

What the “Friends of the People” are, and how they fight the Social Power of the people A reference to “Iran Tribunal”

“Iran Tribunal” successfully concluded its campaign to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable for its crimes against humanity. What “Iran Tribunal” achieved, was unique and historical. For the first time in the history of mankind, while the world powers totally neglected and turned their backs to a nation being plundered and at the same time abused beyond any imagination, ordinary and noble people and those who respect humanity and moral values, who neither hold state power nor are influenced by such powers, held the criminal rulers of the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable for their crimes against humanity. “Iran Tribunal” proved in practice that it is possible to unite the masses with diverse political views in the form of an independent Social Power institution, to hold one of the most brutal regimes in the contemporary history of mankind accountable for its crimes against humanity.

Regrettably, professor Norman Paech, a renowned and well respected German Politician of Germany’s ”The Left” party, who had earlier offered his support to “Iran Tribunal”, was compelled to withdraw his support from “Iran Tribunal”. This was mainly due to the smearing campaign and untruthful allegations against “Iran Tribunal” which was initially launched by Yassamin Mather, the chairperson of “Hands off People of Iran” (HOPI).

After Professor Norman Paech ceased his support for “Iran Tribunal”, which was reflected in some Internet media (<http://www.cpgb.org.uk/home/weekly-worker/online-only/iran-tribunal-impossible-to-continue-support>), he contacted Babak Emad, a member of the Co-ordinating Committee of “Iran Tribunal” by e-mail, and asked him to respond to the allegations raised by Yassamin Mather.

In his e-mail dated 06 October 2012, Professor Norman Paech asked Babak Emad the following questions:

(Please note that only the main and relevant points of these correspondences are reflected here and the non-relevant parts of the e-mails are omitted.)

<Professor Norman Paech’s questions start here>

1. Is the tribunal directly or indirectly financed by the NED?
2. Do the Mujaheddin e Khalk take part in the organisation or support the tribunal?
3. Are there members of the tribunal who support a military intervention against Iran? I accept your decision not to give openly political statements. But being a fierce opponent of any military intervention especially against Iran in times like these this question is very important for me. I can't cooperate with groups or persons who are advocating a military intervention.

<Professor Norman Paech’s questions end here>

On 7 October 2012, Babak Emad replied to Norman Paech and provided him with answers to his questions in the order they were raised:

<Babak Emad's response to Norman Paech starts here>

- 1- Iran Tribunal has no connection with "NED", either directly or indirectly. In either case, we welcome to hear from anyone who has any concrete evidence, or any proof beyond reasonable doubt.
- 2- "Iran Tribunal" is an open platform for seeking justice on behalf of those who were mass murdered by the Islamic Republic of Iran between 1981 and 1988. "Iran Tribunal" is neither fuelled by (Financially or otherwise), nor does it support ANY political organisation, either in Iran or abroad; either Iranian or non-Iranian. This is a "Peoples' Campaign". Therefore, the organisers and supporters of "Iran Tribunal" are from all walks of Iranian political sphere that have been victimised, or directly or indirectly affected by the atrocities inflicted by the Iranian Clerical Regime. No single organisation has ANY hegemony over "Iran Tribunal" whatsoever.
- 3- "Iran Tribunal" receives its mandate from the families of the victims of mass murders of 1981-1988. The background of such families is total advocacy for peace and human prosperity throughout the world, and for that matter, the prevalence of justice. No noble human being with any sensible and right mind would advocate for ANY war. Having been one of the main individuals involved with "Iran Tribunal" right from the outset, I can tell you without any fear of contradiction that no one within "Iran Tribunal" would advocate any war. We believe that getting drawn into this kind of "debate" would detract this campaign from its main aims and objectives which is to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable for its crimes against humanity. This campaign was set up for justice against the Islamic Republics atrocities 23 years ago and not for getting involved in today's political quarrels or nuclear standoff between Iran and the west.

<Babak Emad's response to Norman Paech ends here>

Subsequently, Professor Norman Paech had presented this reply to Yassamin Mather. On 17 October 2012, Professor Norman Paech contacted Babak Emad again, via e-mail, and asked him to clarify the allegations made Yassamin Mather in a reply e-mail by Yassamin Mather to Professor Norman Paech:

<Yassamin Mather's reply to Professor Norman Paech starts here>

Norman

It is a little difficult to reply to the email by Babak Emad as we have not seen the actual questions you have asked him. But we can guess. Let us know if anything else is unclear or requires clarification. This is a very important debate and it goes to the heart of the international anti-war movement and its political outlook and independence, so we welcome the chance to participate in this discussion.

- We have never claimed that NED directly finances the Iran Tribunal. Had they done that, the tribunal would have never gotten off the ground. **However, we have criticised the close links of the main organiser to the US government and NED:** The tribunal is supported by the Iran Human Rights Documentation

group, whose founder, Payam Akhavan, acts as the chair and spokesperson of the tribunal's steering committee. The IHRD has over the years received a large amount of funding from the US government. (www.iranhrdc.org/english/news/in-the-news/3085-silencing-the-watchdog.html#.T9RP7NPgyBs.) Akhavan is also active in Human Rights and Democracy for Iran (also known as the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation). This is financed by a variety of American and European foundations, amongst them the infamous National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

- Babak Emad might personally be against war on Iran. **However, his closest allies in Iran Tribunal are advocates of sanctions and have actually refused to publicly oppose war and sanctions:** For example, Payam Akhavan is a vocal and strong supporter of sanctions against Iran, *which in our view is a form of war*. They are supposed to weaken the regime for 'regime change from above'. So, clearly, if he and Babak Emad *might not want to* get "involved in today's political quarrels or nuclear standoff between Iran and the west" – but they certainly are doing it!

For example, Akhavan is one of the authors of the International report published by the 'Responsibility to Prevent Coalition', which calls for "a comprehensive set of generic remedies - smart sanctions - to combat the critical mass of threat, including threat-specific remedies for each of the nuclear, incitement, terrorist and rights-violating threats". This 2010 report was, incidentally, also signed by Tory MP Michael Gove and "Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy".

(http://irwincotler.liberal.ca/files/2010/05/2010_11_17_-_R2P_IRAN_REPORT.pdf.)

In an interview with a Canadian newspaper, Akhavan boasts: "After years of lobbying, we succeeded in persuading both the US and EU to adopt targeted sanctions against Iranian officials. Canada is far behind in this regard."(<http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/10/18/canada-has-imposed-sanctions-on-iranian-officials-implicated-in-alleged-assassination-plot>.)

On March 8, he attended a meeting of the European Union to present a report he had co-authored that contains the proposal to blacklist not just "individuals", but "the organisations and government bodies that commit these violations", which "should also be put under sanction".(<http://persian2english.com/?p=23744>). The sanctions, as you know, are having a terrible effect on the people in Iran: they are suffering real hunger and shortages.

- **We have no problem with Iranians "from all walks of life" being involved in the tribunal** (or any other campaign). We would not ban people from participating. However, we are trying to explain why the tribunal organisers have taken the political road they have. And the central involvement of individuals close to the Mujahedin (MEK) is an indication as to the political outlook of the tribunal and why it won't speak up against war and sanctions. For this organisation, the overthrow of the regime has always been the key objective and it explicitly supports sanctions and war to achieve it (in the first Gulf War, it

famously sided with Saddam Hussein and supported his attacks on Iran, including militarily).

The Mujahedin's backing for the Iran Tribunal might be disputed by the organisation and the tribunal itself, yet the involvement of people with close links to the MEK seems to tell a different story. Hardly surprising: after all, the US government has only recently announced that it has removed the Mujahedin from its list of terrorist organisations. Leila Ghalehbani (who is featured in a video on the tribunal's front page) is the sister of a number of Mujahedin prisoners who were killed in 1988. Iraj Mesdaghi, a survivor of the massacre, describes himself as "a former member" of the organisation. Last week Mesdaghi participated in two BBC Persian service interviews as the unofficial spokesperson in support of the MEK. In both programmes, he describes how "happy" he is that the MEK is not classed a terrorist organisation anymore (http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/tv/2011/04/000001_ptv_page2_gel.shtml).

Further, the website of the pro-Mujahedin organisation, Human Rights and Democracy for Iran, has just published a very sympathetic interview with Payam Akhavan, in which he is sympathetically prompted to tell readers how he feels about being "slandered" by the Weekly Worker. (www.hrd4iran.se).

We hope this helps to clarify some of the criticisms we share with many Iranians in and outside Iran. We believe that we need a genuinely independent tribunal that can investigate the crimes of the theocratic regime - and at the same time speak out against war and sanctions on Iran.

Please let us know if you have any further questions. We would be more than happy to discuss these issues in Skype meetings, emails, telephone conversations or any form of public debate.

In solidarity,
Yassamine Mather
Deputy Director of the Center for Socialist Theory at Glasgow University
Chair, Hands Off the People of Iran

<Yassamin Mather's reply to Professor Norman Paech ends here>

Due to his busy schedule, as "Iran Tribunal" was approaching its second phase in The Hague on 25 October 2012, Babak Emad was unable to respond to this e-mail by Professor Norman Paech.

Babak Emad subsequently received another e-mail by Professor Norman Paech on 29 October 2012 with an attachment summarising all the points in question. Professor Paech wrote to Babak Emad:

<Professor Norman Paech's comments start here>

Let me clarify the two personal motives of my commitment:

First I am still convinced that a comprehensive and in depth investigation of all the murderous cruelties perpetrated by the Iranian regime in the late 1980's must be undertaken and presented to the international public. An international tribunal is an adequate way to manage this task.

Second I am aware of the deep rifts between various Iranian political groups and parties in exile which are campaigning and struggling against each other. I for my part, in my capacity of an international lawyer, don't want to interfere politically in those disputes and in no way wish to deepen the divisions. The opposition in exile will never come closer to their main task of building a democratic, free and social or even socialist society in Iran unless they stop fighting each other. My contribution to your activities in exile is dedicated to the overall purpose of your existence in exile and the greater task of peace in the region.

I would really like to further support such an important activity *but only if there were no shadow of doubt that this Tribunal would not be misused for legitimizing sanctions and military intervention against Iran*. Given the situation that threats from Israel and the USA are made on a weekly basis, with the intention of waging war against Iran, nothing should be done which could be interpreted as support for an international crime like that. If you can openly refute the conclusion of Jassamine Mather's allegations that the Tribunal "has become part of the campaign to legitimize war and sanctions to enforce pro-western 'regime change from above'" by releasing a public statement, that this Tribunal and its members are strongly opposed to sanctions and military intervention, I would be satisfied. Under no circumstances should this Tribunal be exploited and misused for justifying the US-strategy of military regime change.

In your last mail you already personally rejected those allegations and therefore I am sure that a public statement from the Tribunal could be made without difficulties.

<Professor Norman Paech's comments end here>

<The attachment to this e-mail starts here>

No to the Iran Tribunal!

The main arguments put forward by Hands Off the People of Iran

1. Payam Akhavan (chair and spokesperson of the tribunal's steering committee) has links to organisations that have accepted large amounts of money from the US government
2. The tribunal refuses to take a stand against war and sanctions on Iran
3. Mainstream lawyers and politicians like Sir Geoffrey Nice, John Cooper QC and Maurice Copithorne ideologically support the tribunal – why?
4. The pro-war Mujahedeen is closely involved with the tribunal

5. Many organisations and witnesses have withdrawn
6. Critical voices have been silenced
7. Conclusion: The tribunal has become part of the campaign to legitimise war and sanctions to enforce pro-western 'regime change from above'.

The arguments in more detail:

1. Payam Akhavan (chair and spokesperson of the tribunal's steering committee) has links to organisations that have accepted large amounts of money from the US government.

He is leading member of Iran Human Rights Documentation. This has received a large amount of funding from the US government.ⁱ Akhavan is also active in Human Rights and Democracy for Iran (also known as the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation). This is financed by a variety of American and European foundations, amongst them the infamous National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The NED was founded in 1983 by former US president Ronald Reagan to spread his version of "democracy" around the globe.

2. The tribunal refuses to take a stand against war and sanctions on Iran.

Yassamine Mather, chair of Hands Off the People of Iran, has written to the tribunal's steering committee, requesting that it takes a stand against the threats of war on Iran and the devastating effect that the sanctions are having on the country. She did not even receive a reply.

Organisers of the tribunal subsequently stated that the tribunal is "non-political." Yassamine Mather has responded that, "without clear opposition to war and sanctions, the tribunal effectively strengthens the hand of all those reactionary forces contemplating a military attack on Iran. The danger of war grows every day. I am a strong opponent of the regime in Tehran - but a war would be disastrous for the forces in Iran who have a real interest in democracy: the workers, women's groups and social movements in that country."

In contrast, Payam Akhavan is a keen supporter of sanctions on Iran. For many years, Payam Akhavan has been pushing his sponsors' agenda for ever harsher sanctions. He is one of the authors of the International report published by the Responsibility to Prevent Coalition, which calls for "a comprehensive set of generic remedies - smart sanctions - to combat the critical mass of threat, including threat-specific remedies for each of the nuclear, incitement, terrorist and rights-violating threats". This 2010 report was, incidentally, also signed by Tory MP Michael Gove and "Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy".ⁱⁱ (In an interview with a Canadian newspaper, Akhavan boasts: "After years of lobbying, we succeeded in persuading both the US and EU to adopt targeted sanctions against Iranian officials. Canada is far behind in this regard.")ⁱⁱⁱ On March 8 2012, he attended a meeting of the European Union to present a report he had co-authored that contains the proposal to blacklist not just "individuals", but "the organisations and government bodies that commit these violations", which "should also be put under sanction".^{iv}

Sanctions are supposed to destabilise the regime and prepare the ground for 'regime change from above'. In reality, they impact below: first and foremost ordinary working people are harmed by them. There have been clashes on the streets of Tehran over the price of food - even stallholders at the Grand Bazaar are supporting the demonstrators - most Iranians will tell you that the sanctions are the main reason for their misery. In other words, they help deflect anger away from the theocratic regime. They weaken the only force that can deliver real democracy: the workers', students' and women's organisations, who are today weaker than they have been for many years. Clearly, sanctions are a form of war.

3. **Mainstream lawyers and politicians like Sir Geoffrey Nice, John Cooper QC and Maurice Copithorne ideologically support the tribunal – why?**

Sir Geoffrey Nice is a supporter of the Human Rights Commission of the British Conservative Party; **John Cooper QC** has stood for the Labour Party in elections. **Payam Akhavan** was voted "young global leader" at the World Economic Forum in 2005. All three are well-known, high-ranking lawyers, who in the name of what they dub "the international community" have over the years confronted many dictators and government heads in international courts (generally when these have turned on their former sponsors in the US, of course).

Between 1995 and 2002, **Maurice Copithorne** acted as UN human rights rapporteur for Iran. "Some Iranians travelled to meet him in 1995 in order to get him to start an investigation of the 1988 massacre," according to a member of the Norwegian tribunal support committee (which has since withdrawn). "But they weren't even allowed to meet him. His aide told them that he would only deal with the current situation in Iran and was not interested in things from the past." Of course, this was at a time when the US was making efforts to stage a rapprochement with Tehran and to enlist it as an ally in the fight against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. It was in this geo-political context that Copithorne's 1998 annual human rights report was seen as a political whitewash of the theocracy's oppression. For example, in that report he opines that "the Islamic Republic of Iran is making progress in the field of human rights".^v

Why is Copithorne interested in the massacre now? And why have members of the Conservative Party donated their services for free? After all, this is the same Conservative Party that was in government in 1988 and remained ostentatiously silent as leftists and democrats were systematically culled by the theocracy. This is the same Conservative Party that supports harsh sanctions on Iran and continues to rattle the war drums.

Clearly, all these people are ideologically committed to the trial - which explains why the organisers refuse to come out against war and sanctions. This effectively contradicts the tribunal's claims that they are "non-political".

4. **The pro-war Mujahedeen is closely involved with the tribunal**

For the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), the overthrow of the regime has always been the key objective and it explicitly supports sanctions and war to achieve it. (In the first Gulf War, it famously sided with Saddam Hussein and supported his attacks on Iran,

including active participation in military operations). The Mujahedin's backing for the Iran Tribunal is actually disputed by the tribunal, yet the involvement of people with close MEK links seems to tell a different story. Hardly surprising: after all, the US government has recently announced that it has removed the Mujahedin from its list of terrorist organisations. Leila Ghalehbani (who is featured in a video on the tribunal's front page) is the sister of a number of Mujahedin prisoners who were killed in 1988. Iraj Mesdaghi, a survivor of the massacre, describes himself as "a former member" of the organisation. The website of the pro-Mujahedin organisation, Human Rights and Democracy for Iran, has just published a very sympathetic interview with Payam Akhavan, in which he is sympathetically prompted to tell readers how he feels about being "slandered" by the British leftwing paper, *Weekly Worker*, in its critical coverage of the IT.^{vi}

5. Many organisations and witnesses have withdrawn.

The organisations that have withdrawn their witnesses, support for and cooperation with the tribunal include Rahe Kargar (Komitee Ejraai) and the communist organisation Charikhaye Fadaei Khalgh (one of the offshoots of the original Fedayeen). Others, like the Communist Party of Iran, have dropped their support. The Marxist-Leninist Party of Iran (Maoist) has split over the issue, as has the Iranian Left Socialist Alliance in the US and Canada. The most ferocious criticism has come from the tribunal's Norwegian support committee, which has since dissolved because it felt "duped" by the tribunal organisers.

6. Critical voices have been silenced.

A number of tribunal witnesses have used their statements to condemn the links of the committee to the NED and publicly stated that they are against war and sanctions on Iran. In two highly critical statements the Norwegian support committee describes how all IT witnesses who arrived in London on June 17 were taken to a briefing session, where they were explicitly asked not to raise any politics during their session. They would not be asked the name of their organisation or their political views, as this was "not a political tribunal". One witness wanted to challenge the tribunal and at the end of his 30-minute session made an anti-imperialist statement. Outrageously, his whole statement was excluded from the tribunal's report.

7. Conclusion: The tribunal has become part of the campaign to legitimise war and sanctions to enforce pro-western 'regime change from above'.

The tribunal is part of a campaign that includes sanctions and the threat of war: they are designed to destabilise the theocratic regime, so that it can be easily toppled. But such a regime change from above cannot bring democracy, as the most recent examples of Iraq and Afghanistan prove.

Hopi is campaigning for a real tribunal that can investigate the crimes of the Iranian regime – but which at the same time takes an implacable stand against war and sanctions. Democracy in Iran will come from below, from the struggles of its working

people themselves; they need solidarity, not the pro-imperialist bleating of Johnny-come-lately 'democrats' like Cooper, Nice and Copithorne.

ⁱ www.iranhrdc.org/english/news/in-the-news/3085-silencing-the-watchdog.html#.T9RP7NPgyBs

ⁱⁱ http://irwincotler.liberal.ca/files/2010/05/2010_11_17_-_R2P_IRAN_REPORT.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/10/18/canada-has-imposed-sanctions-on-iranian-officials-implicated-in-alleged-assassination-plot>

^{iv} <http://persian2english.com/?p=23744>

^v www.iranrights.org/english/document-74.php

^{vi} www.hrd4iran.se

<The attachment to this e-mail ends here>

“Iran Tribunal” responded to this e-mail on 3 November 2012, as below, which is covering the entire allegations made by Yassamin Mather.

Dear Norman,

Due to his preoccupation with lots of work regarding the aftermath of "Iran Tribunal's" proceedings, Babak Emad has asked me to respond to your correspondence with him via e-mail exchanges dated 17 October 2012 and 29 October 2012. He sends his apologies for not being able to write to you personally.

As you are aware, we have now successfully concluded our campaign to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable for its crimes against humanity. What “Iran Tribunal” achieved, was unique and historical. For the first time in the history of mankind, while the world powers totally neglected and turned their backs to a nation being plundered and at the same time abused beyond any imagination, ordinary and noble people and those who respect humanity and moral values, who neither hold state power nor are influenced by such powers, held the criminal rulers of the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable for their crimes against humanity. “Iran Tribunal” proved in practice that it is possible to unite the masses with diverse political views in the form of an independent Social Power institution, to hold one of the most brutal regimes in the contemporary history of mankind accountable for its crimes against humanity.

Regrettably, for reasons deemed justifiable to yourself, you were compelled to withdraw your support from “Iran Tribunal” and were unable to share this justice seeking triumph of Iranian people and the rest of humanity with us. However, I feel obliged to provide you with further explanations and comments with regards to your inquiry, and Yassamin Mather's allegations and comments about “Iran Tribunal”.

Your main personal concern that you would like *“to further support such an important activity **but only if there were no shadow of doubt that this Tribunal would not be misused for legitimizing sanctions and military intervention against Iran**”* will be explained fully in the whole body of my reply to you, and I request your patience for my comprehensive and lengthy explanations. I will endeavor to demonstrate to you that “Iran Tribunal’s” stance of remaining non-political, in fact shows that there is

a Third Force which neither takes the West's side nor that of Islamic Republic of Iran's. "Iran Tribunal" takes the peoples' side as the only righteous stance in this campaign, and strives to fight against the human rights abuses from the people of Iran's perspective; irrespective of skirmishes between or amongst reactionary state powers; i.e. the USA, Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is the reason why "Iran Tribunal" intends to continue to maintain this correct stance and vision, and will treat it as non negotiable.

I apologise for the lengthy reply in advance, but I feel that we shouldn't leave any stone unturned and be as thorough as possible in order to address this issue properly and resolve it once and for all.

Please note that any quote from Yassamin Mather used by me in here, is italicized and has been inserted in quotation marks.

In your e-mail dated 17 October 2012, Yassamin Mather claims that:

" This is a very important debate and it goes to the heart of the international anti-war movement and its political outlook and independence, so we welcome the chance to participate in this discussion."

I presume that what Yassamin means by "*This*", is to do with "Iran Tribunal" and "Anti-War" movement.

Yes, from her perspective, and the fact that Yassamin Mather has chosen to concentrate on "Anti-War" movement and channel a major and substantial part of her activism and political vision in that direction, "*this*" would be an extremely important debate to her. However, "Iran Tribunal" has been focused on its own campaign since 2007. The main aims and objectives of this campaign, right from the outset back in 2007, were to be focused on the mass executions of Iran's political prisoners during the 1980s. As we gathered the required momentum by investing in an abundance of invaluable time and effort offered by thousands of supporters of this campaign, you would agree with me that it would only make sense not to be diverted or steered away from our invested efforts by any means. In addition to this, it was also decided right from the outset that our ultimate priority and aim should be to fully focus on seeing this campaign through to a successful outcome. This would necessarily involve not allowing any political influence of any nature (Which will be fully explained why later) have any impact on this campaign, and waste any of our time and effort. Incidentally, all this effort has been on voluntary basis by all the organising and participating individuals. Yassamin Mather is free to focus on her campaign, and we wish her every success. But we have tried to be focussed on ours.

In her opening statement, Yassamin Mather doesn't explain, nor does she demonstrate the relationship between the international "Anti-War" movement, and seeking justice for atrocities committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran during the 1980s. Does seeking justice on behalf of 15000 executed political prisoners "*go to the heart of the international anti-war movement and its political outlook*"? In other words, is there an inherent relationship or a connection between the two? If they are related inherently, can

we show one instance or example of any military intervention by any state power against another for the purpose (Or even as a pretext) of upholding human rights against the other? Has any war between two or more reactionary forces ever been motivated, or been used as a pretext to defend or even pretend to defend or protect human rights?

In the same e-mail to you, Yassamin Mather claims that:

*"- We have never claimed that NED directly finances the Iran Tribunal. Had they done that, the tribunal would have never gotten off the ground. **However, we have criticised the close links of the main organiser to the US government and NED:** The tribunal is supported by the Iran Human Rights Documentation group, whose founder, Payam Akhavan, acts as the chair and spokesperson of the tribunal's steering committee."*

I wonder why Yassamin comes up with such contradictory comments. On one breath she claims that, "*We have never claimed that NED directly finances....*", and on another and immediately after, "*the close links of the main organiser to the US government and NED*" is supposedly "exposed" by her (Emphasis is mine).

Why would "Iran Tribunal" want to make use of individuals with "*Close links*" to NED, if their "motive" according to Yassamin wasn't financial? Embarking on such massive project, would necessarily need funding. So, without being funded, siding with an organisation such as NED would seem to be an illogical move and motive in the first place. I am aware that Yassamin is concerned about "*Regime change from above*" and I shall cover that aspect of her claim later. However, can Yassamin Mather who sounds so sure about her allegations, name the person(s) at "Iran Tribunal" with "*Close links*" to NED?

The link which Yassamin has provided you with on this claim:

www.iranhrdc.org/english/news/in-the-news/3085-silencing-the-watchdog.html#.T9RP7NPgyBs) is a webpage of IHRDC which in a nutshell, gives information about the discontinuation of IHRDC's two year grant by Washington. Where does NED come into it and what does IHRDC (Which Yassamin has alleged that is financed by NED) have to do with "Iran Tribunal"? I would like to ask Yassamin to prove her allegations by evidence rather than speculation. If she can prove to me by evidence, that IHRDC has been on NED's list of receiving awards, and that IHRDC as an organisation and entity, sponsors "Iran Tribunal", I shall stand corrected.

I shall cover the role and the reasons why Professor Payam Akhavan, one of the founders of IHRDC, co-operates with "Iran Tribunal" in a personal capacity and totally unrelated to IHRDC later.

Also, using the word "*Criticised*" by Yassamin intrigues me. When she says that "*We have criticised the close links of the main organiser...*" (Emphasis is mine), in my opinion she is backpedalling without realising what a big hole she's digging for herself.

Up to now, "Iran Tribunal" has been accused for receiving funding by the CIA and NED:

<http://www.cpgb.org.uk/home/weekly-worker/921/accepting-funds-from-the-cia>

According to this link which belongs to the “Communist Party of Great Britain”, the headline reads:

“Supporters of the Iran Tribunal have desperately been trying to defend their abandonment of working class principle. Yassamine Mather reports on the contortions”. (Emphasis is mine)

It is absolutely clear what the article is about, and who the reporter is. Next we read:

“The National Endowment for Democracy - which organised and paid for the Iran Tribunal - is a case in point.” (Emphasis is mine)

Why is Yassamin Mather now changing her story by saying:

“- *We have never claimed that NED directly finances the Iran Tribunal*”. (Emphasis is mine)

She clearly has claimed that “Iran Tribunal” is “*Organised and paid*” by NED! I don’t think that CPGB would just make up such a story without any reference to any “credible” source. Besides, it is absolutely clear where the source of their report is. To me, she’s trying to leave a getaway route for herself for when her accusations are proved unfounded.

So, is Yassamin Mather now saying that all this, is subject to her mere “*criticism*”? Is she now lowering the tone of her allegations about “Iran Tribunal’s” links with the CIA and NED (Albeit indirectly), to a mere “*criticism*”? Yassamin Mather needs to gather her thoughts and make up her mind about the smearing campaign she has launched against “Iran Tribunal”. If she’s only “*criticising*” “Iran Tribunal”, then why all the headlines based on her allegations, who are accusing and condemning “Iran Tribunal” (“*Abandonment of working class principle*”, according to CPGB, is a serious and heavy charge amongst the “Leftists movement” after all.)? If she is accusing and condemning “Iran Tribunal”, why doesn’t she have the courage to stand by her allegations and use the word “Condemn” instead of using “*Criticise*” in her remarks? As far as noble and honourable individuals are concerned, being mixed up with CIA and NED by any individual or institution, either directly or indirectly, doesn’t warrant a mere “*Criticism*”; it deserves condemnation. Or is she now taking a softer position and approach with regards to CIA and NED which in her view, involvement with the CIA and NED doesn’t deserve condemnation any more, but a mere “*criticism*” would suffice about them?

Yassamin Mather has inevitably failed to substantiate her allegations because she didn't really know what she was doing or letting herself into, when she began her smearing campaign against "Iran Tribunal". She doesn't know what she wants to say. She keeps passing her stories from pillar to post.

We have published the full history of the start of "Iran Tribunal" campaign. Briefly and for your information, "Iran Tribunal" had its seed sown in Sweden in 2007. Following a

social gathering of the survivors and the families of the victims of mass executions of the 1980s, it was ascertained by the participants of it (i.e. the survivors and the families of the victims), that under the current international situation, the international judiciary system would do nothing about the gross human rights violations and the crimes against humanity in Iran. While the very same governments and organisations that Yassamin claims "*are linked with Iran Tribunal*" have been and are still appeasing the Islamic Republic on every angle, the survivors and the bereaved families of the victims of 1980's massacre decided that they must take action themselves and seek justice. Babak Emad and a few more advocates of this concept started the ball rolling. Babak and a few sympathisers and supporters out of the above mentioned social gathering, began to investigate the possibilities and carried out a feasibility study on the project for 18 months. He and his team organised this campaign with the support of the families of the victims and the survivors. These survivors and victims' families are the pillars of this campaign.

Yassamin claims that "*NED organised and paid*" for this campaign:

"- Babak Emad might personally be against war on Iran. However, his closest allies in Iran Tribunal are advocates of sanctions and have actually refused to publicly oppose war and sanctions". (Emphasis is mine)

"...However, we have criticised the close links of the main organiser to the US government and NED:..." (Emphasis is mine)

Let's see how much Yassamin knows about NED!

NED has been the haven for all the so called "Anti War" and appeasing elements of the Islamic Republic of Iran who are also striving to re-establish Iran/USA relations. If Yassamin claims that "Iran Tribunal" is financed by NED and subsequently it advocates war and sanctions, therefore, the "logical" conclusion should be that NED and all its affiliated associates should also be after the concept of war and sanctions against Iran.

Let us examine this by taking a closer look at who is actually involved with NED and what their agenda is.

As far as my research on NED's awards to Iranian organisations and/ or individuals is concerned, I can name them along with their political and social aspirations as follows:

- 1- Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in Iran (ABF) \$140,000

This foundation mainly focuses on the violation of human rights in Iran. ABF in the mainstream does not involve itself in the subject of sanctions or war. Although reading between the lines one could see their "hope" and aspiration, at least at this point in time, for some kind of reform within the Islamic Republic of Iran via its reformist leaders.

<http://www.iranrights.org/english/document-329.php>

<http://www.iranrights.org/english/document-674.php>

2- Association for Civic Society in Iran (ACSI) \$80,000

On the “About” webpage of “Iran Human Rights Voice” (IHRV) we read that: “IHRV was lunched by Associate for civic Society in Iran (ACSI)”.

http://www.ihrv.org/inf/?page_id=2

On the “Recent Posts” column of their website we read about how ACSI promotes the role of “Musavi” and “Karoubi” (Two “Reformist Leaders” of the Islamic Republic of Iran) by sending an open letter to Ban Ki Moon to meet with these two individuals (Supposedly under house arrest) on his visit to Tehran during the “NAM” conference. This group clearly strives to maintain the rule of the Islamic Republic and promotes peaceful political, economic and cultural relations with the West.

Incidentally, the list of signatories to this letter is also interesting to peruse.

<http://www.ihrv.org/inf/?p=5150>

3- Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) \$141,793

Research Initiative for Contemporary Iran (RICI) is an affiliated organisation to CIPE (please see below).

4- Research Initiative for Contemporary Iran (RICI) \$87,000

RICI is chaired by “Mohsen Sazegara”, one of the founding members of the Islamic Republic’s “Revolutionary Guard Corps” who has now “found himself” amongst the Iranian opposition forces. Sazegara needs no introduction to anyone who follows Iran’s politics. He’s a prominent advocator of the “reform” movement and has spoken out against war on Iran on many occasions.

http://www.bushcenter.com/lp/newsletter/2011/02/egypt-nd.php/?utm_source=2011-02-22-NewsletterND&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=House

Please see <http://www.ned.org/node/637> about all the above mentioned organisations.

Let’s now examine what sorts of Iranian individuals have been amongst the “Fellow members” of NED.

In order to be more objective, I shall name a few of such “*Allies*” within NED, to see if these “*Allies*” are after war, or on the contrary, they are the very same people whose ultimate strive is geared up toward maintaining the rule of the Islamic Republic of Iran; albeit the “Devine” version of it. Furthermore, the very same people in NED which we shall see, also campaign “Against War”, and their main agenda is re-establishing Iran/USA relations through diplomacy.

a- **Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh**

Visiting fellow member of NED, between 03/01/2011 to 29/07/2011

<http://socialhost05.inmagic.com/Presto/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=MTZkMDUwZTUtZTUxYy00NGQyLThlNGUtZTE1ZjRkZTgwOGZi&rID=MTg3&sID=NA==&bckToL=VHJ1ZQ==&qcf=&ph=VHJ1ZQ==>

In the 1990s she was engaged with the reform movement associated with MOHAMMAD KHATAMI's government; the very reformist leader who is the icon of the Iranian lobbyist groups in order to preserve the repressive rule of the Islamic Republic. I'm sure you need no introduction to Mohammad Khatami and his period of presidency, when hundreds of student activists were arrested, tortured and executed and their movement was brutally crushed under his rule. Also the infamous "Chain Murders" which was orchestrated to physically eliminate any dissenting voice against the totalitarian regime, which included the murder of many scholars in Iran and abroad, took place during Khatami's time in the office as president. Khatami and the reformists of Iran such as Musavi and Karoubi are the ultimate solution for the Islamic Republic's lobbyists (And their Anti War movement, by the same token), and the only hope for re-establishing relations between Iran and USA by means of "Nations' Dialogue"; a doctrine of Mohammad Khatami's!

Read more: [Abbasgholizadeh, Mahboubeh \(1958–\) - PERSONAL HISTORY, INFLUENCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS, BIOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS, PERSONAL CHRONOLOGY:, THE WORLD'S PERSPECTIVE, LEGACY - Women's, Women, Iranian, and Activities - JRank Articles](#)

<http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/5443/Abbasgholizadeh-Mahboubeh-1958.html#ixzz29eRIbmBf>

b- **Ali Afshari**

Visiting fellow member of NED, between 01/10/2006 to 28/02/2007

<http://socialhost05.inmagic.com/Presto/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=MTZkMDUwZTUtZTUxYy00NGQyLThlNGUtZTE1ZjRkZTgwOGZi&rID=MTAx&sID=Mg==&bckToL=VHJ1ZQ==&qcf=&ph=VHJ1ZQ==>

Ali Afshari was a member of Central Council of the Islamic Student Association at Amirkabir University of Technology in Iran and a member of the central council of "Office for Strengthening Unity" (Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat). Between 1996 and 1997, Afshari was Khatami's student political campaign co-ordinator (Yet another advocate of the Iranian "Reformists" acting to preserve the rule of the Islamic Republic). In May 2001, he appeared on Iran's state television- and apologised to Khamenei ("The Supreme Leader") for engaging in activities against the Islamic Republic. Ali Afshari is involved in many "Human Rights" activities. However, his main advocacy and allegiance is geared

up in favour of an "Islamic Rule" with "Divine" properties and that is what shapes his "Opposition" to the present ruling faction. His ideal is the rule of the so called "Reformists" and he doesn't hide this fact either.

c- Manouchehr Mohammadi

Visiting fellow member of NED, between 2006 to 2007. Unfortunately, for some reason, NED hasn't published the exact date span of his membership.

<http://socialhost05.inmagic.com/Presto/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=MTZkMDUwZTUtZTUxYy00NGQyLThlNGUtZTE1ZjRkZTgwOGZi&rID=MTE0&sID=MTU=&bckToL=VHJ1ZQ==&qcf=&ph=VHJ1ZQ==>

Mohammadi was a well-known face within the students' movement of 1999 in Iran. Although he has been keeping a low profile on his activities since he fled Iran, but his general political stance is advocacy for "Change through peaceful means and non-violent civil disobediences". He definitely doesn't advocate war and during the infamous 2009 presidential elections and the consequential mass uprising in Iran, he has been known to have expressed allegiance in favour of Musavi, the "defeated" presidential candidate.

d- Siamak Namazi

Visiting fellow member of NED, between 01/11/2005 to 28/02/2006

<http://socialhost05.inmagic.com/Presto/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=MTZkMDUwZTUtZTUxYy00NGQyLThlNGUtZTE1ZjRkZTgwOGZi&rID=OTc=&sID=MTM=&bckToL=VHJ1ZQ==&qcf=&ph=VHJ1ZQ==>

Siamak Namazi is the chairman of "Atieh Bahar"; a powerful Tehran based commercial enterprise which provides advice to the foreign investors. Namazi is a very close ally of "Trita Parsi", who is the chairperson of "NIAC" (National Iranian American Council) which is a well-known lobby for the establishment of relationships between Iran and USA. Between 1994 and 1996, Namazi worked as a duty officer within the "Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning" in Tehran. Clearly, the vested interests of Namazi are based on improving Iran/ USA relationships and not a military conflict between the two states.

e- Mehrangiz Kar

Visiting fellow member of NED, between 16/10/2001 to 15/03/2002

<http://socialhost05.inmagic.com/Presto/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=MTZkMDUwZTUtZTUxYy00NGQyLThlNGUtZTE1ZjRkZTgwOGZi&rID=MTM=&sID=NA==&bckToL=VHJ1ZQ==&qcf=&ph=VHJ1ZQ==>

I make reference to Mehrangiz Kar, by referring you to her 2010 publication of "Reformist Islam versus Radical Islam in Iran", which would give an insight to anyone about Mrs Kar's position with regards to maintaining the rule of the Islamic Republic via

its reformists, and improving the Iran/ USA relationships. She is a prominent advocator of "Reformist leaders" of Iran.

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2010/11/reformist%20islam%20kar/11_reformist_islam_kar

The above list of "NED Associates" and Iranian organisations extracted directly from NED's website, clearly demonstrates the “pedigree” of the organisations or persons that NED harbours within itself; i.e. personalities and entities with qualities (From NED’s Point of view) capable of influencing the public toward improving the relationships between Iran and the USA, and the ability (Form NED’s Point of view) to promote the preservation of the Islamic Republic rule (In its worst case scenario, by empowering the “Reformists” from within the same Regime and not through any military conflict).

I have demonstrated that those who are nurtured by NED, are amongst the most prominent advocators of re-establishing Iran/USA relations and US appeasement policies with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and ironically, they all happen to be strongly "Anti-War". I have demonstrated that NED's ultimate aspirations are geared up to promote the lifting of sanctions, avoid a military conflict, and re-establish US/ IRI relations in favour of huge financial institutions and cartels which have a vested interest in plundering Iran's resources under a despotic/ theocratic regime of their choice. In the wake of recent developments in Iran which was triggered by the 2009 “Elections” which the people took to the streets to overthrow the Islamic Republic, the role of "Musavi" and "Karoubi" (“Reformists’ Leaders”) was instrumental to derail the people in their quest. Hence, the next best thing as far as NED is concerned, would be to empower the "Reformists" of the regime via their advocates abroad. We can clearly see this by the list of the names and organisations that are supported by NED. Contrary to what Yassamin Mather portrays of NED, this organisation promotes peace and dialogue between USA and IRI via their sponsored organisations and individuals, and not war or sanctions.

This clearly demonstrates that Yassamin hasn’t the faintest of ideas about NED and what they aim to achieve as far as Iran’s politics are concerned. Yassamin didn't even take the trouble to do a little research on NED before she started to pontificate about it. While Yassamin knows nothing about NED, nonetheless, due to NED’s infamous and manipulative nature and reputation, she sees it fit to be utilised as a marring tool to pin onto whoever she disapproves; so that she could spread her nonsensical slander and smear campaign against them.

Yassamin has tried to pin NED onto “Iran Tribunal” without substantiating her allegations. Her allegations of NED being behind “Iran Tribunal” simply don’t hold water.

The “Anti War” campaign for Yassamin is the be all and end all of her political “activism”. I wish her good luck in her endeavour; but Yassamin should realise that other activists have every right to pursue their long awaited endeavours and agendas and have their priorities set in the way which they deem as necessary, and she can’t just go around and spread fallacies about them, just because they don’t share the same views as hers and have other priorities which don’t meet with hers.

The war scaremongering campaign and some parts of the “Anti War” movement is unfortunately, an apparatus in the hands of the Iranian Government's lobbyist groups such as “National Iranian American Council” (NIAC) and “Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran” (CASMI), plus many other so called western “Leftists” who urge themselves to believe that the Islamic Republic of Iran, despite its utmost reactionary and evil nature belongs to the “Anti-Imperialist Camp”. They have simply fallen for IRI's hollow Anti-West/ American rhetoric without opening their eyes to the realities surrounding the IRI due to its evil nature. These lobbyist groups have no ultimate goal other than to improve Iran/ USA relations and they don't hesitate to fuel the flames of war scaremongering by posing as “Anti War” activists.

The regrettable reality about some of today's western and Iranian “leftists” is that their vision of the world affairs is so twisted that the concept of a military conflict between these two reactionary states has compelled them to take sides with one of them instead of emerging as a Third Force to stand against both reactionary sides and pursue their aims and struggles from the peoples' perspective. The recent case of Noam Chomsky and his direct support for the IRI is a sad and typical example of such theoretical disasters within the international socialist and left wing movement. Only a few weeks ago, on October 1, 2012, Noam Chomsky held a speech by invitation at NIAC's fundraising “Dinner Gala”, and spoke on “Peaceful and diplomatic solutions” between Iran and USA as the only way forward. (<http://www.haymarketbooks.org/event/3584>).

Going back to the organisers of “Iran Tribunal”; we have so far ascertained that this was a small group of survivors and family members of the victims of the massacre of 1980s. It is imperative to establish and fully appreciate this fact before we go any further, as the ultimate motives behind this whole campaign would then be properly realised and appreciated.

Initially, the organisers were faced with a huge task in order to hold a credible, albeit “informal” Tribunal. We needed experts' and specialists' advice from amongst the eminent law experts in the specific field of human rights issues. We contacted many legal and judiciary experts such as you, in order to seek professional advice and direct contribution to hold a credible tribunal.

The main problems we were facing were: The Islamic Regime is still in power. The 2002 Rome Statute does not concern itself with crimes committed prior to its ratification and the IRI has not ratified this statute. The UN Security Council is totally uninterested, and the only way to get them even remotely interested, would be by persuading a state power to raise a formal charge against the Islamic Republic's crimes in Iran through the UNSC. That was just not going to happen. We're not naive. The “Democratic World”, including the USA has been and still is too busy to appease one of the most barbaric regimes in the recent history of mankind.

The concept of “Russell Tribunal”, as an alternative, came as an inspiration to the initiators of this campaign as a way out. Only from the point of view that; if Bertrand Russell and his colleagues could hold such “Symbolic” and independent Tribunal against the US war crimes in Vietnam, why couldn't we resort to a “Symbolic” tribunal? “Russell Tribunal” was never a cliché nor was it a schema for “Iran Tribunal”. It was simply an

inspiration on how in the wake of the current international situation, we could achieve our objectives by revealing these crimes and bring them onto the international scene, while at the same time, have the support of the international community by presenting our case via resorting to a team of noble and credible judiciary individuals.

Maintaining our independence, autonomy and unbiased status was, and is absolutely paramount in order to succeed with our campaign. The financial issues are important and without funding we would have no chance of success. We needed dedicated people for this cause. We needed professionals who understand all these predicaments and obstacles, and would willingly, and for the good of humanity, stretch out a helping hand to us.

Having been faced with all these obstacles, we rolled our sleeves up and took the daring decision of launching this campaign. We started to write to hundreds of selected noble legal experts including you, with distinguished human rights track record.

We explained to each and every one of them that “Iran Tribunal” is totally unbiased toward any political stance, and that any law expert willing to accept our invitation would do so on pro-bono basis, in his/ her personal capacity, and merely on the merits of their expertise in the field of international laws on human rights issues.

Professor Payam Akhavan was also on our selected list of law experts. He, amongst other eminent international law experts on human rights issues, accepted our invitation based on our predefined terms. That’s why Professor Payam Akhavan has been with this Tribunal and we are extremely grateful for all his sterling and tireless contribution toward the success of this campaign.

In her e-mail to you dated 17/10/2012 Yassamin claims:

“The tribunal is supported by the Iran Human Rights Documentation group, whose founder, Payam Akhavan, acts as the chair and spokesperson of the tribunal’s steering committee.”

(Emphasis is mine)

In her last e-mail to you she claims:

“Payam Akhavan (chair and spokesperson of the tribunal’s steering committee) has links to organisations that have accepted large amounts of money from the US government.”

(Emphasis is mine)

Yassamin just cannot get her facts right before she puts pen to paper.

On two consecutive occasions (e-mails to you), Yassamin has presented her “facts” incorrectly which to me it demonstrates that she’s not driven by facts and reality; but only by her hysteria and obstinate mindset.

For the record, Payam Akhavan never was the chairperson of “Iran Tribunal” Steering Committee; nor was he ever a spokesperson of it. Furthermore, Payam Akhavan is one of the co-founders of “Iran Human Rights Documentation Center”, and not “Group”. (I’m

not being pedantic here. I'm just trying to show how inaccurately and sloppy Yassamin presents her "facts" on this "*very important debate which goes to the heart of the international anti-war movement*". (Emphasis is mine)

Following Babak's request back in Stockholm in September 2008, Professor Payam Akhavan generously accepted and volunteered to help "Iran Tribunal" on a pro-bono basis to stand and act as the "Leading Prosecutor" of "Iran Tribunal", due to his previous experience in this field of work. He also agreed to help us with giving his expert advice on International and human rights laws as and when available. All Payam Akhavan's expenses including flight costs (With the exception of his last trip to The Hague, which he insisted on paying for himself as a personal financial contribution to "Iran Tribunal") and hotel fees have been paid by "Iran Tribunal", and we can prove it if requested. Professor Payam Akhavan, like the rest of the noble law experts at "Iran Tribunal", has dedicated some of his own personal time to this campaign and does not get paid a penny for his time; either by "Iran Tribunal", or any other institution. IHRDC does not sponsor "Iran Tribunal" by any means and does not play any role with "Iran Tribunal" (*The tribunal is supported by the Iran Human Rights Documentation group...*). (Emphasis is mine).

Yassamin Mather not only hasn't discovered anything new, but she can't even get her facts right, or be bothered to find out what Payam Akhavan's actual role was in this campaign.

Yes, "Iran Human Rights Documentation Center" was receiving funding from the US government until 2009 before it ceased. Payam Akhavan as one of the board members of IHRDC is not a hard core socialist, but a professor and expert of law in human rights issues and we all know that.

Payam Akhavan was never on IHRDC's payroll and his involvement with them was purely on voluntary basis. IHRDC's US Tax filings show this fact.

On Payam Akhavan's pure humanitarian and non-political aspirations for his involvement with "Iran Tribunal", I refer you to this webpage whereby he stands by the people of Iran and does not take any sides with either the US or IRI, nor would he allow the US presidential elections have any influence on his justice seeking involvement with "Iran Tribunal":

(<http://bostonglobe.com/opinion/2012/10/25/iran-crimes-real-and-hypothetical/3I2K8aqgONxmZ6KRvfwESI/story.html>)

Naturally, Professor Payam Akhavan may have his own political views in the same way as any of us do. If he advocates "Targeted sanctions" (These are sanctions against regime's criminal individuals who are known to have been engaged in human rights abuses) against the Islamic Republic, that's his prerogative. However, as far as "Iran Tribunal" and this campaign are concerned, no one's political or ideological views play any roll whatsoever. This is absolute. The topic of our agenda is to seek justice against the atrocities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and "Iran Tribunal" benefitted from Payam Akhavan's expertise, as much as that of other noble law experts' knowledge and skills in the field of human rights issues to advance its objectives.

Yassamin's argument (Criticism or condemnation; I shall let her choose!) on our choice of law experts is as absurd as someone criticising her (Or should she be condemned?) for travelling from Glasgow to London, on a reliable coach made by one of the world's largest motor manufacturing cartels in order to attend an "Anti-War" rally. But I shall let common sense prevail.

As far as "Abdollahian Boroumand Foundation" is concerned (This organisation is known to have been financed by NED), suffice to say that "Iran Tribunal" has had no official contact with them and this foundation plays no role within "Iran Tribunal" whatsoever. If Payam Akhavan has had any dealings with ABF through IHRDC, it would have had no relation with "Iran Tribunal" in any shape or form.

No one within "Iran Tribunal" is or will be permitted to pursue any politically motivated agenda or promote any organisation's viewpoints or interests for that matter. This is the first and foremost prerequisite for any individual who has joined or wishes to cooperate with this campaign. Only Yassamin Mather knows too well, that had this campaign tried to be biased toward any ideological or political viewpoint, it would have had no chance of collectively gathering the survivors and families of the 1980s victims with such diverse political views and mindset under one roof. We have learnt our lesson from such experiences in the past.

Since "Iran Tribunal" is addressing a human tragedy (Common cause) and those humans are from a wide spectrum of Islamic Republic's political opponents with different political views, for it to be successful, it must maintain its neutrality towards any politics or ideology, and must concentrate its efforts on human rights issues. The aim and the methods adopted to meet this objective must be focused on seeking justice and not promoting any political viewpoint.

The acid test was the hearings in London and the tribunal in The Hague. Over two phases, nearly 100 witnesses from different Iranian political organisations and groups with a wide scope of diversity in political beliefs, who would normally fall out with one another over political issues and splinter left, right, and centre, gathered under one roof and demonstrated in practice, that they have a common cause and they can be united around the common axis of human rights. Our adopted methodology to remain unbiased towards political issues proved to work and brought together many different Iranian political activists together to fight a common cause against a common criminal Regime. That is commendable and admirable. Yassamin Mather is only demonstrating her pure lack of understanding of the concept of Social Power and how to mobilise people with different views to achieve a successful outcome for a common cause.

*"Payam Akhavan is a vocal and strong supporter of sanctions against Iran, which in our view is a form of war. **They are supposed to weaken the regime for 'regime change from above'**. So, clearly, if he and Babak Emad might not want to get "involved in today's political quarrels or nuclear standoff between*

Iran and the west” – but they certainly are doing it!” (Emphasis is mine)

On many occasions and from his own personal point of view, Payam Akhavan has actually spoken out against the war and contrary to what Yassamin claims, Payam Akhavan is of the opinion that any war against Iran would hinder and impede Iranian people's strive for democracy:

(<http://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2012/03/30/war-iran-necessity-illusion/>)

(<http://www.straight.com/article-575421/vancouver/law-prof-says-iran-holds-key-middle-east>)

In fact, many social and political circles consider Payam Akhavan as an anti-war campaigner because of his personal views on war. Because of his well known expertise amongst the politicians and scholars, Payam Akhavan has been making his views heard against the war before the decision makers at the European Parliament, US senate and Canadian policy makers' forums and podiums, rather than during mass rallies. He obviously has such platforms and makes use of them. That's his personal accolade amongst different political circles.

On the question of sanctions, which Yassamin opines them as a “Form of war” to pin the pro war advocacy on Payam Akhavan, again she didn't do her homework properly.

As far as Payam Akhavan's stance on sanctions is concerned, he believes that these should be “Targeted sanctions” which target the Islamic Republic's officials whom have been known for their part in human rights abuses and hold astronomical and windfall wealth through plundering Iran's resources in foreign banks:

"If the point is to put pressure on the regime rather than to take measures to affect ordinary Iranians, Canada should adopt targeted sanctions against Iranian officials responsible for human-rights abuses—just like the United States, just like the European Union—which have imposed travel bans and asset freezes on a hundred Iranian officials implicated in human-rights abuses".

(<http://www.straight.com/article-773946/vancouver/law-professor-payam-akhavan-questions-harper-governments-decision-close-tehran-embassy>)

However, Yassamin Mather has no other option but to set the scene, and then send in her own cast:

“So, clearly, if he and Babak Emad might not want to get “involved in today's political quarrels or nuclear standoff between Iran and the west” – but they certainly are doing it!”

When did Payam Akhavan or Babak Emad use “Iran Tribunal” as a platform to promote sanctions? Yassamin Mather may reply that they're doing it clandestinely. I have proved that NED cannot possibly be behind “Iran Tribunal”. So in whose favour would they be pushing a “Political” agenda (“*but they certainly are doing it*”)? Yassamin has pinned CIA to “Iran Tribunal” as well, but we're still waiting to see her proof. She probably

means “Iran Tribunal” has links to Pentagon! Can she substantiate any of her allegations or insinuations by concrete proof? We shall wait and see.

Why does Yassamin think that people are always guilty until they prove their innocence? Why Yassamin can't have any faith in people and Social Power and thus sees everything through State powers? Isn't that because she doesn't really believe in Social Power and grassroots movements? I shall elaborate on this later.

Yassamin Mather certainly places herself and HOPI beside Islamic Republic Regime when she claims that:

“...this tribunal effectively strengthens the hand of all those reactionary forces contemplating a military attack on Iran.”
[\(http://www.shoah.org.uk/2012/10/04/iran-tribunal-to-be-held-in-west-exposed-by-iranian-dissident-as-a-zionist-pro-imperial-front/\)](http://www.shoah.org.uk/2012/10/04/iran-tribunal-to-be-held-in-west-exposed-by-iranian-dissident-as-a-zionist-pro-imperial-front/)

(Incidentally, “shoah.org.uk”, where the above statement has been published, is an interesting website to visit in order to familiarise ourselves with supporters of Yassamin's views and those who happily publish her smearing campaign against “Iran Tribunal”.

Until 22 June 2012, Yassamin Mather didn't have anything to do with “Iran Tribunal”. She didn't launch any debate amongst Iranian political activists, or those who were active within “Iran Tribunal” that:

“Iran Tribunal are advocates of sanctions and have actually refused to publicly oppose war and sanctions”

However, as soon as “Iran Tribunal” began its first stage in London, Yassamin Mather suddenly realised that:

“They are supposed to weaken the regime for ‘regime change from above’.”

Or, as Mark Fischer, Yassamin's colleague at HOPI has claimed in the same article published by “Shoah”:

“Financially and politically the tribunal is an integral part of the campaign for ‘regime change from above, says Fischer.”

That is amazing! Three years of silence, and suddenly the wakeup call, as "Iran Tribunal" finally reached its destination in London on 22 June 2012. What was the reason behind her 3 yearlong silence? If she really had “Iran Tribunal's” success at heart to hold the IRI accountable for its crimes against humanity, why didn't she try to “warn” the Iranian activists about its adopted course of action by debate, discourse, writing articles, etc. and basically by making a concerted effort to convince and “correct” (In her view) “Iran

Tribunal” that it should take an “Anti-War” and “Anti Sanctions” stance to have the “desired credibility” (In her view), otherwise it would “**weaken the regime for regime change from above**.”?

According to my knowledge, in a brief exchange of e-mails between Yassamin Mather and Babak Emad about three years ago, whereby Babak had sought her help to introduce him to some of the left wing legal experts whom she might have known, Yassamin had replied to Babak that the law experts she knew, wouldn’t support “Iran Tribunal” unless “Iran Tribunal” declared that it was against war and sanctions. As it transpired later, one of the lawyers whom had been at the time the subject of conversation between Yassamin and Babak, was later approached directly by Babak Emad, and he categorically denied either being approached by Yassamin, or even being acquainted with her at all. This was Yassamin’s entire effort to talk “Iran Tribunal” into declaring an “Anti-War” and “Anti sanctions” position up until 22 June 2012.

She knew right from the start who was involved with “Iran Tribunal” via its website. Everyone knew that Professor Payam Akhavan was involved with “Iran Tribunal” since its launch. Why didn’t Yassamin Mather warn the Iranian activists within “Iran Tribunal” who what she thinks Payam Akhavan was? Why didn’t Yassamin Mather start to “expose” “Iran Tribunal’s” links with NED and CIA during the course of last three years or even since 12 months ago? Nevertheless, as soon as “Iran Tribunal” became reality in London, she along with her co-thinkers started their hostility and smearing campaign against it and accused it of being financed by NED and CIA.

Yassamin Mather knows full well that since the establishment of the Islamic Republic back in 1979, Iran's social, economic and political situation has nosedived at catastrophic rates and has deteriorated to unprecedented levels. The economic situation of the working class is at such catastrophic levels, that substantial numbers of Iran’s workers have to continue with their shaky and unsustainable jobs without being paid for up to 12 months. Even longer periods of unpaid work within certain sectors of Iran’s manufacturing industries have been reported. Thousands of workers have joined the ranks of the unemployed and many are struggling to provide the basic human needs for their families and find it impossible to make the ends meet. Factory after factory and workshop after workshop is closing down and there is general mayhem in Iran's economy which is directly affecting the livelihood of the workers and toilers of Iran and adding to their misery on a daily basis. Iran’s markets are saturated with imported Chinese substandard goods, and the local manufacturers and industries are being driven into bankruptcy on a daily basis as a result of the cheap Chinese imports. Many workers have been detained following their protests and are enduring long prison sentences and torture. Some have been executed. The economy is a runaway train and inflation is soaring new heights and some believe that it is now in three figures. The great majority of Iranian population is faced with unprecedented harsh and unmanageable economic and living conditions, and as far as social unrest is concerned, Iran right now, is a massive time bomb waiting to go off at any time.

The people's resentment toward the regime is at its peak, and the regime in its entirety, has lost its legitimacy with its own people. Any opposition to the regime is brutally

crushed and suppressed. The only means of support for the regime is through its infamous "Security and Intelligence" network and the "Basij", along with its "Revolutionary Guards". State corruption is at its absolute height and Regime's factions are ripping each other apart in their own internal feuds. Peoples' resentment and hate towards the "Supreme Leader" and the clerical rule is at its peak. The only way the regime can survive this situation in order to prevent any serious and life threatening movement by the people is through implementing unimaginable repressive policies and by resorting to violence and barbaric crack down on any unrest on the one hand, and sheer charlatanism through its so called "reformist" elements on the other.

On the international scene, the regime has totally lost its credibility as a legitimate ruling power. All the conditions are prevalent for the people of Iran to rid themselves of this incompetent, barbaric and totalitarian regime in its entirety. If Yassamin Mather had learnt a single lesson from Marxism, she would have focused her attention on organising the most discontented sections of the Iranian society, which form the absolute majority of the population, i.e. the workers and the toilers. An accomplished and true Marxist would focus on this dismal situation in Iran and would lean on the Social Power of the people and try to organise a revolutionary leadership in order to overthrow the main and root cause of Iran's catastrophic situation today, i.e. the Islamic Republic of Iran in its entirety!

Regime is weak internally. It has no support amongst its own people. Both subjective and objective conditions are rife within Iran's society for Iran's left to act and provide its leadership in order to organise and mobilise the people under the banner of freedom and democracy. And yet, all Yassamin Mather can think of at this decisive moment is:

"...this tribunal effectively strengthens the hand of all those reactionary forces contemplating a military attack on Iran."

"They are supposed to weaken the regime for 'regime change from above'

The truth of the matter is that people and the Social Power of the people don't even come close to Yassamin Mather's thoughts and imagination. She only sees everything through State Powers' position and that which side in this war would be strengthened or weakened.

In her last e-mail to you, the attachment by her reads:

"Organisers of the tribunal subsequently stated that the tribunal is "non-political." Yassamine Mather has responded that, "without clear opposition to war and sanctions, the tribunal effectively strengthens the hand of all those reactionary forces contemplating a military attack on Iran. The danger of war grows every day. I am a strong opponent of the regime in Tehran - but a war would be disastrous for the forces in Iran who have a real interest in democracy: the workers, women's groups and social movements in that country." (Emphasis is mine)

Yassamin simply cannot see through her tunnel vision, that there is a Third Force; i.e. the people of Iran. They are the ultimate power who could stop any potential war by overthrowing the regime and establishing their own secular and democratic system. "*Being a strong opponent of the regime in Tehran*" doesn't mean that one should see the welfare and democratic aspirations of the people through maintaining the balance of power between two reactionary and warring states. What is the role of Iranian people then? To wait for Yassamin Mather (This "*strong opponent of the regime in Tehran*") to "expose" "Iran Tribunal" so that it doesn't "*effectively strengthen the hand of those reactionary forces...*"?

Yassamin only sees the US and the rulers of IRI. She only worries about weakening or strengthening one or the other. People don't come into Yassamin's equation and have no place in her "Anti-War" politics. And when people do something collectively and form a Social Power institution such as "Iran Tribunal", she smears it with lies and accusations.

How seriously is Yassamin an opponent of the regime in Tehran? Is Yassamin Mather trying to organise a grassroots movement for "Regime Change" from below? She has focused the main part of her activism on "Anti-War" campaign. Isn't the balance of power between the USA and IRI the main issue with Yassamin? Doesn't she just want to play "Anti-War" games within the "Anti-Imperialist Camp" of some of the mind twisted so called "Marxists"? Where do the people of Iran come into Yassamin's active politics? State powers and their skirmishes and keeping the balance of power shape Yassamin's vision of "Marxism", not "*the workers, women's groups and social movements in that country*" as she claims.

Let's assume that Yassamin Mather had a successful campaign and not only she prevented the war but the sanctions were also lifted. Wouldn't the best achieved outcome and scenario be similar to the time when Khatami or Rafsanjani had the upper hand within the IRI factions? What is she actually doing with respect to "*the forces in Iran who have a real interest in democracy*"? Do these forces even know that Yassamin Mather exists? The US and IRI states definitely know her and HOPI very well! But what about the people of Iran? How much influence does Yassamin Mather and HOPI have on them? What has she done to promote her views on people of Iran? On which section of Iran's "*workers, women's groups and social movements*" has she managed to succeed to mark her influence and leadership?

As far as I can see, HOPI even doesn't have a webpage [in Farsi](#), so that she could directly or properly address "*the forces in Iran who have a real interest in democracy*". Does she expect us to take her seriously when she claims "*I am a strong opponent of the regime in Tehran*"?

Has she made an evaluation of her influence amongst the "*the forces in Iran who have a real interest in democracy*"? Can she project an estimate of the degree of her popularity or even knowledge of her existence in amongst "*the forces in Iran who have a real interest in democracy: the workers, women's groups and social movements in that country*"?

Yes, Yassamin Mather's twisted stance in international politics should worry her about "*regime change from above*". She has to chip in the "*from above*" bit in, to justify her

pacifism with regards to a revolution by the people of Iran. We know that all the right conditions for a revolutionary regime change are ready. However, Yassamin's distorted vision of international politics which sees the Islamic Republic within the "Anti-Imperialist Camp" prevents her to focus on Iran's people and the country's disastrous and catastrophic circumstances. Instead of trying to focus on organising, emboldening and mobilising the Iranian people for an "Internal War" between the people of Iran led by its working class against the despotic, totalitarian, murderous and warmongering regime of Islamic Republic which is the root cause of majority of Iran's population's misery, she's only worried about who gets the upper hand and hence, "Iran Tribunal" "*effectively strengthens the hand of all those reactionary forces contemplating a military attack on Iran.*"

Well, congratulations to Yassamin Mather! She would qualify to apply for NED's Fellow Membership, as she fulfils all the reformists' qualities which NED requires in order to maintain the Islamic Republic in power (Albeit, a more dampened down version of it)! All the other Fellow Members of NED mentioned earlier, think, say and do the same as what Yassamin Mather deems as the main priorities and objectives in her current political agenda. Yet, she has the audacity to accuse "Iran Tribunal" to have connections with NED!

When I read what Yassamin Mather has written to you, I despair:

"- We have no problem with Iranians "from all walks of life" being involved in the tribunal (or any other campaign). We would not ban people from participating." (Emphasis is mine)

"Ban"? I think Yassamin means "Discourage"; however, what follows is more alarming:

"However, we are trying to explain why the tribunal organisers have taken the political road they have. And the central involvement of individuals close to the Mujahedin (MEK) is an indication as to the political outlook of the tribunal and why it won't speak up against war and sanctions." (Emphasis is mine)

When I claim that Yassamin just sets her own scene and then places her own cast on it, I well and truly mean it.

Firstly, she claims that "**We have no problem with Iranians "from all walks of life" being involved in the tribunal (or any other campaign)**", and immediately after she contradicts herself by as she puts it "*the central involvement of individuals close to the Mujahedin (MEK)*". As if "Mujahedin" have landed from another planet, or they don't belong to the Iranian society!

I am fully confident that Yassamin knows full well what "Iranians from all walks of life" means. Apparently, at first "*she has no problem with...*", but then she admits that she does have a problem, by excluding MEK from "*Iranians from all walks of life*"!

I'm sorry. Yassamin just doesn't know what she's talking about. She's just full of contradictions. However, there is purpose behind her contradictions which will be demonstrated later.

Going back to her above statement; What “*Political road*” has been taken by “Iran Tribunal”? (The scene has been set).

What “*Individuals close to the Mujahedin (MEK)*” are centrally involved in “Iran Tribunal”? (The cast has been placed on the scene).

The tunnel vision of Yassamin’s “Anti-War” campaign is working hard against her. Due to Yassamin’s stance to avoid (Or should it be to prevent?) the weakening of the Islamic Republic’ position in her "Anti-War" campaign, and since the "MEK" have been one of Iran’s ruling clergy's main opposing organisations (I do not advocate or support the MEK, and I am in fact very critical of their whole ideology and political agenda. Here, I am merely stating a reality as far as Iran's politics are concerned.), Yassamin has chosen to “forget” that a substantial number of Islamic Republic’s 1980s victims were either members or supporters and sympathisers of MEK who could, if they wished so, join "Iran Tribunal" as individual victims without representing their organisation.

Wouldn’t Yassamin Mather, or anyone else for that matter, be surprised if “Iran Tribunal” didn’t have a single participant who didn’t at some point in their political activism have allegiance toward the “Mujahedin” or wasn’t a family member of an executed MEK supporter who now sees the opportunity to raise his/ her outrage against Islamic Republic’s atrocities during 1980s? Isn’t such statement by Yassamin Mather ridiculous? Why can't Yassamin Mather recognise MEK's individuals’ unalienable right to seek justice against the crimes perpetrated by the Islamic Regime? That’s what “Iran Tribunal” is set out to achieve, and that’s what they’re doing there!

However, since Yassamin Mather considers "MEK" as an archrival of the Islamic Republic, who may be able to weaken the regime's position, she starts to worry:

“the central involvement of individuals close to the Mujahedin (MEK) is an indication as to the political outlook of the tribunal and why it won’t speak up against war and sanctions.”

As it happens, as far as the MEK is concerned, all the witnesses of both phases of "Iran Tribunal" were victims who in the past had supported the MEK, but later in life they abandoned their allegiance towards this organisation. Due to MEK's sectarian vision and policies which prevents its alliance with majority of Iranian anti-regime organisations, not a single witness or volunteer within “Iran Tribunal” who presently supports or is a member of MEK is active in this campaign. Yassamin Mather is just incapable of carrying out a little bit of fact finding exercise before she presents her argument. The hysteria which is driving her, doesn't grant her the wisdom to base her allegations on actual facts.

What Yassamin doesn’t know, is that all the participating survivors and families of the victims of 1980s mass executions are “centrally involved” with “Iran Tribunal” and not just, according to her, “*individuals close to the Mujahedin (MEK)*”. Although “Iran Tribunal” has a Legal Steering Committee (Which co-ordinates “Iran Tribunal’s” legal objectives) and a Co-ordinating Committee (Which represents the main body of “Iran Tribunal” and oversee the entire project on behalf of all the participants in the project),

but if these two committees make any derogatory decision or any other decision which would be against the will and the intentions of the whole body of “Iran Tribunal” (which is composed of the survivors and family members of the victims of 1980s mass executions who founded this campaign), that decision will simply not be implemented. Because this campaign simply belongs to them and they are the driving force behind it.

Of course, Yassamin wouldn't know that, as she never had any involvement with “Iran Tribunal” after all, and she wouldn't know anything about its structure and internal procedures. She didn't even bother to do her own fact finding to find out more about the structure of “Iran Tribunal” and yet, she has the audacity to pontificate about who does what in “Iran Tribunal” and furthermore, based on her sheer lack of knowledge, she “reports” her disinformation about “Iran Tribunal” to everyone.

The reality is that the majority of the victims during the 1980s had some kind of connection with the MEK. Some of those who no longer support the MEK have joined "Iran Tribunal". However, Yassamin Mather's “Anti-War” campaign states that unless “Iran Tribunal” “*spoke out against war*”; it would have no mandate to seek justice against regime's crimes. And in order to dress up her spiteful intents against “Iran Tribunal” and justify it, she has to propagate lies and slander about “Iran Tribunal” and its “*centrally involved*” individuals close to MEK.

“For the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), the overthrow of the regime has always been the key objective and it explicitly supports sanctions and war to achieve it.”

OK! But where are they (MEK)? Yes, “*MEK's objective has always been the overthrow of the regime*” but what does that have to do with “Iran Tribunal”? MEK have a large and well-structured organisation with ample financial strength to do what they want and get to their “*objectives*”. They have lots of contacts with a lot of influential personalities. Why would they need “Iran Tribunal”? They even have the strength, both financially and logistically, to pursue their own exclusive Tribunal if they wished so, in order to pursue their own “*Political outlook*”. Yassamin knows full well that the MEK doesn't enter into any kind of alliance with any organisation or institution unless it was dominated by them and had their own hegemony over them. Why would they want to pursue their objectives via “Iran Tribunal” and hide it, while we all know that they are fully capable of doing it all themselves, absolutely openly, and take all the “credit” for it?

I am sorry, but Yassamin's claim just doesn't add up!

"Iran Tribunal" witnesses or active members, who had some kind of connection with the MEK in the past, do not support the MEK any longer and that's why they are active in it. At the same time, they have to testify that at the time of atrocities they did support the MEK. That is the reality about these witnesses and active members of “Iran Tribunal”. Who can Yassamin Mather name that is now a member of the MEK, or has an organisational relationship with the MEK and has a “*Central involvement*” with “Iran Tribunal”? Can Yassamin exactly show us even where this “*Centre*” is? Is it the Steering Committee, or the Co-ordinating Committee, or on the witness panel? Where is this

“centre” of their activity? Yassamin didn’t even know the role of Payam Akhavan within “Iran Tribunal” and she supposedly knows all about him.

Yassamin Mather had better present her allegations with a degree of factuality and truth and make proper and factual references so that at least she can give her readers or listeners some degree of confidence that she knows what she is talking about.

Because “*MEK’s objective has always been the overthrow of the regime*”, therefore, any 1988 victims who at one point in time had allegiance toward the MEK, and have now joined “Iran Tribunal” on the merits of their individual case, according to Yassamin suddenly become the “MEK organisation” within “Iran Tribunal”, who “*explicitly supports sanctions and war*” to overthrow the regime “*from above*” in favour of MEK!

So what about all the non-MEK victims within “Iran Tribunal” who have never supported MEK and are the majority within “Iran Tribunal”? Are these people just bystanders and cheerers of MEK’s “coup-de-tat” within “Iran Tribunal”? MEK doesn’t need to stage a “coup” within “Iran Tribunal”. They are fully capable of staging their own “Tribunal” and reap all the gains which Yassamin refers to in their own favour by their own efforts.

Yassamin Mather makes reference to Iraj Mesdaghi, one of the survivors of the massacre, former supporter of the MEK, a spokesperson for "Iran Tribunal" and a key witness with abundance of knowledge about the massacre era.

Would Yassamin Mather deny Iraj Mesdaghi of his right to be active and stand as a witness at "Iran Tribunal"? In what relation to "Iran Tribunal" did Iraj Mesdaghi express his contentment about MEK's recent delisting by the US? Iraj Mesdaghi, or anyone else for that matter, may agree or disagree with the delisting of MEK's name by the US State Department. Iraj Mesdaghi has publically admitted that he no longer supports the MEK. Is Yassamin Mather accusing Iraj Mesdaghi of lying about his present personal political views? Naturally, he has his own views about MEK's delisting. What has that got to do with "Iran Tribunal"?

Looking at it from a different angle, with regards to MEK being listed as a terrorist organisation, is Yassamin in favour of MEK being maintained on the list, against it or does she choose to abstain on this issue? If she was in favour of it, wouldn’t she be supporting the US State Department? If she was against it, wouldn’t she be supporting the MEK? And finally, if she abstains to take any sides, then what's her problem or concern whether or not the US has delisted the MEK or not? Any answer to this question by Yassamin Mather would reveal the irrelevance of her statement with regards to Iraj Mesdaghi's stance on the MEK being delisted.

Yes, Leyla Ghalehbani's brothers who supported the MEK were executed by the IRI and she's now seeking justice on behalf of her family. Should Leyla have remained silent so she wouldn't have been "effectively strengthening the hand of all those reactionary forces contemplating a military attack on Iran."? Is she expected to sacrifice humanity and justice for the “wellbeing” of the murderers of her family members?

It would be easier for Yassamin to just stand side by side of "CASMII" and fully defend the Islamic Republic of Iran. That would make more sense than what she's trying to do against "Iran Tribunal" with such contradictory swings between right and left.

The crux of the matter is that Yassamin Mather's and HOPI's stance is geared up toward avoiding (Or preventing?) the weakening of Islamic Republic of Iran's position on the international scene. Since "Iran Tribunal" is seeking justice against the IRI, she can see this as an additional scandal against the IRI in its current "cat fight" with the west which could weaken the clerical rulers' position (and ultimately the "Anti Imperialist camp's" position) on the balance of power. Hence, all the lies and slanders, and smearing campaign about "Iran Tribunal" and its connection with NED, CIA and "regime change from above", etc. are propagated by Yassamin Mather.

All the rhetoric from both sides (USA and IRI) is on the nuclear issues. There hasn't been a single instance that any of the western powers have "kept all their options on the table" because of IRI's horrific human rights abuses.

Unfortunately, Yassamin Mather's twisted political stance does place her beside the regime beyond her perceivable control; otherwise she wouldn't worry if "Iran Tribunal" did succeed in its endeavour; which would consequently expose the Islamic Republic Regime's horrific crimes and atrocities during the 1980s on a global scale and hence, its total loss of credibility on the international scene. Yassamin doesn't want "Iran Tribunal" to succeed because she doesn't want the IRI to be exposed with yet another one of its horrific scandals on the international scene.

If Yassamin Mather wasn't worried about Islamic Republic's weakening, she wouldn't express the above statement, or:

"Without clear opposition to war and sanctions, this tribunal effectively strengthens the hand of all those reactionary forces contemplating a military attack on Iran, Yassamine Mather says." (Emphasis is mine)

As far as my knowledge serves me, the scope of "Anti-War" groups since 2005, covers a massive range between Pro-Islamic Republic "Hezbollah" to "HOPI" and "Noam Chomsky". Take "CASMII" and "HOPI" for instance. "CASMII" is a pro-Islamic Republic "Anti War" group lobbying in favour of the IRI, and "HOPI" is supposedly against the Regime. Both organisations are "Fighting" for the same cause, but pulling in the opposite directions and keep fighting each other over refusing one another's affiliation to "Stop the War" coalition!

(<http://www.cpgb.org.uk/home/weekly-worker/804/a-reminder>).

The current "Anti-War" movement is so misused and abused that if "HOPI" and "CASMII" for instance, tried to unite under the banner of "Stop The War", Yassamin Mather would find herself shoulder to shoulder with the IRI. The reason for this is that the IRI has of course, taken full advantage of the concept of being "Anti War", and has marked its own devious influence by launching organisations such as "CASMII" co-founded by "Rustam Poorzal", who claims to be an "ex Marxist" (This is so re-assuring to

some of the west's left organisations!), to act as imposters within this movement in order to steer and direct the whole of "Anti War" movement toward its own political advantage. As far as the "Anti-War" movements are concerned, the point to make should be that both USA and Islamic Republic of Iran are reactionary forces who pursue their own agendas. The "Anti-War" campaigns' correct stance should be to condemn both warring sides; as they're both pursuing reactionary objectives, and should be to try to prevent this war (or any war for that matter) from the peoples' perspective and not by taking sides with one or the other warring states.

When Yassamin is concerned that "*Without clear opposition ...this tribunal effectively strengthens the hand of all those...*" she is demonstrating that she has no plans for preventing this war, but worries about who would get the upper hand in it. She consequently and effectively gets drawn into defending one of the reactionary states in this war and this is a dangerous position to take. Yassamin Mather inevitably falls into the trap of having to defend one (IRI) against the other. She then has to insist on "Iran Tribunal" or any other campaigns to do the same, and if "Iran Tribunal" doesn't, because its objective is a pure justice seeking endeavour on behalf of the victims of Iran's 1980s prison massacre by the IRI, which the USA and all the western powers turned their backs onto them, then she has to simply discredit it in order to try to prevent the "*Strengthening of the hands of all those reactionary forces...*" but not the war itself. The people of Iran have no place within Yassamin Mather's politics. Her worry therefore, would be the undermining of the IRI's position in this potential military conflict between the two of them and hence, she does everything to prevent IRI's weakening. In this endeavour of hers, she is even prepared to stand in the way of seeking justice against the IRI's atrocities during the 1980s.

Yassamin Mather and her co-thinkers have accused "Iran Tribunal" of being the "Shop-front" of CIA, NED, etc. Their allegations with regards to any CIA, NED or any other organisations' connection with "Iran Tribunal", whether directly or indirectly, is totally unfounded and untrue, and is just part of a smearing campaign to discredit "Iran Tribunal" and its achievements. What Yassamin is doing, is in essence diluting the 34 yearlong atrocities of the IRI against the Iranian people and providing a case in favour of the criminal regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran Tribunal has demonstrated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a criminal regime and has been convicted for its crimes against humanity, albeit informally. "Iran Tribunal" has also demonstrated that the state powers such as USA and its allies have not only ignored the crimes committed by the IRI, but would be willingly providing impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes through the current international judicial shortfalls. "Iran Tribunal" has also demonstrated that the only credible strength in its campaign stems from the grassroots movement and peoples' sheer will power and determination. The driving force behind our campaign is the very Social Power of the people and nothing else.

I would like to refer you to our own website where it clearly states that:

“Iran Tribunal does not gain its legitimacy from a government or any political party. The driving force behind “Iran Tribunal” is the will of ordinary people complemented and supported by the clear conscience of eminent people and various professionals who are committed to the fundamental rights of those who initiated this Tribunal. Its achievements does not Give legitimacy to any government or political party for their own causes”
<http://www.irantribunal.com/Eng/EnHome.html>

The very reason why “Iran Tribunal” had to resort to a “People’s Court” in the first place, was the apathetical and passive attitude of the Western powers toward IRI’s gross human rights violations. For 34 years, the Western powers witnessed all the atrocities of IRI against its own people, but chose to turn their backs on people of Iran and took no action to defend and uphold humanity. No Western power at any time, kept any “Options open on the table” for IRI’s gross human rights violations. Thousands of pages of human rights abuse reports on Iran have been published and sent to hundreds of Western policy makers to no avail; and yet, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not only continued with its atrocities, but it has become even more aggressive and savage in its oppressions and methods of crack down on the dissenting forces and individuals. That is because it has received no serious reaction against these atrocities by the Western powers.

Why doesn't Yassamin Mather see the flip side of the same coin; which is the entire Western powers contempt and disregard for Iranian Prisoners while they were being slaughtered by the IRI. Doesn't this Tribunal as well as exposing the murderous nature of the IRI expose the fact that all the Western States are also considered as accomplices of the IRI by knowingly ignoring these crimes?

The following questions may be relevant and worth thinking about:

- 1- If USA wanted to attack Iran, and needed a pretext such as “Iran Tribunal” in order to misuse it and legitimise its sanctions or military intervention, would it need to justify it by holding a "Budget Tribunal" (We are doing everything on the cheap. We are not loaded with cash after all) so to “weaken the regime” for its gross human rights violations during its entire oppressive and criminal existence, and particularly during the 1980s?
- 2- When the atrocities were taking place in Iran, the whole of "Western Democracies" turned a blind eye on them and Iranian people's cries fell on deaf ears. Consequently, "Iran Tribunal" resorted to a "Peoples' Court", because the same "Democracies" still aren't prepared to listen unless it was instigated and initiated by a state power and referred to the UN Security Council. If the West is now so adamant to use "Iran Tribunal" or any human rights campaign to "weaken the regime" and use it as a vehicle to justify their war, why doesn't it petition the UNSC to hold the Islamic Republic accountable for its crimes against the political prisoners in the 80s? Wouldn't that be a more "credible" way of justifying their premeditated war than the "Budget driven" and unofficial "Iran Tribunal"?

- 3- Doesn't the West already have enough ammunition at hand with IRI's nuclear programmes to launch a military intervention? Isn't that what they did with Iraq under the "Weapons of mass destruction" scenario?
- 4- The UN Security Council has been sanctioning the IRI since 2006. The USA and Israel have been threatening the IRI with a military action, and "Have kept all their options open on the table" with regards to IRI's nuclear programmes since this date. Why is "Iran Tribunal" suddenly the focus of giving an excuse to the West for sanctions and military intervention?

"Iran Tribunal" is not a political organisation. It was established to address a particular human rights tragedy, and will not allow any political influences or biases which could act as an impediment to achieve its humanitarian objectives tarnish its purity and righteousness. Once its task has been fulfilled, it will be handed over to history and leave its legacy to tell the world how People's Social Power, with minimum of resources and through sheer determination and will power, without any political connotation, or taking any sides with any quarrelling states, one of the most brutal regimes in the world was fully exposed at international level and stood accountable for its barbaric crimes before the people of Iran and the world community. The experience of "Iran Tribunal" could inspire and show the way to any nation suffering from the same predicaments as Iranian people have been faced with. Therefore, "Iran Tribunal" is dealing with the past crimes of a state power in the hope of preventing them in the future anywhere in the world by any state power through holding the perpetrators accountable for their crimes.

Upholding justice and human dignity and values doesn't mix with politics. This is one of the main elements which Yassamin Mather cannot see or appreciate.

To conclude, "Iran Tribunal" has published its financial sources on its official website. All the funding received, has been made by individual citizens who have supported the campaign, and have no connection whatsoever, with any state or state affiliated institutions.

All the eminent and noble international law experts who have chosen to offer their invaluable services in their personal capacity and of their free will, have been doing so on a pro-bono basis. "Iran Tribunal" has been using the raised funds to cover the costs of the legal team and other costs such as the venues, hotels, equipment etc. minus their time, and again, this is published on its website for everyone's perusal.

"Iran Tribunal" receives its mandate from the survivors and the family members of the victims of 1980s massacre of Iran's political prisoners and has no links whatsoever, whether financial or otherwise, with any state or state affiliated institution.

"Iran Tribunal" does not advocate or support any political organisation, and has no allegiance toward any ideology, personality, group or organisation.

"Iran Tribunal" is a prime example of people's Social Power which acts utterly and totally independent of any state power or state affiliated institution.

“Iran Tribunal” is an independent and free platform which has been formed to seek justice on behalf of the survivors and the families of the victims of 1980s massacre of Iran’s political prisoners.

Dariosh Afshar

03/11/2012