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INCORPORATION OF LOCAL ASSEMBLIES

'The lending of a fresh impetus to incorporation of local assemblies' is one of the immediate objectives which the Guardian named in his Convention Message. Already in 1931 he stressed the importance of incorporation of local assemblies when he wrote: 'It is surely very important to give to the Local Spiritual Assemblies some legal standing, for as the Cause progresses and its adherents increase, they will be confronted with duties they cannot even imagine at present. Not only will they have to make contracts for acquiring halls for their meeting place, but also they will be obliged to create new institutions to care for their sick, poor and aged people. We hope that before long the Bahá'ís will even (be able to) afford to have schools that would provide the children the intellectual and spiritual education as prescribed in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master.

For such duties that will naturally devolve upon the Local Spiritual Assemblies there will be an increasing need for a legal standing. They will have to be considered as a legal person with the power of making binding contracts.'

Incorporation paves the way for the establishment of local endowments and gives the Assembly the protection of the civil law. It adds prestige by making clear to those with whom the Assembly deals that it is no feeble temporary body, but an enduring force in the locality. Direct advantages should quickly become evident in the business dealings of the Assembly when it incorporates and wider benefits will appear more gradually as its status becomes known.

That the Guardian attaches great importance to the incorporation of local assemblies as an essential and early stage in the upraising of God's Kingdom on earth is seen from his references to it in *God Passes By* (pages 335-7), from the exhibition of Certificates of Incorporation at Bahji, from regular publication in Bahá'í World of new incorporation documents and from its inclusion in the national goals of the Ten Year Plan. It will greatly please the Guardian each time a British Local Assembly is incorporated.

This goal has two aspects, strengthening Communities so that they may safely incorporate, and providing facilities for incorporation. About fifteen members are sufficient for incorporation to be contemplated, although naturally the strength of each Community will be considered separately by the National Assembly, whose approval is needed before definite steps towards incorporation are taken.

No distinctive legal status is given to religious bodies in the United Kingdom. Assemblies have to be incorporated under the Companies Act, and careful consideration has decided that local assemblies should be incorporated as Unlimited Companies without share capital. This is the form of incorporation of the National Assembly.

Although the members of an Assembly incorporated in this way are nominally liable for the debts of their Assembly, they can rest assured that the responsibility is in fact shared by the whole British Community. Thus the members of the National Assembly are in law liable for every debt contracted by the National Assembly; but as Trustees of the Cause of God in the British Isles they know that the British Bahá'í Community and, no doubt, the Bahá'í World Community, would intervene, in any situation that might arise, to save the nine members of the Assembly from having to pay the Assembly's debts from their personal resources.

The National Assembly's solicitor is drawing up standard Memorandum and Articles of Association for local assemblies in the United Kingdom which must be used by all when they incorporate. These are based on By-Laws of the Assembly of New York, designated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'The City of the Covenant', which the Guardian has said should be copied throughout the Bahá'í world with only such modifications as are needed to adapt the document to the requirements of national laws.

The cost of drawing up the Memorandum and Articles and the cost of printing them (as required by the Board of Trade) make up the greater part of the cost of incorporation. The National Assembly is helping local assemblies by supplying Memorandum and Articles and by having type set for the printing of these which each Assembly can use.

At present only two of the British Bahá'í Communities—London and Manchester—are strong enough to incorporate and it is hoped that these will be incorporated this year. For all other Communities, the goal is to become strong enough to be able to incorporate. This is of particular importance for the Communities in Dublin, Edinburgh, Belfast, and Cardiff, since they are the pivotal centres of the British Bahá'í Community. To reach a stable membership of fifteen is a first step towards incorporation which all communities can determine at once to achieve. Each should regard itself as taking part in a spiritual race whose goal is incorporation.

The Guardian's guidance tells us that this is the time to lend fresh impetus to incorporation; obedience to the Guardian taps the power of the Covenant which, the Master has said, 'is as the heat of the sun which quickeneth and promoteth the development of all created things on earth'. Great spiritual forces have also been released by the Ten Year Crusade as part of the Divine Plan. Now is the time for local communities to take advantage of these forces and to press on by energetic teaching to achieve their goal. Each one of us can help to ensure that our own Community takes full advantage of the wonderful opportunity now presented to us.

AFRICA

In this and succeeding issues we shall give, in serial form, extracts from Violette Nakhjavani's account of the journey which she and her husband made across Africa settling pioneers in new territories.

It was on the afternoon of Thursday, August 27th, 1953, that the little band of five waved their last goodbye to the assembled friends at the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds of Kampala. The five were: Samson Mungono, headed for the Belgian Congo; Max Kenyerezi, for French Equatorial Africa; Enoch Olinga, for the British Cameroons, these three sitting in the back seat of the heavily loaded car; Ali at the wheel, and myself. The car was the transportation, Ali was the driver, I was the caterer; and our three pioneers, the three glorious African heroes of Bahá'u'lláh. Would this mission succeed? What were to be the difficulties, the problems, and the setbacks it had in store? Would the expedition score any victory for the Beloved Guardian? Such were the thoughts and feelings of the members of the expedition, as well as of those who were raising now their last loving *Alláh-u-Abhás* and wishing us success. This loving cheering assurance of the Beloved Guardian, 'Loving fervent prayers accompanying you ...', was a source of strength and hope.

In about fifteen exciting minutes, Kampala and its beautiful hills were left behind. Our first session of prayer started. Each one of us in turn, in a humble and lowly tone, raised his voice in reading one or two of the Bahá'í prayers, in thanksgiving to our Lord, in praise to His Glory, in supplication for His blessings, and His confirmations. Such prayers were repeated almost every morning and evening on each day of this crusading journey. How appropriate and full of meaning specially to us were these sweet-ringing words of an oft-repeated prayer: 'O Thou incomparable God! O Thou Lord of the Kingdom! These souls are Thy heavenly army. Assist them and with the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse make them victorious ...'

... Our first real excitement was the day, at about noon, when we crossed our first border, that of Ruanda-Urundi. Our joy was twofold: first we were no more in Uganda, and second, the travelling documents of the dear pioneers were in order. An extra session of prayer followed to celebrate the occasion ... Now our destination was the little town of Kamina, to the south,

where Mr. Vahdat, an isolated Bahá'í, lives. This stretch of our journey lasted about a week. Sometimes we would get a fine resthouse in the evening and we would stop and wash and sup and then our party would divide, half sleeping in the car and the rest in the house (these rest houses are unfurnished). We would leave early in the morning and after our prayers we would stop for a quick breakfast. Lunchtime would take us longer; sometimes we were lucky to find a good shady place to eat and many times had to eat in an uncomfortably hot spot with hundreds of flies as our honourable guests.

We stayed three days in Kamina. Temporary arrangements were made for Samson to stay with a three months' permit. Through Mr. Vahdat, a job was found until our return when, according to circumstances, more permanent plans could be made. The fourth day we said sad good-byes to Samson and headed west ...

(to be continued)

FROM THE GUARDIAN

To all National Assemblies

May 6th, 1954

Dearly beloved Friends,

The beloved Guardian has been very happy indeed over the results of the teaching work in the virgin areas, in the first year of the Ten-Year Crusade. He is very hopeful that all of the virgin areas outside of the Iron Curtain countries will soon be settled. He urges that your Assemblies keep after this very important matter, so that the settlements can be accomplished at the earliest possible date.

The Guardian feels that you should write to all of the pioneers, informing them that he attaches the utmost importance to the services which they are rendering; in fact, he feels there is no service in the entire Bahá'í world as important as their pioneering work in the virgin areas. They have achieved a great station of service. They are the representatives of the Faith in these virgin areas. They have the inestimable privilege of bringing the light of Bahá'u'lláh to those hitherto deprived of Divine Guidance for this day. The Guardian has repeatedly pointed out that they can and should become the spiritual conquerors of these new lands.

No pioneer should leave his post unless there is some very urgent reason, and then only after consultation with the appropriate committee or National Assembly. If it is found that someone must leave their post because of very urgent matters, then the National Assembly should arrange to replace the pioneer before the pioneer leaves. The Guardian urges that you pay the very closest possible attention to this important matter, so that the development of the Faith in these virgin areas may move along in an orderly manner, and produce great results.

As the Guardian cabled the entire Bahá'í world at the time of the Conventions, he hopes that the dynamic spirit which was generated during the first year of the Plan will be augmented during the second year of the

Plan, and all the Bahá'ís arise everywhere with renewed effort in order to spread the Glad-Tidings. This year must mark a very substantial increase in the number of Bahá'ís throughout the world—on the home fronts, in the consolidation areas, and in the virgin areas. Particular attention should be paid to the home fronts and the consolidation areas. As the Guardian indicates, he is expecting 'an upsurge of activity which, in its range and intensity, will excel the exploits which have so greatly enlarged the limits, and noised abroad the fame, of the Cause of God'.

The Guardian urges that all the Bahá'ís centre their complete attention on the obligations of the Ten-Year Crusade. He feels that no new activities should be undertaken of any type, whether of a local or a national nature. The friends must concentrate on the goals of the Ten-Year Crusade, which are principally national and universal. For instance, no local *Háziras* should be considered during the Ten-Year Crusade, no projects on a national scale should be considered which do not definitely relate themselves to the prosecution of the Ten-Year Crusade. Funds should not be used for any purpose except the objects of the Ten-Year Crusade.

We are embarked upon the greatest spiritual drama the world has ever witnessed; and it is going to require the sacrifice of every individual, every community and every assembly, whether local or national, in order to reach the goals. The Guardian feels they can be reached if we will concentrate, and not allow our attention to be diverted for a moment for any purpose whatsoever.

The Guardian sends you his loving greetings.

Faithfully yours,
 LEROY IOAS,
Assistant Secretary

Israel Branch of National Assembly

A letter from the Guardian through his Secretary, dated May 16th, states:

'I am enclosing, at the instruction of our beloved Guardian, the original title-deed of one-quarter of an acre plot of land recently purchased near the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf on Mount Carmel; and registered in the name of the Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles.

The cost of this property was six thousand dollars.

He feels sure that the British Bahá'ís will rejoice to know that they now have a part of the International Bahá'í Endowments in the name of their own special Israel Branch.'

The Guardian first mentioned that an Israel Branch of the National Assembly would be instituted to hold land in Israel on the completion of the Initial Phase of the Six Year Plan in 1948. The formation of the Israel Branch was recently completed by the Guardian and acquisition of land on Mt. Carmel has followed rapidly. It is a great honour for the British Bahá'í Community to be one of the first three National Communities to hold land at the World Centre of the Faith.

Local Assembly Secretaries

Belfast—Mrs. Beattie, 27 Rockland Street, Belfast, N. Ireland.

Birmingham—Mrs. Goode, 29 Robert Road, Birmingham 20.

Bournemouth—Mrs. Cranmer, 52A Southbourne Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth.

Blackburn—Miss J. Kranen, Park View, Haslingden Road, Blackburn, Lancs.

Blackpool—Mrs. Hyett, 46 Chepstow Road, Blackpool.

Bradford—Mrs. Naylor, 4 Derby Street, Great Horton, Bradford.

Brighton—Miss Doreen Geary, 154 Woodland Drive, Hove 4.

Bristol—Mrs. Weeks, 9 Caledonia Place, Clifton, Bristol.

Cardiff—D. G. McArthur, 8 Stanwell Crescent, Penarth, Glamorgan.

Dublin—Adib Taherzadeh, 8 Belmont Villas, Donnybrook, Dublin.

Edinburgh—Miss Noora Faridian, 26 Findlay Grove, Edinburgh 7.

Glasgow—Miss A. Williams, 285 Bellshill Road, Motherwell, Lanarkshire.

Leeds—R. H. Backwell, 90 Carr Manor Road, Leeds 7.

Liverpool—Miss S. Farnsworth, 19 Canning Street, Liverpool 8.

London—E. Munsiff, 9 Clifford Street, London, W.1.

Manchester—Mrs. Senior, 15 Oaklands Road, Swinton, Lancs.

Newcastle—J. Jameson, 21 Beech Grove, Wallsend, Northumberland.

Northampton—Miss A. Stevens, 1 Bruce Street, Northampton.

Norwich—Miss E. Bird, 238 Heigham Street, Norwich.

Nottingham—Miss O Sutton, 212 Mansfield Road, Nottingham.

Oxford—Miss J. Campbell, 18 Rawlinson Road, Oxford.

Sheffield—Mrs. Broom, 38 Wadsley Lane, Sheffield, 6.

Stockport—C. Johnson, 35 Neal Avenue, Heald Green, Cheshire.

Torquay—J. A. Povey, 8 Abbey Place, Torquay.

Nellie Voss

On March 23rd last, Bristol lost one of its original Assembly members in the passing of dear Nellie Voss.

Quiet, unassuming, Nellie lived her daily life in the spirit of service. During our Six Year Plan, she quite fortuitously attended a Bahá'í public meeting. Unhampered by the weeds of orthodoxy, she quickly recognised the object of her search in our teachings, and served on our Assembly harmoniously until she had to retire from activity on account of ill health. Her passing was sudden, but truly in our loss we can say—'Death proffereth unto every confident believer the cup that is life indeed'.—Alláh'u'Abhá.

BAHÁ'Í WORLD

BAHRAYN. Mr. Faizi, pioneer to Bahrayn, has written: 'A few years ago, we did not have a single soul here, now we have five Bahá'í Assemblies and two groups'.

INDIA. Translations of the selected Bahá'í booklet have been completed for the following out of the 40 languages allocated to the Indian National Assembly: Manipuri, Siamese, Javanese, Balochi, Pushto and Georgian. The work of translation is proceeding in Nicobarese, Lepcha, Annamese, Punjabi, Tibetan, Pali, Tho.

Mr. Fatheazam spoke in February to 200 people at a meeting organised by the World Fellowship of Faiths.

It should be recorded that during the two months separating the Fourth Intercontinental Conference in New Delhi, which ended on October 15th, and her fateful tragic flight on January 10th, Dorothy Baker, Hand of the Cause, made a teaching tour in India taking in 24 towns, some of them hundreds of miles apart.

CANADA. It is reported that radio time has been obtained for Bahá'í broadcasts in four places—London (Ontario), Calgary, Oshawa, Hamilton. Broadcasts have also been made at Belleville, Kingston, Montreal, Charlottetown.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Fernie (G.P.O. Box 462, Suva, Fiji) are setting up a stamp business to earn their living; used stamps may be forwarded direct to them at the address quoted.

The Faith has been officially recognised at Queen's University, where it is included among other religious groups in a booklet which is distributed to new students.

GUATEMALA. The Bahá'í Cultural Institute, established at Chichicastenango as an 'Indian' project of the Central American National Assembly, is progressing steadily with English and typing classes included among its courses. A pamphlet has been translated into Maya-Quiche.

CENTRAL AMERICA. Advertisements to catch the eye have been placed in the chief newspapers of each country inviting people to write direct to their N.T.C. Office in Honduras. Teaching continues by letter to correspondents until they are ready to be passed on to local assemblies and groups.

FRANCE. Manuscripts of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have been discovered in the Bibliotheque Nationale, the French National Library in Paris.

JAPAN. In January it was reported that there were nine isolated centres in Japan and an organised group at Amagasaki in addition to the Tokyo Assembly. A new introductory pamphlet 'Guide to the Bahá'í Faith' has been printed in Japanese and a Bahá'í monthly Bulletin is being produced for distribution to Bahá'ís.

CHILE. In the heart of Santiago, an exhibit was placed in a store window for a week showing the map of the World Crusade with each National Assembly named on a card at the side of the window linked with a silk ribbon of the appropriate colour to that National Assembly's location. 'Everyone in Santiago saw the display.'

ALASKA. A Bahá'í of Anchorage, Verne Stout, has been elected to the Executive Board of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and is the first white man there to be so named. Anchor-

age Assembly has registered 20 acres with United States Commissioner's Office and the Territorial Land Commissioner.

AUSTRALIA. Six members of the National Assembly of Australia and New Zealand have now volunteered for pioneering service in the Pacific Islands.

CAROLINE ISLANDS. Miss Virginia Breaks, pioneer in Truk, while visiting the home of the District Anthropologist in Yap, listened in with the anthropologist's wife to a radio interview with Mr. Faizi of Bahrayn, broadcasting from Australia, some 2,500 miles away.

EUROPE. Translations into Flemish, Maltese, Piedmontese and Basque are completed.

HOLLAND. The Bahá'í Literature Foundation has been established. It is the first legally recognised Bahá'í body in Holland.

UNITED STATES. Bahá'í Programmes have been broadcast regularly at White Plains (N.Y.), El Paso (Texas), Roswell (New Mexico) and Santa Fe (New Mexico). Bahá'í broadcasts have also been given at Butte (Montana) and Chicago (Illinois).

A permanent book exhibit and information centre has been arranged at a hotel in the heart of the town at Niagara Falls where three million visitors go each year.

Election of National Assembly

Fifty-five delegates voted, but the votes of one were disqualified. 486 valid votes were cast.

Mr. H. Balyuzi	...	...	...	52
Mr. J. Ferraby ..	...	...	...	49
Mr. R. Backwell	...	...	...	46
Mrs. D. Ferraby	...	...	...	35
Mrs. B. Reed ...	...	...	...	35
Dr. J. Mitchell	...	...	...	31
Mrs. M. Hofman	...	...	...	30
Mr. L. Ross-Enfield	...	...	...	29
Mrs. C. Langdon-Davies	...	...	...	27
Mr. I. Semple ...	...	...	...	18
Mr. E. Gregory	...	...	...	14
Mrs. A. Gregory	...	...	...	13
Mr. E. Munsiff	...	...	...	11
Mr. M. Mihaeloff	...	...	...	8
Mrs. G. Backwell	...	...	...	7
Miss V. Isenthal	...	...	...	7
Mr. H. Hazari	...	...	...	7
Mr. J. Shortland	...	...	...	6
Mr. H. Habibi	...	...	...	5
Lady Hornell ...	...	...	...	5
Mr. J. Lee	...	...	...	4
Mr. R. Cheek ...	...	...	...	4
Miss J. Benfield	...	...	...	3
Mr. D. Millar ...	...	...	...	3
Dr. E. Miller ...	...	...	...	3

Miss E. Archibald, Mr. H. Backwell, Mr. St. B. Baker, Mrs. P. George, Mrs. J. Giddings, Mr. J. Jameson, Mr. A. Joseph, Mrs. B. Kamming, Mrs. M. Munsiff, Mr. A. Taherzadeh, Mr. B. Townshend—2 each.

Miss E. Baxter, Miss B. de Gruchy, Mr. D. Hofman, Miss J. Kranen, Miss P. Lewis, Mr. A. Naimi, Mrs. J. Pitcher, Mr. R. Sabit, Mrs. P. Senior, Miss O. Sutton, Mr. W. Wilkins, Miss A. Williams—1 each.