

ASSOCIATE



Newsletter of the
Association for Bahá'í Studies
(English Speaking Europe)

Issue 31/32 – Summer/Autumn

ABS(ESE) Annual Conference 'Dialogue Among Civilizations'

SOAS, University of London, 7-8 October 2000

Over one hundred people braved the stormiest day of the year to date, on Saturday 7 October, and the much more pleasant weather conditions on Sunday 8 October, to attend the Association for Bahá'í Studies annual conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Speakers and participants from a broad range of backgrounds from the UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany, addressed and discussed the conference theme 'Dialogue Among Civilizations'. With the year 2001 having been designated by the United Nations as the 'Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations', participants were well briefed on the theme by the end of the weekend, having listened to presentations from economics, science, international relations, history, linguistics, development, religious studies and gender studies, on the issue.

Dr Augusto Lopez-Claros started off the conference with his presentation on 'Conflict and Co-operation in the Age of Globalization'. In this age of entrenching conflict as well as notable co-operation, evidence of both conflict and co-operation could be seen in every field. For example, recent revelations that 44 countries had the know-how to develop nuclear weapons contrasted with confirmation from the Human Genome Project that the widest possible genetic difference between 2 human beings still meant that they were only 0.01% different, and therefore 99.99% genetically identical.

In the economic field, international interdependence and globalization had changed the nature of the problems that we face and demanded new mechanisms for us to deal with its ramifications.

Governments were often unable to deal with the forces of globalization in isolation, and this had led to overwhelming human welfare costs and was reflected in the anger that had spilled over in the public backlash against globalization, as demonstrated in street riots in Seattle and Prague. International organizations, from the UN to the IMF, also remained weak, partly by design and partly through lack of imagination to adapt them to the needs of a rapidly changing environment. Dr Lopez-Claros spoke, however, of the noticeable shift in the inside thinking in International Financial Institutions during the past decade, ensuring that economic thinking was no longer their sole concern in implementing their projects and strategies. Assuming that globalization was here to stay, Dr Lopez-Claros asked what sort of institutional reforms were needed to make these organizations more relevant? Would the necessary change come only as a result of deeper, more sustained crises that will lead eventually to learning through experience?

Professor Joe Watson, a Professor of Modern Irish at University College Dublin, addressed the topic 'The English Language and Cultural Imperialism'. He

INSIDE

- 2 ➤ **Report – Religion Conference**
- **Notice – Covenant Conference Feb. 2001**
- **Notice – ISSEI Conference July 2002**
- **Notice – Arts Dialogue**

- 3 ➤ **Article - Scholarship**

- 4 ➤ **Notice – Bahá'í Sociology**
- **Review - ICC**

- 5 ➤ **Notice – Modern Religion Conf. Dec. 2000**

- 6 ➤ **Notice – Human Rights MA**
- **Notice – Wilmette Judaism Course**
- **Notice – ABS-N. America Conf. Aug. 2001**

- 7 ➤ **Notice – Religious Studies (SIG) Mar 2001**
- **Report – AGM of ABS(ESE)**

- 8 ➤ **Report – ABS(ESE) Annual Conf. cont.**

- 10 ➤ **Report – Covenant Conference**

- 11 ➤ **Notice – Recent Publications**
- **Report – Bahá'í Societies**

The International Society for the Study of European Ideas

The International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI) is pleased to announce its 8th International Conference, to be held from 22-27 July 2002, in Aberystwyth, Wales. The overall conference topic is 'European Culture in a Changing World: Between Nationalism and Globalism'. The conference is multi-disciplinary, and addresses the central topic in the following sections:

- I. History, Geography, Science
- II. Economics, Politics, Law
- III. Education, Women's Studies, Sociology
- IV. Art, Theatre, Literature, Religion, Culture
- V. Language, Philosophy, Psychology

The conference is structured as workshop discussions and paper presentations. Initially, we invite colleagues to offer one or more workshops in their specialist area within sections I-V. Please submit the following information: Title, Name; Academic affiliation; Postal Address; Email address; Workshop section (I-V); Workshop title; Summary of workshop topic. Deadline for submissions: 1 December 2001

Please use the submission form provided on the conference website (URL: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/tfts/issei2002/>), or send by email to Dr Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, or by Fax to +44 1970 622831, or by mail to ISSEI 2002, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, University of Wales Aberystwyth, Parry Williams Building, Penglais Campus, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3AJ, Wales, UK.

The Academic Board of the Conference will review workshop submissions on a regular basis and inform prospective chairs of whether their workshop has been accepted. Once

Conference Report

A Three-Day Conference on Religion and Society in Qajar Iran was held on 4-6 September 2000 at University of Bristol.

There was a significant Bahá'í contribution to the conference and a number of talks at the conference on Bahá'í-related subjects including:

T. Lawson: 'The Reception of Fayz Kashani in the Early Qajar Period'.

J. Cole: 'Shaykh al-Ra'is in Shiraz and Tehran: Prologue to the Constitutional Revolution'.

S. Yazdani (of the Teachers Training University, Tehran, Iran): 'Heterodox Intellectuals of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution' (which explored the extent to which Azalis were pre-eminent in the Revolution).

M. Momen: 'The Role of Women in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Iranian Bahá'í Community'.

In addition, Professor Abbas Amanat of Yale University spoke on 'Mujtahids and Missionaries: Shi'i Responses to Christian Polemics in the Early Qajar Period'.

Arts Dialogue

Contents (October 2000) include interviews and reports: *Barca de Venetia per Padova*, an opera by Andriano Banchieri; Roberto Lun, dancer/choreographer; Janita Appa, visual artist; Mark Laurent, singer/songwriter, guitarist; Thaya Whitten, painter, musician.

Articles: 'The Creation of Symbols, Hervé Constant'; 'love, mysticism and ghazals'; 'The Arts as Pathways to Global Unity'; 'Sifting through the layers of the text'.

Poems: by Joanna Margaret Paul, Cal E. Rollins, Susan McLaren, Hans J. Knopse, R.K. Singh, Rob Altork.

Short Story: by Kathleen Hite Babb.

Illustrations, photographs, artwork by: Jacomien Souverijn, Fuad Izadinia, Mor Gueye, Barbara Casterline, Mark Sadan, Ryoszo Morishita, Myriam Bargetze, Änni Langenhorst Blackmer, Jawa Al-Malhi, Arnon David Ben, Derrick Nxumbo, Inge Kölle, Keith Eldridge, Chris Reid, Kouhyar Rowshan, Carl O'Kelley, Terry Eichler, Hervé Constant, Edward Woodman, Thaya Whitten, Bill Skuce, Jessy

Conference Notice

A study weekend on the Covenant will be facilitated by Todd Lawson in Ireland (at the National Bahá'í Centre in Dublin) 10-11 February 2001. A reading pack is available from Dr I. Watson, ABS-ESE, 24 Burlington Road, Dublin 4, Ireland.

Dr Lawson received his PhD from McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies in 1987 and has taught at the University of Toronto and McGill University since. He also has an extensive list of publications and is working on a book *Islamic Apocalypse: the Literary Beginnings of the Bábí Movement* to be published by George Ronald in 2002.

Scholarship on the Bahá'í Faith

This article is a survey of attempts to analyse and study the Bábí and Bahá'í Faith from a scholarly viewpoint.

1. *Bábí Scholarship.* All eighteen of the Letters of the Living had been students of the Shaykhi leader, Sayyid Kazim Rashti. The new religion was then spread by this group through their social network of relatives and friends who consisted mainly of other 'ulama (lit. learned persons) and some mujtahid (e.g. Sayyid Yahya Darabi Vahid, Hujjat Zanjani, Mirza Ahmad Azghandi and Mulla Muhammad Taqi Haravi). Numerous treatises were written by these scholars (most of which have unfortunately not survived). It is even reported that the Báb instructed forty of his followers to compose treatises to demonstrate the validity of his mission.

2. *Early Bahá'í Scholarship.* The stream of conversions of Muslim 'ulama slowed a little after the intense persecutions of the Bábí period but it by no means stopped. The stream of scholarly works continued, but the exigencies of the times however determined that these were mostly still introductory and polemical works (e.g. Mirza Abu'l-Fadl Gulpaygani, Shaykh Muhammad Qa'ini Nabil-i-Akbar, Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali Qa'ini and from a somewhat later period Mirza Asadu'llah Fadil-i-Mazandarani). Many others wrote istidlaliyyih, works written in proof of the Bahá'í Faith usually written from the viewpoint of a particular religion (e.g. Haji Mirza Muhammad Afshar (Islamic), 'Andalib (Christian), and Mirza Mihdi Arjumand (Jewish and Christian)).

Bahá'u'lláh himself gave encouragement to the development of scholarship and on some occasions referred questions that had been asked of him to scholars such as Gulpaygani to answer.

3. *Western Scholarship on the Bahá'í Faith.* The first accounts of the Bábí movement to be published in scholarly journals were by Dr Austin Wright (1851) and by Bernard Dorn (1865). Of much greater importance in alerting the West to the rise of the Bábí movement were the books by Arthur, Comte de Gobineau (1865) and Mirza Kazem-Beg (1865). These two works were to remain the main source of information on the Bábí movement in the West for many years. They mark an important turning-point in that the accounts that had appeared before this gave the general impression of the Bábís as revolutionary communists and anarchists. Gobineau was the first to demonstrate that there was some considerable substance in the teachings of the Báb.

Edward Granville Browne was the first academic to concentrate on the new religion. He travelled to Iran in 1887-8 and subsequently in 1890 to Cyprus to meet Azal and to 'Akka to meet Bahá'u'lláh. Concentrating almost exclusively on the Báb was A. L. M. Nicolas, who wrote a history in 1905, as well as translating a number of the Báb's most important works. He is also the first to have written at any length on the Shaykhis in 1910-1914.

In contrast to Browne and Nicolas who concentrated their efforts on the Báb, there were, at this time in Russia, a

number of scholars who were concentrating more on the Bahá'ís (e.g. Baron Victor Rosen and Aleksandr Tumanski). A number of other Western oriental scholars also wrote important articles about the new religion at this time although none of them had a sustained interest in the subject (e.g. Prof. V.A. Zhukovski of St Petersburg; Prof. Clement Huart of Paris; Hermann Roemer of Töbingen; Prof. Ignaz Goldziher of Budapest; and Prof. Arthur Christensen of Copenhagen).

There were also some who were considered eminent scholars in such fields as religion, but who were not oriental scholars, and who also wrote about the Bahá'í Faith (e.g. Dr Benjamin Jowett, Prof. Thomas Cheyne and Prof. John Carpenter of Oxford; Prof. Auguste Forel of Switzerland; and the philosopher Leo Tolstoy). Among the nascent communities of Western Bahá'ís, the most proficient scholar was the Frenchman, Hippolyte Dreyfus.

4. *Anti-Bahá'í Polemical scholarship.* Foremost amongst [opponents] in this early period was the Shaykhi leader Haji Muhammad Karim Khan Kirmani, who wrote four treatises against the Báb, the first in 1845. Since that time many Muslim scholars have written treatises against both the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths. Muslim anti-Bahá'í polemic has increased in the years since the Iranian Revolution.

From the early decades of this century, this stream of Muslim anti-Bahá'í polemic has been joined by a rising amount of Christian anti-Bahá'í polemic. This was initiated by Christian missionaries in Iran such as S.G. Wilson and J. R. Richards. Polemic from other religious groups against the Bahá'í Faith has not thus far been of major importance.

In addition, there have been attacks on the Bahá'í Faith made by secular opponents. The largest volume of such material was generated in the Soviet Union as part of the communist anti-religion drive. Also to be included in this category are the works of 'Covenant-Breaker' groups.

5. *Modern Bahá'í Polemical Scholarship.* During much of the period of Shoghi Effendi's leadership there were comparatively very few works of scholarship produced by the Bahá'ís. Most scholarship in the Bahá'í community continued to be mainly geared to producing polemical and introductory literature.

Among Iranian Bahá'í scholars, there was some diversification away from works of polemic to commentaries on scripture and histories (e.g. 'Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq-Khavari, 'Azizu'llah 'Sulaymani, Muhammad 'Ali Faydi, and Muhammad-'Ali Malik-Khusravi). In more modern times a number of scholars with training in more modern academic disciplines arose and began to disseminate writings (mainly in the form of articles) informed by such areas as western philosophy (e.g. 'Abbas 'Alavi, 'Ali-Murad Davudi, Badi'u'llah Farid, and Kamalu'd-Din Bakhtavar).

In the West, Dr John E. Esslemont did considerable research in writing his book, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* (1923), the book that has universally been regarded as the textbook of the Bahá'í Faith until recent times. A few further introductory books were published in the next few decades (e.g. George Townshend).

In the period following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the number and variety of books published has increased markedly. The area of history and biography has been well served. A start has been made in the area of applied scholarship: the application of the social teachings of the Bahá'í

Faith to areas such as social and economic development and education. However, up to the present, the area of theology and philosophy have been comparatively neglected.

6. *Modern Western Academic Scholarship on the Bahá'í Faith.* After the death of E.G. Browne in 1926, the scholarly study of the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths lapsed in the academic institutions of the West. A small number of theses on the Bahá'í Faith were produced (e.g. Mikhail Ivanov 1939). Among the Bahá'ís also there was little scholarly activity (except e.g. Alessandro Bausani, Adelbert Möhlschlegel and Hermann Grossmann). The needs of the Bahá'í community dictated that the majority of the literature which it published, apart from scripture, was either introductory or polemical in nature.

This state of affairs continued until the 1970s when the Bahá'í community grew to the extent that it could sustain the 'luxury' of a more analytical type of scholarship and there was a renewed upsurge in such studies. This renewal was initiated by the writings of Hasan Balyuzi. It has been carried on to a large extent (but not exclusively) by young Bahá'í scholars seeking to study their religion at post-graduate level (e.g. between 1920 and 1970 only eight Ph.D. theses were produced while between 1970 and 1982, twelve were completed and between 1983 and 1987, a further seven theses were produced). Some of these theses have now been published: Peter Smith *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions* and Abbas Amanat *Resurrection and Renewal*. In addition, an increasing number of papers have appeared in academic journals, such as *Iran*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Religion*, *The Journal of Religious History*, *Zygon*, and *Conflict Quarterly*. The series *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History* (now renamed *Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions*), and more recently the *Journal of Bahá'í Studies* has provided an important additional place for the appearance of academic material.

Bahá'í Sociology

A new e-mail discussion list has been launched recently for people interested in sociology and the Bahá'í Faith.

It is possible to join the list by sending an e-mail to: Bahai-Sociology-Request@BCCA.Org containing the following information:

e-mail (PN=Lastname, Firstname/CT=XX/SP=XX/C=XX) (include the ', 'PN=' and '/' as shown) e-mail is your e-mail address all in lower case; Lastname, Firstname is obvious; CT=City of residence; SP=state/province of residence; C=Country of residence (if possible the 2-letter country code (e.g. IE, US, CA, UK, JP, ...))

So, Iarfhlaith Watson's subscription would be -

iwatson@ucd.ie (PN=Watson, Iarfhlaith/CT=Dublin/SP=XX/C=IE)

All of this information is to keep a record of the geographic distribution of members. The only information actually

International Criminal Court

Reference to principles of oneness and unity as recognised international legal values in significant international law publication

Following the historic adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court by an overwhelming majority of negotiating States in Rome on 17 July 1998, numerous academic articles and books have appeared on the Statute, its provisions and its significance in international law. From among these publications one clearly stands out: Professor Otto Triffterer's *Commentary on the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: Observers' Notes, Article by Article* (Nomos Verlagsesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 1999, 1295 pp., ISBN 3-7890-6173-5). Commentaries on international agreements constitute a limited but very significant genre in international law literature. They tend to function as authoritative reference books on the subject-matter of the legal instrument it addresses. It normally takes several years to prepare such commentaries, drawing on the foremost experts in the particular area of international law, aspiring to become a useful source of guidance to practitioners and academics in the field.

Professor Triffterer from the University of Salzburg, one of the pioneers of international criminal law, managed to pull together his commentary less than 16 months after the adoption of the Rome Statute. It is a comprehensive and thorough commentary prepared by 51 leading academic experts and practitioners in international criminal law worldwide, including the key government delegates who negotiated the Statute between 1994 and 1998 at the invitation of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Although no less than 60 ratifications by states are required before the Statute enters into force, a process which could take anything from three to six years, the content and language of the Statute was conclusively determined by the Diplomatic Conference in Rome, and may only be amended through restrictive formal procedures. Triffterer's commentary will, therefore, continue to be relevant in its current form, and even more so when it appears in a second (possibly even a third) revised edition over the next few years.

Like most multilateral conventions the Rome Statute contains a Preamble which, in eleven preambular paragraphs, sets out the fundamental object and purpose of the Statute, the essential values and principles on which it is based, and the general international legal context within which the treaty appears. Provisions in the Preamble may assist those who apply the Statute in their interpretation of its operative articles. The first preambular paragraph of the Rome Statute provides that the States Parties to the Statute are

Conscious that all peoples are united by common bonds, their cultures pieced together in a shared heritage, and concerned that this delicate mosaic may be shattered at any time.

The commentary to the Preamble was co-authored by Professor

Otto Triffterer and Morten Bergsmo, a Legal Adviser at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Their text on the above-quoted preambular paragraph 1 may be of interest to readers (pp. 6-8):

I. Paragraph 1: Global context

Preambular paragraph 1 makes it clear that States Parties, when accepting the Statute, are '[c]onscious that all peoples are united by common bonds, their cultures pieced together in a shared heritage, and concerned that this delicate mosaic may be shattered at any time'. This represents an important statement of fundamental value-based considerations that seem to have become universally recognised. Opening the Preamble with such a declaration serves as a useful reminder that the foundational principles and interests underlying the emerging system of international criminal justice do not exist in a normative vacuum. Rather, they echo, in the arena of international affairs, the loftiest aspirations of an ever advancing civilization.

Being aware 'that all peoples are united by common bonds, their cultures pieced together in a shared heritage' means that all human beings, regardless of their citizenship and religious, ethnic, social or other origin or identity, are essentially members of one human race simply by being human beings. Born with inherent potentialities and equal in dignity, all human beings enjoy the same fundamental human rights and freedoms that protect interests such as life, physical integrity, personal liberty and individual conscience. The references to 'common bonds' and 'shared heritage' recognise that humankind is essentially *one*, despite political, legal or socio-economical divides or considerations of national or geographic separation. The enforcement of international criminal law through an international jurisdiction has the potential to contribute to the further *unification* of humankind by bringing peace through justice.

At the same time preambular paragraph 1 recognises that the peoples of the world are entitled to preserve the essential diversity of humankind as it traditionally exists as well as evolves in the future. It refers to the cultures being 'pieced together' and that this constitutes a 'delicate mosaic'. Essentially, paragraph 1 addresses the need for the various peoples of the world to afford respect and tolerance for one another.

The unity in diversity of humankind, as recognised by the metaphor of a 'delicate mosaic', was already expressed in a proposal by Andorra of 30 June 1998, which emphasised:

'that our cultures are woven together in a shared history, a delicate tapestry that may at any moment be rent and torn asunder by unspeakable acts of brutality and ignorance that threaten the well-being of our world' . . .

3. ... [T]he final format of the paragraph expresses the recognition by the States negotiating at the Rome

Conference that this 'delicate mosaic', the cultures of all peoples pieced together in a shared heritage, may 'be shattered at any time'. Armed conflicts constitute an integral part of the reality of international affairs, providing sobering material that confirms that such conflicts continue to generate 'grave crimes [that] threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world', as referred to in preambular paragraph 3.

Triffterer and Bergsmo identify the oneness and unity of humankind as well as its unity in diversity as fundamental notions on which the Statute of the International Criminal Court is based. That this is so might not surprise readers. One should recall, however, the restrictive nature of legal methodology, which tends to reduce the number of recognised values and interests on which legal instruments are based. The values and legal interests recognised by the Statute must be taken into consideration when the Statute is interpreted and applied, especially when there is a concern for *reconciliation* through justice. It is not always clear which values and legal interests a treaty is based on, but it is recognised that an authoritative commentary may be a relevant source for the interpretation of the normative underpinnings of such international legal instruments.

Any development in the direction of general recognition of the oneness and unity of humankind as fundamental values and legal interests in international law is significant. The concept of the oneness and unity of mankind go beyond such recognised

Draft Programme of International Conference

A draft programme of 'The First International Conference of Modern Religions and Religious Movements and the Bábí-Bahá'í Faiths' is now available.

This conference is the first sponsored by the Bahá'í Chair at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The dates are 17-20 December 2000. The programme is a full one and includes talks on Mormonism (Professor R. Keller, Brigham Young University, Utah. 'Human beings who are we? A latter Day Saint (Mormon) view'), Jewish mysticism (Professor E. Etkes, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 'Magic and Mysticism in early Hasidut'), and the Wahhábí movement (Shaykh Professor A. H. Palazzi, 'The origins and development of the Wahhábí Movement'). There are a number of talks on the Bábí-Bahá'í religions which include:

Necati Alkan, Mulheim/Ruhr Germany 'Ottoman Reform Movement and the Bahá'í Faith'.

Stephen N Lambden, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK 'Some aspects of ismu'alláh al-A'zam'.

Dr Moojan Momen, Cambridge, UK 'Millennialist dreams and

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON- MA in Human Rights

(MPhil/PhD programme also available)

Institute of Commonwealth Studies

The Institute of Commonwealth Studies is offering a one year full-time (or two year part-time) programme leading to a University of London MA in Understanding & Securing Human Rights. It is open to graduates of any discipline who seek (additional) training in the area of human rights. It is designed to equip students with an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the main debates & newer trends in the area, from a variety of perspectives.

This unique programme benefits from the Institute's central London location at Russell Square, the excellent library facilities in the vicinity, and numerous human rights events taking place throughout the year. Lecturers and speakers come from international human rights agencies and also from the UK academic community.

In previous years speakers from over 30 different agencies have taken

sessions on the course or spoken at seminars, including Amnesty International, UNICEF, Minority Rights Group, Interights, Human Rights Watch and Anti Slavery International.

The course consists of three papers: Understanding Human Rights, Securing Human Rights in Practice, & International Law and Newer Trends in Human Rights. As part of the MA, students undertake a dissertation investigating a Human Rights issue of their choice, and also benefit from a one-day work placement each week with an international human rights agency, usually based in London.

Part-time or full-time MPhil or PhD studies in programmes in human rights are also available. Doctoral studies linking Bahá'í scholarship to human rights particularly welcome. For further details contact (44) 20 7862 8834 or e-mail: christie.goodall@sas.ac.uk or nazila.ghanea-hercock@sas.ac.uk

Or you can visit our website on:

Judaism For Deepening and Dialogue

TOPIC: Judaism is the oldest of the Semitic religions and the mother Faith of Christianity and Islam. Its scriptures are among the world's oldest. Judaism allows us to study the

eternal spiritual teachings that the Bahá'í writings say all religions share, as well as the laws and practices unique to it, suited for a certain age but loved and practised by millions of Jews today. The course will study Judaism for the purposes of deepening and dialogue. Deepening implies better understanding of the basics of other divinely revealed religions, and by comparison, the Bahá'í Faith. Dialogue implies interacting, that is, sharing one's faith perspective, with people of other religions in an informed and respectful manner.

DATES: February 1, 2001, to April 30, 2001

TEXTS (available through the Institute): Mary Pat Fisher, *Living Religions*, James Fieser and John Powers, *Scriptures of the World's Religions*, Michael Sours, *Compilation of Bahá'í references to Judaism*

FACULTY: Ted Brownstein, Mark Foster, Marc Greenberg, Michael Sours, Robert H. Stockman, Peter Terry, Yael Wurmfeld.

COST: \$150. A twenty percent discount is available when registering as part of a local group of three or more, to senior citizens (65 and older), or to those whose service to the Faith engenders financial hardship. Larger discounts are available for even larger groups, and financial aid is available.

25th Annual Conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies-North America

Announcement and Call for Presentations

'Towards a Spiritual Civilization'

Friday, 31 August-Monday, 3 September 2001, Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Towers, Seattle, Washington, USA.

The historic completion of the buildings and terraces of the Arc Projects on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land has been identified by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, as marking the 'culmination of the development' of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He indicated that this 'vast and irresistible process', unprecedented in humanity's spiritual history, would synchronize with two other significant developments - one outside and one within the Bahá'í world - 'the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institutions'. He further stated that this process will eventually lead to the attainment of the Most Great Peace and the 'emergence, in the plenitude of its power and glory, of the focal Centre of the agencies constituting the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh', and ultimately to 'the flowering of a civilization, divinely inspired, unique in its features, world-embracing in its scope, and fundamentally spiritual in its character. . . .'

Of the edifices of the Arc on Mount Carmel, the Universal House

of Justice has written: 'When the buildings are completed, they will stand as the visible seat of mighty institutions whose purpose is no other than the spiritualization of humanity and the preservation of justice and unity throughout the world'. Moreover, 'The beauty and magnificence of the Gardens and Terraces now under development are symbolic of the nature of the transformation which is destined to occur both within the hearts of the world's peoples and in the physical environment of the planet'.

To mark this historic event in 2001, the Annual Conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies-North America will explore aspects and implications of these processes and our role within them, including the textual basis of these processes in the Bahá'í Writings; the Lesser Peace as a prelude to the Most Great Peace; the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh as the matrix of the spiritual civilization of the future; the evolution of Bahá'í Administrative institutions; the nature and character of a spiritual civilization and its implications for all aspects of society; the Mount Carmel projects and their significance in the transformation both of human relationships-individual and collective, and of human environments-physical and social; the role and contribution of Native peoples in relation to the concept of 'spiritual civilization'; the role of women and the process of establishing the equality of women and men; and the role of scholarship and Bahá'í Studies in representing, explaining, participating in, and advancing these processes. Presenters from every field, discipline, and profession are invited to analyze these topics in relationship to their own area of specialization, to explore their role as contributors to and participants in a spiritual civilization, and to examine the ways in which the Bahá'í teachings illuminate their object of study as well as how knowledge generated in these fields of endeavor can contribute to the understanding and advancement of these processes.

Call for Presentations: Proposals are invited for presentations and workshops on the themes described above (though not limited to those topics). Proposals should include (1) a description of the presentation or workshop you wish to present (250-500 words), (2) biographical information about the presenter, (3) current address, phone number, and e-mail

An Introduction To Academic Bahá'í Scholarship And The Religious Studies (SIG) Seminar

'An Introduction to Academic Bahá'í Scholarship' by Moojan Momen, Stephen Lambden and others will be held on Thursday (2pm - 10pm) and Friday (10am-10pm) 22-23 March 2001 and will be followed by the ABS-ESE Religious Studies (SIG) seminar on Saturday and Sunday (until 5pm) 24-25 March 2001. Venue: Bahá'í Centre, 30 Victoria Square, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, England. UK. All welcome. For details contact Stephen Lambden: e-mail

hurgalva@earthlink.net (preferred) or SLamb53037@aol.com or Moojan Momen +44 (0) 1767 627626, e-mail: momen@northhill.demon.co.uk There will be no charge for attending these events.

The one-day 'Introduction' to Academic Bahá'í scholarship' will be run by Moojan Momen, Stephen Lambden and others. The orientation of this introduction will be largely on religious studies lines. All persons wishing to embark upon such systematic study are welcome to attend; formal qualifications are not necessary though an openness to modern academic approaches will be expected - there is no age restriction or fee involved. Consultative instruction on the day will include informal presentations about the field, history and current state of Bahá'í scholarship; various academic methodologies; primary and secondary source materials and access to them; the study of the various scriptural languages; research needing to be done; computing, cyberspace and Bahá'í scholarship; where to publish material; and Bahá'í scholarship and the Bahá'í community.

Immediately after the one day course and at the same venue the ABS-ESE Religious Studies (SIG) seminar will take place. You are invited to submit papers for presentation at this. There is no theme for this seminar but it is expected that papers will be on some aspect of Bahá'í Studies and will aspire to being of good academic standard. Newcastle is fairly easy to reach from London; a one hour supplementary plane flight; 3 hour train journey (there are frequent trains from King's Cross) as well as buses which take around 5 hours. Newcastle upon Tyne has an International Airport -- direct flights are obtainable from many European countries and international locations. Bed & Breakfast accommodation in Newcastle is plentiful and not too expensive. The Jesmond Park Hotel for example, (quite close to the venue) provides reasonable B&B accommodation at around 22 GBP / \$35 per night (74-76 Queens Rd. Jesmond, Newcastle Tel. +44 [0]191 2812821). Over the last few decades the Religious Studies (SIG) seminars have to some extent become internationalized. Bahá'í scholars and other academics from many parts of the world have attended or presented papers and discussion has included many aspects of Bahá'í scholarship and publication. Opportunity also exists for that human interaction which goes beyond philological or intellectual analysis into something like intimate Bahá'í worship. A Bahá'í presence is preferred. Persons are more than welcome to attend these informal academic seminars.

Annual Report at ABS(ESE) AGM 2000

The following is a summary of the Annual Report given at the Annual General Meeting held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London on 8 October 2000. The purpose of the report is to give feedback to the members of the Association about our activities and to encourage feedback from the members.

Membership

Membership of the Association continues at a healthy level of around 350 members. A small number of complimentary memberships are provided to academics interested in Middle East studies, and in particular the Bábí and Bahá'í religions.

Bahá'í Studies Review

This continues to be the most prestigious publication in the

field of Bahá'í studies. BSR 9 has just been published as a double edition for the years 1999 and 2000. For review, the editors use the 'academic review panel', which is a new initiative of the NSA, and is intended for the Bahá'í review of academic material. BSRs 1-8 full text is now available on the web on <http://www.breacais.demon.co.uk/abs/bsr.htm>. Copies may be purchased for six pounds (order forms are on our web page).

Associate

The Associate has a new editor (Iarfhlaith Watson) and appears with more regularity and frequency. There are three issues per annum - hopefully increasing to four.

Web Page

Our web page can be found at <http://www.breacais.demon.co.uk/abs/welcome.htm>. We were invited to mirror our web page on the Bahá'í library site and this has now been done. In addition to hosting the only Bahá'í studies on-line journal (*Bahá'í Studies Review*), it also carries the second edition of the *Bahá'í students' Handbook* on line.

Special Interest Groups

The Religious Studies and BIPOLIG (law and politics) SIGs have continued to flourish with regular and well-attended meetings. The Education SIG has floundered, but will hopefully be resurrected in the coming year, given the importance of the education of children. If anyone is interested in joining the SIGs, please contact:

BIPOLIG – Babak Bahador at: bbahador@hotmail.com
 Religious Studies – Moojan Momen at: momen@northhill.demon.co.uk

Stephen Lambden at: slamb53037@aol.com
hurqalya@earthlink.net

Education – Masoud Afnan at: masoud.afnan@virgin.net
 Science – Rob Ghanea-Hercock at: ghanear@info.bt.co.uk

Bahá'í Societies

The Bahá'í Societies had a full session in the annual meeting. There are two new co-ordinators – Ramin and Sonja Farzanafar. They can be contacted on ramfar@hotmail.com and sonja.far@virgin.net.

The Association continues to act amongst other things as a resource centre for the Bahá'í societies, providing funds and support. In addition we provide the *Bahá'í Students' Handbook* on line.

Meetings

Courses have been run at both the Sidcot and Waterford summer schools on Moral Education, Resources for Bahá'í Scholars, how to start in Bahá'í Studies, and the Kitáb-i-Íqán.

In response to a request from the Counselors, a very successful meeting on the Covenant was held in June this year.

warned that the legitimate push towards the idea of an international auxiliary language by Bahá'ís should not neglect the fact of the rapid extinction of languages, and their associated cultural traits, around us. Such a (continued on page eight)

ABS(ESE) Annual Conference (continued from page one)

decline was dramatically affected by the pressure of communications technology and free market economies – thus entrenching the further spread of the English language as a kind of de facto international auxiliary language. This pattern challenged another significant Bahá'í principle, that of 'unity in diversity'. He warned that many of the endangered languages that are currently on the path to extinction, if they die, will take a whole family of languages with them. If languages were 'windows on the world', then what in fact was being lost was a whole cultural experience of humanity, a whole perspective on the world that could never be rediscovered. Of the 6,700 languages around today, experts had predicted that over 95% of them would be lost in the next 100 years – a loss that had been compared to the loss of rainforests, the loss of a unique heritage that would take with it unknown riches. Professor Watson proposed the revival of minority languages alongside the path towards an international language, and the utilisation of linguistic experts in proposing the most appropriate auxiliary language to be adopted, rather than just being drawn by the elimination of all alternatives.

The next speaker was Charles Lerche on, 'A Bahá'í Perspective on Peacebuilding'. He spoke of the three 'R's of reconciliation, reconstruction and conflict resolution. Whilst 'creative conflict' in a society could be the key to its vibrancy and activism, the world had unfortunately witnessed a whole range of deadly conflicts in the aftermath of the Cold War. This had led to wide discussions by various actors about where greater responsibility should be assumed in the light of these tragic occurrences? The jury was still out on these issues: of who should, or has the right to, do what to/for whom under what circumstances when it comes to peace building? Dr Lerche suggested that effective peace building had to be proactive in nature and should be informed, both in theory and practice, by both a model of civilization and a conception of human nature that provided for the fulfilment of emotional, psychological and spiritual, as well as physical needs. Dr Lerche turned to the Bahá'í Writings as a significant source of inspiration and guidance out of these deadlocks on the problems surrounding peace building. He particularly drew on the principles of decision-making through consultation as a means of pro-active peace building.

'Dialogue Between the West and Islam' was the next issue on the agenda, addressed by Dr Moojan Momen. Dr Momen took a historical look at the rise and decline of Islam in relation to the west. He analysed this through

attention to three themes: first – the Scientific approach, second – Human Rights and Religious Tolerance, third – the Position of Women. Attention was drawn to the fact of the Qurán's emphasis on the investigation of the truth and in discovering the signs of God in contemplating the heavens and the earth. The first universities in the world had been those of the Islamic civilization, a civilization which had contributed magnificently to the world of science. Regarding human rights and religious tolerance, Dr Momen emphasised Islamic thought as the foundation of modern individualism and drew attention to the Quránic principle of 'no compulsion in religion'. Muslims had been called upon to uphold justice and reject injustice, and the level of religious toleration in early Islamic history had been very progressive in contrast with the norms of the time. And finally, on the issue of the role of women, Islam had unquestionably established the idea of the equal spiritual status of women and the improvement in their legal status on issues such as the ownership of property and maintenance in case of divorce.

Dr Momen asked the audience to contemplate as to how, despite this early prominence, the Islamic world was no longer considered at the forefront of these three issues? With regards to the first theme, the encouragement of investigative and rational thought had died off by the end of the twelfth century; with regards to religious tolerance this had ebbed in the nineteenth century, possibly due to the loss of self-confidence in political and social terms in the Muslim world; and with the regards to the status of women, moral injunctions had gradually been given the force of law by male interpreters, and sidelined the progress of women.

This overall cumulative effect of thwarting the spirit of the Revelation was referred to, by the speaker, as the 'suppression of the Qurán by Muslims' – and held a warning to all believers not to reduce the latent powers of progress and enlightenment contained within Revelation by their own conservatism.

Rob Weinberg's fascinating paper on, 'Early European Bahá'í Involvement in Social Activism' was based on original historical research that he is currently engaged in. Weinberg illustrated the early involvement of Bahá'ís in Europe in the project of 'Social and Economic Development'. Whilst it was only in a Message dated 20 October 1983 that the Universal House of Justice had urged the whole of the Bahá'í World to become engaged the field of Social and Economic Development, small scale but significant advances in this field already had precedents in European Bahá'í communities much earlier in that century. Among these examples of social activism were the activities of early British Bahá'ís in the suffragette movement, Lady Blomfield's involvement in the early years of the League of Nations and the establishing of the Save the Children Fund, the Bournemouth Bahá'ís' attempt to raise an orphaned Bahá'í baby, the establishment of a Bahá'í school in Paris by Victor and Fanny Ponsonaille and British contributions to the establishment of Bahá'í schools in Haifa. Weinberg demonstrated that individual European Bahá'ís, early in the century, were, in a number of instances, more actively involved with the needs and exigencies of the time in which

they lived than some European Bahá'í communities today! This lent further force to the attention that the Universal House of Justice had been drawing in the past seventeen years for Bahá'í communities to take further steps in initiating and participating in social and economic activity at a grass roots level.

The next topic to be explored was that of, 'The International Criminal Court - a Bahá'í Perspective' by Daniel Wheatley, Government Relations Officer of the UK Bahá'í Community. The four questions that the presentation sought to tackle were the following: What is the International Criminal Court (ICC)? When will it become reality? What is happening in the UK? Why is it relevant to Bahá'ís? Wheatley spoke of the July 1998 inter-governmental conference in Rome which adopted the Statute of the International Criminal Court. The role of NGOs had been significant in the adoption of that Statute, in certain of its provisions, and in pushing for the necessary number of state ratifications to ensure that it comes into force. Current estimates were that this would happen in the next two years. One way that the Bahá'ís had been involved in the UK, was in facilitating interfaith lobbying on the ratification of the ICC Statute by the UK government, and joining a delegation to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to urging its early ratification, which was now going to be presented at the next parliamentary session.

Wheatley contrasted provisions of the International Criminal Court with Bahá'u'lláh's depictions of justice and world order, as well as the vivid elucidations of Shoghi Effendi. Wheatley saw the coming into being of the International Criminal Court as a significant and necessary, but limited development on the path towards infusing justice into the dynamics of the international community.

Babak Bahador took the floor next, on the topic of, 'The Lesser Peace and Global Civilisation'. His paper explored the notions of 'The End of History', 'The Post-modern World' and the 'Obsolescence of Major War' - ideas by Fukuyama, Cooper and Mandelbaum, respectively, that had sparked much debate within the discipline of international relations over the last decade. Each of these perspectives, in one form or the other, had argued that a new stage in human history had arrived, which stood in stark contrast with the brutality and bloodshed of the twentieth century. These arguments were compared and contrasted with the Bahá'í notion of 'the Lesser Peace'. While most analyses of the Lesser Peace had focused on the outward manifestations that are to accompany it, this paper argued that these were only consequences of an underlying condition that had clearly already emerged in international affairs over the last decade. While the Lesser Peace was a process, the emergence of its underlying condition in world affairs signalled its real initiation. Many thinkers had, from their own standpoint, noted this new condition - which Bahador presented as the precursor to the emergence of the world's first truly global civilization.

Zarin Hainsworth Fadaei next addressed the theme of the conference in relation to the position of women, under the heading 'Apostrophies and Aliens'. The title of the talk

came from the dichotomy of whether men and women were alien to each other or complimentary? The paper drew on the history of male-female relations in a number of cultures, particularly of civilizations which had considered women as possessions. Whilst in some cultures women had had the 'upper hand' and received similar educational standards, in other historic phases women had clearly been considered chattels and possessions of men, with independent women being regarded with suspicion and even persecuted as witches. In the UK for example, in 1882 changes began with the Married Woman's Property Act, but it was still unusual for a woman to follow her own interests unless her spouse had died. Only in very recent years had women been able to be taxed separately from their spouses, and had marital rape been recognised as a crime. On the international scene, female babies still have a greater mortality rate before the age of two, and a much greater proportion of foetuses aborted are female where a scan to determine sex is made available to pregnant women.

Zarrin Caldwell spoke on 'Beyond Birth Control: Different Approaches to Gender Equity'. Caldwell's paper touched on development programmes, gender equity and birth control. In the practice of equality between the sexes clearly basic changes in attitude were demanded by both men and women. In the current climate of sex education and gender equality, there was much focus today on teenage pregnancy and AIDs, but gender and spiritual issues were largely ignored. She explored the idea of whether population control was possible without changes in attitudes accompanied by the involvement of men in family planning. She drew attention to a recent publication that had argued that programmes focusing on the spiritual, emotional, and psychological aspects of reproduction may be more effective in the long-run over population control programmes that focus more strictly on the physical aspects of reproduction, i.e. birth control. It was precisely this approach that Caldwell was proposing as the more successful manner of moving the debate and practice forward.

Roger Prentice addressed the theme of 'Dialogue and Reality: an introduction to the notion of dialectical spiritualization, with special reference to the work of Ken Wilber'. This paper approached the nature of reality and the Bahá'í approach to it. He argued that the virtues of truth, beauty and goodness; and notions of knowledge, spirituality and spiritual development, could not be understood without attention to our understanding of reality.

The paper then glanced at a few of the references to 'reality' in the Bahá'í writings, and then briefly compared and contrasted this with the definition of reality given by the writer Ken Wilber.

Prentice argued that we are permanently in, or ought be in, a dialogic and dialectical process - as part of religious process - in order to grasp more clearly 'reality' and 'sub-realities' to reality - this he referred to as the notion of dialectical spiritualization. He argued that this process of dialogue, and the dialectic was necessary to all progress.

Gemma Burford spoke of her first hand experience with the setting up of a grassroots NGO, under the title 'Turning Development Inside-out: a Case Study from Tanzania'. This NGO, set up in Tanzania, had declined the top-down or

bottom-up approach to development, in favour of an 'inside-out' approach - which she defined as building on the indigenous knowledge and skills that already exist inside a community, and reaching out to the rest of the world. The goals were those of instilling confidence, particularly in the youth, protecting and preserving Africa's cultural diversity, instilling a volunteer ethic and exploring traditional knowledge - for example in the field of traditional medicine.

On Sunday, the first address was by Payam Akhavan on 'The Clash of Civilizations and Other Seductive Myths: Power and Identity in the Global Age'. Akhavan rejected the notion of 'clash of civilisations' that had become a popular theory about conflict in the aftermath of the Cold War. This theory had depicted ethnic wars from Bosnia to Rwanda as inevitable fulfilments of this prophecy. By giving close examination to such conflicts, however, Akhavan tried to demonstrate that these conflicts were neither primordial nor inevitable outbursts of tribal hatred, but rather, calculated manipulation and instrumentalization of identity by political leaders without any particular ideological allegiance.

Akhavan argued that theories of inevitable conflict have their basis in a highly cynical view of human nature with racist undercurrents. These perspectives, he claimed, were perpetuated by self-serving leaders whose own interests were served by capitalising on these theories, rather than

Report on the ABS(ESE) Covenant Meeting

A one day conference on the subject of the covenant, specifically examining the challenges to it, was held on 24 June 2000 in Birmingham. There were three main speakers, Shahriar Razavi, Augusto Claros-Lopez and Barney Leith, though there was plenty of opportunity for discussion and full audience participation by the forty-two people who registered. Overall the evaluation forms completed by the participants were very favourable and positive.

After the opening prayers Mr Razavi began his talk primarily emphasising the historical and definitive aspects of issues relating to the covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, paying particular attention to tablets by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas about the station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the One to turn to and refer matters to in His capacity as an Interpreter of the Cause by the Bahá'ís after Him. He went on to explain what is meant by the covenant, what constitutes covenant breaking and defined the two different forms of covenant, the greater covenant which is between the Manifestations of God and Their people about the appearance of the next

dispensations and the lesser covenant which is the acceptance of the one appointed by Him as the centre of his covenant after Him. Regarding the purpose of the covenant he quoted the Guardian in *God Passes By*, '... The covenant is to perpetuate the influence of the truth, insure its integrity, safeguard it from schism and stimulate its world wide expansions ...'.

Mr Razavi was followed by Dr Lopez whose talk was based on the elements of external opposition to the cause. One source of opposition comes from the Divines of the Day – extensively dealt with by Bahá'u'lláh in the *Kitáb-i-Iqán* and elsewhere. An important element of opposition is a lack of adequate understanding, on the part of clergy, of our Faith, combined with the attachment that they have to the dogmas of their own churches. Dr Lopez discussed some of the fundamental differences in the theological principles and doctrinal practices between the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity which could act as an impetus for the emergence of external opposition in the west. Whereas Bahá'ís believe in divinely guided institutions and the concept of the indirect nature of communication with God through His Manifestation, Christian beliefs multiplied following the death of Jesus Christ insofar as each church or indeed individual claimed direct inspiration by the Holy Ghost. Secondly, the Churches teach individual salvation, whereas the Bahá'í perspective is one of universal salvation, which in turn will benefit all the individual members. Thirdly, Christian teachings and dogmas were developed a long time after the death of Christ, and in order to rationalise them between the various authorities, reducing beliefs to static, absolute, but narrowly defined concepts. The Bahá'í Faith on the other hand is rich in the vocabulary of growth and evolution. Dr Lopez made an interesting observation that the Bahá'í Faith makes enormous intellectual demands on individuals who have spent their careers learning traditional concepts and interpretations. He also added that publications written by the enemies of the faith to dampen the enthusiasm of believers from the beginning of Bahá'í history up to the present had a recurrent theme and lacked originality. Dr Lopez concluded his talk by presenting seven desirable conditions for the protection of ourselves and the covenant. These are the concept that no-one is indispensable, the need to be tolerant and respectful of others, not to judge others, giving the Faith the very best of our abilities, obedience to the Bahá'í institutions, to be courageous and detached from earthly desires.

Barney Leith presented a case study to explain the manner in which the Bahá'í institutions have and will come under attack from within and without of the Bahá'í community and pointed to three principle means by which a response is normally made to challenges by Bahá'í institutions, they were: removal of a person's name from the roll, removal of individuals' administrative rights and the policy of non-engagement. He envisaged that the attacks will be more subtle in the future and pose traps for Bahá'í institutions to fall into and later emphasised the importance of the quality of initial teaching programmes for the new believers in the faith in reducing occurrence of such incidences. Contributions by the participants created a great deal of discussions and comments, they ranged from disillusionment issues affecting Bahá'í individuals when their capacity is not fully utilized in the

Recent Publications

Some recent books from Kalimat Press:

S*Religion In Iran: From Zoroaster To Bahá'u'lláh* by Alessandro Bausani trans. by J. M. Marchesi Bibliotheca Persica Press distributed by Kalimat Press as Volume Eleven of the series *Studies In The Bábí And Bahá'í Religions*. \$38.00

A brilliant, even masterful, overview of the religious history of Iran, this new English translation of Prof. Bausani's classic Italian work is standard reading for any student of Iranian religious history.

The volume opens with the formation of Zoroastrian doctrine, pursues medieval Mazdean religion, early Persian Islam, and modern Islam - and concludes with a discussion of the Bábí and Bahá'í religions, as Iran's most recent contribution to religious history. This is a fully academic treatment of the entire panorama of Iranian religion.

Bausani was a professor at the University of Rome and one of the greatest scholars of Iranian religion and

Reports from Bahá'í Societies 1999-2000

London School of Economics

The Bahá'ís of the London School of Economics set up a weekly study group to apply the goals of the annual meeting of the Bahá'í International Politics and Law Special Interest Group, of the ABS-ESE conference on International Affairs, on a regular basis. The idea was to have an informal evening cup-of-tea where Bahá'ís (youth/students/adults) could discuss and analyse contemporary topics of international affairs and correlate them with Bahá'í perspectives.

One was particularly encouraged to bring works from one's own field of study or interest, present the author's thoughts and open up discussions. This provided a way of offering fresh perspectives in one's own reading, as well as exposing fellow Bahá'ís to writers of particular note in different fields: e.g. international relations, law, politics, economics and current affairs.

Topics e.g.:

State Sovereignty and Equality of States; Balance of Power; The Invisible Hand; Democracy; Globalization;

Nationalism; Supranational Organizations; Justice vs. Order.

Contemporary and classical authors e.g.:

Philip Allot, Thomas Franck, Anthony Giddens, Hedley Bull, John Rawls, Morgenthau, Waltz, Norman Angell, Keohane and Nye, Kant, Rousseau, Machiavelli, The *Economist*.

Bahá'í resources on International Affairs:

The Guardian's *World Order letters*; Statements from the Universal House of Justice: *Promise of World Peace*; *Individual Rights and Freedoms*; BIC statements: *Prosperity of Humankind*; *Turning Point for all Nations*; *Who's Writing Our Future*; Compilations on the Lesser Peace and World Order; Articles by Bahá'í authors.

The study group met on Mondays at 8pm, in central London.

Topics to date: NATO Kosovo Bombings; the Pinochet Trial; State Sovereignty; The UN and World Order; the Lesser Peace - what is it?

Rod Rastan

Cambridge University

The Cambridge University Bahá'í Society is an organization of undergraduate and graduate students dedicated to the promotion of the universal principles of the Bahá'í Faith and has now been established for around thirty years. The Society is open to all students at the University and aims to encourage association, friendship and interchange of ideas between those of differing backgrounds and to promote discussion of topical and global issues as well as those related to spiritual and personal development.

Last year, the Bahá'í Society held a number of activities to this aim. The year started with the Freshers' Fair where many students signed up for the Society e-mail list, with many more taking literature on the Faith. This was followed by a successful Society Squash, where all were entertained and uplifted by the music of the Swan Duo. Thereafter were held a series of prayer meetings, firesides, talks and dinners. A talk on the Bahá'í Faith by Dr Kishan Manoocha resulted in more than thirty students hearing about the Faith's history and principles. Each year the Bahá'í Society participates in the annual One World Week event at the University and this year's

Membership of ABS(ESE)

- Individual membership: £15 Sterling per year
- Unwaged membership: £10 Sterling per year (including full-time students and senior citizens)
- Sponsoring membership: £25 Sterling per year (supporting a Bahá'í in Central or Eastern Europe)

Membership Secretary

ABS-ESE

27 Rutland Gate

London, SW7 1PD

Submissions for Associate should be sent to:

By e-mail:

absese@hotmail.com

Or by post (preferably on disk) to:

Associate

ABS-ESE

27 Rutland Gate

London, SW7 1PD

The ABS(ESE) webpage can be found at: