

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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REPORT OF SUMMER SCHOOL -----

The first Bahá'í Summer School in this country was successful beyond all expectations. Nothing short of Divine Guidance could have achieved the results that were obtained. Forty three people attended and went away with a deeper understanding of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and a rich experience of harmony and fellowship. It was keenly felt that a new page had been turned in the history of the Faith in these Isles. The spirit of unity and concord engendered by the Summer School will go a long way to serve the eventual triumph of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

The School opened on Saturday, August 8th with a very illuminating talk by Mrs Bishop on "Bahá'í Summer School - the University of the Future". During the remaining nine days the following lectures were given. "The Dawn of the Bahá'í Dispensation", by Mr. H.M. Balyuzi; "The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today", by Mme. Gita Orlova; "The Bahá'í Administrative Order", by Mrs Bishop; "The Integration of the Individual with the Universal" by Mr. Mark Tobey; "World Commonwealth", by Mr. David Hofman; "Economic Aspects of World Order", by Mr. Alfred Sugar; "The Word of God", by Mr. E.T. Hall. A final session was devoted to a discussion of the work of Summer School.

On one evening Mme. Orlova gave a short address on the Cause to all the guests at Cromford Court and that was followed by an impromptu entertainment arranged by members of the Summer School. Many Bahá'í pamphlets were distributed. Mr. Richard St. Barbe Baker spoke, at a Sunday evening service, on his work in Africa; he referred to 'Abdu'l-Baha and the esteem in which He was held in Palestine. Besides these formal meetings there were many informal gatherings and discussions which proved of immense benefit to everyone.

It is hoped to collect the talks given, in the form of a booklet. If justified by sufficient demand it can be printed and

offered for sale. The net price is estimated to be between one shilling and one and sixpence. Place your orders with Mr. H.M. Balyuzi, 14 Frognal Mansions, Hampstead, London.

THE BAHÁ'Í FUND

"And as the progress and extension of spiritual activities is dependent and conditioned upon material means, it is of absolute importance that immediately after the establishment of local as well as national Spiritual Assemblies, a Bahá'í Fund be established, to be placed under the exclusive control of the Spiritual Assembly. All donations and contributions should be offered to the Treasurer of the Assembly, for the express purpose of promoting the interests of the Cause, throughout that locality or country. It is the sacred obligation of every conscientious and faithful servant of Baha'u'llah who desires to see His Cause advance, to contribute freely and generously for the increase of that Fund. The members of the Spiritual Assembly will at their own discretion expend it to promote the Teaching Campaign, to help the needy, to establish educational Bahá'í institutions, to extend in every way possible their sphere of service. I cherish the hope that all the friends, realising the necessity of this measure, will bestir themselves and contribute, however modestly at first, towards the speedy establishment and the increase of that Fund". (Shoghi Effendi: Bahá'í Administration, page 37)

Dear Friends: In every sphere of Bahá'í activity there are signs of new life and expansion -- except in contributions to the Bahá'í Fund. Not one of us in England doubts that this is a time of new opportunity, and yet we are in danger of letting it go by for lack of the necessary funds to carry on our work. At the very moment when we should be increasing our sphere of action, we are forced to reduce it! The N.S.A., recognising how 'unimaginably precious' are the opportunities given to us now, feels that it would be failing in its duty to Baha'u'llah if it allowed the present time to slip by without a final and heartfelt appeal to the friends to avail themselves of the supreme privilege now open to us. A frank and clear statement is best. The income of the N.S.A is practically nil. The friends are poor, it is known, but the spiritual blessings received from contributing to the Faith are not measured by the amount, but by the degree of sacrifice and devotion. Without these qualities the Faith will not expand for we shall have proved ourselves unworthy instruments of the Divine Will. The

N.S.A feels that this is a spiritual problem for every believer to solve individually. Am I ready to sacrifice for the Faith or am I not? Let us remember that sacrifice is the highest degree of perfection destined for a believer.

As a practical suggestion, the N.S.A offers the following. Let every believer take stock of his or her income and set aside, no matter how small, an amount for contribution to the Bahá'í Fund. If this contribution is made regularly, or as often as possible when the income is not regular, the flow of funds to the treasury will be steady, even though small. If the weekly contribution amounts to no more than one penny per person, the spiritual principle is invoked and we know the results will follow. It is the united efforts of all believers which make strength, not the generosity of a few.

World Congress of Faiths.

The Congress was held in London during July and representatives of all the major religions of the world were present. The Bahá'í paper, approved by Shoghi Effendi, was presented by Rev. G. Townshend. Mrs Charles Bishop and Madame Orlova made short addresses afterwards, and Mr. Hirst of Leeds, a sympathiser with the Faith made a thoughtful and effective plea for consideration of the Principles of Baha'u'llah. The subject of the Congress was "World Fellowship Through Religion", and the Chairman, introducing the Bahá'í paper said that if he were asked which of all the various Faiths represented came nearest to the aims and ideals of the Congress, he would say the Bahá'í Faith.

Decisions of the National Spiritual Assembly.

The following plans were made at the last meeting. Discontinuation of the Teaching Bulletin and the publishing of the Bahá'í Journal, an organ for use of the N.S.A to maintain contact with the friends, foster our national unity, give instruction in Administration and promote the Teaching Campaign. A quarterly News-Letter, one foolscap page in length, is being sent to the Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world, as a means of imparting news and of integrating us with the world organism of the Faith. It has been decided to issue a printed pamphlet or magazine to help in the Teaching work, the final plans of which will be made later.

RESOLUTION Individual believers must not communicate with persons of eminence in governmental or political circles, except through the National Spiritual Assembly.

This resolution has been adopted for the protection of the Faith as well as for individual believers. Shoghi Effendi has

expressed the wish that important people should only be approached through the Spiritual Assembly and since there have been instances of individual believers sending unsolicited Bahá'í literature to people in eminent positions, the above decision has been adopted. The National Spiritual Assembly is the proper authoritative channel for contacts of this kind, being an Institution created in the sacred Writings and having the authority of the Guardian.

Bahá'í Journal.

The functions of the Journal are mentioned above. The N.S.A believes that these ends cannot be achieved unless the friends, individually, recognise the responsibility to read and study the contents of every issue. It is through the Journal that every believer can maintain contact with the Bahá'í world, receive messages from the Guardian and become an integral part of that organism whose nucleus is Haifa and whose ramifications must eventually embrace all humanity. The friends will be helping to forward the Faith by giving attention and thought to the Journal.

BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION.

The Nineteen Day Feast.

Speaking in London on December 29th, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:- "The Nineteen Day Feast was inaugurated by the Báb and ratified by Bahá'u'lláh, in His holy book, the Akdás, so that people may gather together and outwardly show fellowship and love, that the divine mysteries may be disclosed. The object is concord, that through this fellowship hearts may become perfectly united, and reciprocity and mutual helpfulness established. Because the members of the world of humanity are unable to exist without being banded together, co-operation and mutual helpfulness is the basis of human society. Without the realisation of these two great principles no great movement is pressed forward".

"In brief, this is my hope: that the Nineteen Day Feast become the cause of great spiritual solidarity between the friends, that it may bring believers into the bond of unity, and we will then be so united together that love and wisdom will spread from this centre to all parts. This Feast is a divine Feast. It is a Lord's supper. It attracts confirmation of God like a magnet. It is the cause of the enlightenment of hearts".

"It is my hope that the Nineteen Day Feast may become firmly established and organised so that the holy realities which are

behind this meeting may leave behind all prejudices and conflict, and make their hearts as a treasury of love. Even if there is the slightest feeling between certain souls - a lack of love - it must be made to entirely disappear. There must be the utmost translucency and purity of intention".

"They must enjoy the love of God, acquire the power for the promotion of the happiness of mankind and the Word of God. With such high mention must this Feast become an established institution. When they gather in this meeting, all those present must turn their faces toward the Kingdom of Abhá, and from their hearts supplicate, invoke and entreat toward the lofty throne, beg of God's forgiveness for all shortcomings, read the teachings and arise to His service".

"Then spread the feast and give refreshments. Assuredly great results will be the outcome of such meetings. Material and spiritual benefits will be assured. All who are present will be intoxicated with the breezes of the Love of God, and the Breath of the Holy Spirit will with tremendous power inspire the hearts".

"If this meeting be established on such a rock, it will become a power which will attract heavenly confirmations, be the means of the appearance of the Light of God, and the reality of every subject will become unfolded. Such a meeting will be under the protection of God. It is my hope that you will continually hold these meetings and that each time it will become more and more the centre of all the virtues, the point for the effulgence of God".