

THE
**Final
Straw**
A WEEKLY ANARCHIST SHOW

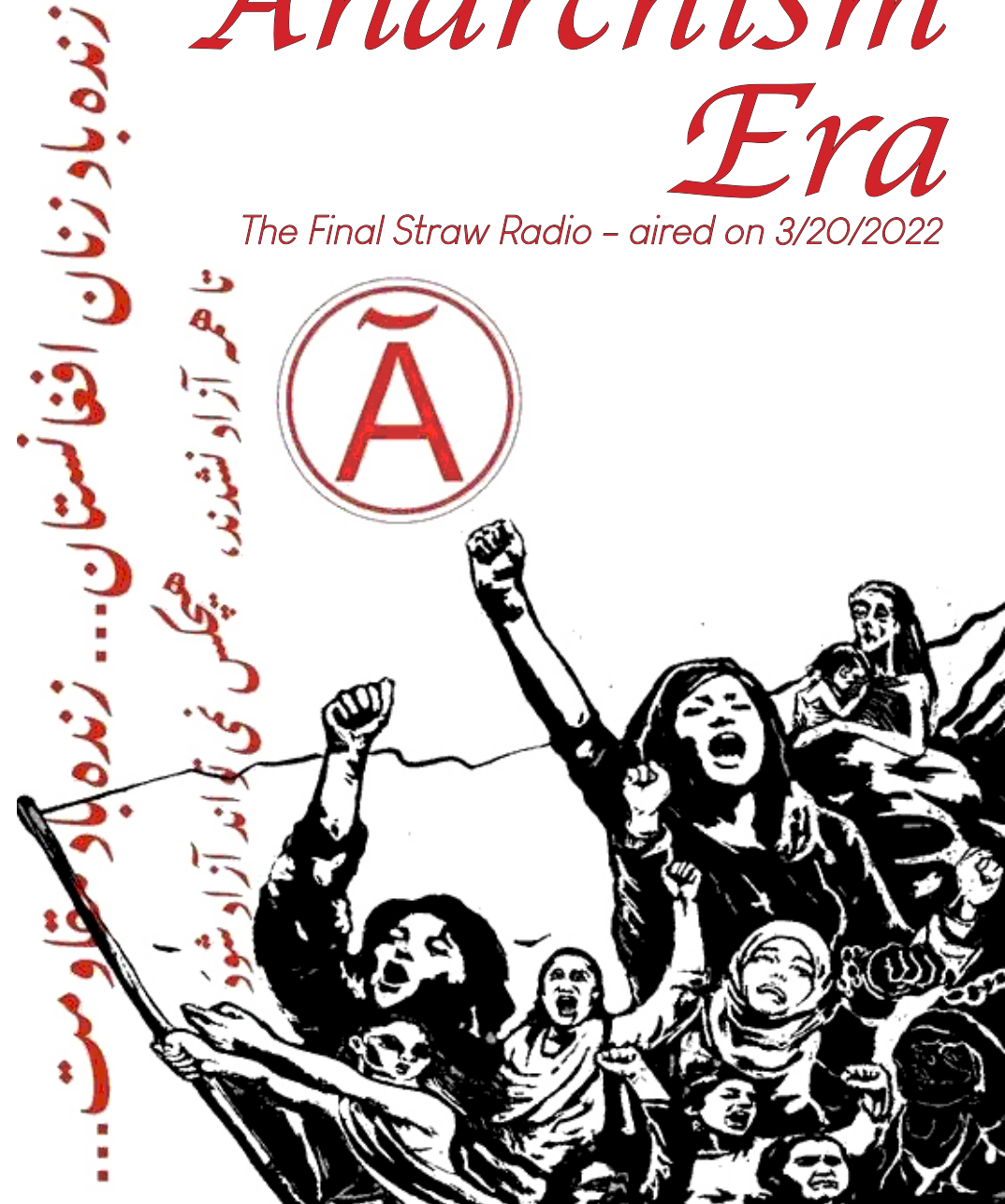
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Federation of Anarchism Era

The Final Straw Radio - aired on 3/20/2022



TFSR: *So we're joined again by a member of the Federation of Anarchism Era. Aryanum, who we have spoken to before, will be sharing some responses to some questions that we had from other members of the FAE. Thank you so much for having the time and putting together the energy to have this chat. Would you introduce yourself further for the audience? Do you have preferred pronouns or any sort of other info?*

Aryanum: *Yes. Hi, this Aryanum, my pronouns are he/him, and I'm a member of the Federation of Anarchism Era. Thanks for having me here again.*

TFSR: *Of course.*

So the last time that we spoke to y'all, to members of FAE, and to you in particular, it was July of 2021, during the expansion of Taliban forces across Afghanistan, as the US military ran for the exit. Simultaneously, the US and other Western governments froze assets in an attempt to stop the Taliban from stepping into full power, which also threw the population into famine.

Can you speak about what you're aware of that experience and how FAE affiliates in Afghanistan and their communities are doing these days?

Aryanum: *Yes, first I think there is a misunderstanding. I don't think the Western governments have frozen the assets to stop the Taliban because of their actions afterwards: flying the Taliban members to Oslo even though it's on their a list a terrorist organizations, sending money for pay directly to Taliban. From what Biden did... these action shows that they were not about stopping the Taliban. They just didn't want to pay any more money. The previous government in Afghanistan was propped up by the US Embassy and government. They were only surviving through the financial aid that they were receiving from these governments. The change of hands, the change of power, that arguably was helped by the Western governments they stopped providing those funds. They just stopped it.*

Regarding how comrades are doing... the majority of them are right now, except one of them, could no longer work because of the current regime. Because some of them were journalists that the Taliban has targeted viciously. Their pictures are going around, there are reports of them going around to be tortured severely and being executed and being killed. Either assassinated mysteriously, which all goes back to Taliban, or being tortured and imprisoned. So they could no longer work. A majority of them evacuated from

the Chinese people and the Iranian people experienced. Which is the Taliban would go to their family members, and would threaten them, would beat them to tell their family members to stop talking to silence them. Even though people make it out they have to be careful about themselves and their identity because it can be used against their loved ones that are still in Afghanistan, or Iran, or in China. It's the same tactic. They just learned it from Iran and China.

TFSR: *Yet, it's terrible. That makes sense. So well, Aryanum, I hope that you're doing well and thanks a lot for having this chat. And I can point people to the social medias and the telegram channel and the website in the end of the episode. But, thanks so much. Solidarity and appreciation to the work that you and your network do. And I'm glad a lot of them have been able to get out despite difficulties.*

Aryanum: *Thank you very much for having me and having this conversation. I really appreciate that and having a voice within the podcast.*

I just want to say sorry to everybody who contacted us this past few months on asking for an interview for a written interview for the voice interview, sometimes from our Iranian comrades, something from our Afghan comrades. We let them down. We either gave them late responses or something like that. Unfortunately, our core outside Iran and Afghanistan is really a small and we are only responsible for dealing with this inquiry for inquiries and questions. We got overwhelmed and we apologize for it. It is not because we are ignoring you. It is because we just can't unfortunately, we get overwhelmed. Thank you very much for having me on. We'll be talking again.

TFSR: *Yeah, I hope so too. Yeah, Solidarity.*

Aryanum: *Solidarity.*

of children at the moment are growing up in the prison and are in prison because their mother is in prison. They haven't seen a world outside of the prison as long as they live. And that's another situation in prisons that are not talked about that much, but it is a reality that we are experiencing. The children are not put up for adoption. The children are not given to a family member that can be responsible for them or who can take care of them. They are living with the mother. And in some cases there is nobody, left alone. The mother and the child are serving a sentence that is cruel and inhumane.

TFSR: Yeah, the idea of raising kids inside of a prison is... I mean, that doesn't happen in the US, the child would get taken in either put in foster care or sent to a relative. But definitely people give birth in prisons and obviously, in some cases in assigned women's prisons, people who have been in for a while sometimes get pregnant. And there's a question of how that happens, if not the guards.

Aryanum: Yeah. There is sexual assault of men and women is rampant in prisons.

Men's prisons from our report, Sohail Arabi, who got released from prison, sent to exile for two years. Then after two years, he needed to report back to prison. They didn't want to let him go. Even though they keep making the same cases for him to keep extending his prison time. I think for some deals, he was allowed to leave the prison, he was part of some deals, regarding BARJAM, the nuclear deal, to leave the prison and be just in exile. But he will be going back to prison and he has multiple stories about prison that there is a sexual assault, it's rampant. Prison guards would sexually assault you. You are not allowed to masturbate in prison. So there is a lot of sexual frustration there as well. There are people that take advantage of others, and the prison guards do what they can, what they can get away with. It is not like in the US, where they try to keep it on the low. In Iran it's just not a concern. It just happens.

TFSR: There are there are laws in the US where whether successful or not prisoners can file with the federal government to the PREA, the Prison Rape Elimination Act. I've heard about people filing suits against other prisoners or against administration's or against guards for that. But, yeah.

Aryanum: One thing that I remember is that some of the censorship that happens from Taliban, is that the people that made it out, if they haven't hidden their identity, their family members are going to experience the same thing that

Afghanistan. They no longer are in Afghanistan. Some of their family members wanted to evacuate as well. But the Iranian Government is making it really hard. Even returning some of the refugees back to Afghanistan, extraditing some of the refugees. For Pakistan, even though Pakistan has opened this consulate. It is in so much demand, that right now a visa to Pakistan is \$500. With all of the famine happening, people are selling their children to survive, to child marriages. It is a crisis. A complete crisis.

The Taliban government is not even a government. They don't know what they are doing. They have no experience. They don't have any staff to even organize and deal with the issues like governing their country. So recently they declared that the labor that people do, for the work they do, they don't get money. The Taliban government wants to instead give them wheat, just grains, which doesn't work in the urban environment. There is no way to sustain on just grains. And that's the thing that the Taliban is doing at the moment including all the suppression execution, assassinations they are doing.

TFSR: Yeah, there was this this massive displacement internal and external to Afghanistan that resulted from the fighting and fear of the Taliban reprisals and from economic destabilization. When we chatted a little less than a year ago, you all were attempting to fund for resistance to the Taliban, as well as to help get anarchists out of the country, since they're enemies of the state. And it's very dangerous to to be any sort of like dissident even in areas that were controlled, ostensibly by the Afghan government. But is the resistance still a thing that you need? Or for getting folks out? Is that still something that you're fundraising for or that you're trying to aid in some way? Or is that kind of on pause?

Aryanum: When we the last talked, yes we were trying to gather from comrades, because they were requesting, they were thinking of resisting as much as they can. But after a little evaluation on their part, they realized the neighbors and the people around them are not gonna join up. Some of them are part of the previous Mujahideen and they even though they are armed up, that is no way to cooperate. Since we are so few, unfortunately, you do not have the number of anarchists like in Ukraine to have a detachment of your own. So that plan changed into leaving the country. They're trying to utilize the money that we gathered up till then, which was around \$2,000. They plan to take refuge to Iran. But the day that they were planning to leave to head to toward Iran... Nimruz, a province bordering Iran and Afghanistan, that a majority of refugees were using as a crossing between Iran and Afghanistan. That

province was taken the same day that they planned. So that plan had to stop.

We were still gathering more money, but it was kind of slow until Kabul fell. When Kabul fell, since we were basically one of the first people raising funds and basically the only anarchist one in this regard, a lot of comrades started helping out then, we managed to raise about \$45,000. We were using PayPal. So PayPal took basically \$15,000. So we were only left like around \$30,000. But we decided that would be enough money for our comrades to leave the country. We managed to get some of our comrades through Pakistan and they were trying to process the asylum status to leave Pakistan. Firstly, it is not easy from Pakistan, you cannot go to India because the dispute between Pakistan and India. Going from Pakistan to Iran, the border crossing, just to travel there is really, really dangerous. Iran has other issues. So if you're saying Iran, illegally, basically you're in danger of being extradited back to Afghanistan. So we managed to get some of our comrades in Pakistan. Some are in Iran waiting to process their information. One comrade is in Afghanistan still, but we managed to get most of them out. We are kind of running out of funds because keeping them in Pakistan and trying to get the application process. Just for the visa for one of our comrades to travel to Iran legally just to get the visa and travel, basically took \$2,000. Us trying to evacuate our comrades to Pakistan, that took a lot of money. We might start issuing another fundraising, but we haven't decided on that yet. We still have some money at this moment.

TFSR: Since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, their claims of relative normalcy of participation of women in civic, political and economic life seem to have withered. Can you speak about what is known of the realities of life today in Afghanistan, for women, as well as others who are not cis straight men?

Aryanum: They're were obviously lying from the very beginning, even though as they were taking the provinces, there were videos of them coming up of them flogging women for not wearing their hijab right or not traveling with with a man called mahram. Basically a man which is their father, brother, or husband, basically. Anybody that basically the patriarchy enforced through religious means and through force, basically. So the women started making protests against the regime. Some of them were activists before the regime change during the previous republic of [Ashraf] Ghani and [Hamid] Karhzi. They started protesting during the Taliban's regime from very beginning. The Taliban started suppressed them as soon as they could. They were assassinated, they were mysteriously

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Aryanum: It is probably created by a government sponsored group just divert people from anarchism.

TFSR: Yeah, I could, I could see that. What can you say about the situation of political prisoners in Iran at the moment. A news services posted information about hunger strikes going on in a few prisons, right?

Aryanum: Yes, the hunger strike is happening because of the death of Baktash Abtin. He was a poet, writer, and a filmmaker. He got imprisoned because of what the government describes as the propaganda against the state, which he got imprisoned. The government in Iran was using COVID as a weapon. The situation in the prisons was so abysmal. The people could contract it, COVID, the political people. But the people that got in there because of embezzlement. They had all the money that they could use to live a good life in prison. They would get out of the prison soon after. The political prisoners that didn't have any money, the activists, they either injured them, or used COVID as a weapon. So, the people who contracted COVID were not sent to a hospital, they did not do medical procedures to cure them, or ease their symptoms.

So Baktash Abtin contracted COVID. He got it so bad because of the neglect. He eventually had to be hospitalized and while he was in handcuffs in the hospital bed, he died of COVID. We all know that it was because the government wanted him to die and they were using the COVID as excuse. The larger scale prison hunger strikes started because of that. The hunger strike eased off a little bit, but we have recent news as of this week that they are continuing that again. For some reason they are restarting it again. During their hunger strike in Ervin prison, the head of prison, I think we reported on this as well on our website, the head of prison and head of intelligence started assaulting the political prisoners during the hunger strike. Some of them got severely injured. They wanted to give some benefit to one of them, like a shorter prison sentence, and having a right for a family member to visit them, something like that, for them to stop the hunger strike. But they persisted and got assaulted. But they're gonna continue on.

TFSR: There had been an article recently about women prisoners inside of Iran doing an action...

Aryanum: About the woman. The prison in Iran is abysmal for both women and men. Women get arrested for petty things. If they are pregnant, they are gonna give birth to the child in the prison. The child is going to grow up in the prison. There are a lot of children. I don't have a number, but there is a lot

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TFSR: Thank you very much. So I can see from the ASRAnarshism website that there have been mobilizations of teachers in Iran against the economic crisis there and also striking mine workers in the Azerbaijan province within eastern Iran. I guess switching to Iran for a moment. To your knowledge, have anarchists been able to participate in these struggles? Are there other social struggles that are worth noting here for the audience? That they may not have heard about within Iran?

Aryanum: Yes, Iran right now is a hotspot of strikes. Not only from teachers, but like you said, mining workers. And also the financial economical crisis is so big that even then prison guards are striking. Which we spit on them because they tortured our comrades for the little money they get, we are not in solidarity with the prison guard's strikes. But everybody is striking. They are doing it in waves, it comes and goes. It shows deterioration of the Iranian control on the working population. The way they're trying to get out is by supporting regimes like Taliban, so they can get some benefits, so they can ease their own crisis to a certain extent.

But yes, a lot of workers are striking. And among them are Iraqi's as well. They're not specifically from our organization, but we are aware of the dark movement anarchists organizations. Most of them are covert in Iran. Certain groups here and there. During the workers strikes, plenty of them are going to be anarcho-syndicalists. You could see anarchists in every struggle, just they don't advertise it because in Iran, anarchism, even though it's growing, the opposition to that from the government is growing as well. They created fake anarchism group, which is a national anarchism called Irananarshism, which is just to divert attention from the people who are looking for anarchism that direction, they send them in the wrong path. They also are approving translation of anarchists books because they want to control the narrative, they approve what is damaging to them, which is the most mellow stance of anarchism that they can. They change the narrative and done and they control and they can see where the movement is going by. Like how many people are purchasing this book? And maybe they can track who is purchasing this book, who goes to the gatherings promoted by authors of this book. So they're trying. It is a growing part of the concern of the Iranian government.

TFSR: Yeah, I hadn't heard of the Iranarshism or Iranarshist national anarchist. That's so weird. National anarchists are a strange abomination.

killed, they were imprisoned as hostages or for ransom. They've were imprisoned. The men basically like the women in Afghanistan, we're saying, is the chant is "Our war, our fight, our struggle starts from home." Because basically we have Taliban in our homes. The patriarchy and the Islamic patriarchy, it has deep roots in the society, and for them to struggle against the Taliban outside, they had to basically wage war against their own family members that have the same ideology [as the Taliban].

So because of that, men did not support them. Because of that even men did not protest for their own rights against the Taliban and did not protest that much with the government. Recently there was a decree by the Taliban that women cannot leave the country without the mahram. Basically, they cannot leave the country without having a husband, or father, or brother, or any man that is above them in the social hierarchy, approve of them leaving the country, and he needs to leave with them. I know there is an issue with some of the woman activists that want to leave the country after all this oppression but are dealing with some challenges in that regard. We are trying to see how it develops, but at the moment, women get imprisoned if they were protesting, and some cases assassinated, and in some cases we heard from the news that they were raped and then assassinated. There were signs of sexual assault.

Some of the people that we talked to who were talking about, they were like scouting a location just for the graffiti against the Taliban. They were with their fathers and were supporting that. Taliban, scouting the area, having checkpoints all around the area scared them to hell, because they thought they were gonna get arrested right there. Even though they didn't do anything yet they were just scouting their area for graffiti. But the Taliban was like "Oh, is this woman part of the Woman Justice seeking movement?" They scared the brother and he scared her. So they decided not to do that again.

So it is a big campaign of silences going on. The woman that get arrested, even though they're released, they cannot talk. They don't feel safe to talk back anymore. The public movement that are talking directly in the face of Taliban is fizzling. We are hoping it transforms to a more covert form.

TFSR: That sounds really difficult and it's hard for me to imagine because I haven't experienced anything like what you're describing in my life. Just how scary that would be.

Yeah, I wonder, as you say, if things have to go a little more underground and less with the government, and since the patriarchy and the Taliban exist in the households, and the state is empowering, or what there is of the state, is empowering the diffusion of patriarchal violence

through the households, and sort of as a reproduction of the state, at a home level... I wonder if people who as imperfect as it was lived under the Republic will see the difference with what they're experiencing now and will the men, for instance, be more willing to understand, in contrast, the pain? I imagine if the dialogue was more talking about liberation of women and fighting against gendered violence, and then the Taliban is imposed and some strict kind of Sharia is imposed or whatever. If you can compare it to another experience that you've had? If that maybe primes you for having a better understanding of alternatives to what's being imposed. What do you think?

Aryanum: The previous government wasn't for women's rights. We had honor killing during the previous government as well. The patriarchy was as strong as it is now. It is just so that the previous government being propped the US was less likely to use it. What achievements women had during the previous government was because of their own making. They worked for it for 20 years to make it happen. It wasn't just that the previous government was suppressing them. Not because it was actively encouraging them or making their part easier. The woman activist was even active during the previous government.

The path that the Taliban is taking right now is very similar. It is basically they're using the same tactics that the Islamic Republic of Iran is using. Iran had it's own moment in the beginning of the revolution opposing the mandatory hijab, but it got crushed. It's very similar things that Taliban is doing. They were imprisoned, killed, assassinated, either by the militia or by others. The current women's movements are getting acid thrown at them and get disfigured because of acid. There is honor killing going on in Iran. And the most recent, a woman [Mona Heydari], 17 years old, left her husband. Way way older husband. She went to Turkey because she feared for her life but her father and brother basically forced her to come back and her husband killed her and decapitated her head. Then paraded on the street showing it off. That was one of the most shocking things that I saw. It happened a couple of months ago.

So you just said previous government was not using patriarchy as directly as the Taliban and because of that the women's movements could move forward and make some achievement for their own autonomy and freedom. But the Taliban is going to use the same tactic as the Islamic Republic of Iran. The patriarchy is going to become worse and more embedded in the society. As it is the patriarchy is so strong that the men do not accompany the women in the struggle. There is no solidarity at the moment. There are some men that

were in contact with. But people can help them and inquire about them.

TFSR: Thank you very much. So it's a little bit of a shift in topic. But I wonder if members of your network have observations or words for anarchists slipping under States in the former Soviet Union such as Belarus, Russia, or Ukraine, or about the war being conducted by Putin's regime that they'd like to share with comrades there?

Aryanum: They fully support our comrades in the countries Belarus, Russia, Ukraine. We condemn the imperialist action of the Russian State against Ukrainian people. We are not in support of the Ukrainian State. I believe Ukraine was the State government that basically put the news and development of the Ukraine airplane crisis that happened in 2020 in Iran. So, during the shooting down of the Ukrainian airplane, the Ukrainian government cooperated with Iranian regime, we still haven't found out what was the truth. So they helped the Iranian government to hide the truth. There is no file among Iranian anarchists for the Ukrainian state. But we are anarchists, and we support the Ukrainian people against the imperialist forces of Russia and the opportunist, imperialist actions of the West, of NATO.

Because of this, we are really happy about the anarchist detachments, the militaristic detachments that doesn't necessarily listens to the State directive, and does not side with their fascist group, like Azov. We wish them the best. We hope for an autonomous region, where it's similar to Rojava, something like that in Ukraine. We are hopeful about that. During the war in Afghanistan, we consulted some of the comrades that fought in Rojava, to see what we can do. Can we make something like Rojava happen in Afghanistan? Unfortunately, since our numbers are unfortunately so little, we could not have even an anarchist detachment, we could not do something that happened in Rojava. We were not prepared for something of the scale. But as the war continues on, this might be an opportunity for the Ukrainian anarchists, the Belarusian anarchists, the other anarchists, joining the defense against Russian invasion, to find an opportunity to create something like an autonomous region just like Rojava. We are really hopeful about that. And, again, we are saddened about all the losses, all the destructions. It is just a reminder of what happened in Afghanistan. That war just took a month but all the internal displacement all the external refugees, we understand. We experienced that, we are in solidarity with them.

So one of our comrades family decided to take refuge in Iran. He couldn't get the visa, so they cross the border illegally, but they were shouted by the border guards. And they got into an accident after with another car, which was kind of severe enough to have a broken hand, severe bruises, unfortunately. Not too serious of injuries, but they got caught by the police because of the accident and they got extradited back to Afghanistan. Like I said, the Iranian government keeps sending Afghan people back to the Afghanistan. Land border crossing without visas has a lot of risk. Some of our comrades are trying to process that application for some of the western governments, but the other government is saying "oh, you need to prove how your life was in danger that made you have to leave the country." Which is a ridiculous question because it's very obvious. There's a famine going on. There is extreme suppression of the religious and ethnic groups in Afghanistan. So, that question is very misguided. But some of our comrades are journalists as well. One of them even had, before the takeover of Taliban, had a lot of sharp critiques of Taliban that everybody in the in the business knew, so their life is in danger. They applied for the French Embassy, they applied for Swiss embassy and trying to see how they can process an application for asylum.

TFSR: *Thank you for sharing that.*

The one other part of it that I wondered was, and it's okay if you don't have an answer to this, but if there are any NGOs that you've heard of from folks that have had to go through this, that seem to be doing a decent job, and who would be worthy of supporting if people had money that they wanted to give or if those NGOs operated in areas where the listener lives that they could consider volunteering with. Or maybe just anytime you find that there's people being resettled to where you live, going and trying to meet people would be a good idea. Does that make sense?

Aryanum: *Yes, there is one organizations that are claiming that they are helping targeted Afghans find refugee and resettle, and there is not going to be any expenses and no salaries, and 100% of the donation would go to helping them. And like I said, personally I just heard of them recently, and I'm not sure exactly how they operate, or when they're operating. So don't take this as an endorsement. But then name is Azadi Charity. They have a Twitter account, and the website is AzadiCharity.com. That's what they're claiming that I understand. There may be few others, but unfortunately, they don't come to mind at the moment. And unfortunately I'm not familiar with them If they haven't helped anybody that we*

are, of course, supporting and they get killed. The treatment they receive is worse than what the captured women receive. Even though they are defending humanist ideal against a fascist organization that is the Taliban. But they get treated worse and they get killed. That scares the other men that are on the fence. They just don't join. There is no solidarity at the moment.

In the previous government, there are some that want to go back to something like a republic, that they can choose their own, and have a political participation, like men, in the government. Some are saying that Islam is one of the problems that are perpetuating patriarchy and enslavement to our current predicament. Some of them are seeing both state and Islam as a problem. Which is basically our position as anarchists of Federation. I'm not sure if that answered your question.

TFSR: *Oh, yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I didn't mean to put the agency into the hands of the government. But your point that when the government is not as actively repressing, people get a chance to organize and coordinate as opposed to when there's direct threat of violence or death coming from the State. That's kind of what I was trying to get at. The point was very well made.*

In ways other than the patriarchy, does the Taliban appear to be ruling any differently than they did until 2001? Like how is life for queer folks or for atheists, or people of other faiths than the brand of Sunni favored by the state, or for political dissidents? Is it just kind of the same as you've been describing already?

Aryanum: *For the atheists and the members of the LGBT community. They were in the closet and in hiding even during the previous government. They just hold their own hidden communities. Because again, the society is very patriarchal and it hasn't changed. The struggles are very similar. It was deadly then, it is more deadly now. They are in hiding, some of them left the country and some of them because of a financial blockade, extradition of the refugees from Iran and Pakistan. They are they are stuck in Afghanistan and they cannot leave the country.*

How the government is ruling since 2001? It is basically the same but it is more vicious, more ruthless. It is more pronounced in Mazar-i-Sharif. Because in Mazar-i-Sharif, they [the Taliban] have a deep hatred of that city because it was one of the last cities that basically fought until the end during the last takeover. It fought against Taliban. A lot of killings that you see happens in Mazar-i-Sharif area in the province

of Balkh, where women are mysteriously getting killed, by mysteriously, the perpetrator without a doubt is the Taliban. They don't announce it as they're doing it, they just do it. They either give the bodies to the hospitals and make a reason why they died and they falsified the evidence. Or they leave them somewhere, just leave the body somewhere.

It is the same fascist Islamic government that it used to be 20 years ago. Maybe it just got smarter. It's using the similar tactics that the Iranian government is using. It is probably getting counseled by the Iranian Islamic state, getting supported somehow because the Iran is gonna benefit from the water rights and its going to benefit from the mines that Afghanistan has. I believe Taliban is going to give them some rights. I just read the news just a few hours ago that the China wants to cooperate with the Taliban in Afghanistan to drill some oil refineries, drill some oil, petroleum and refineries and a copper mine to get copper for cheap. And I'm sure Russia is not that far off. Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan, the governments gave a go ahead for Taliban taking over and they provided support. Mostly Iran, provided support and Pakistan provide their military support, I believe. China just provide political support. The short answer is, it is the same as before, but more brutal.

TFSR: Like you've mentioned women's protests and protests for gender justice, being repressed pretty heavily. What are the levels of resistance to the Taliban in Afghanistan still that you can tell? Like, protesting Kabul of no longer featured on Western media, and I'm not sure if that's because they're not happening or because the Western media has such a short attention span. And the tragedy of the Taliban takeover is such an embarrassing moment for so many people in the West whose governments and taxes went to participate in the occupation and war that lasted 20 years? And what's the state of resistance information that you can tell getting out of Afghanistan?

Aryanum: Sure. So, there are some militant groups that announced their formations, we are not affiliated with them, and we are watching them from afar. Just observing the situation about them. And majority were previously part of the Mujahideen. There are similar Islamic groups with their belief system that is not that far different from what Taliban is espousing. For example, only one of them is even showing women speaking in their announcement of their formation, the rest of them were just men, and they are just saying how they are defending the country. The language is full of patriarchal Islamic rhetoric. They see the woman as their belonging,

are limited and they are expensive, because they can gouge people. People had no autonomy to cook for themselves. I think that would have been good if they could cook for themselves. But I guess they didn't want to give the refugees tools that could be used as a weapon, I guess. I have no idea at the larger military bases, why they don't give them any things.

In the beginning, they used to be able to eat at their own place. But after that, they were forced to, if they wanted to eat, they had to go to the kitchen to eat. So a family with two kids, yeah, that's gonna be hard. Like they cannot bring any food out. So they have to all go there and then their belongings getting stolen and stuff like that. They did receive a cell phone so we could communicate with them, which was good, it was paid by some nonprofit organization, I believe. So to help us, one of the groups around Minnesota, they recently met some Iranian family that they became friends with. That is some of their struggles.

Previously, since they are non-believers or atheists, they couldn't mingle with some of the Afghani groups as well, because some of the Afghani's are extremely religious. Our comrades are not praying and its really conspicuous, especially if you are leaving your country with basically nothing, your identity is the only thing you have left. For some people, that includes their religious identity, and some people would become extremely dependent on that and if you're not conforming to that ideal, yeah, it could cause conflict. So, our comrades decided not to intermingle that much. Just with a select group of people, they were not sent to the same place. But they met the Iranian family that are friends with and they are working to a degree to get their legal residence and they are already trying to get a driving license. So they are working on that stuff. None of the other ones are same as this.

Yeah, there was a lot of crazy things that happens in between, but it's all about them getting out and that's their experience outside of Afghanistan. For inside Afghanistan, while they were trying to get out, that family was part of a group, but they didn't go to a safe house same as that group. Because safe houses were not safe and are not safe in Afghanistan. The people who rent those spaces out are not in solidarity with you, with the people who give them money. The people, the neighbors would talk. So, the Taliban would find out real quick, and would come knocking. Some of the people that were in the safe spaces or safe houses waiting to get out of the country to evacuate, they've been arrested in the safe houses. Some of these are women activists, they were already in safe houses, but the safe houses were compromised. The owner of the place gets scared if the Taliban comes and just tells them everything. They already got your money so they don't care, they just tell them everything.

12 hours via the bus to get there and just another hour to get to the border from the city and province of Kandahar. So they arrived, and there were so many refugees just lining up to go to Pakistan. The Taliban and Pakistan, in collaboration with each other were changing the rules every single day. The first day that the comrades tried, they said they're only allowed the residents of Kandahar and they don't allow any other residents to cross the border without a visa. Just the Kandahar people. So our comrades basically tried to forge identification that shows that they were from Kandahar so they can pass. The change the rule again! They needed to have a visa now, there needed to be something... they kept changing the rule until they closed the border.

Two of our comrades managed to cross the border. Basically, the rest of them had to be smuggled. There was no path. The only people that could cross the border... none of them could be women or children because leaving the life of your children in the hands of a border smuggler is very risky. There has been horrible news of people missing in the smuggling process. So one of our comrades that came with their family decided that they will not cross a border. One of the times that they crossed that border, they lost their luggage. So they lost their phones, they lost all of their clothes, everything. They only had their identification with them in a bag that they kept with them. In an attempt to cross the border, the last time, the Pakistani border guards really was mistreating the people and every Afghan refugee that was trying to cross the border. They were hitting them, they were hurling insults all sorts of things. One of our comrades decided through a different channel which went to Qatar, then from Qatar, they went to America. In America they reported that they were sent into military encampment, a military base. The building that they were in had no door, just a curtain for the privacy, but there was no door so they could not leave their belongings there because other refugees could come and steal them and they did. They bought their 3 year old kid and some shoes, those shoes that lights up when you step on them so for the three year old to calm her down, to ease her as they keep moving from one place to another. They got stolen. In the refugee camps, there are stealing people. People have needs and people are thinking, "okay, I can sell this for my own thing." So they steal the stuff.

So, that was happening and one of our comrades was saying the food was really little. I'm not sure why that was, apparently, people were not donating enough and it was hard to divide it, I'm not sure what was the reason, just not allocating enough food and they had to pay their own money that they brought over just to eat. Things were expensive at the camp because they don't have a choice to go anywhere else. That is only some stores that are allowed to be operating. The choices

their namus, that's what they are called. That they need to be defended, the patriarchal chauvinism.

So, beyond planning to work with them, we just observing them at the moment. There is another suit in Pancheer province, it was another previous Mujahideen leader basically, that is mounting the resistance in Pancheer province. There are small groups that are forming, but the women's movement is basically the only radical movement. But it is not militarized because they were not given any weapons. They do not have a chance to have weapons. The military organizations are forming, they had their weapons beforehand from the back when they were part of the Mujahideen organization or another military organization. The new organizations, that were not part of those groups, they did not have opportunity to have a gun. The opportunity to procure a gun, but also experience to do the very covert guerrilla tactics or any other war tactics against the Taliban. Those that do, have a previous experience from, like I said, the Mujahideen or other military groups.

Regarding how the news is getting out, fortunately, there is still internet. Afghanistan during the previous government and even during Taliban, Taliban doesn't have any expert to oversee censorship on the internet. We can imagine that with the cooperation of China and Iran, they are working to get that capability. But at the moment, the people are using the internet to get the news out. They use Facebook, they use WhatsApp at the moment. With our communication, we try to push into secure communication. Like for example, Telegram, even though Telegram is not that secure, it is more secure to us than WhatsApp. Signal for the best secure communication. But unfortunately, it seems that since the internet is so big over there, the signal processing on WhatsApp is much more efficient than Telegram. So our comrades, when they having signal issues, they might be able to communicate through WhatsApp, but they cannot do through Telegram and not through Signal. It's not as good, unfortunately. Yeah, people are communicating through that. This causes the Taliban to check the phones on every checkpoint. So whoever is sending a message, have to keep clearing their messages, including our comrades that are traveling through, moving anywhere, they just have to keep deleting their messages. Taliban would just show up and force them to show their phone with all the apps open so they can view it. They will check on the phone and see if the name of the person they're talking to is on a list or database for them to apprehend. So that's happening, but people still can communicating through internet. The news can get out through there.

There is one news channel which is not related to us. That provides relatively okay news about Afghanistan. That's Amajnews.com. This seems to be okay for the most part. Some

of the language that they use in some articles shows them as very liberal, statist, it shows the bougie side. But yes, they are getting the news out that way. You can find them on Telegram and their website. But we try to create as much news as we can. We ask the people involved as much as we can, people who we are in contact with and are comrades.

TFSR: Yeah, I know that your networks are very stretched thin. At one point you talked about using satellite networks to be able to produce podcasts or some sort of news or media that could be broadcast in a way that didn't need to be encrypted but could be consumed relatively anonymously inside of Afghanistan. Is that still an eventual goal?

Are the Taliban still... it sounds like if they're letting people through with their smartphones at the moment, they're not doing what they were doing their first rule of destroying technological devices like stereos and whatever else. They're just sort of dealing with the fact that they're there now.

Aryanum: Yes, there was one video showing the Taliban member condemning TV to being of the devils and destroying it, but they cannot really control it as much they need. They need phones as well. They try to use phones to infiltrate into groups, and catch the people involved that way. For example, so they arrested 49 people, I think 25 of them were women activists, and they got forced confession from out of them with the promise of them being freed. So when they did that they produced a TV program showing all of these forced confessions. "Oh, yes, we only wanted to leave the country, not fighting for our rights, fighting for self interest... just wanted to leave the country, to go to some country. The people who helped us, lied to us saying 'hey, we can help you get out of the country.'" Stuff like that.

They put a snippet of conversation between two activists. In which they got a hold of a phone. I believe it was Tamana [Zaryabi Paryani]'s phone. She was arrested with her sister. They got off the phone and extracted conversations. They edited it to their favor and put it in the program to show that "yes, all of this was a ruse for them to leave the country. This had nothing to do with us oppressing them." It is same tactic that the Islamic Republic of Iran is using with the forced confessions.

They are searching house-to-house. So if they find anything incriminating being shown... well, not necessarily... They just search house-to-house, some take and steal their belongings, they steal whatever people have left. The jewelry, the gold, whatever they find in the house, they steal it. If they find anything showing that the residents of the house had any

anti Taliban sentiment, well, they're gonna get arrested, the men are definitely gonna get tortured. So that's going on, but there is not a network to intercept the signals midway or record every messages like NSA in the US. I mean, they would like to have something like that.

TFSR: Yeah, what state wouldn't?

Yeah. So there was, during the war, bombings that were claimed by a group called Islamic State in Khorasan, or ISIS-K. Is this group joining in with the efforts of the Taliban? Or is it waging its own insurgency, or has it sort of disappeared?

Aryanum: That is like Al-Qaeda, maybe it's inactive. They haven't done anything recently, and the Taliban may be using it as an excuse for tightening their own security measures and becoming more intrusive and more violent. Using the Al-Qaeda as their legitimation tool. "Yes we are the good government, Al-Qaeda is the bad one. We are not Al-Qaeda so we are good." That sort of logic is going on. I'm not sure about the ISIS Khorasan, to be honest. I don't have any information about that.

TFSR: Ok, thank you.

Do any of your federation members have anecdotes or experiences of having to become a refugee, that they shared with you? And if they've moved to places where there are anarchist communities, have they been able to integrate or interact with those communities? How have they been received? Finally, are there any NGOs or organizations that are doing refugee support work that you've heard are doing a good job and should be supported by general civil society where possible?

Aryanum: We managed to, with the help of a comrade introducing us to somebody, help one of our friend's families to leave directly to the US. There is another comrade that used their own channels and managed to get their family to the US as well. From their experiences, if I want to start from beginning, after the fall of Kabul and after 12 days, our comrades decided to evacuate because we couldn't mount a defense. There was no resistance at the moment and he chances of the window of opportunity for us to evacuate was closing.

So some of our comrades try to leave the country, evacuate the country to Pakistan. There are two borders that gets used. And for Pakistan, the one of them is Torkhan, which is near the near Kabul. That was closed in the beginning. The other one was the Chaman crossing. Chaman is the border city in Pakistan. So, it is kind of far away from Kabul, it was