

Attacks on the Faith

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FROM THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

To the American Bahá'í Community for the Feast of Jalal
April 8, 1997

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Two recent attacks on our beloved Faith serve to remind us that as the Cause of God emerges from obscurity, crises will be a means to victory. This past month an article, instigated by former Bahá'ís, was published by the Religious News Service in seven newspapers across the United States. The article alleges abuse of power within Bahá'í institutions, corruption of the Bahá'í electoral process, financial misconduct, and suppression of free speech, among other things. A week later, on the eve of Naw-Ruz, the Dallas Bahá'í Center was defaced with swastikas and white power graffiti.

These two unrelated attacks share important similarities. Both are false and misguided and both will serve to strengthen and advance the Bahá'í Faith. Shoghi Effendi repeatedly warned us that the Bahá'í community was "unavoidably approaching a testing period" which he described as "crucial, prolonged, potent [and] purifying" These tests, he instructed, should be seen as blessings in disguise that would cause the believers to "plumb greater depths of consecration [and] soar to nobler heights of collective endeavor" The Guardian explained that challenging criticisms and attacks on the Cause from within and outside the Faith "constitute the lifeblood of its institutions" and are a means for the strengthening of the believers and a catalyst for quantum leaps of progress for the Faith itself. A case in point is that two days after reading the Religious News Service article, a person who had not previously known of the Faith declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

"Trials and tribulations, as Bahá'u'lláh says, are the oil that feed the lamp of the Cause" "This Cause, like every Divine Cause, cannot be effectively established unless it encounters and valiantly triumphs over the forces of opposition" The history of the Bahá'í Faith itself is proof that persecution is the lot of the chosen ones of God. As the Faith grows, attacks from all directions will increase. Our challenge is to maintain unwavering adherence to the Covenant, to act wisely using attacks on the Faith for its advancement, and to be confident in the ultimate victory that is the destiny of the Cause of God.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Robert C. Henderson, Secretary-General

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