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From the Inception of the Bahá'í Cause in America there had been hypocrisy violation in the Chicago Bahá'í Community.

The Master wrote many Tablets upon this subject. After His first visit to Chicago the Master sent Mr. MacNutt from New York to Chicago, Himself paying Mr. Macnutt's expenses that he, Mr. Mactutt, might settle the matter of violation there caused by Dr. Nutt. I don't recall exactly what happened except that Mr. MacNutt was not awakened to the condition and accomplished practically nothing. Zia Baghdádí once told me that the Master had remarked to him that instead of sensing the condition of violation in Dr. Nutt, that Mr. MacNutt conferred with him and thought things to be alright and as they should be .

This condition continued for several years centering in Mrs. Luella Kirchner and a group associated with her in nativity. Thus conditions continued until the fall of 1917 when the Bahá'ís from various parts of the country assembled in Chicago to celebrate the Centennial Anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's birth. While there was an utter semblance of unity in those gatherings held in the Auditorium Hotel there was in reality a very bad condition existing among the Friends. I thought of it a great deal. Where were undercurrents in every direction. One morning as I awakened in my room in the Auditorium Hotel I seemed to see a map of this country with the various Bahá'í Centers marked, and on it s huge black octopus with its head in Chicago and its tentacles reaching out to the 'various Bahá'í Centers. It was not a dream nor a vision but a thought that came to me pictured in this manner. I spoke to some of the Friends about it, and that day daring one of the meetings the matter was brought up and a committee of investigation was appointed by the Friends to look into the matter and to render the Bahá'ís in this country a report. I was made chairman of that commission with Imogene Hoagg, George Latimer and Louis Gregory as members. The committee remained in Chicago for several weeks going thoroughly into the

affair. When we had completed our findings we called together the Friends from the various assemblies to her our report.

In the meantime the Kirchner outfit had been very active through correspondence and through sending emissaries around the country. Much destructive propaganda had been accomplished. The sentiments of some of the outstanding Bahá'ís had been so worked upon that they took a stand against the findings of the committee. Among these was Mrs. Parsons of Washington, Juliet Thompson, Mountfort Mills and Roy Wilhelm of New York, Harry Randall of Boston and a number of others. In the meanwhile various false reports of all kinds abounded and did much destruction, so when the Friends assembled in Chicago to hear the findings of the committee division already existed.

For many years Mrs. True and Zia Baghdádí of Chicago had held the fort against the violators, and around them had gathered a group. Mrs. Kirchner, the leader or the insurgent forces, also had her group. In as much as the committee of investigation round Mrs. True's group to be of the right wing and Mrs. Kirchner's of the left wing, we decided to do all in our power to keep the Friends coming from different parts of the country from further contamination. In order to safeguard the position of the firm ones it was decided to hold our meeting at the home of Mrs. True. Now a group of Friends including Mrs. Parsons, Harry Randall and others were confused upon the point in issue. They did not understand the principles of violation. To them it was merely a matter of inharmony between a few Bahá'ís in Chicago. 'They therefore determined to remain. "neutral". They did not attend the meeting of Mrs. True's. They remained to their hotel down town and requested that a joint meeting be held on "neutral" ground to which the Kirchners and others be invited. This could not be done. After the meeting at Mrs. True's house late in the evening the meeting, adjourned down to the hotel and met with these Friends, but at that time they were in no frame of mind to listen to tiny report of the committee. Confusion reigned, and they returned to their homes in really a worse frame of mind than that in which they had come.

The committee moved eastward. We came to Washington then rent to New York and Boston explaining our report to people. At various points we were opposed. Edward Getsinger lead the opposition in Boston. Various ones in other places did the same, and here in Washington, Mrs. Parsons and a group of her friends would not come to hear the report explained. Things were in a very, bad way, but little by little they quieted down, and after some time when correspondence was re-established with the Holy Land (which had been cut off during the war) Parsons received a Tablet from the Master in which He stated that Mrs. Kirchner was a violator and should be avoided. Parsons spoke of this Tablet to me several years afterwards, but I have not yet seen a copy of it. Just the other day I made inquiries from Leona Barnitz hoping to get a Photostat of this particular Tablet knowing in her will that Mrs. Parsons had left her Tablets to Leona. The Tablets have not yet been turned over to her. When it is possible I will try again to get a copy of this Tablet to place with these reminiscences.

The effect of this violation was of very long standing. In New York City, Mrs. Ford took a stand for Mrs. Kirchner and felt very bitterly toward me and others who had taken a prominent part in this investigation. I really believe that it was Mrs. Ford's antagonism personally against me that made her espouse the cause of Bourgeois and his temple design and line up her forces against the architectural ideal that I was trying to put before the people; namely that of a temple design after the lines of the Taj Mahal which the Master wanted, Now I can see quite clearly that the Master's wish for the architecture or the temple was sacrificed because of this condition of violation which condition so blurred the vision and the minds of the Bahá'ís in this country that they could not see nor understand His wish in this matter.

But in time all these things will be straightened out. The fact that the Master wished me to design the Bahá'í Temple for Mount Carmel in Palestine is proof to me that He preferred the Indian Style in which I worked to any other style. While I am pleased that He has entrusted this work to me I on truthfully say that I have really no desire of mine own to be the architect of this temple. I would gladly pass the work on to others providing that I felt that they were carrying out the Master's wish so far as the style of the temple is concerned.

Thus poison infected into the Cause will run sometimes for generations before it is eliminated.

In this volume containing a report of the committee of investigation appears also several other documents pertaining to the same. The article on "Firmness in the Cause" was written in Europe shortly after the famous Faríd violation in London. In my article entitled "The Protection of the Cause of God" I make allusions to several experiences dealt with elsewhere in these reminiscences. On page fourteen I allude to Mrs. Allen-Dyar and her activities. On pages twenty-six and twenty-seven I allude to the Ormont Silver expedition and the troubles that he created in the Cause. On page thirty-six I refer to Dr. Woodward and his activities also mentioned elsewhere in my writings, and on page forty-two I write again of the conditions in London in 1914 just prior to the out-break of the great war.

The recovery of the Cause in these days from these troubles has been slow and laborious, and I fear it will be some time yet before we are through with these ill effects. In this volume is a copy of a telegram that Mrs. True received from the Master regarding the violation. The last efforts of the Master in His mission here on earth were concerned with the violation. As I recall the last cablegram He sent to America was sent to Roy Wilhelm. It was regarding the violation.

During my last hour with the Master in the little upper chamber of the hotel at Tiberias He spoke at length of the violation in America apropos of nothing that I had said, and His words have been recorded in another part of my reminiscences. Thus the struggle has gone on.

For a number of years now I have been quite outside of this struggle. While the stand that I took against the violation in 1917 brought me many firm friends

among the Bahá'ís it also created a feeling of great enmity against me in the hearts of others. Traces of this still exist, and for that and other reasons I prefer now not to be in any position of prominence in the Bahá'í Cause. There is a time in one's life when he no longer cares to fight, particularly when things that are very clear to him are more of muddled in the mind of the Bahá'í Group. However the experience in 1912 in Chicago was a glorious fight and a glorious venture, a time of great inspiration that one can look back upon as a soldier can on a battle.

C. M. R.

Washington, D. C.

July 11, 1935