

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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

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"Ensure total victory now within reach . . ."

SHOGHI EFFENDI

No. 77

Bahá'í Year 106

FEBRUARY 1950

A WONDERFUL TEACHING CONFERENCE

Springboard For Last Supreme Effort Culminating April 21st

THE GUARDIAN'S MESSAGE

Feel moved address this eleventh hour my last fervent appeal assembled representatives British Community seize opportunity Teaching Conference arouse entire body followers Faith Baha'u'llah British Isles save fortunes Plan now hanging balance. Entreat once again all Believers England Wales Scotland Ireland whether young old men women native-born visitors overseas newly-enrolled veterans brace themselves as hour centenary Bab's noblest act sacrifice approaches. One last supreme sacrificial sustained effort designed ensure total victory now within reach constituting befitting culmination final phase six years heroic endeavour, and worthy tribute collectively paid by British upholders cause Baha'u'llah immortal memory dearly beloved Martyr Prophet their faith. Arranging transmission £500 further contribution consummation enterprise unprecedented in scope spiritual potentialities half century British Baha'i history.—SHOGHI

Mere perusal of this cable, challenging and soul-stirring though these words are to every devoted follower of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, cannot convey the deep feeling engendered amongst the assembled friends which prompted the Conference to send the following telegram to the Secretaries of all Groups and Assemblies throughout Britain:

'Teaching Conference profoundly shaken and inspired by Guardian's cable just received. Urges you call every believer to special meeting immediately. Copy cable posted to-day every believer.

Conference'

With the cable was enclosed this letter, and all envelopes were posted that night:

Beloved Friend,

At this year's Teaching Conference a spiritual fervour of such intensity developed that the friends feel impelled to share this bounty with the whole British Bahá'í Community.

We therefore enclose a copy of the Guardian's cable, along with a copy of a telegram sent to your Secretary.

We humbly urge you to respond, without fail, to this heartfelt appeal from the Conference.

In service to Bahá'u'lláh,

TEACHING CONFERENCE

It was a Conference which was blessed from the very start. The Guardian had cabled '*Praying fervently success forthcoming conference*'; Mrs. Amelia Collins was with us; we were in the very room in which the Plan really got under way in February 1946, and the room was full right from the very beginning. Almost eighty chairs were occupied when the Conference opened at 2.45. On the window-ledges was a book display; the room was brightened by flowers tastefully arranged, whilst on the walls of both the Centre and corridor outside were masses of display material, which amply demonstrated the strides taken during the past few years in advertising, and publicity of all kinds. As someone remarked, there was, through the whole Conference, that real love, and joy of being together, which characterised Summer School last year.

The Conference then, opened well, with every Group and Local Assembly represented (with the exception of Blackburn and Bournemouth); the short cable above, from the Guardian, was presented; and greetings from Miss Ethel Dawe, Hassan Sabri, Arthur B. Cole, and other absent friends were received.

In opening the after-tea session, the Chairman gave the thrilling news of Stockport—how it had been found that a number of believers were deprived of Bahá'í community life because of the distance they

lived from the Manchester Centre, and how that, as a group of them lived in the county of Cheshire in an area around Stockport, the N.S.A. had approached the Manchester Assembly with the suggestion that an Assembly might be formed in Stockport. Full co-operation of the Manchester Assembly was readily given, the believers themselves enthusiastically supported the idea, and the full story was sent to the Guardian, who not only approved the plans but allowed Stockport to be a substitution for St. Ives. Whilst this was a tremendous step forward in the Plan, it came as a sad blow to Bernard Leach, the lone representative from St. Ives, but he rejoiced with the Conference, for it meant that a new Assembly could be formed almost immediately as there were eight residents in this district and one pioneer had offered to move there.

The Secretary of the N.T.C. then presented graphically the needs of the Plan, using a 6 ft. map of Britain, first showing how the Cause had grown in these Islands, and then calling on representatives from each goal town to describe the activities and requirements of their own Group. It was interesting to learn during this session that in the first forty years of the history of the Faith in Britain only 3 Spiritual Assemblies had been formed, so the formation of Bradford and Torquay in April 1939 was a great step forward. The little band of 130 believers, who were pledged by their delegates at Convention in April 1944 to form 19 new Assemblies, were faced with the situation that only 20 of them lived in the towns which were destined to become new centres of the Cause, thus over 150 more believers were needed in the *new towns alone*, to achieve success. By Convention 1948 the Initial Phase of this Plan was over, and from a start of 17 adult Bahá'ís in 9 towns, there had been built 9 Assemblies with a population of 86 adult Bahá'ís. In all, during that same period, the British Community had more than doubled its numbers, and almost trebled the number of its Assemblies — 122 new believers had accepted the Faith. Since this remarkable achievement, a number of Assemblies had dropped below strength and only Norwich and Oxford had been won in 1949, so that the picture presented to the Conference, with only 15½ weeks before the end of the Plan, was:

Goal Towns	Present	No. Required	Weak Assemblies	No. Required
Belfast ...	2	7	Bradford ...	2
Brighton ...	4	5	Blackburn ...	1
Blackpool ...	5	4	Bristol ...	1
Glasgow ...	4	5	Bournemouth ...	1
Liverpool ...	7	2	Cardiff ...	2
Newcastle ...	6	3	Dublin ...	1
Sheffield ...	4	5	Edinburgh ...	2
Stockport ...	8	1	Leeds ...	2
			Norwich ...	1
			Nottingham ...	2
		—		—
		32		15
		—		—

The overwhelming need for intensive work along the whole 'front' was only too obvious.

The 4 in Sheffield resulted from the decision, announced at Conference, of Marion and Arthur Norton to pioneer there almost immediately; and the substitution of Stockport for St. Ives allowed Mrs. Mills, *en route* to St. Ives, to go to Brighton.

Mrs. Alma Gregory and Miss Una Coward, both of Northampton, are pioneers in the process of settlement, and Miss Stella Farnsworth and Miss M. Shakib are settling in Blackpool and Newcastle respectively. Miss V. Mohtadi is trying to settle in Brighton. Two pioneer offers for Stockport were received — Miss Jessica Young and Mr. H. Habibi (both of Manchester); and Mr. Silverman (also of Manchester) placed himself at the disposal of the N.T.C.

Thus, after Conference, 40 believers are required in 17 towns with 14½ weeks to go.

Money for pioneering was briefly touched upon in respect to the principle of deputising, and such was the spirit of this occasion that within a few minutes over £700 was donated.

Both in this session and in the one on Sunday morning, it was realised that there was not the time left to count on new believers filling the gaps, though the strenuous efforts of all the friends are sure to be blessed, and some confirmations are assured; pioneers are, as always, the key. The 10 Assemblies which had fallen below strength had a great part to play by increasing their numbers, and becoming so united in love that they will be points of attraction, and centres of radiance.

By the time the evening session was due to start, more believers had arrived, and all towns, with the exception of Blackburn, were represented, with a total attendance of 90. During the break for dinner, the long cable from the Guardian was telephoned from London, and even though its text had not been recorded in full, it set the tone for the evening session, during which the N.S.A. introduced Mrs. Amelia Collins and thereafter left it in her hands. Her charm, radiance and bubbling humour were eclipsed only by her wonderful devotion to our beloved Guardian so that it was the stories of him, and of her experiences in Haifa, that so captivated her audience. The reading of the Tablet of Visitation by the Chairman of the N.S.A., whilst all turned to 'Akká, was a truly befitting climax to that joyous, inspiring day.

Perhaps it was the realisation that this 'eleventh hour' Conference was more than half way over that brought the friends together on the following morning in a serious frame of mind, or perhaps it was that it did not seem possible that the high level achieved on the day before could be surpassed, but whatever it was, the Conference quickly settled down to the matter before them — Teaching to Confirm.

Whilst it was made clear from the beginning that it was not right to *expect* new people to learn of the Faith and be confirmed in it in the remaining few weeks, it was readily appreciated that new methods of systematic teaching were needed.

The story of the Teachers' Conferences in Liverpool, Summer School, and Blackpool, was told, and the theory of teaching the Covenant right from the student's early contact with the Faith was explained, along with the experimental 6-week course — 'The Changeless Faith of God.' It was a 'meaty' period,

full of information, but it was soon apparent from the consultation that followed that there had been real appreciation of what had been presented. Many important aspects of teaching were studied; deep-rooting in the Covenant; the training of the student even after the desire had been expressed to accept the Faith; the parent-child relationship which exists between the teacher and student; the duty of the Bahá'í when teaching to make the way clear but in nowise rush, or put pressure on the student; the use of the Master's 'Will and Testament' and the 'Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh,' as essential teaching material to be used right from the early introduction to the Faith; the technique of allowing the student to 'empty' himself until he becomes receptive to the Teachings; the need for deep study by the teachers so as to teach themselves, and above all, the need for absolute love, patience and understanding on the part of the teacher, and radiant unity and harmony to be seen in the Group or Assembly.

Much more could be said, but it must be sufficient for this brief report to record the feeling, which was expressed by all who have attended previous Conferences, that this conference witnessed not only a greater love and joy amongst the friends, but a maturity resulting from the pioneering and teaching work which had been undertaken by such a large proportion of the British believers. It is interesting to note here the composition of this unique Conference. By the time the afternoon session commenced, another 8 participants had arrived, two being from Blackburn; thus the attendance of the whole Conference was:

From the 'old' Local Assemblies	
(including 23 from Manchester)	31
From the Local Assemblies of the Plan ...	38
From the Goal Towns	25
Isolated	3
Visitors	1
	98
	—
Number of participants who have become Bahá'ís since April 1944	40
Number of Pioneers present	34

The Centre was packed to capacity for the last session of all, and the opening was delayed in the hopes that the correct version of the cable from the Guardian would be available. This was not to be for a little while, so the Chairman opened by reading excerpts from a recent letter from the Guardian, and re-reading the incorrect version of the cable. The atmosphere could only be described as tense, and the inspired reading of the Báb's Farewell Address to the Letters of the Living, by Mrs. A. C. Gregory deeply stirred the Conference. Not even the blatant telephone destroyed this intensity of feeling, for it was the expected text of the cable. There was a feeling that the Guardian himself was at the other end of the telephone, and all ears were straining to catch the odd snatches of the conversation. The incorrect version had certainly moved the hearers but in its corrected form, the message seemed to address itself to the very soul of every believer present; *Feel moved address this eleventh hour my last fervent appeal Assembled*

representatives . . . and dear Millie, moving to face the crowded room to read the Tablet of Ahmad, drew our attention to our dearly loved Guardian, probably at that moment prostrated at the Shrines praying fervently success . . . Conference, calling us in that room to arouse entire body followers Faith Bahá'u'lláh British Isles save fortunes Plan now hanging balance, and pleading for one last supreme sacrificial sustained effort . . .

The reading of the Tablet was a thing never to be forgotten, and as the minutes of the silence which followed it slowly ticked by, the souls of many of the believers were searched by the self-imposed question, 'What more can I do?'

In the consultation which followed, once the silence was broken, many offers of service were made, but the strongest feeling of the Conference was the urgent need to respond to *arouse entire body*. None could doubt the power felt in that room, nor was there any doubt that if the spirit of the Conference could only touch the absent friends, the Plan would be assured. Thus was born the plan to:

- (a) Send a telegram to every Group and Assembly calling an immediate meeting for all the believers.
- (b) Send a duplicated copy of the cable to every believer at once, along with a covering letter and a statement of the needs of the Plan, the news of Stockport and the offers received during the Conference.
- (c) Feature the cable in large type on the front page of the *Journal*.
- (d) Give a mandate to every participant of the Conference to carry with him at all times the spirit of the Conference, and endeavour to share this with all those who had not had the privilege of being there.

It was also suggested that every believer pledge himself to bring some new believer to the Cause during the next few months; and that the N.T.C. consider some plan of unified teaching in every Community. Offers received during, and as a result of, the Conference included:

Constance Langdon-Davies would pioneer Belfast in April if needed, and *Lizzie Hainsworth* would accompany her if possible; *Bernard Leach* placed himself at the disposal of the N.S.A.; *Dorothy Ferraby* would go on a short term pioneer project at the end of the Plan and *Elsie Lee* would accompany her; *Susanne Solomon* and *Hugh McKinley* would pioneer if they could be released from Cardiff; *Marion Norton* and *Alma Gregory* asked if there was more they could do than what was already planned for them; teaching offers were received from *Dora Coleman*, *Ted Cardell*, *Prudence George*, *Shomais Alai*, *Adib Taherzadeh*, and one month's residence in Belfast from *Muriel Mathews*; *Brian Townshend* — all his holidays.

Thus this crucial Conference ended on the note of re-dedication and eagerness to serve. Even before it closed, the committee appointed to put into effect the plans made, was at its job. It had not been felt possible to draft a cable to the Guardian before the closing scenes were over, and the final decisions made, but as the friends dispersed to go to their respective

homes, snatches of his cable to us echoed and re-echoed through our minds:

'eleventh hour . . . last fervent appeal . . . fortunes Plan now hanging balance . . . One last supreme sacrificial sustained effort . . .'

and, raising all these efforts above the level of mere striving for a goal, he tells us we can, by winning the Plan, collectively pay:

' . . . worthy tribute . . . immortal memory dearly beloved Martyr Prophet . . .'

The cable to him which was sent late on Sunday night tells the story:

'Conference inspired new sense maturity realisation, sends loving grateful thanks inspiring cable generous gift deeply conscious presence Bab's Bahá'u'lláh's spirit. Increasingly aware nearness Guardian resolved unified action and personal re-dedication. Friends greatly uplifted by Mrs. Collins radiant faith, devotion. Present needs complete plan. 32 in 8 goal towns, 15 for weak assemblies, 1 pioneer arose Conference complete Stockport Assembly, 3 other offers. £700 donated during Conference step resolved send copy cable message requesting all believers consult immediately needs Plan. All offer Guardian deepest loyalty of loving hearts.'

His reply: *'Greatly heartened news Conference prayers continually ascending throne Bahá'u'lláh total success Plan.'*

NATIONAL FUND

Guarantors

At its November meeting the National Assembly faced the situation that the anticipated income from the contributions by Local Assemblies and individual believers, whether through the pledge scheme or independently, would not be enough to meet the outlay necessary to complete the Six Year Plan. It just did not seem to lie within the friends' capacity to provide, and the most careful wisdom in expenditure could not greatly reduce the estimate of our needs; indeed it was recognised that even some increase over the estimate might be unavoidable in certain circumstances.

In view of this and the Guardian's promise that on completion of the Plan we might rest, we decided that we must be prepared to spread the cost over part of the future when expenditure is likely to be on a reduced scale.

We therefore resolved to approach a number of individuals inviting them to underwrite our overdraft up to an amount of £2,000 until April 1952 by providing us with individual guarantees to a total of this amount which we could deposit with our bank.

We are very happy to report that at the time of writing the greater part of this sum has been underwritten in this way.

Income and Expenditure

The Treasurer is very glad to be able to report that for the 4-week period, November 17th to December 15th, receipts at £398 exceeded expenditure at £324. Receipts included the proceeds from a concert specially undertaken (by Joan Coulson) for the Fund; the refund of an entire budget allowance over several months by one pioneer; and the moneys remitted from a special 7-year Covenant.

ADDITIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

Elsie Turnbull, Liverpool
Renate Torop, London
Faizollah Taheed (Youth from Iran), Stratford
Fuad Majzub (Youth from Iran), London
Clifford Jones, Dublin
Hooshang Assassi (From Iran), London
Mohammed Damerchi (Youth from Iraq), London
George Shepperdson, Northampton
Arthur Silverman, Manchester

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

Investment Scheme

In reply to a number of enquiries from friends: Amounts of £50 or over are invited, by the N.S.A., from members of the British Bahá'í community, as investments in the Publishing Trust. The details are set forth in the prospectus distributed last November.

The terms of the investments are:

3½ per cent. for 10 years.

4 per cent. for 20 years.

So far 2 amounts have been invested, totalling £750.

Production

New title:

'The Bahá'í Faith' in Welsh; 6d.

Books in Production:

'The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh' (a compilation).

'Hidden Words' (reprint).

'The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' (new edition).

'Teaching Problems' by Ruhiyyih Khanum.

Awaiting publication, but needing finance:

'Principles of Bahá'í Administration.'

'Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era' (new edition).

'Paris Talks' by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.'

'Dawnbreakers' by Nabil (slightly abridged).

'Bahá'í Writings on Christianity' (a compilation by George Townshend).

'The Master's Talks' (a selection).

'Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi.'

Prescription for Living by Ruhiyyih Rabbani

Publication day is February 23rd

The Trust will gladly receive orders now and supply for that day. There are two editions:

cloth @ 7/6

paper @ 3/6

A son has been born to Zarin and Adib Taherzadeh.

THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

Australia and New Zealand

The news from Australia and New Zealand inspires one with the feeling of consistent enthusiasm and activity in that part of the world.

Not only do they hold a Summer School (which takes place in the winter) but also a Winter School (which takes place in the summer).

In accordance with instructions from the Guardian and in pursuance of their Six Year Plan, the N.S.A. has formed two new Groups in the suburbs of Sydney. The members of these Groups were withdrawn from the Sydney Community. In the same way several new Groups will be formed in the environs of Adelaide.

Mrs. Bertha Dobbins, while on a teaching trip to Perth, W.A., initiated a new and dignified house to house approach. 'It was arranged to select a street and, the night before, deliver the twelve principles, together with a personal note, to the effect that one or two friends would call one night next week to tell them about the Bahá'í Revelation if they wished to hear about it. If not, there was no harm done.' This method proved highly successful, and people were most courteous. Later, in Lismore, New South Wales, Mrs. Dobbins used this same house to house approach and among many others, called upon the Mayor, who appreciated her attitude that the Mayor should know all about movements in his area of jurisdiction.

Canada

Canada has its Five Year Plan, inaugurated by the Guardian through a cable to the first Canadian Convention in April, 1948. Some of their objectives are as follows:

'Doubling the number of local Assemblies throughout the Dominion and raising to 100 the total number of localities where Bahá'ís reside throughout the provinces.' Fifteen Assemblies were in existence at the beginning of the Plan. Of these, one has been lost and two more added, bringing the total to 16 at the present time. There were 64 localities similarly existing at the beginning, and this number now stands at 76.

'The constitution of a group in Newfoundland'

On October 8th, Miss Margaret Reid of Toronto, a Bahá'í of a year, arrived in St. John's to become the first pioneer there. Her account of her journey to St. John's and her arrival and settlement there, shows clearly what a soul shaking experience it can be to go alone to an entirely new area, to pioneer in the Cause of God.

'The formation of a nucleus of the Faith in Greenland'

'The participation of Eskimos and Red Indians in membership to share administrative privileges in local institutions of the Faith in Canada.' One Indian Bahá'í family has recently taken up residence in Ontario, bringing the number of voting believers of the Indian race in Canada to three.

The Laurentian Summer School, held during the week of July 30th to August 5th, was a great success. As reported in the Canadian *Bahá'í News*:

'Special efforts were made to contact our French-Canadian neighbours this week. As if in answer to prayer the owner of the Beaulac store arranged a bonfire on our opening night, built a platform for dancing, supplied music and invited the whole neighbourhood. We arrived five-car strong and square-danced with French Canada. We invited them to our own bonfire on the next evening on Bahá'í property, and again, on our closing night, we exchanged English songs for French folk songs, joining together in the famous "Alouette." Our neighbours arrived by car and truck with all their children and listened attentively to a welcome speech in French by Paul Rhéaume. Our American friends were deeply moved to share such an unaccustomed experience with a group of people whose tongue they could not understand and who are about to awaken to the significance of the Spirit of the New Age.'

Alaska

The Faith is advancing with great momentum in Alaska. Inquirers are so numerous that there are not enough Bahá'ís to take care properly of the new contacts.

Agnes Parent (Indian and French) and James Cooper (negro) appeared on a panel discussion with several speakers from various races. The room was crowded with new people. A Buddhist, a tourist from New Mexico, a lady from Norway and one from Puerto Rico, all expressed a wish to know more of the Faith. The whole report from this northern land, in the *Bahá'í News* for November, is correspondingly interesting and exciting.

Persia

At the sixteenth Annual Convention held in Tihiran, from April 26th to May 2nd, 87 delegates were present out of the 95, who were elected from 22 administrative divisions. Quoting from the report: '... Discussion on pioneering became the key-note of Convention ... there was a five day discussion and talk on pioneering which can be regarded as the broadest, the most exhaustive survey ever made since the inception of the Plan ... a unique feature of the Convention was the occasional heart-gripping scenes caused by the moving manner in which the delegates, some with tears in the eye and heavy lump in the throat, appealed for unprecedented sacrifice on the pioneering front ...'

STOP PRESS

Newcastle. Spiritual Assembly was formed on February 2nd. The declaration of J. Mitchinson and the pioneering of Vida Johnston and Maboubeh Shakib made up the numbers.

Stockport. Spiritual Assembly was formed on February 7th. Jessica Young and Mr. Habibi pioneered to make the Assembly.

Hassan Sabri is coming over to help us for three months. The Guardian cabled in reply to N.T.C. enquiry 'Highly approve'.

The New History Society and its junior branch, The Caravan, were founded by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab in the early thirties. Sohrab was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's personal secretary for many years. He was also the Master's interpreter during His journeys in Europe and America. He it was who took the Master's Tablets of the Divine Plan to the American believers. Furthermore, Sohrab was the translator of a large number of the Tablets and prayers revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá'.

After the passing of the Master, he served the Cause in America for several years, but gradually he refused to bide by the provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá'. At first he challenged the authority of the National Spiritual Assembly. Next he challenged the authority of the Guardian.

Sohrab claims to accept the Will and Testament of the Master, but maintains that the Guardian has fallen short of the station accorded him by 'Abdu'l-Bahá'. This muddled feeble argument is not worthy of notice. What does the Master say in His Will, while speaking of the authority of the Guardian of the Cause of God and the Universal House of Justice?

'The sacred and youthful branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice, to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the 'Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One (The Báb) (May my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God; whoso obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them, hath not obeyed God; whoso rebelleth against him and against them hath rebelled against God; whoso opposeth him hath opposed God; whoso contendeth with them, hath contended with God; whoso disputeth with him, hath disputed with God; whoso denieth him, hath denied God; whoso disbelieveth in him, hath disbelieved in God; whoso deviateth, separateth himself and turneth aside from him, hath in truth deviated, separated himself and turned aside from God. May the wrath, the fierce indignation, the vengeance of God rest upon him! The mighty stronghold shall remain impregnable and safe through obedience to him who is the Guardian of the Cause of God.'

Ahmad Sohrab, like other violators, has failed to bring about a rift in the body of the believers. Apart from a wealthy American lady who has financed his movement, only a few other individuals here and there have paid any attention to him. Those who are members of the New History Society and The Caravan have been drawn from outside the Cause, and their membership in these organisations does not make them the followers of a new Faith. However, Sohrab is always trying to seduce the believers from the Covenant. The friends should be aware of his machinations, and whenever they meet any member of Sohrab's organisations, explain to them that Sohrab has refused to accept the discipline of the Cause, and has gone outside of it to propagate his own views which are largely drawn from the teachings of the Cause. We should point out to them that there is no room in the Cause for sectarianism, and show them how such efforts made in the past have inevitably come to grief. There are the examples of Azal, and Muhammad 'Ali, one the half-brother of

Bahá'u'lláh, and the other the half-brother of Abdu'l-Bahá'.

It has never been any physical opposition on the part of the champions of the Covenant that has defeated its violators. Nay, rather it has been the powers inherent within the Covenant of God that have ruined the designs of the Covenant-breakers. All this should be explained with tact, patience and firmness.

More important than anything else is making the reality of the Covenant felt by such people.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

National Office

The National Office is leaving its present premises and as from February 10th, 1950, letters for the National Spiritual Assembly should be sent to —

49 Sandbourne Avenue,
Merton Park,
London, S.W.19.

This is the Secretary's private address. The new address of the London Bahá'í Centre, which will be the Registered Office of the National Assembly for legal purposes, will be announced shortly. The permanent address of the National Assembly remains —

BM/BAHA'I,
London, W.C.1.

but this address is not recommended to correspondents in the British Isles for normal correspondence, as its use involves a delay of 24 hours in forwarding.

Bradford

The pioneering of Mr. and Mrs. Norton has made it necessary for the Bradford Spiritual Assembly to elect fresh officers. The new secretary is —

Ralph Naylor, 4 Derby Street,
Great Horton, Bradford.

National Teaching Committee

No change, but it is absolutely essential that the Secretary's name should appear on all envelopes addressed to the Teaching Committee —

HAINSWORTH,
179 Woodstock Road, Oxford.

MR. TOWNSHEND'S NEW BOOK

We are happy to publish the following cable from the Guardian to Mr. Townshend:

'Glad Tidings Bahá'u'lláh gratefully received heartfelt congratulations latest evidence unique magnificent services Faith.'

This refers, of course, to the new compilation of Bahá'í Scriptures made by Mr. Townshend and published by John Murray in *The Wisdom of the East* series under the title *The Glad Tidings of Bahá'u'lláh*. (4s. net.).

Margaret Sullivan is recuperating in a sanatorium and would welcome letters from the friends. Her address is:

Block 3,
Cheshire Joint Sanatorium,
Market Drayton,
Salop

'THE THIN RED LINE'

The picture of the serious situation existing in the majority of our L.S.A.s, presented to Teaching Conference and reported in this issue of the *Journal*, makes clear to every reader the process, which has been taking place for some time now, of the spreading out of all available pioneer resources over the whole British Bahá'í 'front.' In fact, the majority of our Local Assemblies, whether in Virgin Territories or on the home front, whether old or newly-established, are below the full complement of members required for their recognition on April 21st this year.

The National Assembly has been aware of, and indeed has to some extent encouraged this process, for three main reasons.

Firstly, we believe that each offer which adds to the amount of teaching activity anywhere, does in fact increase the amount of it everywhere, and so the whole community benefits. Sacrifice, and effort expended, do certainly increase capacity, and also one's efforts away from home are so often more effective.

Secondly, by the stretching of the 'thin red line' almost to its limit the work can be pursued at once along the 'whole front,' and the virtue of having this work progressing in 24 weak centres as against a much smaller number of comparatively stronger centres, is that there are more 'points of unity' through which the Power of Bahá'u'lláh can flow.

Thirdly, and by far the most important, there is a unity of sacrifice; all are giving, and all are becoming more conscious that the 'advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole.'

With these three reasons in mind then, the N.S.A. has resolved that the N.T.C. should be empowered to accept *any* offer of service, of whatever duration, and from whatever source, provided that the home Assembly is not so seriously weakened as to be unable to get a quorum for its meeting. If an Assembly were reduced below this strength it would have to cease as a continuing body.

As the fate of the Plan hangs in the balance it must not be said that resources once offered or made available are not being brought into use. Everyone counts, every offer is of use, every effort must be made effective in this last determined drive for victory. It will, however, be obvious that grave risks must be taken, one in particular being the tendency for some pioneers, in their eagerness to serve, and meeting with temporary setbacks in their pioneer posts, to offer to move on again before their own job is completed. To these, the N.S.A. would point out the example, *par excellence*, of Marion Jack in Bulgaria, who has never left her post, even when during the most trying time she was offered asylum in Haifa. Once in a pioneer post, the blessings will surely be earned by the strictest devotion to the task at hand. Those pioneers then, who are already pioneering in a town which cannot release them, can, in most cases, best serve the needs of the whole by re-dedicated intensified labour in their pioneer post.

The gravest risk of all is, that this weakening of every community in Britain now faces us with the challenge of 'all or nothing.' The issue is clearly before us, but we can face it squarely, for as long ago as August 12th, 1944, our beloved Guardian wrote,

'Every sacrifice should be made, every effort should be exerted, every avenue should be explored to ensure the success of the Plan. The immediate destinies of the entire community depend upon it . . .' And now, in his most recent cable, he says, ' . . . prayers *continually* ascending throne Bahá'u'lláh total success Plan.'

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

'LAST DITCHING'

From time to time, the question has been raised about 'Last Ditch' pioneers. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing, but the Committee would like to clarify the situation. When asked if one could make a 'last ditch' offer, we take it to mean an offer of settlement for the shortest possible time.

Now the true pioneer offer is the one which has no strings attached to it at all, but is an offer to transfer one's residence to a place in need, and to terminate it only when one can be released or the job is done; the place, and date of end of project to be worked out in consultation with the N.T.C.

It is with the help of this kind of project that we hope to achieve victory, but we realise that in the last few days of the Plan, it may be necessary to fill certain breaches in an emergency way with pioneers who must be speedily released. We would like to know of any such offer. We will welcome any offer of service, and stand ready to consult at very short notice.

It will be realised, however, that victory will only be won, if we can satisfy the National Spiritual Assembly that on April 21st there will be a full membership of at least 9 in all the 24 towns in the Plan.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

SUMMER SCHOOL

Letter from the Guardian

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

Your letter of October 9th was received and our beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He was very glad to hear the School was such a success this year, and that — a very important factor — it placed no extra burden on the National Fund at this critical juncture.

Next year your School will be held after the end of your Plan; he hopes the victorious end! It would be suitable to hold some kind of review of how the goals were won and to remember the many sacrifices that have been made, for they have been very real and taxed to the uttermost the strength of the servants of Bahá'u'lláh in the British Isles.

Also he feels it would be good to have some course on the Covenant, the force that binds and strengthens the Bahá'í Community and holds it together, when so many man-made institutions are disintegrating and going on the rocks of discord and lack of Faith.

Likewise, discussion of the future needs of the community should be held. By next summer you will know better what these are, and can formulate your points to be taken up and considered.

He will pray that a suitable place may be found for the friends to gather.

Every year your School is more representative and successful than the year before, and he feels sure this will continue to be so until that happy day comes when Summer School develops at last into a seat of Bahá'í learning.

With loving greetings,
R. RABBANI

May the Almighty bless your meritorious efforts, guide and sustain you in your activities, enable you to extend continually their range, and contribute to the consolidation of the newly-born institutions of His Faith.

Your true and grateful brother,
SHOGHI

OUR JOB UNTIL '53

A Letter from America

In 1944 the Bahá'ís of North and South America celebrated a great event. This celebration took place at the Bahá'í Temple in Chicago. A great victory had been won, both in North and South America, and the believers were jubilant over this victory. The Guardian praised them highly for their endeavours.

Then two short years passed and in 1946, in a cable to the Convention, the Guardian outlined the objectives for the second Seven Year Plan. These objectives included the safeguarding of the victories already won in the United States, the establishing of three National Spiritual Assemblies, one in Canada, one in Central and one in South America, the opening up of the ten goal countries in Europe and the completing of the holiest House of Worship in the Bahá'í world, the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West.

No sooner had the believers heard this news than a new stimulus stirred the whole Bahá'í world. Canada rushed forward to consolidate the thirteen Canadian Assemblies already formed, in order to broaden the basis and reinforce the foundations of the future Pillar of the Universal House of Justice.

Instead of a National Teaching Committee covering all of the United States, four Area Teaching Committees were set up and a special effort for closer co-operation was sought in all these areas by the Area and Regional Committees.

South America and Central America set up Regional Teaching Committees of their own, made up almost altogether of native new believers, and a new determination filled their hearts to build for that wonderful day when both Central and South America would elect their first National Spiritual Assembly.

The Guardian called for nine holy souls who would arise and set out for the shores of Europe and settle in the ten goal countries which he outlined. He spoke of this project as a crusade yet unfought and unbelievably potent, and likened it to the crusades embarked upon by the early Christians.

To these first nine people who arose he said the following: 'They can neither retrace their steps nor falter, nor even afford to mark time. The sands are running out, the short span of six brief years intervening between the present hour and the termination of the second stage of the enterprise on which they have embarked will soon expire.'

Another of these objectives brought to us in this cable was the completion of the interior of the Temple before 1953. The Guardian stated that believers without exception are called upon to steel themselves without delay to face an unexpected emergency, seize a God-given opportunity, meet a supreme challenge.

The American Bahá'í Community were faced with a financial responsibility of \$850,000.00, which would have to be met before the termination of the Plan, plus an additional \$300,000.00 to carry on the other activities requested by the Guardian.

A Special Plan was set up by the National Assembly which would give all members of the Bahá'í Community an opportunity to participate in this wonderful venture. The Guardian had by this time stated that the Temple was the only one of the four objectives which hung precariously in the balance, and he had laid greater and greater emphasis on our completing the interior of the Temple at the earliest possible moment.

This Special Plan which the National Assembly devised was as follows: they asked for a thousand believers to resolve to contribute \$400.00 a year for two years. They asked for another thousand believers to join the \$100.00 group for two years. They asked for another thousand believers to join the \$25.00 group for two years. They suggested that special contributions should be made by those who were able to make them out of principle, life insurance, or through the sale of securities.

From the beginning of the Plan about \$330,000.00 has come in. The Temple budget requirements for the balance of the calendar year 1949 amount to about \$305,000.00; which means that we will have about \$25,000.00 towards our 1950 Temple requirements. These requirements for 1950 will amount to approximately \$500,000.00. This must be met in addition to \$150,000.00 to carry on the other three objectives and the administrative work.

The opportunity afforded to each believer in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is one which will not be open for ever — during your and my lifetime we will never have another opportunity of being a part of the building of the holiest House of Worship in all the Bahá'í world.

'Abdu'l-Bahá has said some wonderful things about the day when the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will be completed. He has said: 'Verily the founding of the Temple will mark the inception of the Kingdom of God on earth.' The Guardian in his Messages to America, page 30, says: 'Welcome particularly recent action designed expedite termination of divinely founded Temple ordained to be the ark destined to ride triumphantly the tidal wave of world-encircling calamities and offer sole refuge to storm-tossed sufferers of sinful, steadily sinking civilisation.'

In a more recent letter he has also said: 'The builders of the most holy House of Worship through the outpouring of their substance are called upon to match the sacrifice of life and resources so freely given by the hosts of unnumbered heroes in the opening decade of the first Bahá'í century.'

What an opportunity faces our generation! Only those who come after us will be able to adequately appraise it.