

# Freedom of religion on trial in Morocco



## *The Nador Case*

January 1963\*

\* [https://www.h-net.org/~bahai/diglib/books/A-E/B/BIC/Morocco\\_Case\\_1963.pdf](https://www.h-net.org/~bahai/diglib/books/A-E/B/BIC/Morocco_Case_1963.pdf)

On December 15, 1962, the Regional Tribunal at Nador, Morocco, condemned three men to death, five to life imprisonment, and one to ten years. The charges on which they had been tried included rebellion, formation of an association of criminals, and offenses against religion. The prosecution, a section of the press, and certain government officials claimed that the condemned, all members of the Bahá'í Faith, had conspired to overthrow the government, subvert religion, and disrupt public order.

The harshness of the sentences, the cruel treatment of the accused during the pre-trial investigation, which lasted for eight months, the dignified courage which the defendants displayed in the court, where all rules of judicial procedure were disregarded, and, above all, clear evidence that the prosecution of these Bahá'ís of Nador was motivated solely by religious considerations, attracted world attention to this obscure North African town.

Out of a welter of conflicting statements and claims there emerged the clear outlines of a case which can be described by no other term than genocide.

The first signs of an approaching storm appeared in December, 1961, when *Al Alam*, organ of the Istiqlal (Independence) Party and one of Morocco's most influential newspapers, carried an article deploring the alleged decline of Islam:

When we look into the factors which led to this [the decline of Islam], we discover the preaching missionaries are the outstanding factor.

There are the Christian missionaries with their various means. Then the Jewish schools which accept Moslem students and convert them into devoted Jews and send them to Israel.

These are the movements which have schools and institutions, but there is another community which was driven out of the Islamic East and came to Morocco with its destructive ideas. These are the Bahá'ís.<sup>1</sup>

The article proceeded to offer its own exposition of what the Bahá'í Faith is and how it established itself in Morocco by attracting the youth. *Al Alam* concluded:

They added, by their deeds, another group to the previous ones, and we have now the Christians, the Jews, and the Bahá'ís. All this is taking place and no one raises a hand to defend [Islam]. Where are our men of religion? They are asleep.<sup>2</sup>

1 *Al Alam*, Casablanca, December 7, 1961.

2 *Al Alam*, October 3, 1962.

This inflammatory article evoked an immediate response from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, which issued a statement in reply to the *Al Alam* article of December 7, 1961, thanking all those who had written about the “nefarious” activity of the missionaries and assuring the public that the Ministry was not idle, but was gathering information on all such activities throughout Morocco.<sup>1</sup>

The attack on the Bahá’í Faith in Morocco came as a surprise not only to the members of that religion, but to the general public as well. Neither its teachings, nor the numbers of its followers in Morocco seemed to warrant such a bitter attack. For more than a decade there existed in Morocco groups of Bahá’ís who enjoyed a good reputation in their communities, contributed to the well-being of their fellow citizens and practiced their religion without giving offense to anyone. The very nature of the Bahá’í Faith is such as to make its followers seek mutual understanding, friendship, and brotherhood with members of all religions. This is clearly stated by the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith:

The fundamental principle enunciated by Bahá’u’lláh, the followers of His Faith firmly believe, is that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is a continuous and progressive process, that all the great religions of the world are divine in origin, that their basic principles are in complete harmony, that their aims and purposes are one and the same, that their teachings are but facets of one truth, that their functions are complementary, that they differ only in the non-essential aspects of their doctrines, and that their missions represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of human society. ...

The Bahá’í Faith upholds the unity of God, recognizes the unity of His Prophets, and inculcates the principle of the oneness and wholeness of the entire human race. ... It, moreover, enjoins upon its followers the primary duty of an unfettered search after truth, condemns all manner of prejudice and superstition, declares the purpose of religion to be the promotion of amity and concord, proclaims its essential harmony with science, and recognizes it as the foremost agency for the pacification and orderly progress of human society. It unequivocally maintains the principle of equal rights, opportunities, and privileges for men and women, insists on compulsory education, eliminates extremes of poverty and wealth, abolishes the institution of priesthood, prohibits slavery, asceticism, mendicancy and monasticism, prescribes monogamy, discourages divorce, emphasizes the necessity of strict obedience to one’s government, exalts any work performed in the spirit of service to the level of worship, urges either the creation or the selection of an auxiliary international language, and delineates the outlines of those institutions that must establish and perpetuate the general peace of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

Early in 1962, the Bahá’ís of Morocco sustained the first blows directed

1 *Al Alam*, December 8, 1961.

2 Shoghi Effendi, *The Faith of Bahá’u’lláh*, Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1959, Wilmette, pp. 6–8.

against them solely on the basis of their religious beliefs. Faouzi Zine Al Abidine, a Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Tetuan was threatened by the authorities and ordered not to associate with his co-religionists. On January 25, 1962, he was dismissed from his post at the University. Another Bahá'í, resident of Nador, lost his government job shortly thereafter.

The dismissals were only the beginning of the campaign directed against the Bahá'í Faith. Rumors circulated that 61 Moslem religious leaders had written King Hassan II, demanding that the "heresy" be extirpated throughout Morocco.

On April 10, 1962, five Bahá'ís were arrested at Nador. *Le Courrier du Maroc* reported that the activity of the Bahá'ís had extended all over the Riff region and had attracted the attention of the *Sûreté Nationale* (the Security Police). The paper further stated that those arrested were a teacher, at whose home the police had found a number of Bahá'í pamphlets; another teacher; a customs official; and a police inspector. Three days later a special commission of inquiry arrived in Nador to interrogate the prisoners. According to *Le Courrier du Maroc*, they admitted the facts which were alleged against them, promised to cease all activity and then were released.<sup>1</sup>

The account in *Le Courrier du Maroc* was not entirely accurate. The five Nador Bahá'ís were arrested on April 10. During the questioning they apparently succeeded in proving to the local officials their innocence of any wrongdoing and won immediate release. However, only a few hours later they were rearrested and have been in jail ever since.

Further arrests occurred in June. A Bahá'í of Larache and one of Tetuan were imprisoned on June 28 and 29 respectively. During this same period, Mohammed Mohammed Said El Bekkali El Amrani, 26 years old, a tailor from Fez, who had gone to Nador to visit his imprisoned friends, was arrested. The police demanded that he name any other Bahá'ís he might know. When he refused, the inquisitors hung him by his feet, but torture failed to break his spirit and he remained silent. However, a search of his person produced a letter signed by Fouad Mohammed Jaouad Tahhan, 37, of Syrian nationality. Tahhan was arrested on July 11, 1962.

A few days later the accused men obtained the services of Maître Jacques Vallet, a French lawyer resident in Morocco, and Maître Triqui, a Moslem lawyer. On two separate occasions they requested the release of the prisoners, arguing that the Bahá'ís shun subversion, are loyal to the Government and respect all religions. Both requests were denied, and the Bahá'ís remained in prison though no formal charges had been brought against them.

The news of the arrests began to appear in the European press. On August 10, 1962, *Le Monde* (Paris) wrote about the imprisoned Bahá'ís, mentioning that their religion had many adherents in the United States and that it was recognized as a non-governmental organization by the United Nations.<sup>2</sup> The Bahá'í International Community, an organization representing the Bahá'ís of the entire world, brought the case to the notice of Mr. Roger Baldwin, Chairman of the International League for the Rights of Man. In a

1 *Le Courrier du Maroc*, April 14, 1962.

2 *Le Monde*, Paris, August 10, 1962.

letter to Mr. Ahmed Taibi Benhima, Chief of Morocco's U.N. Mission, Mr. Baldwin expressed the League's concern over the reports of the arrests of the Bahá'ís in Morocco:

According to information emanating from Morocco [Mr. Baldwin wrote] these persons are being held without any formal charges which could bring them before a court of justice. Our informants also declare that these persons have been subjected to brutal treatment in prison. They have lawyers but the latter are unable to bring the case into court. We have the names and know the places of detention of all the prisoners on whom reports have been made up to now.<sup>1</sup>

In the same letter, Mr. Baldwin expressed his anxiety over the policy pursued by Morocco, since the League for the Rights of Man had believed that Moroccan law could be counted upon to give religious freedom to all. He asked what Morocco's policy and intentions were in regard to Bahá'í prisoners. "Naturally," Mr. Baldwin concluded, "we would not want to bring this matter before the United Nations, especially in view of cordial relations which we had with your representatives during the long struggle for Morocco's independence."<sup>2</sup>

As if in reply to the communications from the International League for the Rights of Man, the imprisoned men were formally indicted. They are described in the indictment as follows:

1. Kebdani Mohammed Mohammed Ali, age 22, of Moroccan nationality, single, resident of Nador.
2. Ben Chillal Abderrahman Hamida, age 22, of Moroccan nationality, official of the Post, Telegraph and Telephone Department, at Nador.
3. Bou Arafa Maanan Mohammed, age 28, of Moroccan nationality, single, Inspector of Police, at Nador.
4. Mustapha Mohammed Taib El Mitoui, age 24, of Moroccan nationality, single, at Nador.
5. Abdelaziz Abdallah Al Waryachi, age 21, of Moroccan nationality, married, Bursar of the Institute of Higher Studies, at Nador.
6. Mestari Miloud El Houssein, age 23, of Moroccan nationality, married, teacher, at Tetuan.
7. Jabbari Mohammed Hassan, age 24, of Moroccan nationality, married, teacher, at Tetuan.
8. Abdessalam Hadj Salem El Sebti, age 31, of Moroccan nationality, married, Customs Inspector, at Nador.
9. Mohammed Mohammed Said El Bekkali El Amrani, age 26, of Moroccan nationality, single, tailor, at Fez.
10. Abdessalam Ahmed Barrada, age 28, of Moroccan nationality,

1 Mr. Roger Baldwin, Chairman of the League for the Rights of Man, to His Excellency Ambassador Ahmed Taibi Benhima. New York, October 29, 1962.

2 *ibid.*

official of Customs Service at Tetuan.

11. Houssein Mohammed Chamlal, of Moroccan nationality, married, teacher, at Tetuan.
12. Mohammed Ahmed El Sebti, age 32, of Moroccan nationality, official of the Agriculture Service, at Tetuan;
13. Fouad Mohammed Jaouad Tahhan, age 37, of Syrian nationality, married, Director of the Centre d'Etudes de Tannerie, at Tetuan.
14. Abdessalam Miloud El Choukri, age 27, of Moroccan nationality, married, official of the Public Works Service, at Fez.<sup>1</sup>

The indictment formally accused all fourteen of “rebellion, disorder, attacks against public safety, formation of an association of criminals, attacks against the religious faith, and illegal formation of an association.”

The indictment is contained in a document so jumbled, so full of inaccuracies, misrepresentations, and outright falsehoods that no court with a pretense to fairness could have allowed it to be presented. It states that:

On the 14th of April, 1962, numerous complaints were deposited with the police of the city of Nador by the native residents of the city of Nador on the subject of the propagation of the new religion known as Bahá'í. After the investigation carried out by the judiciary police concerning this idea current among renegades of the native population of the city of Nador and concerning the anxiety manifested by the native inhabitants with reference to their children, their wives, and their relations. [The sentences are incomplete in the original.]<sup>2</sup>

The paragraph cited above contains flaws which are obvious. If the complaints of the inhabitants had been deposited with the Nador police on April 14, why were the accused arrested four days earlier and why did a special commission of inquiry arrive in Nador on April 13?<sup>3</sup>

The indictment further states that the Minister of Islamic Affairs (Mr. Allal El Fassi), submitted a report to His Majesty the King “concerning the dangers which threaten the children of this believing land”, whereupon a Commission was set up to investigate the case. Again, the impression is created that the Commission was organized after April 14 when the population allegedly had begun to complain about the Bahá'ís and to express fear for the safety of their wives and children. But *Le Courrier du Maroc* reported on April 15 that the Commission had arrived in Nador on the previous day.

The true motives animating the prosecution are revealed two paragraphs later in the indictment:

It is clear from the report, attached to the file, addressed by the Minister for Islamic Affairs to His Majesty, the King, that Bahá'í is a religion whose goal is to undermine the precepts of Islam and the commandments which Mohammed (may salvation and the

1 Text of the Indictment. *Royaume du Maroc, Cour d'Appel de Tanger, Chambre des Mises en Accusation, Arrêt de Renvoi, No. 36, rendu en date de 31/10/62, Dossier No. 809.*

2 *ibid.*

3 See *Le Courrier du Maroc*, April 14, 1962.

blessing of God be upon him) has brought. It is equally clear that the precepts of the practice of this new religion annul those of Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Then follows such a garbled account of Bahá'í religious practices that they become utterly unrecognizable:

The fast, according to this new religion, lasts 10 days from sunrise to sunset, and the day of the festival ending the fast is the day of Zairuz (sic), the day of the Iranian day of the Magi. The book *Al Bayan*, considered as the Koran by them, says, We have made of Zairuz your feast day, having perfected it.<sup>2</sup>

The passage is both inaccurate and malicious. The Bahá'í fast lasts neither 10 days nor 14, as the same document states a few pages below. It does terminate on the first day of spring, the ancient Iranian festival of Naw-Rúz, but the reference to the Magi in this context is nothing but an attempt to prejudice opinion by suggesting a pagan connection.<sup>3</sup>

The *Bayan* is not "considered as the Koran" by the Bahá'ís. They regard it as the holy book of the Babi religion, which preceded the Bahá'í Faith and by the precepts and the laws of which they are not bound.

The Bahá'í daily prayer is described in the indictment as consisting of nine prostrations "made in the direction of 'Mirza', where is located 'Housseine Bahaa.'" He, "Housseine Bahaa", says (in this indictment), "when you wish to accomplish your prayer, turn toward Jerusalem." Here, by "Houseine (or "Houssein") Bahaa" is apparently meant the founder of the Faith, Husayn Ali Bahá'u'lláh. Those who composed the document in question did not know that "Mirza" is a Persian honorific title which until recently signified a learned person if placed before a name, or a prince, if placed after. However, here "Mirza" has turned into a place where "Houseine Bahaa is located" and in the direction of which Bahá'ís pray. If the indictment is to be believed, they must do it in clear violation of "Bahaa's" teachings, since the very next sentence proclaims that he enjoined his followers to "turn toward Jerusalem".

What is one to make of all this? The fact of the matter is that every single statement cited above is untrue. Nor are any of the ones that follow in this document, such as: "The Bahá'ís recommend to the people not to go on pilgrimages and to every adherent to destroy holy places and not to hesitate to do so."<sup>4</sup>

The Bahá'ís do not interfere with the religious practices of others. They respect all religions and could not make recommendations such as cited above without betraying their own faith. The appeal to religious fanaticism in the statement about the holy places is so obvious that one hesitates even to point it out.

The statements concerning the attitude of the Bahá'í Faith toward Islam made in the Report of the Minister of Islamic Affairs to the King, the Report which served as the only basis of prosecution and the only substance of the Bill of Indictment, are contradicted by the whole body of Bahá'í sacred writ-

1 See Footnote 9.

2 See Footnote 9.

3 The Bahá'ís accept Zoroastrianism as a religion no less true and valid than Judaism, Christianity, or Islam.

4 See Footnote 9.

ings, basic doctrines of the Faith, and the practices followed by Bahá'í communities throughout the world.

Referring to the founders of the world's great religions, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

These sanctified mirrors, these day springs of ancient glory, are, one and all, the exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty. The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory. They are the treasuries of Divine knowledge and the repositories of celestial wisdom. Through them is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and by them is revealed the Light that can never fade.<sup>1</sup>

In the Bahá'í writings are to be found innumerable references to Muḥammad, all of them respectful:

Behold, how many are the Sovereigns who bow the knee before his [Muḥammad's] name. How numerous the nations and kingdoms who have sought the shelter of his shadow, who bear allegiance to his Faith, and pride themselves therein! From the pulpit-tops there ascend today the words of praise which, in utter lowliness, glorify his blessed name ....<sup>2</sup>

In their temples, whether in Wilmette, Sidney, or Kampala; in their meetings from Alaska to Cape Horn, from Scandinavia to Malaya, Bahá'ís of all religious backgrounds—Jewish, Zoroastrian, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim—recite the Qur'án, as well as the Scriptures of other religions.

During the interrogation at Nador, as reported in the Bill of Indictment, no issues even remotely connected with the charges of rebellion, conspiracy, or criminal activity were raised. As the indictment shows, the inquisitors tried to, and did, establish only that the fourteen prisoners had read Bahá'í books, discussed Bahá'í philosophy in private, and professed belief in the Bahá'í Faith. The inquisitors also claimed to have established that the Bahá'ís “believe that God can be imagined in the state of a person and can be situated in time.” This belief is not held by the Bahá'ís. Their Prophet, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

Know thou of a certainty that the Unseen can in no wise incarnate His Essence and reveal it unto men. He is, and hath ever been, immensely exalted beyond all that can either be recounted or perceived. From his retreats of glory His voice is ever proclaiming: ‘Verily, I am God; there is no other God beside Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.’<sup>3</sup>

The specific items of the indictment are:

1. That the accused “have studied books treating of the Bahá'í

1 Baha'u'llah, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán* (The Book of Certitude), Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1931, New York; pp. 99–100.

2 *ibid.* p. 110.

3 *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1939, Wilmette, p. 49.



Faith and its philosophy and that they believed in it.”

2. That the accused “believe that God can be imagined in the state of a person and can be situated in time; and that Mohammed, may salvation and the blessing of God be upon him, is not the last of the prophets, and that they do not believe in the hereafter in the form of Heaven, Hell and Resurrection.”
3. That the Bahá’í doctrine stipulates “that the direction of prayer is not Mecca but rather ‘the door’[?], and that it varies according to the variation of the door.”<sup>1</sup>
4. That Bahá’ís do not conform to Islamic practices in praying and fasting,<sup>2</sup> that “the pilgrimage to the holy places is illicit and that it is necessary to destroy the holy places of Islam as soon as a courageous man is in a position to do so.”
5. That the Bahá’ís advocate “the overthrow of all governments and the establishment of a government on a world wide scale in their place.”

The first four items of the indictment have been discussed earlier. The fifth belongs to the category of defamation where a false statement is linked with a true one. The Bahá’ís do advocate the establishment of world government, believing it to be the goal of the political evolution of human society. However, they believe no less firmly that this goal can be achieved only through the process of spiritual evolution which would correspond to the technological, economic, educational, and social progress which is bringing all nations into an integrated world community.

As for the advocacy of “the overthrow of all governments”, the charge is utterly false. “In every country or government where any of this community reside,” Bahá’u’lláh proclaimed, “they must behave toward the government with faithfulness, trustfulness, and truthfulness. This is that which is revealed from the presence of the Ancient Commander.”<sup>3</sup> One of the most authoritative Bahá’í texts, penned by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (eldest son, lawful successor and the authorized interpreter of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings), proclaims:

According to the direct and sacred command of God we are forbidden to utter slander, are commanded to show forth peace and amity, are exhorted to rectitude of conduct and straightforwardness and harmony with all the kindreds and peoples of the world. We must obey and be well-wishers of the governments of the land, regard disloyalty unto a just king as disloyalty to God Himself and wishing evil to the government a transgression of the Cause of God ....

O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon you to be submissive to all monarchs that are just and to show your fidelity to

1 This sentence seems meaningless. Moreover it contradicts the earlier assertions in the same document to the effect that the Bahá’ís direct their prayers toward a locality called “Mirza” or toward Jerusalem, unless one assumes that “Mirza”, “the door”, and Jerusalem are one and the same place.

2 The document states that the fast is 14 days long, while earlier 10 days were claimed.

3 *Bahá’í World Faith, Selected Writings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*. Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1956 (second edition); p. 192.

every righteous king. Serve the sovereigns of the world with utmost truthfulness and loyalty. Show obedience to them and be their well-wishers. Without their leave and permission do not meddle with political affairs, for disloyalty to the just sovereign is disloyalty to God himself.<sup>1</sup>

6. That the accused "by embracing the Bahá'í Faith have aroused anxiety in the minds of the citizens and that they are in league to injure people in their Islamic sentiments, and that signs of revolt threaten to manifest themselves in the country."<sup>2</sup>
7. That "by embracing the Bahá'í Faith and applying its precepts the accused aim to undermine the State and to substitute for it a state conceived on the world-wide scale and that, by this deed, they attack public order."
8. That the accused have formed an illegal association to propagate the Bahá'í Faith and that they attack religious beliefs.

Such was that remarkable indictment on the basis of which a court of law tried and convicted nine innocent men.

The trial opened at Nador on December 10, 1962, in an atmosphere of intimidation. Certain newspapers and government officials had already prejudged the case.

The Court quickly demonstrated its hostility and prejudice toward the accused. During the examination on the first day of the trial the defendants were not asked a single question related to the five charges made in the indictment: 1. Rebellion, 2. Attack against public security, 3. Formation of an association of criminals, 4. Formation of an illegal association, 5. Attack against religious faith. No facts were adduced or even solicited.

The Court confined itself to an inquiry into the religious beliefs of the defendants, engaging them in a debate intended to demonstrate that they were heretics and to prevent them from properly defending themselves. The proceedings were so grossly unfair that the large crowd attending the trial began to ridicule the Court. One person was arrested for showing his disgust. The same inhabitants of Nador, for whose protection the trial was supposedly being held, were now loudly expressing their disapproval of the trial and their sympathy for the defendants.

The defense, consisting of four distinguished lawyers, entered a protest against the manner in which the trial was being conducted. They requested that Mr. Allal El Fassi, Minister of Islamic Affairs whose report to the King had set the whole case in motion, be called as a witness. The Court denied the request.<sup>3</sup>

The next day, harassed and denied all opportunity to perform their legal function, the defense lawyers submitted to the Court a written protest in which they announced their decision to withdraw from the case, the outcome of which had been decided beforehand.

1 *ibid.* pp. 440 and 446.

2 No proof is offered for these allegations.

3 "Inquisition au Maroc", *Le Monde* (Paris), December 18, 1962. There was grim irony in the fact that the trial began on December 10, Human Rights Day.

They pointed out that the Court had not addressed itself to the charges on which the fourteen men were supposedly being tried, and “that it was in fact sufficient to read ... [the indictment] to see that the defendants are essentially charged with having spread a religious doctrine.” Indeed, the five charges had been made only because the actual deeds of the defendants had not constituted a crime under the law. The lawyers stated moreover, that under Moroccan law no one could be held guilty of a crime unspecified by legal codes, and that Article 6 of the Constitution specifically guaranteed the freedom of religious practice.<sup>1</sup>

The Prosecutor General had stated openly that the defendants would be condemned. The trial was therefore nothing but a farce. The lawyers deplored the persecution of the Bahá'ís as a violation of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and stated that before resigning they had advised the defendants not to answer any further questions. The judicial farce continued without the defense.

On Saturday, December 15, 1962, the Regional Court of Nador pronounced its verdict.<sup>2</sup> It summarizes the material contained in the Bill of Indictment and accepts the latter *in toto*. The language follows closely that of the Prosecution. The defense is mentioned very briefly. The argument centers on the Bahá'í Faith itself, neglecting the formal charges until the very end, when it is stated that membership in the Bahá'í Faith in itself constitutes rebellion, formation of a criminal association, illegal formation of an association, and an offense against religion. Thus, like the Bill of Indictment, the Verdict shows that it was the religion that was on trial and that all the other charges had been made only in order to give the prosecution a semblance of legality.

Nine of the fourteen defendants were found guilty.

1. Kebdani Mohammed Mohammed Ali
2. Bou Arafa Maanan Mohammed
3. Fouad Mohammed Jaouad Tahhan

were sentenced to death.

1. Abdel Aziz Abdallah Al Waryachi
2. Jabbari Mohammed Hassan
3. Abdessalam Hadj Salem El Sebti
4. Mohammed Mohammed Said El Bekkali El Amrani
5. Mohammed Ahmed El Sebti

were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Abdessalam Miloud El Choukri was sentenced to 10 years, suspended sentence, with the warning that he will serve the full sentence if he offends in the same way again.

The five other defendants were acquitted.

The Nador verdict shocked the world. Upon receiving news of the sentencing, the International League for the Rights of Man sent a cable to the King of Morocco:

1 Text of the petition made by the four lawyers (Vallet, Triqui, Belhadj, Maati Bouabid) to the Court at Nador, December 10, 1962; Criminal Court of Nador, File No. 32/62. Bahá'í Information Center, New York.

2 Text of the Verdict, “Kingdom of Morocco. Ministry of Justice. Court of Summary Jurisdiction of Nador. Case (Aff.) No. 62/II.”

As International Organization accredited by United Nations, we express our shock that Moroccan courts imposed death and severe sentences on members of Bahá'í religion solely for their religious propaganda. May we respectfully urge commutation of sentences in accordance with Moroccan and Islamic traditions of fairness and justice.

International League Rights of Man  
Roger Baldwin, Chairman

In behalf of the International Committee for the Study of Group Rights, Mr. George N. Patterson, its Director, cabled King Hassan II of Morocco as follows:

Greatly distressed to read reports death sentence for three members of Bahá'í sect. This Committee on basis of present inadequate information feels Morocco in danger of seriously damaging merited international reputation for religious tolerance and liberal sentiments. We urgently appeal Your Majesty to exercise royal prerogative for clemency on prisoners behalf.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on his Committee's action, Mr. Patterson said: "These persons have been condemned because of their association with a particular religious group."<sup>2</sup>

The Bahá'í International Community, a non-governmental organization accredited to the United Nations and representing 55 National Bahá'í Assemblies, also appealed to the U.N. In a statement made to the press in New York, Mr. H. B. Kavelin, Chairman of the Bahá'í International Community said:

The Bahá'í World Faith is a religion of peace. It shuns all things political. A Bahá'í would be unfaithful to his religion if he worked against his country's interests or engaged in any subversive act. ... The Bahá'ís all over the world are stunned and grieved over the miscarriage of justice by the Moroccan court that tried and sentenced our co-religionists; that persons should be persecuted ... moreover put to death for practicing their religion is ... a setback to mankind's quest for universal justice.<sup>3</sup>

In Great Britain, one hundred and sixty-three Bahá'í groups appealed to the Queen and the Parliament to intercede in behalf of justice and humanity.<sup>4</sup>

*The Guardian* (Manchester) published an extensive and accurate article entitled "Persecution and Martyrdom of Bahá'í Followers. Islam Recognizes a Challenge." The concluding paragraph read:

The anger of Islam against the Bahá'í Faith has been likened to the reaction of the Jews to Christ and His followers. It is suggested by the faithful that Islam sees it a challenge to those in positions of privilege and power in the Moslem order, in the same way as the

1 *The Observer* (London), December 23, 1962.

2 *The Times* (London), December 24, 1962.

3 Bahá'í Information Center, New York.

4 *Daily Mail* (London), December 22, 1962.

Pharisees and the Saducees knew that Christ was challenging the position they had gained for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

*The Observer*, *The Times*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Birmingham Post*, *The Newcastle Journal* and many other British papers carried Reuters dispatches from Rabat, as well as their own comments.

In France, *Le Monde* (Paris) gave particularly thorough coverage to the case, while *France-Soir*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*, *L'Alsace*, *Midi Libre*, *La Raison*, as well as other papers and magazines kept the public well informed. Reports also appeared in African, Asian and Latin American papers.

Between December 18 and 23 the Nador verdict received world-wide publicity. On the 18th many American and Canadian newspapers carried the news as reported by United Press International. Later more detailed stories, giving the background of the case, began to appear, including one story in *The New York Times* (Western Edition).

In the Moroccan press a controversy broke out between the instigators of the persecution and those who felt that the trial violated the liberties of Morocco's citizens and made a mockery of her law.

Mr. Mohammed Berrada, assistant to Mr. Allal El Fassi at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, published a long statement in which he violently attacked not only the Bahá'í Faith but all those who dared to come to the defense of the nine men condemned at Nador. "The Bahá'í Faith," Mr. Berrada claimed, "makes common cause with Zionism. Its 'Vatican' is in Israel and is an instrument in the Zionist game for the destruction of the Arab world and of its holy places. Morocco," Mr. Berrada stated, "will not tolerate the violation of freedom in the name of freedom. Bahá'ism is not a religion, it is a heresy ... which, unless stopped, would continue its inhuman ravages."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Allal El Fassi, Minister of Islamic Affairs, declared in *Al Istiqlal*, the Istiqlal Party's weekly, that the Nador affair was a simple criminal case which had nothing to do with freedom of conscience:

Bahá'ism prepares its initiates for a general uprising against the State in order to establish a Bahá'ist government, which would be in a position to attack Islam's holy places. It was the attempts at the creation of this association of malefactors that were the object of the proceedings at Nador. ... Moroccan justice did its duty and deserves the gratitude of the people and the state.<sup>3</sup>

Many Moroccan papers expressed their misgivings. On December 16-17, 1962, *Maroc-Informations* (Casablanca) devoted a long article to a factual exposition of the Bahá'í Faith. As an epigraph, the paper printed the words of the Qur'án: "There is no difference between the bearers of My Message."

The next day *Maroc-Informations* pointed out that an Egyptian lawyer retained to defend Fouad Mohammed Jaouad Tahhan, could not do so because Rabat authorities never answered his request for permission to appear in court. The paper noted that the young men who were on trial "seemed animated by a profound religious conviction", and that "There is no question of any other accusation but that of having embraced a new faith." In an article entitled "The Witches of Nador", *Maroc-Informations* wrote:

1 The Guardian (Manchester), December 27, 1962.

2 *Al Istiqlal*, as cited in *Maroc-Informations*, December 19, 1962.

3 As cited in *Le Monde* (Paris), December 18, 1962.

It is impossible not to feel discomfort (malaise) before this embryo of inquisition which knocks on the doors of the Kingdom. ... Tolerance could be limited only by a real attack on public order. ... We cannot help but write that if God is indivisible, so is tolerance ....<sup>1</sup>

The weekly, *Les Phares*, founded by Mr. Ahmed Reda Guedira, the Minister of the Interior and Agriculture, cited Article 10 of Morocco's new Constitution which proclaims that "No one can be arrested except in cases and under procedures specified by law." The editorial said:

... Apparently, it would seem that the accused were punished—and with what penalty—without any "cases or procedures" having been expressly specified in the law. Where is there in Morocco a written law which prescribes the death penalty for offences against religion?<sup>2</sup>

On December 24, 1962, the office of the Bahá'í International Community in New York received word that the three Bahá'ís condemned to death at Nador would be executed on the day after Christmas, December 26, 1962. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States immediately telegraphed Mr. John F. Kennedy, President of the United States:

President John F. Kennedy

December 24

Washington, D.C.

On behalf entire United States Bahá'í Community urgently appeal your intervention Sultan Morocco seek clemency death sentence three Moroccan co-religionists scheduled execution Wednesday twenty-six December according report Sunday London Observer stop conviction based on charge treason subversion resulting solely from religious practices stop Bahá'í Faith recognized throughout world as independent religion whose teachings require loyalty all just governments and forbid participation political subversion stop execution these individuals tantamount genocide stop profoundly grateful on eve joyous holy celebration Christmas your gracious consideration this appeal

(Signed)

H. B. Kavelin, Chairman  
U. S. National Spiritual  
Assembly of Bahá'ís<sup>3</sup>

A number of outstanding scholars, lawyers, and religious leaders sent individual messages to Moroccan authorities appealing for a stay of execution so that the case might be reviewed in full view of world opinion.

The Bahá'í International Community argued that the Nador trial was an instance of religious persecution. Accusations of rebellion, formation of a criminal association, etc., were intended solely to divert attention from that tragic fact. There are Bahá'ís in 257 countries and dependencies. Their institutions are officially incorporated and recognized in every state of the United States, every province of Canada, every nation of Latin America, and several European, Asian, and African countries, as well as in Australia. Their houses

1 Maroc-Information, December 15, 1962

2 *Les Phares*, as cited in *Le Monde*, December 26, 1962.

3 Bahá'í Information Center, New York, December 24, 1962.

of worship stand in full view in Wilmette, Illinois; Sidney, Australia; Kampala, Uganda; and another is nearing completion on the outskirts of Frankfurt, Germany. They have never been accused by any country of fomenting a revolution, or of being an association of criminals. On the contrary, scores of outstanding individuals, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas have testified to the non-violent nature and progressive character of their Faith.

The Bahá'í International Community came to the conclusion that the Nador case was an act of genocide as defined in Article II, clauses (a), (b), and (c), of the United Nations Convention on Genocide, which has been signed and ratified by Morocco. Article II states:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group such as:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part ....

That the intention of those responsible for the Nador trial was to “exterminate the germ” of the Bahá'í Faith in Morocco, was freely admitted by many officials and is evident from the indictment and the conduct of the trial. The three death sentences therefore were an act of genocide under clause (a) of Article II of the Convention.

The illegal arrest of the Bahá'ís, their detention for over 6 months without formal charge, the torture to which some were subjected, constitute acts of genocide under clause (b) of the same Article.

The dismissal of the accused from their jobs, the infliction of hardship upon their families, threats against their friends, and promises of forgiveness to those who would recant, constitute acts of genocide under clause (c) of this Article.

The Convention makes not only genocide itself punishable, but also “Conspiracy to commit genocide; Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; Complicity in genocide.” Article IV declares:

Persons committing genocide or any other acts enumerated in Article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.<sup>1</sup>

On December 27, 1962, the Bahá'í International Community addressed a letter to the U.N. delegations of 30 States signatory of the Genocide Convention, informing the delegations

... of a flagrant violation by Morocco of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and the commission of acts enumerated in paragraphs a), b), and c) of Article II of the United Nations Convention on Genocide. We request that you urge your Government to take appropriate steps to remove this threat to the Convention by a State which has signed and ratified it. We also appeal for your personal

1 The U.N. Convention of Genocide, Article III, clauses (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e).

intervention, in the manner you consider most effective, to save our co-religionists in Morocco from sentences of death and life imprisonment at hard labor imposed upon them on the charge of heresy.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, the pressure of public opinion throughout the world, and within Morocco itself, caused the authorities to review the situation. The Secretary of Information issued a "statement assuring the public that the verdict was 'not definitive' and that the condemned men had the right to appeal."<sup>2</sup> Having learned from a Reuters dispatch that the executions would not be carried out and that the case would be reviewed by Morocco's Supreme Court of Appeals<sup>3</sup> the Bahá'í International Community expressed its relief and the hope that the "Moroccan Supreme Court of Appeals will use its highly responsible station to extend justice to the three condemned men." It promised not to rest while "Bahá'ís are imprisoned for the alleged crime of practicing their religion."<sup>4</sup>

The case of the Moroccan Bahá'ís has not been closed. The forthcoming decision of the Supreme Court of Appeals, scheduled to be delivered either in late January or early February 1963, will determine more than whether three innocent men shall live or die. The Supreme Court will decide whether the newly adopted Moroccan Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion, shall be enforced or die with the three prisoners at Nador. The Supreme Court of Appeals will also decide whether Morocco is to be a modern State dedicated to freedom and the dignity of the individual, or whether, after a promising start toward these values, it would turn away from the principles of tolerance.

For all men dedicated to justice and freedom the Nador case is another battle for the rights of man. In this lies its significance for today. To paraphrase *Maroc-Informations*, freedom, like God, is indivisible.

1 Bahá'í Information Center, New York, December 27, 1962.

2 *The New York Times* (Western Edition), December 27, 1962.

3 Rabat, Morocco, December 23, *Reuters Dispatch*. Received in New York, December 25, 1962.

4 Bahá'í Information Center, New York, December 25, 1962.



## **Appendix I**

### **The Bahá'í Faith**

The Bahá'í Faith, an independent world religion, originated in the middle of the 19th century in Iran, and has since spread to over 250 countries and dependencies throughout the world. Its founder, Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí, surnamed Bahá'u'lláh, was preceded and heralded in 1844 by a youth of Shiraz, named Mírzá 'Alí Muḥammad, who proclaimed the near advent of a Dispensation destined "to inaugurate an era of righteousness and peace ... and initiate a new cycle in the religious history of mankind."<sup>1</sup> The Church and the State launched a severe persecution against his followers, leading to his execution in Tabriz in 1850, and the martyrdom of no less than twenty thousand of his followers.

Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned, tortured, and banished from Iran in 1852. During the long years of exile and imprisonment in Baghdad, Constantinople, Adrianople, and finally, 'Akká, where he passed away in 1892, Bahá'u'lláh

formulated the laws and ordinances of his Dispensation, expounded, in over a hundred volumes, the principles of his Faith, proclaimed his message to the Kings and rulers of both the East and West, both Christian and Muslim, addressed the Pope, the Caliph of Islam, the Chief Magistrates of the republics of the American continent, the entire Christian sacerdotal order, the leaders of Shi'ih and Sunni Islam, and the high priest of the Zoroastrian religion.<sup>2</sup>

The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are too vast in scope to be summarized briefly. However, the following are among the essential principles of the Bahá'í Faith:

1. Independent investigation of truth.
2. Unity of religions and progressive revelation.
3. Unity of mankind.
4. Elimination of prejudice and superstition.
5. Equality of men and women.
6. Universal compulsory education.
7. Elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth.
8. Adoption of a universal auxiliary language.
9. Essential harmony of religion and science.
10. Universal peace.
11. World government.

The administration of the Bahá'í Faith differs in important respects from that of other religions.

In the Bahá'í Faith there is no professional clergy. The various functions of administration, teaching, welfare, and worship are carried out by Bahá'ís, none of whom ever have clerical distinction, but are elected by democratic process to administrative posts or arise voluntarily to serve according to preparation and ability ....

The activities of the Faith are financed solely by voluntary contributions from Bahá'ís. It is not possible to accept contributions from non-Bahá'ís for other than charitable purposes. Collections are

1 Shoghi Effendi, *The Faith of Baha'u'llah*, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1959, Wilmette; p. 9.

2 *ibid.*, p. 10.

never taken at Bahá'í meetings. By orderly process each community establishes a Fund. To local and national Funds the believers contribute, without pledge or pressure, through the official treasurer elected for each.<sup>1</sup>

The Bahá'í Faith inculcates in its followers the highest standards of individual and collective morality. Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm for the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond today's disputes between nations, religions, and parties, the Bahá'ís see the emergence of the unity of mankind:

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds, and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole

1 Arthur L. Dahl, *Bahá'í: World Faith for Modern Man*, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1960, Wilmette; pp. 16–17.

2 Bahá'u'lláh in *Bahá'í World Faith*, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1956, Wilmette; p. 136.

planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvelous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve center of a world civilization, the focus toward which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will cooperate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be coordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and cooperation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal toward which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.<sup>1</sup>

1 Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1938, Wilmette; pp. 203–204.

## Appendix II

### Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith

By Professor E. G. Browne of Cambridge  
Introduction to *A Traveller's Narrative*, pages ix, x

Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called táj by dervishes, but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain.

A mild, dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: *"Praise be to God, that thou hast attained! ... Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile. ... We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer-up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. ... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this? ... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come. ... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold? ... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. ... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family. ... Let not a man glory in this that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this: that he loves his kind ...."*

Such, so far as I can recall them, were the words which, besides many others, I heard from Bahá. Let those who read them consider well with themselves whether such doctrines merit death and bonds, and whether the world is more likely to gain or lose by their diffusion.

By Professor Jowett of Oxford  
Quotation from *Heroic Lives*, page 305

Prof. Jowett of Oxford, Master of Balliol, the translator of Plato, studied the movement and was so impressed thereby that he said: "The Bábite [Bahá'í] movement may not impossibly turn out to have the promise of the future." Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter quotes Prof. Edward Caird, Prof. Jowett's successor as Master of Balliol, as saying, "He thought Bábíism (as the Bahá'í movement was then called) might prove the most important religious movement since the foundation of Christianity." Prof. Carpenter himself gives a

sketch of the Bahá'í movement in his recent book on *Comparative Religions* and asks, "Has Persia, in the midst of her miseries, given birth to a religion that will go around the world?"

By Leo Tolstoy

Translated from a letter to Frid ul Khan Wadelbekow, 1908.

Concerning your third question, I answer that so far as I understand Islám, like all other religions, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, etc., it contains great basic truths but that these have become corrupted by superstitions, and coarse interpretations and filled with unnecessary legendary descriptions. I have had much help in my researches to get clear upon Muhammadanism by a splendid little book "The sayings of Muhammad".

The teachings of the Bábís which come to us out of Islám have through Bahá'u'lláh's teachings been gradually developed and now present us with the highest and purest form of religious teaching.

By Former President Masaryk of Czechoslovakia

Continue- to do what you are doing, spread these principles of humanity and do not wait for the diplomats. Diplomats alone cannot bring the peace, but it is a great thing that official people begin to speak about these universal peace principles. Take these principles to the diplomats, to the universities and colleges and other schools, and also write about them. It is the people who will bring the universal peace.

(In an audience with an American Bahá'í journalist in Praha, in 1928.)

By Dr. Auguste Forel

... J'avais écrit les lignes qui précèdent en 1912. Que dois-je ajouter aujourd'hui en août 1921, après les horribles guerres qui viennent de mettre l'humanité à feu et à sang, tout en dévoilant plus que jamais la terrible férocité de nos passions haineuses? Rien, sinon que nous devons demeurer d'autant plus fermes, d'autant plus inébranlables dans notre lutte pour le Bien social. Nos enfants ne doivent pas se décourager; ils doivent au contraire profiter du chaos mondial actuel pour aider à la pénible organisation supérieure [surnaturelle] et supranationale de l'humanité, à l'aide d'une fédération universelle des peuples.

En 1920 seulement j'ai appris à connaître, à Karlsruhe, la religion supraconfessionnelle et mondiale des Bahá'ís fondée en Orient par le persan Bahá'u'lláh il y a 70 ans. C'est la vraie religion du Bien social humain, sans dogmes, ni Nitres, reliant entre eux tous les hommes sur notre petit globe terrestre. Je suis devenu Bahá'í. Que cette religion vive et prospère pour le bien de l'humanité; c'est là mon voeu le plus ardent .... (Excerpt from Dr. Auguste Forel's Will)

By Prof. Yone Noguchi

I have heard so much about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whom people call an idealist, but I should like to call Him a realist, because no idealism, when it is strong and true, exists without the endorsement of realism. There is nothing more

real than His words on truth. His words are as simple as the sunlight; again like the sunlight, they are universal. ... No Teacher, I think, is more important today than 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

By President Eduard Benes

1.

I have followed it (the Bahá'í Cause) with deep interest ever since my trip to London to the First Races Congress in July, 1911, when I heard for the first time of the Bahá'í Movement and its summary of the principles for peace. I followed it during the war and after the war. The Bahá'í Teaching is one of the spiritual forces now absolutely necessary to put the spirit first in this battle against material forces. ... The Bahá'í Teaching is one of the great instruments for the final victory of the spirit and of humanity.

2.

The Bahá'í Cause is one of the great moral and social forces in all the world today. I am more convinced than ever, with the increasing moral and political crises in the world, we must have greater international co-ordination. Such a movement as the Bahá'í Cause which paves the way for universal organization of peace is necessary.

By Mrs. Sarojinu Naidu

(Hyderabad, Deccan, February 1, 1941)

The founder of the Bahá'í Faith is undoubtedly one of the Great Seers of the Modern Age. The Gospel that he enunciated and the programme that he enjoined upon his followers are singularly like a prophecy of the ideal and dream that inspire the heart of youth with (the) quest for a brave new world built upon equity, fellowship and peace.

In the midst of all the tragic horror of hate and bloodshed that surround us to-day, his message to humanity does indeed fulfill the meaning of his name, and carries the "glory of God" into the darkness.

By Dr. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury

I read with interest the social programme of your movement demonstrating the best education for everyone, equal status for men and women and the like and also your encouragement of scientific research and emphasis on the need for a World Commonwealth, together with the oneness of mankind. I am in complete agreement with those aims and wish you well in the pursuit of them.

By Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, K.C.S.I.

*President, Economic and Social Council of UN; Leader, Indian Delegation of United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information; Prime Minister, Mysore State.*

The Bahá'í Faith remarkably speaks not of one Prophet for all time,

but of a succession of prophets as Divine dispensation sees the need for them.

In fact, the Bahá'í Faith gives us the great and precious message of unity in religion. The Bahá'ís do not form a sect by themselves. Rather, through the teachings of their Prophet, they try to illumine the eternal verities of every religion with the spirit of catholicity and fraternalism. How much the world needs such a spirit today .... How far we are from that one far off divine event to which the whole creation is destined to move .... the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Perhaps the Bahá'í Faith is destined to be, and may prove, the greatest single force in achieving that Godly consecrated consummation ....

By Prof. Francesco Gabrielli, University of Rome, Institute of Oriental Study

A richiesta degli interessati, certifico che il Bahá'ismo, nato nella seconda metà del secolo scorso quale sviluppo di una riforma nell'Islamismo persiano (Babismo), ha attualmente lasciato cadere quasi ogni specifico contatto con l'Islamismo tradizionale, e si è sviluppato in una fede supranazionale e superconfessionale, diffusa non solo in Oriente, ma in Europa e in America. Capisaldi di questa fede sono ideali e dottrine altamente morali e umanitarie, di pace di concordia e fratellanza umana, di miglioramento interiore dell'uomo e della società, in nulla ripugnanti alla moderna coscienza morale e religiosa. Onde nulla a mio avviso osterebbe al libero esercizio del culto bahá'ista, quale è ammesso in altri paesi d'Europa e d'America, e che si restringe del resto a semplici e ordinate cerimonie di edificazione e preghiera in comune.

## Appendix III

United Nations

General Assembly

Seventeenth session  
Agenda item 48 Distr.

Distr.  
General

A/5305  
22 November 1962  
English  
Original: French

### **Manifestations of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance**

*Report of the Third Committee*  
*Rapporteur: Mrs. Sivomey (Tongo)*

1. In resolution 1510 (XV) of 12 December 1960 the General Assembly resolutely condemned all manifestations and practices of racial, religious and national hatred in the political, economic, social, educational and cultural spheres of the life of society as violations of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and called upon the Governments of all States to take all necessary measures to prevent all manifestations of racial, religious and national hatred.
2. On the recommendation of the Sub-Committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council recommended to the General Assembly, in resolution 826 B (XXXII) of 27 July 1961, the adoption of a draft resolution on "Manifestations of Racial Prejudice and National and Religious Intolerance". The General Assembly was not able to consider this question at the sixteenth session and decided, in resolution 1684 (XVI) of 18 December 1961, to take it up as soon as possible at its seventeenth session and at that session to devote as many meetings as possible to the consideration of that item.
3. At its seventeenth session the General Assembly, at the 1129th plenary meeting on 24 September 1962, allocated to the Third Committee for consideration and report item 48 of the agenda: "Manifestations of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance". The Committee had before it a Note by the Secretary-General (A/5129), containing the text of Council resolution 826 B (XXXII). The Committee considered this as the fourth item on its agenda, discussed it at the 1165th to 1173rd meetings held from 29 October to 5 November 1962.
4. The views expressed by the members of the Committee will be found in the Summary Records (A/C.3/SR.1165-1173).

[During its meeting held from October 29 to November 5, 1962, the



original draft resolution on “Manifestation of Racial Prejudice and National and Religious Intolerance” was discussed and amended to produce the final recommendation of the Third Committee.

The representative of Morocco actively participated in the discussion and was among the sponsors of the sixth revised version of the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1006/Rev. 6 and Rev. 6/Add.1). He also took part in the unanimous vote by which the Committee adopted the draft resolution which was then forwarded to the General Assembly. Thus, Morocco formally committed itself in the United Nations to the principles enunciated in the document cited below.]

A/5305

#### IV. Recommendation of the third committee

@&. The Third Committee therefore recommends the following draft resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly:

### A MANIFESTATIONS OF RACIAL PREJUDICE AND NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

*The General Assembly,*

*Having considered* the report of the seventeenth session of the Commission on Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and the report of the thirteenth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,<sup>2</sup>

*Deeply disturbed* by the continued existence and manifestations of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance in different parts of the world,

*Reiterating* its condemnation of all manifestations of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance as violations of the United Nations Charter and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

*Recalling* its resolution 1510 (XV) of 12 December 1960,

*Considering* it essential to recommend further specific effective measures to eliminate these manifestations of prejudice and intolerance,

1. *Invites* the Governments of all States, the specialized agencies and nongovernmental and private organizations to continue to make sustained efforts to educate public opinion with a view to the eradication of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance and the elimination of all undesirable influences promoting these, and to take appropriate measures so that education may be directed with due regard to article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and principle 10 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the General Assembly resolution 1386 (XIV) of 20

1 *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 8*, chapter V, paras. 99–139, and resolutions 5 and 6 (XVII).

2 2E/CN.4/815, chapter IX, and resolution 5 (XIII).

November 1959;

2. *Calls upon* the Governments of all States to take all necessary steps to rescind discriminatory laws which have the effect of creating and perpetuating racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance wherever they still exist, to adopt legislation if necessary for prohibiting such discrimination, and to take such legislative or other appropriate measures to combat such prejudice and intolerance;
3. *Recommends* to the Governments of all States to discourage actively, through education and all information media, the creation, propagation and dissemination of such prejudice and intolerance in any form whatever;
4. *Invites* the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to co-operate fully with Governments of States in their efforts aimed at the prevention and eradication of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance;
5. *Invites* Member Governments and the specialized agencies and the nongovernmental organizations concerned to inform the Secretary-General of action taken by them in compliance with this resolution.
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session a report on compliance with the present resolution.

## B

### PREPARATION OF A DRAFT DECLARATION AND A DRAFT CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

*The General Assembly,*

*Desiring* to put into effect the principle of the equality of all men and all peoples without distinction as to race, colour or religion stated in the Charter of the United Nations,

*Being deeply disturbed* by the manifestations of discrimination based on differences of race, colour and religion still in evidence throughout the world,

*Considering* the necessity of taking all possible steps conducive to the final and total elimination of all such manifestations, which violate the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

*Emphasizing* that each State ought to take all the necessary action to put an end to these violations, which infringe human dignity,

*Noting* that the Commission on Human Rights is preparing draft principles on freedom and on discrimination in the matter of religious rights and practices,

1. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to ask the Commission on Human Rights, bearing in mind the views of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, the debates at the seventeenth session of the General Assembly, any proposals on this matter that may be submitted by Governments and any international instruments

already adopted in this field by the specialized agencies, to prepare:

- a) a draft Declaration on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance, for submission to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session for its consideration,
  - b) a draft Convention on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance, for submission to the General Assembly if possible at its nineteenth session;
2. *Invites* Member States to submit their comments and proposals concerning the draft Convention by 15 January 1961.

## Appendix IV Bibliography

### Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá

*Bahá'í World Faith* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 449 pp.

A comprehensive selection of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 346 pp.

Excerpts touching on the nature of religion, the spiritual nature of man, and the transformation of human society.

*Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 339 pp.

Prayers and devotional passages.

*Kitáb-i-Íqán, The (Book Of Certitude)* by Bahá'u'lláh (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 257 pp.

Sets forth the grand redemptive scheme of God, revealing the oneness of religion, its continuity and evolution through the successive Prophets of God.

*Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, The* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 52 pp.

Brief, poetic meditations, crystallizing the essence of all revealed truth.

*Some Answered Questions* by 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2014) 383 pp.

Explanations on a wide variety of spiritual and philosophic questions, with particular emphasis on Christian subjects.

*The Secret of Divine Civilization* by 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 116 pp.

An insight into the spiritual sociology needed in the struggle to attain world peace. It also offers an explanation of the nature of Islam and its contribution to the formation of European civilization.

*Foundations of World Unity* by 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 178 pp.

Addresses and letters on the theme of the spiritual foundations of world unity.

## **Basic and introductory works**

*All Things Made New* by John Ferraby (New York: Macmillan & Co. & London: George Allen Unwin, Ltd., 1958) 313 pp.

A comprehensive outline of the history and major teachings of the Bahá'í Faith.

*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* by J. E. Esslemont (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 340 pp.

Work covering much of same material.

*The Renewal of Civilization* by David Hofman (London: George Ronald, 1945) 96 pp.

A brief general introduction to the Bahá'í Faith.

*Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Stanwood Cobb (Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1952) 103 pp.

A picture of what lies ahead in the way of world progress by a well-known Bahá'í author and educator.

## **History and administrative development**

*God Passes By* by Shoghi Effendi (Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 412 pp.

History of the first century of the Bahá'í Faith.

*The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative of the early days of the Bahá'í Revelation* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1932).

An account of the early days of the Bahá'í Era, centering around the mission of the Báb.

## **Miscellaneous**

*The Bahá'í World*, Volumes I-XXXIV (Bahá'í Publishing Trust).

Reference work, recording the international activities and progress of the Bahá'í Faith; contains basic statistical information, many illustrations.

*Shoghi Effendi: An Appreciation* by Marcus Bach (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1958) 48 pp.

A tribute to the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith by a University of Iowa faculty member. (Originally part of *Circle of Faith* published by Hawthorn Books, Inc.).

*Christ and Bahá'u'lláh* by Dr. George Townshend (George Ronald, London, 1957) 116 pp.

A distinguished Bahá'í scholar, formerly a minister of the Anglican Church, examines the relationship between Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith.

*The Promise of all Ages* by Dr. George Townshend (George Ronald, London, 1948) 164 pp.

The spiritual content of religion traced through the Dispensations of the past, culminating in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

*Prescription For Living* by Rúhíyyih Rabbani (George Ronald, Oxford, 1950) 194 pp.

A Bahá'í approach to the intimate problems of everyday life.

*Religion for Mankind* by Horace Holley (George Ronald, London, 1956) 248 pp.

Essays and talks from several decades, dealing with the application of Bahá'í principles to the solution of modern man's dilemma.

*Mysticism, Science and Revelation* by Dr. Glenn A. Shook (George Ronald, Oxford, 1953) 145 pp.

A study of the relationship between science and prophetic revelation, and an evaluation of the significance of mystical practice, by an American professor of physics.

(A Translation of a certified document on notarized paper, being a translation, into French, of another document, written in Arabic, from the files of the Ministry of State for Islamic Affairs of Morocco—then headed by Mr. Allal El Fassi. ... The translation into French, from the original Arabic document, was made by Mr. S. Bounan, Legal Interpreter, Sworn in and working for the Tribunals of Morocco, #4, Rue Commandant Cottenest. Tel.: 220-81. Casablanca. Morocco.)

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(No. 18.450)

Translation from the Arabic original

Kingdom of Morocco

Ministry of State for Islamic Affairs

No. 852-CH/A/D

Rabat, the 22th of Kada 1381, corresponding to the 27th of April, 1962

Praise be to God alone!

To the Prosecutor General at the Court of Appeals of Tangier,  
Under the aegis of His Excellency the Minister of Justice.

Greetings be upon you, together with Alláh's mercy, under the aegis of Our Lord Muḥammad.

In view of the miscellaneous reports received by the Ministry of State for Islamic Affairs and coming from Larache, Nador and Tangier, concerning the appearance of a Sect known under the name of "BAHÁ'Í".

In view of the letter sent by the Pasha of Nador, Governor of the Province, enclosed herewith.

In view of the report established by the Commission appointed by Royal Order and composed of representatives of each one of the following Ministries:

Ministry of State for Islamic Affairs,  
Ministry of the Interior, and Presidency of the Government,

It appears:

- 1) That there are individuals who have been seduced by "Announcers of Glad Tidings", to the extent that they have renounced ISLAM and embraced the BAHÁ'Í Religion;
- 2) That some of these individuals have recognized these facts before the Commission, and in the presence of the Adele;
- 3) That some of them have recanted and apologized publicly.

This question may be considered in two ways:

1. In the Muslim religious field. We do not have to dwell on this subject, since it is a known fact that Bab'ism is a new Religion, in opposition to ISLAM. The Muslim who embraces it is considered as a renegade, and the Muslim Religion applies the Laws on Apostasy to him.

A copy of the memorandum which I have sent to His Majesty the King on this subject, is enclosed herewith.

You must know that the Laws on Apostasy prescribe;

- a) The necessary discrimination between the renegade and his Muslim Wife or Wives.

- b) The privation from succession rights, concerning relatives, since infidelity is one of the causes of privation of legacy.
- c) Forbidding the renegade from entering the Muslim Mosques.
- d) The interdiction of burying him in Muslim cemeteries.

On the social plane, and considering the interests of the Muslim Sect (*sic*), it is necessary to protect the pupils in the schools, as well as the students in the Universities, from the existence of Bahá'í Professors, since the Bahá'í obligations, as they are mentioned in the books of this Religion, involve the propagation of the Bahá'í Religion through reprobate means.

It is therefore important to put into execution methods aiming at ensuring the protection of the Muslim children, by separating them from these disturbers.

The sentence issued by the Representative of the Public Ministry on this subject, must needs excel that of the entire Nation, since the Depositor of the Public Law has the right to meddle with (*sic*) the protection of the Muslim children, in case their parents do not take care of them or abandon them.

It is known that the Bahá'ís, in order to reach their goals, use dissembling and negation.

In view of the fact that they have been trained in a Shi'a sphere before they have created their Religion, they consider this negation as a duty, basing themselves accordingly on ALLÁH's words; (a quotation from the Qur'án follows).

2. It is also necessary to deal with this question while taking into consideration the Bahá'í danger for the organization and the security of the State. Indeed, the Bahá'ís tell those who follow them that their goal is to constitute a Bahá'í Government which would destroy the sacred Kaaba.

They intend creating that State whenever they find the means of doing it. They are therefore charged with plotting against the entire security of the State, and forming an association of criminals, in order to reach their goals.

Since the Bahá'í principles mentioned in their books aim at the suppression of pilgrimages.

Indeed, the Bab advocated the destruction of the Kaaba, whenever someone among his followers, will be able to do that.

The method followed in their formation of a plot against the State is the same that had been used in the time of the formation of the Fatimite and the Kramite Governments.

Accordingly, they use occult means to attract adherents, means that do not conform with the Announcing in the other Religions. They disturb the Religion of the Government and the Laws of ISLAM, which injures the public order and the security of the citizens, and may lead the Muslims astray.

Consequently, I ask you to kindly inform against the prisoners, in the Bahá'í case;

1. Before the Sharia Court (Muslim Religious Court), in view of the religious prescriptions against all those who deny and reject ISLAM:
2. Before the Criminal Court, for the following charges:
  - a) Injuring the interior security of the State, formation of association of criminals—crimes coming under the sanction of Article 138 and 120 of the Moroccan Penal Code;
  - b) Injuring the Public Order and the peace of the Citizens, and attempts to lead these latter astray, by preventing them from practicing their religious duties—crimes coming under the sanction of Article 168 of the Moroccan Penal Code.



Begging you to accept the assurance of my distinguished consideration,

Signed: Allal El Fassi.

Bahá'í International Community  
556 Sheridan Road  
Wilmette, Illinois  
Temporary New York Headquarters:

Baha'i Information Center  
118 West 57th Street  
New York 19, N.Y.

## Update

On 31 January 1962, Roger Nash Baldwin, then Chairman of the International League for the Rights of Man, appeared before a UN sub-commission of Preventing Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and states that, as far as they knew, the Bahá'í prisoners in Morocco are the only example in recent history where members of a religions have been condemned to death solely for holding and expressing religious views regarded as heretical.<sup>1</sup> This appeal through the UN was supported by nearly the entire body of the Harvard Divinity School.<sup>2</sup>

There were months of diplomatic efforts; US Senator Kenneth B. Keating stated in the U.S. Senate on 18 February 1963, "How far religious freedom under the Moroccan Constitution really applies, will be revealed in the coming weeks when the appeal before the Supreme Court [of Morocco] is heard."<sup>3</sup>

On 31 March 1963 during a visit to the United States and the United Nations, Hassan II of Morocco was interviewed on television on *Meet the Press* then with Lawrence E. Spivak and was asked about the treatment of Bahá'ís in his own country.<sup>4</sup> He addressed the audience saying that the Bahá'í Faith was not a religion and "against good order and also morals".<sup>5</sup> However, on 2 April he makes a public statement that if the Supreme Court confirms the penalty of death that he would grant them a royal pardon.<sup>6</sup>

On 23 November 1963, the Supreme Court hears the appeals and reversed the decision of the lower court. On December 13 the prisoners are actually released.<sup>7</sup> Many international newspapers covered the news of their release.

The New Republic 25 January 1964 issue had an article by Roger Nash Baldwin, founder of the American Civil Liberties Union and member of the International League for the Rights of Man (an organization accredited by the UN which aims to spread civil liberties around the world).<sup>8</sup> Baldwin mentions how the League, by applying public pressure on the King of Morocco helped save the lives of the Bahá'í prisoners who had been sentenced to death. Baldwin was quoted discussing the League, "All this adds up to the very tiny beginnings of a system by which the UN itself would examine and process complaints and ultimately help set up a world court of human rights."

1 *Ministry of the Custodians*, pp. 415–6.

2 "Divinity School Members Protest Verdict on Baha'i". *The Harvard Crimson*. 18 January 1963. [www.thecrimson.com/article/1963/1/18/divinity-school-members-protest-verdict-on/](http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1963/1/18/divinity-school-members-protest-verdict-on/)

3 *The Ministry of the Custodians 1957–1963*. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 419.

4 Rutstein, Nathan. *From a Gnat to an Eagle: The Story of Nathan Rutstein*. p. 119.

5 *The Ministry of the Custodians 1957–1963*. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 415.

6 *ibid.* p. 415.

7 *Bahá'í World*, vol. 14, p. 98.

8 "Bahá'í in the News". *Bahá'í News*. no. 400, July 1964. p. 15.