

TEACHING BULLETIN

issued by

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís
of the British Isles

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Letter From The Guardian.

The following letter has been received by the National Teaching Committee.

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Guardian has read with profoundest interest the second number of the "Teaching Bulletin" issued by the N.S.A. of the Bahá'í of the British Isles, and feels highly gratified at the steps your Committee is taking for the inauguration of a new teaching campaign throughout England. This is surely a clear evidence of the new spirit animating the friends in that country, and a further revelation of their intense desire to give the cause of teaching a fresh and unprecedented stimulus. There is undoubtedly no higher call than that of bringing the Message to a world tormented and torn on every side by the forces of destructive materialism. It is for us to realise the full measure of the responsibility that has been laid upon our shoulders in this matter, and having attained full consciousness of our responsibility to unitedly arise to contribute all that we can towards its discharge.

It is Shoghi Effendi's hope that under the guidance and encouragement of the N.S.A. your Committee's work will steadily progress, and that the results achieved will be such as to create further confidence and arouse fresh hopes in your activities among all the friends throughout the British Isles. He is looking eagerly forward to learn more of your activities, and to witness further signs of the effectiveness, unity and power with which you are striving to diffuse the Teachings and principles of the Cause.

May the Almighty ever bless and sustain you in your labours,

Yours in His Service,

(signed) H. Rabbani.

Dear Friends; with deep gratitude for our Guardian's encouraging message, let us strive with wholehearted devotion to fulfil those high hopes which he has for us.

The Committee is happy to report that active Teaching work has been inaugurated in Devonshire through the co-operative efforts of Mrs. Bishop and Mr. Tobey. A study class of twenty is being continued by Mr. Tobey and we have every reason to hope for permanent results.

In this day, the confirmations of the Holy Spirit descend in showers wherever a sincere effort is made. Now is the time to avail ourselves of this bounty.

Faithfully, your fellow workers,
National Teaching Committee.

ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Convention, held in London on April 26th, was a great success. The reports of the National Committees were read and approved, discussion taking place over many points of vital interest to the Faith. The subject of Teaching received great attention. Mr. Hall made a stirring appeal for greater support from the National Committee and urged that a regular pamphlet be issued which could be sent to interested people. Many valuable suggestions were made and the delegates exercised their prerogative of making recommendations to be considered by the incoming National Assembly.

The following friends were elected members of the National Spiritual Assembly. Mrs. Slade; Sister Challis; Mrs. Brown; Mr. Sugar; Mr. Asgarzadeh; Mr. Lee; Mr. Tobey; Mr. Balyuzi; Mr. Hofman. The N.S.A. held a brief meeting and appointed the following officers. Chairman, Sister Challis. Vice Chairman, Mr. Sugar. Secretary, Mr. Hofman, 67 Guilford Street, London, W.C.1. Assistant Secretary, Mr. Balyuzi. Treasurer, Mrs. Slade, Mallard's Court, Stokenchurch, Bucks.

It was emphasised by the chairman of the Convention that Bahá' u'lláh says that God has forgiven what is past. Shoghi Effendi has written that "a new hour has struck" in the history of the Faith; we must take advantage of it. All that has gone before has been a preparation for the intense and unceasing work which now lies before us.

Through the animated discussion which took place over the various important matters brought forward, a spirit of unity was attained,

a spirit capable of bringing new energy and assurance to every follower of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the land, whether present or not.

A cable was sent to the Guardian bearing the devoted and loyal greetings of the assembled friends, and the following reply was received:- "Deeply appreciate message, fervently praying success deliberations, love Shoghi."

BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION

The Law of Consultation

The law which governs the deliberations of all administrative bodies in the Bahá'í era is that of Consultation. This means full and open discussion of all problems and the achievement of a decision. If, after lengthy discussion, no conclusion is made, the time spent has been wasted. It is interesting to note how the world at large is turning to this procedure, notably in educational circles where creative discussion is replacing the old fashioned debate.

Bahá'í Assemblies owing to their unique method of election, have no opposed factions within themselves, and thus are able to arrive at a decision in a spirit of unity and co-operation. There are no parties in Bahá'í government and therefore no "opposition" in its present political sense. The object of consultation is not to get one's own opinion ratified by legislation, but to approach all matters from various angles and to achieve the best decision. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said:- "The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions."

Once a decision is achieved however, there must be no more dissension. A decision of a Bahá'í Assembly is the decision of the whole body and not of a majority of its members. Every member of the Assembly is obligated to uphold the decision, whether their vote was for or against. This does not necessarily mean the changing of one's considered opinion, but even if an unfortunate decision is made, the law of obedience must be observed. The ill effects which might follow from such a decision could never be as bad as the confusion and inharmony which would certainly result from disobedience to the Assembly. And Bahá'í legislative bodies are empowered to rescind their own laws, so that any decision which does not work well in practice can always be abrogated by the same or subsequent Assemblies.

Bahá'í Committees, although having no legislative power, are governed by the same Law of Consultation.

Excerpts from the "Gleanings".

"Say: Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of proclaiming His Message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds. Such a deed is acceptable only when he that teacheth the Cause is already a firm believer in God, the Supreme Protector, the Gracious, the Almighty. He hath, moreover, ordained that His Cause be taught through the power of men's utterance, and not through resort to violence. Thus hath His ordinance been sent down from the Kingdom of Him Who is the Most Exalted, the All-Wise. Beware lest ye contend with any one, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation. If your hearer respond, he will have responded to his own behoof, and if not, turn ye away from him, and set your faces towards God's sacred Court, the seat of resplendent holiness."

"Dispute not with any one concerning the things of this world and its affairs, for God hath abandoned them to such as have set their affection upon them. Out of the whole world He hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men--hearts which the hosts of revelation and of utterance can subdue. Thus hath it been ordained by the Fingers of Bahá, upon the Tablet of God's irrevocable decree, by the behest of Him Who is the Supreme Ordainer, the All-Knowing."

From Bahá'í AdministrationCENTRAL FUND

"That you may reinforce this Teaching Campaign--so vitally needed in these days--and conduct, properly and efficiently, the rest of your manifold activities, spiritual as well as humanitarian, it is urgently necessary to establish the Central Fund, which if generously supported and upheld by individual friends and local Assemblies, will soon enable you to execute your plans with promptness and vigour."

The National Spiritual Assembly sends to all the friends sincere greetings. May this Bahá'í year be the most active and fruitful in the history of the Cause in this land. The Teaching work is of paramount importance at this time; with high hopes, and unshakable faith in the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, let us arise unitedly to serve Bahá'u'lláh.