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OUR TASK IN EUROPE

BY GEORGE TOWNSHEND

We have forged in Stockholm a bond of fellowship and unity which day by day our own hearts may make ever more strong—the bond of a definite spiritual objective clearly stated by our beloved Guardian and warmly accepted by us in heart and will. Our common purpose is nothing less than under God and by His Command the conversion, the reconciliation and the ultimate unification of the diverse and conflicting peoples, races and classes inhabiting Europe.

To effect 'this momentous undertaking launched on the soil of this continent', it is required of us that we shall distinguish ourselves 'by such deeds of heroism as will rival, nay, outshine the feats accomplished nineteen hundred years ago by that little band of God-intoxicated disciples who fearlessly preaching the Gospel of a newly arisen Messiah contributed so decisively to the illumination, the regeneration and the advancement of the entire European Continent'. It may seem and may be utterly beyond our power. Doubtless it is so. But it is not beyond the power of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Many years ago, after his first visit to London, 'Abdu'l-Bahá made a little-remembered prophecy about Europe and the Bahá'í Faith; and bade us take note of it and look for its fulfilment.

The manuscript was written in his own hand and translated by the Guardian, and may be found in a small pamphlet printed by the Bahá'í Publishing Committee in New York in 1924.

Here are some of its significant closing words. Speaking of the remarkable effect of His own recent visit to England, He said, 'Ponder then in your heart, what the coming of Bahá'u'lláh would have achieved! Had He appeared in Europe, its people would have seized their opportunity, and His Cause, by virtue of their freedom of thought, would by this time have encompassed the earth. But, alas! This Cause, though it first appeared in Persia, yet eventually it shall be seen how the peoples of Europe have wrested it from its hands! Take note of this and remember it in future. Ultimately you shall see how it has come to pass.'

Now the time for action has come. What 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave then as a general prophecy, the Guardian puts now as a specific command—a command directed to each and every one of us, Christians of the West, individually, calling for fearless initiative, the most spiritual endeavour, the most devoted and unflagging perseverance.

It is a hard task. But it can be done. And it will!

European Teaching News

Olga Mills has joined Una Townshend in Malta and they are meeting as often as they can to read from the Writings 'for the benefit of Malta as well as ourselves'. Violet McKinley left London for Cyprus on November 13th. From pioneers' letters we select the following:

SHETLANDS: Brigitte Hasselblatt spoke in a debate at a social club on the motion 'That Christianity has no relevance in the modern world', where some ministers were present. One asked if anyone could offer an alternative and she writes, 'Never shall I forget that experience. I did feel that at the very moment I represented all the Bahá'ís and I knew the words I spoke were put into my mouth by the Master, because I spoke from the heart without effort or self-consciousness . . . How I wish I could tell every Bahá'í who prays for the pioneers of such true "miracles", such real effects their prayers have, because it is the food that sustains us and the light that guides us.'

HEBRIDES: Geraldine Craney writes, 'Everyone I have been to see so far has asked me what connection I have with the Island. Whether I have any relatives here. I think they are a bit dubious of my staying very long. I hope I get a job soon . . . Don't worry, I am not by a long way disheartened. I have got a lot of followers, but I am afraid they range from 2 years to 4 years. I am beginning to get invitations from the neighbours to visit their homes. Soon I will be one of them.'

ORKNEYS: Charles Dunning is selling from door to door and he says: 'I will say this, it is getting me in touch with lots of friends. But I tell you, when these people do start to sit up and listen they will make wonderful Bahá'ís for they have a make up of their own. When I tell them I am a Bahá'í they are stumped for a minute.'

FAROE: Eskil Ljungberg writes: 'I am very happy and full of hope for this Island and in time the seed has germinated and will show that the growth has begun . . . Naturally some are not ready to accept as yet but all the same, as long as they in some way are disturbed "inside" it will get the ground or the soil ready to take the seed, and then we shall have to wait for the harvest.'

NEWS FROM AFRICA

The pioneers are now settling in and getting used to their new territories. Several have already got jobs. Claire Gung, after finding very discouraging conditions on arrival in Southern Rhodesia, was quite miraculously settled in a job and a home with even a residence permit granted in about a week after her arrival. Ted Cardell has a job and claims to be the only pioneer living in a castle; this is a house built on a hill in the style of a Rhine castle during the German occupation of S.W. Africa. Tito Wanantsusi, pioneer from Uganda to Mwanza, Tanganyika Territory, has also settled in a job. Two more friends from America, Mrs. Kenny and Mrs. Duffield, have reached Madeira and there is now a group of four there.

Ali and Violette Nakhjavani are now on the homeward stretch of their amazing journey across Africa by car, during which they settled three Uganda pioneers. Samson Mungono was left in Kamina, Belgian Congo, Max Kunyerazi found an opportunity to work in an African art centre in Brazzaville, French Equatorial Africa, and Enoch Olinga was taken to the British Cameroons. Their car broke down in the heart of the jungle, where every rustle might mean the advent of some wild animal, perhaps even a herd of elephants, and Enoch had walked practically 32 miles to get help before the others caught him up, having been guided to find at last the right thing to do to make the car go again. Struggling over some of the worst of African roads, they reached the frontier of British Cameroons only to find the ferry swept away, which involved another three days' travel before, on the afternoon of October 15th, the last day of the Holy Year, they found a way across. This journey is a marvellous chapter in the history of the Faith and we hope later to tell the story in more detail.

There has been an exciting development in the Gold Coast. Major Dunne, one of the pioneers there, got a job which involved working in a village about seventy miles from Accra and of course spoke of the Faith to the people there. The result has been declarations from ten adults and two children. Two of these friends have already gone to other villages to teach the Faith.

A big teaching Conference was held in the Teso district of Uganda during the first two weeks of October, attended by over 150 believers. There were both courses on the Faith and lessons in reading and writing for illiterate adult believers. An all-African committee organised the Conference which involved not only the general running of it but also feeding all who attended. Very much valuable help was given by Bill and Marguerite Sears, American pioneers to Johannesburg, who attended the Conference whilst visiting Uganda and handled a good deal of the Bahá'í teaching.

We ask your prayers for all the pioneers, some of whom are still without jobs or permits to remain in their territories, and also for the success of the teaching work in Africa.

AFRICA COMMITTEE

Dorothy Smith

Dolly, as we all knew her, passed to the Abhá Kingdom at 11.45 p.m. on Friday, October 30th. She came from a Roman Catholic background, and not having left a will, was buried under Catholic rites by the wish of her mother. A memorial service was held at the Bradford Centre the day after the funeral.

Dolly was introduced to the Faith by Marion Norton about nineteen years ago, and declared her wish to become a Bahá'í when in a small café in Blackpool during an I.F.L. Conference. She had an unbroken record of service on the Bradford Assembly since its formation. At one time she was Secretary, at others Treasurer and Librarian.

A long standing physical disability, bravely endured, prevented her giving the full service she would otherwise have given. Her care and thought for a widowed mother (almost blind) took up much of her time. It can be truly said of her that her outstanding qualities were those of courage and humour. The Bradford friends will miss her greatly.

Hugh McQueen

Hugh McQueen was accepted into the Faith by the Glasgow Spiritual Assembly, together with his wife Mary, on October 20th, 1953. He died in a Roman Catholic Hospital on November 2nd from a chronic illness. The hospital sister, supported by his relations, claimed that he had died a Roman Catholic and should have a Catholic burial; but his wife, who was with him an hour before his passing and knew that he had been upset by attempts in the hospital to induce him to say he was a Catholic, was sure that his faith in Bahá'u'lláh had remained firm to the end. She consulted the Glasgow Assembly and arranged for a Bahá'í service to be held at the undertaker's premises and a Bahá'í prayer at the graveside. The steadfastness of these two new believers should be an example to us all.

Bahá'í Burial

A statement on this was published in *Bahá'í Journal* No. 81 for September, 1950. Clauses drawn up by the National Assembly's solicitor for inclusion in wills, expressing the wish to have a Bahá'í burial, are printed there.

Additions to the Community

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

Myint Swe (from Burma), Portsmouth
Nemat Sabour (from Iraq), Swansea
Ann Thomas (from Canada), Redditch
Edward Drake, Bradford
Hugh McQueen, Glasgow
Mary McQueen, Glasgow
Geoffrey Rideout, London
Phyllis Hall, Bradford
Hilda Hardy, Bradford
Robert Hardy, Bradford
Francoise Theberge (from Canada), London
Margaret Attfield, Norwich
Doreen Watkins, Norwich
Eugene Exprikpo, London
Barbara Simmonds, London

FROM THE GUARDIAN

Progress of the Crusade

The following cable from the Guardian dated October 14th, 1953, was circulated to European Assemblies by the Bahá'í International Bureau at Geneva:

As Holy Year expires, overjoyed announce assembled believers no less thirteen additions Roll Honour since transmission last message (to) Conference week ago. Claire Gung, Southern Rhodesia; Ursula von Brunn, Frisian Islands; Richard Nolen (and) family, Azores; Katherine Meyer, Margarita Island; Geraldine Craney, Hebrides; Fawzi Zeinolabedin (and) family, Spanish Morocco; Manouchihr Hezari, Morocco International Zone; Chicago believer, St. Thomas Island; Ted Cardell, South West Africa; William Danjon, Andorra; Fred, Jean Allen, Cape Breton Island; Frederick, Elizabeth Laws, Basutoland; Amin Batt, Rio de Oro.

Total number virgin areas inscribed scroll with names conquerors since launching world crusade last Ridván mounted fifty. Number territories included orbit Faith raised within unbelievably short time (to) hundred seventy-eight, marking increase (of) hundred countries since celebration first Jubilee nine years ago. In addition, sixty unopened areas bespoken, including Ukraine, Albania.

No more than eight volunteers required (to) be despatched: Ashanti Protectorate, Bechuanaland, Chagos Archipelago, Comoro Islands, Marquesas Islands, Marshall Islands, Spanish Sahara, Tonga Islands, in order ensure attainment pre-eminent goal global crusade, excluding Socialist Republics (and) satellite countries.

Moment arrived (for the) last day year forever sanctified memory future generations owing its sacred associations, be linked closing (of the) already narrow gap separating vanguard army crusaders (from) victory (in the) most glorious phase grandest collective spiritual enterprise embarked (upon by) organised, firmly knit communities Most Great Name scattered (over) planet.

The Guardian cabled the American National Assembly on November 11th, 1953:

'Announce National Assemblies Bahá'í world: Three week interval since close Holy Year witnessed planting banner God's triumphant Cause no less twenty-one virgin areas globe, raising total number territories opened Faith two hundred, representing well-nigh sixty per cent. increase course little over half year number sovereign States, Dependencies included its pale during one hundred nine years its existence.

Seventy virgin areas brought within orbit swiftly expanding Bahá'í administrative order since launching World Crusade, including twenty-one (in the) Americas, nineteen Africa, nineteen Europe, thirteen Asia.

Following Pioneers inscribed Roll Honour since last announcement: Gerald, Gail, Leeanna Curwin—Bahamas; Enoch Olinga—British Cameroons; Malcolm King—British Guiana; Peggy, George True—Canaries; Shirley Warde—British Honduras; Irving Geary—Cape Breton Island; Zunilda Palacios—Chiloe (Island);

Edith Danielson—Cook Islands; Himatlal Bhatt—Diu (Island); Elinor, Robert Wolff—Dutch Guiana; Eberhard Friedland—French Guiana; Labib Esphanani—French West Africa; Adela, Salvador Tormo—Juan Fernandez (Island); Gladys, Benjamin Weeden—Leeward Islands; Frances Heller—Macao; Lionel Peraji—Mahe (Island); Ola Powlavska—Miquelon and St. Pierre (Island); Elsie Austin, Nosrat Shayesteh, Abbas Muhammad-Ali Jalali Rowhani, Ardsani Hasanzadeh Rafii—Morocco International Zone; Bertha Dobbins—New Hebrides; Opal, Leland Jensen—Reunion (Island); Marie Ciocca—Sardinia; Abbas Kamil—Seychelles; Emma Rice, Mr. (and) Mrs. Bagley—Sicily; Greta Lamprill, Glad Parke—Society Islands; Mr. (and) Mrs. McKay, Mr. (and) Mrs. Fleming, Miss Jenssen—Spanish Morocco; Muhammad Mostafa—Spanish Sahara; Lillian Middlemast, Esther M. Evans—Windward Islands.

As few as two territories of Europe, six (in the) Americas, fourteen Africa, twenty-two Asia still remain unopened, excluding Republics, satellites Soviet Union. May opening year decade-long spiritual Crusade be victoriously concluded, befittingly celebrated course festivities next Ridván through establishment nucleus Faith each remaining forty-four territories, insuring thereby virtual attainment foremost objective initial stage Ten Year Plan.'

To the Africa Committee

The following are extracts from a letter from the Guardian to the Africa Committee, through his Secretary, dated 4th June, 1953:

'Your understanding of the treatment of polygamist converts to the Faith is quite correct, but of course if anyone who is a Bahá'í wishes to marry more than one wife, he cannot do so. If they should disobey this law, then the cases must be handled in the same way as the Persians do, which is that these persons who become polygamists break the laws of marriage.

As regards your question about the proper designation for the huts which will be used by the believers in villages as Bahá'í Centres, he thinks that, for the time being, until a more dignified structure can be erected, they should be called "Bahá'í Centre" and not Ḥazíratu'l-Quds—the correct name is Ḥazíratu'l-Quds and not Hazira . . .

The Guardian is urging the bodies associated with the work in Africa to disperse their forces, and not to endeavour to build up large communities. Otherwise, there will be a large number of pioneers in one place, while other goal countries may be left entirely without a pioneer.

As regards the translations for Africa, he has urged the American National Spiritual Assembly, in connection with the printing of Bahá'í literature in the languages allotted to that continent, to give you any help it can.

The Guardian feels confident that, by proper concentration of effort and exchange of information between the committees responsible for getting the pioneers out to Africa, the ways and means will be forthcoming to achieve our objectives this year . . .'

For Meditation

Should the greatness of this day be revealed in its fulness, every man would forsake a myriad lives in his longing to partake, though it be for one moment, of its great glory—how much more this world and its corruptible treasures!

BAHÁ'ULLÁH

LETTER TO NEW BELIEVERS

Dear Bahá'í friend,

Certain matters relating to our spiritual life may have already been discussed at length with you before you were moved to seek admittance to our Faith. They are of such fundamental importance, however, that we think it will be helpful to review them. If you feel uncertain about them or wish for amplification, please write to the National Teaching Committee who will gladly supply full references from the Writings.

These matters are: (1) Prayer, (2) Fasting, (3) Consultation, (4) Contribution, (5) Service, (6) Teaching, in regard to all of which the true Bahá'í attitude represents a mature development.

We are all restricted for one reason or another—ignorance, immaturity of self-control, faulty mental habits and prejudices—from practising the Bahá'í way of life to the full. Nevertheless, we can take steps to overcome these weaknesses and so live a fuller life that accords more closely with that of our supreme Exemplar, 'Abdul-Bahá. We can dispel our ignorance through knowledge of what we should do derived from study, and discussion with our fellow-believers, of the Writings and of our beloved Guardian's communications. We can advance in maturity of outlook and self-discipline through reading and meditating with sincere devotion the words of Bahá'u'lláh, through regular review each day of our actions and our use of time, developing gradually an awareness of priorities until we put first things first. If we remember to put into effect the following words of the Master, we shall surely make progress:

'To teach is to learn; to learn is to work; to work is to serve; to serve is to love; to love is to sacrifice; to sacrifice is to die; to die is to live; to live is to strive; to strive is to rise above all earthly limitations and enter the Eternal Realm.'

We propose to write a letter to you on each of the fundamentals in the next few issues of the 'Journal'. Each constitutes a spiritual obligation we cannot ignore since each has been ordained by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Recognition of the Dayspring of the Unity of God implies steadfastness in His love and strict observance of His laws. The degree of our obedience to those laws is the true measure of our maturity and of our advancement towards everlasting felicity.

'The duties of recognition and obedience are inseparable; neither is acceptable without the other.' (G.331.)

'Man's supreme distinction, his real advancement, his final victory have always depended, and will continue to depend, upon the ordinances of God.' (G. 289.)

'Commune intimately with His Spirit, and be thou

of the thankful.' (G.280.)

'In the heaven of the religion of God two shining orbs have been ordained—fasting and prayer.' (Iq. 40.)

'To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine.' (HW 49.)

'Consultation He establishes as one of the fundamental principles of His Faith.' (GPB.218.)

'That one indeed is a man who, to-day, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race.' (G.250.)

'Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá.' (G.278.)

With sincere and loving greetings,

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

LOCAL ASSEMBLY NEWS

BOURNEMOUTH. One of the Bournemouth friends, Mrs. E. Cranmer, has had several articles on the Bahá'í Faith published in a local periodical. A gentleman living in Bournemouth and recently visiting 'Akká, took a photograph of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and sent it to the friends on his return, although he had never met any of them!

BRADFORD reported three declarations within one month. The friends have been holding, and are continuing to hold, lunch time prayer meetings each week.

EDINBURGH held several most successful public meetings with a good programme of follow-up meetings. The Faith also received some publicity in the Edinburgh newspapers following a Press conference held by two of the friends at the end of the Holy Year, reporting on the Stockholm Conference and local Centenary Celebrations.

LEEDS. The new Bahá'í Centre was opened on September 27th. The programme of the opening meeting was one of the Temple Programmes used at Wilmette and was both inspiring and impressive. The address of the new Centre is: Hope Chambers, Vicar Lane, Leeds. Devotional and weekly meetings for enquirers are being held.

NOTTINGHAM held a successful public meeting on United Nations Sunday with a guest speaker from the local U.N. Association sharing the platform with a Bahá'í speaker.

LONDON. Increased attendance at weekly meetings began during Holy Year and continues at a high level. This community has released one pioneer to a goal town in England and is actively carrying out extension teaching there.

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

'GOD AND HIS MESSENGERS', by David Hofman

Publisher: George Ronald

This is a Bahá'í book for children of about three seven years, with six coloured illustrations. It has seven chapters, one about the Greatest Mystery, God, followed by six giving the stories of Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Muḥammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, told in simple language.

Price 9/6