



Interview in Tehran daily, *Kayhán* (January 20, 1982) with Ayatollah Gilani, judge of Central Revolutionary Court at Evvin Prison. Gilani explains that the death sentences against Bahá'ís have the approval of the entire Shi'ih hierarchy. Condemned persons who are "purified from the wrong

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**The Press Conference
of
the Religious Magistrate
and
the Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor of Tehran**

During a press conference at the Central Revolutionary Courts (Evin [Prison]) yesterday afternoon, Ayatollah Mohammadi Gilani, the Head of the Central Revolutionary Courts and Seyyed Assadollah Lajevardi, the Central Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor, responded to questions from domestic and foreign reporters regarding the problems of the Revolutionary Courts, the recent executions of the leaders of the misled Baha'i Sect, and the manner of freeing of the prisoners of the revolutionary prisons.

In the beginning, in response to the reporters' question about the [staffing] shortages in the judicial cadre[s], the resulting problems in the Islamic Revolutionary Courts, and the programs planned for solving these problems, Mohammadi Gilani said, "The majority of the [staffing] shortages in the judicial cadre[s] are related to the religious judges. Doubtless, the Supreme Judicial Council is faced with this issue. In order to address this void in Qom and other locations, widespread efforts have been underway in order to train religious judges. We hope that this void will be filled as soon as possible."

In answer to the question, "Do the death sentences handed down in the case of the members of small groups get confirmed by [higher] authorities as well?" he said, "The death sentences handed down in the Revolutionary Courts are based on Islamic judicial rules. With regard to the issue of the execution of [the members of] small groups, the honorable Supreme Judicial Council has recently decided that, in addition to the judges of the [various] branches of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts, the sentences handed down will be reviewed by one of the religious jurists who has the competence, and meets the qualifications for, the practice of jurisprudence and, again, will be considered in the Supreme Court of Qom and, in case it is

confirmed, the sentence will be carried out as handed down and, in these phases, each of the religious jurists has the right to veto the sentences handed down.”

Then, regarding the conditions for the freedom of those supporters and sympathizers [of small groups] who have regretted their actions and who did not have effective roles in destructive and terrorist activities, the Religious Magistrate of the Central Islamic Revolutionary Courts said, “The accused are not tried in the Islamic Revolutionary Courts because they are sympathizers, supporters, or active members [of small groups], but because of their actions. In case they have not committed murder, and after proving that they have left the devious ways of their past, the members of these small groups—from the least important all the way to the most important members of their organization[s]—are, from the point of view of Islam, doubtlessly free and will be freed.”

Afterwards, on the subject of the sensationalistic reports by western propaganda establishments about the execution of a number of the members of the National Organization of Baha'is, Mohammadi Gilani said, “It has become clear that [the members of] this group or sect spy for imperialist organizations. The [members of] this misled sect have caused many damages in this country. God is Great. These friends and spies--of imperialism, generally, and of Zionism, specifically—have fought with the Islamic legal system in our country for years and, after the Revolution too, they are fighting against the Islamic Revolution. It is incumbent upon the courts and the religious magistrates to see to it that these people meet with their just punishment. Of course, the members of this misled sect have been spying in political matters for a very long time and, after the hated and corrupt Pahlavi family, they were the largest groups that stole and took away the property of this nation. In the case of those who were executed, their spying for Israel and its friends has become quite clear and they met with their just punishment according to the dictates of the Holy Qur'an.” He added, “There is a group among the members of this sect that has intellectual weaknesses and the courts have done them a favor and have rehabilitated them and returned them to life, because they were misguided and had not understood the problem with spying.”

Then, the reporters asked that, since the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution was approaching, whether some plans for granting amnesty were being considered. In response, Seyyed Assodollah Lajevardi, the Revolutionary Prosecutor of Tehran, said:

“In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. While in prison, a number of those who had committed crimes before these terrorist and destructive acts of June 20 [, 1981 [the bombing of the headquarters of the Islamic Republic Party]] realized the shamefulness of their actions and benefited from the grace of the brother judges. Their files were sent to the Amnesty Commission and we hope that they will be granted amnesty and be released from prison. God willing, they will not [again] commit the illegal acts they had committed before and after the victory of the Revolution. However, as for the small groups whose activities continue and who still commit murder, there is not the slightest plan for granting them amnesty.” Then, about his recent visit with the Imam of the Ummat [Imam of the Muslim nation [Imam Khomeini]], the Prosecutor of the Revolutionary Center [the Central Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor] said, “During the course of this visit, the judicial issues of the Prosecutor and the Islamic

Revolutionary Courts were discussed. The Imam provided some guidance which we hope to be able to put into action successfully as soon as possible.”

In continuation of this press conference, in response to the question of one of the reporters who asked, “When can the representatives of International Red Cross visit Evin Prison?” Brother Lajevardi said, “The condition set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this issue still stands and, until these people stop supporting the murderous small groups and their terrorist members, in my opinion, they are not competent to visit the Revolution’s prisons.” Then, on the subject of the effects of cultural activities in the thinking of the prisoners and the quality and mode of the prosecutor [-mandated] cultural activities, the Prosecutor of the Islamic Revolutionary Center [the Central Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor] said. “In our view, these activities have been very successful and desirable and have been at a level where many of the accused, after interrogation and even after the issuance of the sentence, have requested repeated interrogations so they can reveal more details about the internal workings of their organizations.”

On this matter, Brother Lajevardi added that these propaganda have been so effective that 50 percent of the prisoners have asked us repeatedly for a television interview so they can address the Western propaganda establishments’ sensationalistic coverage targeted at the guards’ treatment of prisoners. He added that the presence of more than 2,000 of them at the religious ceremonies at the Evin Hosseinieh [Mosque] confirms this. About the present situation of the small groups, he said, “The interrogations carried out by our interrogators show that, regarding their ability to attract forces, after the issue of 30 Khordad [June 20 [, 1981]], these small groups have reached zero. If they had been, at least, a successful terrorist movement, their power to attract forces should have increased. However, not only is this not the case, but also they are losing more supporters every day.”

He added, “At the first encounter, the majority of the accused we have here behave in a very high and mighty manner towards us. At the second and third encounters, they apologize and repent. A certain amount of meaningless, baseless, and cheap acting has taken place. Also, the minds of these honest youth who, in our view, were sincere, and who, with complete candor, wished to enter into a religious movement, were corrupted. With all the tricks it had up its sleeve, the treacherous enemy had taken the possibility of thinking [independently] away from them. We believe that only when they are arrested, these people are truly freed because all those restrictions fall away.”

At the end of this press conference, in answer to a question from one of the reporters who asked, “Will the manner of visits with the prisoners be expanded in the future or not?” the Prosecutor of the Islamic Revolutionary Center [the Central Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor], reminding the reporter of incidences when certain prisoners had abused [this privilege], said, “When it becomes clear to us that the prisoners are fit to receive visits from their families, these visits will take place as in the past. Even now, certain prisoners--whose behavior and actions are approved by the responsible authorities—meet in person with their families.” He then mentioned the continuous efforts of the guards of the security forces, including the Strike Force of the Office of the Prosecutor of the Islamic Revolution and commended their hard work.