

# BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES

27 RUTLAND GATE, LONDON, S.W.7

No. 120 *126*

Bahá'í Year 113

JUNE, 1956

## THE GUARDIAN'S MESSAGE TO ALL CONVENTIONS

The triumphant termination of the second phase of the decade-long global Spiritual Crusade on which the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have so auspiciously embarked impels me to share with the delegates assembled at the Annual Bahá'í Conventions convened in all the continents of the globe the feelings of joy, of pride and of thankfulness which so significant a victory has evoked in my heart.

The year that has just ended—a year which posterity cannot fail to regard as one of the most eventful and challenging in the annals of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation—has been overshadowed, in the course of its opening months, by a sudden and highly menacing crisis in the fortunes of this Faith, a crisis which, though as yet not fully resolved, has already led to a remarkable victory over the combined forces of its traditional adversaries in the land of its birth, who, for more than a century, have plotted assiduously to disrupt its foundations, tarnish its glory and extinguish its light. A long abused, down-trodden, sorely tried Community, constituting the overwhelming majority of Bahá'u'lláh's followers, subjected recently to the strain and stress of a violent recrudescence of persecution which, marked throughout by intense vilification, intimidations, spoliation, expulsion, arson, rape, and murder, has emerged triumphant from yet another gruelling experience—a testing period of exceptional severity—its unity unbroken, its confidence reinforced, its prestige considerably enhanced, its fame noised abroad to an unprecedented degree, its administrative agencies unshaken, its endowments unimpaired, and the grim, boastful and reiterated threats of its sworn enemies to outlaw it through formal legislative action, confiscate its property, demolish its edifices, imprison and deport its members, and extirpate it, root and branch, in the native land of its Founder unenforced.

Simultaneous with this marvellous, awe-inspiring interposition of Providence, at this critical stage in the mysterious evolution and the resistless progress of God's infant Faith in the land of its birth, towards the two shining goals of complete emancipation from the shackles of religious orthodoxy and of State recognition, an equally significant development can be noted, during the last twelve months, in the progressive unfoldment, beyond the confines of this storm-tossed land, and stretching to the farthest corners of the earth, of the Ten-Year Plan, now entering upon the third, and what promises to be the most brilliant, phase of its execution.

This world-encompassing enterprise, embarked upon

three years ago, on the occasion of the world-wide celebrations commemorating the centenary of the birth of the Mission of the Founder of our Faith, has, in all phases of its operation, throughout five continents, as well as the islands of the seas, gathered swift momentum, and is demonstrating, in both its territorial and institutional aspects, a vitality, and has registered successes, that have far exceeded the expectations of even the most sanguine among its promoters.

The number of localities into which the light of this unconquerable Faith, now radiating the splendour of its glory over the face of the planet, has penetrated, has swelled to well nigh thirty-seven hundred, marking an increase of almost five hundred in the course of a single year. The number of Sovereign States and Chief Dependencies included within its pale, which multiplied with such amazing swiftness during the opening year of this World-Crusade, has now risen to two hundred and forty-seven through the arrival of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, Udai Narain Singh, Frank Wyss and Daniel Haumont, in Tibet, in Cocos Island and Loyalty Island respectively, as well as through the opening of Laos and Cambodia and of the Islands of Pemba, Fernando Po, Trinidad and Corisco—territories not included in the provisions of the Ten-Year Plan—and as a result of information recently received indicating the presence of a few believers in the Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The number of local Spiritual Assemblies now functioning throughout the length and breadth of the Bahá'í World exceeds nine hundred. Every single country listed in the Plan within the confines of every continent of the globe, with the exception of those within the Soviet Orbit, are now opened to the Faith. All islands figuring in that Plan, over seventy in number, situated in the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Indian Oceans, in the Mediterranean and the North Sea, have likewise been opened except Nicobar Islands, Chagos Archipelago, Hainan Island, Sakhalin Island, Spitzbergen and Anticosti Island. The number of the islands of the globe to which the Message of Bahá'u'lláh has been carried since its inception now totals ninety-eight. In the Pacific Ocean alone the number of opened territories is now over forty, while the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside exceeds one hundred and seventy. The number of languages into which Bahá'í literature has been and is being translated has now reached one hundred and ninety, no less than thirty-four of which are to be regarded as supplementary to those included in the provisions of the Plan.

In the Continent of Africa and in its neighbouring



islands, in both the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, the number of the avowed supporters of the Faith has passed the three thousand mark, over two thousand five hundred of whom belong to the Negro race. The number of territories opened to the Faith in that fast-awakening continent and its neighbouring islands has risen to fifty-eight, while the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside is over four hundred. The number of tribes represented in the Bahá'í Community is now over one hundred and forty, the number of local assemblies already established is over one hundred and twenty, and the number of languages into which Bahá'í literature has been and is being translated exceeds fifty.

The number of incorporated assemblies, both local and national, in various continents of the globe, has been raised to one hundred and sixty-eight, the latest additions being the Italo-Swiss National Spiritual Assembly and the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Brussels, Tokyo, Liverpool, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Quincy, Basel, Zurich, Geneva, Heidelberg, Buenos Aires, Saigon, Suva, Malacca and Addis Ababa. The number of National *Háẓíratu'l-Quds*, the precursors of Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies, acquired in the capitals and leading cities of North, Central and South America, of the goal countries of Europe, of Africa, Asia and Australasia, and of several islands of the globe, has reached forty-three, involving the expenditure of over half a million dollars, amply compensating for the seizure and occupation of the National Administrative Headquarters of the Faith and the demolition of its dome by the military authorities in the Persian capital.

Land for ten temple sites has, moreover, been acquired at a cost of no less than one hundred thousand dollars, while negotiations are well advanced for the acquisition of the one remaining temple site to be purchased in the Swedish capital. In no less than thirty of the fifty-one countries listed in the Ten-Year Plan, national Bahá'í endowments estimated as having a value of one hundred thousand dollars have been acquired, outstanding among them being the Maxwell Home honoured by the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá while in Montreal, which has been transferred by the Hand of the Cause *Amatu'l-Bahá* to the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly. Efforts are, moreover, being strenuously exerted for the establishment of similar endowments in the twenty-one remaining countries.

Following the completion and adoption of the design for the first *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in the cradle of the Faith, steps have been taken for the preparation of no less than three additional designs, one for the Temple scheduled to be erected in the heart of the European Continent, another for the one to be erected in the near future in the African Continent, and the third for the one contemplated for Australasia, paving the way thereby in each of the remaining continents of the globe for the erection of a House to be consecrated to the worship of the one true God, and to the glory and honour of His Messenger for this Day.

In the Holy Land, the centre and pivot round which the divinely appointed, fast multiplying institutions of a world-encircling, resistlessly marching Faith revolve, the double process, so noticeable in recent years, involving a rapid decline in the fortunes of the breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and proclaiming the rise of the institutions of its World Administrative Centre, in the shadow of His Shrine, has been accelerated on the

one hand, through the death, in miserable circumstances, of the treacherous and malignant Majid'd-Dín, the last survivor of the principal instigators of the rebellion against the Will of the Founder of our Faith, and, on the other, through the laying of the foundation and the erection of some of the pillars of the façade and of the northern side of the International Bahá'í Archives—the first of the major edifices destined to constitute the seat of the World Bahá'í Administrative Centre to be established on Mt. Carmel. No less than thirty of the fifty-two pillars, each over seven meters high, of this imposing and strikingly beautiful edifice have already been raised, whilst half of the nine hundred tons of stone ordered in Italy for its construction have already been safely delivered at the Port of Haifa. A contract, moreover, for over fifteen thousand dollars has been placed with a tile factory in Utrecht for the manufacture of over seven thousand green tiles designed to cover the five hundred square meters of the roof of the building.

Coincident with these building operations an extensive plot, adjoining the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, has after protracted and difficult negotiations been purchased for the sum of one hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of extending and safeguarding, on the one hand, the area of the international Bahá'í endowments on Mt. Carmel, and of providing, on the other, the much needed space for the extension and completion of the far-flung arc around which the edifices of the World Bahá'í Administrative Order are to be built. The recently acquired area surrounding the holiest Shrine in the Bahá'í World and its appointed Qiblih in the plain of 'Akká has been further extended through the purchase from the Development Authority of the State of Israel of a dilapidated house, situated south of the Mansion and blessed by the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and in which He was wont to receive His friends, amongst them the first party of western Bahá'í pilgrims to arrive in the Holy Land after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh. To these latest acquisitions must be added the purchase of another plot situated in the neighbourhood of the Báb's Sepulchre and adjoining the area surrounding the future seat of the World Bahá'í Administrative Order, raising thereby the total area of the international Bahá'í endowments in the Holy Land to over 400,000 square metres. Furthermore, the necessary formalities have been completed in connexion with the purchase of the site of the future *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* on Mt. Carmel, while the transfer of the title deeds of recently acquired plots to the name of the Israel branches of the United States, the British, the Persian, the Canadian and Australian Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies is being expeditiously carried out.

In the United States of America, the home of the champion-builders of a fast-evolving Order, an official invitation was extended to the Bahá'í Community by the San Francisco Council of Churches to send representatives to attend a Service of Prayer for Peace and Divine Guidance to the United Nations, an invitation to which the Community warmly responded. At this inter-religious gathering, held in the Cow Palace in San Francisco, the birthplace of the Charter of the United Nations, which united nearly sixteen thousand people in worship and silent prayers, and at which government leaders, among them the United States Secretary of State, were present, the voice of the



Bahá'í representative was the first to be raised reciting a prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, after whom a prayer was read by each of the representatives of the Christian, the Muslim, the Jewish, the Hindu and the Buddhist Faiths, all of whom were similarly invited to participate in that immense and historic gathering. A prayer revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for America was presented by the elected national representatives of the United States Bahá'í Community to President Eisenhower, who acknowledged its receipt in warm terms and above his own signature.

Nor should mention be omitted in this brief survey of Bahá'í victories and achievements in the course of the closing year of the second phase of the Ten-Year Plan of the establishment of a Bahá'í Publishing Trust in India; of the establishment of over thirty new centres and fifteen assemblies in India, Pákestán and Burma; of the purchase of some of the holy sites blessed by the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople, the Land of Mystery and the scene of the proclamation of His Message; of the holding of the first Bahá'í Summer School in Central Africa, in Kobuka, Uganda, attended by about one hundred African and white believers and representatives of no less than twenty-eight Bahá'í local assemblies; of the convocation of the first historic All-France Teaching Conference, the first fruit of the combined labours of the believers of about thirty centres already established throughout the length and breadth of that country; of the setting apart of a plot to serve as a burial-ground for the members of the Bahá'í community in Tripoli, Libya and in the capital of Tanganyika; of the purchase of land for the establishment of a Bahá'í Summer School in Iraq; of the extension to the Bahá'í women in Egypt of the right to be elected to the Egyptian Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly as well as to participate as delegates in the National Bahá'í Convention; of the purchase, in an island near Muara Siberut, Mentawai Islands, of a plot supplementing the Bahá'í endowment established in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital; of the pushing of the northern outpost of the Faith in Alaska to Point Barrow, beyond the Arctic Circle; of the initiation of auxiliary plans for the promotion of the Faith in the Seychelles Islands and in the Sudan; and of the arrival of a pioneer in Praslin Island forming a part of the Seychelles group.

Nor can I in this survey allow to pass unnoticed the energetic and commendable efforts exerted by Bahá'í communities the world over for the support, protection and relief of the persecuted members of the Persian Bahá'í Community subjected to one of the severest ordeals experienced in recent years by the steadfast followers of the Faith in the land of its birth. Following this barbarous recrudescence of religious persecution and the transmission of over a thousand messages by Bahá'í communities, some in writing and others telegraphically, to His Majesty the Sháh, the Government, the Majlis and the Senate, and reinforcing the wide publicity given in the world's leading newspapers and the numerous protests voiced by scholars, statesmen, government envoys and people of eminence such as Pandit Nehru, Eleanor Roosevelt, Professor Gilbert Murray and Professor A. Toynbee, a written communication, accompanied by a memorandum listing the atrocities perpetrated throughout the Persian provinces, was submitted in Geneva to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who appointed a commission of

United Nations' officers, headed by the High Commissioner for Refugees, instructing its members to contact the Persian Foreign Minister and urge him to obtain from his government in Teheran a formal assurance that the rights of the Bahá'í Minority in that land would be protected. Copies of this communication addressed to the United Nations were delivered to the representatives of the member nations of the Social and Economic Council, to the Director of the Human Rights Division, and to certain specialised agencies of non-governmental organisations with consultative status. Furthermore, the American President was appealed to by the national representatives of the American Bahá'í Communities as well as by all local assemblies and groups in the United States. A courteous and reassuring letter was subsequently received by the American Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly from the State Department in Washington, acknowledging the receipt of the appeal, while the Director of the Division of Human Rights addressed in his turn a communication to the Secretary of the American National Spiritual Assembly, informing him that summaries of both the letter and petition forwarded to him would be furnished to the Commission of Human Rights, and copies sent to the Persian Government. Assurance was, moreover, given that summaries would also be sent to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. As a further measure to obtain redress, a forty thousand dollar publicity campaign was initiated by the American Bahá'í Community designed to lend an impetus to the proclamation of the fundamental verities of the Faith, the aims and purposes of its followers, and of the disabilities suffered by the overwhelming majority of its adherents in the land of its birth.

Nor can I refrain from emphasising in this rapid survey the highly significant fact that in over sixty territories, constituting more than a half of the total number of virgin territories opened to the Faith since the inauguration of the World Spiritual Crusade, the number of those who have espoused the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and enlisted under His banner has surpassed the number originally anticipated and regarded as a minimum for the opening of these territories; that in a considerable proportion of them the Bahá'í membership has far exceeded the number required for the formation of local assemblies; that in Gambia as many as three hundred, and in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands as many as five hundred, have been and are being enrolled beneath His standard; and that in Uganda alone which holds the palm of victory, the number of the registered believers has exceeded one thousand.

Such heart-warming, soul-stirring examples of Bahá'í initiative and enterprise; such splendid testimonies to Bahá'í solidarity, perseverance, courage, fortitude and self-sacrifice displayed in rapid succession and over so immense an area of the globe's surface, and in the face of mounting opposition on the part of those who envy the ever-widening glory of the Faith or fear the influence of its all-pervasive power, have shed on the opening chapter of this Crusade a lustre which the passing of time can never tarnish. The third phase of this momentous enterprise—the opening of which is, at this hour, being signalled by the emergence of no less than three additional Regional Bahá'í Assemblies in the African continent—must cast on the annals of this prodigious Crusade an illumination



of such brilliancy as will eclipse the splendour of this lustre.

This glorious and stupendous work already accomplished, singly and collectively, in the course of three brief years, in five continents of the globe and the islands of the seas, both at home and abroad, in the teaching as well as the administrative spheres of Bahá'í activity must, as the army of Bahá'u'lláh's crusaders marches forward into new and vaster fields to capture still greater heights, never be jeopardised or allowed to lag or suffer a set-back. The prizes so arduously won should not only be jealously preserved but should be constantly enriched. Far from suffering the long and distinguished record of feats which have been achieved to be tarnished, assiduous efforts must be exerted to ennoble it with every passing day.

The newly-opened territories of the globe must, under no circumstances, be allowed to relapse into the state of spiritual deprivation from which they have so recently and laboriously been rescued. Nay, the highly edifying evidences proclaiming the expansion and the consolidation of the superb historic work achieved in so many of these territories must be rapidly multiplied. The local assemblies that have been so diligently and patiently established must under no circumstances be allowed to dissolve, or their foundations be in any way endangered. The mighty and steady process involving the increase in the number of the avowed supporters of the Faith, and the multiplication of isolated centres, groups and local assemblies must, throughout this newly-opened phase of the Plan, be markedly accelerated. The incorporation of local assemblies must proceed with a rapidity that will throw into shade the progress achieved in this respect during the two first phases of the Plan. The remaining unopened territories of the globe outside the Soviet orbit, now confined to no more than four lonely islands, must, with the least possible delay, be won over to the ever-spreading dominion of Bahá'u'lláh; consummating thereby the most far-reaching and thrilling of all the enterprises launched through the concerted efforts of His valiant followers. The one remaining Temple site destined to be bought in the Swedish capital must be speedily acquired. The six remaining Hazíratu'l-Quds, some in Latin America, others in the European continent, must likewise be rapidly established. The Bahá'í endowments in the countries still deprived of the benefits of this divinely appointed institution must be forthwith purchased. The task of completing the translation of Bahá'í literature into the languages listed in the provisions of the Plan must be carried out with renewed determination and vigour. The Bahá'í Publishing Trusts that are as yet unestablished must be founded at the earliest possible opportunity. The sacred obligation of purchasing the remaining chief historic sites in the birthplace of the Faith, and particularly the scenes of the Báb's incarceration and martyrdom, must be discharged as expeditiously as possible. The search now being conducted for the purpose of identifying the resting-places of the Father of Bahá'u'lláh, of the Mother and of the Cousin of the Báb, must be pursued with the utmost diligence and circumspection. The construction of the Mother Temple of Europe, so vital and yet so long overdue, must be speedily commenced, whilst a parallel effort must be exerted in Africa for the erection, without delay, of a similar institution which the phenomenal progress of the Faith in that

continent has made imperative. The construction of the Home for the Aged, marking the inauguration of the first of the Dependencies of the Holiest House of Worship in the Bahá'í world, must, now that the site in the proximity of that Temple has been acquired, be started and expeditiously carried forward. The process of incorporating the newly-formed National Spiritual Assemblies, whether regional or independent, must be initiated soon after their formation, and should be continually stimulated with every increase in the number of these assemblies in all the continents of the globe. Above all, an effort, unprecedented in its range and intensity, must be exerted for the speedy multiplication of local spiritual assemblies in all the territories where National Spiritual Assemblies, whether independent or regional, provisional or permanent, are to be established for the purpose of broadening and strengthening the foundations on which these potent national institutions—the pillars of the future Universal House of Justice—must rest. Immediate attention should be focused on the multiplication of such institutions in areas where these National Spiritual Assemblies are to be established in the near future, such as South and Central America, the Arabian Peninsula, South-East Asia, Pákestán, Alaska, Japan, New Zealand, Scandinavia and Finland, the Benelux countries, the Iberian Peninsula and France, as well as those territories in which national assemblies are to be established, at a later stage, in the course of the unfoldment of the present phase of the Plan, and the date of the formation of which will, to a large extent, depend on the rapidity with which these local assemblies are formed.

The Crusade, on which the army of the Lord of Hosts has so joyously and confidently embarked, now stands at a major turning point in the history of its marvellous unfoldment. Three years of magnificent exploits, achieved for the propagation of the light of an immortal and infinitely precious Faith and for the strengthening of the fabric of its Administrative Order, now lie behind it. A spirit of abnegation and self-sacrifice, so rare that only the spirit of the Dawn-breakers of a former age can be said to have surpassed it, has consistently animated, singly as well as collectively, its participants in every clime, of all classes, of either sex and of every age. A treasure, immense in its range, has been willingly and lovingly expended to ensure its systematic and successful prosecution. Already a few heroic souls have either quaffed the cup of martyrdom, or laid down their lives, or been subjected to divers ordeals while combating for its Cause. Its repercussions have spread so far as to alarm a not inconsiderable element among the traditional and redoubtable adversaries of its courageous and consecrated prosecutors. Indeed, as it has forged ahead, it has raised up new enemies intent on obstructing its forward march and on defeating its purpose. Premonitory signs can already be discerned in far-off regions heralding the approach of the day when troops will flock to its standard, fulfilling the predictions uttered long ago by the Supreme Captain of its forces.

Before the eyes of the warriors enlisting under its banner stretch fields of exploration and consolidation of such vastness as might well dazzle the eyes and strike awe into the heart of any soul less robust than those who have arisen to identify themselves with its Cause. The heights its champions must scale are



indeed formidable. The pitfalls that bestrew their path are still numerous. The road leading to ultimate and total victory is tortuous, stony and narrow. Theirs, however, is the emphatic assurance, revealed by the Pen of the Most High — the Prime Mover of the forces unleashed by this world-girdling Crusade — that 'Who-soever ariseth to aid our Cause God will render him victorious over ten times ten thousand souls, and, should he wax in his love for Me, him will We cause to triumph over all that is in heaven and all that is on earth.'

Putting on the armour of His love, firmly buckling on the shield of His mighty Covenant, mounted on the steed of steadfastness, holding aloft the lance of the Word of the Lord of Hosts, and with unquestioning reliance on His promises as the best provision for their journey, let them set their faces towards those fields that still remain unexplored and direct their steps to those goals that are as yet unattained, assured that He Who has led them to achieve such triumphs, and to store up such prizes in His Kingdom will continue to assist them in enriching their spiritual birthright to a degree that no finite mind can imagine or human heart perceive.

#### THE GUARDIAN'S MESSAGE TO THE FOUR REGIONAL CONVENTIONS OF AFRICA

At this historic hour, marking the opening of the third phase of the global Spiritual Crusade so courageously undertaken by the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, I hail the convocation of four epoch-making Bahá'í Conventions now being held in the African Continent: in Kampala, situated in its very heart; in Johannesburg, its second largest city; in Tunis, opened during the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; and in Cairo, the centre of the Islamic and Arab worlds, and seat of the oldest Bahá'í Community in that continent.

My heart brims with joy and my soul is uplifted with thankfulness as I contemplate on this auspicious occasion the magnificent feats which have been accomplished in recent years over the entire length and breadth of a rapidly quickening continent, feats which, in their range, number, quality and swiftness have eclipsed the signal victories which have distinguished the campaigns successively launched in the Continent of Europe and in Latin America.

This vast, highly receptive, spiritually famished and long down-trodden continent — the nest of the Negro race, constituting so large a proportion of the world's population — which was first opened in an hour of trial and adversity, in the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh; whose southern fringes were, during the last epoch of the Heroic Age of the Faith, illuminated by the rays of a divinely established Covenant; on whose northern shores the standard of Bahá'í emancipation has been hoisted and the struggle for the recognition of the independent character of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has commenced — such a continent now boasts, by virtue of the dynamic influence exerted by a rising divinely conceived Order, and the propelling forces generated by a world-embracing, three-year old Spiritual Crusade, over three thousand avowed supporters, five-sixths of whom belong to the Negro race, scattered throughout more than fifty territories and islands, and residing in over four hundred localities. Representatives of no less than one hundred and forty of its tribes have, moreover, enlisted under the banner

of the Faith. Over a hundred and twenty Bahá'í local assemblies are already functioning throughout its territories. Into more than fifty of its indigenous languages Bahá'í literature has been and is being translated. The process of incorporating the newly-formed local assemblies has furthermore been inaugurated. A National Administrative Headquarters has been established in each one of its four pivotal centres, while three Temple sites situated within its confines have been recently purchased, on one of which the Mother Temple of Africa is soon to be erected.

The Concourse on high cannot but laud such remarkable, soul-stirring exploits. The Captain, guiding from His throne of glory in the Abhá Kingdom the march of the army of Bahá'u'lláh's Crusaders, undoubtedly applauds the fidelity, the valour, the zeal and the perseverance of the executors of His Design, while the Founder of the Faith Himself, the well-spring of the energising influences nourishing the lives, and sustaining the activities, of these Crusaders, confers His benediction upon, and lays up treasures for, those who have so conspicuously contributed to the glory and honour of His Name.

I feel impelled, on so memorable an occasion, to pay a warm and heartfelt tribute to the Hand of the Cause appointed for the African Continent; to the members of the British, the American, the Persian, the Indian, the Egyptian and the Iráqí National Spiritual Assemblies; to the members of the African Auxiliary Board; to the numerous assemblies, committees and pioneers who have, singly and collectively, contributed in such a large measure to the expansion of so colossal an enterprise, and who have had so decisive a share in directing its course, in stimulating its unfoldment, and in consolidating its foundations.

I cannot but feel confident that the emergence of four regional National Spiritual Assemblies, as a result of the deliberations of the delegates attending these four Bahá'í Conventions — Assemblies designed to pave the way for the erection of the pillars which must support the future Universal House of Justice — will, by enabling the activities of the Faith to be directed and co-ordinated from within the Continent itself, lend a tremendous impetus to the progress and eventual fruition of the stupendous undertaking launched from coast to coast through the concerted and systematic efforts of the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

I call upon these Regional Spiritual Assemblies to celebrate their birth, and signalise the opening of the third phase of this World Spiritual Crusade, through the formulation of four subsidiary Seven-Year Plans, designed to multiply the number of the avowed supporters of the Faith and of the isolated centres, groups and local assemblies; to consolidate the work already achieved in the newly-opened virgin territories within the confines of that Continent and in its neighbouring islands; to initiate the institution of the National Bahá'í Fund; to stimulate the twin processes of establishing Bahá'í endowments and of incorporating local spiritual assemblies; to hasten the construction of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the African Continent; to ensure the establishment of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust in Egypt; and to speed up the translation of Bahá'í literature into the remaining African languages listed in the Ten-Year Plan, as well as the incorporation of the newly-formed Regional National Spiritual Assemblies.

I appeal to the British, the American, the Persian,



the Indian, the Egyptian and the Iráqí National Spiritual Assemblies, who have set in motion these vast undertakings, not to abandon these fledgling African Bahá'í communities to their fate, but to lend their support and assistance to the newly-emerged Regional National Spiritual Assemblies, enriching thereby the record of the superb and historic services rendered by them, throughout that continent, to its diversified peoples, tribes and races.

May the manifold blessings of Bahá'u'lláh, glorifying in His Kingdom the African victories won in His Name in such rapid succession, rest upon the deliberations of all the delegates attending these four history-making Conventions. May the combined efforts of the faithful, labouring now and in the days that lie ahead, yield, in the years to come, a harvest which will infinitely ennoble the record of unforgettable achievements associated with the rise of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and the establishment of His World Order in the African Continent.

#### TO THE BRITISH BAHÁ'Í CONVENTION

Two cables addressed to Convention have been received

in reply to the two cables sent by the Convention delegates. The delegates cabled:

'Convention stirred, inspired, beloved Guardian's message. Conveys deepest love.'

The Guardian replied on 29th April:

'Assure fervent prayers, heartfelt congratulations, great victories Africa. Urge redouble efforts home front. Deepest love.'

Before this had been received, Convention had sent a second cable:

'Joyous, awed, world achievements second phase crusade. Profoundly stirred devotion African brothers conveying richer fuller meaning Covenant. Determined wholeheartedly arise opportunities serve goals crusade utmost resources. Sobered, firmly resolved, meet immediately challenge third phase. Deeply grateful messages sent pilgrims. Devoted love.'

To which the Guardian replied on 2nd May:

'Welcome resolve meet challenges. Loving fervent prayers offered success dearly loved valiant community.'

## THE FIRST CONVENTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF CENTRAL AND EAST AFRICA

We have received from Irene Bennett a report of the Convention in Kampala which perfectly paints the scene of that historic occasion. It is impossible to publish this in full, but we feel we can best describe the Convention by quoting liberally from Irene's report:

'About eleven o'clock on the morning of 23rd April, Mr. Hasan Balyuzi and myself arrived on the scene of Convention; not, as formerly expected, at the Hazíratu'l-Quds in Kampala, but at a large meeting called the Budonian Club at Mengo on the outskirts of the town almost under the shadow of the Kabaka's palace. This was because that historic great circular tent of the 1953 Conference, which had once again been erected in the Hazíra grounds, had suffered in one of the torrential downpours frequent at this time, so that it was no longer adequate to stand up to the rainy season.

'Inside the meeting hall were row after row of black faces listening to Mr. Hassan Sabri . . . The assembled crowd of African gentlemen were delegates, mostly from Uganda, who . . . were being instructed once again about Convention and how they were to fulfil their rôle in it . . . Shortly afterwards we were carried off to our temporary home at the Sabris'. Friends in Britain will be sorry to hear that Isobel Sabri, who had worked so devotedly in the preparations for this Convention, was sick in hospital and had to remain there throughout the whole of it.

'The opening Unity Feast was not due to be held until 4.30 p.m., so meanwhile I was taken with Mr. Balyuzi to meet both a press reporter for the insertion of a second news item in the local paper, and the officer in charge of the local broadcasting studio, which resulted in the preparation of a radio script in our spare time that same evening and a broadcast the following day.

'Somewhat later than the due time, all were assembled, this time under the tent in the heart of Kampala, because it was a brilliant sunny afternoon. There

among the flowers it was fragrant and cooled by the breezes which wafted in from all around, because the tent stood several feet above ground level.'

Irene then goes on to describe the happy Unity Feast with which the delegates and visitors passed the eve of Convention. The following three days were occupied with the business of Convention itself: the roll-call of delegates, the greetings and messages from the beloved Guardian and Friends throughout the world, and long and intense consultation upon the tasks of the Seven-Year Plan which the Guardian announced in his letter to the Africa Conventions. It must be remembered that all this procedure which, apart from the unique historic nature of this occasion, is so familiar to us, was quite new in the experience of the African Bahá'ís. There was also the complication of language: 'Sixty-one delegates and about thirty visitors, thirteen being non-African, were suitably settled so that delegates occupied all the front benches and visitors the back ones, an Ateso speaking block on the left, and Swahili, Luganda and French speakers on the right, all supplied with translators placed at suitable vantage points. These necessary translations were made simultaneously throughout.'

Ali Nakhjavani was elected Chairman of Convention, Aziz Yazdi Vice-Chairman, and Philip Hainsworth Secretary, but unfortunately Ali had to leave half-way through to accompany the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Banani, to the third Convention in Cairo. Mr. Banani had brought the Guardian's messages to Convention, and on the first day had shared with the friends attar of roses sent by Shoghi Effendi. It was a sad moment when he and Ali came to say goodbye. This was just before the election of the N.S.A., which Irene Bennett describes: 'After a little break came the culminating point of the whole Convention — election hour.'

'Six tellers from among the visitors, three non-Africans, each with an African assistant to cope with



vernacular languages, took up their positions in the small room behind the meeting hall, to serve both as information bureaux and scribes where necessary in accordance with the advice just related to the delegates. An atmosphere of serious earnestness was everywhere apparent, in both rooms, on the verandah, and under the trees, wherever delegates found the most inspiration to perform the task to which they were now obviously putting their whole hearts and minds. Complete control and orderliness prevailed for the succeeding half-hour. Voting papers were handed in as names were called, which, when counted, totalled sixty-nine.

While the tellers repaired immediately to the home of the Sabris to count the votes, the remainder of those assembled were taken again to the tent in the grounds of the Ḥaẓiratu'l-Quds for a viewing of the cloak of Bahá'u'lláh. After an introductory talk by Hasan Balyuzi, and the reading of the Tablet of Visitation, Bahá'ís entered the Ḥaẓira one by one to see this most precious relic. Meanwhile, at the end of two and a half hours of concentrated activity, it was established that a fine, strong N.S.A. had been elected, consisting of three Board members of the area and six pillars of the Uganda Bahá'í Community, an Assembly of four Africans and five pioneers, as follows: Ali Nakhjavani, Philip Hainsworth, Hassan Sabri, Oloro Epyeru, Aziz Yazdi, Jalal Nakhjavani, Tito Wanantusi, Sylvester Okurut and Max Kanyerezi.'

The next day opened with the announcement of the election results, followed by a devotional of thanksgiving, then once again the delegates turned with energy to the discussion of the tasks for the following year. This work is gargantuan in its dimensions. Only in the strength of God will it be possible to accomplish it, but that strength is the one thing Bahá'ís do have if they but turn to Him. It is our privilege in Britain to respond to the message of the Guardian: 'I appeal to the British, the American, the Persian, the Indian, the Egyptian and the Iráqí National Spiritual Assemblies, who have set in motion these vast undertakings, not to abandon these fledgling African Bahá'í Communities to their fate, but to lend their support and assistance to the newly-emerged Regional National Spiritual Assemblies, enriching thereby the record of the superb and historic services rendered by them, throughout that continent, to its diversified peoples, tribes and races.'

AFRICA COMMITTEE

## SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

The last few weeks of this year has seen a great effort on the part of the British Bahá'í Community made at the eleventh hour, which succeeded in maintaining the Pivotal Centres and three Assemblies that it seemed certain would be lost. From its last meeting on 25th March, the National Assembly reported to the Guardian the perilous situation of the Pivotal Centres. His reply was an urgent appeal to the British Bahá'í Community and a contribution of £500. In response to this appeal, nine pioneers arose to save the Pivotal Centres, three more helped maintain the Leeds, Nottingham and Birmingham Communities, and some

twenty-one people have indicated their intention of pioneering before Ridván 1957. Moreover, the response to the urgent appeal sent out by the National Assembly for funds, before the Guardian's cable was received, was a noble one which brought in all the £300 asked for.

Unfortunately, one piece of bad news has been received since Ridván opened. The Northampton Community, whose Assembly had not been considered in jeopardy, had been reduced to nine by the gradual departure of several of its members to other places and the introduction of the civic limits rule. At the meeting held on the first day of Ridván, one of its members, who attended the meeting, suddenly announced his withdrawal from the Faith. One of the first tasks of the new National Assembly will be to consider the situation so produced. If the Northampton Assembly lapses, there will be seven Assemblies to be reconstituted next Ridván, besides six new ones to establish. The seven will be Blackburn, Cheadle (formerly Stockport), Brighton or Hove, Glasgow, Newcastle, Northampton, Torquay.

The number of new believers who have declared their Faith during this year is comparable to the number in previous years, but is far from achieving the rapid increase in numbers the Guardian wants. There have been 32 new voting Bahá'ís and two new Bahá'í youth.

Land for the first national endowment of the British Isles has been purchased at Wirksworth, Derbyshire. There are two fields known as Hatchetts Close, which are let to a farmer tenant for grazing cattle.

In Africa, the Convention for the election of the Central and East African National Assembly has taken place. Meetings were held in British Communities on the same day to celebrate this historic event.

In Cyprus, there were enough believers in Nicosia for the formation of a Nicosia Assembly. An Assembly should also be formed in Hong-Kong, as previously reported.

The translation of a pamphlet into Irish has been received, and an order placed for its printing in Ireland. The Dagbane translation has been received from the printer, bringing the number of Ten-Year Crusade translations to eleven.

Thanks to the pioneers who have arisen in the last few weeks, we start the year ahead of us with the Pivotal Centres intact and the number of Assemblies in the British Isles reduced less than at one time seemed possible. A tremendous effort is now needed to ensure that during the coming year we achieve on the home front as well as overseas all that the Guardian hopes for from us.

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

Hasan Balyuzi, *Chairman*  
Ernest Gregory, *Vice-Chairman and Treasurer*  
John Ferraby, *Secretary*  
Dorothy Ferraby, *Recording Secretary*  
David Hofman  
Marion Hofman  
Betty Reed  
Louis Ross-Enfield  
Ian Semple



## REPORT OF TELLERS CONVENTION 113

Fifty-four ballots containing 486 votes were received. One vote was ambiguous and was ignored after consultation with the National Assembly officers.

Hasan Balyuzi	...	...	...	...	49
John Ferraby	...	...	...	...	48
Ian Semple	...	...	...	...	46
Ernest Gregory	...	...	...	...	44
Marion Hofman	...	...	...	...	42
Dorothy Ferraby	...	...	...	...	33
Louis Ross-Enfield	...	...	...	...	32
Betty Reed	...	...	...	...	30
David Hofman	...	...	...	...	16
Gladys Backwell	...	...	...	...	15
Alma Gregory	...	...	...	...	15
Dan Jordan	...	...	...	...	12
Ernest Miller	...	...	...	...	10
Micky Michaeloff	...	...	...	...	9
Adib Taherzadeh	...	...	...	...	7
Aileen Beale	...	...	...	...	6
Kathleen Hornell	...	...	...	...	6
Jean Campbell	...	...	...	...	5
John Shortland	...	...	...	...	5
Egon Kamming	...	...	...	...	4
Habib Habibi	...	...	...	...	4
Owen Battick, Joan Benfield, Vivian Isenthal, Marion Mihaeloff, John Wade	each				3
Robert Cheek, A. Nazar, Marion Norton, Walter Wilkins	...	...	...	each	2
F. Afnan, Abdol Banani, Jeannette Battick, Gita Chaplin, Reg. Coulson, Abbas Dehkan, Prudence George, Robert Jackson, Albert Joseph, Bobbie Kamming, J. Lee, John Long, G. Mabbutt, Donald Millar, Iraj Mottahedin, Jean Pitcher, D. Rafaat, Rustom Sabit, Isobel Slade, Brian Townshend, Una Townshend, Jane Villiers-Stuart, Dorothy Wigington, Ada Williams	each				1

### National Assembly Meetings

May 11—13	November 16—18
June 8—10	December 14—16
July 6—8	January 18—20
August 17—19	February 15—17
September 14—16	March 15—17
October 12—14	April 12—14

## A JOURNEY TO THE NORTHERN ISLES

A journey to the Northern Isles may well become, for this generation of British Bahá'ís, a longed-for goal which, once attained, will be ever cherished in memory as a wondrous time of spiritual experience. It is perhaps well to remind ourselves that only in the Islands around Britain—not on her mainland—do the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh dwell. The reality of these blessed Knights is veiled from us to-day, nor does it reveal itself save in their own lands, in those spots which the Hand of Destiny has given over to them, and to them alone, to be the 'spiritual conquerors'.

What thoughts course through one's mind, at the first view of Shetland, I have not the gift to tell. For

an hour I rode by coach from the airport, through a bleak and unfertile land of rock and peat pits, with no life but the sheep and the seagulls. It was, even for me, a journey of the soul which I seemed to take with Brigitte, that day in the autumn of 1953 when first she went there. Then in the distance I saw a grey town, all grey with no touch of colour on my March day. Swiftly we came in, down through narrow stone lanes never built for motors, and were there. I dismounted, turned to seek my pioneer, and saw her walking toward me, a very Shetlander in all her outward appearance, but a Bahá'í so poignantly alone that my heart wept. Oh, the joy of such a meeting, a joy which seemed to grow and penetrate one's being as the days flew on.

It took but a few hours for the unique quality of Lerwick to come home to me. Our beloved Guardian has extolled the pure hearts of the African people, their severance from undue emphasis on material things, and to this he has ascribed their readiness for the Faith. I have not been to Africa, but in the Northern Isles I found purity and severance to a degree hitherto unknown to me. The grey town set on the sea's edge, solidly built of handsome stone, the rhythm and sound of the waves always near, the call of seabirds entering the house at all hours, the lift and sweep of the gulls overhead, the charming lanes, the friendly and open faces of this Northern people, the smiling eyes that respond to all one's own smiles—all these circumstances clothed Lerwick with a perpetual radiance, despite the constant wind, mist and snow of my visit. And in the midst of this light moved our Brigitte, gentle perfect Knight; chosen, she seemed to me, from all the believers of the world for this special post, for which all her qualities endow her. When she smiles, all Lerwick smiles with her. Her voice seems to go to the souls of this people, and almost without words she is, by the grace and Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh, moving and calling into being new spirits, very soon, I felt, to be offered and dedicated to our glorious Cause.

To meet in a few days a number of people athirst for the Teachings, who receive them eagerly and without conflict, their eyes reflecting the growing wonder they see in our Faith—this is an experience dearer than any other. And it was to be mine on several occasions in my nine wondrous days in the Northern Isles. It was a blessed privilege, too, to take part in the first public meeting in Shetland and to find, to my astonishment, seventeen new people awaiting my appearance. Both in Shetland and Orkney (although in Kirkwall only five came), the public meetings were exciting for the scope and profundity of the questions, and both meetings continued for over two hours of penetrating discussion. Our prayer for these meetings had been that only those would come who cared to know, and our prayer was answered. A yet greater joy was the appearance at each meeting of one native person of truly native speech, showing especial interest in our Faith, and sent so it seemed by Bahá'u'lláh, since both were unknown to our Knights. Also in each town there came to us one person from an island lying further north. With these four our Knights can keep in touch, as well as with their own proven friends.

To move from the clear and gentle spirit of the Shetlanders to Orkney was, on first contact, a kind of death. A town less intimate with the sea, though a



harbour, and closer to the material life of the world in the south, Kirkwall lacked for me on first meeting the peace and charm of Lerwick. The people, too, were different and less friendly. My heart was oppressed with a kind of overhanging gloom as I bade goodnight to Charles and retired to read the history of the Orkney Islands. And there it was — a story so full for centuries of bitterness and cruelty, the people only pawns in larger political strife, deprived, hard-pressed: while in the modern period at Scapa Flow, across the hill from Kirkwall, two World Wars had left unforgettable traces.

Then I knew the wisdom of Bahá'u'lláh in sending Charles to Orkney! In the days to come, as the heart and soul of that dear man lay open to wound and overwhelm me, I came to appreciate why only a soldier and a martyr-spirit could accept Kirkwall and conquer it. For Charles, though now sixty-eight years old, joined as a Commando in the last war and later served in Air Force Intelligence. The resolution and sagacity of his face in war-time portraits spoke volumes to me, and I came to know Charles as another being than the one we have all taken to our hearts at Summer School and Convention. What I have found in his eyes and learned through his speech, I shall not try to write. That he is indomitable I know, and I know too that his sufferings and endurance have brought him into intimacy of spirit with the Dawnbreakers of the Heroic Age. Indeed, his comfort and support have come straight from them and not from us. Here, as in Lerwick, I found the perfect Knight — the Knight chosen from all others for this hard assignment.

Yet this is not all the story of a visit to Orkney. Bahá'u'lláh has written: 'Wherefore fear ye, O My well-beloved ones! Who is it that can dismay you? A touch of moisture sufficeth to dissolve the hardened clay out of which this perverse generation is moulded.' How Charles and I, with the help of most of the guests and staff in the West End Hotel and two townspeople, seventeen in all, combined to drive away the gloom that had hung over our work, is a delightful memory. It was Naw-Rúz Eve; how to celebrate it in a special and unforgettable way seemed insoluble in our circumstances, until at breakfast I had the idea of a Naw-Rúz party for Charles. The rest of the day was spent in gay and busy preparations which brought us in touch with many in the town, and we invited many. By 8.30 p.m. the tables were bright, we had found the only fresh flowers in Kirkwall that day, great daffodils and pink tulips, and the balloons and paper ribands were put up. After little speeches and a party tea, nine of us talked to Brigitte by phone. And then they began to sing, led off by the 'Memory Man' of Kirkwall, an old age pensioner, and conducted by Charles in his paper crown, and for two joyful and uninterrupted hours we sang! How it must have rung out in the streets of Kirkwall! We sang until we were all as one in gladness, and the warm and happy spirit of that night continued to pervade the hotel to the end of my stay. It brought three Londoners to the public meeting. But better still, it unlocked the town, and Charles and I found beneath the surface a welcoming spirit on many sides; so that I did not leave Kirkwall until I had met souls who, as in Shetland, were possessed of a character and depth full of promise for the future.

On the ninth day the sun shone, for the first time on

this visit. The red stone of the great cathedral glowed. The sea shone like a mirror, and Orkney stole into my heart, to live there with Shetland in a wondrous way.

This account was started as the great cliffs of Orkney, buffeted by the green and glistening sea, slipped behind us — and comes to an end as we rise over Edinburgh. Already I am back in the mainstream of the twentieth century. No more do I dwell in magic islands suspended in the great sea — islands which for the first time brought home the special meaning of the Master's prayer for pioneers:

'O Thou incomparable God! . . . and in . . . the seas be Thou their confidant . . .'

Beloved friends, look to the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh! They are as precious jewels in the crown of the British Bahá'í Community. From them, in their hours of solitude, emanates a yearning and love for us beyond our dreaming. Their prayers for us ascend with a constancy that — may Bahá'u'lláh forgive us — ours for them have never matched. They understand us more than we understand ourselves. They know so many of our remedies and, if we open to them doors of opportunity, will share them with us. And in the Northern Isles our Knights are raising up, under the guiding Hand of the beloved Master and our Guardian, a new creation — souls who, like fresh-running streams, will in days to come flow into our main river and invigorate the Cause of God in these British Isles.

MARION HOFMAN

In flight south of Edinburgh  
23rd March, 1956

## NORTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Secretary of the Northern Regional Teaching Committee writes:

I do not think any meeting or gathering that I have ever attended has reached such heights emotionally as this one has. I think every one of us has come back absolutely rededicated to progressive action. We had glorious weather, the most perfect surroundings one could imagine — one felt God's Presence — good food, a staff who were the most helpful and most considerate, friendly and everything they could possibly be to make the stay comfortable, besides being responsive to our principles. There was not one snag of any kind the whole week-end.

We had fun — loads of it, real, exhilarating happy laughter — that one cannot buy with doctors' pills, the atmosphere was pregnant, each newcomer as they arrived felt it and responded; faces came long and serious but they didn't go away like that; they went away taking with them some of the radiance, shedding it and surely transmitting it in their contact with the world outside.

We sent a cable to the Guardian: 'Deepest love — North Regional School and Shetlands, Dedicated Progress — Two declarations 1 Pioneer.'

Marion Hofman brought messages with her from the Shetland Isles, and Charles Dunning and Brigitte wished it to be known that they were with us all the time in spirit. Marion 'phoned Brigitte and we promised they would be associated with us in our cable to the Guardian.

The Guardian replied: 'Delighted. Praying success. Deepest loving appreciation.'



## 10

£3,200

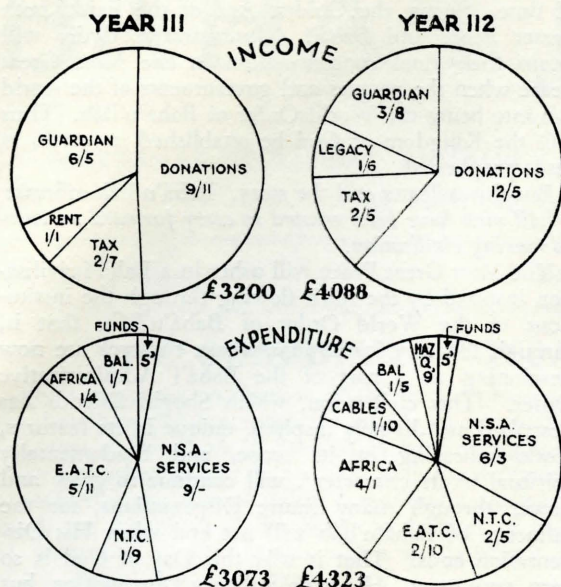
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## Income and Expenditure



The above diagram compares graphically income and expenditure in the year ending March 20th, 1955, and March 20th, 1956.

## THE BAHÁ'Í FUND

Below are a number of extracts of letters from the Guardian to the American National Assembly about the Bahá'í Fund, which the friends are asked to ponder deeply:

1. We must be like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all that it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually 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 all good — that is the secret of right living.

2. Although individual friends and local Assemblies are absolutely free to specify the object and purpose of their donations to the National Spiritual Assembly, yet, in my opinion, I regard it of the utmost vital importance that individuals, as well as local Assemblies, throughout the land should, in view of the paramount importance of National Teaching and as an evidence of their absolute confidence in their national representatives, endeavour, however small at first, to contribute freely towards the upkeep and the increase of the National Bahá'í Fund, so that the members of the National Assembly may at their full discretion expend it for whatever they deem urgent and necessary.

3. I feel urged to remind you of the necessity of ever bearing in mind the cardinal principle that all contributions to the Fund are to be purely and strictly voluntary in character. It should be made clear and evident to everyone that any form of compulsion, however slight and indirect, strikes at the very root of the principle underlying the formation of the Fund ever since its inception. While appeals of a general char-

acter, carefully worded and moving and dignified in tone, are welcome under all circumstances, it should be left entirely to the discretion of every conscientious believer to decide upon the nature, the amount, and purpose of his or her contribution for the propagation of the Cause.

4. The supply of funds, in support of the National Treasury, constitutes, at the present time, the life-blood of these nascent institutions you are labouring to erect. Its importance cannot, surely, be over-estimated. Untold blessings shall no doubt crown every effort directed to that end.

From the Guardian through his Secretary:

5. Contributions to this fund constitute, in addition, a practical and effective way whereby every believer can test the measure and character of his faith, and to prove in deeds the intensity of his devotion and attachment to the Cause.

## THE GREATNESS OF THIS DAY

(A further extract from an unpublished book by John Ferraby.)

The way to the most great peace lies through suffering. Without suffering, little is achieved in this world and nothing is created. The peoples of the earth have turned aside from the messenger of God; wrapped in veils of idle fancy and hidden in the depths of worldly desire, they have failed to recognise the One for whose coming they have prayed for hundreds, even thousands, of years. Only suffering can open hearts thus shut against the bounties of the Lord.

All men share to some degree the common blindness. Each may feel himself well-meaning and blameless, but he cannot avoid the influence of the standards of his time. The spirit of the Christian martyrs, of the companions of the Prophet, is beyond the reach of most men in our day.

This is the spirit which inspires the members of the Bahá'í Community. Martyrdom seems to them a path to grace that some may still tread, even though the Heroic Age of the Faith with its twenty thousand martyrs is gone. Enduring hardship to teach the Cause of God, sacrificing worldly pleasures to finance it, renouncing rest and ease to administer its affairs, they diffuse the same divine fragrance as was diffused by the saints of old.

The foundation of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is now being laid. Although the helpers are still few and the work very great, Bahá'ís are confident of success because the motive power that is irresistibly establishing the new world order comes from God, not man. His is the ultimate Plan that will ensure the triumph of His Cause. Even 'Abdul-Bahá's Divine Plan is subordinate to the Plan of God, which works through Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í alike. All that happens in the world is subject to its influence, the influence of the Covenant of God. The acceleration of scientific discovery, the unrest of the peoples of the earth, the products of genius and the blunders of politics all form part of a gigantic, world-embracing panorama that portrays the Will of God. Certain elements in this panorama were singled out by Bahá'u'lláh for inclusion



in His Tablets to the Kings and the leaders of religion; other elements can be dimly distinguished in the bright light of His teachings.

Among the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh appear references to a great calamity that the world must experience, from which it will emerge purified. A few of these references, taken from a selection made by Shoghi Effendi, follow:

*'Great, great is the Cause! The hour is approaching when the most great convulsion will have appeared. I swear by Him Who is the Truth! It shall cause separation to afflict everyone, even those who circle around Me.' 'O ye that are bereft of understanding! A severe trial pursueth you, and will suddenly overtake you. Bestir yourselves that haply it may pass and inflict no harm upon you.' 'O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity is following you, and that grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not the deeds ye have committed have been blotted from My sight.' 'Grieve thou not over those that have busied themselves with the things of this world, and have forgotten the remembrance of God, the Most Great. By Him Who is the Eternal Truth, the day is approaching when the wrathful anger of the Almighty will have taken hold of them. He, verily, is the Omnipotent, the All-Subduing, the Most Powerful. He shall cleanse the earth from the defilement of their corruption, and shall give it for an heritage unto such of His servants as are nigh unto Him.'*

Bahá'ís expect this calamity to produce a great spiritual change in mankind, whose destined pangs will be the pangs of birth as well as death; the old order is dying, but a new order is being born. Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed:

*'The whole earth is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded it's noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings. Immeasurably exalted is the breeze that wafteth from the garment of thy Lord, the Glorified! For lo, it hath breathed its fragrance and made all things new! Well is it with them that comprehend.'*

And 'Abdul-Bahá explained:

*'The Call of God, when raised, breathed a new life into the body of mankind, and infused a new spirit into the whole creation. It is for this reason that the world has been moved to its depths, and the hearts and consciences of men have been quickened. Ere long the evidences of this regeneration will be revealed, and the fast asleep will be awakened.'*

#### THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD CIVILISATION

The process of establishing the new world order will be a gradual one. First the Lesser Peace will come, when the nations enforce the general principles of Bahá'u'lláh without as yet realising their source. While this is being created and consolidated, the local, national, and international institutions of the Bahá'í

Administrative Order will be evolving. In the fulness of time, during the Golden Age of the Faith, both Lesser Peace and Bahá'í Administrative Order will attain their final consummation in the Most Great Peace when the peoples and governments of the world call into being the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Thus will the Kingdom of God be established on earth, as Jesus prophesied.

But this will not end the story. Bahá'u'lláh affirms: *'All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilisation.'*

The Most Great Peace will usher in a Bahá'í civilisation inspired by the spirit flowing through the institutions of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, that is, through the very institutions whose embryos are now developing as a part of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. This civilisation, which Shoghi Effendi has described as 'divinely inspired, unique in its features, world-embracing in its scope, and fundamentally spiritual in its character', will continue to grow and flower through many future Dispensations, for the influence of Bahá'u'lláh will not end when His Dispensation ends. That is why this Day of God is so very, very great. His is no ordinary Dispensation, but one which lies at a crucial stage in the history of mankind. All previous Revelations prepare for this Day of Unity; all subsequent Revelations for ages and cycles to come will lie in its shadow and promote the world civilisation to which the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh will give rise.

#### Additions to the Community

Since the last list was published in *Bahá'í Journal*, registration cards have been received from the following:

Roshan Aftabi	Cardiff
Nahid Poostchi (youth from Iran)	Newcastle
Zia Rafat (from Iran)	London
Winifred Whelan	N. Ireland
Christine Sweet (youth)	Bournemouth
Beatrice Brook	Manchester
Murray Devlin	London
Dennis Smith	Manchester
Raffi Mavaddat (from Iran)	Leeds
Mohammad Samimian (from Iran)	London
Leonard Nelson	Norwich
Miriam Smith	Manchester
John Long	Leicester
Charles MacDonald	Belfast
Doreen MacDonald	Belfast
Amanollah Vazirzadeh (from Iran)	London
Thorvald van Heel (from Balearic Islands)	Cardiff
Catharina van Heel (from Balearic Islands)	Cardiff
Mahboubeh Koutchekzadeh (from Iran)	Bournemouth
Gloria Mofen (from Iran)	Bournemouth