



Biographical Notes

Necati Alkan has a PhD in History from Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany and teaches Turkish history at Yildiz Technical University in Istanbul. The focus of his research during the last eight years has been the contacts between Islamic reformers and the Baha'is in the context of dissent and heterodoxy in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. He has published several articles in non-Baha'i and Baha'i academic journals.

J. Vahid Brown is a student, researcher and independent scholar. He has published a number of articles in Islamic, Babi and Baha'i studies. He and his wife and three children live in Portland, Oregon.

Jack McLean, a private scholar living in Ottawa, Canada, has an MA in the History of Religions from the University of Ottawa (1972). His main interest is in mysticism, philosophical theology, literary criticism and correlating the Baha'i Faith to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. His writings cover scholarship, poetry, essays and journalistic articles; his publications include *Dimensions in Spirituality* (George Ronald, 1994), (as editor) *Revisoning the Sacred: New Perspectives on a Baha'i Theology* (Kalimat Press 1997), *Under the Divine Lote Tree: Essays and Reflections* (George Ronald, 1999). His forthcoming book, *A Celestial Burning: The Writings of Shoghi Effendi*, is a theological and literary critical analysis of the main works of the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith.

Ahang Rabbani lives in Houston, Texas, where he enjoys studying the history and teachings of the Babi and Baha'i Faiths.

Michael Richards is a Trustee of the Baha'i Agency for Social and Economic Development (BASED-UK). Trained as an agricultural economist, he has worked for 28 years on rural development and environmental issues in developing countries, and currently works for the International Non-Government Organisation Research and Training Centre (INTRAC), Oxford.

Oliver Scharbrodt is a lecturer at the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies. He studied Comparative Religion, Islamic Studies and Philosophy at the University of Bonn and the School of Oriental and African Studies. His PhD thesis is a comparative intellectual biography of 'Abdul-Baha and Muhammad 'Abduh. His research interests are in modern Islam and mystical and esoteric traditions of Islam, and in Iranian Shi'ism in particular. His future research will examine the role of Sufism in the modernisation of Iran in the 19th century.

Peter Smith is head of the Social Science Division at Mahidol University International College, Thailand, where he lectures in world history and anthropology. He is the author of several books and a number of articles on Babi-Baha'i Studies.

Fereydun Vahman, Professor Emeritus, University of Copenhagen, studied Persian literature at the University of Teheran (MA) and undertook post-graduate studies on Iranian Philology at the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies and at the University of Copenhagen. His PhD dissertation 'The Iranian Divina Commedia' is on a Middle Persian text on the concept of Heaven and Hell in Zoroastrianism. He is the author of nine books on Iranian religions and dialects, among them *Ardāy Wirāz Nāmag: The West Iranian Dialects* (3 volumes), *Zoroastrian Religion*, and the *Folklore of Kirmān*. He is also the author of many articles in different scholarly journals and the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

