

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

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

158A OLD BROMPTON ROAD, LONDON, S.W.5

"Pioneers must arise and stop the dangerous breaches . . ."

SHOGHI EFFENDI

No. 76

Bahá'í Year 106

DECEMBER 1949

OXFORD SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST OF THE LAST NINE. EIGHT MORE TO BE FORMED

'Oxford Spiritual Assembly elected Feast Qawl humbly remembers association Covenant turns grateful loving heart dear Guardian eager fill place World Order Baha'u'llah.'

By this cable the friends in Oxford advised the Guardian of the historic event of the establishing of the first Spiritual Assembly in that ancient city. His reply was:

'Heartfelt congratulations historic victory Ardent loving prayers surrounding you noble mission. Shoghi.'

When Siri Bischoff, a new believer from Oslo, arrived in Oxford the community numbered nine. At about the same time the N.S.A. reviewed the anomalous position of Philip Hainsworth, who lives in Oxford and was a member of the Nottingham Spiritual Assembly. His membership was transferred to Oxford, thereby bringing the number to ten.

At the Nineteen Day Feast on November 22nd the election was held, all members being present, except Mrs. Hainsworth who was in hospital, recovering from a serious operation. She voted by mail. Richard Backwell attended on behalf of the N.S.A. and acted as one of the tellers. At a subsequent meeting, officers were elected and the Assembly is now organised as follows:

David Hofman: *Chairman*
Marion Hofman: *Vice-Chairman*
Philip Hainsworth: *Secretary*
Constance Langdon-Davies: *Treasurer*
Cyril Jenkerson: *Librarian*
Jane M. Campbell
Louisa Charlot
Lizzie Hainsworth
Margaret Jenkerson

COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE GUARDIAN

From N.S.A., November 23rd

'Joyfully report Oxford reached Assembly status. Iraj Pootschi, Raschid Hakimian, John Dixon pioneering Nottingham, Belfast, Bristol, devoted love.'

From the Guardian, November 26th

'Delighted victory Oxford assure pioneers deepest appreciation meritorious action.'

SUMMER SCHOOL—LOST PROPERTY

A square silk scarf, chocolate brown and turquoise, was unclaimed. Will the owner please claim it from the Secretary, Summer School Committee, at the London Centre.

PUBLISHING TRUST

The friends will have received the printed schedule, announcing the scheme for investment in the Trust, and it is confidently hoped that a firm financial foundation for the development of this important institution will thus be created.

The Glad Tidings of Bahá'u'lláh

This is the title of a compilation of Bahá'í scripture, selected and arranged by George Townshend and published in September, 1949, by John Murray in the *Wisdom of the East* series, price 4 shillings. The book makes a very suitable gift for a variety of occasions. It is available through booksellers (as well as the Publishing Trust) and its sales may be helped if Bahá'ís purchase copies from them, for this will encourage booksellers to stock copies.

THE SPREAD OF THE CAUSE

This is a series of articles on 'How the Bahá'í Faith came to various towns.' We begin with

NORWICH

One Sunday evening in early summer, 1944, Lt. Philip Hainsworth, R.A.M.C., then stationed in Norwich, visited the Christian Spiritualist Church, and there met one of the workers, who was to become the first Norwich believer. Soon after St./Sgt. Henry Tellerman of the U.S. Army and Cpl. John Cohen, R.E., who were at camps in the county, joined at every opportunity they found in celebrating the 19 day Feasts, and helping at the various meetings which were held on Sunday afternoons in a room lent by the Society of Friends.

One very successful meeting in Suckling Hall at which Mrs. Brown, (now Lady Hornell) and Philip spoke encouraged the friends very much. Several people signed our visitors' book and bought literature.

Philip worked very hard while he was in Norwich making many friends and contacts.

When the war took Philip, John, and Henry away from us in 1945, Miss Evelyn Baxter came for two short visits. Then followed a period of waiting, wondering, hoping, praying, (and some impatience sometimes) from this lone believer, when suddenly and quite unexpectedly came a request in July, 1947 to engage accommodation for Mrs. Prudence George and Patsy. Norwich was on the map at last! Norwich was to have a pioneer.

Mrs. George arrived in August, 1947 from Blackburn, followed by Walter Wilkins in August, 1948 and Robert Cheek in December, 1948. Mrs. George writes:

'My first contact was Evelyn Hansly, in a bus queue. She had left her purse at home, and I loaned her the fare. After that we chatted daily. She shared her problems with me and I gave advice from the Teachings. Dorothy Rose was met at the store where we both worked. She responded eagerly from the first. These two declared themselves on the same day in August. Agnes Haines (youth) worked as a maid where I was housekeeper. She accepted the Faith in January, 1949, and later her husband followed suit. Robert's wife Donna came to Norwich, with their children, a few months before him and declared herself before he arrived.'

Mr. Barrel for whom Prudence worked as housekeeper showed sympathetic interest, and welcomed the use of his rooms for Bahá'í gatherings and liked to take part in them. There was much valuable help from visiting teachers but for the sake of brevity only two can be mentioned. Mrs. Muriel Matthews visited us for a week and Mr. Harry Fowle first came to a lecture by her through seeing the advertisement. Philip Hainsworth conducted an intensive campaign just before April 21st, and chiefly through this Harry Fowle was stimulated to declare himself. Thus our

goal was achieved, and our Spiritual Assembly formed on April 21st, 1949. Later we wrote the Guardian and he replied:—

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Your letter of August 2nd has been received and our beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf. He was very pleased to see that you are girding up your loins to do your utmost for the plan in the critical months that lie ahead. Nothing will further your ends more quickly than the greatest love, unity and co-operation amongst yourselves. These are the very soul of the order Bahá'u'lláh has come to establish in the world and when the people see these qualities and characteristics actively demonstrated in our midst, those who are receptive will hasten to join our ranks. Likewise when they see the lack of these virtues they will hesitate to embrace the Faith however much they may admire its teachings. He will certainly pray that your Assembly may be maintained, your numbers increase, and your devotion be rewarded. With Bahá'í love, R. RABBANI.

In the Guardian's own handwriting:—

Dear Co-workers,

I was pleased to hear from you and receive the assurance of your love, your devotion to the interests of our beloved Faith and your determination to serve its best interests.

I will pray from the depth of my heart on your behalf, that the Almighty may bless and sustain you and enable you to win memorable victories for His Faith. Your true brother, SHOGHI.

ADDITIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

Elsie Turnbull, Liverpool
Renate Torop, London
Faizollah Taheed (from Iran), Stratford-on-Avon
Fuad Majzub (Youth from Iran), Stratford-on-Avon
Clifford Jones, Dublin

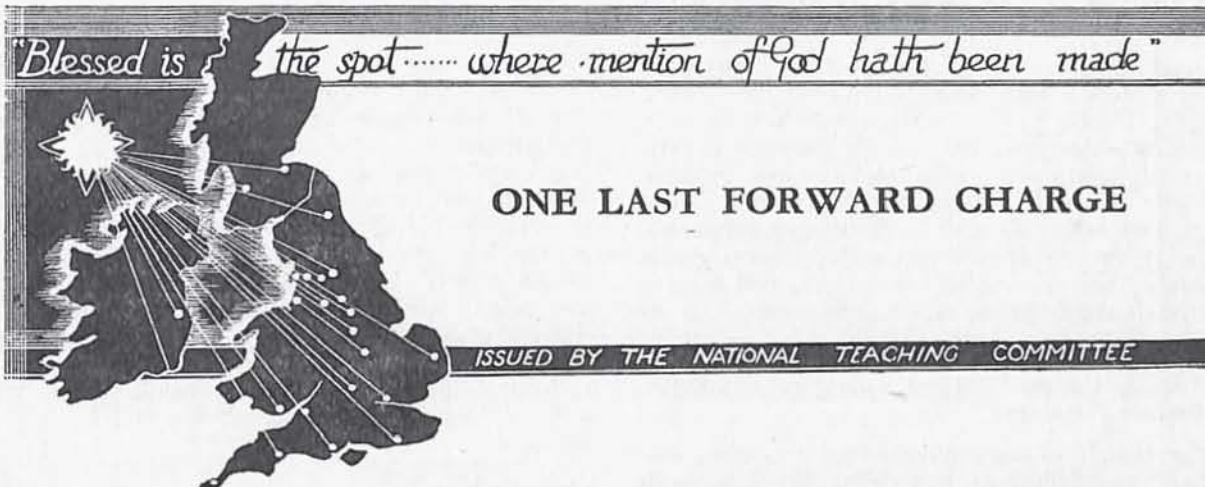
THE FUND

The sacrifices . . . are . . . individual

During the four weeks October 21st to November 17th, between National Assembly meetings, total expenditure was £316; total income was £132. Of this £132 contributions from within the British community itself were £17, believed to be the lowest total for many years over a similar period.

Just as the first fruits of the long months of work are being gathered; just as the impetus for the 'one last determined drive' over the final twenty weeks of the Plan is being released; just as the pioneers are taking their posts one by one, so the financial part of our sacrifice must not be jeopardised nor shirked, 'however costly the sacrifice.'

'The funds . . . must under no circumstances . . . be withheld.'



ONE LAST FORWARD CHARGE

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

Teaching Conference this year is destined to take its place in the history of our Community as the pivotal point, at which we gathered, and in memory of the heroic deeds and sacrifices of the early Bábís, banded together, united in spirit and purpose, to study carefully and undertake the ways and means of filling the remaining needs of our Plan. Comparing, as he does, these final months of the Six Year Plan with the days of unequalled dedication and heroism immediately preceding the martyrdom of the Báb a century ago, the Guardian himself has indicated the mood and theme of the Conference:—*One Last Forward Charge*.

Taking into consideration the imperative need for pioneers and the confirmation of new believers between now and April 21st, the N.T.C. has planned its portion of the Conference around this two-fold requirement for total victory.

The National Spiritual Assembly, during its session on Saturday evening, will present Mrs. Amelia Collins, who will be given full opportunity to consult with the believers. Every Bahá'í is specially urged to make every possible endeavour to be present for that session, as the Guardian himself is 'praying utmost benefit' of Mrs. Collins' visit.

Sunday afternoon will be devoted in full to consultation, during which the friends will have opportunity to voice their views on how we can best achieve complete victory by April.

Every believer has a programme so we need only remind you of the sessions.

Saturday Afternoon, 2.30 - 6.30.—'Bahá'u'lláh's Spiritual Battalions.'

Saturday Evening, 8 - 10.—'Victory within Sight,' Mrs. Amelia Collins.

Sunday Morning, 10 - 12.30.—'Teaching to Confirm.'

Sunday Afternoon, 2 - 4.—'While there is yet Time.'

We can only dimly grasp the overwhelming spiritual importance of the task which faces us. Mankind has from time immemorial been striving toward the day when God's Kingdom would come on earth. We, feeble and faltering though we be, have, through our recognition and love of Bahá'u'lláh, been designated to carry to the world the Message which God intends as the fulfilment of humanity's ceaseless

yearning. Our responsibility is evident and imperative. We can entertain no thoughts of failure. As the Bábís vied with each other for the privilege of being first martyred so we, in these final months, are called upon to compete with one another to be first to help fill the remaining places in our Plan. *For the Assemblies built under this Plan are the foundation bricks of the Kingdom of God itself.*

PROGRESS REPORT

Over the Line!

Joyful loving congratulations to the Oxford friends! Which Goal Town will be next?

Pioneer Roll

Adib Taherzadeh and his wife have arrived from Persia, coming, with the Guardian's approval, especially to pioneer here during the last months of the Plan. Rashid Hakimian has cancelled his plans for returning to his home in India and is now pioneering in Belfast. Olga Mills will soon move from Edinburgh to St. Ives where she will help to carry on the teaching work in that southernmost Goal Town.

Teaching to Confirm

In Brighton, the Reception for Ethel Dawe attracted 23 non-believers and 11 Bahá'ís. An excellent interview headed 'What is Bahá'í—a Faith of Unity,' appeared in the local newspaper. David Hofman has more recently been giving a series of study classes on the Eternal Covenant, and the London Assembly and its Adoption Committee have been gathering teaching strength for Brighton.

During Dorothy Ferraby's recent visit in Sheffield, the Group met for a devotional and consultation meeting. Louis Ross-Enfield and Kathleen Hornell were guests on that occasion, and Ursula Newman visited there en route to the N.S.A. in November. Weekly Monday evening Public Meetings have been inaugurated. *Pioneers are needed.*

On Sunday evening, following the successful and fruitful Teachers' Conference held in Blackpool on November 5-6 attended by fourteen Bahá'ís from Blackburn, Blackpool, Liverpool and Manchester, a Public Meeting was held at which Dick Backwell spoke of 'World Order through World Religion.' Tom Curwen was in the chair, and twenty-one non-

Bahá'ís attended. Isobel Locke has recently moved from Liverpool to Blackpool as resident teacher.

Alma Gregory visited *Liverpool* in November, taking a fireside and conducting a devotional meeting on 'The Bahá'í World To-day.' Alma's home community, *Northampton*, has recently attracted twenty-five non-believers to a similar devotional in conjunction with the slides of the Bahá'í Temple. These unique and highly successful devotional programmes, beginning with excellently prepared prologues giving the history and teachings of the Faith, will be sent to any community by the N.T.C. on request.

Alfred Sugar and Louis Ross-Enfield were the guest speakers at the Liverpool Sunday evening Public Meetings in November.

The *Glasgow* Community has been receiving fine teaching and follow-up help from the Edinburgh Assembly. Ada Williams is doing heroic pioneer work, travelling approximately 250 miles each week from her work in Motherwell to her contacts in Glasgow. *Pioneers are needed.*

Assembly Highlights

The *Edinburgh* Assembly proudly announces the declaration of its first youth member.

Claire Gung has returned to her pioneer home in *Cardiff* after having done outstanding work as a residential teacher in Brighton for several months. Cardiff has announced plans for fortnightly Public Meetings and firesides. Alma Gregory, Ralph Crates and May White have been recent speakers there.

Torquay reports 'a splendid talk by Ralph Crates, sharing the platform with a Crusader for "World Government".'

Louis Ross-Enfield spoke on 'Bahá'í, the New World Faith' to an audience of 250 people recently at the *Nottingham* Cosmopolitan Debating Society. The audience was very attentive and enquiring.

Mrs. Hainsworth has returned home after a serious operation and thanks all friends for their prayers. She is making a good recovery.

TEACHING CONFERENCE

The friends will all have heard of the second change of date, and the reasons. The N.S.A. has been in touch with Mrs. Collins, who says:

'Needless to say, I am looking forward with great joy to being with you all for your Conference.'

The Manchester Spiritual Assembly has co-operated splendidly and Conference will be held in the Bahá'í Centre, Manchester. By moving out all their furniture (except chairs!) and making arrangements for tea in another part of the building, the Manchester friends feel well able to accommodate the Conference. Friends will welcome this hospitable arrangement, and it is indeed fitting that the last national gathering of this 'fate-laden Plan' should take place in the oldest Bahá'í Centre in the north, among the well-loved Bahá'í photographs and exhibits.

THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

Persia

At the third Conference to be organised and directed entirely by Bahá'í women, representatives from twenty provincial centres, and members of the National Committee for the Advancement of Bahá'í Women, were present. The Conference was held in the National Headquarters during the week before Ridvan, and lasted for three days. Quoting from the official report: 'It's main object was to survey the vast field of work, courageously undertaken by Bahá'í women under their four-year project, to exchange views and to propose lines of action whereby progress in feminine education and welfare could be effectively ensured, and the existing handicaps and hindrances removed . . .'

Switzerland

The first All-Swiss Conference in Berne had wonderful results:—nine Declarations, seven of whom were from Geneva!

France

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh has been produced in French—a contribution of Miss Edith Sanderson.

Holland

Netty Rijnbergen writes, on the eve of her departure for Mexico: ' . . . I am awfully sorry that I have to leave all my friends in England and here in Holland, but I am sure we will all meet again . . . Though I would have loved to come to England, to study and to work with you on your six years plan. I'll never forget as long as I live the wonderful and happy days at Summer School with you all, and every year I'll be in mind with you . . . Please do me a favour and give my love and best wishes to *all* my Bahá'í friends in England . . .'

Bermuda

' . . . I receive far too little news here of your activities in the British Isles. However, I know you are hoping to send pioneers to all of England's far-flung colonies . . . I have made several good contacts and several fine articles have been published in the local papers . . . I am hoping we can exchange views and ideas, etc., which will be of benefit to both of us. It goes without saying that any of you who should decide to pioneer here, can plan on a warm-hearted welcome . . . ' From a lone believer, who is already awaiting our next Plan—when the present one is triumphantly achieved.

STOP PRESS

Declarations, supported in each case by the Group, have been sent to the N.S.A. from Mr. Joe Jamieson of Newcastle, and from Mr. Alec McKechnie of Glasgow.

Adib and Mrs. Taherzadeh have taken up their pioneer post in Glasgow.

Mahboubeh Shakib has enrolled in a Newcastle hospital for completion of her training, and will go there in February.