

ESSELMONT'S SURVEY OF THE BAHAI COMMUNITY IN 1919-1920:

Part VIII: Miscellaneous

- edited by Moojan Momen

The following are some miscellaneous typed papers that were also in the file together with the accounts presented previously. The first two are apparently written by Esslemont himself although it is not clear what he has used as his source. The rest are extracts from "Shoghi Effendi's Diary".

Constantinople

During the residence of Baha'u'llah and his friends in Constantinople, none of the Turks were interested or cared to listen to the New Call. The Sultan, Abdul Aziz was strongly opposed to the Bahais, and this opposition was maintained by his successor, Abdul Hamid II. During the past nineteen years, however, several Turks have accepted the Bahai faith, the teachings having been brought to them by pilgrims from Persia and Turkestan who passed through Constantinople on their way to and from the Holy Land. During the Turkish regime these believers were unable to speak openly of their new faith, because of the fanatical and despotic attitude of the Government. But with the defeat of the Turks and the occupation of Constantinople during the recent World-war, conditions have been changed and the believers have seized the opportunity of teaching and thus increasing their numbers. There are at present about forty believers, most of whom were previously Moslems or Christians.

Switzerland

In Switzerland students of Universities as well as professors are gaining interest in the Cause and are getting into intimate relations with the friends of that land.

DAMASCUS

The call of the Beloved bidding the friends arise with one accord, fling away the veil of concealment, and deliver the Divine message, has resounded throughout all regions and has penetrated to countries hitherto the bulwark of conservatism. The city of Damascus has shaken off her somnolence, and, thanks to the activity of a few enthusiastic friends has awakened to the Spirit of the New Age. This morning an eager visitor from Damascus, Haji Mohamad Yazdi, was ushered into the presence of the Beloved...His news was refreshing copious and significant. With a smile and nod of appreciation the Beloved greeted every item and was glad to know that a reaction to the passivity and inaction of the past had set in. "Deliver the Divine message with prudence and wisdom" was the Beloved's recommendation to the teachers

-----  
1. Between the reigns of 'Abdul-Majid and 'Abdu'l-Hamid, there was the brief three-month reign of Sultan Muhammad Murad V.

who are serving in those regions.

(Shoghi's Diary, 13:2:19)

#### Germany

Three weeks ago a central committee was established which took up regular correspondence with the surrounding centres of the Cause, began the translation of Baha'i pamphlets, Tablets and treatises, and the writing and publication of articles in different newspapers, - all this in addition to the individual work which is being carried out by every sincere and zealous Bahai...The people are becoming interested in the Movement; seekers attend the weekly meetings and ever increase in number.

(from letter quoted in Shoghi's Diary of 18:3:19)

We have lately founded the Covenant meeting and also a publication for the Bahai literature.

(Frau Schwarz, Shoghi's Diary, 20:3:19)

Had we emerged victorious and satisfied from this war, undoubtedly material conflicts and even bitterer struggles would have been indefinitely prolonged, and the chain of future wars would have been interminable. Every day a fresh conflict and new aggression would have happened, armies would have swept in wave after wave over the countries of the world, and the fruits we have reaped from this tree of militarism would have become the more bitter and disappointing. Soon, it is hoped, our land will rest under the shadow of the Cause of God and shall be trained through the inculcation of Divine Principles and Teachings, and shall attain a civilisation and a culture which no material conquest or victory can secure.

(Letter from German believer, Shoghi's Diary, 29:4:19)

#### New Zealand

In New Zealand the Bahai Movement is taking a new and happy turn, and eager souls are being awakened...A certain doctor who had met Abdul Baha in London...has started there, fresh and enthusiastic, excellent work which has proved to be quite successful [2].

(S.D. 30:3:19)

#### Australia

From Sydney an Australian youth has expressed his admiration for the

-----  
2. This doctor was Dr. Felkin. See M.J. Ross, "Some Aspects of the Baha'i Faith in New Zealand", M.A. Thesis, History, University of Auckland, 1979, p. 23

utterances of Baha'u'llah, which he was privileged to read in a book on the movement, his keen desire to meet in person the leader of the Cause, and his profound joy in the anticipation of receiving some Bahai books that a friend is planning to send him.

(S.D. 1:7:19)

#### Greece

One of the first Greeks to accept the Bahai Revelation writes to A.B. ('Abdu'l-Baha):- "Dear Father, I am very glad to be the first of the Greeks to believe in your Name. How could I do otherwise than believe? Many times my mind is so tired that I feel like a bird when its feathers are wet with the rain and it cannot fly, but when I take your picture and read one of your prayers, I am like the same bird when the sun's rays come out and it is happy and can fly from tree to tree. That is how I feel always when I make my prayers in your name and I cannot rest all my life until I become an apostle in your name to my country..."

#### Jugoslavia

The Beloved Master will rejoice to hear of Ioan Filipacs, a Yugoslav, who was drawn to the Convention[3] as if by miracle, and whose heart is now on fire. He feels that he must see the Master and then take the message to his own country, just emerging as a Republic - must, in the inception of his own country's new life, infuse that new life with the Divine Teachings. Though only two weeks have elapsed since the Convention, already he has started to translate the Master's addresses in Paris, gathered in the volume of "Divine Philosophy" into the Jugo-Slav language (sic).

#### Hungary

In the new Hungarian Republic, papers have already been published in the Magyar language, with the Beloved's portraits and dealing with the Bahai History and Principles

(S.D. 17:6:19)

#### China

Even China is shewing forth promising signs, and already in Shanghai Persian [4], Russian and Chinese friends are to be found.

(S.D. 15:6:19)

-----  
3. Presumably the Convention of the Baha'i Temple Unity in the U.S.A.

4. The Iranian mentioned is Husayn Uskuli who remained in Shanghai until his death in 1956. See Baha'i World, Vol. 13, pp. 871-3.

## Arabia

The news about the progress of the Cause in Arabia, particularly along its southern and western shores, in the province of Hedjaz, as reported by our active friend, Hosein Ruhy, is indeed promising. As a result of his observations and the experience of his father, who forty years ago sowed the seeds of the Cause in that region, he has come to the conclusion that the people of Arabia, both the nomadic tribes of the interior and the more civilised people who come in contact with European civilization, are ready to accept the Cause and assimilate its teachings.

The Bahais in those regions number about thirty, of whom twenty-five reside in Geddeh. These friends gather in Geddeh every Friday for their weekly Bahai meetings, chant the Tablets of Baha'u'llah, discuss Bahai topics, and commemorate all the Feasts and anniversaries of the Cause. One of them has made a translation of "The Traveller's Narrative" into Arabic, and other members of the gathering are also displaying great activity. The Persians in Geddeh, who formerly showed great bitterness and resentment, have now become tolerant and abandoned their fanatical opposition.

(S.D. 10:11:19)