

**E'TERAFAT-E SIYASI YA YADDASHT-HAYE  
KINYAZ DALQURKI**

**A FORGED DOCUMENT**

**POLITICAL CONFESSIONS OR THE MEMOIRS OF  
PRINCE DOLGURKII**

**A FORGED DOCUMENT**

**Amin Banani, 1985**

A 1983 booklet entitled, Bahism: Its Origins and Its Role, published in the English language out of The Hague by a propoganda agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran known as "Propogation of the Culture of the Islamic Revolution" contains references to a forged and wholly fabricated document known as E'terafat-e Siyasi ya Yaddasht-haye Kinyaz Dalqurki (known in the West as Political Confessions or the Memoirs of Prince Dolgorukii). This document, used by enemies of the Bahá'ís as evidence that the Bahá'í Faith was instituted in Iran by Russian and English intervention in the nineteenth century, has been circulated since the 1930's in various Persian and Arabic editions.<sup>1</sup> Those who use it to accuse the Bahá'ís today of being a threat to the Iranian nation claim it is the work of Prince Dimitri Ivanovich Dolgorukov who served as a minister for the Russian government in the Qajar court from 1845 to 1854.

The document contains an allegation that its author (supposedly Prince Dolgorukov) had been sent to Persia prior to 1845 at which time he claims to have become a Muslim, taken on the name of Shaykh Isa Lankarani, and convinced Mirzá Husayn Ali (Bahá'u'lláh) and Mirzá Yahyá (Subh-i-Azal) to become Russian spies. The document then asserts Dolgorukov, upon becoming minister in Persia in 1845, used halucogenic drugs upon Siyyid Ali Muhammad of Shiraz (the Báb) to cause him to proclaim he was the return of the Twelfth Imam.

1. E'terafat-e Siyasi ya Yaddasht-haye Kinyaz Dalqurki was first circulated in Tehran in various manuscript forms in the late 1930's. The first known publication of this forgery was produced in Mashad in 1943 as an appendix to the Khorasan Yearbook. It was reprinted a year later in Tehran with major changes in description of events, chronology and grammatical usage. Since then, it has been reprinted many times and excerpts have been used from it in Iranian rhetorical works and newspapers. Siyyid Ahmad Fali produced an Arabic translation of the document in the late 1970's from Karbala, Iraq. A Russian version has never been produced, nor has the original Russian manuscript ever been produced, if indeed, it ever existed.

It is a simple matter to show that this document is a forgery.

In the first place, no original manuscript has ever been produced in Russian or any other language, in the handwriting of Prince Dolgorukov nor are there any references to the original manuscript in the subsequent published versions. In none of the Persian publications of this work is there any indication who is translating the work. There is no explanation given in the Tehran 1944 edition for its many changes from previous versions. Therefore, the work is immediately suspect, and may be presumed to be the work of forgers, implicating the publishers themselves or those who paid for their services.

The work was unknown to earlier Iranian historians and Orientalists in the West. There is no reference to it in any publication, whether of Iranian origin or of Western origin, prior to it being published in the 1940's. Manuscripts such as this would not have escaped the attention of scholars or the clerics in Iran. There has never been an explanation given where the original was discovered, by whom, and what circumstances suddenly brought it to light in the late 1930's after supposedly being around for nearly a century. The dispatches of the real Prince Dolgorukov are published in Russian in the appendix to M.S. Ivanov's Babidskie vostania v Irane (Moscow, 1939) and contain many references to the Bábí movement as being a potential threat to the Russian imperial interests in Persia.

In the Arabic translation, the translator claims the original version of the work was published in a journal of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences entitled al-Sharq, yet there is no version of the work existing in that journal whatsoever. This easily refuted lie clearly demonstrates the pretentious motives of those who attempt to publish this forgery. Responsible Iranian historians, such as Abbas Eqbal, Mojtaba Minovi and Ahmad Kasravi have all exposed the Memoirs of Dalqurki as a poor forgery.

There are many historical inaccuracies in the Dolgorukov forgery. For example, in the 1944 Tehran edition Dolgorukov is allegedly in Persia in the year 1834. In the 1943 Mashad edition, this date was given as 1838. Russian records show that the Prince was actually in Persia for about one year in 1831 before returning to Russia, only later in January 1846 to return to Persia as a minister for his government.

In the Tehran edition, Dolgorukov claims to have met Mirzá Husayn Alí (Bahá'u'lláh) in 1834, describing him as an "old man". This is impossible, since Bahá'u'lláh was born in Tehran in 1817, and would have been 17 years old in 1834. The Tehran edition goes on to allege that Mirzá Husayn Alí and his half-brother, Mirzá Yahya (who was 5 years old at the time) were recruited as spies for Tzarist Russia. Many other inconsistencies of dates and family matters occur in the Tehran edition.

The work describes a meeting the Prince supposedly had with Russian Tzar Alexander II in July 1838. Yet Alexander II was not to become the Tzar until 1855, a well known historical fact. The Báb is described as being induced with drugs to proclaim his station as the Return of the Twelfth Imam in 1845 upon the Prince's return to Persia as minister, when actually it is a well documented historical fact that the Báb made his mission known in May 1844 and the Prince was not to arrive at his post in Tehran until January 1846. The work alleges that while still in Iran as minister to the Russian government, the Prince was to help see to the banishment and exile of Bahá'u'lláh to Constantinople, Adrianople and eventually Akká, Palistine. Bahá'u'lláh's exile to these places began in 1863. Dolgorukov's service as minister in Persia ended in 1854, never to return. Dolgorukov died in Moscow in 1867, prior to Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in Akká.

Currently, the Islamic Government of Iran uses the forged Dolgorukov memoirs as one of several spurious reasons for their denial of basic human rights to members of the Bahá'í community in Iran. Within the traditional xenophobia of Iran it may be expected that the general masses of devout Shi'a Muslims would fall prey to such a forgery. And certainly, within the scope of the the practice of *irshad*, spiritual compulsion to conform to Islam or be punished, we might expect that the psychological pressure would have seen even the most enlightened Iranians grant credence to this fake work. Without the necessary scholastic latitude and discipline to put forth opposing viewpoints, it is understandable why so many of the elite in Iran today, as in the past, have silently allowed use this of this forgery as a tool for polemical nonsense.

The terribly sad outcome of this is that the Islamic Republic of Iran has not only acted in a foolish and self-incriminating manner by using the Dolgorukov memoirs, but has discredited all other claims of historical accuracy in current and future propaganda by such corrupt and un-Godly behavior. This means that whatever that government says in future communications regarding the Bahá'ís will undoubtedly be untruthful and not to be believed as has been the consistent experience of the Bahá'í community under this and former Iranian governments for the most part. This is terrible for the government of Iran which will, if it persists in such lies, find fewer friends in the world willing to trust it and increasingly become more isolated in terms of alliances based on mutual trust.