

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

30 October 1991

To Selected National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has requested us to send you the enclosed copy of a letter dated 28 October 1991 which we have written at its instruction to a believer who is an academic and who requested that consideration be given to changing the Bahá'í administrative policy requiring prepublication review of manuscripts authored by Bahá'ís. The concern expressed is that this policy contradicts values of free inquiry as perceived in academic circles and that submission to it could undermine scholarly credibility. As you will see from the enclosure, the House of Justice does not agree with this perception of Bahá'í review, but it sympathizes with the difficulties faced by Bahá'í academics in upholding and defending Bahá'í policy. Your attention is called particularly to the penultimate paragraph of the letter which mentions an approach intended to ease these difficulties and which can readily be accommodated by the current regulations on Bahá'í review.

The scholar who has authored a manuscript on a Bahá'í subject may recommend to the National Spiritual Assembly one or more individuals for inclusion among the reviewers selected by the Assembly. If for some particular reason the Assembly finds his nominees unacceptable, it may ask the author to submit other names for its consideration. While the National Assembly must retain control of the reviewing process and operate its reviewing mechanism as it sees fit, it must at the same time exercise a flexibility which will allow it to accommodate such a procedure. As in any other instance of review, the Assembly should exercise independent judgment as to the merits of the recommendations it receives from its appointed reviewers.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat