

An Open Letter to the Students and Faculty of UCLA:

WHY THE SHAH OF IRAN SHOULD NOT BE INVITED TO UCLA

On June 11 the Shah of Iran is scheduled to deliver the major commencement address to graduating UCLA seniors. As part of the official program, he will be presented with an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters--in effect a public endorsement by this University of the Shah's "humanity" and commitment to academic freedom and democracy.

THIS PRESENTATION WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY ALMOST TO THE DAY OF THE KILLING OF MORE THAN 5000 UNARMED MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE CITIES OF IRAN, CARRIED OUT ON ORDERS FROM THE SHAH.

On June 8th and 9th, 1963, the Shah issued a "shoot-to-kill" order to the Iranian army and secret police for the slaughter of peaceful demonstrators protesting the arrest of the Reverend Ayatollah Khomeini, a prominent and widely respected religious leader. Time Magazine wrote: "Tehran was a battleground....screaming 'Down with the Shah!' 10,000 bare feet swept through the capitol. Though the whereabouts of the Shah were kept secret, nearly 7000 troops were called out to restore uneasy peace in Tehran. Their duty: 'Shoot to kill!'" (Time, June 14, 1963, page 34)

How any university, anywhere in the world, could make a public demonstration of support for such a man as the Shah is difficult to understand, but that it should be in our own school is something that we as students, if we believe even half-heartedly in the heritage of academic freedom that we have been taught, must look upon with abhorrence.

Let us examine the record of the Shah to see if we can discover the rationale of the Administration in making him a "Doctor of Humane Letters":

In July of 1962 the managing editor of the Washington Post wrote: "Contrary to the principle of constitutional monarchy, the Shah of Iran rules, as well as reigns, in military, police, and political police affairs...the country as a whole operates under a system of fierce suppression of civil rights and civil liberty...a government censor sits in every newspaper office, papers are suppressed, speeches of opposition groups are not published, most demonstrations are forbidden and the secret police (SAVAK) effectively prevents the formation of an operating opposition party..."

Senator Hubert Humphrey, in a statement opposing the continuation of American military aid to Iran, said, "Do you know what the head of the Iranian army told one of our people? He said the army is in good shape, thanks to US aid -- it was now capable of coping with the civilian population. That army isn't planning to fight the Russians. It is planning to fight the Iranian people." (Newsweek, May of 1961)

In relation to students, the most vocal opposition to the dictatorship of the Shah, the repression by that dictatorship is most cruel and vicious.

In December, 1953, the Royal Military Guard "entered the University of Tehran in order to crush a manifestation of dissatisfaction with the Shah's regime and brutally shot to death three unarmed students....In the period which followed the university was frequently invaded by armed uniformed soldiers, by the police and by plainclothes spies. If three or more students stood together talking they would be approached and advised to stop discussion." (Iran: A Report of the Research and Information Commission of the International Student Conference, 1961/62, p. 17)

"On May 2nd 1961, the government troops attacked 4000 Tehran teachers who were on strike asking for a salary increase. During this attack one teacher (Dr. Khan Ali) was killed and many were injured." (Daneshjoo, March 27, 1964, p.4)

(OVER)

"On January 21, 1962, the paratroopers of the Shah entered the University of Tehran charging at the students with bayonets. During this attack 500 students were severely injured. Many...have become permanently disabled. The crime of which the students were guilty was a demand on their part for the return to school of some secondary school students who had been expelled because of speaking out against the government." (Daneshjoo, March 27, 1964, p. 4) This attack elicited the following response from the Chancellor of the University of Tehran, addressed to the Prime Minister of Iran:

"Mr. Prime Minister:

Pursuant to our conversation, at 11:00 A.M. soldiers and paratroopers occupied Tehran University. There was no reason or excuse for the violation of the rights or regulations of the university.

The soldiers and paratroopers after entry attacked boys and girls indiscriminately...many of the students were beaten to the point of death.

I have never seen or heard of so much cruelty, sadism, atrocity and vandalism on the part of government forces. Some of the girls in the classrooms were criminally attacked by the soldiers.

When we inspected the University buildings we were faced with a situation as if an army of barbarians had invaded an enemy territory. Books were torn, shelves were broken, typewriters smashed, laboratory equipment stolen or destroyed; desks, chairs, doors, windows and walls were vandalized by the troops fighting unarmed students without interference from their officers.

Even the University hospital had not been immune from the soldiers. Many of the nurses and patients were either beaten or wounded. The same pattern was followed in the faculty club and the foreign students' dormitory. At the present a great number of students are severely injured and are patients at the University hospital.

As the Chancellor of the University, also as the representative of the faculty and the student body, I take this opportunity to protest against this atrocious and criminal action. Meanwhile, as long as the responsible individuals are not punished for their beastly action, all the deans of the colleges and I submit our resignations.

Dr. A. Farhad, Chancellor, University of Tehran

The Iranian Students Association wrote to Chancellor Murphy, requesting that he reconsider the invitation to the Shah. Chancellor Murphy replied:

"The University stands without apology and without reservation behind its invitation to the Shah....I see no possible purpose that could be served by further correspondence about this matter."

It is a sorry commentary on the democratic pretensions of the UCLA Administration that they have chosen to confer their honors, not upon the students, professors and university administrators of Iran who have suffered so much in attempting to preserve academic freedom, but upon the brutal dictator responsible for the suppression of all of the traditions represented by the free university.

We appeal to all the students and faculty of UCLA to declare their opposition to the visit of the Shah to our campus by endorsing a petition protesting the proposed honoring of this dictator.

COME TO THE UCLA COMMENCEMENT ON JUNE 11, 1964, AT 10:15 A.M., DICKSON ART CENTER PAR TERRE, TO PEACEFULLY DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE SHAH.

IRANIAN STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

President: Mostafa Chaharmachali

ORGANIZATION OF ARAB STUDENTS

President: Abdulla M. Maktari

UNITED STATES NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Steven Robbins, Chairman, National Supervisory Board (USNSA)