

Iran: The other side of the coin

Sometimes in the heat of emotional reaction to a situation, we have a tendency to forget the fact that there is always two sides to every argument. Nowhere has this overheated reaction been more apparent than in the one-sided debate being waged by the media regarding the present situation in Iran.

The actions of the Ayatollah are confusing and most of the time very hard to defend. Yet it is necessary to look beyond the one-sided account we have been receiving to understand how the situation in Iran developed.

The United States has screamed loud and long that its diplomatic rights were tread upon when the Iranian students stormed and seized the American Embassy. It is true that this constitutes a breach of international protocol. Yet the Americans have been "breaching" international protocol for years. One only has to look at Chile, Nicaragua, Vietnam in the 60's to see how much respect the Americans have for the rights and independence of others.

And what about Iran itself. The Shah, the main cause of the whole incident, was set up in Iran by the American C.I.A. and the 'Seven Sisters' (a nickname for the seven major oil companies in the world). Did the Americans think about how they might be treading on people's rights when they installed the Shah on the 'Peacock Throne' in 1953. It is very doubtful. More than likely what they had on their minds was dollar signs.

Neither can the Americans claim innocence regarding the reaction of the Iranians if they let the Shah into the States (for what ever reason). The Americans were warned several times, not only by Iranian politicians, but by their own advisors that admitting the Shah to the States would bring harmful and dangerous results. Advice that has turned into reality.

What of the reaction of the Iranians themselves? It is important to remember how the Iranian people look at the Shah. As attractive a figure as the Shah is to the Western World, to the Iranians he is a murderer and a thief. No one in the world can say the Shah has no blood stains on his hands. His secret police was one of the most brutal and deadly in the world. Thousands died or simply disappeared during the Shah's rule.

How would you react if you discovered the man who had murdered your family was being put up in another town? If the "host" had relatives in your town wouldn't you go to their house, demanding to know why their relative was protecting the man who had killed your family? As innocent as the relatives might be, it is only human nature to strike out at the nearest object you can find. (Just look at the harassment the Americans have shown Iranians in the States since the crisis. Or the treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

It is also interesting to note the States, which has for one of its mottos 'justice and liberty for all', seems to be making a pastime out of admitting men who have ignored this idea all their lives. What with the Shah, Somoza, and some of the politicians from South Vietnam, the United States doesn't seem to be too particular about who they admit to their country.

Please do not mistake the tone of this editorial. It does not support the actions of the Ayatollah Khomeini. It only asks you to look seriously at all the facts in the question, not to let emotions rule your thoughts and to realize that, no matter what we are told, innocent babes in the woods and one-sided wars just do not exist any more.

Letters to Gazette

anger and disgust with the present situation, yet the student representatives of SUNS and NUS are "waiting for (our) viewpoint"! What more do they want?

Through this entire decade Ms. Mrenica & Co. and their predecessors have been "making the most of what we have" and feathering their nests with cushy positions in the bureaucracy under this hoax of "supporting those who would support us when the day comes..." Apart from this self-interest, the NUS and SUNS hacks by their "petitioning" give legitimacy to the campaign of the government being orchestrated through MPHEC. This campaign, laid out by the Graham Royal Commission in November 1974, seeks to throw one-third of this provinces university student population out on its ear. Briefs are useless. Keith Wornell is a member of the

P.E.I. Treasury Board, hand-picked by the Maritime governments of the rich to head this "study". We students "disregard elected representatives" because we are rapidly resolving any remaining "doubts about certain groups". The "elected" hacks as well as their "In-Struggle!", "Forge" and NDP mentors and cronies all promise heaven on earth but tuition and residence fees go up year after year.

These student misleaders are incapable of leading the student movement forward.

The only way to change this situation is for the students to take the initiative in facing this crisis and formulate concrete actions and policies to make the rich pay for the rising costs of tuition, etc. This can only be accomplished through revolutionary struggles, through rebellion against the rich and their state, without the agents of the rich within the student movement who stifle and extinguish our fire.

Sincerely,
Sheila Jensen

The Gazette would like to retract the last statement made in the response by Marlene Peinsznski to Jim Wentzell's letter to the editor. The Gazette would also like to apologize to Norman Smith for misquoting him in Campus Comment (112, No. 7, Oct. 25).

Student speaks in Iran's defence

by Margot Griffiths

The detention of forty-nine American hostages inside the United States Embassy in Iran is entering its fourth week, and the situation seems to worsen daily. The United Nations Security Council has been called into session on Saturday, in hopes to bring about the release of the Americans. In an interview with Dalhousie student Javad Tavakolt of Iran, the crisis was defended from the Iranians' point of view.

"The Shah is as bad as Hitler and should be tried for these injustices"

According to Tavakolt, the United States Embassy in Iran was not an ordinary embassy. There is a belief among the Iranian people that there was an effort on the part of the U.S. government to create problems within Iran.

In conversation with one of the female hostages, Tavakolt said he was told that a machine for printing Iranian money was found, as well as a stamp that was used to validate Iranian passports.

The United States has stated that the seizure of the American hostages is against International Law. Tavakolt said the United States' past connections with Vietnam and South America was also against International Law, and that if the law was going to apply to one country, it should apply to all.

Iran is thought of as a wealthy, oil producing country, but Tavakolt said in some places people are without water, and have been oppressed for twenty-five years. He said only people who have experienced these injustices and lived in the midst of the oppression can understand the situation.

Last week, fifty American and British people, who were free to leave Iran, chose instead to demonstrate in favour of the Iranian position, because they understood the

suffering that the Iranian people have been subjected to.

Although the situation is now regarded as a serious threat to world peace, Tavakolt said the U.S. will never jeopardize peace because the consequences are too grave. He said the United Nations will solve the crisis in the near future. As for the Iranian students, only time will tell how they will decide to deal with the anxious American hostages.

There has been a lot of talk about the Ayatollah Khomeini's move to power being a self-imposed one, but Tavakolt said Khomeini has a great deal of support from the Iranian public. Tavakolt said after 24 days, public opinion seems to be coming around in Iran's favour. Although the U.S. had previously refused a UN debate, they have now called for such a move themselves.

The main issue in the situation revolves around the Iranian students' demand for the deposed Shah, who is now residing in the United States. The Iranians said the U.S. is protecting him despite the fact that he is a criminal.

Tavakolt said the Iranian people know only too well the deaths and tortures committed at his hands. The people who have lost their eyesight, and their hands, people who are without food, can attest to the crimes of the Shah. Tavakolt said the Shah is as bad as Hitler, and should be tried for these injustices.

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