

Berkeley professor blasts 'media distortion'

By DAGMAR OBEREIGNER
Of the Emerald

America supplies the arms for the slaughter of innocent people in Iran, and the United States media are "insistent upon slaughtering the truth" there, said Hamid Algar, professor of Near East Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, during his "Teach-In on Iran" lecture Friday evening in the EMU.

Algar told the mostly Iranian audience of about 80 persons that information on Iran is distorted by most of the Western media, and that a pro-Israeli stance and media payoffs are the two major reasons for the distortions.

"The shah and the United States have a complementarity with respect to Israel," Algar said. "While the United States provides the arms, Iran provides the oil."

Israeli officials coordinate policy in the Middle East with the Iranian government and exchange intelligence information, he said.

The shah has constantly paid off large segments of the American media, Algar added. He said that in the late 1950's, a defected Iranian official published copies of cancelled checks paid to so-called "friends of Iran," including Time-Life publisher Henry Lewis.

At no point has the extent of the casualties in Iran received adequate coverage," Algar continued. He cited the recent example of the rioting in Qom, Tehran and elsewhere in Iran on Sept. 8. The official casualty figure reported was about 98, but Algar reported the actual number to be closer to 2,000.

Another distortion is the question of female emancipation, according to Algar.

"Women are given the opportunity to participate in meaningless elections, and a few 'society ladies' get elected to meaningless offices," he said.

"In a country where freedom does not exist, it is hardly possible to have the unilateral emancipation of women."

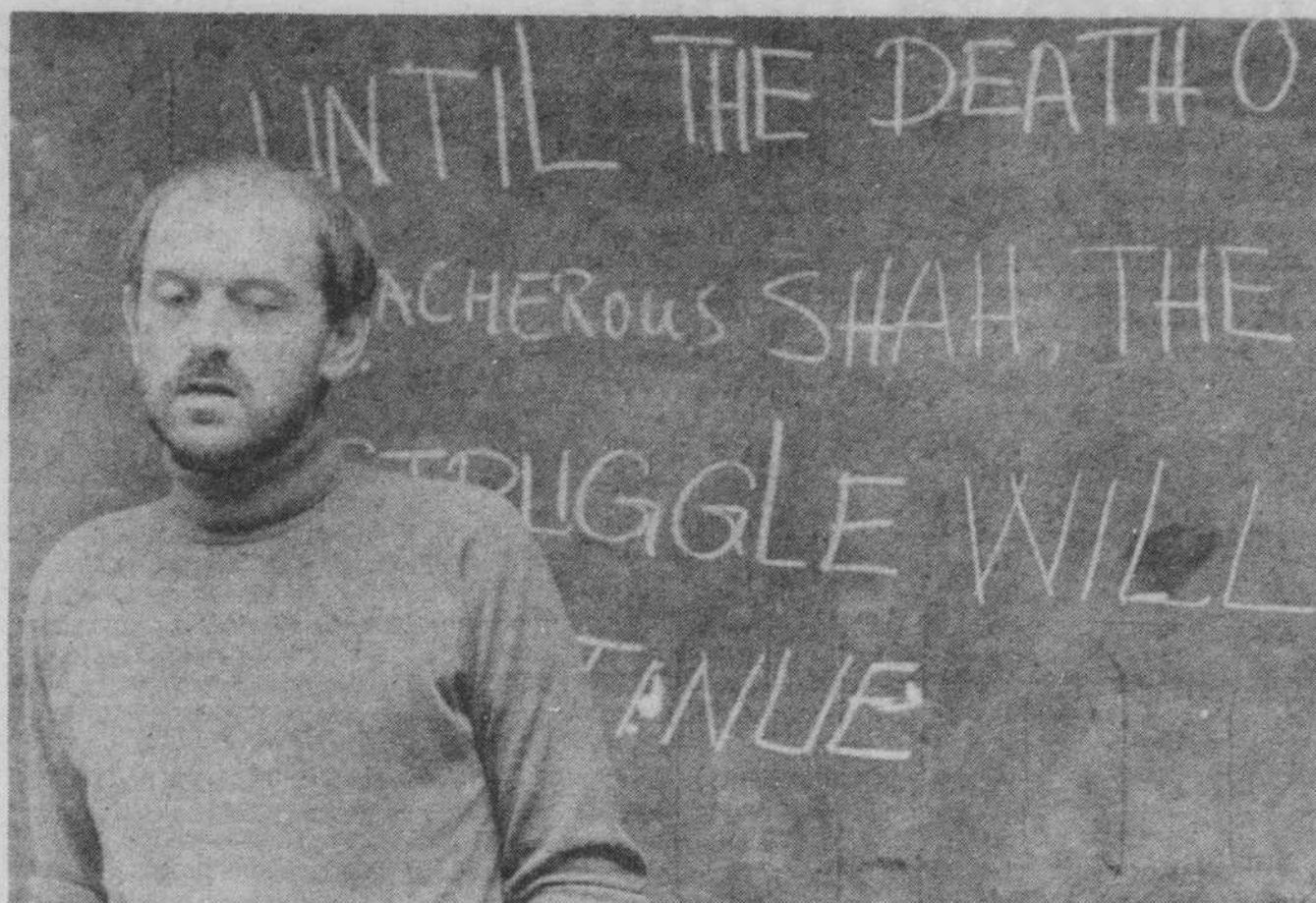
Responding to an audience question later, Algar said he did not think that the Muslim constitution proposed in the 1938s said anything about the vote for women.

With 95 percent of the population professing the Islamic faith, Marxism is not a strong force in Iran, Algar said.

A large Communist party did exist in Iran in the 1950s, but became "totally discredited because of its subservience to the Soviet Union," he said.

Algar also discussed SAVAK, the Iranian secret police.

"America is responsible for bloodshed (in Iran) — not just for



The Shah of Iran's regime is that of "Third World dictator," Muslim professor of Mid-East studies Hamid Algar told a gathering of University students Friday night. Hamid criticized Western media coverage of Iranian political events and Pres. Carter's stand on human rights.

weapons with which people are shot down in the streets, — it is responsible for those who are obscenely tortured to death" by SAVAK.

"The 20 retired Iranian officers who set up SAVAK received special training in Virginia, and later

went on to special CIA training."

Algar quoted a New York Times article stating that most SAVAK agents receive training in American police programs.

Carter and the media in the United States "worked themselves into a fury" when two Soviet Jews

were sent to Siberia when they wanted to go to Palestine, "which isn't theirs in the first place," he

said, "but nobody raises an eyebrow about the slaughter" in the massacres in Iran.

Algar recalled Pres. Carter saying on his New Year's Eve visit to Iran that he and the shah saw eye-to-eye "on human rights."

"Carter's statement to the shah should correctly be interpreted as a green light for the shah to go massacre as many persons as needed to stay in power."

Algar said the slaughters by the Iranian army are the direct and openly acknowledged responsibility of the United States," he said.

He termed the situation in Iran unique. "In no other country is there such a close identity of the interests of people and the religious leadership."

Algar has a degree in Oriental Studies from Berkeley. He speaks seven languages, including Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and is a Muslim. He has written a book on the political and social role of the Muslim element in Iran in the 19th century and has recently been interviewed in the McNail-Lehrer Report on the situation in Iran. His lecture was sponsored by the Muslim Student Association.



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