

# Iran at the Outbreak of the Revolution

Interview with Hassan Maarfi Pour activist from Iran

This interview was conducted with a magazine, but for various reasons the magazine will not be mentioned!

What is the reason for the recent protests in Iran? What was the main trigger? What are the social contradictions that take place in the Iranian community? What are the reasons for the current revolutionary protests and resistance in Iran?

The reasons for the revolutionary uprisings in Iran are manifold. On the one hand, the oppressed and all sections of the wage earners are dealing with a sharp crisis and catastrophic economic situation; on the other hand, for about 44 years, we have been experiencing one of the most repressive and authoritarian forms of government, which I personally can only call fascism. [One can say] that the state machinery with all its organs is suspended. The only organ of the state that functions is the apparatus of violence, and it does not function as it used to. The population in Iran has been in a permanent state of emergency for more than 43 years. In a country like Iran, with an incredible amount of raw materials such as oil, natural gas, gold, silver, and copper, the state is not able to improve the life of the working class. Still, this state invests millions and billions of euros in terrorism and terrorizes the entire region of the Middle East. This brutal terrorism for spreading the hegemony of Islamic fascism and developing a regional imperialist rule is considered and supported as "anti-imperialist" by the traditional "left" and orientalist postmodernism. Even someone like Samir Amin did not give up this "cross-front" ideology until the end of his life. I will not separate the social, economic, political, ideological, and moral tendencies that only together play their role in these uprisings. As a Marxist, one must see, analyze, and criticize the totality of the capitalist mode of production and organize for the abolition of capitalism with people who follow the same interest and stand for actual emancipation, representing a proletarian class standpoint with the working class.

Aban 98 (a time reference to the Persian calendar indicating the month of Aban 1398 equivalence roughly to November 2019) is one of the critical turning points in the history of Iran. The uprising of November 2019 is unprecedented in the history of modern Iran. Here, we discuss the aesthetics of the Aban uprising, the position of different forces in this uprising, the role of the opposition, and the role of other alternatives. The goal is to redefine these narratives. It is essential to understand that the Aban uprising was formed upon the foundation of a preceding uprising (in Dec-2017) which itself had negated all bourgeois alternative movements such as the "Khordadi's Second Reformation," the "Green Movement" and the "Heroic Compromise" of Violet movement. What made the Aban Uprising more noticeable was the following facts: it was carried out on a broader dimension, more radical and militant, and had a deeper reflection of the slogans & demands of the laborers and marginalized people. Although Aban Uprising was suppressed by bloodshed and mass killings, it became the basis for the workers and the urban laborers to reflect deeper on their struggles. The continuous protests and strikes of workers, teachers, women, and retirees between 2017 - 2019 clearly show that the working class considers the "one step forward, two steps back" policy (a tactic that has been effective to a large extent) as a logical and revolutionary tactic and as a tactic which allows them to look back to their positionality and struggles.

Within two years (2017-2019), we witnessed different political developments, such as the intensification of the class struggles of the workers on the one hand and the increase of the struggle of the bourgeois classes against the workers on the other hand. The bourgeoisie of Islamic Iran manifests itself to the workers through the imposition of inflation, increased cost of housing & food, and commodification of various areas of people's lives. On the other hand, the "proletariat" tried to dissolve and expose the pro-regime labor structures by radicalizing and deepening the labor struggles, ideological war with the defenders of capitalism and the labor "aristocracy" and advancing the genuine communist line in the society and among the workers.

Iran's society has undergone serious changes in the past year. The balance of power has changed in favor of the workers. We can never compare the uprising of Aban 1398 (Nov 2019) with the uprising of Dey 1396 (Dec 2017). On the one hand, Iran's bourgeois political structure has reached a politico-economic dead-end and has no desire to resolve the people's economic problems. On the other hand, it uses the current condition of the economic crisis and the sanctions in favor of accumulating more capital to spread regional terrorism. The primary victims of economic sanctions were the weakest strata of the working class. Over time, these sanctions generally led to the proletarianization of society, poverty, and misery of the vast majority of people, which comprises about ninety percent of the country's population. It also led to the proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie and the destruction of the vast majority of the middle class. Except for an ostentation nostalgia, nothing is left of the petty bourgeoisie (the middle class) in Iran. Iran's bourgeoisie, hoping to return to the era when gasoline was cheap, has also some sort of mental orgasm with the memories of the past. This is very similar to the pre-Covid condition of Europe and similar to the crisis of the petty bourgeoisie in Germany (in 2008) who had nostalgia for the good old times of "Mark" before the formation of the European Union.

Islamic fascism in Iran is experiencing the worst kind of defeat. The hegemony of the regime and all other right-wing and conservative forces, from monarchists to liberals, has been defeated. The majority of the population is radical and militant. In contrast to other uprisings in the last four years, notably Dec 2017 and Nov 2019, as well as a series of other strikes that lasted more than a hundred days in the petrochemical (oil) industry.

Due to the constant and long-lasting strikes in the sugar industry, locally known as "Haft-Tappeh" in the last decades, the establishment of the teachers' union and the continuation of its activity, women's activities, and women's movement, etc., the current protests and uprisings are becoming more and more radical. People are attacking the police directly before they are attacked themselves.

The riots may have had this or that trigger. Still, eventually, the death of Mahsa Amini at the hands of the "morality" police spurred the population to vent their pent-up anger and take to the streets en masse across Iran. The demands are becoming more radical and broader, and the form of the movement is changing every day and becoming more and more radical.

The population will not come to terms with the "rationalization" of Islamic fascism, nor with the right-wing and conservative opposition. There is only one answer, and that is a socialist revolution and the abolition of the bourgeois state through the establishment of council democracy.

Does any well-organized opposition or resistance exist in Iran, an opposition that wants to get rid of the theocratic character of the state?

In Iran, there is no freedom for the political work of oppositional parties, and there is no freedom at all for political work in civil society. For this reason, I can say no. In the country, there is no political organization that can lead this revolutionary uprising alone to a revolution. All that we have achieved in Iran in the political struggles have been achieved through political illegal or semi-illegal work. In fascism, you cannot talk about legal organization. We have been living under the rule of Islamic fascism for 44 years. This does not mean that all these uprisings in the last five years were spontaneous and unorganized, and we could not form any organization in Iran. In Iran, many different organizations either did or do underground work or are active in the trade union and other fields. Since the reformists and the followers of Khatami have tried to create space for reformist political activities within the logic of the regime, the Marxists and communists, activists, and radical people have also taken advantage of this situation.

The supporters of 2nd Khordad (reformists within the regime and supporters of Khatami like Siad Hajarian and Katuzian etc., as classical intellectuals in the sense of Gramsci, tried to carry out this conservative attempt and so-called "passive revolution" based on "the discourse" again with Gramsci spoken by the counter-revolutionary method. On the one hand, they tried to propagate this "master-servant relationship" in the Hegelian sense and in terms of diplomacy to the outside and foreign policy as a "Dialogue among Civilizations" and translate it as "Discourse Free of Domination." However, from the beginning, there was nothing except a subordination of the fascist state in Iran to the Western capital and Western imperialism.

Between 1998 and the early 2000s, we witness in Iran, on the one hand, a discourse for the "reformation" of the fascist state through a passive revolution, as well as resistance and struggles within society. As Mohammad Khatami, with the help of "traditional intellectuals" in the sense of Gramsci, such as Said Hajarian, we witness a broad discourse for the restoration of the regime and its adaptation. This neoliberal policy was an attempt for the integration of the economy into the world economy and the implementation of the projects of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, hiding behind the cloak of Habermas' "Communicative Action."

The role of Germany and Heinrich Böll Foundation and Habermas in the integration and legitimization of the fascist rule of the Iranian regime and the relativization of the mass murder of political prisoners to the Western "world," or rather Western states, especially Germany, must not be forgotten. Habermas, who was called the state philosopher of German imperialism by the green former foreign minister, had not only not celebrated in the totality of his normative naive "theories" the imperialism and fetishism of the West but also supported the ultra-conservative fascistoid forces like the so-called reformists in Iran, but received the murderers and co-founders of the fascist apparatus, so-called Revolutionary Guard (Sepah Pasdaran) Akbar Ganji, who had personally often attacked the women with acid, in Vienna during his "escape" to "exile." I will not reduce the analysis of Habermas to his political actions, but every political action has a theoretical background, and this must not be reduced to his naivety. And these things must be mentioned, of course, because Habermas and Heinrich Böll Foundation, by relativizing the crime of fascist Islamism in Iran, have contributed greatly to the illusion within the intellectuals, at least in Germany. The Berlin conference in early April 2000, organized and financed by Heinrich Böll Foundation, was disrupted by Iranian communists and opponents of the regime in exile and ended without success. Habermas and Heinrich Böll Foundation, who fought for the "representation" of a "rational" Iranian regime within the population in Germany, were called traitors and opponents of democracy by revolutionary communists and communists from Iran.

In Iran, in the period of "reformation" (1997-2005) of Islamic fascism and passive revolution, we witnessed active persecution of political activists and chain murders of many activists and left intellectuals such as Mohamad Jaafar Pouyandeh and Mohammad Mokhtari, who were active "members of Iranian Writers Union" with many other left intellectuals were murdered. In the period of the government of the "reformists" on July 9, 1999, the university was attacked by armed troops, partly by Hezbollah from Lebanon; using tanks and heavy weapons, many students were killed and seriously injured, and some were even thrown down from the roof. The further consequence of the oppression and killings, both the killings and oppressions of the workers and students, happen exactly under the rule of a government that presented itself as "Rational" to the western countries. On 24.1.2004, the striking workers of the copper industry in southern Iran were shot with helicopters, and their strike was brutally put down, killing four workers.

Should we consider the situation a revolutionary one?

Yes. There is no need to emphasize that the objective situation in Iran is revolutionary, but a revolutionary situation needs revolutionary theory and practice. As Lenin described: "To the Marxist, it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the "upper classes," a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for "the lower classes not to want" to live in the old way; it is also necessary that "the upper classes should be unable" to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in "peacetime," but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the "upper classes" themselves into independent historical action"( Lenin, V. I. The Collapse of the Second International, 1915).

The objective situation for a revolution is there. For years there has been a sharp economic crisis, inflation, poverty, and unemployment, which cannot be solved by the ruling class on the one hand. On the other hand, the ruling class cannot hold its legitimacy anymore in society; the legitimization crisis by itself is another condition for revolution. By principle, the working class needs to understand its class interest and positionality, i.e., that their interest is not compatible with the interest of the bourgeoisie; now, we can see that the working class of Iran has developed a partial (if not full) class consciousness. So, one of the observations during the current uprising is that the right-wing forces are gradually manifesting their true anti-revolutionary nature. Similarly, the working class is presenting its revolutionary nature. Therefore, yes, we are in a revolutionary situation, but to implement a revolution, we need a revolutionary understanding of revolution; and speaking ontologically, this understanding of the revolution and the formation of the class consciousness is not developed *aposteriori* but *apriori*. Such uprisings, though they are formed and raised spontaneously, can't remain so; an uprising would either get suppressed or get organized. So, for an uprising to transition toward getting organized, it has to get this class consciousness. We are experiencing an ontological moment and an ontological turn. This ontological turn is presented in the politicization of most of the population on the one hand and on the other hand in

the development of the class consciousness and class standpoint; so, there is a need to overcome the populist positions in the struggle against the domination of capital and a need to differentiate between left and right or bourgeois (fascist and liberal opposition) and communist. The revolutionary uprisings have socio-economic reasons and want emancipation in different areas; they want a revolution and demand the destruction of the state. The right-wing opposition wants to maintain the current state apparatus and to continue more radically the neoliberalism that for years has dragged the working class in Iran into poverty. All right-wing, fascist, conservative, and liberal parties and groups, regardless of what they say about themselves, do not represent any alternative except neoliberalism. Their irrational argument says that in neoliberalism, the state is sharply diminished. Since in Iran "Revolution Guard" is involved as a part of the state in the investment big time, neoliberalism cannot exist in Iran despite brutal attack on the livelihood of the working class, commodification of interpersonal relations, privatization of almost all possible spheres of life from education and medicine to housing to reproductive labor, etc. all have been reified and commodified.

The situation in Iran is revolutionary, but merely one revolutionary situation can't be able to develop a revolution. We need a revolutionary realpolitik with ideological, strategic, and tactical methods that can prevent any attempt to change this revolution into a counterrevolution; we need a kind of regime change that can lead this revolution to the abolition of the capitalist state and seizure of power by the proletarian councils and develop a kind of Council Republic. The proletariat must become a class by itself and for itself; that is, to be "the state" and no longer remain in opposition or on the margins of society.

Do national minorities play any role there?

In the revolutionary uprisings, we do not see nationalist slogans, promotions focusing on the independence of national minorities, or fighting for autonomy and independence. Of course, the oppressed from all walks of life, including ethnic minorities, are very much involved because of the precarious situations in the areas like Kurdistan and Baluchistan. The main reason for the uprisings is socio-economic. The economic situation of most of the society in Iran is catastrophic. In Iran, most of the population lives below the poverty line. More than 75 million people can barely finance their rent and food. There is absolute inflation, and thousands of people suffer from homelessness. There are people in Iran who don't have a place to sleep. Thousands of children work for a few euro cents a day in Iran. Most of the population has no money to pay for medical and health care.

If I go specifically to the question, I can say no. The revolution in Iran has the emancipation of all oppressed groups like women, the working class, etc., which is why the uprisings are internationalist instead of nationalist. There is mutual support from the working class in Kurdistan, Tabriz, Baluchistan, Tehran, and other regions. Some slogans read: "Kurdistan is the eye and light of Iran," or slogans read: "Yashasin Kurdistan, Beji Azerbaijan," meaning long live Kurdistan, long live Azerbaijan. This mutual support of national minorities and all oppressed in Iran is a crucial moment in this revolutionary phase. For this reason, there is no place for racist and nationalist agitation within the oppressed and national minorities or majorities.

What is the position of other countries towards the protests? What policy do Saudi Arabia and Israeli authorities pursue?

In some countries, especially in European parliaments, this revolution is romanticized. Some female politicians try to show their fake solidarity by cutting their own hair. The women-despising and anti-communist parties and politicians like the Greens in Germany and Annalena Baerbock as a propagandist of the war, want to "support" the "women" in Iran. The world appears with these people as a pseudo-reality. All bourgeois parties no matter in Germany, the USA, Israel, or Russia, have similar ends; this is true for the Iranian regime; they all are anti-revolution. For example, the SPD of Germany suppressed a revolutionary uprising that was forming in 1918–1919. History tells us that the social democrats did shoot the revolution in the leg, and they will do the same now if we give space to the social democrats' jargon in Iran; almost all Iranian bourgeois parties are siding and apologists of the imperialists. The majority of them are supporters/apologists of Nato and the West, and some others are apologists for Russia and Iran; they all look at society from a bourgeois outlook.

The states like Saudi Arabia and Israel, like their masters in the U.S. and Europe, support the right-wing fascist opposition and invest millions of euros and dollars in the right-wing and fascist groups like the Monarchists in Iran or the People's Mujahedin group [Mujahedin Khalq]. They support the television channels like "Manoto", "Iran International" etc. These TVs directly or subliminally try to present the fascist monarchy as the alternative and restore the barbarism of the past and the master-servant relationship. These oppositions get millions of euros. The imperialist countries and reactionary states do not invest capital in the pro-Western opposition without reason. No imperialist or capitalist state that follows the logic of capital and exploitation will support a radical socialist revolution. They always support the anti-communist forces inside and outside the country. They may sell this support behind the guise of "human rights" or "just wars." Still, for the revolutionary people and the working class, this support is no different except for creating the counter-revolution from the outside. Israel and Saudi Arabia, the USA, and Europe should pay attention to the human rights and the demand of the working class in their country. A state like Israel, which enforces racist and inhuman policies against Palestinians and has forced millions of people to leave their country and has turned Gaza into an open-air prison, or a country like Saudi Arabia, which enforces the death penalty by the sword, or a country like the USA, which has waged and is waging wars all over the world, or even Russia, which works very closely with the fascist regime in Iran and enforces anti-working class policies and wages wars, cannot talk about "human rights."

Let us ask you about the Islamic revolution. Was it in the interest of the local Iranian capital? As far as we know, many of the resources, both natural and technical, had been expropriated for the Iranian people's sake.

There was no Islamic revolution. The Islamic fascists were the counter-revolution. The counter-revolution had developed because the working class and communist parties could not continue the revolution and become a class for itself. The revolution of 1979 failed from the beginning. The reasons for the failure of this revolution are different. The first reason is that Shah's regime supported the Islamists against the communists and left the opposition, and at a time when the communists were arrested, tortured, and shot, the Islamists quietly carried out their political work. The other reason is the so-called White Revolution/[Enqelab-e-Safid], a term referring to the Iran Monarchy's land reforms [when Mohammad Reza Shah was ruling]; they formed a top-down passive revolution against the revolutionary uprisings that were happening then by the peasants. Through this so-called white revolution, the monarchs created the condition for the peasants to sell

their lands, and because the peasants could not pay the interest and loans they received from the bank and couldn't take care of the land on their own, there was a great displacement within the country. The peasants who moved to the bigger cities did not have the perspective to find a permanent job and did not find an apartment. The cities were unprepared for this great emigration from the country to accommodate many peasants. For this reason, large slums were formed on the outskirts of the cities. The peasants who formed the lumpenproletariat formed the basis for the Islamic counter-revolution.

The starting point of this oppression and exploitation was the crushing of the leftist, radical revolution of the working class in 1979 by the fascistic Islamic counterrevolution, which presented itself as revolutionary and enabled the ground for the transfer of power to the fascist Islamists through populist-demagogic propaganda. The new provisional government in Iran began a destructive 8-year war against the Ba'athist regime in Iraq immediately after taking power, to create a crisis in which any opposition could be delegitimized as a threat to "national security" and immediately crushed. The overarching goal of the war was to secure imperialist domination of the region for Iran. As Khomeini put it, "The road to Jerusalem passes through Karbala," meaning "If we want to conquer Jerusalem, we must occupy Iraq on the way." The ostensible reason for this campaign of conquest was to spread the Shiite religion as the "true" Islam. Islam was used as a doctrine of legitimacy for imperialist attacks and capital expansion. The analyses that portray the Iranian regime as pre-capitalist or Islam as an ideology incompatible with capitalism lack any scientific and empirical basis. We have seen that Islam has adapted to the most brutal forms of capitalism (neoliberalism and fascism) both in Iran and in countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, and even Saudi Arabia. The Iranian regime came to power through the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. It could only survive by adapting to the logic of capitalist domination and imperialist world politics and becoming a pole of regional imperialism. The first attempt of imperialist war was made by the Iranian regime at the beginning of the transfer of power through the fascistic counterrevolution we call "Khomeinism."

With the imperialist war against Iraq under Saddam Hossein, the domestic war against any opposition also began. Especially with the attacks on the communist resistance in Kurdistan, in northern Iran on the Caspian Sea in Türkmen Sahra, and in the south near Shiraz among the nomadic Turkish Ghashghai minority, the last breath of the real revolution was extinguished. Shortly after, all factory councils were criminalized, and workers' control over production was finally abolished by 1982. The councils were renamed "Islamic Councils" (Khane Kargar and Shoraei Islamie Kar), and all leftists and communists in the workers' councils were arrested or wiped out. In the spring of 1982, the first mass extermination began. Thousands of People's Mujahideen and members of leftist parties were murdered. This brutal extermination of opposition people continued from the spring of 1982 until the summer of 1988, taking the lives of more thousands of people. The mass killing peaked in the summer of 1988 when 5,000 people were exterminated within a few weeks without trial and buried with the help of excavators in mass graves in Khavaran.

The so-called leftist parties such as the Tudeh Party, Aksariat (People's Fedayeen Organization as the supposedly largest "socialist" party in Iran), and other small parties and groups that had supported the Soviet Union and contributed with their propaganda, strategy, and tactics to the takeover of the fascist Islamic regime were also banned in 1984. Their members and central

committees were imprisoned, and the leaders betrayed many of their supporters, who were then brutally tortured and put up against the wall.

The establishment and consolidation of Islamic fascism in Iran is, on the one hand, a consequence of the global neo-liberalization of the economy. It was supported by Western neoliberal imperialism during the anti-communist fight against the socialist and leftist movements close to the Soviet Union. After the G7 summit in Bonn in 1978, in the interests of so-called world security, the talk was mainly about Iran and Japan. The heads of government of the Western countries joined forces to talk to Khomeini and strengthen him as an alternative to the leftist and communist movements in Iran. However, by supporting Khomeini, the G7 imperialist countries achieved not only the crushing of the socialist opposition in Iran but also the crushing of the previously strong socialist movement in Iraq. Khomeini was the only power-seeker who promised the G7 states the war against Iraq, which had to weaken any domestic opposition. In this way, the G7 countries could banish the threat of communism in the Middle East.

Khomeini promised to support the oppressed, to grant freedom to the communists as well, and to "bring the money from the oil to the table of the workers" and to eliminate inequality. In his meeting with the biggest imperialists, he waffled to the public about his and their anti-imperialist stance. This abuse of leftist discourse by Islamic fascism had a great effect, pulling the rug out from under the leftist opposition. At the same time, he claimed that the economy belonged "to the donkey" (in the dustbin), thus propagating a return to spirituality and promising progress in regression. This was accompanied by his propaganda for the return to life in miniature against modernity with its bourgeois liberal ideals of the West.

On the other hand, the propaganda of the religious site Hosseinieh Ershad anchored the ideology of Islamic fascism as the representation of the workers in the population. Khomeini and his followers used the false consciousness of the population that amounted to the destruction of reason. Khomeini translated the ideology into simple language, making it accessible to an even wider audience. In a chauvinistic and misanthropic manner, he spoke of the "suffering workers" and repeatedly emphasized, "We do not need the material; we only need our spirituality." In this way, he shrank the basic material needs of the workers to trifles and legitimized the perpetuation of these needs. With these statements, he laid the spiritual and practical foundation of one of the most brutal fascistic forms of domination at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century on the shoulders of the working class through a revolution from below.

The revolution could only come about with the strike of the workers in the oil industry and the permanent protests. The Islamists never actively opposed the monarchy in Iran. During the Shah's regime, people were sentenced to death for writing a Marxist book, but the Islamists always had the freedom to publish their books. The Shah himself visited Mecca, and even Mossadegh considered himself a liberal Muslim. Mossadegh, unfortunately, is often portrayed in the West as a "progressive" or even a "socialist." However, he supported both the monarchy and Islam, and his government crushed the resistance of the dispossessed and peasants and workers on his direct or indirect orders and jailed several activists of the oppressed classes and sometimes supporters of the Tudeh Party. Mossadegh, who is highly regarded as a "national character" like Jaml Aldin Abdolnaser both by nationalist counter-revolutionary forces in Iran and by bourgeois leftist politicians in the west, nationalized oil only under radical pressure from below (from the trade unions and workers). However, the nationalization of oil had been a just demand since the



emergence of the labor movement in the oil industry, supported by workers 25 years before Mossadegh. After the coup against Mossadegh, the Shah's regime slid into a crisis that eventually led to the 1979 revolution.

The analysis of the 1979 revolution in Iran can only succeed from the perspective of the critique of political economy on the global economic and political connection between the bloc of state capitalism (so-called socialism) and the imperialist bloc of the West in the Cold War period. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union tried to weaken the U.S. and the Western imperialist bloc by supporting reactionary, nationalist, religious, and sometimes fascist movements that presented themselves as anti-imperialist and as "national liberation struggles." Behind this was the ideology of the "national road to socialism," which postulated that national liberation movements would automatically lead to "socialism" in a partnership with the state-capitalist Soviet Union. With this mechanical and highly simplified belief, the Soviet Union thus effectively contributed to the establishment of fascist rule in countries such as Iraq, Iran, and Syria. In Iran, this was more than evident when the counterrevolution, posing as the revolution, adopted neoliberal policies immediately after seizing power. At the same time, Khomeini also disappointed the hopes of the Western imperialist states that he would continue their imperialist policies in Iran like a puppet. Shortly after seizing power, Khomeini's supporters occupied the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and deported its diplomats to the United States. But even if the U.S. had known from the beginning that Khomeini would not become another Suharto (1965) or Pinochet (1973), it would still have supported him to prevent the emergence of a socialist state. For this purpose, all means seem to be justified to them. Even though capitalist states have conflicts among themselves, there is a common interest among all capitalist actors that is above all intra-capitalist conflicts: The maintenance of the capitalist mode of production and domination. That is why capitalist states come together where they are concerned about crushing socialist projects that lead to a different, non-capitalist mode of production and threaten the capitalist mode of production with the possibility of expansion to other regions. Thus, they either try to smash socialist projects brutally or integrate them into capitalism, thus also destroying them step by step. In Europe, through a passive revolution from above (social reforms), the counterrevolution often integrated the left opposition into the bourgeois state apparatus without having to smash it brutally and act against the members of the left and communist parties with a policy of extermination as in Iran, Chile, or Indonesia. Since the first socialist movements and revolutions, an anti-communist policy has been pursued in the West by social democracy and conservative parties against the communist parties that did not want to conform.

Do you see any particular candidates having their own interest in the fall of the Islamic Republic?

There are different groups and parties, currents, and attempts from the right and left in the Iranian opposition abroad. Many conservative directions subordinate them under the monarchy. From the so-called Republicans to constitutional monarchists and "social democrats," secular democrats and all bourgeois and liberal parties form the right-wing bloc and support the monarchy. The People's Mujahedin, as a fascist-Islamist party, is outside this bloc, not because it is not sufficiently right-wing, but for other reasons. People's Mujahedin is ideologically in the tradition of Khomeini's Islamic fascism. Since the right-wing, fascist, and monarchist opposition has realized that they cannot find a base with religion, they are marginalizing themselves from parties like People's Mujahedin and trying to present themselves as secular. However, they have made nationalism and racism their ideology.

On the left, we have many communist parties and groups that show solidarity with the working class and the oppressed and see themselves as part of the working class. The opposition that is abroad may present themselves as they want. The revolution is developing in Iran and does not rely on the right-wing opposition abroad. The further development of the revolution in Iran is an abyss for the fascist monarchy. The right-wing opposition has never been revolutionary, and no revolution can come out of the right. All forms of taking power by the right relate to the crushing of the revolution. The takeover of power by the fascists in Italy to Germany, Spain, Indonesia, Chile, Iran, etc. were all different types of fascist counter-revolution. One must not call this takeover of power by the counter-revolution a revolution, as the fascists do. The fascists present revolution as counter-revolution by changing course and vice versa. In other words, we can represent fascism as a bourgeois ideology capable of reconstructing an inverted image of reality, similar to what Marx was saying, capable of developing a false consciousness. If you do not understand this, you have given the hegemony to fascists.

In Iran, many different leftist groups have formed illegally or semi-legally and are involved in organizing the uprisings. There are the unions of the working class that have penetrated or could penetrate with permanent struggle, and these organizations form the real cells of the revolution. They can take the lead so that we do not repeat the mistakes of 1979.

In the 80s, Ayatollah Khomeini claimed that Islam should be rationalized within the country. What differences between Iranian Islam and radical Islam might you notice? Should we take Iranian Islam into account as a religion or rather a national ideology?

Khomeini became a leader of Islamic fascism who actually came to power out of the failure of the 1979 revolution. I tried to clarify this issue during the interview. There is no rational Islam, and the talk of rationalization of Islam by Khomeini was a rhetoric that was accompanied by assimilation of the other interpretations of Islam on the one hand, and brutal attack on the parties such as People's Mujahedin who held a similar view of Islam on the other hand. In the spring of 1980, these fascist attacks on the People's Mujahedin began. However, they were actually very close to Khomeini and even Masoud Rajavi, as the head of People's Mujahedin, put himself on the list of candidates for the presidency. Khomeini's Islamic fascism wanted not only to defeat the leftist, communist, and other oppositional but also to eliminate any liberal group that did not follow the "fundamentalist" ideas of Khomeini and, in time to form a unified state. Khomeini as an Islamic fascist, is actually very similar to Hitler in this respect. NSDAP and SS also wanted to form a unified state with a permanent state of emergency and shut down all forms of resistance in Nazi Germany; they started with communists and then social democrats who were not able to submit, and after that, shut down the closest allies of NSDAP like SA. Ernst Rohm as a representative of the "left" wing of German fascism was arrested, imprisoned and shot in 1934 with the instruction of Hitler, although SA made a great contribution for Hitler's coming to power.

It may be that Khomeini was ignorant of the history of Italian and German fascism, but he was, of course, in the tradition of fascist counter-revolution and was an essential practical "leader" of Islamic fascism. He tried over time to wipe out all liberals from the government, although they were close to Islamic fascism and supported Khomeini by all means. He spoke out against "Meli Mazihabi" (in English national-religious) groups and portrayed them as the enemy. Khomeini legalized the so-called leftist parties such as Tudeh Party and Aksariat, which backed Khomeini and portrayed this fascist as anti-imperialist, sent their members to jail, forced their leadership to

talk on Iranian TV about the similarities between Islam and communism, and had hundreds of their members shot as well. To distinguish such a brutally fascist power and religion from Mujahedin, Taliban, and IS is an illusion and is an expression of the antinomy of bourgeois thinking. What later Taliban did in Afghanistan and IS in Iraq and Syria was done in Iran in the 80s by Islamic fascism of Iran against the opposition. There is a difference only in the form. Khomeini regime shot masses of prisoners and buried them in mass graves in a time when there were no smartphones and internet, and therefore this brutality was not shown to the public inside the population outside Iran, IS and Taliban slaughter their opponents for the camera, and you can see this brutality directly everywhere.

One may hear Khomeini or the regime in Iran babbling about national religion or Islam, rationalization of Islam, etc. Still, for most of the population, Islam is not an ideology they identify with. In the last days and weeks and years, the mosques and the religious holy places are attacked and burned, and the turbans of mullahs are attacked. Islamic ideology is experiencing a crisis of legitimacy, and this crisis can only be solved through revolutionary violence. All these fights against Islamic ideology show that the population will never again accept Islamist parties and groups with Islamic ideology as an alternative; exactly for this reason, the religious Islamic parties and "intellectuals" from the right-wing milieu have tried to make nationalism their new ideology. From Ahmadinejad to other fascists like the so-called "Revolution Guard" and the representatives of the new right in Iran like Seyyed Javad Tabatabai and his followers and monarchists, republicans, social democrats, secular democrats are united in terms of shifting from Islam to nationalism.

Ayatollah Khomeini called for people to fight against imperialism. Do you think he tried to deceive the working class? Or shall we consider it as a left rhetoric that would have helped to fight the western capital?

Khomeini was himself a fascist, as I have already explained. Fascism is a pseudo-socialism and an aesthetic promise of use as Wolfgang Fritz Haug in his book "Critique of the Aesthetics of Commodities" in reference to Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility" presents fascism as a pseudo-socialism that wants to enforce the "aestheticization of politics" and present its politics consumable and pleasant for people without questioning private property. Fascism wants to organize the proletariat in its sense without doing anything against private property. Hitler also had exactly such ideas as Khomeini. He used socialism as a sham, although he had Atatürk and Mussolini and fascism as a goal. He spoke to the "Germans" that everyone can own a "VW", in a time of world economic crisis. Khomeini had also made such promises before coming to power, and his anti-imperialism was a sham socialism for justifying his essential fascism. In other words, I can say that Khomeini was never against imperialism, but he himself wanted to impose a capitalist rule that could end up becoming regional imperialism. Khomeini had talked about the conquest of the Islamic world and about an Islamic state and "Ommat" (nation) in the beginning, he had talked about the conquest of Jerusalem by Karbala in the time of the war between the Khomeini regime and the Ba`th regime. All capitalist states have equally imperialist tendencies. Khomeini reduced imperialism to the USA, which nowadays many cross-front "leftists" but better said fascists with the leftist appearance also do.

The definition of imperialism on the basis of the historical development of capitalism to a higher station, which on the one hand, globalizes the capitalist mode of production, on the other hand,

combines the enforcement of the interests of the imperialist states with the hegemony and physical violence by monopoly capitalism or monopoly capitalisms. All these developments must be considered within the framework of the critique of political economy (critique of the bourgeois mode of production in general, critique of fetishism, and critique of false consciousness and bourgeois and reactionary ideologies) and with historical materialism (as a method for determining the situation of the working class and changing this situation in the sense of the emancipation of the working class). Any moral, cultural, and reactionary criticism of imperialism, (as in the sense of orientalism of Edward Said who conceives imperialism as a kind of cultural dispossession or Philo-colonialism, expressed with Losurdo, as is the case with the Frankfurt School, especially Adorno and Horkheimer), must not be understood as anti-imperialist and communist or Marxist.

Georg Lukacs in his book "Lenin" spoke of Lenin's analysis of imperialism and believes that his analysis of imperialism was not a purely theoretical superiority of "practical genius" or "practical perspicacity", but Lenin had studied realpolitik and, in this way, developed for the "Concrete Political Situation" a "concrete analysis that described the situation very clearly from a Marxist point of view." (Lukacs 1924)

Imperialism is the political expression of the process of capital accumulation in its competitive struggle for the remnants of the non-capitalist world milieu that has not yet been seized. Geographically, this milieu still encompasses the widest areas of the earth today. (Luxemburg 1975, p. 391)"

Fascism is no more than hyper capitalism, and hyper capitalism cannot be against imperialism because it is itself imperialist. When the fascists use the leftist rhetoric, we must not give up using our terms, but show exactly why these barbarians use the pseudo-socialism as an aesthetic use-promise to use exactly the form as an appearance to convey another being.

"If the shortest possible definition of imperialism were required, it would have to be said that imperialism is the monopolistic stage of capitalism. Such a definition would contain the main thing, because, on the one hand, finance capital is the banking capital of a few monopolistic big banks merged with the capital of monopolistic industrialist associations, and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy extending unhindered to territories not yet conquered by any capitalist power to a colonial policy of monopolistic domination of the territory of the earth divided without rest. (Lenin 1972, p. 270)"

In many respects, this definition by Lenin applies to the Iranian bourgeoisie under the rule of fascist Islamists. The Iranian state is in many ways more imperialist than Germany of 1911. It is more imperialist than Japan in 1917 and Russia before the October Revolution. We as communists must not be swayed by this bullshit rhetoric of the fascists about imperialism and anti-imperialism, but attack English-style capitalism and want to abolish it.