

# BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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## 'GREATEST EVENT . . . SECOND EPOCH FORMATIVE AGE'

The following is a copy of a cable sent by the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, dated January 9th, 1951:

'Proclaim National Assemblies (of) East (and) West weighty epoch-making decision (of) formation (of) first international Bahá'í Council, forerunner (of) supreme administrative institution destined (to) emerge (in) fullness (of) time within precincts beneath shadow (of) World Spiritual Center (of) Faith already established (in) twin cities (of) Akká (and) Haifa. Fulfilment (of) prophecies uttered (by) Founder (of) Faith (and) Center (of) His Covenant culminating (in) establishment (of) Jewish State, signalling birth after lapse (of) two thousand years (of an) independent nation (in the) Holy Land, (the) swift unfoldment (of) historic undertaking associated (with) construction (of) superstructure (of the) Báb's Sepulchre (on) Mount Carmel, (the) present adequate maturity (of) nine vigorously functioning national administrative institutions throughout Bahá'í World, combine (to) induce me (to) arrive (at) this historic decision marking most significant milestone (in) evolution (of) Administrative Order (of the) Faith (of) Bahá'u'lláh (in) course (of) last thirty years. Nascent Institution now created (is) invested (with) threefold function: first, (to) forge link (with) authorities (of) newly emerged State; second, (to) assist me (to) discharge responsibilities involved (in) erection (of) mighty superstructure (of the) Báb's Holy Shrine; third, (to) conduct negotiations related (to) matters (of) personal status (with) civil authorities. To these will be added further functions (in) course (of) evolution (of) this first embryonic International Institution, marking its development into officially recognised Bahá'í Court, its transformation into duly elected body, its efflorescence into Universal House (of) Justice, (and) its final fruition through erection (of) manifold auxiliary institutions constituting (the) World Administrative Center destined (to) arise (and) function (and) remain permanently established (in) close neighbourhood (of) Twin Holy Shrines. Hail (with) thankful, joyous heart (at) long last (the) constitution (of) International Council which history will acclaim (as the) greatest event shedding lustre (upon) second epoch (of) Formative Age (of) Bahá'í Dispensation potentially unsurpassed (by) any enterprise undertaken since inception (of) Administrative Order (of) Faith (on) morrow (of) 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension, ranking second only (to) glorious immortal events associated

(with) Ministries (of the) Three Central Figures (of) Faith (in) course (of) First Age (of) most glorious Dispensation (of the) five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle. Advise publicise announcement through Public Relations Committee.

### An International Crusade

A copy of a further cable from the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States dated January 16th, 1951, was sent us by Lotfullah Hakim at the Guardian's request:

'Assistance Africa project through financial contribution participation pioneers white coloured close consultation cooperation British Assembly necessary. Independent campaign not intended. Fervently praying participation British American Persian Egyptian National Assemblies unique epochmaking enterprise African continent may prove prelude convocation first African Teaching Conference leading eventually initiation undertakings involving collaboration all National Assemblies Bahá'í world thereby paving way ultimate organic union these Assemblies through formation International House Justice destined launch enterprises embracing whole Bahá'í world. Acclaim simultaneous inauguration Crusade linking administrative machinery four National Assemblies East West within four continents and birth first International Council World Center Faith twin compelling evidences resistless unfoldment embryonic divinely appointed World Order Bahá'u'lláh.'

### Other Cables

The Guardian cabled us on December 22nd, 1950:

'Assure Claire Gung loving prayers surrounding her meritorious historic journey supplicating blessings forthcoming Conference deepest loving appreciation.'

This was in reply to one from us dated December 18th:

'First Africa pioneer Claire Gung sails Tanganyika January 3rd assistant matron school Lushoto. Beg prayers her also Teaching Conference January 6th—7th devoted love.'

A cable from Teaching Conference dated January 8th read:

'Teaching Conference Manchester expresses profound love devotion loyalty humbly beseeches beloved Guardian's blessings prayers.'



To which the Guardian replied on January 10th, 1951:

'Assure attendants supplicating Almighty blessings deliberations may Conference lend tremendous impetus process consolidation homeland initiation pioneer activities African Continent.'

On January 22nd, after receipt of the announcement of the decision to form an International Bahá'í Council, the National Assembly cabled:

'Thrilled inspired exciting news historic decision awestruck magnitude vision unfolding humbly grateful Divine bounty.'

To which the Guardian replied on January 25th:

'Appreciate sentiments beloved friends.'

## THE AFRICA PROJECT

### THE AFRICA CONFERENCE

The Conference was held on December 29th in the new London Centre, which was used for the first time for this ceremony. A generous gift of new chairs to the London Centre by a Bahá'í fortunately arrived the day before the Conference.

The morning and the early part of the afternoon were devoted to consultation with prospective pioneers regarding the opportunities and difficulties likely to be experienced both on the voyage out and on arrival in Africa, and the best means of coping with them when they arise. It was felt necessary to stress the need for caution in the initial approach and the avoidance as far as possible of discussions on subjects alien to African thought and custom which might lead to opposition.

In the afternoon we were privileged to hear interesting lectures by the Editor of *African Affairs* on 'Africa's Need for Spiritual Civilisation' and by a lecturer from the School of Oriental and African Studies on African languages. The Conference ended with a display of films showing scenes of life in the Gold Coast and in a college in East Africa, loaned for the occasion by the Central Office of Information.

### PIONEERS

The first pioneer from this country, Claire Gung, left England on January 4th by the 'Warwick Castle' for Tanga en route for Lushoto in Tanganyika, where she has been appointed to the position of Assistant Matron in a school for European boys and girls. She was seen off at Liverpool Street Station by Bahá'í friends and a number of flashlight photographs were taken on the platform as a record of this historic occasion. The prayers and good wishes of the Community will be with her in her great venture.

A second pioneer, Jalal Nakhjawani, who went direct to East Africa from Persia and is investigating the possibilities of setting up a business in one or other of those countries, has reached Dar es Salaam in Tanganyika after visiting Kampala, Uganda.

### AFRICA COMMITTEE.

#### Committee Appointment

Mr. Rustom Sabit has been appointed to the Africa Committee, with a view to becoming secretary of the Committee in due course.

## FOR MEDITATION

Cleanse from your hearts the love of worldly things, from your tongues every remembrance except His remembrance, from your entire being whatsoever may deter you from beholding His face, or may tempt you to follow the promptings of your evil and corrupt inclinations. Let God be your fear, O people, and be ye of them that tread the path of righteousness.

## THE NATIONAL FUND

	Nov. 21 to Jan. 20	Total since April 21
THANKSGIVING FUND	£	£
Earmarked donations, shares, and Guardian's contributions	503	561
Balance of Six Year Plan Deficit		1439
TOTAL INCOME		
From all sources ... ..	1006	3676
EXPENDITURE		
Pioneers ... ..	223	1945
Consolidation ... ..	94	623
Africa ... ..	121	150
Other Committees (& Journal) ...	46	152
N.S.A. — all expenses ... ..	219	855
Sundries ... ..	44	215
	747	3940

Notes: 1. Income includes £600 on behalf of the Guardian of which £500 was applied to the Thanksgiving Fund. 2. Contributions from 12 Local Assemblies amounted to £54. 3. Pioneer expenditure totalled £171 in month ending December 20th owing to unforeseen circumstances. 4. Sundries include £30 Bank Interest, £11 Bank Commission.

## SHRINE OF THE Báb

In his cable announcing progress of the work on the Shrine, the Guardian asks all Bahá'ís to join him in prayers for the uninterrupted prosecution of the work initiated in Italy and the Holy Land. The National Assembly urges the friends in the British Isles to use the Intercalary Days and the subsequent 19-Day Feast on March 2nd for this purpose, so that the British Bahá'í Community may be united in prayer on these days. The Assembly recommends that the friends use these days also for making further donations to the Shrine of the Báb Fund. Contributions on January 18th had reached £430 10s. 8d., of which £78 12s. 10d. was from Assemblies and £251 17s. 9d. was from individuals. The Fund is, of course, a continuing one so long as the work on the Shrine lasts.

### Changes of Address

*Bradford Secretary:* Mr. A. Norton, 41 Cranbourne Avenue, Chellow Dene, Bradford.

*Sheffield Secretary:* Miss U. Coward, Hallam Lodge, Tipton Crescent Road, Sheffield 10.



## THE BODY OF THE CAUSE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

If any part of the human body becomes damaged, e.g. through a foreign body lodged there, or because it has become cut off from the main circulation of blood or interacting nervous system, the whole organism cannot help but take notice. The body's forces of consciousness and its corpuscular battalions rush to try and make good the damage before it becomes 'accepted' and that part of the body becomes permanently defective and perhaps stunted.

If among the communities that comprise our whole national body, there are any that for some reason lose their impetus for spreading the Cause, or suffer from such a deep-rooted disunity that their common life ceases to have meaning, or they include members who for whatever cause have become heedlessly complacent or apathetic, then there is a danger that listless disillusion will set in and growth of any kind entirely cease. These will then find it very hard to get started again and perhaps for decades may lag behind the rest.

We know that the strain of the Plan's victorious execution was very great and that there have since been gaps and weaknesses arising here and there. Let us all take note of this and do what we can by prayer, by encouragement and appreciation, individually and collectively, by such tokens of affection as we can offer, by visits, by watching for contacts in these places, by going as pioneers if we can, to plump out the weak places and help them regain their rightful position toward which their members strove so valiantly and with such high hopes and self-sacrifice but a few short months ago.

### CONSOLIDATION NEWS

*Pioneers.* Mr. and Mrs. Rustom Sabit and family have settled in Brighton. Adib Taherzadeh is now happily settled in Dublin, having obtained a good job.

The steps taken to 'consolidate' all the pioneers are proving to be in the right direction; only four needing financial assistance at the moment of writing.

*Local Assemblies.* The following towns are below strength: Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield. Cardiff and Nottingham present the greatest challenge.

*Teaching Conference.* Once again the great hospitality of the Manchester friends contributed to a most happy and successful Conference. Over 75 participants of 11 nationalities represented 20 of the 24 local communities and the joyous and sound consultation provided striking evidence of the growing maturity of the community.

The new film of the Holy Places on Mt. Carmel and at 'Akká, which for almost an hour presented 'close-ups' of the Gardens and the Shrines, was breathtaking in its beauty and very moving.

The final session, consisting of talks by Prof. Z. N. Zeine, David Hofman and Hasan Balyuzi, was unique in Teaching Conference history and will be long remembered.

Whilst the excitement and emotion of the 'Plan' years were absent, the Conference was satisfying and

inspiring, and strikingly evident in the consultation was the desire to see the regional work develop and the 'prizes won' maintained.

CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE

### WORLD YOUTH DAY

The problems of this respite year have not been spared us, and a large part of our time has been so far occupied with sorting out difficulties of organisation that are a legacy of the Six Year Plan. Two noticeable factors this year are the extreme maturity of a large percentage of the youth serving on Local Assemblies and Regional and Teaching Committees, and the extreme localisation of all teaching and administrative work — most especially youth work — due to the great shortage of funds.

To assist in surmounting this last and major problem, the National Youth Committee has organised WORLD YOUTH DAY on rather unusual lines: Date of celebration will be February 26th (or any other of the Intercalary Days, if the 26th is not possible, but within the Intercalary period), and the programme will be a local Devotional, which will be in your hands soon, to be arranged by the youth. Previously World Youth Day has been celebrated in different regions, and the youth have attended them with great success. In view of the Guardian's appeal for contributions for the Fund for the building of the Shrine of the Báb, the N.Y.C. has arranged a series of local meetings to be held by the youth in every locality at which contributions will be made through the Chairman of the N.Y.C. (Iraj Poostchi, Kirkley Hall Farm Institute, Ponteland, Newcastle-on-Tyne) to whom donations may be sent by the youth, to the amount they would have spent in travel and hotel expenses in attending a Regional World Youth Day Meeting. The sum collected will be submitted to the N.S.A. for division between the Shrine Fund and the National Fund, whose needs are very great.

All members of the community should be invited to these meetings, and are free to contribute if they choose.

We are sure that you all will take advantage of the opportunity this offers to participate in the International activity of the Bahá'í Youth.

NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE.

### Additions to the Community

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

Noora Khaze (from Iran), Warwick  
Jamshid Koutchakzadeh (from Iran), Sheffield  
Manouchehr Derakhshani (Youth from Iran),  
Edinburgh  
Evelyn Bowman, Norwich  
Parichehr Sarvian (from Iran), Liverpool

### Annual Convention

Members of the Community are reminded that Convention is being held this year on Saturday, Sunday, Monday, April 28th, 29th, 30th.



## THE USE OF BAHÁ'Í BOOKS FOR STUDY

In the *Aqdas* we are enjoined by Bahá'u'lláh to read at least a little of His Scripture every day and told that it is better to read one verse attentively than a thousand carelessly. Elsewhere He says that if we listen hard enough He will become the ear wherewith we hear.

Bahá'í books of Scripture available to us comprise the prayer books, complete works like the *Iqán*, *Hidden Words* and *Gleanings*, two or three of the works of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and several useful compilations.

It has been said that Bahá'í books are flowery. As we get to be familiar with them — e.g. after learning by heart — we find this inevitable and right, not just because of the universality of the Cause, not just because it thereby redresses the balance of fanciful invention that has corrupted so much of the teachings of all other religions, but because this is the only way of carrying the glorious truths. Whenever we try to put one of the Hidden Words into other language we find that we have lost something: indeed that is a great test of the perfection of the revealed word, that it loses in changed form and yet yields new meaning every time we read it.

We can study the *Iqán* with a brief study aid such as the outline prepared by the Trust which can be had if wanted on request. The great Bahá'í teacher, Abul Fazl, is said to have read this book 95 times and found something new to delight in and appreciate each time.

We can read at least one of the Hidden Words each night as we go to sleep, and let its meanings sink in and reverberate through the mind and soul along with the prayer for sleep. In the *Hidden Words* we can, if we will, find condensed all the Holy Books of God; or we can use it as a touchstone to reconcile, or as a basis for comparative study of all religion. The glorious phrases echo through our minds — 'array all things with the apparel of life,' . . . 'commune with My spirit,' . . . 'The gates that open on the Placeless stand wide,' . . . We can ponder the fact that all religion is in a sense summarised in the first one of all, and consider how all others are but commentary.

We can read a prayer — e.g. that for unity — and think how the whole Bahá'í message is really contained in the words 'Unite the hearts of Thy servants' or 'Weld our hearts into one heart,' or those words of the Báb, 'O God, my God, my Beloved, my heart's Desire,' pondering upon God as the Source, Pivot, Motive-power and Goal of all things, even of ourselves. Each of us can enrich our favourite prayers by a process like this.

We can think on some of the astonishing gems of the *Gleanings*, a book which is arranged in five sections more or less distinct (a) i to xviii, God and the Day of God; (b) xix to lxix, The Manifestations; (c) lxx to xcix, The Soul and Immortality; (d) c to cxxi, The Most Great Peace; (e) cxxii to clxv, Individual Responsibility in Living and Teaching. The knowledge of God is here abundantly poured forth for us.

The works of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are simpler, yet no one has succeeded in matching His divine simplicity. It is a fascinating study to turn to the 'Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh' and to compare His Will and Testament with that of His Father, and so to note how almost every point made by Bahá'u'lláh is taken up again by

'Abdu'l-Bahá. In the Will and Testament itself it is equally fascinating to roam in the three parts and note how the themes, as of a symphony, intertwine and modulate and amplify one another.

It may help to mark specially well-phrased and telling quotable passages so that we can refer to them in a talk or at will when in need. *Paris Talks* is so full of passages apt for quotation that almost every page can be heavy with pencil marks, yet each talk is short, lucid and complete. It is particularly pleasing to watch in *Some Christian Subjects* how 'Abdu'l-Bahá takes up two or three contrasting themes in each talk and repeats them almost as though in contrapuntal style, each time making the point clear in the exactly perfect manner.

In this world which increasingly suffers from fanciful make-believe, substitute living and the dust of acquired human learning and prejudice, we can strive to shine through making the Bahá'í books our own, first by purchase and then by study, until they become second nature.

BAHA'Í PUBLISHING TRUST COMMITTEE.

### Ideal Homes Exhibition

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust is exhibiting three titles in the 'Books in the Home' section of the Ideal Homes Exhibition, to be held at Olympia from March 6th—31st, 1951.

### Mrs. Rogers

On January 8th last, Bristol lost its oldest L.S.A. Member by the death of Mrs. Blanche Rogers. Although eighty-four years of age, a truly youthful spirit dominated this remarkable old lady to the very end. Disdaining to enter any Nursing Home while in a frail state of health, our beloved Mrs. Rogers continued to exert her energies in supporting any movement for the promotion of peace and harmony among all people. She was a Founder Member of the Bristol Soroptimist Club, also a member of the Clifton Arts Club, U.N.A. and Crusade for World Government. An elocutionist of no mean ability, she gave instruction by class and private coaching, and contributed in verse to several of our social meetings. Although she became a member of the Bahá'í Community only in 1948, when eighty-one years old, she had met 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His visit to Bristol—in her own words, 'an experience I shall never forget.'

### London Bahá'í Centre

The London Bahá'í Centre is available to National Committees for their Committee meetings when it is not being used for other purposes. Committees should book the Centre for their meetings well in advance, either by arranging for a booking to be entered in the book kept for the purpose at the Centre, or by writing the Secretary of the London Assembly saying when they want to meet. As the Secretary does not go to the Centre every day, it is essential to allow at least two or three weeks for him to check that the Centre is not already booked for the time at which the Committee wishes to meet, and to confirm to the Committee that the Centre is available.



## F I R E S I D E S

"Welcome all with the light of oneness"  
'Abdu'l-Bahá.

We can all of us call to mind some of the many stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wonderful hospitality, warmth and understanding, which He showed towards everyone. Bahá'u'lláh has enjoined us to show hospitality and told us to turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the perfect Exemplar of His teachings. When we read these stories we see the pattern for our behaviour.

Surely firesides provide a perfect opportunity for extending hospitality to friends - for at a fireside we have more than mere companionship and physical comforts to offer. We have spiritual food and healing to give as well.

Firesides provide an opportunity to discuss many aspects of the Faith in an informal, intimate way. They should provide the chance for seekers to ask all those questions they want to ask, but sometimes feel shy of expressing in a public meeting. It is well to curb our strong desire to hold forth on the teachings and instead to lend a truly sympathetic hearing to what our friends have to say. We need not be distressed if only one contact turns up and if he (or she) spends all the time pouring out his troubles. If we are genuinely concerned for his happiness and listen sympathetically, we may well find some solution or consoling through for his difficulties.

Firesides are far more effective if they are fairly small, and it is better to have several firesides in different houses in one town rather than all the Bahá'ís gathering in one place, outnumbering the contacts and overpowering them with their eagerness to explain every difficult point! In fact, Bahá'ís should respect a Bahá'í hostess in the same way as any other hostess, and only attend the firesides to which they are invited!

Such gatherings should be as comfortable, happy and harmonious as possible. Discussions should be easy, not forced, and many different ways of introducing the Faith can be employed. Some friends like to open with a prayer and a short reading; others prefer the conversation to flow and be guided, tactfully, into Bahá'í channels. Again it is often possible to share news about the Faith from other lands, or read an extract from a letter, show photographs of Summer School etc. Pictures and photographs in the room, books about the Faith, flowers from a Bahá'í friend, etc., all these may be the starting point of a discussion. Sometimes it proves helpful if we share the difficulties we and other Bahá'ís have faced in

accepting the Faith, and the joy we experienced when we overcame them.

If current affairs are discussed by our contacts, we should be careful not to let ourselves become embroiled in political arguments; rather we can show that the Faith contains a solution for all the problems in the world, and that this gives us strength to remain undismayed by the black present and confident of a rosy future. Such discussions must be steered clear of argument, for Bahá'u'lláh has warned us:- "Beware lest ye contend with anyone, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation". and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, reminding us of His Father's injunction: "...He hath even prohibited the believers from discussing political affairs".

However humble our homes, we can make the best of them, cheer them with a fire in cold weather, decorate them with flowers or leaves and welcome our friends with warmth and sympathy.

"Do not be satisfied until each one with whom you are concerned is to you as a member of your family. Regard each one as a father or as a brother, or as a sister, or as a mother, or as a child. If you can attain this, your difficulties will vanish; you will know what to do." 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

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Consolidation Committee.  
January, 1951.

# THE EASIER WAY TO GIVE THE FAITH.

In the home,  
round the table  
or by the fireside

