

# Baha'i Community Worries About Members Still in Iran

By Marjorie Hyer  
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW YORK—No one is keeping a more anxious watch on developments in Iran these days than Victor de Araujo, who is the representative of the International Baha'i community to the United Nations here.

The Baha'i faith, which de Araujo represents and which originated in Iran, has had several bloody conflicts with the dominant Moslem forces there in its more than a century of existence. With the control of Iran now moving toward the more traditional Moslem religious leaders again, de Araujo is particularly anxious about the future.

Baha'is form the largest religious minority in Iran, de Araujo pointed out, but have no legal status in the overwhelmingly Moslem state. While reports reaching de Araujo at his office here across from the U.N. building are confused, the Baha'is in Iran already have suffered during the turmoil there.

Since the revolution began in Iran last winter, according to de Araujo, about 300 Baha'i homes in that country have been burned; 15 adherents of the faith have been wounded and two killed; the publishing house and Baha'i center in Tehran have been padlocked; a Baha'ism clinic in Isfahan was dynamited; orchards belonging to Baha'i farmers have been seized; and holy places of the religion have been seized or desecrated.

Baha'i communities have been terrorized, individuals and families beaten and, de Araujo charged, in some instances driven to Islamic mosques and forced to repent their faith. The bitter antagonism of Moslems to the Baha'i faith has deep theological roots. It is an antagonism, de

Araujo maintains, that also has been exploited for political purposes.

"The founders of the Baha'i faith were (Moslem) reformers within Iran," he explained. "Like Christianity came out of Judaism, the Baha'i faith came out of Islam."

The Baha'i faith began in the mid-19th century. In 1844 a young Persian merchant who came to be known as the Bab disputed Islam's traditional view of the prophet Mohammed as the ultimate manifestation of God to man. The Bab taught that a new prophet would appear to bring a new law and a new era in the history of mankind.

This challenge to the traditional Islamic view of Mohammed was viewed as heresy by Moslems of that day and the Bab was imprisoned and finally executed in 1850.

There followed an era of religious persecution in which, according to Baha'i tradition, about 20,000 disciples of the Bab were killed and others forced into exile.

Thirteen years later, one of these exiles, who had fled to Baghdad, proclaimed himself to be the prophet whom the Bab had foretold. For the next 40 years this prophet, who became known as Baha'ullah, produced the body of writings that Baha'is acknowledge as their scriptures. Though he continued in exile, his followers in Iran, who became known as Baha'is, remained faithful to his teaching. Despite harsh measures by Moslem leaders to wipe out this "heresy," their numbers slowly increased and the faith spread elsewhere.

Today the Baha'is believe, though relatively few in number, are scattered throughout the world. "Today 110 national administrative bodies of Baha'is throughout the world are recognized (by secular government) and

are able to hold property," de Araujo said.

"Traditionally in Islamic countries the Baha'is have had difficulty," he continued. "Yet in Pakistan they are recognized and entitled to hold property. And in Lebanon and Jordan there is more freedom to move about than in Iran."

In Iran Baha'is "were turned into the scapegoats of Islamic society," de Araujo said.

While Baha'is today view their religion as a separate faith, orthodox Moslems still see it as a Moslem heresy that in Iran is accorded no rights, de Araujo said.

"Whenever there are nine or more Baha'is, an administrative body is elected to take care of the affairs of the community," he explained. Baha'is may go abroad to spread their faith

"not as missionaries but as pioneers—they get a job and try to become integrated in the life and culture of that country."

A key tenet of Baha'i belief is the unity of all nations and races and acceptance of the divine origin of all great religions including Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. Baha'is have no clergy, and "teach Baha'i is a teacher," de Araujo said. He denied that Baha'is are aggressively evangelistic though "we do share our faith in the unity of all mankind, but we do not force our convictions on anybody."

According to de Araujo, the bloody history of Baha'is in their native Iran was modified somewhat under the Shah because "the Shah tried to hold the mullahs [Moslem religious leaders] back."

De Araujo vehemently denied charges leveled by some Iranian revolutionaries that Baha'is were politically active in support of the Shah.

"It would be a violation of their religious beliefs to join a national party," he asserted. "There are basic principles involved. Baha'is have the obligation to be loyal to the (national) government wherever they live and obey its laws," he said.

"But because of the Baha'i beliefs in the organic oneness of the whole human race they must never be involved in any political organization of any state, short of the whole world. Any organization short of the oneness of the whole world would be divisive" and contrary to their goal of ultimate world unity, he said.

De Araujo estimated the number of Baha'is in Iran today at "between

300,000 and 500,000 (but) because of the persecution, a lot have not come out directly" to declare their allegiance to the faith.

A basic of the Baha'i faith is education, said de Araujo. "There are almost no illiterate Baha'is, because it is forbidden." As a result he said they have worked themselves up into the ranks of Iranian professions and the economic middle class where they are more visible and, de Araujo feels, more vulnerable to attack.

De Araujo feels that the future security and well being of Baha'is in Iran hinges on there being some legal recognition as a religious faith separate from Islam. "That is why we are very concerned about what might come about with this new constitutional" to be drafted by the new revolutionary government, he said.

### Community Services

**GEORGETOWN GOOD FRIDAY COMMUNITY SERVICE**  
April 13, 12-3 P.M.  
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
3114 & O Streets, N.W.

Participating Churches:  
Christ Episcopal Church  
Dumbarton United Methodist Church  
Georgetown Presbyterian Church  
Grace Episcopal Church  
Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church  
St. John's Episcopal Church

**Interdenominational**

**LARGO COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
DR. H. JACK MORRIS, Minister  
WORSHIP 9:30 & 11 A.M. EVE 7:30 P.M.  
CHURCH SCHOOL 9:30 A.M.  
9:30 & 11 a.m.—"LIVING THE TRIUMPHANT LIFE"  
7:30 p.m.—"THE CANALIA: "OLIVE TO CALVARY"  
1701 Enterprise Rd., Largo-Middlefield, Md.

**Lutheran**

**GEORGETOWN LUTHERAN CHURCH** Northwest  
4900 Conn. Ave. at 36th & Everett St., N.W.  
WORSHIP at 11 a.m. BIBLE STUDY at 9:45 a.m.

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
CONNECTICUT AVENUE  
4900 Conn. Ave. at 36th & Everett St., N.W.  
Henry & Luffberry, D.C.—Pastor

9:00 and 11:00 A.M.—"STIRRINGS OF THE SOUL"  
9:00 Children's Depts. 10:00 Youth and Adult Classes

**CENTER CITY**

**LUTHER PLACE**  
1212 Vermont Ave. at Thomas Circle  
John S. Steinhilber, Pastor  
WORSHIP 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**AUGUSTANA**  
V St. & New Hampshire Ave., N.W. (1 Block E. of 16th)  
Palm Sunday, April 8  
9:30 a.m.—Soprano's Hymnaria  
11:00 a.m.—Worship in Parish Hall  
11:15 a.m.—Procession to Meridian Hill Park for Service of Palm jointly with St. Paul and Augustine R. C. Church  
12:00 noon—Holy Eucharist  
5:00 p.m.—Vespers

### Easter Sunrise Service

Come to the  
**EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE**  
Sponsored by the Arlington Methodist Association  
6:30 A.M. EASTER SUNDAY, 1979  
at  
**IWO JIMA MONUMENT—NETHERLANDS BELL TOWER**  
Special Music by the Arlington Methodist Association  
The Rev. Dr. M. Douglass Newman, Ample Parking by U.S. Park Service & Arlington County Police. If raining, service will be held at First Presbyterian, Corner Sprigg Rd. & N. Vermont in Arlington.

**United Methodist**

**CHRYSLER UNITED Methodist Church**  
7001 Connecticut Ave. April 8—PALM SUNDAY  
FACE TO FACE WITH THE TENET

**United Methodist**

**Lanham United Methodist Church**  
(Whitehall Chapel Rd. off Rt. 430, Beltsville, Pa. 207)  
Rev. John R. Wilson, Pastor  
**PALM SUNDAY**  
9:30-11 a.m.  
"JESUS—SUFFERER"  
Special Music by the Power Group's Brass Ensemble  
Palm Distributed  
7:00 p.m. Evening Service  
**MALDEN THURSDAY**  
7:30 p.m. Terrence Sonensky Choir  
Gene Ippolito, Director  
Holy Eucharist  
**EASTER SUNDAY**  
8 a.m. Sunrise Service  
Music by Youth Choir  
9:30 & 11 a.m.  
"Jesus Faces Death And Life"  
9:30 a.m. Music by Junior Choir  
11 a.m. Music by Junior Choir  
7 p.m. Evening Service

**Palm Sunday Concert**

**Fourth Presbyterian Church**  
3500 River Rd., Bethesda, Md. 320-3400  
APRIL 8 at 5:45 P.M.  
Concert by the Chapel Choir  
by the Westminster College Choir  
Robert Simpson, Conductor

"THERE IS ONLY ONE REAL EGO"

**A FREE Christian Science Lecture by**  
William Millard Correll, C.S.B.  
Member of the C.S. Board of Lecturership

**SATURDAY, APRIL 7 at 3 P.M.**

**STEPHEN DECATUR COMMUNITY CENTER**  
8200 Pinewood Drive, Clinton, Md.  
Child Care De Catena

### Bible Way Church Worldwide

**BISHOP WILLIAMS SAYS: "CHRIST FOR TODAY AND EACH TOMORROW—CHRIST"**

LISTEN TO THE BIBLE WAY CHURCH BROADCAST EACH SUNDAY MORNING 9:30 A.M.—10:30 A.M. RADIO STATION WOL—1430 ON D.C.

VISIT THE BIBLE WAY CHURCH  
1100 N.J. Ave., N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

6:00 A.M. Morning Prayer  
8:00 A.M. Live Broadcast Service  
10:00 A.M. Sunday School  
11:00 A.M. Worship Service  
3:00 P.M. Special Club Service  
6:00 P.M. Youth Service  
8:00 P.M. Ecumenical Service

Glorious Palm Sunday! Worship With Us!

**Bishop Smallwood E. Williams**

**PCUS Presbyterian UPUSA**

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
4101 Nebraska Ave., N.W.  
Dr. Lewis H. Brown, Jr., Dr. Thomas A. Stone, The Rev. Charles E. Rowland  
8:45 & 11 a.m.—Morning Services Phone: 522-2800

"THE BLESSINGS OF COMMUNION"—Dr. From Sunday School for all ages, 9:45. Nursery Care 8:45-9:30 a.m.—CANDLELIGHT VESPER SERVICE BY CHOIR & SOLOISTS  
A 30 p.m.—PALAESTINIAN SUPPER COMMUNION SERVICE—THE INSTITUTION APRIL 12 at 8 p.m.—MORNING 11:30-12:30 P.M. SERVICE OF HEAL COMMUNION  
APRIL 13—GOOD FRIDAY HOLY AGONY AT THE CROSS, 8:00 P.M. at 12:00 P.M.

**NEW YORK AVENUE**  
175 Years in Washington  
1213 New York Avenue N.W. Tel. 293-3700  
Pastors

# Soviet, U.S. Churchmen Call for End to Arms Race

Religious News Service

GENEVA—Twenty top-level church representatives from the United States and the Soviet Union have issued a statement here declaring that their countries' national resources should be released from the arms race and "employed in the development of just, sustainable and participatory societies."

Meeting for an unprecedented ecumenical summit, the church leaders backed the SALT II treaty—although they believe it inadequate—and called for cessation of nuclear arms testing and production.

Rev. M. William Howard, president of the national council. He is an American Baptist minister and works for the Reformed Church in America. The Russian delegation included leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church and four other churches.

The statement, entitled "Choose Life," includes a general section that reiterates opposition to arms proliferation on an economic and political basis, then offers "Theological Reflections" and concludes with an eight-point "Call to Action."

In the "Call to Action," the church representatives called for:

BP000676