

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES
BM/BAHAI, LONDON, W.C.1

No. 122

Bahá'í Year 111

JUNE, 1955

CABLES FROM THE GUARDIAN

March 20th to the American National Assembly

'Occasion Naw-Ruz Festival marking opening auspicious year being celebrated followers Faith approximately sixteen hundred centres Western Hemisphere, above eight hundred Asia, well nigh three hundred Africa, more than two hundred Europe, over one hundred Antipodes, joyfully announce commencement excavation foundations International Archives heralding rise first edifice destined inaugurate establishment seat World Bahá'í Administrative order Holy Land.

Announce moreover selection design submitted Hand Cause Mason Remey for projected Mother Temple Bahá'u'lláh's native land, paving way construction third Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Bahá'í World.

Urge followers the Faith Eastern, Western Hemispheres arise lend support erection these twin mighty institutions embryonic World Order Bahá'u'lláh at World Centre Faith within cradle His Revelation.

Share twin glad tidings all National Assemblies.'

April 30th, 1955, to the American National Assembly

'Share National Assemblies following announcement supplementing message recently addressed delegates Bahá'í Conventions.

Annual elections second year, second decade, second Bahá'í Century, signalised formation first historic local Assemblies in Communities as diversified (and) far apart as Mecca, Qiblah Islamic world; Muscat (and) Riaz, situated shore (and) heart Arabian Peninsula; Bahamas, British West Indies; Diu (Island), Kuala Lumpur, Malacca, Sargodha, Saigon, (in) South-east Asia; Monte Carlo, Basel, Mongat, Orleans, Marseilles, Bergen, Cologne (in) Europe; Reunion (Island), Zanzibar, Seychelles, Madagascar (in the) Indian Ocean; holy cities Kazimayn, Najaf, strongholds Shí'ih orthodoxy in Iraq, in addition group already established Karbilá; Teneriffe, Las Palmas (in the) Atlantic Ocean.

Africa alone boasts establishment above seventy new Assemblies, raising total number established since launching systematic simultaneous teaching campaigns African continent four years ago well above one hundred. Uganda in particular achieved unique, memorable feat formation seventeen new Assemblies, swelling number Assemblies (to) forty-one, localities (to) over hundred, total believers (to) almost nine hundred.

Sacred dust Báb's infant son, extolled (in the)

Qayyúm-i-Asmá, respectfully, ceremoniously transferred, anniversary his Father's martyrdom, presence pilgrims, resident believers (to the) Bahá'í cemetery Shíráz, prelude translation same spot (of the) remains Báb's beloved, long-suffering consort.

Five additional incorporations local Assemblies, including Suva.

Pioneer embarked Loyalty (Island), last remaining unopened island Pacific Ocean outside Soviet orbit.

Negotiations purchase national Házíras Colombo, Jakarta nearing completion.

Preliminary steps undertaken establishment Bahá'í Publishing Trust Tíhrán.

Design Mother Temple cradle Faith unveiled presence pilgrims resident believers assembled Haram-i-Aqdas first day Ridván.'

NOTE: The Haram-i-Aqdas is the Outer Sanctuary of the Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.

May 5th, 1955, to the American National Assembly

'Announce National Assemblies number members International Council raised nine through appointment Sylvia Ioas.'

May 26th to the American National Assembly

'Impelled this grave hour chequered history (of the) over century-old, world-encompassing, repeatedly-persecuted yet undefeatable Faith, (to) summon entire body valorous upholders its institutions who, severally (and) collectively, stand pledged (to the) prosecution mightiest crusade launched since its inception, whether residing homelands (or) overseas, however repressive regimes under which they labour, ponder anew full implications, essential requirements, their stewardship Cause Bahá'u'lláh.

Entreat them refuse allow any vicissitudes, present (or) future, (to) dampen ardor (and) enthusiasm, impair solidarity, weaken resolution, deflect them (from their) high purpose. Unbowed (by) adversity, disdainful clamours, undeterred machinations inveterate, artful, traditional enemies (who are) alarmed (by their) own declining fortunes, contrasting (with the) evidence dynamic force, impelling power, rising prestige, indivisible unity, accumulating resources, multiplying institutions, inextinguishable spirit (of) God's infant Faith, it behoveth them bend (their) energies, rise (to) higher levels consecration, vigilantly combat all forms

misrepresentations, eradicate suspicions, dispel misgivings, silence criticisms through still more compelling demonstration loyalty their respective governments, (and) win, maintain, strengthen confidence civil authorities (in) their integrity (and) sincerity, reaffirm universality aims (and) purposes Faith, proclaim spiritual character its fundamental principles, assert the non-political character its administrative institutions.

Appeal members communities untrammelled (by the) disabilities (and) shackles imposed (on their) less privileged brethren, particularly those established North American continent, recognised stronghold administrative order Faith, (and) those residing British Commonwealth (and) Empire, situated heart, East (and) West African continent, scattered (throughout the) Antipodes (and) Pacific area, arise promptly (and) accelerate tempo activities, multiply exploits which will more than offset transient setbacks which a steadily advancing (and) as yet not fully emancipated Faith may suffer. Theirs (is the) sublime opportunity so (to) act as (to) thoroughly dishearten (and) confound any schemes which envious, fanatical, embittered adversaries, tottering (to) their fall, may devise.

Share message National Assemblies.'

Convention Cables

The Guardian's reply to the first message sent him from Convention was dated April 25th and set out the goals for the British Bahá'í Community during this year:

'Deeply appreciate Convention Message. Appeal

delegates urge all Communities (in the) British Isles (to) concentrate attention (and) energies (on)

Intensification teaching activities

Multiplication Centres (i.e. places where there are Bahá'ís)

Strengthening allotted newly opened territories

Incorporation Assemblies

Establishment (of a) national endowment.

Praying fervently attainment objectives course second (and) last year (of this) phase Ten Year Plan.'

The cable to which this was a reply read:

'Convention deeply moved vision tremendous unfoldment Cause humbly soberly approaching deliberations our share. Begs prayers. Unitedly sends deepest love.'

Convention also sent a second cable to the Guardian as follows:

'Over hundred friends present Convention from all Communities four groups including 47 delegates 2 Knights Bahá'u'lláh. N.S.A. asked choose largest possible number new assemblies achievement this year, call all members signify possible service. Delegates deeply conscious urgent needs last year second phase, determined immediately stimulate dispersion, teaching.'

The Guardian's reply was dated April 28th:

'Rejoice splendid initiative assembled representatives valiant British Bahá'í Community. Ardently praying fulfilment fondest hopes.'

REPLY TO A CLERGYMAN

A new believer in the Falkland Islands, Mrs. Florence McKinnon, was somewhat plagued by the Church of England Minister there who gave her two pamphlets about Christianity to read and told her that in becoming a Bahá'í she was turning away from both God and Jesus Christ. She read these as requested, and felt impelled to write the clergyman a note telling him exactly how she felt. The Guardian was so impressed with her letter that he instructed Mr. Leroy Ioas to send us as well as the American National Assembly a copy of the letter about which Mr. Ioas comments:

'It shows the strong faith of this young and new Bahá'í and of the manner in which, in that far off land, no instruments have been raised up for the establishment and propagation of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It also shows the manner in which the Church of England is watching its fold even in such places as the Falkland Islands.'

Mrs. McKinnon's letter reads as follows:

'Reverend Sir,

With the returning of your booklets, I take this opportunity of acquainting you of my decision, of remaining firm and steadfast in the Bahá'í Faith.

This is not just a phase, but an awakening, a rebirth, a totally new life, to which God has called me.

I know this to be true, because it has been revealed to me, through my own seeking, first by prayer, and then

God's word, which Bahá'u'lláh makes manifest in the Bahá'í teaching.

There can be no doubt that it is God's word, being revealed to us by Bahá'u'lláh, God's Dispensation for this era, for the very reason, the whole, is pulsating with light and truth.

I believe in God, therefore I do not reject 'Jesus' nor do I reject anything pertaining to the Word of God.

So many things have been revealed to me within so short a time that my life has become filled with happiness, and desire to serve God, the Father of all mankind. "As ye have faith, so shall your powers and your blessings be."

These words I have penned, come from a sincere heart, and not from one who is sadly delusioned, or elated with a feeling of superiority.

Never before have I felt so humble, nor so able to seek out my own shortcomings.

Reverend sir,

I remain, yours faithfully,

"In His Service",

(s) FLORENCE MCKINNON.'

Mr. George Townshend comments:

'What life, what spirit is here! What a ringing contrast is this to the cold faith of conventional tradition! There is in Mrs. McKinnon's letter a vigour and depth of conviction which give impressive and penetrating power, and have made it a fitting example and chal-

lenge to hundreds of Bahá'ís. And the incident is not closed! Whatever is the spiritual condition of that missionary? Missionaries in remote places are often more receptive to religious influences than those in high places or in great cities. He is feeling the *REAL THING*! Perhaps he may be *shaken*, and may some day see the Truth. A thought, is it not, which may call us all to deepen our Faith more and more day by day that we too may seize an opportunity when it comes, as this faithful lady of the Falkland Islands has been able to do.'

LETTER TO A NEW BELIEVER

The Bahá'í Fund

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

There is one subject of the greatest importance which may well not have been adequately discussed with you before you embraced our beloved Cause, either because you yourself did not think it necessary to ask about it, or your informant on other matters was unsure how to broach what is regarded as rather a delicate subject by some people, or perhaps because time and opportunity were lacking. We refer to the question of contributions to the Bahá'í Fund.

As with everything else in the Faith, the Bahá'í Fund is directly linked with the principle of the oneness of mankind, the spiritual attractive power of the centre of the Covenant and the evolution of the individual soul.

On becoming Bahá'ís we enter into a new divinely founded system when we are required to practise our Faith with deeds, not mere words, deeds wholly inter-fused with the spirit of the teachings. How often do we realise that we need to practise the oneness of mankind, about which we talk so much, within the Bahá'í Community itself, acting as an organic member of that body?

To practise the principle of the oneness of mankind implies many things. It implies a common fundamental recognition of Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings; it implies obedience to His ordinances, of prayer and fasting particularly; it implies spiritual relationship with His Covenant and its divinely unerringly guided Centre; it implies aspiration towards His World Order which is foreshadowed by the Administrative Order now developing in the womb of a travelling world; it implies acceptance of all the duties and responsibilities which that Order entails; it implies that all parts or cells of the new organism must be mutually linked together, physically through association, service, love and correspondence, spiritually through prayer. It therefore also implies that it is vital to the whole that each part or cell keep up its full health through devotion of time to demonstrating the glorious principles in action and in teaching and the devotion of resources in financial contribution, regularly and continuously, in however small degree. This is the practical, effective test of the intensity of a believer's faith.

There are cells near the heart that give and need but little blood and there are cells in the great veins and arteries that carry much blood. The degree of their

devotion is the same: they give what they can, but they give it regularly and continuously, and they give it freely and voluntarily.

This organism, the Bahá'í Community, still but an embryo, is growing steadily, but we need to search our hearts: 'is it growing as healthily and as fast as it might if I were to practice "concentration, dedication, co-ordination, resourcefulness, and perseverance" more in those two fields of service open to me—making time for teaching others and setting aside my resources for financial contribution to the Fund?'

Our National Fund is the bedrock of all our national institutions to the extent that it will even underpin any local community that stands in dire need, and at the same time finance all the increasingly heavy demands of our ever-widening commitments at home, in Africa, in Europe and in Asia. Our local fund supports all the work of consolidating all efforts past and present to establish the Faith among the disillusioned, spiritually famished masses of the homeland. Our international fund helps our beloved Guardian—his hand ever the first to give in all parts of the world—to achieve those breathtaking decisions and successes in the Holy Land at the World Centre of the Faith.

We Bahá'ís alone have the privilege of taking part in this unspeakably glorious mission of helping Bahá'u'lláh to redeem mankind. We alone can contribute to support those enterprises which in this country and all over the world will remain, throughout the cycles of ages to come, sacred to the inviolable Cause of God the Father, now come in majesty and glory to rule the planet. Dare we do other than our utmost to be worthy of this privilege, this opportunity that will never again recur?

It is 'a sacred obligation', it is 'the secret of right living' 'to be continuously giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by the fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the source of all wealth and good'.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Hasan Balyuzi (Chairman)
Ernest Gregory (Vice-Chairman and Treasurer)
John Ferraby (Secretary)
Dorothy Ferraby
Alma Gregory
Marion Hoffman
Betty Reed
Louis Ross-Enfield
Ian Semple

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH, 1844-1954

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust still has a number of copies of this book of statistical and other information compiled by the Guardian, which gives also the detailed goals of the Ten Year Crusade and has a map illustrating the goals. Every believer should have a copy. To make it more easily available, the price is now reduced to 2/6 including map, or 1/6 without map.

CONVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

HOME TEACHING

1. The National Assembly is recommended to adopt a number of Assemblies, the largest possible number, as goals for formation this year. (*Goals for the year include formation of four Assemblies.*)

2. Recommended that every Bahá'í be asked to signify to the N.S.A. by its June meeting what he or she will undertake to do in the coming year under any or all of the following three headings:

- (1) Dispersion
- (2) Teaching
- (3) Giving to the Fund

We ask the N.S.A. to provide facilities for this to be done. (*This has been done.*)

3. Suggested that the National Assembly consult the Guardian about how much stress should this year be put on the foundation of new Assemblies in the British Isles and how much stress should be put on the opening of new centres. (*The Guardian was informed immediately about our chosen goals.*)

4. The National Assembly is urged to find early in the year ways and means of ensuring that there are no weak Assemblies at the end of it. (*Agreed.*)

5. Recommended that the National Assembly urges all Local Assemblies to adopt a campaign of continuous teaching. (*A letter has been sent to Local Assemblies.*)

6. Recommended that all Assemblies, whether strong or weak, be given extension teaching work. (*Referred to N.T.C. for study.*)

7. The National Assembly is recommended to keep in touch with those stronger Assemblies which are understood to be helping weak ones to ensure that this help is being given. (*Referred to Public Relations Committee.*)

8. Suggested that the National Assembly consider how to make the Cause more widely known in this country, as an adjunct to teaching. (*Referred to Public Relations Committee.*)

9. Proposed that each travelling teacher, whenever possible and practicable, supplies in advance a write-up about himself to form the basis of an item in a local newspaper. (*Referred to N.T.C.*)

GENERAL

10. All delegates are invited to ask their Communities to join in common prayer on 9th and 12th Days of Ridván for the work of the Cause during this year, suggested the Tablet of Ahmad might be used.

11. The National Assembly should consider trying once again the scheme of initiating pledges of financial donations and if they adopt such a scheme, suggested believers be given an opportunity to ask the Treasurer to remind them of the payments pledged. (*Agreed.*)

12. Suggested that the National Assembly try to keep track of adverse comments about the Faith which are published and inform the friends of these. (*The N.S.A. will be glad to hear reports of any attacks which come to the notice of the believers.*)

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

13. The Publishing Trust should investigate the selection from *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* reported to have been made already, and to examine whether it would be possible to publish it. (*Referred to the Publishing Trust Committee.*)

14. The Publishing Trust should prepare an article for publication in *Bahá'í Journal* to inform the friends of the history of the Publishing Trust. (*Referred to the Publishing Trust Committee.*)

VISUAL AIDS

15. Proposed that printed posters for railway stations and other sites should be included in the material used by the Visual Aids. The posters should have panels in which material can be put which is changed from time to time. The Committee should make use of the Manchester Assembly's experience in producing these posters. (*Referred to Public Relations Committee.*)

16. The Visual Aids Committee is asked to recommend a map of the Middle East as an aid to study of *Dawnbreakers* and *God Passes By*. (*Referred to Visual Aids Committee.*)

17. The National Teaching Committee and Child Education Committee should co-operate with the Visual Aids Committee in providing material for teaching and for children. (*Referred to the three Committees concerned.*)

OTHER COMMITTEES

18. The Child Education Committee in future should aim at producing a series of cheaper books containing anecdotes, hymns, etc., rather than another larger more expensive book. (*Referred to the Child Education Committee for comment.*)

19. The Sales Committee is requested to have copies made of the photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá given by the Guardian to the Ḥazirátu'l-Quds. (*Agreed.*)

20. The National Assembly is asked to take note of the progress which the youth have made this year and to see what steps can be taken to help this work. (*Agreed.*)

21. Suggested that a study of Christianity be made at Summer School this year, using the Bible, Promise of All Ages and Heart of the Gospel. (*Agreed.*)

22. Recommended that as new editions of the *Bahá'í World* are published, the National Assembly acquire two copies, one for preservation and one for circulation among the Communities. (*Agreed.*)

Supplementary Report of the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

By a narrower margin than ever before, the Assemblies have all been maintained. A pioneer offer in the evening of April 20th filled the last gap. Then on the First Day of Ridván itself came a telephone call to the National Office that a believer in a Community of nine wished to withdraw from the Faith—but that a declaration had been accepted by the outgoing Local Assembly that day making the Community of nine again. The British have a reputation for winning their victories at

the last moment but it is to be hoped there will never again be quite such a close call as this.

Since the annual report was written, new believers have been accepted in Reading and Portsmouth and a declaration from a Cambridge contact living in Newmarket awaits National Assembly consideration. It should not be too difficult to establish Assemblies in these towns, and others too, in the coming year if the whole Community arises in response to the Guardian's appeal to establish more Assemblies.

Another victory on the home front has been the incorporation of the Liverpool Assembly, completed on April 20th.

The efforts of the Bahá'ís in the African territories under British Bahá'í jurisdiction have been generously confirmed. About thirty new Assemblies will have been formed—the exact number is not yet known. An outstanding development has been the spread of the Faith in the British Cameroons, where Enoch Olinga is the only pioneer; nine new Assemblies are expected and four more pioneers will have gone from there this year to nearby territories.

The first declaration from the islands for which we are responsible has recently been accepted from Famagusta in Cyprus. This believer is also the first Greek to accept the Faith. Another declaration from Cyprus, this one from Nicosia, has also been accepted and there are now eight Bahá'ís in Nicosia.

The Guardian has asked us to publish translations into Scottish and Irish Gaelic and a pamphlet has been prepared with the aid of Mr. Townshend. Translators are now being sought.

A suitable place in which to hold Summer School has been discovered in North Wales and a place for next year has also been found.

The Hazíratu'l-Quds is being slowly furnished and brought into full use, but it seems that it may be quite a long time before all arrangements are complete, since the number of workers is small. The Committee to plan a public opening has been reformed, as some of the members of the original one were unable to serve. Mrs. Langdon-Davies' sons have generously presented to the Hazíratu'l-Quds the picture by Mark Tobey entitled 'Movement around a martyr', which was in their mother's possession.

Several pilgrims have brought back notes that the Guardian would like land for a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár to be bought on the banks of the Thames, and the National Assembly has made preliminary enquiries about cost. To buy this is not, however, a goal of the Ten Year Crusade.

A discussion has been held with a senior official of the Central Valuation Section of Inland Revenue about the de-rating of Bahá'í Centres and a favourable impression was gained from the discussion. The National Assembly would be glad to advise any Local Assembly about getting its Bahá'í Centre de-rated.

A purchaser has been found for 8 Burgess Hill; although it is not yet certain he can obtain permission to use the building for his intended purpose. The furniture is being auctioned. Bahá'ís in London and nearby

Communities were given the chance of buying articles before they went for auction.

The year has seen some progress and it is to be hoped that the way has been paved for a big advance on the home front next year. A concerted effort from the whole community can achieve it. Perhaps the necessary impetus will be given from this Convention.

AFRICA COMMITTEE Supplementary Report

Due to the fact that Convention is being held so near the First Day of Ridván we have not yet the usual news about the formation of new Assemblies. Our latest information is that nine Communities were ready to form Assemblies in the British Cameroons, making ten in all, one was ready in Ho, British Togoland, another one in the Gold Coast, at Osenase, making two in that territory, one at Leopoldville, Belgian Congo, and seven in Kenya. There is a possibility of up to four in Tanganyika and the reports from Uganda have at different times given estimates ranging between ten and eighteen. There of course they have also the task of maintaining the existing twenty-four Assemblies. If all the Assemblies hoped for are achieved, that means approximately thirty new Assemblies in our territories. As the Guardian said he hoped that half of the eighty existing groups would form Assemblies, it seems as if our territories have contributed very well towards the total. This is due to a tremendous amount of devoted work by the pioneers and teachers, both African and non-African.

In response to the Guardian's wish that African believers should pioneer to neighbouring territories, we have two African believers in Uganda ready to go to Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland; they are waiting now for financial arrangements to be made by the N.S.A. responsible for these territories. Another African pioneer is under consideration for Northern Rhodesia. From British Cameroons two pioneers have gone to Spanish Guinea and in response to a last minute request from India we hope that pioneers have gone from Victoria to French Cameroons to complete the Assembly in Douala.

So far as future pioneers are concerned, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Lissner are at this moment on their way to Sapele in Nigeria, and Ethna Archibald is investigating possibilities in Nigeria and Nyasaland.

A new Assembly is expected in Salisbury, S. Rhodesia, where two pioneers from this country have settled, Claire Gung and Noura Faridian. Another of our pioneers, Eric Manton, in Kitwe, Northern Rhodesia, has now confirmed four new believers, two Africans and two Europeans. Our old friends, Ursula and Mehdi Samandari in their last letter reported that there were five believers in Mogadiscio, Italian Somaliland, and they were working hard to get the other four.

At its last meeting before Ridván, the Committee discussed how to supervise and consolidate the various territories which are now acquiring such large Bahá'í populations. As there will be African National Assemblies next year, we are trying to work with the simplest

arrangements possible during this interim year and except in one case are not proposing to set up any new machinery but to carry on in the previous way, with a teaching committee in Uganda and with the mother Assemblies of Nairobi and Dar supervising and helping the work in Kenya and Tanganyika. In British Cameroons we are intending to appoint a Teaching Committee because the mother Assembly at Victoria is itself so new.

(Note: Final reports have shown that 37 new Assemblies were formed in African territories under British jurisdiction: Uganda 17, Kenya 8, Tanganyika 1, British Cameroons 8, British Togoland 1, Gold Coast 1, Belgian Congo 1. There are now 861 believers in Uganda and 116 in Kenya.)

NATIONAL COMMITTEES

AFRICA. '(1) To carry out the goals of the Ten Year Plan in Africa under the direction of the National Spiritual Assembly. (2) To obtain translations of Bahá'í literature into African languages and to advise the Publishing Trust regarding their publication.' Henry Backwell, Dorothy Ferraby (Secretary), Ian Semple, Joan Giddings, Joe Lee. Consulting member, John Ferraby.

ARCHIVES. Fuad Abbas, Hasan Balyuzi, Dorothy Ferraby, Marjorie Parker, Barbara Simmonds.

'BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL'. Editor: John Ferraby.

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST. 'To be responsible for the policy and direction of the affairs of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust under the supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly.' Reginald Coulson, John Ferraby (Manager), Ernest Miller, Ruston Sabit, John Shortland.

'BAHÁ'Í WORLD'. Representative: Jean Pitcher.

CHILD EDUCATION. 'To study, advise and encourage Bahá'í education of children and provide suitable material.' Terry Dunne, Lilo Jessen, Jean Pitcher, Louis Ross-Enfield, Margaret Shanks.

EUROPEAN AND ASIAN TEACHING COMMITTEE. 'To carry out the goals of the Ten Year Plan in Europe and Asia under the direction of the National Assembly.' Hasan Balyuzi (Chairman), Jean Campbell, Egon Kamming, Marcel Mihaeloff, Barbara Simmonds (Secretary), Dorothy Wigington.

HAZÍRATU'L-QUDS

Installation and Maintenance. Gladys Backwell, Hasan Balyuzi, Dorothy Ferraby, John Ferraby (Secretary), Bobbie Kamming, Donald Miller.

Reception. 'To organise an official reception on the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh at the Házíratu'l-Quds.' Fuad Abbas, Hasan Balyuzi, Owen Battrick, Dorothy Ferraby, David Hofman.

Social. 'To arrange monthly "At homes" at the Házíratu'l-Quds for those in sympathy with the Faith.' Gladys Backwell, John Ferraby, Marjorie Parker.

NATIONAL TEACHING. 'To be in charge of carrying out the objectives of the Ten Year Plan in regard to teach-

ing and consolidation in the areas of the British Isles not included in the European Teaching Plan, and to supervise and direct the work of the Regional Committees.' Gladys Backwell, Aileen Beale, Ernest Gregory (Chairman), Habib Habibi, Robert Jackson, Marian Mihaeloff, Betty Reed (Secretary).

PERSIAN. 'To advise and, where necessary, help Persian Bahá'ís in this country. To concern itself with and make recommendations to the National Spiritual Assembly about their welfare and happiness. Shoghiyih Avarigan, Hasan Balyuzi, Abbas Dehkan, Iran Mir-Fakhrai, Asher Nazar, Sirous Setarih.

REGIONAL TEACHING. 'To carry out the policy of the National Teaching Committee with regard to the goals of the Plan for the year in the region.'

Scottish: Zozislaw Charewicz, George Marshall, James Robertson. Liaison with N.T.C.: Marian Mihaeloff.

Northern: Phyllis Lewis, Stanley Lowe, Marcel Mihaeloff, Margaret Shanks. Liaison with N.T.C.: Habib Habibi.

Midland: Sandy Akeroyd, Edwin Barwick, Emily Eastgate, Pat Holland. Liaison with N.T.C.: Betty Reed.

Southern: Ethna Archibald, Jeannette Battrick, Beryl de Gruchy, Bobbie Leedham, Sirous Setareh. Liaison with N.T.C.: Gladys Backwell.

South-western: Ralph Crates, Rosemary Crates, Ernest Miller. Liaison with N.T.C.: Aileen Beale.

REVIEWING COMMITTEE. '(1) To review all material for publication except material reviewed by other national committees, letters sent to newspapers and non-Bahá'í publications and material intended solely for local use. (2) To consider the accuracy of Bahá'í facts and teachings therein. (3) To consider literary style and presentation.' Louis Ross-Enfield (Secretary), Brian Townshend, Isobel Slade.

VISUAL AIDS. Vivian Isenthal, Donald Millar, Marina Nazar. Consulting member: Hasan Balyuzi.

Election of the National Assembly

Fifty-four voting papers were received, but one was disqualified as it contained less than 9 votes.

Hasan Balyuzi 51, John Ferraby 50, Ernest Gregory 47, Dorothy Ferraby 46, Ian Semple 43, Marion Hofman 40, Betty Reed 32, Louis Ross-Enfield 32, Alma Gregory 24, Marcel Mihaeloff 16, Gladys Backwell 14, Ernest Miller 11, Kathleen Hornell 10, David Hofman 9, Henry Backwell 5, Adib Taherzadeh 5, Jean Campbell 4, Donald Millar 4, John Shortland 4, Dan Jordan 3, Albert Joseph 3, Joe Lee 3, Joan Giddings 2, Habib Habibi 2, Vivian Isenthal 2, Ethna Archibald, Aileen Beale, Robert Cheek, Clarence Clarke, Anne Howes, Joe Jameson, Bobbie Kamming, Egon Kamming, Elsie Lee, Mehrangiz Munsiff, Arthur Norton, Jean Pitcher, Isabel Robinson, Margaret Shanks, Jane Villiers Stewart, 1 each.

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL

(This Report is being published serially. It was dated May 2nd, 1955.)

Dearly Beloved Friends,

Time has slipped by so rapidly for the members of the International Bahá'í Council serving the beloved Guardian here in the Holy Land, that it seems scarcely possible our last communication went forth over two years ago. Be that as it may, we feel that many details of what is going on here at the World Centre of our Faith will stimulate and interest the friends, and carry to them some idea of the immense progress made lately in Haifa and Acre—and of the activities of Council members.

Since the completion of the Shrine of the Báb in October 1953, it is proving as great a silent teacher as the Temple in Wilmette. From all sides of Haifa, it is clearly visible, seated on its green carpet of gardens and open space in the heart of Carmel, its golden dome glittering not only in the sunlight by day, but in the moonlight at night. So clear is the surface of the tiles that at certain angles cloud reflections can be seen sailing on them. One of the most beautiful views of it is had from incoming ships, and many comments have been made, not only by pilgrims arriving by sea, but non-Bahá'ís as well.

The demand to visit it is so great that it has posed quite a problem. The public, including large groups of school children, young people, and tourists from all over the world, members of clubs, etc., pour in in such numbers that it is not possible to leave them unattended and free to wander where they will, as this may lead to damage to the lawns and crushed tile paths, and to the picking of fruit and flowers. A conducted tour is therefore made every few minutes, the gates being unlocked and relocked after each group, while two of the Council members—assisted sometimes by visiting pilgrims—take the party into the Shrine of the Báb. On Saturdays, the legal day of rest, and on the Jewish holidays, the crowds are often immense—sometimes over 700 in three hours—and this necessitates at least four people being on duty. As accurate an account of the visitors as possible is kept with a ticker by those on guiding at the Shrine. About 35,000 people a year is the attendance so far, as many as 1,700 coming on one holiday. In view of the fact that the gate leading to the inner garden and the Shrine itself are only open from 9 to 12 daily, this figure is remarkable. The outer garden, where anyone may enter from early morning until dark, must be visited by at least twice this number.

Most of the visitors come out of curiosity, because the Shrine is open to the public, because, as one American tourist said: 'This is the most beautiful spot in Israel; in fact, it is the most beautiful spot in the whole world.' Many interesting remarks are overheard by the friends guiding at the Shrines; a particularly touching one being the case of an elderly man, who after leaving the Shrine of the Báb, took one of the Bahá'ís aside and asked: 'Don't you feel God much closer in there?' Many local people come practically every week to just

enjoy the serenity and loveliness of the gardens. The attitude of those visiting the interior of the Shrine is interesting to watch; almost invariably the people are considerate; they are requested to remove their shoes and not speak. They marvel at the rugs and chandeliers, the vases, lights and flowers. Sometimes one sees people who are deeply stirred, or who quietly read the Tablet of Visitation, or who remain a long time; occasionally there are tear-filled eyes. So the Shrine is broadcasting, all by itself, its message, and echoes come back to us, such as a remark recently heard in Nazareth by sightseers, who were hearing about the new Church of the Annunciation to be built there. 'And', said their monator, 'it will be bigger when completed than the Bahá'í Shrine'. At all news-stands, views of the Shrine are on sale, and it is difficult to get a picture of Haifa in which it does not figure prominently, owing to its unique position and size.

Of the 220,000 square metres of land owned in Haifa by the Faith, about 65,000 square metres are actually gardens—each year the Guardian stretches his hand over a new piece of wild mountainside in Haifa or of sandy plain in Bahji and creates, almost overnight, a new and lovely addition to the existing gardens. Red paths roll out before him, iron gates spring up, the lawn becomes green, and trees, hedges and flowers appear as if by magic. We never cease to marvel at the rapidity with which this takes place, or the beauty of the final product.

This winter, in two and a half months' time, an entire new section of Mt. Carmel, lying above the Resting-Places of the Greatest Holy Leaf and her mother and brother, has been developed. This is the area embracing the right side of the 'arc' the Guardian has mentioned in his communications. The arc itself is at present one-half completed; it springs off from the main highway running up Mt. Carmel behind the Shrine, and goes up behind the Resting-Places to the middle axis of the gardens surrounding them, which is also its own centre point. In order in the future, to complete this arc on its eastern side, a considerable property owned by a hotel company, must be purchased. First a quarter circle of garden was completed, which filled in the space between the wide path, which marks the arc, and the already existing gardens around the resting-places of the Master's family. The Guardian devoted a great deal of time and attention to the line of this curve which is broad and graceful. After this was done, a band of garden 20 metres (60 feet) wide was developed on the further or mountain side of the arc. Then the exact site of the new International Archives Building was fixed.

If one visualises a semi-circle and then projects the base line on which the semi-circle rests to the right, one gets a rough idea of the relation of the Archives Building to the arc, for this projected line forms the axis of the building. Its position is spectacular and,

rising in the style of a peripteral Ionic Greek temple on the side of the mountain, its creamy white Chiampo stones—the same stone as that used for the Shrine—shining in the sun, its green tiled roof stretching 30 metres long, broadside to the road, the Shrine, the lower city and the harbour, the edifice will be widely visible and immensely impressive.

The stone-work for this edifice is now being done in Italy, under the supervision of the Hand of the Cause, Ugo Giachery; and soon the shipments of stone, cut and ready to be set up, will start arriving. This is the first of the buildings that will give shelter to the administrative activities of the Faith at the World Centre. A seat for the Guardianship, for the Hands of the Cause, and for the Universal House of Justice, as well as other edifices, will later be added, clustering about the 'arc'.

As the friends already know, from the Guardian's messages, the site for the first Temple in the Holy Land has been purchased and transfer of the title deed will shortly take place. The negotiations for this 36,000 square metre property took over a year, and were fraught with innumerable complications. When the full account of its acquisition is written, it will read like a mystery story. A commemorative obelisk, seven metres in height, and made of Italian Travertine, the same stone the ancient Romans built their temples of, will be placed on the grounds as soon as the land is transferred to our name.

It is now one of the spots visited by all the believers who make the pilgrimage. The land is truly in an imposing position. It lies near the spot where the Tablet of Carmel was revealed, which as the Friends know, is the Charter for the World Administrative Centre of the Faith on Mt. Carmel. It is immediately above the two Caves of Elijah, one controlled by the Jews and the other by the Christians. West, the sun sinks into the Mediterranean; south are the rolling hills, the Valley of Askelon and the coast line; north, across the bay, lies historic Acre, and Mt. Hermon, often crowned with snow, is clearly visible; east lies Haifa City, the port, and, daintily outlined, the dome and pinnacles of the Báb's Shrine are silhouetted against the sky half way up the mountain. We may now truly say we own the head and heart of Carmel.

On November 12th, 1952, a contract was signed with the Development Authority of the State of Israel, whereby the Bahá'í Community secured ownership of some 160,000 square metres (40 acres) of land surrounding the Sacred Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. The magnitude of this historic event is difficult to understand at this time. The previous owners of the land surrounding the Shrine, who were intimate friends of the Covenant-breakers, had, in the days of the Master, done everything they possibly could to prevent even the development of a small garden around this most Sacred Spot, going so far as to dig ditches and plant trees to mark the limits of their property and to shut in the Resting-Place of the Sacred Remains of the Manifestation of

God. They had stated on numerous occasions that they would never permit the Bahá'ís to purchase any of this land.

After the Arabs fled and the Jewish State was established, the Government became the owner of all this property, and consented to exchange it for a tract of land held by a Bahá'í family in a strategic military area. The beloved Guardian immediately began the development of gardens surrounding the Holy Tomb and created the 'Haram-i-Aqdas', which is now one of the most beautiful spots in this part of the world. He has gone on enlarging these gardens so that they now form practically a semi-circle around the Shrine with a radius of 110 metres. Thus approximately 35,000 square metres (9 acres) of land is now developed.

In Haifa, the extension of the International Endowments has been going forward continuously. During the first two years of the Ten-Year Crusade, the Bahá'í Community has purchased some 43,000 square metres of land, thus further protecting the glorious Shrine of the Báb from any possible encroachment.

On the very top of Mt. Carmel, immediately on the axis of Carmel Avenue upon which the Shrine lies, 4,000 square metres of land have been purchased, which will prevent any construction overlooking this most sacred spot. Of great interest to the friends in connection with this particular piece of land is the fact that while the N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of Iran is not yet incorporated, and cannot hold land legally in its own name in Persia, yet we have been able to legally incorporate an Israel Branch of the N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of Iran here in the Holy Land; and this 4,000 square metre piece of land is registered in the name of their Branch and legally owned by them.

Another acquisition of great interest to the Bahá'ís is the tract of land previously owned by Mrs. Farah Sprague. On and off for a period of many years, the beloved Guardian attempted to acquire this small piece of land situated in the heart of Bahá'í holdings in the areas surrounding the Shrines of the Greatest Holy Leaf, the Purest Branch and the Mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Mrs. Sprague's original price for this land was fantastic; finally she arbitrarily refused to sell it to the Bahá'ís at all. Recently arrangements were made with the Finance Minister of the State of Israel to expropriate the land, on the recommendation of the Mayor of Haifa; and this piece of property is now in our possession. Here we see an enemy of the Faith, who asked an exorbitant price, and then would not even sell to the Bahá'í Community in spite of a very liberal offer, forced by non-Bahá'í agencies to sell to us, and for a small amount of payment from the State of Israel. It is this land which is incorporated in the area which has now been landscaped in preparation for the International Bahá'í Archives Building. The Haifa Municipal Council has been most helpful, and a road scheduled to pass right through this area has been recently removed from the Town Planning Scheme.

(To be continued.)