

Where Is Iranian Socialist-Humanist Intellectual, Yashar Darolshafa?

On Thursday November 21, five days after the outbreak of a popular uprising against the Islamic Republic of Iran, Yashar Darolshafa was violently arrested by government authorities at a friend's home and taken away. Since then, family and friends have not heard from him. Subsequent efforts by family members inquiring about his status, have not led to any results.



Darolshafa is a 33 year old PhD candidate in the School of Health and Social Welfare at Tehran University, a journalist and an activist with deep interest in student, labor, women's and oppressed minority struggles and rights. He represents the combination of brilliance, erudition and compassion.

He has paid a heavy price for his critical thinking and commitment to human emancipation. His efforts in producing a youth journal, *Sarpich* (Insubordinate) with a special 2009 issue critically evaluating the 1979 Revolution, landed him in prison for the first time. Later he was sentenced to five years in prison for his participation in the 2009 Green Movement.

While in prison (2012-2016), Darolshafa continued his research with an extensive critique of the Iranian Shi'a reformist thinker, Ali Shariati. He also closely followed the Syrian uprising against the brutal Assad regime and the Kurdish struggle for self-determination in Rojava, northern Syria.

After he was released on parole in late 2016, despite extreme pain from beatings in prison, he was drafted into compulsory military service. He then returned to his graduate studies in sociology, health and social welfare.

He responded to the December 2017-January 2018 popular uprising in Iran by writing a series of articles on the history of Iranian labor struggles from the early 1900s to today. He also wrote about and strongly supported women's rights activists known as the Girls of Revolution Avenue who took off their scarves in public to oppose the compulsory hijab.

Most recently Darolshafa was writing an essay, comparing and contrasting Ali Shari'ati and Frantz Fanon with the aim of reclaiming Fanon's critique of Third World nationalist intellectuals.

Darolshafa is a unique type of humanist intellectual activist who has broken with the dogmatism, nationalism and sexism of many members of previous generations of Iranian socialists. His contribution to emancipatory thought and struggle at this critical moment in Iran's history is urgently needed.

We urge socialists around the world to publicize the case of this brave intellectual activist, demand to know where he is being held, hold the Iranian government accountable for his safety, and call for his immediate release.

He needs and deserves our support!

Please send signatures to Frieda Afary at fafarysecond@yahoo.com. Please respond by Friday, December 19 and say how you would like your signature to appear.