

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

20 November 1989

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Guyana

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 22 September 1989 raising the question of your National Spiritual Assembly's relations with the Government of Guyana, and it has requested us to convey the following.

In general, the manner in which the principle of noninterference in political affairs should be applied in Guyana depends upon your appraisal of the situation. The subject should be discussed with the friends in such a manner that they will not only understand its import for themselves, but will also see how they can positively and confidently explain it to non-Bahá'ís. The adherents of this Cause uphold the principles of loyalty and obedience to government, do not become involved in subversive activities, refrain from partisanship and do not join political parties. At the same time, as responsible citizens, they strive to promote the best interests of their respective nations and governments by making themselves productive, helpful members of society wholly committed to serving humanity for the love of God. Such considerations, while orienting the Bahá'ís to the attitudes they must adopt, should also allay the fears and suspicions of their non-Bahá'í fellow citizens, regardless of their political persuasions, concerning the outlook and intentions of the Faith. These attitudes should be neither offensive nor threatening to anyone. As the friends are seen increasingly to reflect them in their daily lives, they should gradually earn the respect and trust of all ranks and segments of society.

It is up to the National Spiritual Assembly to determine which posts and functions are "diplomatic or political" and which are "purely administrative in character" and "under no circumstances are affected by the changes and chances that political activities and party government, in every land, must necessarily involve." While the former represent activities the friends must avoid, the latter functions are open to Bahá'ís. Indeed, such functions are to be welcomed by the friends as they constitute opportunities which enable them "to serve, in an unselfish, unostentatious and patriotic fashion, the highest interests of the country" to which they belong. (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters*, rev. ed. p. 65)

To throw oneself into the maelstrom of political struggles or to withdraw utterly from any interest in the affairs of men outside the Bahá'í community are two extremes that must be avoided by every loyal Bahá'í. The true course is more difficult to follow, and requires wisdom and mature judgment. The general guidelines are given with great clarity by the beloved Guardian in "The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh," and can be found on pages 64 to 67 of *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*...

The House of Justice will offer its prayers at the Holy Shrines for your guidance and for the reinforcement of your devoted endeavors.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat