

ISSE demonstrates in New York to demand release of jailed Iranian students

Bill Van Auken
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The International Students for Social Equality held a demonstration Saturday, February 16 to protest the Iranian government's arrest of more than 40 left-wing students and demand their immediate release.

ISSE members and supporters, together with a group of Iranian students attending university in the US, rallied outside the Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations in midtown Manhattan. The demonstrators carried signs condemning the arrests and put up display boards bearing photographs of a number of those who are now imprisoned by the Iranian government. The students formed a picket line, marching in front of the entrance to the building on Third Ave. in Manhattan, where the mission has its offices, chanting, "Free the Iranian students, no to war against Iran."

After the demonstration, the Socialist Equality Party and ISSE held a meeting in which there was a lively discussion about the present political situation in both Iran and the US, the political issues posed in the development of the Iranian student movement and the struggle for Trotskyism.

Those arrested in Iran are part of the group Students for Freedom and Equality, also known as the Radical Left. In December, the group organized an independent demonstration to denounce US war plans, while also opposing all factions of the Iranian government. More than 30 students were arrested after the demonstrations, and another 10 were arrested on January 15.

Some students have been released on bail, while others have been unable to meet the extremely high bail fees of up to \$100,000. Other students, including alleged leaders of the group, are not eligible for release and have not had contact with friends or family outside of prison. Some students have said they suspect that these prisoners are being tortured to elicit televised confessions. (See "Iranian government intensifies crackdown on left-wing opposition")

At Saturday's rally, Joe Kay, a member of the ISSE Steering Committee, addressed the demonstrators and read out a letter drafted by the ISSE to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad demanding the immediate release of the imprisoned students. The ISSE will be submitting this letter together with other letters sent by our readers to the Iranian government's representatives. The WSWS calls on its readers to continue sending letters of protest to the Iranian Interests Section in the United States at requests@daftar.org. Please send copies to the WSWS.

We will soon be posting a more complete report on the ISSE demonstration on the WSWS.

The text of the ISSE letter follows:

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
President Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei:

We are writing to demand the immediate release of all members of the group Azady Barabary (Students for Freedom and Equality) currently held by the government of Iran. Charges against these students must be dropped. They have committed no crime but to engage in legitimate protest against war plans of the United States and the policies of your government. The freed students must be given the right to demonstrate and voice their political opinions openly on campuses.

A list of the names of those students arrested is included below. These students are not affiliated with our organization, but we, along with students and workers all over the world, are following their treatment carefully. We will continue to follow and publicize their cases until they are freed and their unjust persecution ends.

We are outraged by reports that these students have been subject to torture and myriad forms of physical and psychological interrogation. They may also be under pressure to agree to false confessions before television cameras.

These methods recall the atrocities of the Shah's

regime. It should be noted that the first wave of student arrests in December occurred after a demonstration marking Students' Day, which commemorates the murder of four students by the Shah during the visit of then-US Vice President Richard Nixon in 1953. The killing occurred shortly after the US-sponsored coup overthrowing the government of Mohammad Mossadegh.

The ISSE speaks on behalf of students and workers in the United States and around the world who are deeply opposed to the past and present warmongering policies of the US government against Iran. The students that you have placed behind bars were engaged in protests against US imperialism. Their arrest will only damage the struggle against war that endangers the population of the entire region.

Your imprisonment and mistreatment of these courageous students is a grievous assault on democratic and human rights. It plays into the hands of the imperialist militarists, who exploit the injustice committed by your government to justify their plans for an assault against Iran.

We once again demand the immediate release and the dropping of charges against the following students:

Amin Ghazaie, Bijan Sabagh, Soroush Dashtestani, Anahita Hosseini, Morteza Eslahchi, Bita Samimizad, Behzad Bagheri, Morteza Khedmatloo, Soroush Sabet, Mohammad Pourabdollah, Mohammad Zera'ati, Farzad Hasanzadeh, Saeed Habibi, Peyman Piran, Mehdi Gerailoo, Nader Ehsani, Behrooz Karimizadeh, Ali Salem, Ali Kolaie, Abed Tavancheh, Sadra Pirhayati, Saeed Aghamali, Keyvan Amiri Elyasi, Hadi Salari, Amir Aghaie, Soroush Hashempour, Mehdi Allahyari, Majid Ashrafnejad, Reza Arab, Mohammad Saleh Aboman, Sohrab Karimi, Farshid Doostipour, Javad Alizadeh, Anoosheh Azadbar, Ilnaz Jamshidi, Roozbeh Safshekan, Roozbehan Amiri, Farshid Farhadi Ahangaran, Milad Omrani, Mohsen Ghamin, Nasim Soltanbeigi, Amirhossein Mehrzad, Mahsa Mohebi, Saeed Aghakhani, Okhtai Hosseini, Arash Pakzad.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact