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Empire of Iran combats national brain drain

By BRUCE KIDD FOR CANADIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Empire of Iran is suffering from brain drain. Despite the continual exhortations of his Majesty the Shah to "say what you can do for your country," the cream of the Persian youth are leaving as quickly as they can - and permanently. In underdeveloped countries, where plant and machinery are often scarce, human resources, especially ingenuity, can provide a great source of development potential. In China, for example, human beings are crudely used to provide horse power.

In Iran, the loss of many of its educated youth seriously depletes its economic and social strength.

Young Iranians with eyes on the outside offer two main reasons for emigrating.

Most of them are convinced there is little in Iran to keep them there. Outside the government-owned oil industry, there are few opportunities for Iranians "to make good money," and "making good money" seems to rank very high among their ambitions.

And the universal draft (requiring two years army service) is considered more than an inconvenience. One Iranian I met, a medical student in an American university in Beirut, had been drafted while at home on summer vacation.

Behind these reasons lies an absence of idealistic feeling for the future welfare of their country and for the great majority of the 25 million Persians who live by primitive agriculture. There is a deep gulf between the rich and poor in Iran, and the former seem completely to

ignore their "untrained" countrymen.

The type of democracy fostered by the Shah is not geared to arouse much enthusiasm. The Shah wants democracy for his country, but only if social stability can be maintained hand in hand with its development.

In his book, "My Mission for My Country," the Shah writes that democracy must come from the top down. This is to ensure the process of transformation from an illiterate, agricultural society to a modern, industrial one does not get out of hand.

The Shah's preoccupation with stability is best illustrated by his newly-established Literacy Corps.

Under the Corps programme, army draftees who have graduated from high school are sent into peasant villages to conduct various types of instruction. (The rest of the army, as the Shah himself commented to Hubert Humphrey two years ago, keeps the population in check.)

While attempts are made to teach the dialect-speaking peasants how to read and write Pharsee, the national language, the emphasis of the programme is on improving agricultural techniques and hygiene.

It is too early to tell if the Literacy Corps will succeed. Its major difficulty, according to an American Peace Corps worker

who had studied the Iranian Corps, is the lack of enthusiasm in Corps personnel.

The predominantly urban Corpsman often resents being isolated in a primitive village, where few peasants can communicate with him.

Even where idealism exists among the youth in Iran, circumstances can often frustrate it.

In Ahwaz I met an MA graduate from Berkeley University who had suppressed all desires to accept the well-paid job that was offered to him in California to return to work in his home city.

But there, he found the best available employment the very same as he could have obtained five years earlier as a high school graduate. Only a month back in Iran, he has already applied for permission to emigrate to the United States.

In Iran today, the Shah is the only one who can hold the country together. Even his political enemies admit this. He currently enjoys large amounts of foreign aid from both east and west and technical assistance from the United Nations.

Yet if he is to make development in Iran a long term proposition, he must mobilize the nation's educated youth to his cause.



From the vestal's temple

By NANCY WHITE

Today: a didactic column, featuring easy-to-follow instructions for quick mastery of the Shirreff Hall intercom general announcement.

It's vital that we all have a working knowledge of this art, because the intercom is the major means of communication in the residence. Each bedroom is equipped with a speaker that simply can't be turned off, and announcements, pleas and commands come thundering through it by the dozen, usually in the early part of the evening. The system's so efficient that you can only escape Big Brother by retreating to the showers or leaving the building.

Here, then, is a "how to" rundown on approved intercom technique.

Your first consideration must be background music. This, as Wright says, is necessary "to help in developing the mood, build the crises, . . . or sometimes establish the basic rhythm of the over-all production."

"Oh dear, need I hire an orchestra?" you're saying to yourself.

Relax, help is at hand. Shirreff Hall has a piano (!) in its main hall, and you should have no trouble finding someone to play for you. It needn't be a pianist; anyone with from six to ten fingers and a spirit of co-operation will do. Research has shown that the most effective selection is "Variations on the Second D from the Bottom." (That's the note that buzzes best.) If you can't find anyone to play this, gather up a small group and stage a hymn sing.

Now you're ready to begin, provided you've found a friend to help you with the first part of the announcement.

Approach the intercom board with confidence. With the left

hand, firmly grasp the "emergency" button, push down and hold.

Now say in a loud voice: "Am I doing it right? Which button do I push?"

Have your friend say: "No, no, you just push that one down."

Now release the button and relax for a moment or two. Glory in the fact that you've just addressed over 200 people and that those who were sleeping are awake, the students freed from their troublesome concentration, and those who were just sitting around are bolt upright in their chairs. Allow at least a minute for suspense to build up in the group. This may be a good time to stroll over and offer a few words of encouragement to the musicians.

Back to the board. It's time to communicate. Your voice is important here; it must be exceedingly loud and a little breathy so, as soon as you've pressed down the button again, clear your throat and maybe give a little cough. Your announcement must be lengthy. Let the girls know something of importance is going to happen.

Always begin with an opening like "Attention, all girls of Shirreff Hall". This gives everyone a sort of warm we-feeling, and tells the thousands of boys in Shirreff Hall, plus people outside the building, that there's no need for them to listen.

Then you add "this is a very important announcement that concerns everyone in the hall".

Sum it all up now in a brief sentence like "that's the Chewing Gum meeting at 7:30 at the Drama House. All welcome."

Ring off and wait one and a half minutes, then repeat the entire announcement for the benefit of all those who have come into the building in the meantime.

Above all, don't forget the character of your listening audience. Remember that they're all unemployed and probably not too bright. So give the announcement at least three more times during the day.

As in other fields of endeavour, practice makes perfect.

Good luck and have fun.

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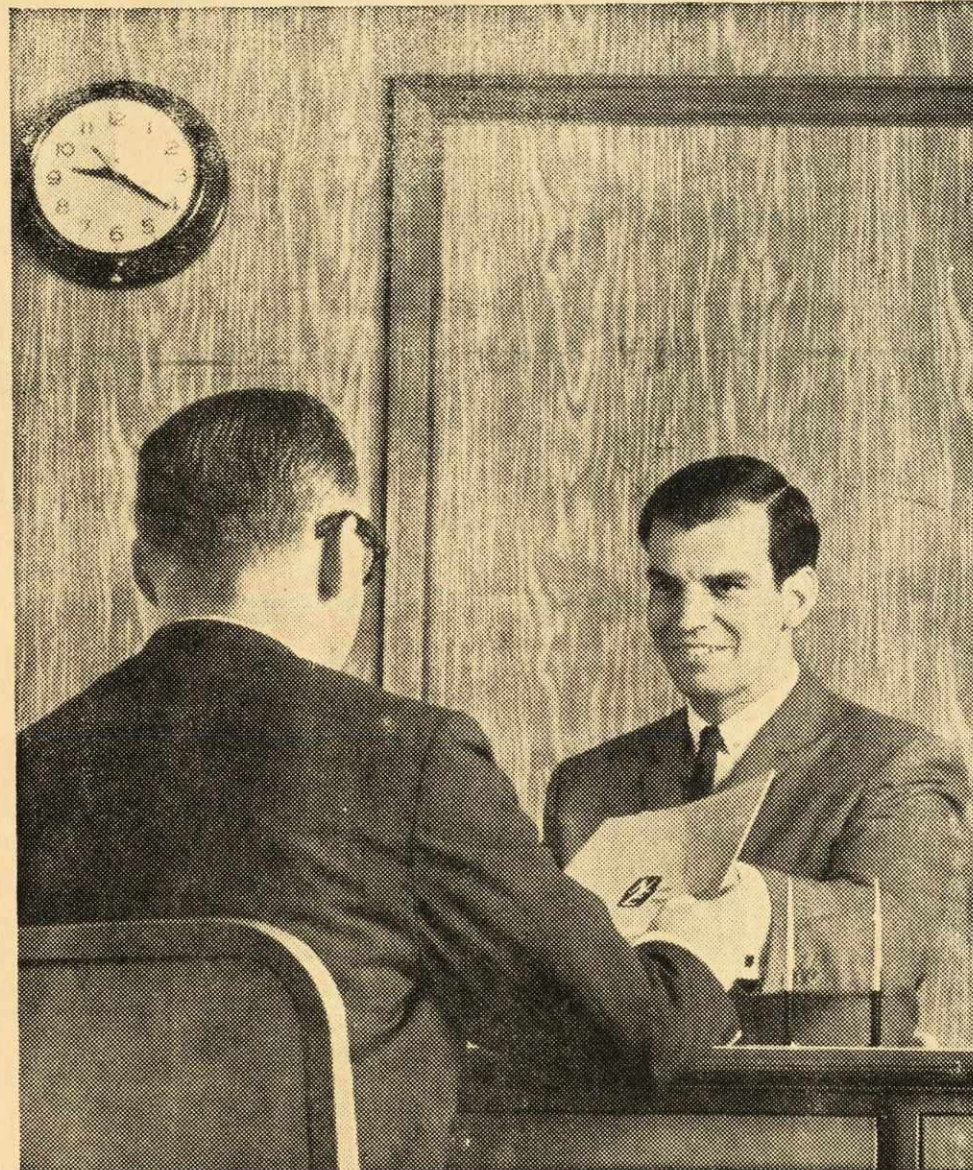
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