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LETTER FROM THE N.S.A.

Beloved Friends; Since the last issue of the Journal, the second British Bahá'í Summer School has been held. A report is appended. London has resumed its winter teaching activities and following a successful visit of Mrs. Bishop the Manchester Spiritual Assembly is continuing regular teaching meetings. It is hoped that throughout the winter steady and intensive work will be maintained.

The N.S.A. feels the obligation to place before the friends the greatness and urgency of our obligation, collectively and individually. As humanity penetrates nearer to the centre of that 'darkest period of its history' the Faith of God becomes more sharply outlined. We would urge every declared follower of Bahá'u'lláh to ponder deeply the tremendous message which He has brought, to consider the perilous state of the world in the light of the warnings addressed by Him, to recognise the individual responsibility which each one of us is called upon to shoulder, and to arise, dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit, to discharge it. What else

can claim our attention in this day, save service to His Cause? The darkest hour is rapidly approaching; our teaching must be deeper, intenser, wiser, more loving and imbued with a spirit which none can withstand. Only study of the Teachings, prayer and meditation will achieve this. In our everyday lives, our motives and faith must be as clearly outlined as is the Bahá'í World Order in the welter of international affairs.

Paramount as the teaching work undoubtedly is, it is of utmost importance that it should be reinforced and vitalised through those channels of collective experience which Bahá'u'lláh has designed for the enrichment of human endeavour. The nineteen day Feast is the basic institution of the New World Order. It is a sacred obligation to attend. Through it the unity of the believers is strengthened, the life of the community is renewed, the spirit of each individual is refreshed and divine confirmations are attracted. This most important occasion may be likened to the heartbeat of the body. The pulse of the Bahá'í community is the nineteen day Feast. It must be steady and vigorous.

It is felt that a word should be said about Spiritual Assemblies. A Spiritual Assembly, whether local or national, is not a collection of nine people. It is an Institution created by Bahá'u'lláh, to which the believers elect nine members. Outside the Assembly, or apart from it, the members have no distinction or authority; as individuals they are the same as every other believer. The decision of a Spiritual Assembly cannot be regarded as the triumph of a majority over a minority, or even as an agreement between nine individuals. It is the decision of the Spiritual Assembly, and as such rests upon the authority invested in the Spiritual Assembly by Bahá'u'lláh. Such a decision is binding upon every member of the community, even upon a member of an Assembly who might have voted against it. Every believer is required to uphold the decision of the Spiritual Assembly, even while believing it to be unwise. Should any decision prove to be impracticable or harmful it can be repealed and far less harm will result than would have resulted from disobedience to the Spiritual Assembly. The community must consult with the Spiritual Assembly at the nineteen day Feast, and bring any such matters forward at that time.

“God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of teaching His Cause.”

Faithfully,

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

SUMMER SCHOOL

The Summer School of 1937 showed, once again, the immense services which this institution can render to the Faith.

Of outstanding value is the fact that believers from all over the country are able to meet, live a community life together, and share common experiences, as well as study the Teachings together. The organic character of the Bahá'í community is demonstrated and strengthened by Summer School.

Fourteen people attended who are not declared believers; all of them were interested and many came very near to the Faith. The lectures were interesting and covered a wide field. The Summer School Committee is considering whether their range was too wide, and whether to adopt a more intense programme next year.

Mr. St. Barbe Baker gave talks illustrated with lantern slides and on one occasion showed pictures of the gardens around the shrines on Mount Carmel. There was one picture of the Master.

Lady Blomfield opened the School and spoke the following week to the guests at Cromford Court. Later they came and asked about our work. One of the most important items of School was a daily study class on the Book of Certitude.

On two evenings members of the School provided entertainment for the whole of Cromford Court and three picnics were arranged.

LONDON

The London Spiritual Assembly is issuing a leaflet at monthly intervals, in the form of a news-letter. It keeps the friends advised of activities and serves as a notice for feasts and other events.

A series of five meetings were commenced on September 30th at Caxton Hall, Westminster. Mrs. Bishop and Mr. Balyuzi are the speakers; the second meeting, on October 14th, was a Youth Rally. Meetings are held regularly at the Centre on Sunday evenings and Fireside meetings are held during the week.

MANCHESTER

The Manchester Bahá'í Community have been greatly encouraged by a two weeks visit of Mrs. Bishop. On her first day sixty people came to the new centre, the friends being especially glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Norton from Bradford. A lecture was given in the Centre to the Womens' Guild and at the Nineteen Day Feast Mrs. Bishop discussed "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh" with the friends. Mrs. Bishop spoke in Blackpool and at Altrincham and attended several fireside meetings in the homes of the believers.

Regular meetings have been instituted in the new Centre on Sunday evenings and there are fireside meetings during the week.

TORQUAY

The Bahá'í group in Torquay has started its winter teaching campaign and is holding meetings for investigation of the teachings as well as study classes for deepening their own understanding of the Revelation. Mrs. Stevens and Mrs. Langdon Davies were welcome visitors at Summer School.

In Brighton Mrs. Romer arranged two meetings which were addressed by Mr. David Hofman, one in a private home and the other in the hall of Christ

Church Unitarian Church. Mr. Hofman also spoke in Bristol to the Sea Mills Adult School and found several people already interested and acquainted with the Teachings.

VISITORS

It is with great regret that we accept Mrs. Bishop's decision to return to America at the end of October. The generous efforts which she and Mr. Bishop have made on behalf of our beloved Faith, endear them to all the believers in this country. Their help has been invaluable and we can only repay them by fostering the work which they have done.

Madame Barry Orlova returned to America two weeks ago. She had become so much a part of the Bahá'í community that we had forgotten she was a visitor. The London Spiritual Assembly, the Youth Group, and the Bahá'í Theatre Group will feel the loss of her vivid personality, and still further are we thrown back on our own resources for the promotion of the teaching work.

Mrs. Olive Routh, from Sydney, Australia, is in London and expects to stay until March. She brings greetings from the friends.

During September Mr. and Mrs. Vetter of Lima, U.S.A. and Mr. Abbas Dehken of Beirut, visited the centre in London. Mrs. Helliari, a believer from Vancouver, has been in Bristol for a few weeks and visited London.

Mr. A. H. Naimi of Teheran visited London and attended the Summer School for a few days.

Mr. W. J. Grant, editor of the *Rangoon Times*, has visited London and will return before going back to Burma. He has rendered great service to the Faith through his paper, and the Guardian has commended him to us. We take this opportunity of welcoming him and expressing our thanks and admiration for his work.

TEACHING CONFERENCE

At the Convention it was suggested that a Teaching Conference should be arranged during the winter. The N. S. A. has considered this and it has been decided to hold a Conference in Manchester over the week-end of December 19th. Further details will be issued later but all the friends are urged to make an effort to attend.

N.S.A. MEMBERSHIP

The N. S. A. regrets to announce that Mrs. Slade has been obliged to retire from membership.

Mrs. K. V. Brown has been elected treasurer in her place. All contributions to the National Fund and to the Publishing Fund should be sent to Mrs. Brown at 14 Froggnal Mansions, Hampstead, London.

PUBLISHING

Contributions to the Publishing Fund have been gratefully received from the following Spiritual Assemblies:

Acre, Palestine.

Poona, India.

The National Spiritual Assembly has taken legal advice with reference to forming a Trust for the administration of the Publishing Funds. An application to the Board of Trade for incorporation as a religious body was refused, and it is felt that the formation of a Trust will help to pave the way for that recognition which the Guardian desires us to achieve.

'The Goal of A New World Order' has been printed from the Publishing Fund and is now available from Mr. Wilkins at twopence per copy. The friends are urged to use this pamphlet for giving away, as well as for their own study.

"They that have forsaken their country for the purpose of teaching Our Cause—these shall the Faithful Spirit strengthen through its power. A company of Our chosen angels shall go forth with them, as bidden by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. How great the blessedness that awaiteth him that hath attained the honour of serving the Almighty. By My life. No act, however great, can compare with it, except such deeds as have been ordained by God, the All-Powerful, the Most Mighty. Such a service is, indeed the prince of all goodly deeds, and the ornament of every goodly act. Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is the Sovereign Revealer, the Ancient of Days." Bahá'u'lláh.