

Khomeini legalizes inhuman butchery

by Judith Wyer

Just over a year ago, the dictatorship of Ruhollah Khomeini adopted a so-called Islamic legal code based on *qissass* (the Farsi word for retribution) which has increased the already barbarically high number of executions in Iran. The *qissass* system has produced over 2,500 executions, many of them against political opponents of Khomeini. According to a group of Iranian lawyers who have just exposed the *qissass* system, mutilations such as severing the left arm—to which 1,700 Iranians have been subjected—are also common forms of punishment. So inhuman is Khomeini's form of justice that his own Islamic Republican Party refused to allow the Iranian press to write about it.

Death for 'thinking evil thoughts'

Amir Taheri of the *Sunday London Times* reports that among the crimes for which such punishment has been dealt are "insulting the leader," "reading heretical books," and "thinking evil thoughts." Prostitution, female adultery, and homosexuality are among the most harshly punished crimes. Public hangings of women are not uncommon today in Iran, including pregnant women. A murderer can go scot free, however, by paying one of the mullahs (Shi'ite Muslim priests) who act as judges about \$300.

Death-worship is the ideological underpinning of Khomeini's fundamentalism. Khomeini himself has affirmed that millions of Iranians "corrupted" by the influence of the previous regime, be eliminated. The deployment of thousands of children and adolescents as cannon fodder to the four-year-long Iran-Iraq war has proved to be Khomeini's primary means of conducting genocide.

Martyrdom has become a national cult in Khomeini's Iran. During the fifth anniversary of his takeover of Iran in February, a fountain of red-colored water representing the blood of Iran's martyrs south of Teheran was unveiled. That month, the Islamic regime announced it was expanding a cemetery outside the central Iranian city of Isfahan to hold 1 million martyrs.

Iran is spending millions of dollars to expedite the burial of its dead. Since the upsurge in fighting with Iraq two months ago, Iran has increased its imports of cloth from Turkey for funeral shrouds. A textiles factory in Izmir reported in March that it sold its entire production quota to meet Iranian orders.

Since early February, the Khomeini regime has escalated its kidnapping of young boys to send to the front. In February the legal draft age in Iran was lowered to 16 years of age. Iranian sources report that there has been an outcry from parents of young boys in Teheran who have disappeared from elementary schools only to turn up on the war front. Boys from the fourth grade of several Teheran schools were sent to "logistical training."

Taheri reports another phenomenon as grotesque as it is bestial: Since the imposition of Khomeini's *qissass* system, up to 700 of Khomeini's Islamic judges now jet around Iran holding makeshift courts, often at airports, where summary executions are sometimes conducted on the spot. Ayatollah Khalkali, who earned the title of "hanging judge" for his scores of executions just after the Khomeini takeover, holds the record for having convicted and executed 53 prisoners in one night, during a "stopover" in the Kurdish town of Sanandaj.

Recent reports from human-rights activists indicate that there are about 400 prisons and torture centers administered by the likes of Khalkali, throughout Iran. Despite efforts to expedite executions there are still an estimated 100,000 prisoners being held, including women and children. According to Iranian exile Khandran Aryan, who testified at the just concluded 40th session of the U.N. Human Rights Commission (UNHRC), there are many infants born to imprisoned Iranian women. These children later develop rickets and paralysis from malnutrition and poor sanitation.

The UNHRC session marked the first strong U.N. condemnation of Khomeini's crimes. But the human rights movement, which played a major role in ousting the Shah, only raised a voice of protest once Khomeini's crimes became so grievous that they could no longer be ignored. The silence which has predominated up to now contributed in no small measure to the deaths of as many as 500,000 Iranians under Khomeini's Dark Ages dictatorship.

The chemical-weapons question

At the same time, the United Nations, the U.S. State Department, and other bodies have upheld Iran's claims that Iraq is using chemical weapons banned by international agreement since shortly after World War I (see *EIR*, March 27). But, according to the French magazine *VSD*, there is evidence that some of the Iranian patients reported to have been stricken by this chemical weapons may have been subject to attacks from the Iranian regime itself! Some of the patients in European hospitals, according to *VSD*, were attacked by Khomeini's forces as members of the opposition.

Moreover, in early March, the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Hashemi Rafsanajani, publicly stated that Iran had the ability to make chemical weapons, would do so, and would use them against Iraq if Iraq's alleged use of them did not stop. Thus the uproar about Iraqi weapons may have been a pretext for Iran's broad-scale use of such capabilities.