In these two photographs, taken early last December, French artisans are installing the last major portions of the marble exterior for the new building for the Seat of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel. In the photograph above, workmen are placing marble sheathing on the building's dome. The ceramic tile covering for the rest of the roof has yet to be installed. Below, the marble steps in the center of the entrance side of the building are being constructed.
Two of the youngest and most dynamic of the Hands of the Cause of God, Enoch Olinga and Dr. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájjír, left this earthly plane of existence last year for service in higher realms. Mr. Olinga, his wife and three of their children fell victim to rampaging gunmen in Kampala, Uganda, last September, while Dr. Muhájjír succumbed to a heart attack in December while on a teaching trip to Ecuador. Moving accounts of the final days of each of these beloved Hands of the Cause are in this issue. The story of the slayings of Mr. Olinga and his family begins on Page 2; a report of Dr. Muhájjír’s final days in Ecuador begins on Page 8.
A sacrifice to fidelity

The senseless, brutal slayings of Enoch Olinga, his wife and children

(The following extracts are from a letter dated January 11, 1980, from the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land to the Hands of the Cause of God throughout the world.—Ed.)

In all of these sad events it is some consolation to know that apparently the murder of Mr. Olinga was in no way directly connected with either religion or politics; in other words no one associated Enoch with any political factions and this attack on him was not in the nature of an attack on the Faith itself. Enoch may have been killed just because he was an affluent businessman and well known because of this and as a “leader” of the Bahá’ís. For some years past in Uganda the elimination of prominent people has been a fixed policy of certain factions and nearly all those who fell into this category fled the country. Mr. Vuyiya, who arrived in Kampala from Nairobi three days after the event, writes, “... staying in the middle of the town, I had the full effect of the state of near anarchy in Kampala at night. There were shots every night.” He points out that in the nightly curfew no one could tell who was roaming about the streets and that every night brought with it “... the news of the murder of yet another family.” As nothing worth mentioning, including a large sum of money which was available in Mr. Olinga’s desk, seems to have been stolen from the home, some people consider that it was one of the acts being regularly committed by some obscure faction, to create the impression that lawlessness was rampant and thus discredit the efforts of the new Government to maintain law and order. In similar killings these “thugs” have stated they are not thieves but have come “only for lives.”

Now that detailed reports have been received here, we feel we should acquaint you fully with these matters so that the Bahá’ís, through this report to you, will be properly informed and not attribute his murder to all kinds of things which have no foundation in fact; we notice through meetings with the friends and letters received here that there is a lot of speculation, misinformation and personal interpretation of events going about. Hence the details contained in this letter, most of which you already know.

There is no doubt that the fidelity of Enoch to the Bahá’í community and its interests in Uganda, and in particular to the Mother Temple for Africa, was not only outstanding and most touching but, on more than one occasion the respect in which he was held by many prominent non-Bahá’ís enabled him to safeguard the House of Worship and the adjacent National Headquarters, at a time when meetings were forbidden and the country itself in a very dangerous condition. For almost two years (due to the banning of the Faith in Uganda along with twenty-six other religious organizations in September 1977) Enoch and the two Ugandan members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central and East Africa, Oloro Epyeru and Kolonario Oule, had been made responsible, by the Universal House of Justice, for the protection and guidance of the Faith there. At last conditions had begun to change and our Supreme Body was able to appoint a Uganda Administrative Committee to take over the administrative work, pending such time as the re-election of the National Spiritual Assembly could be held. This important new Committee held its first meeting in the National Hazíratu’l-Quds on the Bahá’í Temple property on August 25, 1979. Enoch was present and invited to chair it. He was radiantly happy and distributed to the Committee members present “a well worked out and soul stirring devotional programme,” handing each one a new prayer book with passages marked. They all went to the Temple for this most moving devotional inauguration of their work and from there visited the
grave of the Hand of the Cause of God Músá Banání and after praying there returned to the National Centre to start their meeting, which they opened with the Tablet of Ahmad. Enoch then presented each one with one of the prayer books as a gift and he and the others all signed each book—truly a precious memento of an historic occasion which constituted the “resurrection” of the Ugandan Bahá’í community.

According to the minutes of that meeting: “the beloved Hand of the Cause of God presented the appointment letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Committee. He observed that this Committee was an arm of the Universal House of Justice stretched over Uganda” and assured them this appointment conferred the capacity and worthiness to do their work and therefore they should rely on the power of the Holy Spirit at all times. The Committee then decided to draft a cable to the Universal House of Justice signifying their acceptance of their appointment and desire to serve worthily. This entire meeting was a “joy-laden” occasion and ended with singing Bahá’í songs.

The following day Enoch again acted as Chairman at the second meeting and set before its members a clear picture of the needs of both the Faith throughout the country and the many things requiring to be done at the Temple property owing to the depredations caused by the conditions inside Uganda and the war—telephone connection, water supply, office equipment, lawn mowers were all gone; the Universal House of Justice had provided a budget for restoring the property and the National Centre to a condition where it could be kept up and the administrative work function; the property also urgently needed personnel to stay on Kikaaya Hill and protect it. Many duties were outlined and discussed and a plan made to hold a National Briefing Conference during October. This was later called the “Re-Birth Conference.”

The next meeting of this Committee took place on September 15th—the day before Enoch’s murder. He was not present but the Counsellor Kolonario Oule had specially come to Kampala to meet with it and discuss the work in his area. His arrival at this moment, when the black cloud of catastrophe was already drawing near, was truly providential. As both Ugandan Counsellors—Kolonario Oule and Oloro Epyeru—live about 300 kilometers north-east of Kampala, communication and travel were not easy and Oule apologized for both his and Epyeru’s absence, due to illness, from the first meeting. He paid glowing tribute to not only Enoch’s services but his “matchless courage” during the most difficult period the Cause had passed through.

We learn from George Olinga, Enoch’s eldest son, that from the time the Faith was banned until Idi Amin fell from power his father, on many occasions, stated he would not leave the country or run away. He was not only worried about the morale of the Bahá’ís but was very much concerned about the Bahá’í properties and their protection. That they were safeguarded in the midst of so much turmoil, that precious archive material was removed to a remote spot and nothing happened to it, we owe largely to this fellow Hand of ours, this Enoch we loved so much.

In April 1979 Enoch was injured and very narrowly escaped death in a serious car accident, the cause of which was suspicious; he told George Olinga—though he considered it providential as otherwise he would have gone to his home in Teso and he had learned later that his name was on a list for “liquidation” there. As he was recovering from this accident and living up at the Temple site during the chaotic period of looting in Kampala, his
presence there was undoubtedly the reason the Bahá’í properties—particularly the precious Mother Temple of Africa—were not also looted. Generally speaking the looters passed over places which were occupied, especially if a strong personality stood up to them. During this period, however, Enoch’s own home was looted completely bare. He went down one day from Kikaya Hill to his house and found this going on; for some moments his own life was in acute danger as he was accused at gun point of being a soldier of Amin; when he succeeded in convincing them he was not, his life was spared. He and his family, who for safety’s sake he had sent to their home in Teso, then had to set about the complete restoration and refurnishing of their house.

Shortly before the conquest of Kampala had taken place, which preceded the above incident, Enoch’s son Badi was hijacked with his pickup by Amin’s soldiers and disappeared for over a week. The anguish of worry over his whereabouts and fear for his life was acute and George states that in his father’s many prayers he asked Bahá’u’lláh to accept Badi as a sacrifice for His Cause. When Badi was finally released by Amin’s soldiers, who had impounded his car for transportation, the relief of the Olinga family was great, but it had been a terrible experience for his young sister Tahirih who suffered severe depression as a result. Indeed, it was partly to cheer her up that the large family reunion was planned for Sunday, September 16th, which was her birthday.

Of his father’s last days George writes: “He spent most of his time at Kikaya cutting the grass around the Temple, sweeping the Temple, and the last few days before his tragic death he had reorganized the Bahá’í Centre, from washing the floor to allocation of rooms for various functions of the newly appointed Administrative Committee. During their first meeting in Kampala I had just arrived from Nairobi and Daddy was overjoyed when I told them that while I was in Kenya I had found the grass mowers for the Temple grounds and that they had been purchased . . . So happy was Daddy during these last days of his life that he told some of the friends he is so believed to have handed over to the Administrative Committee that he was ready to die.”

Even on that fate-laden Sunday, September 16th, Enoch and his wife and the children who were in Kampala had been up at the Temple, as George states that on that day his father “was in a happy mood and spent most of the time in Kikaya.”

As the regular nightly curfew began at 8 p.m. we assume well before that hour the Olingas returned to their home—the former historic home of the Hand of the Cause Músá Banání, which Enoch had bought when Mrs. Banání could no longer live there alone because of the steady increase of robbery and violence inside Kampala, in spite of the fact that the house was in a very good residential district inside the city; Enoch had added to the property a high barbed wire fence and a gate to ensure greater protection.

It is probably never going to be possible to establish exactly what the terrible course of events was which took place that night; sleeping next to the garage, in a building near the back door, which gave on to the small compound into which, through the gate, the automobile driveway entered the grounds, was a Bahá’í garden boy; on either side of the Olinga property were neighbors. In a city where murder for many weeks has stalked the streets in the dark, and the rattle of automatic fire is frequently heard, people keep inside and under cover themselves when they hear guns going off nearby. No doubt this was equally true of those near the Olinga home.

We are told, however, by the garden boy, that Elizabeth was in the kitchen, at the back of the house preparing dinner with Lennie; Badi was studying in a back bedroom at the end of the inner corridor and Tahirih may have been with him. It is conjectured that there were six armed men, one remained to guard the gate through which they broke into the property, and the other five came to the back door demanding it be opened and firing shots. Whatever exactly took place a trail of blood was found from the kitchen to the room Badi was in and a rough attempt had been made to bandage Lennie’s leg where he had
No one was more appreciative of the many contributions of Enoch Olinga than Dr. Rahmatu'llah Muhajir who is shown here holding a photo of his fellow Hand of the Cause. Ironically, Dr. Muhajir succumbed to a heart attack in Ecuador only three months after the tragic deaths of Mr. Olinga, his wife and three of their children in Kampala, Uganda.

been wounded. As this is the room where all except Enoch were murdered, it seems likely they sought refuge there, locked the door and enough time elapsed to try and staunch Lennie’s wound before the armed men broke in and evidently lined Elizabeth, Lennie, Badi and Tahirih up against the wall and shot them; two rows of bullet holes showed they were shot both at chest and knee level and the pitiful mangled remains of these four people were found next day on the floor in a pile. Exactly what happened to Enoch is not known; George surmises, from accounts of those who were at least in the vicinity, if not actual eyewitnesses of what took place in the house, that Enoch was in the sitting room, heard the cries and shots, came out into the compound at the back and was taken in either to see his family shot or see them lying dead and once again came out into the compound for he was heard to be weeping and sobbing out loud; he was then shot from behind in the chest and hips and fell in front of the garage. The neighbors stated that they phoned the police five times when all this was happening but were told there were patrol cars in the area; no one came. In the morning, whenever he dared to venture forth, the garden boy found Enoch’s body and ran to inform a member of the newly appointed Uganda Administrative Committee who immediately went to the home of “Auntie Claire,” the much-loved and esteemed early pioneer to Africa who owns a well-known nursery school.

During all the warfare and troubles in Uganda and in Kampala, Claire Gung, in spite of her 79 years and very poor health, had remained at her post. Now, at the time of this grievous crisis, despite her own shock and heartbreak, she placed many phone calls, trying to contact
George in Kenya and let him know what had happened, seeking to inform the World Centre and receive guidance from the Universal House of Justice, telephoning as far afield as England in case other channels should not prove effective. The solicitude of the Universal House of Justice for Miss Gung's welfare—in the midst of all its own shock, grief and pressing duties at that time—was most touching and was reflected in the constant communications from Haifa regarding the funeral and other matters in which messages of appreciation, assurance of prayers and admonitions to take care of her health were included.

It will be remembered that Sunday, the 16th of September, was to have been a family reunion for all the Olinga children in East Africa; George, his wife and two children were coming back from a visit to a Bahá’í on the coast of Kenya; Patrick was due back in Kampala from a trip to Teso to sell coffee for his father; Godwin, who was in Fort Portal, decided to wait until George arrived and then come in to Kampala. By such tenuous threads are the lives of people suspended! George was delayed because he could not get the right tires for his car, Patrick decided to wait until Monday and see how much the coffee was sold for, Godwin just waited . . .

At length the frantic telephone calls of Claire Gung succeeded in conveying the terrible news to both the Continental Board of Counsellors' Office in Nairobi and the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya. The Counsellor, Peter Vuyiya, was fortunately in Nairobi, staying at the National Center, and was able to telephone the Universal House of Justice, which was in session when this terrible news was broken to it. From then on the guidance of the House was with the heartbroken friends and family responsible for making all decisions for the funeral, for the burial, for publicity and so on. On that same day, Monday the 17th, George and his wife and children left for Kampala, spending a night en route at Kisumu. Peter Vuyiya decided to not get involved with air travel and left early the 18th, arriving, by a process of many changes from one communal taxi to another, in Kampala before curfew fell.

While all these events were taking place Enoch and his family were still lying Monday morning where their murderers had left them. Two of the devoted African Bahá’ís had immediately gone to the Olinga home and were there when the police made their investigations.

In reading over a great many pages of reports one is deeply impressed by the fact that the people on the spot, the victims of civil war, terrorism, looting, constant crimes and dangers, acted with astonishing presence of mind, courage and capability. Their calmness, faith and fortitude shine through the horrible tale of violent death and all its degrading details. We all acutely realize the loss of Enoch and the wanton murder of his wife and children. What we do not perhaps appreciate is the defenseless state of the dead in a city devoid of facilities, still mostly without any law enforcement, in hot weather, in a country depleted of almost every commodity. Yet the three Counsellors, Oloro Epyeru, Kolonario Oule, and Peter Vuyiya, with the members of the very recently appointed Administrative Committee, together with members of Enoch's family and a handful of friends, lifted—like veritable giants—the manifold burdens of this unheard-of situation and carried their work forward to a beautiful and dignified conclusion when the bodies were finally interred on Tuesday, September 25th, in the Bahá’í cemetery.
Funeral in Uganda for Hand of Cause Enoch Olinga

The funeral for the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga was planned, in collaboration with the Continental Board of Counsellors in Central and East Africa, by the month-old Bahá’í Administrative Committee for Uganda. This committee was appointed by the Universal House of Justice to oversee the affairs of the Faith in Uganda until the formerly-banned National Spiritual Assembly could be re-established. George Olinga, the eldest surviving member of the family, joined the Committee in much of these deliberations.

Shortly after noon on September 24, 1979, the bodies of the five Olingas were taken from Mulago Hospital mortuary to the Olinga home on Kintante Road in Kampala. The five draped caskets were placed in the sitting room along with the many flowers. Those present recited prayers and sang Bahá’í songs. It was a sad and tragic homecoming for the man who had become a Bahá’í in that same house in 1952, when it was the residence of the Hand of the Cause of God Músá Banání. Mr. Olinga had purchased the home after Mr. Banání’s passing.

The funeral procession assembled at the Olinga home. The five caskets were loaded into pickup trucks, the only vehicles available, for the procession out of the city and up the winding road to Kikaaya Hill.

A police escort, required for protection, preceded the automobiles carrying the members of the Board of Counsellors and members of the Olinga family. Other mourners followed in an assortment of vehicles.

The funeral began at 2 p.m. in the Conference Hall of the National Házíratu’l-Quds, adjacent to the House of Worship and the Bahá’í cemetery. Those present sang “Alláh’u’Abhá” as the caskets were carried into the hall and placed at the head of the room. The casket of the Hand of the Cause was in the special care of the members of the Board of Counsellors; the other pallbearers were members of the Olinga family and the large Bahá’í “family” in East Africa.

More than 300 people were present, overflowing the capacity of the building and leaving some standing outside during the service. Some of those at the funeral had walked great distances after being informed of the tragedy by special broadcasts on the state radio system.

Officials present included the Minister of Justice as special representative of the President of Uganda; the former Ugandan Ambassador to Lesotho; the Bishop of Namirembe; the Canon of Makerere Church in Kampala; the principal Immigration Officer, and other distinguished guests and representatives of the press.

The message from the Universal House of Justice was read during the service as well as other messages of condolence and a brief summary of the life of the Hand of the Cause. Prayers and passages from the Bahá’í Writings were read in English, Persian, Swahili, Ateso, and Luganda.

The funeral party then proceeded to the cemetery. The Prayer for the Dead was recited, then the casket carrying the earthly remains of the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga was lowered into the earth of his native land.

Mr. Olinga’s grave adjoins that of the Hand of the Cause of God Músá Banání. The grave sites of his wife Elizabeth and daughter Taríhír, and those of his two sons, Bä’dí and Lennie are nearby.

Mr. Olinga, a native of Kampala, embraced the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh in 1952 and spent the next 11 years as a pioneer in West Africa, principally in the Cameroons, Nigeria and Ghana.

His heroic efforts in opening the British Cameroons to the Faith led to his being named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh. He was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by the Guardian in October, 1957, the only native African ever to achieve that distinction.

The Hand of the Cause traveled extensively in Europe, South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand. He traveled to the United States on at least two occasions, and visited many towns and cities in the Deep South during a period of large-scale enrollment there in 1970.

Mr. Olinga represented the Universal House of Justice on a number of occasions, such as the Bahá’í National Conventions in the Dominican Republic and Cuba in 1961, and in later years in Burundi / Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Liberia, The Gambia, and at the first Bahá’í Oceanic Conference in Palermo, Sicily, in 1968.

An economist who was fluent in six languages, Mr. Olinga authored several books, the most important of which is Social and Economic Problems—Their Solution.

The cable from the Universal House of Justice pays proper tribute to this beloved Hand of the Cause: “His Radiant Spirit, His Unwavering Faith, His All-Emerging Love, His Leonine Audacity in the Teaching Field, His Titles Knight Bahá’u’lláh Father Victories Conferred Beloved Guardian, All Combine Distinguish Him as Pre-Eminent Member His Race in Annals Faith African Continent.”
"Much-loved friend and adviser"

Hand of the Cause Rahmatu'llah Muhajir dies in Ecuador

(This moving account of the final days of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'llah Muhajir was written by Mrs. Helen Hornby, the Bahá’í News correspondent in Ecuador.—Ed.)

The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjír arrived in Ecuador from Lima, Perú, at about 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 26. He was greeted at the airport by a host of friends including members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America, who were in the country for one of their scheduled meetings. Dr. Muhájjír was presented with several bouquets of red roses, which he in turn lovingly presented to two of the indigenous believers from Otavalo as a token of his love and esteem.

He shook hands and embraced all the friends, saying, “Alláh’ú’Abhá.” When he had finished greeting everyone, he jokingly remarked, “Now I am sure I have said ‘Alláh’ú’Abhá’ 95 times for the day.” Everyone showed such happiness at being with Dr. Muhájjír that passersby paused to look on, some of them asking, “Who is he?” and giving the Bahá’ís an opportunity to mention the name of the Faith.

Dr. Muhájjír’s schedule was hectic. He did not pause to rest after arriving at the airport, as he usually did in this altitude, but was driven directly to a television interview. Unfortunately, the interview was canceled because of technical problems with the lights. Afterward, Dr. Muhájjír had a radio interview, and at 6 o’clock that evening was taken to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kamran Mansuri, in the village of Cumbaya, where the Counsellors were meeting.

Later that evening he spoke to the Bahá’í community in Quito, and afterward had a brief interview with members of the National Spiritual Assembly about his proposed agenda and length of stay. The following day, Thursday, he went to Esmeraldas, accompanied by Auxiliary Board member Charles Hornby and Keikavous Vahdat.

From the airport in Esmeraldas, the three went directly to the new Baha’i Institute that is being built and named in honor of the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga. Afterward, they were invited for lunch at the home of pioneers Susanne Jensen and Auxiliary Board member Jim Jensen. In the afternoon Dr. Muhájjír did three radio broadcasts, gave a fireside that evening, and had a television interview that night. The interview was conducted by Sr. Angel Jara Lucas, who had accepted the Faith at the age of nine but had had little contact with the Bahá’ís since his early years. Dr. Muhájjír invited him to do the interview, and afterward removed his

The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjír greets the friends on his arrival last December 26 at the airport in Quito, Ecuador. Standing behind and to the left of Dr. Muhájjír is Counsellor Peter McLaren.
necktie and presented it to Sr. Lucas in remembrance of the occasion. Sr. Lucas also invited people to attend a meeting that evening at the Jensens' to hear Dr. Muhájjir speak.

At that meeting, Dr. Muhájjir gave a warm and loving talk, likening the body of mankind to the human body, relating science to religion in a way that was educational as well as spiritual. Then he turned the meeting over to the Baha'is and seekers, encouraging the friends to answer questions and enroll those who wished to accept the Faith. Fifteen were enrolled before the meeting was adjourned.

Dr. Muhájjir returned to Quito around midday on Friday, December 28, and resumed his busy schedule, conferring that afternoon with the Counsellors before presiding at a joint meeting that evening with the Counsellors, Auxiliary Board members and the National Spiritual Assembly.

A conference for pioneers had been called for Monday, December 31, by the National Spiritual Assembly on behalf of the Counsellors. The Hand of the Cause expressed the feeling that the meeting should be held instead on Saturday, December 29; that it would bear more fruit if a plan or plans could be presented. He also insisted that the more active indigenous teachers should attend.

"Mount your steeds, O heroes of God!" This was Dr. Muhájjir's motto, and it was epitomized by the eagerness of those waiting to see how many far-reaching projects he would envisage, and substantiated by the prompt movement of pioneers and teachers responding to the call. Whenever a new teaching Plan was received from the Universal House of Justice, everyone knew it wouldn't be long before a visit from Dr. Muhájjir was forthcoming to place in perspective any perplexities that might be engendered by the vastness of the Plan.

He would always open up new avenues and approaches to teaching. On one occasion, he sent a group of believers to the history books of a country to find out how many different ethnic groups were there, where they were located, and to learn something about their culture—then he asked the National Spiritual Assembly to formulate a plan to reach them. After each session he would leave heads swirling by his edifying presence, his high spirit, his clarity and simplicity, and of course by the amount of work he outlined to be accomplished while at the same time giving the group the feeling they had really planned it themselves. He always was quick to praise the institutions of the Faith and the believers for their accomplishments—but nearly always added a sweet, calm suggestion that the teaching work could be amplified a bit more!

The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly reported that in its meeting with Dr. Muhájjir, he had asked to be brought up to date on the progress of the Cause in Ecuador; then, after inquiring about numerical goals, he decided to concentrate on the first goal enunciated by the Universal House of Justice—that of increasing the number of believers in the country from all levels of society. He was pleased by the Assembly's plan of increasing the Baha'i population in areas that historically had been difficult, but suggested that more Baha'is should be looked for in the areas of mass conversion, that teaching should be stepped up in the larger cities, and that a certain number of cities should be chosen and the following method used to find new believers:

Start teaching in one Baha'i home and invite seekers there for firesides, not stopping this fireside teaching for 10 consecutive nights, then rest one or two days. This should be followed by another 10 nights of firesides in a different Baha'i home; then rest another day or two, and resume in yet another home . . . He suggested doing this for nine months, thus obtaining "mass conversion" teaching results.

Dr. Muhájjir then left the Assembly meeting to join the friends at the Hazíratu'l-Quds, leaving
Counsellor Raúl Pavón to work with the National Assembly to pull the plan together and have it ready the following day for the meeting with pioneers and other Bahá'ís. En route to the Hazíratu’l-Quds for the public meeting, Dr. Muhájír remarked to one of the friends who was walking with him, “What would you think if I were to stay several more days? I would like to visit all of the teaching areas.” He expressed the same thought later that evening, after dinner.

The meeting at the National Center was adjourned late that evening, and it wasn’t until after 11 o’clock that the Hand of the Cause and Counsellors arrived at the home of Charles and Helen Hornby for a late supper. Dr. Muhájír carried on an animated conversation with a Korean acupuncturist about his native land, the Bahá’í Faith, and the Korean language. He appeared very happy and quite hungry. It was not until after midnight that supper was finished and everyone retired.

On Saturday morning, December 29, when the writer and her husband arrived at the Mansuri home around 7:30, Dr. Muhájír and some of the Counsellors were preparing to leave for the meeting with the pioneers. The gathering, at the Hazíratu’l-Quds, was opened with a round of prayers, after which the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly gave a brief explanation of its purpose and extended a warm welcome to everyone. Dr. Muhájír was invited to speak, but he asked that Counsellor Pavón speak first. As the Counsellor began to talk, Dr. Muhájír playfully teased him in Spanish, which created a happy atmosphere among the audience. Shortly afterward, Dr. Muhájír arose and quietly left the room. He was smiling; no one had any idea that he might be ill.

Soon Dr. Muhájír was taken to a nearby emergency clinic for medical attention and oxygen. During this time he was repeating the Greatest Name with those who were caring for him, and he smiled and talked with the doctor and nurse when his pain was not so acute. Counsellor Mas’úd Khámsí never left his side. About half an hour after his arrival at the clinic, Dr. Muhájír lost consciousness and soon passed away. It was shortly after 11 a.m.

When it was noted that his condition was worsening, the other Counsellors were called to the hospital. They and the national secretary relayed the somber news to the friends that Dr. Muhájír had winged his flight to the Abhá Kingdom. The friends from throughout the country who had come for the meeting were stunned and deeply saddened by the catastrophic news; many found it difficult to believe and accept. The Counsellors took charge of matters until such time as a meeting with the National Spiritual Assembly could be held. Phone calls were made to the World Centre, to Dr. Muhájír’s wife in the United States, and to the various National Spiritual Assemblies in South America.

Mrs. Muhájír and their daughter, Gisu, arrived in Quito on Sunday morning. To allow for the possibility of delegations from other countries attending, the burial date was extended to Monday, December 31, beyond the 24-hour period usually observed under Ecuadorian custom. Mrs. Muhájír was able to select a lovely grave site, state her preferences concerning burial arrangements, and request an unembellished wooden casket. Representatives from Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia and Perú were able to be present at the services.
The presence of the Board of Counsellors, which met with the National Spiritual Assembly to plan the program, assured compliance with the expressed wishes of the Universal House of Justice that the funeral be conducted with the dignity and respect befitting the honored, revered and respected Hand of the Cause of God. Dr. Muhajir, who was appointed a Hand of the Cause by the Guardian in his last message to the Baha'i world, was, at 53, the youngest of the living Hands of the Cause.

Amid the spontaneous grief and lamentations of the Baha'is, there was beauty and dignity. A profusion of multi-colored flowers surrounded the casket at the Haziratu'l-Quds: a giant red and white heart arrangement sent by the Universal House of Justice, an exquisite floral blanket from the International Teaching Centre, a blanket of red roses that ran the full length of the casket from his wife and daughter, floral arrangements from the Continental Board of Counsellors, the National Spiritual Assemblies of South America, the pioneers and other friends in Ecuador, and dozens of varieties of lovely and fragrant flowers that were tastefully and artistically grouped by members of the Quito Baha'i community.

On Sunday, following the Nineteen Day Feast, prayers were chanted and read at the bier upon the arrival of Mrs. Muhajir and her daughter. Some of the friends kept a vigil all night and prayed, in accordance with local custom.

On Monday morning, more than 100 Baha'is and friends gathered for the funeral service at the national Haziratu'l-Quds. Prayers were chanted and read in many languages. Afterward, when the casket had been carried to the hearse, the Baha'is made a symbolic walk behind the vehicle the length of the block, with the Counsellors leading the way. Then the friends got into cars and buses to follow the casket to the cemetery, the Parque de Recuerdos (Memorial Park), which Mrs. Muhajir had selected for its simplicity, beauty and tranquility. Three plots were purchased that allowed the grave to be oriented toward the east, a slight declination from the layout of the cemetery.

After the formal program at the cemetery, there were many spontaneous prayers by the friends in various languages. The casket was then lowered into the grave. Many of the friends lingered for a long while afterward, reluctant to leave and relinquish the dear Hand of the Cause to the next world. Since the funeral, some of the friends have made daily visits to the grave for prayers.

A touching sight at the cemetery was that of the indigenous Auxiliary Board member, Rufino Gulavisi, consoling Mrs. Muhajir. It seemed as though he were consoling her in the name of thousands of indigenous believers whom Dr. Muhajir loved so dearly.

On Monday afternoon, shortly after the services, the National Spiritual Assembly called for a teaching conference. There the Assembly, assisted by the Counsellors, immediately launched Dr. Muhajir's teaching plan; contributions, both in financial terms and in teaching assistance, were offered. The spirit was high, and everyone left the meeting convinced of the need to carry out his part in the last and, hopefully, one of the greatest strategies devised by the beloved Hand of the Cause, Dr. Muhajir.

The Baha'is of Ecuador are griefstricken over what is felt to be the untimely death of their much-loved friend and adviser. At the same time, however, they are cognizant of the great blessing bestowed upon them and their country by the Almighty, who has decreed that the earthly remains of the Hand of His Cause should find their final resting place in the soil of Ecuador, thus blessing forever the country and its people.
The friends have often asked me how I first came in contact with the Faith and finally embraced it. The explanation is this: during my life, in Iran, I often saw people mercilessly persecuted, often tortured and beaten to death. Sometimes I saw people hanged by their ears or their hands and pelted with stones. Curious as to why such terrible punishments were being inflicted on these individuals, I approached many people and asked them about it. But the only answer I received was this: "They are Bábis."

My own spiritual quest had led me to many cities in Iran. I would enter a city and seek out all the religious leaders there. But I was always disappointed. While staying in Isfahán, I was invited one night to a garden. The men who were present talked about various subjects. Somehow the subject of the Báb and His religion was raised, and I took the opportunity to speak. "This person made two great mistakes," I said. "Therefore, he was unable to accomplish his goals and was destroyed. First, he set himself against the established authorities, and, second, he tried to overturn the customs and beliefs of the masses. He should have allied himself with one or the other of these factions in order to gather support for his cause."

One of those present responded politely, "If this was a mistake, then it has been made by all the Prophets of God, including Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and all the Holy Imams."

I was surprised by this answer and also embarrassed that I had made such a false and simplminded statement. I also realized that the one who answered me...
must be a Bábí and that there must be more to the Bábí Cause than I had previously thought.

I decided to become friends with this person, which was no easy task since all Bábís were in grave danger and had to be extremely cautious. Nonetheless, he eventually adopted me as his student, though he was at first afraid that I might be insincere in my quest. Fearful of the consequences of revealing his own inner convictions, he scarcely told me anything. Although he did not speak of the Cause, he was preparing the ground for a sacred and fruitful conversation, and gradually I won his confidence.

It happened one day that I saw a large crowd gathered in one of the squares of the city. I was attracted by the noise and commotion and drew closer. There I saw five siyyids, mullás, and merchants, well dressed and from the respectable classes. Their ears had been nailed to a post, and soldiers were beating them with sticks, demanding that they recant their Faith. I was amazed that, even in that desperate condition, those believers were calm and patient and thankful. They refused to recant and quoted passages from the Qur'án to prove the claims of their Prophet, the Báb.

As I observed their steadfastness and submission to the Will of God, the fire of search was inflamed within me and I caught a glimpse of the grandeur of this Cause.

After I had become intimate with my friend, and when he was assured of my sincerity, he revealed to me that he was a Bábí, and we began to discuss the Faith. We were afraid of being discovered, so we could not meet openly. The times and places of our meetings kept shifting. Sometimes he would invite me to his house—but always after midnight. When I entered the house, I had to hide myself in the corridor until we were sure that all the members of the household were in bed and sound asleep. Then, and only then, would my friend come for me and conduct me quietly to the kitchen. There we would study the Báb’s Writings and chant prayers. At times, when it was too dark and we were unable to see the words, the only thing we could do was place a candle on the floor of the oven, then hold up the Writings to the light and, with great difficulty, study them.

When my friend came to my house, it was with the same secrecy. Sometimes it would become even more difficult. We could not have meetings of more than three or four persons, and then only late at night. Once, I rented the upper room of a certain house. My room had a window that opened on the garden. So that the people in the house would not know where I went at night, I used to climb down from the window by a rope tied to the iron bars, and return to my room the same way before sunrise to sleep.

My father was not a believer. He was a Shaykhi and a follower of Háji Muḥammad Karim Khán. He was firmly against my Faith and would follow me to many places to voice his opposition to my beliefs. We exchanged some letters, but they did not help. Eventually he left Kirman in quest of me and found me in the small town of Ná’in. He hoped that there he would be able to educate and guide me, since most of the people of the town were followers of Karim Khán.

My father went to the governor of the town, whom he knew personally, and asked for me to be brought to him. I was summoned to the governor’s house. But with the assistance of God, I was able to speak in a manner that pleased everyone. They all encouraged me and spoke words of approval. “The grace of Háji Muḥammad Karim Khán has encircled you and protected you,” they said. “He has not allowed you to go astray.”

Every morning it was their custom to recite verses from the Qur’án after prayers. It was my honor to recite these verses, and everyone was always pleased to hear those beautiful words. To open the way for our discussion, I began to include verses of the Báb with those from the Qur’án. No one criticized—or even detected that verses other than those from the Qur’án were being chanted. This gave me an opportunity to present my argument to the people in the room, particularly my father.

An uncle of mine, Háji Muhammad-'Ali, lived in Ná’in. He was a good friend of mine and knew of my correspondence with my father. So I asked him if he would be willing to hide me and protect me and take me secretly to Isfahán. He accepted, and I prepared to leave.

I went to the hall where my father and the governor and several other people were seated. I sat next to my father and said to him, “Suppose I had been born blind and could not know you by sight. Could I not certainly recognize you by your voice?”

“What is your aim in asking this question?” he responded.

“Let me finish the premise; then you will comprehend the purpose of my question,” I replied. “Suppose, again, that you were to go on an extensive trip and return home only after a long time. I shall still know you by your voice and shall naturally run to you. When I receive kindness, compassion, and love, I shall know for certain that the newcomer is my father.”

All present agreed, “This is true. It is obvious and understandable.”

“Now, here is my question,” I continued. “When I chanted the verses of the Qur’án for you, I often included in the texts verses revealed by the Báb. I am sure you recognize the verses of the Prophet Muhammad by His words, tone, and style. Then, why did no one protest? Surely, only because the words revealed by the Báb have the same tone, vigor, and style, and come from the same Source.”

This concluded the discussion. I left the hall quickly.
and made for my uncle's house. I stayed in his house for a month, until all efforts to find me were exhausted. Then I secretly left Na'in and traveled to Isfahan.

My father and others came to Isfahan looking for me, and there they made efforts to have me killed or imprisoned. But the Huijatu'l-Islam, Siyyid Asadu'llah, was a very influential man in Isfahan and was related to me through my mother. The followers of Karim Khan were rejected by the prominent 'ulama in Isfahan, and the two groups were openly hostile to one another. Seeing only that I was opposed to these people whom they hated, the 'ulama protected me. My enemies were defeated, and I was victorious. But when my father died, I learned that he had disinherited me.

In Isfahan, I spent most of my time in the presence of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin. We used to go to distant and desolate places far from the tumult of the towns and villages, just to be together, study the Writings, chant prayers, and discuss the Cause of God. These moments of joy kept us alive, but we longed to teach and make His Name known in any way we could.

We tried different methods of approach. We went to an Indian who claimed to have some medical knowledge, and Jinab-i-Zayn opened the discussion by saying, "I feel a painful sensation in my heart. I know of no physician who can help me."

"What is the cause?" asked the physician.

Jinab-i-Zayn replied, "A few days ago, I was walking in the street when suddenly I beheld a strange sight. Some people, held captive and helpless in the hands of a savage mob, were being tortured and mercilessly persecuted. I was so disturbed and alarmed that, ever since then, I have felt this pain in my heart." Then Jinab-i-Zayn went on to tell the Indian doctor about the Revelation of the Bab, His tragic history, and His Writings.

One day we were outside the city of Isfahan in a very pleasant place where there was a mosque and a stream and a few trees. We had taken provisions to spend the night. We went to the mosque, where we planned to stay. A few of the inhabitants were curious, so they entered the mosque and someone asked me where I was from. I had a slight Isfahani accent, but I said that I was from Shiraz.

"Why are you lying?" the man replied. "It is obvious that you are from Isfahan. Seventy thousand angels will curse a liar."

"Have you seen those angels?" I asked, hoping to create an opportunity to teach the Faith.

"Why shouldn't I have seen them?" he replied.

"They are recorded in the authentic traditions of our Faith."

I was rather incautious and said, "Yes, I can tell that you have the spiritual discernment to have seen them."

Then they guessed our secret and immediately cried out, "These people are Babis! Come and get them!" And we were forced to leave all of our belongings behind and run away.

These problems often occurred. There is one funny story about a certain siyyid who was a student in a religious school. I used to speak to him and I invited him to my home a few times. He claimed to have accepted the Faith. He got to know a few of the believers, and some of the Writings of the Bab were given to him.

Then someone informed me that the siyyid had said to him, "I have gotten to know some Babis. When I meet all of them and find out what their schemes are, I plan to inform the authorities and have them all arrested."

The siyyid was living at the religious school at the time. So I went to the headmaster of the school and told him that he had a student who was a Babi and was in possession of some of the Writings of the Bab. I also

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**NOTES**

1. Haji Muhammad Karim Khan was a student of Siyyid Kázip. He assumed a position of leadership among the Shaykhis in Iran after the siyyid's death, and became a bitter enemy of the Bab.

2. A title of the Shi'i Muslim clergy.

3. Mullá Zaynu'l-Abidin, surnamed Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín (Ornament of Them that Are Nigh unto God) by Bahá'u'lláh was a Shi'i mujtahid before becoming a Bábí. He later became an outstanding follower of Bahá'u'lláh.

4. Jinab is a polite title meaning honorable. The name of the person referred to follows immediately after this title.
made sure that someone told the siyyid what I had done. When he heard this he was overtaken by fear, and, leaving all his belongings behind, he fled from the town and never returned.

A few years later, I was going from Shiráz to Būshihr. On the way, I stopped at a mosque in a small town, not knowing that this same siyyid now lived there. He saw me and recognized me. Seeing an opportunity to take his revenge, he approached me and said, "Do you remember what you did to me in Iṣfahān?"

"Yes," I replied. "You are that same Bābi student who was going to be arrested and killed in Iṣfahān. Now you have come here and have become a leader of Muslims in this mosque."

He was so frightened by my reply that the whole time I was in that place he would not leave my side, fearing that I would denounce him to others. He brought me food and tea until I left.
Australian Temple undamaged in brush fire

The Mashriqu’l-Adhkar near Sydney, Australia, the Hazrat-ul-Quds, and other auxiliary buildings escaped damage when a massive brush fire swept through the Temple property last December 17.

The Universal House of Justice cabled: “EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY DEVASTATION TEMPLE GROUNDS GREATLY RELIEVED SAFETY STAFF BUILDING RECORDS.”

Shortly after the brush fires in Ku-ring-gai National Park that closed roads and destroyed some homes, an eyewitness described the Temple property: “The scene is very strange. The majority of property is completely razed. Smoldering logs remain where they fell. The House of Worship is untouched.

“The fire was halted five feet from the Assembly Hall and 20 feet from the National Office. The garden beds in front of these buildings are virtually all of the vegetation that remains.”

The Temple, Hazratu’l-Quds, Assembly Hall, hostel and caretaker’s cottage were untouched, due to the efforts of the Temple caretaker and firefighters.

The National Spiritual Assembly’s appeal for $5,000 to help restore the grounds was quickly met. Already, dead trees and shrubs have been cleared, new fences erected, and the lawn between the House of Worship and main entrance greatly extended with the laying of more turf.

Many of the trees that were burned have begun to regenerate, a process that will take approximately two years to complete. New trees and plants are being put in place, and the local Shire Council has offered to donate 100 eucalyptus trees to help replace many of those that were lost in the fire.
Hawaii Bahá'í community presents Agnes Alexander award for service

About 200 people attended an International Year of the Child banquet last December 26 in Honolulu, Hawaii, at which the Agnes B. Alexander Award for Service to Humanity, named in memory of one of the pioneers who introduced the Faith in Hawaii in 1901, was presented to educator and community leader Gladys Ainoa Brandt. The banquet was sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands and its Office of Human Rights (NAHBOHR).

The principal speaker at the banquet was Dorothy W. Nelson, treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. Judge Nelson's husband, Judge James Nelson, chairman of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, also was present at the banquet in the Princess Kaiulani Hotel.

Representatives of U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye and Mayor Frank Fasi of Honolulu were present at the banquet along with representatives of organizations such as the International Year of the Child Steering Committee for Hawaii, the Hawaii division of the United Nations Association, UNICEF Hawaii, and the Hawaii Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Mrs. Brandt, the award recipient, has had a distinguished career ranging from elementary school teacher to 17 years as Hawaii's first and only female high school principal. She also has served as district superintendent of Kauai schools.