



alcoholism.

In 1951, Enoch came into contact with the Bahá'í Faith through `Ali Nakhiavani, the son-in-law of the Bananis, Persian Bahá'í pioneers; and upon enrollment, he gave up all alcohol. However, this was too late to save his government career.

Enoch Olinga was the third Ugandan and the first of the Teso tribe to declare his belief in Bahá'u'lláh. He had become a close friend of `Ali and regularly was in attendance at Bahá'í meetings at the Banani home, 3 Kitante Road. On account of his remarkable transformation in conduct, his wife soon became a Bahá'í. Then many others followed and by Ridván (April 21, 1952) the first of several Local Spiritual Assemblies in Uganda were formed. Shortly afterward, Enoch returned to his native village of Tilling to spread the glad tidings of Bahá'u'lláh. In a few weeks, the mass enrollments begun, the first trumpet blast of `entry by troops' predicted by `Abdu'l-Bahá. The following year, nine more Assemblies were formed.

In 1953, the first of four Intercontinental Conferences was held in Kampala, February 12-18 and Shoghi Effendi hailed with a `joyous heart', the large number of new believers. The next year, Enoch responded to the appeal for pioneers to open up new territories and became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. He was also elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa. That same year, Enoch made a precarious, overland journey to what was then known as Cameroon, becoming the first to open that country to the Faith, holding this pioneer post for ten years. One of the outstanding believers who found the Faith through the teaching work of Enoch Olinga was David Tanyi, the first believer in the entire Cameroon province, later becoming a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for French Togoland. Discretion often had to be used when teaching and making travel plans in order to avoid arousing the suspicions of the local governmental authorities, for persons of diverse backgrounds and ancestry were often suspected of covert activities.

It was during this time, Enoch wrote his first letter to Shoghi Effendi, describing the outcome of the teaching work and asked that he may be permitted to stay at his pioneering post. In 1956, Enoch was elected chairman of the newly

formed National Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa, headquartered in Tunis. In the span of three years, twenty-nine of the thirty-three virgin territories were opened to the Faith.

During February 1957, with the assistance of Dr. Ugo Giachery, Enoch was, with some difficulty, granted a current passport and visa to visit the Guardian in Haifa, and arrived in the Holy Land on February 3rd, staying for ten days. The love showered upon him by Shoghi Effendi affected him for the rest of his life. He returned to West Africa enkindled with the love of Bahá'u'lláh and made arraignments to move his family. The teaching work in the British territories of West Africa continued. It was on a visit to Uganda, October 2, 1957, when he was notified through a cable received by Mr. Banani that he was, along with John Roberts and William Sears, elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God.

#### Bahá'i Temple of Africa

One month later, he received the word of the Guardians passing. Enoch was unable to attend Shoghi Effendi's funeral in London but was in attendance for the first Conclave of the Hands in Bahji on November 18, 1957.

#### Rúhíyyih Khánum

recalls one of his most endearing qualities was his: "great joyous, consuming and contagious laugh." He attended the laying of the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of Africa at Kampala on February 14, 1957. He worked at the World Center until 1963. He returned to live in East Africa and found his relation with his wife Eunica, going from bad to worse. They separated and divorced; he went to Nairobi with his second wife, Elizabeth and all of his children, facing numerous difficulties during the dark days after the passing of the Guardian.[1] Finally, he returned to live in his native village of Tilling in Teso, Uganda and built a house. Though the loving guidance of the Universal House of Justice, he once again began to travel teach for the Faith. In the spring of 1963, he was chosen to be chairman of the opening session of the First Bahá'i World Congress, held in London.

Enoch met heads of state during his many visits to different countries, including one with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India, during October 1968. Over many years of service, often accompanied by his wife Elizabeth, he traveled and stimulated the Bahá'ís and met with high officials. He would often bring the Faith before public and media. After Mr. Banani died, Enoch purchased his home in Kampala. Additional travels after 1968 were extensive, including a tour of Upper West Africa in 1969 and later that same year, South America, Central America, passing through the United States, then the Solomon Island, and Japan. In 1977, He represented the Universal House of Justice at the International Teaching Conference held in Brazil and then attended the International Teaching Conference in Merida, Mexico where the instructor of this deepening series was given the honor of meeting and conversing with him. He returned to Uganda that same year to help protect and preserve the Bahá'í Community there during a civil war.

In September, 1977, the Bahá'í Faith was banned in Uganda by the new dictatorial government headed by Idi Amin.[2] All administrative institutions had to be closed. In March of the same year, Enoch was in a terrible automobile accident when his car was rammed and knocked down the side of a hill by a troop transport; he was subsequently robbed by the soldiers and left for dead. He commented that if it weren't for Bahá'u'lláh, he would have died in that accident. Two days later, his son Badí was kidnapped by soldiers. He arranged for his wife and youngest child, Tahiri, to return to Tilling. The train they traveled on was strafed by bullets several different times, inflicting many casualties. However, they were not harmed. Badí returned and Enoch promptly sent him and his brother Patrick on to Tilling to be reunited with their mother. He was too weak to make the journey himself because of the accident. Kampala was being heavily bombarded and Enoch was persuaded to seek refuge on the Temple property. He made his way there on foot, under extreme pain, struggling against the crowds of people trying to flee the city.[3] That night, a fierce artillery battle raged around the Temple where he spent the night in prayer. The next day, the temple still stood,

undamaged.

He soon returned to his house, finding it being looted. He was accused of being one of Idi Amin's men but somehow was able to convince the mob otherwise. He returned to the Temple and assisted in its protection.

Gradually, the conditions improved and the Universal House of Justice was able to appoint an interim administrative body to reorganize the Bahá'í activities and properties. Enoch spent his days working at the Bahá'í Temple and assisting the Administrative Committee. He refurbished his home in Kampala and his family joined him there.

It was on Sunday, September 16, 1979, five soldiers in unmarked uniforms knocked on the door.

The houseboy recalled: "At about 8:30, I heard someone shaking the gate to the compound and, looking through the window, saw five armed men walking towards the back door leading to the kitchen. They shouted 'open' and banged on the door. Lennie opened the door and there was a sound of shots. I fled over the fence to hide in the neighbor's bushes and remained there in terror all night. I wasn't able to see anything but heard shooting and other sounds going on for about two hours. At dawn, I ventured out of hiding and went to the house, seeing the body of Enoch lying in the courtyard and inside, all in an inner bedroom, the bodies of Elizabeth, Tahirih, Lennie and Badí, heaped on the floor where they had fallen when shot to death."

[4]

On September 24, 1979, Enoch Olinga was laid to rest in a burial plot near the Temple, next to that of Musa Banani, his fellow Hand of the Cause of God; one was designated the 'Spiritual Conqueror of Africa' now joined by the 'Father of Victories'.

Notes:

It is often a cultural custom among African tribesmen to practice polygamy; Enoch Olinga had two wives. (Research by the author).

Idi Amin was making the news almost daily during the

later nineteen seventies. The author recalls the announcement in September 1977 that he had band several organizations from Uganda, including the Bahá'í Faith, and it was thought that he stated: "Such a belief doesn't fit my agenda." ( KABL San Francisco).

Numerous stories of brutality have come forth centered around Idi Amin. One of the most noteworthy was posted in Time Magazine in October 1977: It stated that he killed one of his three wives because he believed she had conspired to have him poisoned. He then dismembered the corps and arranged the severed limbs backward. Upon showing the atrocity to his children, he was reported to remark: " See what happens to bad mothers." (Time Magazine article)

Another story of Idi Amin concerned the Mother Temple of Africa: He was reported through communication by Bahá'í caretakers to frequently visit the Mother Temple of Africa, instructing his body guards to wait outside. He would then enter the Temple alone and remain in solitude for a considerable period of time before calling to his trusted guards that he was ready to leave. Could the mystical power of God have comforted his poor, demented soul? (Bobby Nicolas-oral communication, Gallup, New Mexico).

The United States State Department has denied it, but it is speculated by many political scientists that the Central Intelligence Agency was supporting an effort to overthrow the regime of Idi Amin. He in turn, was receiving support by the Soviet Union during what has sometimes been termed a "Cold War" diplomacy. Idi Amin was overthrown in 1978 after Tanzanian troops invaded Kampala. He fled first to Libya, then Iraq and most recently to Saudi Arabia. He died in Jeddah's King Faisal Hospital on August 16, 2003 from kidney failure after remaining in a coma for nearly a month. (Oral communication -Anonymous, VAO News.com ).

This is a common practice used in third world nations as a terrorist ploy by covert activist and drug lords. Similar activity has occasionally been practiced by counter cultural groups such as that of Charles Manson in the United States in 1968. (oral communication)

METADATA

Views27591 views since posted 2004-10-07; last edit 2016-05-03 20:26 UTC;

previous at [archive.org.../francis\\_olinga\\_biography](http://archive.org.../francis_olinga_biography);

URLs changed in 2010, see [archive.org.../bahai-library.org](http://archive.org.../bahai-library.org)

Language

English

Permission

author

Share

Shortlink: [bahai-library.com/1565](http://bahai-library.com/1565)

Citation: ris/1565

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio

Bibliographies

BIC

Biographies

Books

Chronologies

Compilations

Compilations-NSA

Compilations-personal

Documents

East-asia

Encyclopedia

Essays

Etc

Excerpts

Fiction

Glossaries

Guardian

Histories

Introductory

Letters

Maps

Music

Newspapers

NSA-documents

NSA-letters

Personal

Pilgrims

Poetry

Presentations

Resources

Reviews  
Scripts  
Software  
Statistics  
Study  
Talks  
Theses  
Transcripts  
Translations  
UHJ-documents  
UHJ-letters  
Video  
Visual  
Writings

home

sitemap

series

chronology

search:

author

title

date

tags

adv. search

languages

inventory

bibliography

abbreviations

links

about

contact

RSS

new

— Olinga, Enoch (Used by permission of the curator)