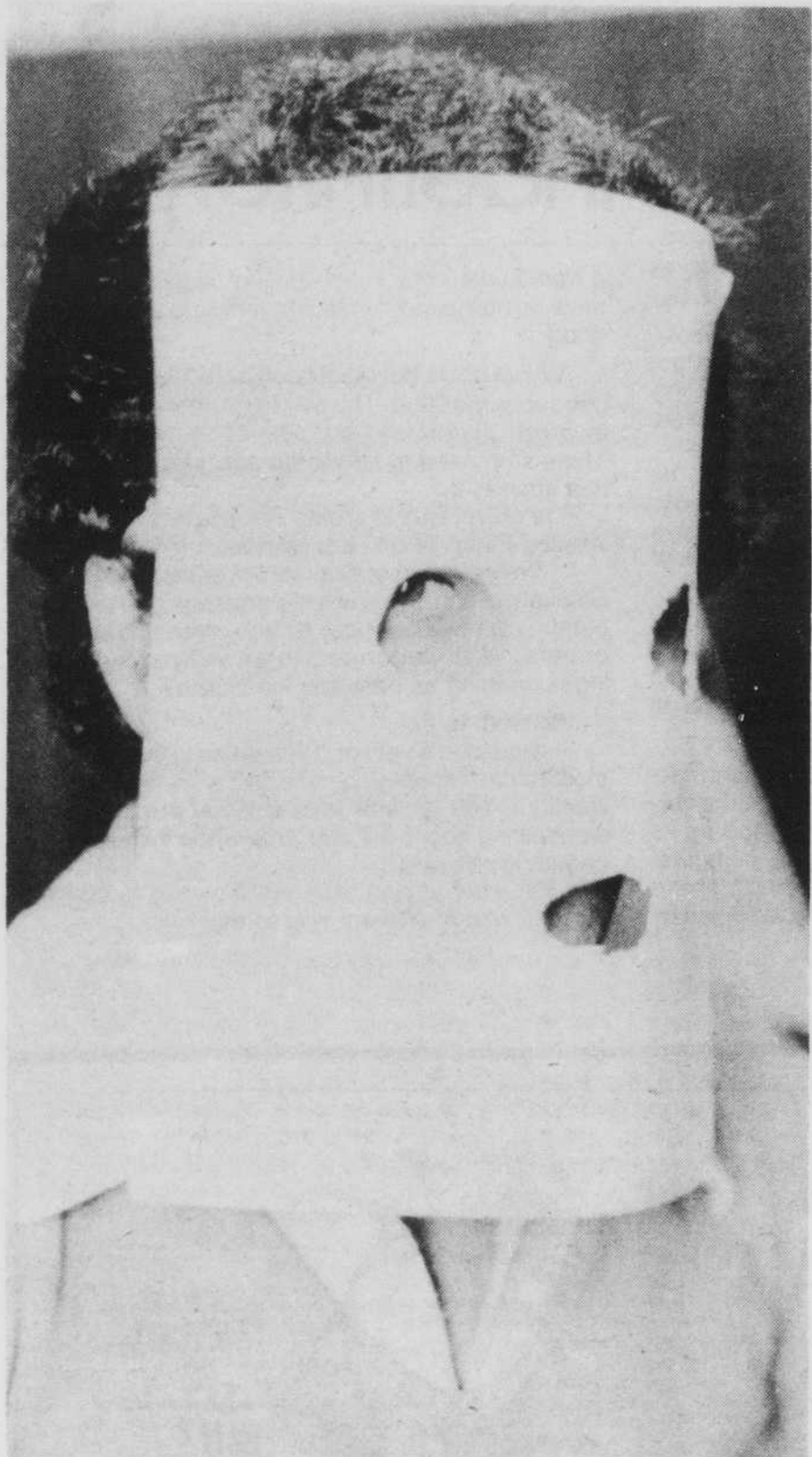


Students say shah aggravated disasters

Iranians assail government response



Iranian students, fearing reprisal by their government, use masks to hide identity while criticising shah during Monday press conference in the Eugene Hotel.

By JIM ALLEN
Of the Emerald

The havoc following a recent earthquake and theater fire in Iran was aggravated by the shah's regime, a spokesman for the Iranian Student's Association said Monday.

Speaking at a press conference

in the Eugene Hotel, ISA spokesman Ahmad Mobarez said that even though the earthquake that killed thousands was unpreventable, the Iranian government "did almost nothing to help the people in the stricken eastern city of Tabas."

Mobarez said the Iranian army was in the area, but did not help

victims for almost three days after the earthquake. "The government is corrupt and didn't do anything," Mobarez said. "Private groups did most of the work."

The recent theater fire in the oil-producing city of Abadan provides an even stronger indictment of the shah, according to Kaveh Ahankar, another ISA member. Ahankar and other members of the group suspect arson on the part of the shah.

"No one else could have done it," says Ahankar. "The theater was packed with anti-shah people and a progressive Iranian film was being shown. The fire trucks arrived late and came with no water to extinguish the fire."

Mobarez also said airplane fuel was used to ignite the fire, which killed 750 people. "Only the government can obtain this kind of fuel," he charged.

The ISAUS, the Iranian students' national organization in the U.S., gave its version of the theater fire in its newspaper, Resistance. The publication charges Iranian troops with killing large numbers of people who were trying to escape from the blaze, then with stealing the movie house doors to trap the remaining people.

Iranian students in the United States have also had their share of problems. Mobarez noted that about 90 percent of the Iranians studying in this country are opposed to the shah, and cited several examples of hostility toward Iranian students demonstrating against the shah.

"The best example is the brutal attack by Los Angeles police, who arrested and beat students demonstrating against the theater fire," says Mobarez. "There have also been incidents of police harassment in Oklahoma and Chicago."

ISA members explain the harassment by explaining the political connections between the governments of Iran and the United States.

"The Iranian students have been active in the U.S. for 15

years," explains Mobarez, "and we've been very successful. The U.S. has a tremendous stake in Iran, and this attitude has been reflected in the police attitude toward the Iranian protesters."

The ISA has also had difficulty in combating the popular attitude toward the shah in America.

"The news media in the U.S. helps perpetuate ignorance, the opinion that those working against the shah are only religious fanatics," says Ahankar. "The move-

ment against the Shah is popularly based."

ISA members also cited columns in the Oregonian and the Eugene Register-Guard that emphasized the importance of Iran to the U.S. and derided the efforts of the anti-shah demonstrators.

The ISA is planning a demonstration against the shah on Friday at 1:30 p.m. in Portland on the Portland State University campus. A march through downtown Portland is also planned.

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