

MANCHESTER, N.H. UNION LEADER D. 66,091-MANCHESTER NASHUA METRO AREA

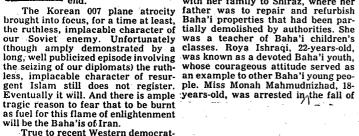
OCT 18 4993

IRAN: Now They Hang Women

ESPITE THIS century's amazing and accelerating technological prowess, so-cially most of the world slides backward, adopting or surrendering to socio-political sys-cms as bad as the worst in history.

Our ships probe the solar system and beyond but who can fathom the souls of the dour bureaucrats who pre-sided at September's Soviet shoot-





ic tradition their predicament has to date aroused little interest. After all they control no oil; they are not revo lutionaries; they have no multi-na-tional corporate ties. Why should the West be (now) more than "deeply con-cerned?" Later, we'll cry at their cerned?" Later, we'll cry at the graves. For this there is precedent.

NO COMMUNITY under Islam NO COMMUNITY under Islam could be less deserving of persecution than the essentially non-political Baha'is. Their religion (unlike Islam) is a peace-loving one. It requires the faithful to abstain from partisan politics, forbids subversive activity, endorses total loyalty and obedience to civil authority. Yet, the 300,000 Iranian Baha'is community faces imminent destruction. It has been told "Before it is too late, the Baha'is should fore it is too late, the Baha'is should recant Bahaism. . . . Otherwise, the day will soon come when the Islamic nation will deal with the Baha'is in accordance with its religious obligations, as it has dealt with other hypocrites who have appeared in more dangerous garb and have religious and satanic gatherings." This statement is to be taken seriously.

Consider the actions of its originator: Hojjatol-Islam Qazai is Religious Judge and President of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz. It was his court which recently sentenced 22 Baha'is to death; in reference to which he said: "... I must say that by the grace of Almighty God, the Muslim nation of Iran, which follows the policies of the Sacred Household (the Inamate) will, God willing, fulfill the prayer of Noah (mentioned in the Koran): 'And Noah said, Lord, leave not a single family of Infidels on the Earth.' "He doesn't intend to.

AMONG THOSE hanged June 18th (1983) in Shiraz: Miss Mahshid Nirumand, age 18, a college chemistry major. She served on the Baha'i youth Consider the actions of its origina-

major. She served on the Baha'i youth committee, the Shiraz Baha'i teaching committee, the Baha'i campus club. And there is Miss Simin Sabiri, early 20s, a victim of persecution long be-

fore her hanging on June 18. Her fami-1982 with her father Yadullah; he was ly of 11 was forced twice to move from one of three Baha'is hanged on March one town to another. In the fall of 1979, the Sabiri home in Marvdasht was destroyed by a fire set by a mob. The Sabiris moved to Bahman. Their home there was looted and set afire. Forced from town, the family settled in Shiraz where Miss Sabiri was arrested for her Baha'i activities (she had been active in the Baha'i educa-tion of children). In March her cousin, Rahmatullah Vafai, was also hanged in Shiraz.

Others: Miss Shirin Dalvan, early 20s; Miss Akhtar Sabet, 19-years-old; Mrs. Tahirih Siyavushi, 32-years-old, were arrested in the fall of 1982 bewere arrested in the fall of 1982 because of their Baha'i activities (including the education of children). Mrs. Siyavushi was the wife of Jamshid, hanged two days earlier. Miss Zarrin Muqimi, early 20s, had moved with her family to Shiraz, where her father was to repair and refurbish Baha'i properties that had been partially demolished by authorities. She was a teacher of Baha'i children's classes. Roya Ishraqi, 22-years-old, was known as a devoted Baha'i youth, whose courageous attitude served as

one of three Baha'is hanged on March 12, 1983 in Shiraz. Miss Mahmudnizhad was beaten before being execut-

WHILE THE President of the United States has appealed to Ayatollah Khomeini and the Congress has passed a resolution condemning the persecution of Baha'is, Iran's policy has not been tempered. Only a worldwide wave of revulsion such as that resulting from the Soviet Korean plane short-down might prevent large scale genocide. This requires major media motivation. Unlikely. Yet here is a cause that is about as pure as you

can get.
To date almost 200 Baha'is have been killed by the Islamic regime; hundreds have been imprisoned; thouhundreds have been imprisoned; thousands denied schooling, employment or pensions due to their religion. Representatives of the Iranian government scoff: "... nonsensical fabrications... custom-made lies." Their U.N. mission explains: "Bahaism is not a religion, but rather, it is a political entity created and nourished by anti-Islamic and Colonial Powers." anti-Islamic and Colonial Powers."
The Iranian U.N. mission (using the theocracy's special logic) states that "... the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran never sentences or pun-

holding a particular ideology or fol-lowing a particular faith . . . although lowing a particular faith . . . although the Constitution does not recognize the Constitution does not recognize Baha'ism as a religion . . . nevertheless, its followers have never been punished . . . merely and simply because of their beliefs." The explanation, of course, is that those "punished" were agents of Israel (and that earlier Bahai were agents of the British Empire). Amnesty International has a different opinion: ". . . they are being presented solely for their religions." being persecuted solely for their religious beliefs.

SINCE ITS founding in 1844, the Baha'i religion has been considered a heresy by Islam (more than 20,000 believers were put to death in the early days); now, in "revolutionary" Iran, once again the mullahs have whipped up a frenzy of anti-Bahai persecution. With no legal standing (the religion is not recognized by the government or Constitution) Baha'is and their property can be attacked by the most vicious clerical and criminal elements cious clerical and criminal elements in Iran with near complete impunity. They need not fear retaliation. The peaceful Baha'is' religion forbids it.

Ray Saidel is a research association at The Center For International Secu-

rity, Washington, D.C.