

Iranian students choosing to stay at home away from home

By Diane Andersen

Since Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini became leader of Iran last February, there have been widespread reports of Iranian students returning to their homeland from U.S. colleges and universities.

Apparently, UNL is not part of this trend, according to Peter Levitov, coordinator of international educational services, and UNL Iranian students of various political factions.

"Although we make it a point not to check up on what the students are doing," Levitov said, "this year it seems that about the same number of Iranian students have gone home as before."

Levitov said he thinks Iranian student feeling at UNL is the same as at most universities, although it "has not been a hotbed of activism to the degree that it receives press coverage."

LEVITOV SAID he feels the Iranian students at UNL are just as politically aware as Iranians elsewhere. He said some of them may have been so used to U.S. lifestyle that they may feel uncomfortable going back to Iran.

Hassan Rasheed, a Ph.D. student in agronomy at UNL and a member of the

Iranian-Muslim Student Association, said he has known Iranian students that have left for home, but has no idea how many.

Rasheed said that although MSA is primarily a religious group, politics and religion are inseparable in Iran. He said the two main groups of people that have returned to Iran are Muslims that want to cooperate with the new government and "counter-revolutionaries" that are now trying to put through their own programs.

"Some Iranian students may have financial problems because of the revolution," Rasheed said.

He said many people have lost jobs since the revolution, although poor people earn more money now than they used to.

"THE GOVERNMENT can't send them (students) more than \$1000 a month," Rasheed added, explaining that the Iranian embassy must approve the money being sent to the United States.

Rasheed said he feels conditions have definitely improved since the days of the shah. He said that torture and executions may still exist under Khomeini, but now they are publicly explained and are necessary to protect the people.

"If they don't execute them (the leftist counter-revolutionaries), they start distur-

bances and might kill lots of people," he said.

Rasheed said he believes most of the MSA plan to return to Iran.

"I never changed my plan," he said. "I plan to go back and help the people."

RASHEED HESITATED when asked whether he would return if the shah were still in power, then said he probably would.

"I am more eager now. It is the government I was looking forward to," he concluded.

Nasser, a UNL graduate student who preferred to give only his first name, is a member of what he calls the "progressive" Iranian Student Association. He stressed that the statements he made are his own opinions, not necessarily representative of all ISA members.

Nasser said he wants to protect his identity because the Iranian embassy may be checking out Iranian students and the organizations they belong to. ISA is a political group.

Nasser said he has seen a usual number of Iranian students go back home since the revolution.

"Most students went back to participate in the uprising (against the shah)," he said.

HE SAID THE Khomeini government is undemocratic, in that it fails to represent the workers and peasants who united to create the revolution.

Nasser complained that fanatic, fundamentalist Muslims in Iran such as the "Hesbollahi" or "Party of God" have physically attacked more progressive Muslim groups and tried to close down popular leftist newspapers.

"The government is all-powerful, but they don't protect the people from such demonstrations," he said.

Nasser said he and most of the ISA members will return to their homeland. He said he wants to help the working class.

"I think the new regime represents petty bourgeoisie," the ISA member said.

"It is our position to be anti-reactionary, anti-imperialistic. We support all progressive groups."

Nasser said things are going to get tougher for leftist groups in Iran, but that ISA is using the twenty years of experience of student activists there to help them.

"The painful thing is, we don't expect these kinds of things (violence, censorship, etc.) from this regime like we did under the shah," Nasser said.

Community center to go before public

The City of Lincoln will hold a two-day public meeting beginning Friday to get citizen opinions on the location and need of a community center to serve the Malone, Clinton and Hartley neighborhoods.


A workshop will be Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. at the Whittier School cafeteria, 2200 Vine St.

The meetings will focus on recreational needs of the neighborhoods and where a community center could be located. The three neighborhoods are between City and East Campus.

Money for renovation of the Malone Community Center at 22nd and T streets was provided by the federal office of Housing and Urban Development and the Lincoln Foundation, a private organization.

However, a check of the center showed the building is not worth the investment needed to renovate it, Leslie Robin from the city planning department said.

Before the city will commit money to a new community center, citizen opinions will be considered in a recommendation to be made by a research group, which will be forwarded to the City Council, Robin said.



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