

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

10 March 1987

[To an individual]

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 27 January 1987 and has asked us to convey on its behalf the following in response to the points you have raised.

It is not advisable for Bahá'í institutions or individuals to initiate actions designed to prod government leaders to urge their government or the leaders of other governments to convene the world conference called for by Bahá'u'lláh and echoed in *The Promise of World Peace*. Two points should be borne in mind in this regard: (1) Because of the political gravity of the decisions implied by this call and the differing political attitudes which it evokes, such actions on the part of the Bahá'í community would embroil the friends in partisan politics. There is quite a difference between identifying, as does the Peace Statement, the need for a convocation of world leaders and initiating the political processes towards its realization. (2) In the writings of the Faith (e.g., the closing passages of *The Promised Day Is Come*), it is clear that the establishment of the Lesser Peace, of which the conference of leaders will be a related event, will come about independently of any Bahá'í plan or action. This is not to say that Bahá'ís should be inert. Indeed, Bahá'ís may promote the concept of the Lesser Peace with all that it implies without engaging in the political processes which its realization will require.

The House of Justice feels that the task before the Bahá'ís is to prepare the ground for the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of world government. This requires a number of related activities which have been indicated in the goals of previous and present Plans of the community based on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan. The activities which will indirectly prepare the world to make the final stride include the following.

The establishment as rapidly as possible of firmly grounded, efficiently functioning Local Spiritual Assemblies in every part of the world, so that seekers everywhere will have a point of reference to which they can turn for guidance and for the Teachings of the Faith. This implies a vast increase in Bahá'í membership. Although the Canadian and many other Bahá'í Communities have achieved remarkable progress, much work is required to bring the Bahá'í institutions all over the world to the degree of maturation that is needed.

A second important activity is the deepening of the believers, of all ages, in their understanding of and obedience to the Teachings of the Faith. A third is the proclamation of the Faith to all strata of society, and in particular to those in authority and to leaders of thought so that those who hold the direction of peoples in their hands will learn accurately about the nature and tenets of the Faith and will grow to respect it and implement its principles. A fourth is the promotion of Bahá'í scholarship, so that an increasing number of believers will be able to analyze the problems of mankind in every field and to show how the Teachings solve them. A fifth is the development of relations between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations, both directly with the highest United Nations institutions and at a grass-roots level in areas of rural development, education, etc.

These different activities, which began a long time ago and are still going on, coupled with the presentation of *The Promise of World Peace* to the leaders of the world, will gradually bring about circumstances which will indicate the direction of subsequent actions. The House of Justice will advise the Bahá'í world when the time is ripe for such actions. The unpredictability of certain

events in the world, which are likely to change the current course of certain processes, makes it impracticable for the House of Justice to respond with precision to some of your questions.

The House of Justice in its message to the Bahá'ís of the World dated 2 January 1986 referred to Shoghi Effendi's perception of a dialectic of victory and crisis in the organic life of the Cause. This indicates the instrumentality of the forces of opposition which will help to bring about, over a period of time, conditions necessary for the Local and National Spiritual Assemblies to act effectively as Local and National Houses of Justice.

The stages of the evolution of these institutions, which will synchronize with the establishment of the Lesser Peace, are indicated in the writings of the beloved Guardian, such as in the following extract:

Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power.

(*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 6–7)

Your specific question about whether or not Bahá'ís in North America "are permitted to run for election to school boards, town or municipal councils, hospital boards and for local enforcement officer positions" should be answered by the National Assemblies concerned.

The completion of the buildings on the Arc "which will synchronize with two no less significant developments—the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institutions—the one outside and the other within the Bahá'í world" speaks, as you have rightly perceived, "to the readiness of the Bahá'í Administrative Order to manage the ever-growing and complex affairs of the Cause as well as an increased capacity to interface with the non-Bahá'í world and its institutions."

Regarding the question in the final paragraph of your letter, the following reply was written on behalf of the beloved Guardian in a letter dated 14 March 1939 to an individual believer.

Your view that the Lesser Peace will come about through the political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great Peace established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Super State—your view on this subject is quite correct and in full accord with the pronouncements of the Guardian as embodied in the "Unfoldment of World Civilization."

The fact that the Bahá'í institutions will not be directly involved in the eventual convocation of world leaders and in effecting the political unity of nations does not mean that the Bahá'ís are standing aside and waiting for the Lesser Peace to come before they do something about the peace of mankind. Indeed, by promoting the principles of the Faith, which are indispensable to the maintenance of peace, and by fashioning the instruments of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which we are told by the beloved Guardian is the pattern for future society, the Bahá'ís are constantly engaged in laying the groundwork for a permanent peace, the Most Great Peace being their ultimate goal.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

