

**Emerging From Obscurity:  
The Response of  
the Iranian Baha'i Community to Persecution:  
1978-1982**

by  
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The nature of persecution, whether religious or political, has prompted scholars and serious writers to consider usually one of four approaches.<sup>1</sup> Martyrology is a legitimate enterprise which "preserves and memorializes the tragic events" ensuing from the persecution.<sup>2</sup> A second approach would describe the resistance, whether active or passive, in the face of relentless oppression.<sup>3</sup> The study of specific policies and the mechanism of destruction provides a third avenue,<sup>4</sup> while the human face of the persecuted group itself constitutes yet a fourth view.<sup>5</sup> The last approach is essentially an ethnographic account of the day-to-day living of the victims of persecution. Available materials when considering the recently intensified persecution of the Baha'i community in Iran lend themselves to a thorough study of the social context in which a persecuted religious minority finds itself. The theme of this paper is to demonstrate how efforts of the Shi'ih authorities to politicize the Baha'i situation have largely failed and to explain why the Baha'i community has continued to exist despite the pressures of persecution. As result of these events, the Baha'i community has emerged from social obscurity.

Throughout its 138-year history, since 1844, the Baha'i Faith in Iran has known persecution. There is a considerable body of literature which addresses the nature of opposition to this Faith. *Nabil's Narrative*<sup>6</sup> provides eyewitness accounts of persecutions in the 1844-1853 period, as does Count Gobineau's well-known work.<sup>7</sup> However, not many reports exist to furnish us with accounts of the persecutions that occurred between 1853 and 1921.<sup>8</sup> The 1921-1979 period, also relatively little documented, was more recently covered in a lengthy article by D. Martin in *Middle East Focus*.<sup>9</sup> All these documented materials show that the basis of the persecution lies squarely in the hands of the Shi'ih clergy. With the heightened wave of persecution since the declaration of the Islamic Republic in late 1978, a good number of authentic documents pertaining to both persecutors and the persecuted have come to our attention.<sup>10</sup> In 1982, three books are being published as complete accounts of the persecutions.<sup>11</sup> All of these accounts serve to underscore the fact that the persecution of the Baha'i Community in Iran has been continuous, regardless of regime or time. One report states the following:

The Baha'i Community as a whole . . . suffered sustained and systematic persecution under the Shah, and its members were relegated to second-class citizens, a practice which the present regime has easily inherited.<sup>12</sup>

It is important to stress the point that the current outbreak of religious persecution against the Baha'is should not be simply regarded as some unfortunate outcome of the revolution in Iran.

The main elements of the more recent persecutions are actually derived from what has happened earlier: a thorough denial of all common civil and human rights. Baha'i marriage is not recognized and thus a wife is open to prosecution for prostitution. The institutions of the Baha'i Faith have also been denied the right to function as legitimate corporate bodies. No public religious services are permitted, Baha'i schools have been closed down, and Baha'i literature could not be published or distributed. Baha'is, who are imprisoned or executed under the current wave of persecution, are "typically charged with 'spreading corruption throughout the world, spying for Zionist forces, promoting U.S. imperialism and sympathizing with the former regime.'"<sup>13</sup> These charges are particularly offensive to a religious community which, despite provocation, continues to be apolitical. The apolitical nature of the Baha'i Community is not only apparent from its teachings,<sup>14</sup> but also from various researched reports assembled by disinterested parties.<sup>15</sup> It was this same apolitical attitude which led Baha'is not to join the former Shah's Rastakhiz Party in 1976. The Shah had established a one-party system as a means of removing opposition, and many Iranians who are associated with the present regime were members of this Party.

The current wave of persecution is based on a three-point plan which aims at strangulating and, eventually, completely extirpating the Iranian Baha'i Community from Persian soil. This has led some analysts to look upon this plan as the "Final Solution."<sup>16</sup> This plan involves a) a confiscation or destruction of Baha'i Holy Places and properties and the freezing or seizing of assets owned by Baha'is, b) the arrest and execution of prominent Baha'is and c) the intimidation of the rank-and-file membership. The statistics available provide evidence that the persecution is indeed substantial. There are over 10,000 homeless Baha'is, at least 150 are held in prison without charges, 113 have been executed, and at least 14 have disappeared or have been kidnapped.<sup>17</sup> It would indeed be a complete misunderstanding of the Iranian situation if one were to equate the severe persecution of the Baha'is with the restrictions imposed upon the other minority faiths, which are all legally recognized. While these latter faiths have rights enjoined upon them as "people of the Book," the Baha'is are ostracized, and persecuted, to the extreme.

## **Baha'i Holy Places, Properties and Assets**

The denial of recognition as a minority religion under the new Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran<sup>18</sup> has abetted unrestrained action on the part of mobs and official elements to confiscate and destroy all Baha'i properties. Baha'i holding companies—necessary institutions in Iran because official Baha'i bodies have never been recognized—were completely sequestered, and this paved the way for seizure of all Baha'i property. Local and national assets have been frozen, including a Baha'i hospital, clinic and an agricultural institute. Baha'i cemeteries have been destroyed. Religious sites have been confiscated, razed to the ground or occupied. One of the most sacred Holy Places in the Baha'i world, the House of the Bab<sup>19</sup> in Shiraz was ravaged to the ground despite assurances to the contrary by the authorities.

## **Arrest and execution of prominent Baha'is**

In various localities throughout Iran, members of local governing bodies have been summarily arrested and executed, and its recently reconstituted membership met the same fate. Complaints from Baha'i governing bodies have not been registered by the authorities because these bodies are not officially recognized and are thus seen as "non-existent."

## **Intimidation of rank and file**

The purpose of the persecution is to cut off to all Baha'is the basic source of such fundamental needs as food, shelter, and personal security. Iranian institutions and authorities have embarked on institutional persecution of the membership. Students have had to return scholarships, schools have expelled 70,000 Baha'i children, <sup>21</sup> students' diplomas have been denied after completion of training or studies, students have been harassed and attempts at brainwashing have occurred, and pensions have been denied to both pensioners and widows. Hundreds of Baha'is have been affected in the educational, public health, and civil service sectors. The denial of trade licenses and the refusal to issue birth certificates further exacerbates the Baha'i situation. The recent identity card re-registration program<sup>22</sup> ensures that citizens can acquire the staples of livelihood and fuel. The Baha'i Community, however, has been denied this right.

What the institutions cannot effect, the fanatical mobs have been empowered, through silence and inaction on the part of authorities, to accomplish. A campaign to inflict physical harm to individual Baha'is and their families with the purpose of creating confusion and fear is underway.<sup>23</sup> Injury through traffic "accidents," setting fire to people, raping, forcing Baha'is to recant, abducting children, and killing by stoning, hanging, beating, or torture portray the images of a pogrom. Even the dead are not untouched by this

violence. Many executed Baha'is are unceremoniously, often clandestinely, buried. Graves and cemeteries have been desecrated and destroyed and bodies disinterred, looted and burned.

### **Who is implicated?**

The organizational responsibility of this persecution seems to lie in the hands of the Tablighat-i-Islami ("Society for the Propagation of Islam"),<sup>24</sup> a fundamentalist Muslim group whose chief designs are to infiltrate and destroy the Baha'i Community, first under Savak during the reign of the Shah,<sup>25</sup> and currently working with the blessings of the present regime. Another organization, the "Foundation for the Dispossessed" (Bunyad-i-Mustad'ifin), confiscates Baha'i properties and turns them to various charitable purposes.

A surfeit of official agencies provide the legal framework under which the activities of these organizations take place.<sup>26</sup> The Iranian Supreme Court, the Revolutionary Court, the Supreme Judicial Council in Tehran have issued statements detrimental to the Baha'i Community. A host of informal groups have been spurred by these statements: "armed men," angry mobs, crowds, "masked men," Revolutionary Guards, local Revolutionary Komitehs, Chiefs of villages, and preachers in mosques.

The inattentive observer in Iran would not be aware of the scale of persecution. The media are wont to use code-words, e.g., "the misled and heretical sect," to denote the Baha'i community. The meaning of such phrases is, nonetheless, clear to all. *Etela'at*, a leading Iranian daily, regularly publishes official orders affecting the Baha'is.<sup>27</sup> Only in the past years have observers, particularly the Western media, been mindful of the Baha'i situation in Iran. While the media were initially innocent of the nature and extent of the persecution, they too are now refusing to politicize the persecution.<sup>28</sup> Rather than being regarded as a "heretical sect," the Baha'i community is now seen by analysts in its own light, namely as an independent religious community, which is being persecuted purely on religious grounds.

These more progressive Western interpretations of the Baha'i situation in Iran also indicate that the Baha'i community, although suffering extensively under the burden of oppression, has shown signs of vigor and, in fact, renewed spiritual devotion. For example, *Le Monde*<sup>29</sup> recounts the story of a Mr. Kamran Samini who had the opportunity of leaving Iran, but refused to do so because of his willingness to stay to assist his fellow believers. That same report further states that "The Baha'is are not deprived of spiritual direction, even now." Another account, in the *Globe and Mail*<sup>30</sup> relates the story of a Dr. Samandari, a practising medical doctor in Canada, who returned to Iran to "help his countrymen," knowing that he would be arrested and possibly executed which happened soon after

his arrival. There is also the account of Professor Manuchihr Hakim, a medical practitioner and recipient of numerous awards for his discoveries in anatomy and founder of the Baha'i hospital in Tehran, who had returned to Iran anticipating death. Other expatriate Baha'is have returned to Iran, despite warnings of Amnesty International.<sup>31</sup> One newspaper reported that the Baha'is "are largely determined to remain in the land where their Faith was founded."<sup>32</sup>

Baha'i sources of information also indicate this spiritual rededication of the Persian Baha'i Community. For example, in a recent communication to all Canadian believers, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Canada spoke of the "courage, steadfastness, and unity which has suffused the Baha'i Community in Iran."<sup>33</sup> A telex from the international Baha'i governing body, stated:

... thousands of Baha'is, unmindful of consequences, have courageously appealed by letter or cable to various high officials complaining about barbaric acts, gross injustice and revealed their names and addresses.<sup>34</sup>

The magnitude of such personal behavior is also reflected by Baha'is who have been daily harassed by looters, as for instance the Baha'i families in Yazd who treat the looters as children who want to be satisfied with playthings.<sup>35</sup> Other examples of this behavior are found in the prisons, where Baha'is are known to have instituted programs of benefit to the prison population as a whole, or have assisted prison guards with their personal problems. In areas where there is a Baha'i refugee problem, the Baha'is have been such a cohesive group that they have even refused help of food from their persecutors.<sup>36</sup>

This form of resistance corresponds to the organized activities of the Baha'i communities in Iran. For example, the Baha'i Community of Yazd established a Baha'i program of study after the dismissal of over 100 children from schools.<sup>37</sup> In other reports Baha'i communities are stated to have coordinated activities to alleviate pressures on afflicted believers by providing clothing, food, heating facilities, and spiritual counseling. The elected bodies of communities continue to meet and their Committees continue to function.<sup>38</sup>

This creative response to persecution has its effects on the non-Baha'i society in Iran. For example, attendance of a large number of people of all religious backgrounds is characteristic at funerals of slain Baha'is and non-Baha'i spouses of Baha'is have become Baha'is. The Baha'i Community in Iran is responding dynamically and with spiritual elan, despite the methodological plan to uproot the entire Baha'i Community by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. We are led to consider why the persecution is not achieving its ultimate foal of readicating the Baha'i Community. Two factors account for the lack of success in uprooting the Baha'i Community.

There are "internal" factors which relate to the distinctive character of the Baha'i Community, as well as "external" reasons, i.e., related to the Iranian political and social climate beyond the pale of that Community.

### **Internal Factors**

One of the chief underpinnings of the regime's strategy to undercut the Baha'i community reveals a lack of comprehension of the distinctive system of governance of that Community. This strategy involves "cutting the head off the Baha'i Community." Presumably this refers to the "leaders" of the religious community.

Leadership in the Baha'i Community is vested in elected bodies on the local and national levels. Every year in April, the Baha'i Community elects from its membership nine adult believers who can serve on the governing body. The qualities required by members being considered by the electorate refer to the person's devotion, experience, loyalty, and well-trained mind. There is no electioneering nor campaigning on one's own, or someone else's, behalf. Leadership is vested in this council as a whole, not in any one specific individual or individuals who are serving on it. No individual serving on such a body has any powers extending beyond the confines of that body. The "Spiritual Assembly" renders decisions only when it is in session. In the case of the Iranian experience, the national governing council's membership has been replaced as soon as its previous members have been arrested or executed. This process frustrates all efforts by the authorities to do away with Baha'i "leadership."

The diverse membership of the 500,000 Baha'i Community is another consideration that mitigates against full-scale attempts to uproot the Baha'i Community. The ratio of Baha'i/non-Baha'i population is about 1:70. Statistically, this means there is at least one Baha'i for every 11 or 12 households.<sup>39</sup> Many non-Baha'i families will therefore be able to see directly the impact of persecution within a circle of about a dozen families. It is unlikely that all families are fundamentally and radically opposed to the Baha'is, given the extent of personal knowledge that exists about individual Baha'is and their families. It is more probable that persecution might be most serious in areas where Baha'is constitute a considerable minority in the population.

A powerful source of inspiration which explains the current dynamism in the Baha'i Community is the history of the persecuted minority itself. The Baha'is have spiritual recourse to some of the most noble and enduring examples of unflinching heroism of their ancestors, at least 20,000, going back 138 years. This inheritance of the past serves as a stumbling block to fanatical elements in society at large to create a timid religious community. One commentary on the Baha'i situation stated that:

... because the Baha'i faith took root in the martyrdom of its founders, such persecutions have played a crucial role in galvanizing the Baha'is into action.<sup>40</sup>

The willingness of Baha'is to sacrifice their own lives has already been alluded to. Although much in the way of material goods have been taken away from the Baha'is, it has not daunted the spirit of the Baha'is. The spirit of sacrifice does not only pertain to material possessions, but also deals with the physical fact of torture and execution. Few Baha'is have recanted. Those who have, have been scorned by the oppressors.

Finally, *the abstinence from political activity by the Baha'i Community* has served to expose the falsity of the regime's efforts to politicize the Baha'i issue. No charge made by the authorities has ever been substantiated with regard to political involvement.<sup>41</sup> The teachings of the Baha'i Faith are very clear on this point. The only Baha'i who involved himself with politics, General Sani'i, the father of Amir A. Hoveida, former Prime Minister, was expelled from the Baha'i Community because of this action.

### **External Factors**

Four elements constitute the external factors that explain the continued existence of the Baha'i Community. First, the present regime has been constantly distracted from the Baha'i Community, by civil strife and warfare. Various indigenous groups vie for attention and resources, such as the Arab minority in Southern Iran and the Kurds in Northern Iran. The war with Iraq provides another distraction that has prevented the Baha'i Community from receiving still more vicious blows. The regime's attention has also been diverted to a crackdown on intellectuals, writers, leftists, and such minorities as the Azerbaijanis and the Sunni Muslims in the South.

A second factor which has prevented the authorities from pursuing Baha'is more relentlessly is the economic upheaval of the country as a whole by the anachronistic economic policies created by the religious leaders of Iran. Much energy has had to be devoted to attempting to solve the problems arising out of these policies.

The admiration and respect from Muslims themselves, both those who are personal friends of the Baha'is, as well as those who have had business dealings with the Baha'is have undercut in some cases the workings of fanatical mobs and persecutors. Muslim neighbours are known to have opened doors and offered their home to some of the havenless Baha'is, albeit furtively. "No one," however, "is willing to [publicly] take up the defense of the Baha'is within Iran."<sup>42</sup> Officials in the administrative hierarchy have also opposed, in some instances, measures levelled against Baha'is, at the expense of firing or demotion.<sup>43</sup> The Baha'i Community of Iran has existed for several generations in that country, weaving their lives and teachings into the fabric of Iranian society.

Finally, the efforts of the community of nations, and the public media, have, to some extent, softened the wave of persecution. Individual governments and parliaments, such as the Canadian Parliament,<sup>44</sup> Britain, Australia,<sup>45</sup> and the Netherlands,<sup>46</sup> Germany,<sup>47</sup> the European Economic Community and Parliament,<sup>48</sup> and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe<sup>49</sup> have presented the Iranian authorities with international opinion on the situation. Subsequently, agencies of the United Nations, including the Human Rights Commission,<sup>50</sup> the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,<sup>51</sup> the Economic and Social Council<sup>52</sup> and the Third Committee of the General Assembly<sup>53</sup> have issued statements and resolutions regarding the safety of the Iranian Baha'i Community. Furthermore, the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control<sup>54</sup> also examined the issue of "the practice of summary executions and arbitrary executions." The United Nations Human Rights Committee—consisting of 18 experts to monitor the performance of states who are parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—is also presently (April 1982) closely following the Baha'i situation.

The substantial number of human rights organizations, most notably Amnesty International, as well as religious groups concerned with human rights, such as the United Church of Canada,<sup>55</sup> and the International Association for Religious Freedom,<sup>56</sup> which have protested the treatment of the Iranian Baha'is confirms the widespread impact the persecution of the Iranian Baha'is on the world as a whole. Perhaps one of the most significant statements was made by the Federation of Protestant Churches in Switzerland.<sup>57</sup> This organization was one of the first to have conducted thorough research as to the apolitical status of the Baha'i community prior to issuing its statement.

'The public attention given to the Baha'i situation has been followed by declarations of support from the academic community, particularly the thirteen Heads of Colleges in Oxford, and the Master of Balliol College, Oxford.

These developments, along with those occurring at governmental levels, have provided the means by which the Baha'i community in Iran, and indeed in the world as a whole, is gradually emerging from obscurity.

## **Conclusion**

This brief examination of the persecution of the Baha'is in Iran indicates how the efforts of the Shi'ih clergy have largely failed in politicizing the Baha'i situation. The persecution has a religious base. The modern teachings of the Baha'i Faith, such as the equality of women and men, the harmony of science and religion, the oneness of mankind, and universal education are the sources of discrimination of persecution. For example, the teachings on the equality of women and men have been misconstrued as the basis



for prostitution and having "illegitimate" children, resulting in "proper" penalties, according to the Muslim Law. With the increasing levels of persecution and in light of the Faith's modern teachings, the charges against the Baha'is are becoming increasingly absurd.

Secondly, the current Baha'i situation shows how vulnerable minority groups provide convenient scapegoats during times of social and economic upheaval.<sup>58</sup>

What would be generally applicable in the lessons derived from the Baha'i persecutions in Iran? It is this: civil, political, cultural and economic freedoms are often based on precarious sentiments and social consensus, even in "enlightened" countries. Fuller knowledge of minorities whose basic rights to exist even are called into question provides a good antidote against the precariousness of leaders or powerful groups to dispense with freedom of conscience. Every instance of persecution, such as the Baha'i case in Iran, becomes the touchstone of an emerging universal moral order. The need to establish such an order is becoming increasingly apparent.

These theoretical and moral issues are alone sufficient grounds to require a complete cessation of oppression. There is also an empirical fact, which has been naively ignored by persecutors—persecution permits a religious community to emerge from obscurity. Never in the history of the Baha'i world community has world opinion and knowledge of the aims and teachings of the Baha'i Faith been more forcefully acknowledged than during the current wave of persecution in Iran. The "no-win" situation which presents itself to the persecutors must bring little comfort to those responsible for the oppression. The "problematique" was already acknowledged in the Baha'i Writings a long time ago:

... they [i.e., oppressors] thought that violence and interference would cause extinction and silence and lead to suppression and oblivion; where as interference in matters of conscience causes stability and firmness and attracts the attention of men's sight and souls; which fact has received experimental proof many times and often.<sup>59</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Isaiah Truck, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), pp. ix-x.
2. Some Baha'i examples: Martha Root, *Tahirih the Pure*, Rev. ed., originally published 1939 (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1981); Gloria Faizi, *Fire on the Mountain Top* (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1973); 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Memorials of the Faithful* (Wilmette, Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1971); Kazem Kazemzadeh, "Varqa and Ruhullah: Deathless in Martyrdom," *World Order* vol. 9, no. 2 (Winter 1974-5), pp. 29-44; Muhammad Labib, *The Seven Martyrs of Hurmuzak*, trans. Moojan Momen (Oxford: George Ronald, 1981); Dimitri Marianoff and Marzieh Gail, "Thrills of Yearning Love," *World Order*, vol. 6, no. 4 (Summer 1972), pp. 7-42.

3. Again, some Baha'i illustrations: William Sears, *Release the Sun* (Wilmette, Ill: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1960); Nabil-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative of the Early Days of the Baha'i Revelation*, trans. and ed. Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette, Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1932); Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1957); Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, *Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*, 9th ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), pp. 131-275; Christine Hakim, *Les Baha'is: Victoire sur la Violence* (Lausanne, Switzerland: Editions Favre, 1982).
4. A Baha'i instance of this approach is Douglas Martin, "The Baha'is of Iran Under the Pahlavi Regime, 1921-1929," *Middle East Focus*, vol. 4, no. 6 (March, 1982), pp. 7-17; Geoffrey Nash, *Iran's Secret Pogrom* (Suffolk: Neville Spearman, 1982).
5. Some Baha'i accounts of this genre can be found in: A. Q. Faizi, trans. and ed., *Stories from the Delight of Hearts* (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1980); Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway* (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1940); William Sears, *The Baha'is in Iran: A Cry from the Heart* (Oxford; George Ronald, 1982).
6. Nabil-i-A'zam, op. cit.
7. Gobineau, op. cit.
8. Effendi, op. cit., pp. 104-150, 296-299.
9. Martin, op. cit.
10. See Baha'i International Community, *The Baha'is in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority* (New York: June, 1981), and *Update* (November, 1981).
11. William Sears, *A Cry from the Heart*, op. cit.; Geoffrey Nash, op. cit.; Christine Hakim, op. cit.
12. *Times* (London), 30 August 1980.
13. *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 31 July 1980.
14. Baha'i International Community, *The Baha'is in Iran*, op. cit, pp. 11-76.
15. *Times* (London), 15 July 1980; *Toronto Star*, 26 December 1979; the European Parliament also produced a White Paper on this subject (European Parliament, "Minutes of proceedings of the sitting of Friday, 19 September 1980).
16. *Sunday Times* (London), 20 September 1981.
17. Baha'i International Community, *Chronological Summary of Individual Acts of Persecution against Baha'is in Iran* (from August 1978) (New York: November, 1981), 34 pp.; *Sunday Times* (London), 20 September 1981 reports that there are 166 executed.
18. A listing of disabilities as result of the Constitutional neglect of the Baha'is is found in Baha'i International Community, *The Baha'is in Iran*, op. cit., pp. 17-19.
19. The Bab, whose name signifies "Gate [to a new age]," is the Forerunner of the Baha'i Faith. He proclaimed his mission in this house in 1844 and was put to death by the Persian religious and secular authorities in 1850.
20. *The New York Times*, 6 August 1981.
21. *Sunday Times* (London), 20 September 1981.
22. "Recant or Else," *The Economist*, 23 January 1982, and *The Guardian*, 26 January 1982.
23. See, e.g., United Nations Commission of Human Rights, E/CN.4/ Sub.2/L.778 of 2 September 1981 which categorically refers to this physical threat against individual Baha'is.
24. *Times* (London), 15 July 1980.
25. A document was "published on 9 June 1980 in *Mujahid*, one of the dailies in Iran, [and] clearly indicates that Tablighat-i-Islami... was supported by the Shah's secret police, SAVAK, in its anti-Baha'i activities" (Martin, op. cit.).
26. "Editorial," *The New York Times*, 27 April 1981, and *Times* (London), 15 July 1980.

27. The 27 June 1980 issue of *Etela'at*, for example, carried a governmental order dismissing all Baha'i employees.
28. Editorials, news and feature articles have appeared in all major newspapers of the West, incl., *Washington Post*, *Le Monde*, *The New York Times*, *Sunday Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Financial Times*, *Die Welt*, and others. The television media have also recently adopted a more neutral, and therefore more penetrating view, such as Geoffrey Nash's W-5 Program, "Iran's Secret Pogrom," as well as CBS and BBC.
29. *Le Monde*, 1 January 1982.
30. *Globe and Mail*, 31 July 1980. The story also appeared in *Newsday*, 26 September 1981, p. 2, Part II.
31. *Maclean's*, 13 July 1981, p. 47.
32. *Washington Post*, February, 1980.
33. Letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Canada to all Canadian Baha'is, 7 January 1982.
34. Telex from the Universal House of Justice, Halifax, to the Baha'i world, 9 March 1982.
35. "Excerpt from a Letter from Yazd," February, 1982, published in *Canadian News*, recounts several stories of this nature: "When they [the Baha'is of Yazd] are looted of their property, furniture and belongings they part with them as they would with outworn dolls and playthings . . . They shower love upon those who come to take away their belongings as might an affectionate and indulgent parent who with a smile will give a worthless toy or plaything to a naughty child . . ."
36. *Living*, a California daily, reported this, 19 January 1982, p. B5 and 7.
37. "Excerpt from a Letter from Yazd," February, 1982.
38. Various reports distributed by the Universal House of Justice, Summer, 1979.
39. We assume an average household of circa 6.
40. *Maclean's*, 13 July 1981, p. 47.
41. The continued existence of the Baha'i community cannot be explained in terms of the alleged power possessed by the Baha'is. The Baha'is under the regime of the Shah did not possess influence, although a number did occupy prominent scientific and administrative posts. In any event, the Baha'i community also consists of rural peoples and as such never have enjoyed any privileges.
42. *Le Monde*, 1 January 1982, p. 2.
43. For example, one headmaster of a school in Yazd decided to resign after receiving the order to dismiss his Baha'i students. (He absented himself from school, later.) "Excerpt from a Letter from Yazd," February, 1982.
44. Two unanimous Parliamentary resolutions and statements.
45. A Resolution in the House of Representatives, 25 March 1981.
46. Netherland Parliament, July, 1980.
47. Heads of State or other governments or parliaments which have made statements include France, Belgium, Luxembourg, India, Switzerland, Western Samoa and Fiji.
48. The European Parliament passed on 19 September 1980 a Resolution urging governments to impose trade embargoes and urging the Iranian government to recognize the Baha'i Community. A second Resolution was passed on 10 April 1982.
49. This Assembly issued a written declaration, 29 September 1980, urging the Committee of Ministers to make urgent representations to the Iranian authorities. On 29 January 1982, the Assembly tabled a full report by Mr. M Dejardin. A parallel body of the Assembly, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, also issued a statement on 25 November 1981 expressing concern over the Baha'is.

50. A four-nation draft Resolution (Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands) was passed on 9 March 1981. On 11 March 1982, the Commission adopted a third Resolution, requesting the Secretary General to "establish direct contact with the Government of Iran . . . to ensure that the Baha'is are guaranteed full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms."
51. A Resolution was passed on 10 September 1980 concerning the safety of Baha'is in Iran. A second Resolution (Resolution 8 [xxxiv]) requesting the Secretary-General of the United Nations to gather relevant information.
52. A ten-nation Resolution was adopted on 29-30 April 1981, drawing attention to the plight of the Baha'is.
53. This Committee tabled the Iranian situation for discussion by the United Nations General Assembly.
54. At its 7th session, March, 1982.
55. Executive of the General Council of the United Church of Canada met in plenary on November 17-20, 1981 and passed a Resolution. This statement, forwarded to the Canadian Government, was issued entirely at the initiative of the Church.
56. Other human rights organizations include the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, the Pacific Conference of Churches, and Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (based in France).
57. 12 September 1979.
58. Firuz Kazemzadeh ("For Baha'is in Iran, A Threat of Extinction," *The New York Times*, op. ed., 6 August 1981, p. 23) mentions how the Iranian regime accused the Baha'is during the 1906-1911 revolution of having formed a Baha'i plot behind the Persian constitutional movement. Such charges have no backing in fact.
59. Abdu'l-Baha quoted by the Universal House of Justice, "Letter to the Baha'i World," 26 January 1982, p. 2.