicated and obsessed with repression, and it uses various methods to torture, break, and eliminate its opponents. Second, the global prison is very big and complex. This is especially true of the prisons of the current government of Iran.

Being incarcerated in Dovalf cell of the Tharallah Sepah prison is different from being incarcerated in Yakalf cell of the same prison. Each interrogator is different from another interrogator, each cell is different from another cell, each jailer is different from another jailer, and every day is different. Especially in prison, every moment seems different.

The combination of these differences creates very complicated conditions and situations, so that the only way to overcome them is to recognize the situations, increase self-knowledge and have a high goal and abundant motivations.

After gaining self-knowledge and knowing the complicated world known as prison, one can become a "third type" of prisoner.

A prisoner of the third type is someone who, unlike a prisoner of the first type, breaks into the prison and goes there to ruin it. The aim of their efforts and desires is to endure the conditions and build a life similar to the one outside his prison.

The third type of prisoner turns the prison into a place of struggle for petition and freedom. Not only do they not break, but they break the jailers and the prison.

The important stages are the stage of diagnosis and observation of various layers inside the prison.

Where does an anarchist prisoner find allies? Among the political celebrities who criticise on the surface but are actually a safety valve for the status quo? Among the wealthy prisoners connected to the government, who spend several mornings performing a show with corrupt businesspeople? Among the thousands of corrupt people, there are more corrupt people in prison, and prison is more comfortable for them than a hotel.

No, not in any of them. A fighter who fights for the freedom, justice, equality and self-determination of the people is a true anarchist. In prison they will unite with those who want change, the classes who need change and who do not tolerate the existing conditions.

Prison workers are those who have taken actions out of necessity that the government has called illegal. These might include a worker who lived for years and never received his wages and expenses and was forced to sell alcoholic beverages, or someone who failed in business, or is in prison for not being able to pay a dowry or small debts.

Now we are faced with a more important question, despite the existence of a repressive government that has turned many into informers and traffickers, in prisons full of closed-circuit security cameras: how can organisations be formed? And we have a useful answer for this: a person who exists in this darkness, saw the light and became an anarchist, is certainly sufficiently intelligent and able to find a way to overcome difficulties.

To explain these ways would not fit in one article, and it is inappropriate that a discussion of the methods of defeating the oppressors should be published publicly. What matters is the motivation and goals of the fighters: the difficult path to freedom cannot be paved by writing thousands of pages, but if the militant knows what a treasure freedom is, they will suffer every pain and go through every obstacle to reach it.

What is happening in Iran and what do anarchists do during times of unrest?

December 13, 2021, was the third day of the Iranian teachers' strike, and several teachers were arrested in these strikes. In addition to severe physical torture, their families were subjected to strange threats from the government's usual psychological torture machine.

Execution continues as always in Iran, which sometimes ranks first and sometimes second in the world from a statistical point of view. Executions of children, women and political prisoners also continue.

Protests and workers' gatherings continue as always, and the Islamic government suppresses workers in various ways, as always.

On December 19, unfortunately, the Islamic Republic executed the political prisoner Haider Qurbani, a Kurdish prisoner. We have often witnessed such news of executions and the existence of many facing the death sentence.

As another example, on December 19, the political prisoner Abbas Dariss was in danger of execution, his brother was sentenced to life imprisonment, and his wife tragically lost her life due to the fear of execution. Prisoners at Urmia started a food strike to protest being transferred to unrelated cells and demanded to be returned to the standard cell from December 12.

People and farmers protested in the city of Isfahan at the end of November 2021, due to the deliberate drying of Zaindehrud River and the change of its course. More than 300 people were arrested, and more than 40 people killed as a result of the security forces' shooting. The security forces shot the protesters mainly with rifles or shotguns from close range. The wounded also suffered from movement, hearing and speech disabilities due to bullets entering brain tissue. More than 40 people also lost their eyesight due to the tearing and destruction of their corneas. Most of the bullets were aimed at the heads and faces of the protesters.

Naturally, anarchists in Iran, like all the anarchists of the world, were present in the street struggles and with the people, as well as in all the widespread urban protests in 2009, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021, and in all the urban clashes.

The anarchist is against power and their motivation for activism is not to gain political power, but to fight for equality and to disempower the autocrat. Therefore, many of the anarchist initiatives are not in the dark, but they are still hidden. The ones that are obvious are field battles, such as clashing with government officials in marches, writing slogans, graffiti, Twitter storms, etc.

But many activists do not organise famous free educational groups that are held for children and even adults who are deprived of education, or programs related to the environment and animals. In Iran, we have many anarchist groups that volunteer to clean up nature, collect garbage, or provide services related to animals, especially stray and injured animals, etc.

In this sense, successful groups help the families of prisoners, promote the release of prisoners by paying off debt and providing money and help to the homeless. Some of these groups are anarchist, and some are natural anarchist behaviors.

What is happening in Afghanistan now, and what are the possibilities of resistance under a new Taliban regime?

Since the fall of the Islamic Republic and the establishment of the Islamic Emirate, the citizens of Afghanistan, including civil activists, journalists, women's rights activists, athletes, artists, and freethinkers, have been forced to leave their homeland and emigrate to faraway countries.

With the establishment of the Islamic Emirate, women and young people lost all their jobs. Poverty, unemployment, and targeted killings have intensified every day.

We are in daily contact with many young people, and they are all worried, spending their days and nights full of fear and worry. Unfortunately, these young people are worried about their lives and have no hope for a better and brighter future. They have decided to emigrate because of the possibility that they will be assassinated in the future.

Unfortunately, these young people have no choice but to emigrate to Iran and Pakistan. These countries treat immigrants worse than the Taliban or any other terrorists. The police of the country of Iran have no humane relationship with the immigrants. Rather, the police insult, humiliate, and beat them.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported in its December 12, 2021, issue that between 2,500 and 4,000 Afghan asylum seekers are being deported by the Iranian authorities. According to this report, in the last year, Iran has expelled 1.02 million Afghans.

Among other things, we reported on November 16, 2021, that the Iranian police shot at a car carrying two women, one man, and a three-month-old immigrant child from Afghanistan. The passengers, including both women, were injured. The terrorist and bloodthirsty Islamic regime ruling Iran did not even allow them to be hospitalized. In the end, Iran sent them to the camp and then across the border.

In Afghanistan, up to now, more than 100 clerics, members of the former Afghan army, civil activists, and active women in Mazar-e-Sharif and others have been killed, disappeared and kidnapped by the Taliban, while the Taliban falsely announced amnesty. These are the people who should defeat the Taliban: the avengers of those who were killed during their 5-year government from 1996 to 2001, and for 20 years after that. So many ordinary people, children and women were killed by the suicide bombings of the Taliban, and now there is nothing but poverty. This poverty has led to the sale of children of families, together with Islamic reaction and the seclusion of women and school girls in the home. Such misery has also led to displacement across borders.

In Mazar-e-Sharif, the Taliban arrested more than 80 young people, students, and university students in a demonstration, tortured them, gave them electric shocks, and inflicted many harms on them, so that even their partners were not able to speak freely and leave.

In another incident, 7 women activists in Mazar-e-Sharif, including Forozan Safi, a university professor and a civic activist, were murdered in mysterious ways. Their bodies were found in a pit on the outskirts of Khaled Benhan Waleed city in Naheed.

It has been said that four of the active Afghan women were killed by gunfire when they were on their way to the airport to leave the country.

The family members of the civil activist and university professor Safi, who recovered her body from the morgue, claim that the bodies of dozens of young women are kept there, but no trace of their families has been found so far.

At least three types of resistance have been formed against the Taliban. One is multiple guerilla and military fronts. The second is the resistance of protesting women, who have announced their presence and opposition in different provinces. Their repression is very high in all provinces, and most of the women activists are active in Kabul, where dozens of them were arrested.

The third resistance is the negative resistance taken up by the trained and specialised forces, who intentionally left Afghanistan so as not to serve the Taliban and their government.

One way that people show their disgust with the Taliban is by leaving Afghanistan behind. The presence of Afghans behind border crossings and smuggling routes is like a great protest against the Talibs' presence.

Another thing is that with the departure of people from Afghanistan, the possibility of gaining power and forming political opponents and social activists outside will increase a lot. Yet, there is still a risk that, with the passage of time, the suffering of the people of Afghanistan will melt away in the minds of the people of other countries, and be forgotten.

Another issue is the emigration of specialists and educated people. The departure of educated cadres and individuals can be viewed as resistance against the Taliban's consolidation of power. If such a thing is announced publicly by these individuals (experts), then they leave not only because of the danger to their lives, but also to protest the strengthening of the Taliban. Emigration will no longer just be an escape or refuge, but also a concept of fighting against the Taliban.

We have the experience of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, and the Taliban will use the experience of the Islamic Republic to suppress opponents, especially women. Therefore, we are informed about the tactics and movements of the Taliban, because we know the Taliban receives the advice of the military and security advisors of at least Pakistan and Iran. However, the closest government to the Taliban is the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Taliban will look for profit in suppression, and if 43 years ago the Iranian government did not have a model close to its own, the Taliban can use the experience of the Islamic government in Iran to be 43 years ahead. In this way, it can cover this path in just a few years.

But from the other side, we, who stand in opposition to the Islamic Republic of Iran, know the way to confront the Taliban, because we know the way to confront the regime in Iran. For this reason, we have decided to withdraw our known forces from Afghanistan in order to preserve our strength, so that we can organise anarchist struggles with new forces in the coming years.

Part Two

July 21, 2023

The first part of this interview with Asra Anarchism was published in September 2022. In light of recent developments in Iran, we asked the group two further questions which immediately follow this introduction. The second part of the interview will then continue below that.

Please bear in mind much of this interview was translated by a third party and then edited for readability. Therefore, there may be slight differences to the original meaning.

In light of recent protests against the current regime in Iran, how do you view efforts aimed at international solidarity, considering how Middle Eastern and Muslim people are treated abroad?

Regarding the people's revolution in Iran, the efforts for solidarity by the people, writers, artists, and intellectuals in the first weeks of the uprising, beginning in September 2022, were very encouraging. Still, these efforts could not reach a cohesive, or rather social, form. What we mean by a social form is solidarity with people, collective approaches, participation in demonstrations, and even protest organisations by different communities across the world.

We feel there is a necessity for real solidarity so that radical political movements can actively fight against the Islamic Republic and other reactionary political forces affiliated with Western and Eastern governments and create an independent opposition. This opposition can shape the international social discourse and actions outside of Iran.

For example, the international anarchists sharing and allying with the positions of the anarchists of Iran and Afghanistan was very good and encouraging. And now, many of our comrades who have been active since the beginning of the protests and uprising are moving forward with us in many organising and activist spaces.

What we consider necessary is strengthening and spreading this atmosphere of action and solidarity as an international people's opposition to the Islamic Republic and to the reactionary movements seeking to replace them.

What potential for revolution do you see in the recent protests?

The most important aspect of Iran's uprising which will lead to a revolution is its egalitarian nature. This aspect has highlighted itself by demanding gender equality and the elimination of the oppression that the Islamic Republic has imposed on women. However, it does not end there, because the fight to eliminate gender oppression is only one part of the fight for equality. The noticeable phenomenon in this uprising is the breakdown of general demands into smaller and more detailed ones. These are smaller sections, all of which have arisen due to the inequality of the ruling patriarchal order. This order has arisen from the logic of government, a logic that has existed for years and is not limited to the Islamic Republic.

Therefore, the essence of the demands so far can be seen as a revolt against the whole social structure. The people will be able to change the entire unequal social order of the country by relying on what can be called the uprising against patriarchy, which has the most crucial revolutionary potential in Iran.

Nowadays, we see that people in Balochistan, Kurdistan, and Ahwaz, more than any other regions in Iran, are moving towards diversifying their slogans, gatherings, and also their role in determining social changes.

This is in response to the different religions and different languages that comprise these regions. For this reason, they have experienced different oppression and social exclusions caused by the monarchist and Islamic systems based on the above-mentioned differences. Only through such an uprising could these communities make themselves and their demands stronger than ever and into an effective political force for all of Iran.

This revolutionary process will soon consolidate itself with all its might. This process started from an uprising against gender oppression and became an uprising against all other existing oppressions. The realisation of the necessity of rising up against inequality is multiplying, as it makes itself recognizable and possible for all communities and social strata in Iran. This liveliness is a potential and an outstanding sign of the revolution!

Despite all this, we should not forget that the Islamic government severely suppressed the revolutionary movements and did not even allow the fortieth day after death ceremony to be observed for those murdered by the regime. The only permanent demonstration is still held every

Friday in Balochistan, but it is met with severe repression. An unknown number of people have been arrested and injured there. Of course, in opposition to repressions, the people have also changed the form of struggle and revolutionary process for the time being. The cores of the resistance have been formed and continue their struggles covertly.

Today, more than four months since the revolt, people and their resistance groups need logistical support to continue and expand their activities. The fire of this revolt is still alive and strong. It is just momentarily under the ashes, ready to blaze out at the next opportunity. Everyone knows this. Reactionary forces are gearing up to steal the revolution; we must do the same to resist them and win the future.

What follows is the second part of the original interview questions.

How do you address the oppression of women and ethnic and religious minorities in Iran and Afghanistan? Does your work involve improving literacy and education among these and other groups?

The oppression that is applied to the women of Iran and Afghanistan is very widespread and systematic, and it has a specific legal form. Women, both within the family and in the community, and within the Islamic terrorist governments in Iran and Afghanistan, must be in constant conflict and struggle. Therefore, women themselves are on the front line of this fight against theocracy and religious tyranny.

The prevailing narrative of political Islam and fascism in the geography known as Afghanistan, which is regressive and extremist, does not recognize the rights of women or other minorities. Most of the extremist groups believe in the Taliban's epistemology, a closed and dark world where the aliens must be killed and killing these aliens is considered *Jihad* (reward in this world and the hereafter), and the value of women is reduced to an object. For the Taliban, women are only creatures for reproduction.

For Islamic governments, cis and trans women are considered their first and main enemies, because most discriminations and oppressions are against cis women and transgender people due to their gender and sexual orientation. Their god is male and patriarchal, and all prophets, imams, and religious leaders are liars and religious charlatans. A woman has no political or religious leadership position. In Iran, women have been deprived of education in many sciences in universities, and in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, they do not have the right to receive education beyond the sixth grade (approximately after learning multiplication and division and solving fractional problems). This is ideological and religious discrimination, and the continuation of women's education in universities, if those universities are dependent on religious and security governmental institutions, will be prevented in many fields.

The nature of being heterosexual, whether from the point of view of sexual orientation towards the opposite sex or from the point of view of one's own sexuality, outside of the traditional framework, is suppressed by the institutions of family, market, university, laws, and religious devotion. The LGBTQ+ community is ostracised by society, beaten and insulted, and personally assassinated or sentenced to death.

We see individual movement activity more than we have organisational activity. Due to security reasons and extensive repression, we focus more on individual movement activity in Iran and Afghanistan.

In Iran and Afghanistan, different people live with different native languages, cultures, and religions, but they are forced to study only in a common language and are deprived of the right to education in their mother tongue. This issue is not found within sections of anarchists or feminists.

Note that most of us anarchists of the Federation live in the so-called geography of Afghanistan and Iran and in religious and ideological societies. Because we are atheists ourselves (facing the sentence of apostasy and execution), this shows that we are facing different challenges and have to fight in a wide range of fields, despite in other ways being just like all the other anarchists around the world. We pay special attention to people's struggles and global anarchist movements. We follow the world news every day, and as soon as protesters and anarchists enter the street protests, they get violently repressed. We will immediately try to inform and communicate closely with their anarchists, if possible, to help or support them as much as we can, considering that people outside of Iran and Afghanistan can be a part of the Federation as well.

Several weeks before the US withdrawal, the Federation had come to the conclusion that civil, social, and public activities were not possible in Iran. Therefore, we decided that the whole union should focus on Afghanistan and provide financial support for such activities so that it could expand. But unfortunately, the political events changed quickly and within eleven days of U.S. withdrawal, thirty-three out of thirty-four provinces, except Panjshir, fell into the hands of the Taliban. Then, the government handed over power to the Taliban.

What we think is important about Afghanistan's geographical minorities is their genocide and the systematic removal of thousands. We are referring to the racism that has played out for years, where rulers and regimes based on the narrative of political Islam and fascism have been shedding thousands of people's blood in different ways and for different reasons. Thousands of lives will soon be destroyed due to a lack of external support and due to the differences of religion. How many educational institutions, schools, nurseries, wedding halls, and sports clubs belonging to the Hazara (a long persecuted ethno-religious minority) are being purposefully blown up and destroyed? Members of this minority are deliberately shot on the highways, and their civil protests are violently and finally destroyed with bombs and horrible explosions. In summary, the history of Afghanistan is witnessing the worst behaviour of autocratic rulers against thousands of people, and it continues today.

Therefore, Afghanistan's Hazaras and federalists can be considered a potential partner for the anarchist project.

Is armed struggle feasible in Iran and Afghanistan?

In general, yes. There is an armed struggle in both Iran and Afghanistan, but it faces serious limitations. If there is money, it is possible to buy access to weapons in Afghanistan. Also, because of the more than four war zones in Afghanistan, there is a possibility of supplying weapons. On top of this, the existence of the Hindu Kush mountains and the rugged nature of Afghanistan provide a natural condition for the presence of armed forces and guerrillas. Even if Iran is considered geographically similar to Afghanistan, its elevation is not as high as the mountains of Afghanistan, and the entire geography of Iran is not considered mountainous like its neighbour.

In Afghanistan, since August 15, 2021, when the Taliban occupied Afghanistan, the armed struggle by the forces and supporters of the National Resistance Front led by Ahmad Massoud began, and several other military fronts have been formed as well.

We anarchists also examined the possibility of creating an independent armed force before the fall of all thirty-four provinces of Afghanistan. However, we did not have the financial capability, we did not have the weapons, and our force was very small and limited, so we did not have the possibility of confrontation and war on two fronts.

There have been more than four wars in Afghanistan since 1979, and in general, a section of the people are tired of war. The Taliban, however, who use the force of war, weapons, and terrorist operations, and by suicide explosions, and killing women, children, and ordinary people, come to negotiate and agree with governments. There is no other way to combat this except war and armed resistance.

A group that is going to start an armed war needs people to stand by it, that is, to have the support of the people. Second, like the authoritarian groups such as the Taliban, we must also have the support of a foreign country, for ammunition and other things. This issue is also true for Iran. Iraqi Kurdistan is sometimes controlled by several Kurdish armed groups.

Anarchists in Iran have a social structure of support, but they do not have the necessary weapons and facilities. The existence of laws in Iran that can turn even a small fruit knife in a pocket into a cruel sentence of several years in prison has inhibited the carrying of firearms and the smuggling of them to different key regions.

Many collective efforts in this direction have led to failure, but still, in different and new ways, the general public is trying to obtain weapons. This general and all-round desire for arming oneself in Iran without any restrictions and conditions is intensified by the all-round massacres of the people of Iran by the government. More than 6,000 deaths were documented in just one province in November 2019.

Of course, it is obvious to us that the armed struggle must also be carried out using anarchist tactics and philosophy, that is, with decentralisation, will and antagonism toward the aim of destroying the powerful forces of the enemy.

How can anarchists in the Middle East resist the authoritarian revolutionaries like Daesh (the Islamic State), who are pushing for the establishment of a caliphate in the borders?

When we talk about the Middle East, it is not clear exactly which countries and geographical regions it includes, and we are faced with different names, but apparently there are 18 countries in the Middle East. Iran is located in the Middle East and Afghanistan, like Pakistan, is in South Asia. Therefore, to answer this question, more than just the Middle East should be examined.

Let's review some currents by name: the Taliban of Afghanistan and the Taliban of Pakistan (Tehreek-e Taliban), plus Daesh in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, and in some countries of Southeast Asia. As well as the Taliban and Daesh, of course, there are currents of Islamic extremism in Andhra Pradesh, the State in India. There are Islamists like al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and Ansar al-Sharia in Africa, plus al-Qaeda, Hizb al-Tahrir and hundreds of other Islamist terrorist groups.

We have a government in Iran that is similar to the Taliban and Daesh. According to the people of Iran in cyberspace, we have faced a combined Taliban and Daesh government in Iran for 34 years before Daesh, and we are still confronting this terrorist Islamist government.

The first terrorist act of the current rulers of Iran towards the people was the burning of Rex Abadan cinema, which happened six months before the revolution of 1979. As many as 776 people were killed. The main instigators of the burning of Rex Abadan cinema after the revolution were the representatives of the Islamic Republic Council.

According to the Doha agreement with the Taliban and the U.S. government, the Taliban inherited power from America and the West within 11 days and occupied Afghanistan starting in August 2021. In short, the Taliban has taken the people of Afghanistan hostage. During this time, Talibs have committed countless crimes and have been increasing the restrictions for women, practically sequestering them in their homes. Basically, Islamists consider women and transgender people their first enemy, and most of their laws are against these two groups.

We, the anarchists, women, queers, and atheists, are actually on the front line of the fight against Islamist terrorists like the Taliban in Afghanistan and the clerics in Iran who have taken political power and applied their Sharia and patriarchal laws.

In the Middle East and in all Islamic countries, based on Sharia, we have to fight on several fronts at the same time. Anarchists in areas where Islamist terrorists are either in power or trying to reach power should count women, queers, atheists and freedom seekers as their allies. In addition, we should encourage the growth of anarchism in these societies and at the same time welcome the help of anarchists around the world.

What are some of the organisational challenges you face at the international level? Do you see the end of sanctions on Iran and Afghanistan as an opportunity for inter-cultural encounters?

Perhaps the issue can be divided into several sections:

1) One of the organisational challenges at the global level is that most of the activities of anarchists are secret in many countries, and due to security reasons, it is not possible to exchange our experiences publicly by projecting them into the virtual space of the movement. This would not be constructive. On the other hand, in many geographical areas the level of oppression is different, the organisational methods are different, and there is a different understanding of the level of oppression between different societies, and the situation of survival.

2) The issue and problem of language is that it limits global communication unintentionally. This problem of a lack of a common language is one of the obstacles to the exchange of more and more experiences of struggle that can promote global self-organisation.

3) There is also the difference between societies in terms of the type of government and the quality and quantity of dictators; the political, social, cultural, religious, geographical and climatic differences; and the difference of societies in terms of the economy and the level of welfare or the poverty of societies. The possibility of self-organisation at the international level faces these challenges.

4) The structure of the institutions of power and the methods of repression are different in different States; therefore, this also makes the possibility of self-organisation across borders difficult.

5) Government lobbies abroad, their propaganda, and cyber devices have the possibility to target anarchists all over the world, however indirectly, in cyberspace. For example, following the fallacy that “there is imperialism only in America,” some anarchists gave up the fight against all other imperialist and micro-imperialist states, or even supported or guarded silence about the Islamist governments and Islamic currents that were using supposedly anti-imperialist and anti-American slogans. Or, by referring to the excuse of “Islamophobia,” they would refuse to join us when we were fighting theocratic governments like the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Taliban of Afghanistan. Sometimes, they would even refuse to publish our comments or content on their websites.

6) It is the system of State borders, which practically makes it difficult for many people from poor countries or countries without “valuable” passports to make direct contact with anarchists abroad.

7) Not having comprehensive media such as satellite TV reduces the coverage of self-organisation at the international level, and we have the fewest media tools compared to government media. For example, the Islamic Republic of Iran is trying to cut off people’s access to the international internet and has fully prepared the necessary infrastructure for this.

8) Lack of financial opportunities can play an important role in the field of international organisation. Despite all these problems, the international anarchist movement has an acceptable track record and has worked very successfully. This is because a part of the politics of their world struggles is enacted on a daily basis, that is, the priority is with the people’s struggles every day. When in every part of the world, people are on the streets and are fighting against a government, all the anarchist movements are there in spirit and are focused on those people’s struggles and anarchists’ struggles. In fact, anarchists are the only political actors who really prioritise internationalism and act on the basis of “one world, one struggle,” like a complex but unified system.

This is the same in the virtual space as well. In fact, anarchists support each other in every possible way. To give an example, our content, which is in Farsi (Persian), is mostly broadcast by international anarchist comrades. As a result, apparently, it has an international audience larger than the people who know Farsi.

After the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan, the international anarchists did not hesitate to provide financial assistance so that we could evacuate some of our comrades from Afghanistan. So many interviews were done with us when we were busy leaving, and they contacted and helped us so much that we really did not find the ability to answer, translate and answer all the interviews.

International anarchist comrades regularly translate our content into different languages and post it on their websites.

Regarding international sanctions, first of all, it should be said about the role of the lobbies of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Afghan Taliban abroad that they are present “everywhere.”

In particular, the Islamic Republic has sent its forces abroad to lobby for it during these 34 years. The clerics of the Islamic Republic of Iran want to promote the political line of their theocratic government by influencing the media, newspapers, parliament, political parties, world scientific and university societies, human rights societies, etc. One of these issues is the discussion of sanctions, and the main benefits of lifting sanctions would be for the terrorist states of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the terrorists affiliated to the Guards Corps of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the terrorist Taliban in Afghanistan. Another example is the attempt to gain official recognition of the Taliban through their international agents. Of course, these lobbyists have many duties and receive a lot of money from the Islamic Republic.

Whenever the sanctions of the Islamic Republic of Iran have decreased, this has led to greater profit to finance this state’s terrorism across the globe, or it has strengthened its religious and economic reach in the world, to meet its goals of converting more people to Shi’ism to launch an Islamic revolution, or of simply suppressing the peoples of Iran, Iraq, and Syria. In this way, practically cancelling the sanctions only increases the risk of suppressing the people of the region.

In your founding manifesto, Federation of Anarchism Era explicitly disavows “religious anarchisms.” What is the context of why you adopt political atheism as a politi-

cal line? To what degree do prophetic visions of the future drive politics in the Middle East, and how can anarchists reframe these concerns or desires to promote an anarchist future? What role does culture (music, theatre, art), primary targets of destruction by groups like Daesh, play in your anarchism?

The issue of religion is very important. In some regions, the people have been alienated from religion and it has no appeal for them. A real alternative that intends to overthrow the government therefore cannot be like its opposition. We are against political Islam and Islam in power, and we also think that religion has negative effects on everything. This is because the government rests at the top of a pyramid which should be inverted, and the laws that should be earthly have become contaminated with reactionary religious thoughts and delusions.

Besides, any anarchist tendency can be present in the federation, except a tendency antithetical to anarchism. It is not possible for a person to have a religious attitude and another to have an anti-religious attitude, because they will not reach any common point and they will always be in conflict with each other.

In the Middle East and its surrounding countries, there are great differences among societies. In some societies, religion has the upper hand and religious power is dominant, but in others, the majority are not religious. For example, religion in Afghanistan is much stronger than in Iran. Therefore, societies in the Middle East and South Asia can be divided into two groups: societies where religion and religious thought play the main role, and societies where religion is unlikely to play much of a role in its political future. Anarchists in the Middle East play a different role. In some geographical areas such as Iran, anarchists have a social body, but in smaller countries in the Middle East, the number of anarchists is few. It goes without saying that we do not limit our field of activity to Iran or Afghanistan and we seek to strengthen anarchism, especially in the Middle East.

In relation to art: Taliban, ISIS (Daesh), and other Islamic religious forces are fundamentally opposed to music, theatre and art, just as music was forbidden in Iran for several decades after 1979. At first, underground music was performed, and this practice continues, because music is also under the control and censorship of Iran's theocracy.

Like books, music and art, theatre is under the supervision and censorship of the Islamic government of Iran. Anarchism in Iran and Afghanistan entered society mainly through art and artists.

Finally, the main reason for anarchists' confrontation with religion is due to its systematic rules and views of society. The ideology of religion, like the "nation-state," is completely centralised and calls for the usurpation of individual and even social will for the benefit of the "greater good," that is, the "religion-nation" system.

A part of Afghanistan's society is religious, and a large part of it is disgusted and hates religion. This is because the wars and bloodshed, destruction and our withdrawal from Afghanistan have their roots in religion and political Islam. Those who are harmed by and hate religion, fearing the consequences of dynastic power and xenophobic reactions, cannot speak of it. The few who do are cursed and blasphemed by the religious founders, and if not outright assassinated, they are arrested or executed by the religious rulers. The Taliban regime executes even the most ordinary person on the charge of violating and criticising their self-defined Islam without trial.

Oh, how the soldiers whip groups of people for the crime of not praying, and even shot a young man in Ghazni province for the crime of fasting, without trial! Of course, these were only small samples that we noticed. With a few differences, this situation is generalised in Iran's

society and regime. The harsh behaviour of religious representatives and governments, which has enslaved the people in the literal sense of the word (such as through the mandatory hijab of women or the mandating of long skirts and facial hair) are the cause of increasing hatred.

According to Herbert Reed, an anarchist poet and writer, “if you do not provide your society with a new religion, it will gradually revert to the old one.” There is a need for another idea to be presented to society instead of political Islam, and it will be a good ground to attract the masses.

Authoritarians, nationalists, and clerics want to bring the world and the people under the rule of their intellectual system. Of course, they do this with political tricks and in most cases by resorting to force and coercion. The only defence against this bullying is anarchism, which can be achieved with an intellectual and social revolution and a freeing of society from the evil of this tyranny.

What advice would you offer to those trying to create a group like your own?

Our situation has its own intricacies, characteristics, and conditions that have been imposed on us. Our dispersion in different countries and continents is one of these characteristics.

Our second characteristic is that we come from repressive Islamic countries, and we have a lot of experience in dealing with systematic oppression. Even abroad, there is the risk of terrorism by the Islamic Republic of Iran, being killed outside of the country, the risk of kidnapping and taking us to Iran or prison, and the possibility of execution in the countries around Iran by Iranian spies. There is also the constant risk of hacking and espionage. There is information about the Islamic Republic of Iran operating by using technology abroad, like the recent discovery of the government spying on opponents abroad using Dutch servers.

We are a group that can cooperate with all anarchist tendencies except for those who advocate pacifism, capitalism, religion, or nationalism. This is because conflicting political ideas cannot cooperate with each other. For example, religion is not compatible with atheism. We went through each of these tendencies before arriving at where we are today.

The creation and organisation of an anarchist group should be proportional to the geographical-political region and the amount of oppression, the type of oppression and the level of life risks. Respecting security issues is important under all conditions and in every geography, and the influence of police should be taken care of. If you want to prevent their penetration, it is necessary that you quietly attract the required number of people and choose those people yourselves. When the required force is provided, stop and think more about influencing the anarchist movement and related movements rather than expanding your organisation. Your activity must be focused on the goals of the movement.

It is better for your media to be established in other countries, preferably in other continents that do not have a good relationship with the country you are considering. Although there is a risk of hacking and cyber-attacks, or of information being lost between states, it is important that key information is not exchanged online.

Being a part of organisations in different countries reduces vulnerability in the country of origin and can increase the level of struggle, diversity and expansion. The anarchist movement can benefit from the experience of global forces and attract the support of the global movement.

Do you want to add something that we haven't covered?

Due to security reasons, we could not answer your questions as clearly as we should, considering that only in Iran, we have to deal with 16 intelligence-security institutions. This is in addition to the Taliban's intelligence agency.

The growing fear of the Taliban caused serious changes to our plans. Among them, many interviews were conducted with us when most of the members of one of the countries that make up the Federation of Anarchists of Afghanistan and Iran were displaced and the Federation still had 9 months for them to leave Afghanistan.

We would like to thank all the anarchist comrades of the world who helped us financially so that we could help comrades from Afghanistan escape, and of course we did not think that the withdrawal of the comrades would take so long. We thought that we would be involved for about six months, but still more of our comrades in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan need to get abroad, and we will need financial help and support from our comrades. Since the war in Ukraine escalated, the plan to leave Afghanistan and transfer them to safe countries is no longer on the agenda or a priority. Therefore, the issue of ensuring the safety of our comrades may take several years, depending on the situation in Ukraine. In general, as a strategy, we anarchists should be able to be in close contact to establish communication between continents.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in conducting the interview.

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