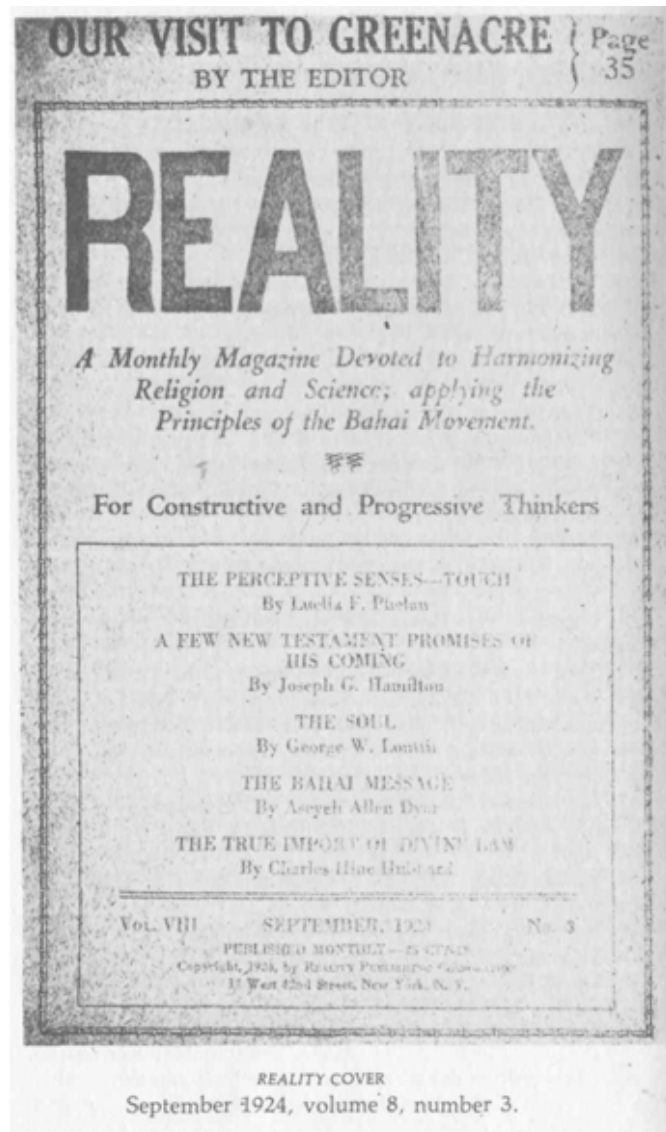


From *From Iran East and West*, edited by Juan Ricardo Cole, Moojan Momen, Chap. 3.
"Reality Magazine: Editorship and Ownership of an American Bahai Periodical," by Peter Smith



The national Convention of the Bahá'í Temple Unity held in New York City in April 1919, offered a new beginning for the American Bahá'í community. Highlighted by the presentation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Tablets of the Divine Plan*—a call for systematic endeavor to spread the Bahá'í teachings throughout the world—the convention was also characterized as the "Convention of Reconciliation" a deliberate attempt to end the divisions and recriminations caused by the Chicago Reading Room crisis of 1917-18.¹ In both regards, the convention was immediately successful, and a great surge of Bahá'í activity ensued.

In metropolitan New York itself, the year 1919 saw the initiation of a number of significant Bahá'í projects by which the local Bahá'ís sought to consolidate and expand their activities. Central to these projects was the establishment of a Bahá'í Center at 415 Madison Avenue. Containing an assembly room, reading room and library, the Center came into being primarily as the publishing office for the new Bahá'í magazine, *Reality*.² Initiated by Eugene and Wandeyne Deuth, *Reality*

expressed the long-standing desire of many Bahá'ís for a periodical that would not only report on Bahá'í activities, but would also appeal more broadly to all "seekers of light" in the new age heralded by the Bahá'í revelation.³ Accordingly, from early in 1919—the first issue is undated—until late in 1922, *Reality* provided space both for accounts of Bahá'í activities (mostly those of New York) and for a wide range of articles by Bahá'ís and others on a variety of topics ranging from metaphysics to socialism. After 1922, the magazine rapidly changed in character, serving first as a vehicle for a series of attacks on Bahá'í orthodoxy and organization (1923-1926), then practically ceasing to contain any Bahá'í reference (1926-1929), and finally going out of production in the spring preceding the Great Crash and the Depression.

THE WORLD OF REALITY, 1919-1922

During its early years of production, *Reality* provided a fascinating insight into the activities and thinking of numbers of American Bahá'ís. How representative *Reality* was of the American Bahá'í community as a whole is as yet uncertain. New York is not America, and the activities and events of the New York Bahá'ís (or of some of them) in the early years after the First World War need not be regarded as typical of the nation as a whole. Any complex religious movement is liable to express a range of concerns and interests. In the case of the early American Bahá'í community this diversity was increased by the realities of geographical distance and the variety of local subcultures. Even more than their modern day counterparts, these early Bahá'ís were only partially members of a single national community. Even for the most active Bahá'ís, the greater part of their Bahá'í lives were spent in the company of fellow believers from their own region and in dialogue on the particularistic concerns and interests of their own locality. Major national events—such as the Chicago Reading Room crisis—might pass an entire section of the country by. Thus is explained, perhaps, the apparent unconcern of Bahá'ís in the Western states over the Chicago crisis and the complex responses of those in Washington, D.C.

Of the major religious motifs of the early American Bahá'í community which I have sketched elsewhere, three received particular emphasis in the pages of *Reality*, reflecting, presumably, the interests and commitments of those involved in the production of the magazine and in the associated activities of the New York Bahá'ís.⁴ These three dominant religious concerns—religious liberalism, metaphysical esotericism, and social reconstruction—will be detailed in turn below. Other early Bahá'í motifs (the expectation of millennial fulfillment, and the sense of personal devotion and strict obedience to the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá) are only obliquely expressed in *Reality* and will not be discussed here. Indeed, in the case of the attitude toward 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is some expression of reserve toward the personal adulation which many American Bahá'ís displayed toward him. Concern was expressed that such devotion should not outweigh commitment to the universal Bahá'í principles.⁵

Religious Liberalism, Organization, and Inclusivism. When contrasted with contemporary Western Bahá'í communities, two of the most distinctive features of the early North American Bahá'ís were the relative weakness of such local and national Bahá'í organizations as then existed and a pervasive inclusivism in the attitude of many Bahá'ís toward their religion. These characteristics were related. Thus, for those many Bahá'ís who then opposed strong organization, the Bahá'í cause was a loose knit movement embodying the spirit of the age. Liberal and humanitarian in its principles, it represented more a spiritual attitude than an actual religion. All progressive movements—both within and outside the churches—represented part of the same God-directed spirit. It was therefore meaningless to attempt to organize such a phenomenon or to prepare lists of its members. Opposed to this attitude, there were

many Bahá'ís who favored the growth of organization and the greater communal cohesion and distinctiveness which it promised. For such believers, the Bahá'í cause was a divinely revealed religion with its own laws, institutions and teachings. Although tolerant and liberal in its relations with the wider world, it was ultimately an exclusive religion of which one either was—or was not—a member." Of course, to modern Bahá'ís it is this latter attitude which is orthodox. But in 1919, both attitudes were well established and neither had yet attained an overall dominance within the American community, despite the endeavors of the 1917-18 Committee of Investigation. Only from the mid-1920s, and then only with the support of Shoghi Effendi, the recognized head of the religion, did "organizational exclusivism" come to be a dominant part of the ethos of North American Bahá'ís.

For most supporters of *Reality*, the dominant attitude was clearly that of inclusivism. It was promoted as an expression of that religious liberalism of doctrine and practice which was embodied in the Bahá'í movement. In words attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "To be a Bahá'í means to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for the universal peace and the universal brotherhood of mankind."⁷ And again, "It makes no difference whether you have ever heard of Bahá'u'lláh or not. The man who lives the life according to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is already a Bahá'í."⁸

According to this latter doctrine, a whole variety of persons could be attributed with Bahá'í status. As an extreme example, one *Reality* contributor reported that "every thinking person in the world today is a Bahá'í whether they know it or not."⁹ More specifically, any public figure who expressed ideas resembling the Bahá'í principles was liable to be identified as a Bahá'í.

Thus, the automobile magnate Henry Ford had only to speak in favor of industrial profit sharing and the need for a universal Bible for a *Reality* editorialist to query: "I wonder if Henry Ford knows he is a Bahá'í?", a rhetorical question also asked of such figures as President Woodrow Wilson, the wife of President Harding, and the journalist Arthur Brisbane.¹⁰

Inclusivism gave a sense of being part of a forceful current of social change, rather than of a small religious collectivity. Thus, while only "thousands" were actual followers of Abdul-Bahá, there were "millions" who were serving the Cause unconsciously.¹¹ More positively, inclusivism gave scope for association with liberal Christians and social reformers who were unlikely to readily associate with an exclusive religious organization of alien origin. Thus, for example, the interest shown in the Bahá'í movement by the Reverend Dr. Guthrie, rector of St. Marks Episcopalian Church, or by the sculptor, G.G. Barnard.¹² Again, inclusivism gave opportunity for individuals who might otherwise have remained sympathetic outsiders on account of existing religious commitments to identify themselves as Bahá'ís. G. A. Kratzer was able to call himself a Bahá'í, even though remaining a Christian Scientist; Rev. Richard M. Bolden of the Church of Emmanuel could combine his churchly duties with service on the New York Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly; and the Bahá'í activist Urbain Ledoux could be both a Bahá'í and a member of a modern school of Buddhism.¹³

Organizations could also be regarded as expressions of the same spirit of the age manifested in the Bahá'í movement. Socialism, spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, New Thought, and the movement for female emancipation were all seen in this light by sympathetic Bahá'ís. This view was taken not only by *Reality*, but significantly by the popular Bahá'í text published at this time, Horace Holley's *Bahá'í: The Spirit of the Age* (1921). In this respect, the writings of Horace Holley (1887-1960) are of particular interest in so far as Holley was shortly to become the leading exponent of organizational exclusivism in America.¹⁴ In the immediate post-war period, however, Holley was still

an active proponent of inclusivism. Resident in New York, he was at first an active supporter of *Reality*, serving as one of its consulting editors from its inception until July 1922. During this period he still saw the Bahá'í Cause as "not a new religion", not a cult, a philosophy nor a Formula, but a positive transformation of experience throughout the world.¹⁵

Metaphysical Esotericism. Late nineteenth century America witnessed a wave of religious innovation concerned with the expansion of the frontiers of religious knowledge and experience. Movements such as Theosophy, Vedanta, New Thought, and Christian Science represented a congeries of interests in metaphysical speculation, occult knowledge, and spiritual healing and well-being.¹⁶ As the early American Bahá'í Community drew many of its members from the cultic milieu of persons influenced by these movements, various metaphysical and esoteric ideas were naturally influential on certain sections of that community, including many Bahá'ís in New York.¹⁷ Thus, S. N. Alter found that most of those present at a meeting in the New York Bahá'í Library claimed to have experienced spiritual healing through reading Bahá'í Tablets of healing.¹⁸ More generally, Horace Holley's *Bahá'í: The Spirit of the Age*, is fulsome in its praise for "the miracles of Spiritualism, Psychic Research, [and] New Thought," such groups expressing that same "cosmic Reality" revealed by the Bahá'í movement. Indeed, according to Holley, the founders of Christian Science and New Thought were "among the mightiest proofs of the Cause of God": and the Theosophical thinking of Helena Blavatsky and her discovery of the lost esoteric sciences shone brightly in the light of the spiritual sun, her work rising "like a tremendous mountain from the low levels of Western thought." Indeed, for the new kind of humanity that had been called into being for the new age, a "Spiritual Race" of "thought bodies" able to function on the plane of Reality and thus able to attain cosmic inspiration, true Theosophical study and development were undoubtedly "the greatest activity on the plane of consciousness at the present time."¹⁹

Such metaphysical themes were amply represented in the pages of *Reality*. New Thought and Theosophical ideas and language were particularly prominent. An early editorial advised readers that inner happiness was attainable through the realization that "your life on this plane is your *omrt*. your thought and intention make or mar it."²⁰ They should have "Absolute Faith in a better condition awaiting both your own life and the life of the world." Such were the teachings of the present "World Teacher" and "Master of Thought" (that is, 'Abdu'l-Bahá). Again, much attention was given to the emergence of a "New Race" of human beings, who were sometimes attributed God-like characteristics. This was "the great white way of eternity." The conditions for the New Age were being prepared, and even if human beings ignored the fact, "the forces of the invisible powers" were even then producing "certain vibrations of change of thought and conditions."²¹ A new universal consciousness was dawning, and as various contributors affirmed, many varied aspects of life were thereby uplifted. Vegetarianism, color science, and psychic astronomy were commended. Testimony was given to the psychic vision (or "soul seeing") of the Bahá'í leaders and to the great power "to heal the sick and solve other human problems through prayer," which even many of the disciples of the Bahá'í movement displayed.²² Later issues included information on such matters as "odic vibrations," psychic experiences, astrology, the "dream problem," and numerology.

As a commercial magazine, *Reality* readily accepted advertisements. These too reflected metaphysical concerns, especially during H. G. Dyar's editorship. Even during the early years of publication, however, readers were regularly informed of the attractions of astrological readings; of

various systems of physical regeneration and self-realization; of the Los Angeles Brotherhood of Light; of the St. Louis Master Key Institute; and of a range of occult publications from Levi's transcription of the "Akashic Records" (*The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*) to *Azoth*, the New York "Inspirational Magazine" dealing with Theosophy, freemasonry, psychic research, and astrology. The Reality Publishing Corporation itself stocked and marketed numbers of these books, including *I00I Dreams and their Interpretations, Accredited to the Ancient Magi of Persia and Egypt* and Fabre D'Olivet's *Golden Verses of Pythagoras and Hermeneutic Interpretation*. Moreover, there were advertisements for the "Bahá'í Psalm of Healing" (published by the Observer's Publishing Society of Berkeley, California), and later for Dr. Drews of Chicago, "The Bahá'í Dietist," who advised that "every true Bahá'í observed "the truth of right eating," and for the Golden Glory Society (also of Chicago) who for 25 cents would send a book of religious prophecies (from Moses and Krishna to Bahá'u'lláh) confirming the details of when, where and how "The Rule of God on Earth" would be established.²³

Social Reconstruction. Brief involvement in the First World War had brought many social strains to the surface of American life. Presented as a crusade against the "swinish Huns," the war had served to reinforce the concern of Anglo-Americans with the preservation of the cultural purity of the society which they dominated. Even during the war, such European immigrants as had failed to become sufficiently Americanized had come under suspicion, and from 1917 onward a series of ever tighter restrictions on "undesirable immigration" had been imposed. Meanwhile the Great Migration of southern black Americans to the cities of the north and west had begun. In its wake there had been lynchings and race riots and the revival of the Ku Klux Klan. Rapidly expanding to the new areas of black settlement, the Klan found additional targets in the form "un-American" Jews and Catholics. Exacerbating all of these developments, post-war economic change led to sharp increases in the cost of living and a rapid increase in the number of unemployed.²⁴ Fueled by the resultant hardship, there was a great wave of industrial and radical discontent. Terrified by the recent example of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the government acted swiftly, using troops to break strikes; in the Red Scare of 1919-20, a massive series of raids was held on suspected subversives, many of whom were imprisoned or deported without trial.

Considering this highly charged atmosphere, the views and activities of some of the New York Bahá'ís assume particular interest. Although emphasizing the non-Bolshevik nature of the Bahá'í message, several *Reality* contributors and editorialists appear to have been sympathetic toward broadly socialistic viewpoints, calling for the nationalization of public utilities, the freeing from imprisonment of the socialist leader Eugene Debs, and urgent action to aid the unemployed.²⁵ Utilizing a variety of means—including open-air meetings and soap box oratory—Bahá'ís sought to convey their message to the poor, thereby encountering many who held socialist views and prompting a variety of speculations as to their own political stance.²⁶ Undertaking practical social work, Bahá'ís were active in establishing a number of poor men's clubs called Stepping Stones—including one in the Bowery—at which "tens-of-thousands" of those on the "Breadline" were given free meals followed by the "spiritual food" of the Bahá'í message.²⁷ In keeping with the esoteric ideas of some, such meals were strictly vegetarian and were served without tea, coffee or condiments. Tobacco and alcohol were rigidly excluded, and recipients were required to have bathed before their repast. Lodging and employment were also found for some of these men. A refuge for elderly working women was also projected.

Bahá'ís were also active in calls for disarmament and the establishment of international peace. Regular peace meetings were organized; and in 1922, Bahá'ís joined the New York Peace Parade, afterward holding a large open air peace meeting which was eventually dispersed by the police.²⁸ More idiosyncratically, Urbain Ledoux —prominent in many of these activities—organized groups of the unemployed to sing oratorios during the Disarmament conference so as to "maintain the vibrations of the Divine Presence," and furthered his work on behalf of peace and the unemployed by a dramatic interview with President Harding in which Ledoux appeared in sackcloth and ashes.²⁹ Bahá'ís also attempted to contribute to the lessening of racial tension: several were involved in the interracial Rainbow Circle centered around the black Bahá'í minister, Richard Manuel Bolden, a *Reality* supporter and at one stage a member of the Bahá'í Board of Consultation for Greater New York.³⁰ Another example of Bahá'í social work at this time in the New York area was Victoria Bedekian's work with blind orphans.³¹

The Deaths had originally established *Reality* as a cheap, mass circulation publication. To overcome the production vagaries of the newsstand and other casual means of distribution and sales, they needed as many promptly paid annual subscriptions as they could obtain, making repeated appeals to this end.³² Even with the introduction of advertisement columns with the September 1919 issue, a successful financial basis for the magazine was not established, however. For several months in 1920, production had to be suspended altogether. In April 1921, in response to the evident need for someone with considerably more business ability to become involved in production. Herold Sweetser Robinson became secretary and treasurer, assuming the business editorship in September.³³ By his own account, a forceful and self-made businessman with considerable experience in magazine publishing, Robinson soon adopted a more aggressive marketing policy, diversified the magazine's contents and accepted an increasing number of occultist advertisements. Readers were encouraged to become stockholders in a magazine for which, it was stressed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had expressed his support and which was now destined to become "the savior of mankind."³⁴ Although still portrayed as "The Bahá'í Magazine," and although still containing an officially approved report from the New York Bahá'í Board of Consultation, *Reality* now increasingly reflected a far wider range of interests. In March 1922, Horace Holley provided an editorial denying that *Reality* was an official Bahá'í magazine. At about the same time Robinson bought the Deaths' share in the magazine and appointed Mary Hanford Ford to be its new editor.

Mary Hanford Ford (1856-1937) was a veteran Bahá'í teacher and lecturer with a particular knowledge and interest in all aspects of the metaphysical milieu.³⁵ Later identified by Ruth White as the leader of those Bahá'ís favoring minimal organization, Mrs. Ford's assumption of the editorship of *Reality* was reportedly animated "by the desire to prevent the upgrowth of a certain form of illiberalism" within the Bahá'í movement.³⁶ Whether or not she felt she had achieved this objective, her tenure as editor was soon ended. Acting as editor from April to September of 1922, Ford came into conflict with Robinson over matters of editorial policy. Opposed as she might have been to the development of organizational exclusivism, Ford was still a devoted Bahá'í who perceived *Reality* as a means of furthering the Bahá'í cause. Robinson, by contrast, saw *Reality* as an expression of universal Bahá'í principles, particularly that of the independent investigation of truth.³⁷ Regarding the Bahá'í movement as an expression of religious liberty which made everyone a free agent and their own leader, Robinson wanted total independence from any formal Bahá'í constraint. Accordingly, Ford resigned and H.G. Dyar was appointed in her stead. Evidently very much of the same mind as Robinson, Dyar furthered and extended Robinson's policies so successfully, that *Reality* soon subtitled "an independent Bahá'í magazine," was radically altered in its concerns, eventually losing all contact with the Bahá'í movement whatsoever.³⁸

THE EDITORSHIP OF H. G. DYAR, 1922-1929

From October 1922 until his own death in January 1929, *Reality* was dominated by its editor, Harrison Gray Dyar (1866-1929).³⁹ An eminent entomologist, custodian of Lepidoptera in the United States National Museum, and the leading authority on American mosquitoes, Dr. Dyar became interested in the Bahá'í movement through his second wife, Wellesca Pollock Allen (1871-?). Named Aseyeh by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Mrs. Dyar had been a Bahá'í since 1901, making the pilgrimage to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1907, and spending the summer of 1919 on an extended Bahá'í teaching tour through Alaska and the Canadian Northwest.⁴⁰ Unlike his wife—who according to Dyar was a devoted follower of Abdul-Bahá—Dyar remained unattached to "personality" For him, his self-identification as a Bahá'í evidently centered on his conviction that the Bahá'í movement provided a means for "rejuvenating religion on the principles of science."⁴¹ Possessed of a private income, his assumption of the editorship and part-ownership of *Reality* was undertaken in order to mount a crusade for this purpose.

Advocating an extreme epistemological individualism, Dyar was uncompromising in his rejection of all forms of religious authority.⁴² Thus, even the statements of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá were not to be accorded undue importance. Indeed, in Dyar's developing critique of established Bahá'í ideas, Bahá'u'lláh was regarded as a religious fundamentalist who had broadened the Bábi sect into an authoritarian world religion. As such, his teachings were dismissed as "predominantly reactionary." By contrast, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was regarded as having remodeled his father's religion along progressive lines. Unable to make much headway among his followers in the East—who still followed in its purity the authoritarian "Bahá'í Religion"—'Abdu'l-Bahá turned to his new-found followers in the West and sought to inculcate in them the "modernist" principles of the "Bahá'í Movement."⁴³ Thus, in the East 'Abdu'l-Bahá was forced to acquiesce in an authoritarian situation characterized by personal devotion to himself and his father, and supported by a policy of the excommunication of defectors. In the West, however, he was able to emphasize principle above personality, teaching a scientific religion of universal ideas.

Given this reading of Bahá'í history, Dyar was naturally opposed to the development of Bahá'í organization in the West and regarded it as a regressive feature. Equating organization with sectarianism, Dyar readily came into conflict with all those who sought its advancement, stressing his utter opposition to any attempt to consolidate the "Bahá'í Religion" at the expense of the "Bahá'í Movement."

For Dyar, nothing could negate his vision of the Bahá'í movement. When Jeanne Bolles reported that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had modified the statement, "The Bahá'í Faith can never be organized," to read "The Bahá'í Cause can never be confined to an organization," Dyar commented that the former wording better expressed 'Abdu'l-Bahá's intention (which he evidently thought he knew).⁴⁴ When presented with the evidence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament*, with its explicit promotion of organization, Dyar dismissed the document as an expression of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secret anguish which should be suppressed out of respect for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his public teachings.⁴⁵ More generally, many apparent contradictions between 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings and policies and Dyar's own portrayal of the Bahá'í movement were explained by the contrast between the Western and Eastern Bahá'í contexts.

With such an independent attitude towards religious authority, Bahá'í teachings which were

unappealing to Dyar were readily jettisoned. Thus, it was denied that the Bahá'í movement had any social program at all. Such Bahá'í ideas as the abolition of extremes of wealth and poverty were socialistic and, therefore, bad and bound to fail. The Bahá'í principle of the unity of mankind was symbolic rather than actual. Physical unity was wrong since interracial marriage would lead to a decline in brain power. Indeed, although disapproving of their violent methods, Dyar sympathized with the Ku Klux Klan's defense of Protestant white supremacy. He also advocated eugenics as "the highest philosophy of mankind," and stressed that Yankees (such as himself) had a national duty to produce large families so as to raise the proportion of the best elements of humanity.⁴⁶ Similarly, with regard to Bahá'í theology, Dyar maintained that it was unnecessary to believe in the Manifestations of God, their divinity, or indeed any "cosmic conception."⁴⁷

Increasingly using *Reality* as a vehicle for the promotion of his own ideas, Dyar was still ready to give space to alternative viewpoints related to the Bahá'í movement, no matter how idiosyncratic. Thus, the lone American Azali, August J. Stenstrand was able to find a platform for his views, and Edward J. Irvine was able to promote "Red Bahá'ism" or "Irviniism."⁴⁸ Seemingly a rather pathetic figure who gained no adherents for his "reformed" religion, Irvine was soundly rejected by both the Bahá'ís and the communists whose tenets he sought to combine. Space was also given to those whom mainstream Bahá'ís regarded as violators of the Covenant such as Ameen Fareed, Ibrahim Kheiralla, and the promoters of the Kheirallaite "Unitarian Behai's Movement."⁴⁹


Few mainstream Bahá'ís continued contributing to *Reality* after its evident heterodoxy became established. The main exception, interestingly enough, was the future leading opponent of Bahá'í organization Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, who acted as one of the consulting editors of *Reality* from October 1922 to April 1923. Sohrab had already had occasion to cross swords with some of the more exclusivist Bahá'ís during the aftermath of the Chicago Reading Room affair, and several of his contributions to *Reality* clearly express his continued opposition to organizational exclusivism. In February 1923, Sohrab wrote that Bahá'ís could be judged by their deeds rather than their words, and that "the Powers of the Holy Spirit can never be monopolized, nor the graces of the Lord be turned into a trust." Again, in April 1923, Sohrab affirmed that even those who had never heard the name *Bahá'í* were Bahá'ís if their lives were characterized by freedom of thought. By contrast, those orthodox who sought to recreate "the dark ages of blind authority" were not Bahá'ís. Then again, in October 1923, Sohrab appealed to the Bahá'ís not to lose the Bahá'í principles by too great a concern with trifles, to banish their fear and mistrust of suspected violators of the Covenant, and to deal kindly and lovingly with all.⁵⁰ Besides Sohrab and Mrs. Dyar, Richard Bolden was the only other prominent Bahá'í to remain actively involved with *Reality* under Dyar's editorship. He remained a consulting editor until October/November 1927.⁵¹

By his presentation of ideas that from the standpoint of Bahá'í orthodoxy offered an utterly distorted picture of Bahá'í belief, by his vehement attacks on Bahá'í organization, and by the space which he gave to the views of identified Covenant-breakers, Dyar readily offended the sensibilities of most leading American Bahá'ís. There was little that they could do about the situation, however. *Reality* was not under Bahá'í ownership or control. Dr. Dyar, supported by Robinson, was resolute in the pursuit of his personal crusade. Moreover, appeals to Dyar and Robinson to change their policies generally exacerbated the situation, prompting Dyar to further expressions of opposition to the developing Bahá'í administration. Again, as Dyar was not in any conventional sense a Bahá'í—even by the elastic standards of the American community in the immediate post-war period—there was no sanction which Bahá'í leaders could apply against him. In the event, all that could be done by the orthodox Bahá'ís was to seek to distance their religion from *Reality* magazine.

Such distancing had already begun by March 1922, when the Deaths had been bought out and Horace Holley (then as one of the consulting editors) had provided an editorial denying that *Reality* was an official Bahá'í magazine. This denial he repeated in September 1922, as secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New York, noting the Assembly's pleasure at the removal of the subtitle "The Bahá'í Magazine" from *Reality's* cover and the inclusion of a statement that the editors and management were solely responsible for the magazine's contents. This removed, he explained, a "serious source of objection on the part of Bahá'ís."⁵² In his rejoinder to Holley, Robinson readily acceded that *Reality* was not an official Bahá'í magazine, adding sharply that he had been amazed that anyone could have thought that it was, given that (as "every Bahá'í" understood) the Bahá'í cause could not be organized, and thus there could be no official organ and no officials!⁵³ Thereafter, the "independent Bahá'í magazine" went its own way, proclaiming over and again that "The Bahá'í Message is a call to religious unity and not an invitation to a new religion."

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September 1924, volume 8, number 3.

Making no amendment in his editorial policy, Dyar nevertheless sought rapprochement with the organized Bahá'ís. He presented the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly with a written proposal of cooperation in August 1924. Referring the matter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's appointed successor, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani (1897-1957), the National Assembly was advised that cooperation was desirable if the Assembly was satisfied that no "unfriendly" or "harmful" matters would be published in *Reality*. No such satisfaction was gained, and the National Assembly followed Shoghi Effendi's instructions. In June 1925, they advised all Bahá'ís to totally avoid any involvement with the *Reality* magazine.⁵⁴ Thereafter, despite Dyar's September 1925 announcement of a change of policy in favor of support for Bahá'í organization—nominal rather than actual judging by the issue's contents—the Bahá'í content of *Reality* rapidly diminished. Soon it was almost non-existent.

Market pressures may again be assumed to have influenced this change. Advised not to contribute to the magazine by their National Assembly, and presumably by now well aware of the idiosyncratic nature of Dyar's attacks on Bahá'í orthodoxy, most Bahá'ís may well be assumed to have abandoned their subscriptions. As early as June 1923, Dyar had admitted that the organized Bahá'ís were numerically superior to those of the "Bahá'í Movement," and he hoped for conversion of the former to the latter must have seemed increasingly unlikely as the years went by.⁵⁵ Accordingly, after 1925, the established trend was accentuated. Soon the magazine was devoted almost entirely to such issues as New Thought, eugenics and the occult. Presumably these concerns reflected the interests of both Dyar and *Reality's* new readership. A description of the Bahá'í movement was still given on the inside cover; lists of fundamental Bahá'í principles and of Bahá'í books still stocked in the Reality offices were provided. But in no other respect did *Reality* reveal its former status as a Bahá'í magazine. By the time of Dyar's death in January 1929, even these slight Bahá'í references had been dropped. *Reality's* subtitle was changed to "The Universal Magazine, advocating the elimination of racial and religious intolerance: For progressive and constructive thinkers." In April 1929, the Robinsons were advertising for a new editor (of any or no religion). None, seemingly, was forthcoming and *Reality* ceased production.

NOTES

Please see bibliography for full citations for the books mentioned below.

1. On the New York Convention, see the report in *Star of the West*, vol. 10 (1919-20) pp. 54-66. On "Reconciliation" see Sohrab, *Story of the Divine Plan*, pp. 102-16. For the Tablets of the Divine Plan, see Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets* and Sohrab, *Unveiling*. On the Chicago Reading Room crisis see Smith, "American Bahá'í Community," pp. 189-94.
2. *Reality*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1919) pp. 28-29.
3. On similar Bahá'í publications, see Smith, "American Bahá'í Community," pp. 115-16. For expressions of support for *Reality* in this vein, see Deuth and Deuth, *Real People*.
4. On the motif concept, see Smith, "Motif Research," and Berger, "Sociological Study of Sectarianism." On motifs in early American Bahá'í history and Babi/Bahá'í history in general,

see Smith, "American Bahá'í Community," and idem., "Babi and Bahá'í Religions."

5. Compare *Reality*, vol. 1, no. 5 (1919) pp. 8-9, with vol. 3, no. 3 (1921) pp. 4-6. During H. G. Dyar's editorship (1922-29) attacks on such adulation became common.
6. These contrasting attitudes have been variantly described by Johnson, "Critical Transformations," pp. 297-306, and Smith, "American Bahá'í Community," pp. 194-201, and idem., "Emergence from the Cultic Milieu."
7. Stevens, "Light in the Lantern," p. 785.
8. Hammond, *Abdul Baha in London*, p. 106. See, for example, *Reality*, vol. 4, no. 12 (1921) pp. 45-50.
9. *Reality*, vol. 2, nos. 2-3 (1920) p. 50.
10. *Reality*, vol. I, no. 4 (1919) p. 4; vol. 1, no. 5, p. 4; vol. 1, no. 8, p. 6; vol. 4, no. 12 (1921) pp. 23-26.
11. *Reality*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1921) p. 4.
12. *Reality*, *ibid.*, p. 43.
13. *Reality*, vol. 2, nos. 2-3 (1920) p. 39; vol. 5, no. 5 (1922) p. 52; vol. 5, no. 7, pp. 16-19.
14. On Holley, see *Bahá'í World*, vol. 13, pp. 849-58, and Whitehead, *Some Bahá'ís to Remember*, pp. 214-47.
15. *Reality*, vol. 2, no. 9 (1920) pp. 12-16.
16. On these movements see Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion*; Gottschalk, *Christian Science*; Judah, "Indian Philosophy"; and, idem., *Metaphysical Movements*.
17. On Bahá'í involvement in the metaphysical milieu, see Smith, "American Bahá'í Community," pp. 161-70, and, idem., "Emergence from the Cultic Milieu."
18. Alter, *Studies in Bahá'ism*, p. 47.
19. Holley, *Bahá'í* especially pp. 140, 146, and 147.
20. *Reality*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1919) p. 8.
21. *Reality*, vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 5-6.
22. *Reality*, vol. 2, nos. 2-3 (1920) p. 39; vol. 2, nos. 4-8, pp. 14-20.
23. See, for example, *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1922) p. 62; vol. 8, no. 3 (1924) p. 64.
24. Thus, between 1919 and 1920 the cost of living in New York City increased by 28 percent, and by March 1921, there were some four million Americans unemployed (McCoy, *Coming of Age*, p. 24).
25. *Reality*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1919) p. 27; vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 34-35; vol. 2, no. 12 (1920) pp. 22-23; vol. 3, no. 4 (1921) p. 27; vol. 5, no. 9 (1922) p. 55.
26. *Reality*, vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 33-34.

27. *Reality*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 14-15; vol. 1, no. 2, p. 31; vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 26-28; vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 26-27; vol. 1, no. 8, p. 34.
28. *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 9 (1922) p. 55. Compare the war-time attitudes of some Bahá'ís (Smith, "American Bahá'í Community," p. 177).
29. On Ledoux, "Mr. Zero," see *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1922) p. 49; vol. 5, no. 6, pp. 13-18; vol. 5, no. 7, pp. 16-19; vol. 5, no. 8, pp. 15-16; vol. 12, no. 4 (1926) p. 4. It was Ledoux who effected Sarah Farmer's removal from a sanitarium (Richardson, "Greenacre," p. 157.).
30. *Reality*, vol. 2, no. 10 (1920) pp. 31-34; vol. 2, no. 12, pp. 37-39; vol. 3, no. 4 (1921) pp. 40-41; vol. 5, no. 5 (1922) p. 52.
31. *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 5, p. 39.
32. The Deaths also succeeded in building up a national network of distributors, and by December 1921 there were 38 of these outside of New York City. Mostly individual sympathizers, the distributors also included 11 commercial agencies. Their geographical distribution was as follows: Northeastern States (excluding New York City) 9; Midwestern States 13; Western States 5; Southern States 7; Canada 2; Australia 1; Japan 1 (*Reality*, vol. 4, no. 12 [1921] p. 55).
33. On Robinson and his wife, Laura Ryan, see *Reality*, vol. 7, no.6 (1924) pp. 9-12.
34. *Reality*, vol. 4, no. 9 (1921) p. 2.
35. On Ford see *Bahá'í World*, vol. 7, pp. 541-42, and Whitehead, *Some Bahá'ís to Remember*, pp. 145-52.
36. *Reality*, vol. 7, no. 6 (1924) p. 10; White, *Bahá'í Religion*, pp. 18, 74.
37. *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 10 (1922) pp. 57-58; vol. 7, no. 6, pp. 9-10.
38. I have portrayed the change of editorship in intellectualist terms, as it is portrayed in the magazine itself (see *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 9, p. 22; vol. 7, no. 6, p. 10). But it is, of course, entirely possible that Robinson's desire for financial support for what was predominantly his magazine was also a factor: Dyar wished or was prepared to buy a share in the ownership of *Reality*, Ford might not have been prepared so to do. Apart from Robinson, Dyar and the Reality Publishing Corporation, the only other part-owner after the Deaths had been bought out was Cora Jenkins of Bethesda, Ohio (see *Reality's* annual statements of ownership).
39. On Dyar's public life see the entries for Harrison Gray Dyar in Johnson and Malone, *Dictionary of American Bibliography* (1958 ed.) vol. 3, pp. 578-79; and *Who Was Who in America* (1943 ed.), vol. 2, p. 351. On his involvement with *Reality*, see *Reality*, vol. 7, no. 6 (1924) pp. 4-7; and more generally, vol. 17, no. 2 (1929) pp. 2-6.
40. *Reality*, vol. 7, no. 6, p. 6; vol. 11, no. 6 (1926) pp. 14-19; and Allen, *Introduction to the Bahá'í Revelation*. Dr. Dyar also joined his wife in the production of a volume of "*Short Talks . . . on the Bahá'í Revelation*" (Dyar and Dyar, *Short Talks*).
41. *Reality*, vol. 7, no. 6, pp. 4-7.
42. On epistemological individualism see Wallis, "Cultic Movements," and Smith, "Emergence from the Cultic Milieu."

43. As given by Dyar, these principles centered on "the independent investigation of truth," defined in terms of scientific method. The oneness of mankind and of the world religions, the harmony between science and religion, the equality of the sexes, voluntary wealth sharing, the need for an international language, and for universal peace and an international tribunal were also advocated, albeit in a manner that often diverged from Bahá'í orthodoxy.

Dyar's critique of Bahá'í orthodoxy extends throughout his editorials and articles in *Reality*, but see in particular. *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 10 (1922) pp. 4-7; vol. 6, no. 6 (1923) pp. 23-24; vol. 6, no. 7, pp. 5-7, 16-20; vol. 7, no. 1 (1924) pp. 50-54; vol. 7, no. 2 p. 32.

44. *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 12, pp. 55-56.

45. *Reality*, vol. 6, no. 7, pp. 16-20.

46. Dyar himself had two children by his first wife and three by his second, Aseyeh Allen (*Who Was Who in America*).

For his various statements noted here see *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 10, pp. 4-7; vol. 6, no. 8, pp. 31-33; vol. 8, no. 4 (1924) p. 18; vol. 9, no. 1 (1925) pp. 3-5; vol. 10, no. 2 (1925) pp. 4-5; vol. 10, no. 4, p. 3.

In contrast to Dyar, 'Abdu'l-Bahá advocated a detailed program of social change, including the abolition of extremes of wealth and poverty by direct taxation and the encouragement of interracial marriage. Accounts of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings as given during his Western tours are given in Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá and Ward, 239 Days*.

47. *Reality*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1923) p. 8; vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 32-37; vol. 6, no. 6, pp. 3-4; vol. 10, no. 2 (1925) p. 6.

48. For Stenstrand's contributions see *Reality*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1924) pp. 2-4; vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 4-5; vol. 8, no. 4 (1924) pp. 32-34; vol. 12, no. 2 (1926) p. 24; vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 59-60.

On Irvine and for his contributions see *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1922) pp. 40-41; vol. 6, no. 7 (1923) pp. 41-42; vol. 6, no. 11, pp. 3-5; vol. 6, no. 12, pp. 60-62; vol. 8, no. 4 (1924) pp. 5-7; vol. 8, no. 5, p. 42; vol. 9, no. 5 (1925) pp. 43-44; vol. 10, no. 4 (1925) pp. 3-4, 29-30. Irvine later appears to have become interested in the work of Swami Yogananda (*Reality*, vol. 14, no. 3 [1927] p. 54).

49. See *Reality*, vol. 6, no. 12, pp. 55-57; vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 15-19; vol. 9, no. 1, p. 5; vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 8-19; vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 32-39; vol. 11, no. 4 (1926) pp. 50-54; vol. 12, no. 3 (1926) pp. 49-51.

50. *Reality*, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 60; vol. 6, no. 4, p. 5; no. 10, pp. 24-28. Sohrab's own account of his clash with the "exclusivists" is given in his *Story of the Divine Plan*, pp. 102-16. He had expressed his opposition to what he saw as a developing Bahá'í dogmatism as early as February 1914 (see *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 3 [1922] pp. 31-33).

51. *Reality*, vol. 6, no. 12 (1923) pp. 33-34.

52. *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1922) pp. 3-4; vol. 5, no. 10, p. 56.

53. *Reality*, vol. 5, no. 10, pp. 57-58.

54. See the letter of Shoghi Effendi to the American National Spiritual Assembly, 27 November 1924 (*Bahá'í Newsletter*, no. 2, January 1925, insert; Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 73. This latter source omits the name of "*Reality*.") and the letter of the (North American) "National Bahá'í Assembly" to "local Spiritual Assemblies and Regional Teaching Chairman of the United

States and Canada," 12 June 1925. A copy of this latter document has kindly been supplied to me by Mr. Richard Hollinger of Los Angeles. See also the comment in *Bahá'í Newsletter*, no. 19 (August 1927) p. 3,

55. *Reality*, vol. 6, no. 6 (1923) p. 23.

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