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MAINSRING AND PIVOT

The Guardian once indicated that the National Assembly was the mainspring of the manifold activities of the National Community. The present article is designed to review the extent to which the present assembly has this year so far performed this function.

Apart from the easily compiled statistics of six meetings comprising approximately 120 hours consultation and 423 decisions separately recorded in minutes many of which themselves constitute whole constellations of action, the chief aspects of N.S.A. activity this year may be viewed under five main divisions: (1) Teaching and expansion; (2) Finance; (3) Consolidation; (4) Other special activity; and (5) Routine work.

These may be best reviewed in the reverse order. It is not often realised the degree and quantity of careful attention to numerous reports of committees and sub-committees, to minutes and records, to specially commissioned articles for the Journal, to the particular analysis of specially allotted problems, which N.S.A. members are called on to put forth. It is usual for them to have 6 or 7 substantial reports to dig into before each meeting—from N.T.C., A.D.C., N.Y.C., B.P.T., Treasurer, Secretary (usually two from him), and generally at least one N.S.A. Sub-Committee. All this is apart from the work performed by the N.S.A. officers, the very considerable volume of correspondence handled by the Secretary as part-time, voluntary work, the work of payment, receipt, record and report by the Treasurer who also is National Registrar, the frequent demands made on the Chairman for advice, in some of the more urgent details of administration and for signature very often to documents for which the Secretary's signature alone is insufficient. Routine too, but how closely it affects everyone, is the careful selection of believers to serve on national committees, which, as trusted executives of the N.S.A., are yearly gaining in experience and stature, and perform the ever more intricate and important detailed activity of the Cause with ever-increasing efficiency.

Other special activity has included many different things. The cementing of international Bahá'í relations through regular communication with the Guardian, through the despatch of a special representative to the First European Bahá'í Teaching Conference in Geneva, through the gift of archive material to the American community in recognition of the great teaching help they had given us, through the offer of the supply of certain books to India, through the ready acceptance and exchange of gift copies of periodicals and other publications from all the National Assemblies, through the connection built up with the Persian N.S.A. concerning the arrival of certain Persian believers in this country—all these and more form an ever-growing part of the N.S.A. obligations. From the last has sprung the increasing responsibility put upon the N.S.A. for the welfare of those many young Persians who have come to this country for schooling. Another aspect of this has been the hospitality which it has been the N.S.A.'s privilege to be able to offer at almost every meeting to one or more believers in the international field. Yet another great and potentially fruitful field of activity has been the preparation and despatch of the announcement concerning Mr. Townshend which, together with the clarion call he is so shortly to make, will surely have the "mighty results" of which the Guardian wrote. Then again at each meeting there has been a great number of difficult problems about the affairs of local communities and of individual believers themselves to be carefully and lovingly pondered and elucidated.

Under the heading of consolidation should be put several most important developments this year. The institution of the Assembly Letter, containing information of special interest arising from each meeting, will have had the effect of strengthening the mutual relationship which should more and more perfectly obtain between the N.S.A. and the community it represents. This fundamental of harmonious unity based on knowledge and trust was also surely enhanced

by the visits paid by individual N.S.A. members to all established communities, and will have been yet further confirmed by the eight meetings to inaugurate the Final Phase on November 14th. There has thus been an increase in the to-and-fro flow of news and views so that individually and collectively there have been forged stronger links with the whole community.

With regard to finance, the N.S.A. has devoted many anxious hours to considering ways and means of safeguarding what resources there are, of stimulating fresh intake and of ensuring wise economy in spending. The budget planned and accepted by the Convention delegates has been considerably reduced—by nearly one-third—and, in spite of increased activity in all fields, the rate of expenditure has actually so far been a lot below the revised budget figure. A Finance Sub-Committee of the N.S.A. was formed to watch and advise, seven year covenant arrangements have been made available, several circulars giving the clear position have been despatched, local assemblies have been sent (in confidence to them) comparative statements of total amounts received from each local fund by the National Fund. Other national communities have been found glad to participate in the privilege of contributing to support the work of Mr. Townshend.

Finally, in the matter of expansion, the N.S.A. has not been idle. Acting on the resolution voted by the delegates at Convention, the N.S.A. summoned all Local Assemblies to hold immediate meetings to plan an intensification of local teaching work so that the lessening of tension, which is so liable to set in after the achievement of goals, should be mitigated and avoided and effort already expended be capitalised in further growth. Then Regional Teaching Committees were formed because it was thought—and it has been proved in practice—that three results would accrue: there would be more teaching, a reduction in cost and a devolution of work from the N.T.C. A bold programme was drawn up to complete the Final Phase and fully elaborated in the manual of that name which was circulated to every believer. A plan has been launched whereby it is hoped that many of the friends will obtain a deeper insight into the meaning of the Cause through a greater understanding and appreciation of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdul-Bahá its Centre, when Lotfullah Hakim makes his circuit of the country.

It may be added that four members of the N.S.A. will have arisen to pioneer before the end of the year.

(Continued from column 2).

the concept of progressive religion, and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation for this day, the reincarnation concept will fade away in the light of truth; we should try and avoid controversial issues in the beginning, if possible.

FROM THE GUARDIAN.

On the 25th October the National Assembly cabled the Guardian:—

Assembly sends deepest gratitude promised contribution happy report arrival Hakim arranging tours assemblies view deepening believers in Covenant Olga Mills Dick Backwell pioneering Belfast Newcastle. Regret report passing Grace Challis. Loving devotion.

To which the Guardian replied on 29th October:

Assure Mills Backwell loving appreciation grieve passing Challis praying progress soul services Faith gratefully remembered.

The National Assembly cabled on 22nd November:

Your letter deeply appreciated. Ada Williams Derrick Faux pioneering Glasgow Oxford. Four new believers Norwich Belfast Blackpool. Loving devotion.

And the Guardian replied on 25th November:

Assure Ada Williams Derrick Faux deepest loving appreciation. Delighted enrolment new believers. Deepest love.

Letters to Individuals.

From a letter to Eric Backwell, through his Secretary, dated 20th September, 1948:

It is quite natural for anyone, observing the present state of the world, to feel very depressed and apprehensive of the future. Any intelligent person must be wondering what you are wondering. It is indeed hard to see what lies ahead of us in the near future—but we, as Bahá'ís, unlike most people, have absolute assurance that the distant future is serene and bright. We do not know if there will be another Great War; what we do know is this: that unless people become spiritually awakened in time, great suffering, maybe in the form of war, will come upon them, for humanity must be unified, must be redeemed. If men refuse absolutely to take the easier road of faith, of seeking out God's Manifestation for this age and accepting Him, then they will bring upon themselves a fresh crisis in human affairs and very great affliction. What we, as Bahá'ís, must do is *our* duty; we cannot do other people's duty for them, alas, but we can fulfil our own sacred responsibilities by serving our fellow-men, living a Bahá'í life, teaching the Faith, and strengthening its budding world order.

From a letter to Richard Backwell, through his Secretary, dated June 23rd, 1948:

We should never insist on teaching those who are not really ready for the Cause. If a man is not hungry, you cannot make him eat. Among the Theosophists there are, no doubt, many receptive souls, but those who are satisfied should be just associated with in a friendly way, but let alone. Once a seeker comes to accept

(Continued in preceding column).

NEW APPROACH TO TEACHING

STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE.

In presenting this statement on teaching, the N.T.C. fully realises that the time is now past for stressing the need and urgency of teaching. By now, every believer has become conscious of the Six Year Plan and of the part each one of us must play to bring it to final victory. Nevertheless, as we enter this intensive period of the Final Phase, we must consider afresh our resources and teaching methods, for the development and progress of the Plan bring new problems and our success ever depends upon finding the right response to each new challenge.

In speaking of teaching we are apt to regard it from one angle only, that of organised public activity. One cannot say this is a wrong conception, but certainly this method alone is not adequate to our needs. We are also prone to think that intensive teaching means a series of public meetings, a seminar, or an exhibition, with all the money needed for such expense. But as we all know, the funds of the national community are severely limited, while the demands of the Plan are continuously growing, and thus a new conception of effective teaching must be developed.

Our Committee would like to suggest to the friends that the new approach to teaching, the method which is sure to lead us to victory, which will win to our Cause many new adherents, and which can be carried on with almost no expense, can best be summed up as *individual initiative in teaching*. This means that every individual believer will from now on consider it his own privilege and duty to teach in his own circle and give the Message to whomsoever he meets, with full confidence that Bahá'u'lláh's promised aid is surely forthcoming. The Cause needs the efforts of every Bahá'í, the whole group, not a part of the group, in order to function organically.

Once we reach this understanding, and resolve, each one of us, to carry out Bahá'u'lláh's mandate on individual teaching, it then becomes our responsibility to learn and practise the diverse methods and techniques of teaching. The truth is often borne in upon us that our own limitations stand more in our way of teaching than the minds of our students! The value of our words rests on the foundation of what we ourselves are and how keenly we ourselves follow the Bahá'í precepts. We can be under no illusion that our words can tell of glorious ideals and our lives contradict them!

We need to train ourselves to handle this delicate task of teaching, just as the jeweller must know how to handle his jewels. After all,

what do we do when we teach the Cause? We do not for a moment consider ourselves greater than the student. We offer him a priceless jewel with wisdom, true humility, pure motive, kindliness, radiance of spirit, patience and love, that we may attract his heart and may not in any way stand as a personal test, in addition to the numerous tests he is likely to encounter.

Not one of us can possibly say, "I can't do that." Each can play his part and will be enabled to do so through constant endeavour.

Who will, for even a fleeting second, question this statement by the Guardian: "The Final Phase of the Plan must be carried forward with still greater energy, with still nobler self-sacrifice, with a clearer vision of the historic import of the work which is to be accomplished, with a mightier determination to bring it to a successful conclusion." Or again, can we afford to neglect his urgent appeal to Convention? "Plead, urge valiant promoters Plan guard against dissipation resources, relaxation efforts, distraction attention, forfeiture hard-won prizes." This warning is not only directed to the National Assembly, the N.T.C. or the Local Assemblies; rather, is it not meant for every Bahá'í? Thus all of us are equally responsible to God, to Bahá'u'lláh, to our own conscience, and to our countrymen whose immediate destinies depend upon our success.

We cannot speak enough of the myriad opportunities which are available to us, but we can discuss now and at every meeting the methods and means of seizing them. The Master told us, when speaking in London, that: "All the deliberations, all consultations, all talks and addresses must revolve around one focal centre and that is: Teach the Cause. Teach. Teach. Convey the Message. Awaken the souls. Now is the time for laying the foundation. Now must we gather brick, stone, wood, iron and other building materials. Now is not the time of decoration. We must strive day and night and think and work. What can I say that may become effective? What can I do that may bring results? What can I write that may bring forth fruits? Nothing else will be useful to-day. *The interests of such a Glorious Cause will not advance without such undivided attention*" (From "Chosen Highway," p. 177).

The keynote of the new teaching programme for the Final Phase is individual initiative. Instead of depending upon the organisation of public teaching work, or waiting for outside teachers to visit our communities, each one of us—whether a pioneer, resident of a goal town, or

member of a new or old-established community,—has the privilege and responsibility of reflecting in our daily activities our love for the Faith, by constantly teaching in whatever way may come to hand. By this means alone, teaching activity throughout Britain will be increased a hundred-fold and our harvests for the Cause will be infinitely enriched.

A final word. In calling upon each believer to arise in voluntary teaching service, the N.T.C. would like to draw attention to the methods and the practical aids which are now available. Chief among the teaching methods are: (1) Daily contact with friends, business associates, acquaintances, and all those who cross our path, or whom we may seek out, to share this Bread of Life which is Bahá'u'lláh's trust to us; and (2) Fireside gatherings in our homes, preferably of a small and intimate nature, when the Teachings will be informally discussed. A third method, which you may organize with the help of your Local Assembly, or the N.T.C. if you live in a Goal Town, is the Study Group, for the purpose of planned and regular study of the Faith. The Committee wonders how many of the friends are now holding fireside meetings, and how many communities and Goal Towns are sponsoring Study Classes?

Now as to practical teaching aids and materials. No doubt you are aware of all of these, but nevertheless we venture to emphasize them, because we are confident that a full and effective use of them by every believer will greatly increase the teaching capacity and success of the national community.

First, the Teaching Manual, which was introduced at Summer School for the Workshop on Teaching Methods. Here is a rich source of advice and practical instruction on every kind of teaching work. It covers the teaching activities of individual and organized public work as well. It analyzes what is needed at each stage of teaching, in Attraction, Instruction, and Confirmation. The Manual includes a large number of valuable and inspiring quotations from the Writings, some not available in our English publications, illustrating every phase of teaching. We earnestly recommend the Teaching Manual and we hope every believer will find it possible to own a copy and refer to it constantly in teaching work. (Price 2/6).

Second, the literature of the Faith which is made available by the Publishing Trust. Early in the Six Year Plan, in August, 1944, the Guardian wrote as follows: "The multiplication of Bahá'í Centres and the dissemination of Bahá'í literature should be regarded as the chief objectives of the prosecutors of the Plan." To make the best use of available Bahá'í literature, we need to know what each pamphlet and book

contains and thus we shall be able to give to each inquirer the instruction and teaching he most needs. This is a never-ending study, but it will greatly enrich our teaching work.

The dissemination of literature may be carried out in some of the following ways:

- (1) Buying literature and giving it away to your friends and contacts.
- (2) Asking your Assembly, the R.T.C. or N.T.C. for free literature to distribute to contacts.
- (3) If you are a member of a library, by asking for the books to be bought for you or by trying by any suitable means to place Bahá'í books there.
- (4) By taking an active part at Bahá'í meetings in showing the literature to visitors and guests.
- (5) By arranging displays of Bahá'í literature at meetings of other organisations, in show windows, etc.

Third, we call attention to the Study Course, and to three reference books (5/- for all). This is an excellent introductory study of the Faith, covering the lives of the Founders, the spiritual and social teachings, and Bahá'í Administration and World Order. It not only provides the material needed for a study class, thus aiding the teachers and those who plan the class, but it also puts into the hands of the students the material and references for their own personal study.

Fourth, we would remind the friends that visual material is also available, as slides of the Temple and films of the Holy Shrines can be borrowed from the N.S.A., and the N.T.C. is always ready to send the Bahá'í Exhibition or some part of it for display in your community. In addition, you yourself will greatly enhance your teaching by sharing with friends and inquirers the world-wide news of the Faith, and photographs of Bahá'í Groups, the Temple, the Master, and all such interesting material which now comes to us in our Bahá'í Journal, Youth Bulletin, and the various news letters from abroad.

Teaching the Cause is our honour, privilege, and our pleasant duty. No living soul can ascertain the outcome of intensive teaching, but let us always bear in mind that once the seed is sown it never dies, and once we do our part God never fails to do His.

There are no suitable words to close this except the Guardian's "Appeal further sacrifices, nobler dedication, greater intensification labours, until last act Final Phase divinely-sustained Plan gloriously consummated." How little time do we have left for so great an end!

Faithfully,

With deep love,

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE.

DEEPENING IN THE CAUSE

A SELECTION OF QUOTATIONS.

To deepen in the Cause means to read the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master so thoroughly as to be able to give it to others in its purest form. There are many who have some superficial idea of what the Cause stands for. They, therefore, present it together with all sorts of ideas that are their own. As the Cause is still in its early days we must be most careful lest we fall into this error and injure the Movement we so much adore. There is no limit to the study of the Cause. The more we read the Writings, the more truths we can find in them, the more we will see that our previous notions were erroneous.

* * * *

Those who participate in such a campaign (of teaching), whether in an organizing capacity, or as workers to whose care the execution of the task itself has been committed, must, as an essential preliminary to the discharge of their duties, thoroughly familiarise themselves with the various aspects of the history and teachings of their Faith. In their efforts to achieve this purpose they must study for themselves, conscientiously and painstakingly, the literature of their Faith, delve into its teachings, assimilate its laws and principles, ponder its admonitions tenets and purpose, commit to memory certain of its exhortations and prayers, master the essentials of its administration, and keep abreast of its current affairs and latest developments. They must strive to obtain, from sources that are authoritative and unbiassed, a sound knowledge of the history and tenets of Islam—the source and background of their Faith—and approach reverently and with a mind purged from pre-conceived ideas the study of the Qur'án which, apart from the sacred scriptures of the Bábí and Bahá'í Revelations, constitutes the only Book which can be regarded as an absolutely authenticated Repository of the Word of God. They must devote special attention to the investigation of those institutions and circumstances that are directly connected with the origin and birth of their Faith, with the station claimed by its Forerunner, and with the laws revealed by its Author.

SHOGHI EFFENDI.

* * * *

The Source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His Divine Manifestation.

The essence of religion is to testify unto that which the Lord hath revealed, and follow that which He hath ordained in His mighty Book.

At the dawn of every day he (the true Seeker) should commune with God, and, with all his soul, persevere in the quest of his Beloved.

* * * *

The whole duty of man in this Day is to attain that share of the flow of grace which God poureth forth for him. Let none, therefore, consider the largeness or smallness of the receptacle. The portion of some might lie in the palm of a man's hand, the portion of others might fill a cup, and of others even a gallon-measure.

* * * *

O wayfarer in the path of God: Take thou thy portion of the ocean of His grace, and deprive not thyself of the things that lie hidden in its depths. Be thou of them that have partaken of its treasures.

* * * *

Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear him. Unless he teacheth his own self, the word of his mouth will not influence the heart of the seeker.

* * * *

That City (of Certitude) is none other than the word of God revealed in every age and dispensation. In the days of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the days of Jesus, the Gospel; in the days of Muhammad, the Messenger of God, the Qur'án; in this day, the Bayán; and in the Dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest, His own Book—the Book unto which all the Books of former Dispensations must needs be referred, the Book that standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme.

* * * *

Intone, O My servant, the Verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effects, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon his soul. Thus have the Mysteries of the Revelation of God been decreed by Virtue of the Will of Him Who is the Source of power and wisdom.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

The Religion of God is the promoter of truth, the founder of science and knowledge, it is full of goodwill for learned men; it is the civiliser of mankind, the discoverer of the secrets of matter, and the enlightener of the horizons of the world . . . For God, knowledge is the most glorious gift of man, and the most noble of human perfections . . . For knowledge is light, felicity, perfection, beauty and the means of approaching the threshold of unity. It is the honour and glory of the world of humanity, and the greatest bounty of God. Knowledge is identical with guidance, and ignorance is real error.

* * * *

In this present age the world of humanity is afflicted with severe sickness and grave disorders which threaten death. Therefore His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has appeared. He is the real physician bringing divine remedy and healing to the world of man. He has brought teachings for all ailments, the Hidden Words, Ishraqat, Tarazat, Tajallyat, Words of Paradise, Glad-Tidings, etc., etc. These holy words and teachings are the remedy for the body-politic, the divine prescription and real cure for the disorders which afflict the world. Therefore we must accept and partake of this healing remedy in order that complete recovery may be assured. Every soul who lives according to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is free from the ailments and indisposition which prevail throughout the world of humanity; otherwise selfish disorders, intellectual maladies, spiritual sickness, imperfections and vices will surround him and he will not receive the life-giving bounties of God.

* * * *

In thanksgiving for them (the bestowals and favours of God) you must act in accordance with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. You must read the tablets—Hidden Words, Ishraqat, Glad-Tidings—and all the Holy utterances, and act according to them. This is real thanksgiving, to live in accord with these utterances. This is true thankfulness and the divine bestowal. This is thanksgiving and glorification of God.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ.

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Additions to the Community.

Between the publication of the last list and December 7th, the following have been registered :

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|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Henry Backwell | London |
| Anayat Ketirai (from Iran) ... | Guildford |
| Sydney Barrett | Northampton |
| Eruch Munsiff | London |
| Hetty Engelsman | Belfast |
| Agnes Haines | Norwich |
| Helen Cheek | Norwich |
| Elizabeth Gorvett | Cardiff |

A FIRST VISIT TO ITALY.

(In this article Marion Hocken tells of her meetings with some of the Bahá'ís in Italy).

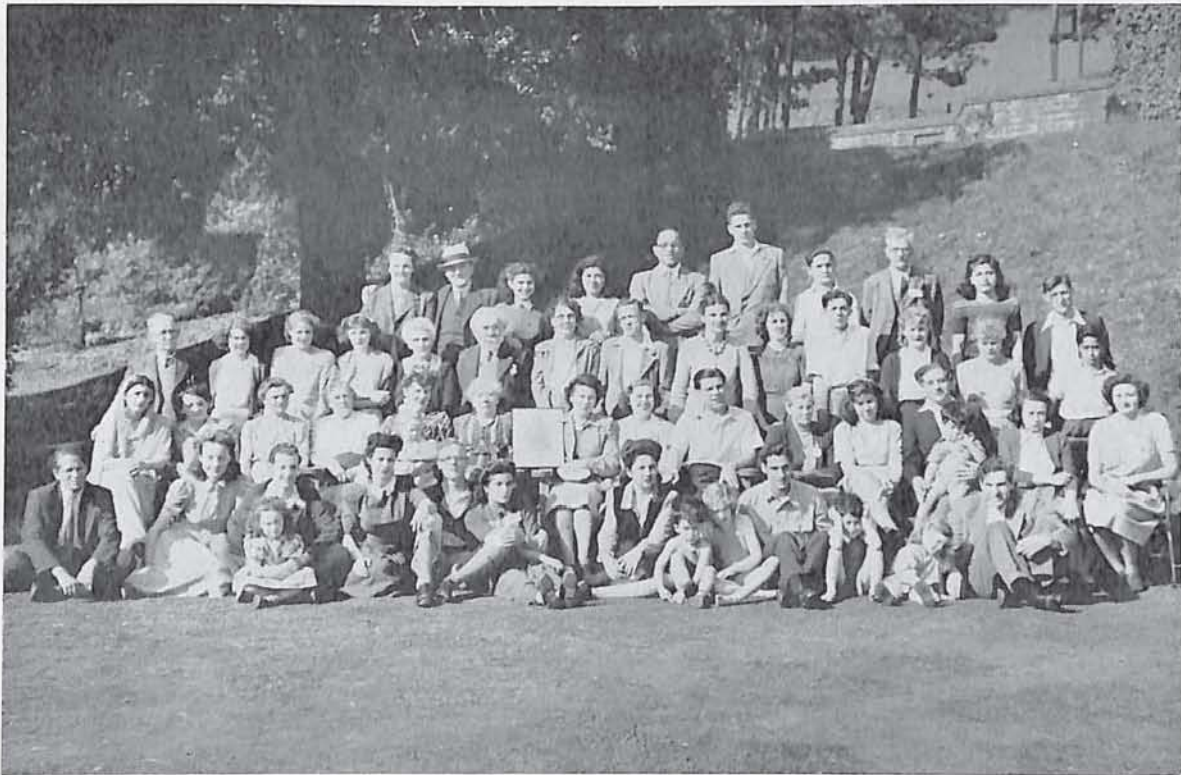
After Summer School I visited Italy, an exciting experience for an artist. Leaving Paris, I journeyed via Mt. Cenis to Turin, Milan, Padua and Venice. The third class carriages were often cattle wagons packed tightly with people and proving rather rough travel, but I was determined to see as much of Italy as my £26 would allow. I stayed in students' hostels carrying my bedding on my back with a haversack, cooked on a small stove and bought all I needed in the markets. These hostels provide numerous opportunities for speaking of the Faith and there were ready listeners.

I met two of the Florentine Bahá'ís, Madame Gasperi Campani and Giulio Jacoviello. They made me feel very much at home. I was taken to meet their families whose kindness made the time spent in Florence go only too quickly. Madame Gasperi's husband is an artist of high order, who for many years has been in charge of the restoration and care of the old churches and palaces of Florence. He spent much time showing me frescoes and paintings and the beautiful old buildings of Florence which he loved. Madame Gasperi told me much of the struggle of her country and of hard times both during and after the war. Behind the facade of plenty which is displayed in the shops there is a very real poverty, as few can afford the costly goods displayed.

Giulio Jacoviello showed by many acts of kindness how pleased he was to meet an English Bahá'í, but we had to get Madame Gasperi to interpret before we could understand each other. She has translated "The Hidden Words" into Italian. I was sorry to leave the friends I had made in Florence where I had been so happy.

In Rome I visited Dr. and Madame Giachery—he had just returned from Paris where he had represented the Bahá'ís at the U.N.O. Conference of non-governmental organisations. As my funds had dwindled they allowed me to stay with them two days. Dr. Giachery gave me a copy of "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" which he had translated into Italian and they both showed every kindness. They felt that Rome was so crowded with the refugees from the occupied countries that it was a very difficult time to try to stay there.

Phillip Marangella has done excellent pioneering work and I had a pleasant meeting with him and the first Bahá'í to declare herself in Rome. There is an assembly there now. These are brave Bahá'ís in Italy, who are tackling the many difficulties with fortitude. It was a privilege to meet them before returning home through Pisa, Genoa and Turin.



Bahá'í Summer School, Ashover—Second Week

TEACHING TOUR.

In India, Meherangiz Munsiff was very active in Bahá'í public relations work. From accounts from Norwich, Bristol and Cardiff, she has, here too, pursued every possible avenue of making the Faith known to peace-loving people.

In all three cities she succeeded in introducing the Faith to educators and people of prominence in other fields.

In Norwich, with an introduction from Sir Frank Brown, Royal India and Pakistan Society, London, Meherangiz met and spoke of the Faith to the Head of the Langley Hall School, Laudon.

"While in Cardiff," she writes, "I met Sir Frederick Rees, Hon. Fellow of Lincoln's College, Oxford. I was introduced, by Lady Rees, to the Organising Secretary of the Cardiff Youth Clubs, and was shown two model clubs. One was for small children, who were amused by a song of 'Abdu'l-Bahá sung by me in Persian. I discussed the Bahá'í conception of social work with the Organiser and delivered the Message to two club leaders who expressed desire to attend Bahá'í meetings."

She was introduced to a prominent singer, the Social Secretary of the University, and a well-known cartoonist, all of whom became greatly interested in the Faith. The former wishes to

present Meherangiz at the Cardiff City Hall and arrange several public lectures for her in the future.

In Bristol, she met and gave the Message to the Director of the British Broadcasting Company and his wife.

Realising that many contacts come to the Faith through other organizations, Meherangiz visited the Norwich Theosophists. In Cardiff, she spoke at the International Youth Club on "Labour Problems in India and Their Solution." In Bristol, she declined an invitation to speak at the Indian Association, to return to London to a reception given for Pandit Nehru, Prime Minister of India.

Excellent newspaper publicity and photographs resulted from the Press Conferences held in Bristol and Norwich.

Searching for new angles, Meherangiz chose to speak of "India's March to New Order" and "The World's Greatest Prisoner."

With the Guardian's warning that the future of the world depends on our carrying the revivifying Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the sorely afflicted people of this troubled planet, surely the significance of these teaching techniques is doubly underlined.



First Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bristol.

Achieving Assembly Status.

BRISTOL.

Prominent above a south-western outbound road near the Suspension Bridge, can be seen a long terrace of houses. One, known as No. 16, Royal York Crescent, Clifton, formerly the Clifton Guest House, is where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed and taught, laying the foundations of the Bahá'í Faith in Bristol.

Apparently there was no declared believer nor any reported Bahá'í activity of Group formation from that year 1911 until 1931 when a London born believer took up residence in the city. From 1931 until 1946 there were occasional home meetings at which Helen and Charles Bishop and Willard Hatch spoke to groups of people and individuals. Mark Tobey on a visit, was offered a pulpit by a Unitarian Minister. Contact was made with the Esperantists resulting in two public meetings and a fireside addressed by a national teacher.

During the war, the first declaration was sent to the National Assembly. The Six Year Plan was launched in 1944 with Jessica Young heading the pioneering list by moving from Manchester to Bristol for three months. Immediately after 1946 Summer School, a second declaration was sent in and systematic teaching work was started with regular firesides. The Group grew to four

believers and Bristol was declared one of the nine goal towns in the Initial Phase of the Six Year Plan. For a brief period in the summer of 1947 Peter Robinson pioneered from Manchester. Soon Robert Cheek and family followed from London, reinforced by George Mabbutt and family and we got down to hard work.

Under the guidance of the National Teaching Committee a series of national teachers were sent for different projects. A letter from Haifa to the Group stated that judging from our signatures a mere three were needed to establish the Assembly. How simple it sounded! Despite continued efforts and for various reasons, instead of the additional three, our Group dwindled. Our Naw-Ruz greetings 1948 bore but three signatures!

We have proved how true a later message from Haifa has been, that Bahá'u'lláh enables us to achieve the seemingly impossible. The turning point was reached before we realised it, for at a Unity Feast at Naw-Ruz our meeting room housed no less than 21 people. April 1st saw the arrival of Evelyn Baxter as pioneer to be shortly followed by Bruce McCombe, and a week's intensive teaching was staged by two national teachers. Energy and enthusiasm grew as the week progressed—there were two new declarations.

(Continued in column 2, page 9).

SISTER GRACE CHALLIS.

With the passing of dear Sister Grace Challis to the Abhá Kingdom the Bahá'í Faith in this country has lost one of its best beloved believers whose pure and radiant example has made many converts to the Faith.

As a young woman Sister Challis became a member of the Society of Friends. She first heard of the Bahá'í Cause from Dr. Esslemont when she was nursing at the Home Sanatorium in Bournemouth at the time when Dr. Esslemont was writing "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era." She attended the meetings held in his study and pondered deeply on what seemed to her an amazing idea, but she prayed with all her heart that she might be guided to accept or reject this new teaching according to the Will of God.

The clear guidance came to her on the night when the Bournemouth Bahá'ís were gathered together to hear the heartbreaking news of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She declared her acceptance of the Faith at that meeting.

For many years Sister Challis was Chairman of the National Assembly; her journeys to London for that work were her only outings, which she looked forward to with the greatest joy. She would return late at night, tired out physically but greatly refreshed in mind and spirit by her contact with the fellowship and love of the other members of the Assembly.

During the war, shortage of staff at "Rizwan" became very acute, and Sister had to curtail her activities for the Bahá'í community in Bournemouth. She had resigned her membership of the National Assembly early in the war.

From the time Sister opened her first Nursing Home at West Moors and later at "Rizwan," Broadstone, she held Bahá'í meetings in her home, and also organised many public meetings in Bournemouth. The meetings at "Rizwan" were always most happy, and Sister's presentation of the Cause was clear and convincing. Often the gathering was a large one held in her lovely garden, as when dear Martha Root was her guest speaker. Sister was secretary of the Bournemouth Group for many years, and every member of the Assembly there would agree that her wise handling of all matters under discussion, together with her deep love and knowledge of the Teachings were largely responsible for the absolute harmony which pervaded every meeting. In spite of the unavoidable curtailing of her Bahá'í activities in later years, she lived and died one of the most faithful and devoted Bahá'ís and a shining example to all who had the great privilege of knowing her.

One of her favourite quotations from the utterances of the Master was "Turn your faces away from the contemplation of your own finite selves, and fix your eyes upon the Everlasting

Radiance, then will your souls receive in full measure the Divine Power of the Spirit and the Blessings of the Infinite Bounty."

Grace Challis' life was lived in the fulfilment of that promise.

Truly I say, virtue is the greatest commander which leads the Cause of God to victory, and the legions which deserve this commander are pure, sanctified and praiseworthy deeds and attributes.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

(Continued from page 8).

We were yet to see the result of that initial work in 1911, for one of the Master's own contacts expressed her desire to formally join the community, bringing the number to eight declared believers. Our excitement was climaxed on April 15th, when by a telephone message we were assured of the ninth declaration—the first Bristol Bahá'í Assembly was achieved.

The new Assembly wrote to our beloved Guardian and received the following reply dated September 22nd, 1948:

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Your letter of April 21st reached our beloved Guardian after a long delay, and he has instructed me to answer it on his behalf.

The formation of your Assembly, in the face of so many difficulties, was indeed a noble achievement, and serves to prove that our struggles as individuals, often handicapped by the sense of our own inadequacy, are reinforced by the grace of Bahá'u'lláh, Who enables us to achieve the seemingly impossible!

He urges you all to persevere in maintaining your Assembly, which forms one of the vital links in the Bahá'í chain, which will soon gird the British Isles, never to lose heart, and to redouble your teaching labours so as to ensure a broader foundation next year for your Assembly's election and thus guarantee its permanency.

His prayers will be offered for you, one and all, for your success and guidance.

With Bahá'í love,

R. RABBANA.

Dear and valued co-workers,

I was so pleased and grateful to receive your message, and I wish to assure you all of my loving and fervent prayers for the progress of your historic work, the extension of your activities, and the realization of every hope you cherish for the promotion of your beloved Faith. May the Almighty watch over you, sustain you in your valued endeavours, and aid you to render memorable services to His Faith and its institutions.

Your true and grateful brother,

SHOGHI.

THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. The Winter Session of the Yerrinbool Bahá'í School was held from 1st to 9th September, 1948. There were three new declarations during its progress.

The Guardian has advised the reprinting of of Abul Fazl's booklet, "The Brilliant Proof," perhaps their first publishing venture of this kind.

CHINA. Miss Jean Gates of Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., was reported by the Chicago Bahá'í News as being *en route* for Shanghai as a pioneer.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA. After a long interval, news has come from Prague telling of new translations in the Slovak language, including the Guardian's statement "World Religion."

FRANCE. Mr. C. N. Kennedy, Chairman of the Paris Assembly, has been designated by the N.S.A. of the U.S.A. as representative of the International Bahá'í Community with the non-governmental organisations of U.N.O. at Paris.

There have been two more declarations at Lyons.

GREECE. The Secretary of an association of College students at Athens has expressed his desire to spend his life teaching the Bahá'í Faith, and wishes to form a "Bahá'í Committee for Greece."

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BURMA. "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" has been published in Singhalese. Of the languages into which, as a goal, the New Era is to be printed, only one remains, the Chin language.

Twante has bought a piece of land for their Haziratu'l-Quds, and has begun to build it.

JAPAN. Feasts are now once again being regularly observed in Tokyo.

PALESTINE. Gladys Anderson and Ben Weeden, who are in Haifa with the Guardian, were married some months ago by the Amman L.S.A. in Jerusalem. The State of Israel registered the marriage and endorsed the records as entered in the Bahá'í book used at the World Centre, giving full recognition to the Faith and its right to perform marriages. When the records were presented to the American Consulate, there was no hesitation in registering Gladys as Mrs. Weeden. It would seem that the United States, through one of its consulates, has recognised the Bahá'í marriage of two Americans.

PERSIA. A Summer School was organised at Karaj, about 28 miles from Tehran, from 10th to 20th August, in two periods of 10 days each. About 40 people, the maximum, attended each session. Weekend visitors numbered hundreds.

A Youth Conference, with representatives from 18 districts, organized in 10 sessions, was held from 20th to 25th August in Tehran.

The third Teachers' Conference, composed of a number of travelling and resident teachers, was held in Tehran over three days in May.

TURKEY. A translation in Turkish of the book published by the British N.S.A. on the occasion of the centenary of the Cause has been published in Istanbul.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. Among the goals placed before the United States Bahá'ís this year is to raise every established community to the minimum of 15 believers. At April 21st there were 122 communities whose membership ranged from nine to fifteen.

It is estimated that there are four million readers of the publications, two trade papers and three other magazines, in which regular Bahá'í advertisements appear.

A Bahá'í Youth from New York has been publicising the Faith through his own experimental radio station, using Bahá'í radio transcriptions.

A Bahá'í booth was maintained at a State Fair in Northern Montana. Some 400 to 600 people were personally contacted and perhaps 10,000 visitors saw the name Bahá'í.

COMMITTEES.

We offer our sincere apologies to the National Youth Committee for having omitted the names of its members from our list of Committees, published in the September "Bahá'í Journal." The names are given below, together with the names of members of some newly appointed Committees.

NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE. Hugh McKinley (Chairman), Margaret Shanks (Secretary), Ronald Sellars (Business Manager of Youth Bulletin), Isobel Locke, Mavis Sellars.

CHILD EDUCATION COMMITTEE. Elsie Lee, Catherine Turnbull, Grace Watson, Arthur Whitworth.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE. Hasan Balyuzi, Dorothy Ferraby, John Ferraby, Joe Lee.

SUMMER SCHOOL COMMITTEE. Gladys Backwell, Reg Coulson, Dorothy Ferraby, Ursula Newman, Hassan Sabri.

Under all circumstances—whether in adversity or comfort, in glory or affliction—this wronged One has commanded all to show forth love and affection, compassion and union.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.