

“Stand By the Oppressed & Say "No" to the Oppressors”

An Open Letter to Professor David Harvey

Dear professor Harvey,

We are a number of socialist political and social activists, writing to share with you our concerns regarding your scheduled speech in Iran and urge you to cancel it.

You have been invited to give a talk at the "Women & Urban Life Conference" from December 11th through December 12th in one of the most neoliberalized cities of the world, namely Tehran, in which public spaces are highly controlled by the state and widely privatized over the recent decade. The conference is organized not by a university or an academic association, or even a non-governmental or people-based organization, but rather by the Tehran Municipality and will be held at the International Center for Conferences in the Tehran Milad Tower, which is one of the most expensive places to which the absolute majority of the Tehran's citizens have no access. Moreover, the conference entrance fee for the conference is more than a quarter of the monthly minimum wage in Iran, hence it should be clear what kind of audience you are likely to have.

You have been invited by one of the most menacing arms of the oppression of vulnerable urban groups in the heart of the capital city that rendered the overspreading of child labor, homelessness, ghettos, vendors, and the like, and have also deprived from basic services a wide range of elderly, people with health issues, the handicapped, the disabled, or those with special needs. All of these social groups experience the most atrocious forms of structural suppression in public spaces.

You will be hosted by a governmental organization which implements various fearsome scenarios in favor of neoliberal urbanization: confiscating the vendors' commodities on the streets, attacking, arresting and even killing them with brass knuckles by their black-colored shirts; vendor-cleansing the streets by brutal force and "picking up" the drug addicts by transferring them to government-run rehabilitation camps which are nothing short of torture camps; setting fire to the immigrants' sheds who live in deprived areas on the outskirts of the towns; as well as prosecuting journalists who expose its corruption and so forth.

We would like to use this opportunity to point out that as a radical academic figure and an brilliant intellectual source of inspiration for countless socialist activists around the world and a major producer of critical interpretation of the ideas of "Social Justice and the City" and your own formulation of the "right to the city" your attendance in this conference will contradict the the basic political principles to which you have thus far steadfastly adhered.

Indubitably, your attendance at a seminar in Iran would be an excellent opportunity and a favorable occasion for all scholars, students, political and social activists who make efforts towards the right to the city in Iran. Nevertheless, we believe that your invitation is part of recent attempts by the Iranian government to co-opt and misuse critical research and activism for its own purposes and legitimation of its governance institutions and practices, led by different organs of the state, all in order to blunt the trenchancy of critical approaches concerning the status-quo power relations.

We, as socialist political and social activists, and as those who have followed your ideas in and outside of Iran, appeal to you not to take part in this seminar funded by the Tehran Municipality which is a major oppressor of the Tehran's subalterns and a systematic violator of their most elementary rights, and to not grant your seal of approval to the agents of ongoing neo-liberalization policies in Iran.

We sincerely hope you respond to our comradely appeal and stand by the oppressed and suburbanized people of Tehran and say "no" to the oppressors by refusing to attend this conference.

Date: 02 / 12 / 2016

Signatures:

1. Abbas Shahrabi
2. Abdee Kalantari
3. Adel Irankhah
4. Aida Eyvazzadeh
5. Ako Pakzad
6. Alborz Zahedi
7. Ali Akbar Masoumbaigi
8. Ali Fathi
9. Ali Rasoli

10. Ali Saleki
11. Ali Soltani
12. Alireza Abbasi
13. Alireza Adinh
14. Alireza Moinian
15. Amer Goli
16. Ammar Goli
17. Amin Hosouri
18. Amin Zargarnejad
19. Amir Chamani
20. Amir Hooshang Eftekhari Rad
21. Amir Javaheri Langroudi
22. Amir Kianpour
23. Amir Memarian
24. Amir Mesbahi
25. Amir Shojaei
26. Amirkhosro Nazeri
27. Anita Kamali
28. Arash Doosthossein
29. Arash Kia
30. Ardavan Tarakame
31. Arman Esmaili
32. Ardalan Bastani
33. Asal Akhavan
34. Ashkan Khorasani
35. Azam Safaei
36. Azadeh Saberi
37. Aydin Gholamzadeh
38. Aydin Halalzadeh
39. Babak Pashajavid
40. Babak Farahani

41. Bahar Naji
42. Baktash Abtin
43. Behnam Amini
44. Behnam Daraeizadeh
45. Behnood Momeni
46. Behrang Mohammadi
47. Behrang Zandi
48. Behrouz Joshani
49. Behrouz Khabaz
50. Bijan Kiarasi
51. Bijan Sabbagh
52. Chnoor Maki
53. Cyrus Bina
54. Darioush Mohammadi Majd
55. Deiako Haghgo
56. Ebrahim Aalipour
57. Ehsan Rostami
58. Ensieh Salmani
59. Elnaz Ansari
60. Elnaz Babaii
61. Faezeh Karimpour
62. Farhad Gooran
63. Farshin Kazeminia
64. Fereidoon Teimoori
65. Firoozeh Mohajer
66. Foad Shakeri
67. Forough Asadpour
68. Forough Saminia
69. Ghazal Khoshabadi
70. Golnaz Khajehgiri
71. Golrokh Jahangiri

72. Hadi Kherdamandpour
73. Hamed Kiaii
74. Hamid Ghamgosar
75. Hamid Mafi
76. Hamid Nowzari
77. Hassan Mortazavi
78. Hasan Razghandi
79. Hatef Soltani
80. Hazhir Pelaschi
81. Hesam Amiri
82. Hesam Salamat
83. Hooman Kazemian
84. Homayon Iwani
85. Hossein Yousefi
86. Iman Vaghefi
87. Iran Mansouri
88. Jamileh Nedai
89. Javad Abbasi
90. Javad Jafari
91. Javid Sobhani
92. Kamal Khosravi
93. Kamran Matin
94. Katayoun Keshavarzi
95. Kaveh Banaei
96. Kaveh Darolshafa
97. Khashayar Niroomand
98. Khosro Sadeghi Broujeni
99. Kianoosh Boostani
100. Laleh Pasha
101. Laleh Derakhti
102. Leila Akhavan

103. Mahboub Tisheh
104. Mahdis Mohammadi
105. Mahsa Asadollahnejad
106. Mahsa Sabbaghi
107. Mansur Tayfuri
108. Maria Abbasian
109. Maryam Ashrafi
110. Maryam Hanifi
111. Maryam Zandi
112. Masoud Hoseini
113. Masoud Ghods
114. Maysam Gandomabadi
115. Mazdak Tousinejhad
116. Mehdi Toopchi
117. Mehdi Saberi
118. Mehdi Salimi
119. Mehran Jangali Moghadam
120. Mehrdad Emami
121. Mehri Abbassi
122. Mehrnoosh Ashtarani
123. Mehrnoush Mirsaeidi
124. Mehrzad Dashtbani
125. Mila Mossafer
126. Milad Jannat
127. Milad Shahraki
128. Mina Ghorbani
129. Mina Khani
130. Mitra Yousefi
131. Mohammad Amin
132. Mohammad Ghaznavian
133. Mohammad Javaheri

134. Mohammad Kalali
135. Mohammad Karim Asayesh
136. Mohammad Nouri
137. Mohammad Pourabdollah
138. Mohammad Shayan Nikbeen
139. Mohsen Emadi
140. Mohsen Fouladi
141. Mojdeh Arasi
142. Nahid Mirhaj
143. Nader Fatourehchi
144. Naser Pishro
145. Nasrin Fayeghi Fard
146. Nazli Mortezaei
147. Nima Barazandeh
148. Nima Saberi
149. Omid Montazeri
150. Pardis Rahmanfard
151. Parisa Amiri Eliasi
152. Parisa Nasrabadi
153. Pasha Shaker
154. Payam Shaker
155. Peyman Fazeli
156. Peyman Piran
157. Pezhman Rahimi
158. Piran Azad
159. Pooya Nodehi
160. Raha Asadzadeh
161. Reza Asadabadi
162. Reza Asadollahi
163. Reza Dehghan
164. Reza Eskandari

165. Rezgar Mahmoudi
166. Roozbeh Dorneshan
167. Saba Hajjafar
168. Sadegh Heydari Fard
169. Saeed Arami
170. Saeed Habibi
171. Saeed Kalaanaki
172. Saeed Naderi
173. Saeed Nadimi
174. Saiedeh Asadipour
175. Sam Salour
176. Saman Aram
177. Samaneh Zakeri
178. Samira Eliasi
179. Samira Khoshbakht
180. Sara Dehkordi
181. Sara Delshad
182. Sasan Amjadi
183. Sediq Esmaili
184. Sepehr Ebrahimi
185. Seyyed Hassan Sajjadi
186. Shabgir Hassani
187. Shadab Alibolandi
188. Shadyar Omrani
189. Shahin Navai
190. Shariar Galavani
191. Sharareh Shahed
192. Shahab Borhan
193. Shakiba Asgarpour
194. Shervin Taheri
195. Siavash Amjadi

196. Siavash Sarkhosh
197. Sina Habibi
198. Soroush Dashtestani
199. Sourena Amidi
200. Syrous Kafei
201. Taha Zeinali
202. Tika Kalaki
203. Yasamin Mahboobi
204. Yaser Goli
205. Zahra Pourazizi
206. Zohreh Asadpour