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BAHÁ'Í YEAR 102

JUNE, 1945

THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMUNITY

The coming of partial peace in the world opens to us as Bahá'ís, amongst other things, the prospect of greater ease of contact with fellow believers in other countries. This is of great importance, because we are a world community, a world unity in miniature, and as such all the various parts are inter-related and need the help and support of each other. For all are engaged in different sections of the same task, to bring into being the World Community of Bahá'u'lláh, the Kingdom of God on earth. Viewed in this light, the American work of establishing local assemblies in every state and province of North America and in every republic of Central and South America, the recent magnificent Indian achievement of quadrupling the number of communities in that country, our own recently adopted Six-Year Plan, the efforts of lonely Bahá'ís in such remote places as Iceland or Patagonia, are all parts of this tremendous spiritual effort. Each of us rejoices when a success is achieved, whether in our own part of the world or in some distant place, because it is the same united community which has achieved it.

It is therefore surely in this light that we should regard our own efforts to teach the Faith. Our Six-Year Plan is not just a little group of 160 people in a country of some 48 millions setting out to propagate an idea; it is merely our particular share of a much bigger task, in which people representing all sections of the human race are or will be participating, and by our prayers and by the spiritual effect of the efforts we make, we all help each other. More than this too, it is work done with the further and far greater help of the Divine Power, and the successes of communities in other parts of the world have proved how richly this Power is available to help those who set themselves to Bahá'u'lláh's work.

Let us therefore not feel so very alone in the work we are trying to do. The whole Bahá'í community is going forward, is expanding and making progress, and we, playing our part in our appointed place, will go forward with it if we bring to the work the efforts and the sacrifices needed and if we turn for help to the Divine Source, as others have done and are doing. We go forward in good company, following in the wake of the glorious band of martyrs who sowed the seeds of the Faith in the early days. They gave up their lives, we are called upon to live ours to their normal span for the same wonderful purpose.

Never in all its long history has the world needed Divine help as it does now. It stands faced with the choice whether it will take the path of peace or sow the seeds of further disaster. God in His Mercy has given the Power and the Plan by which peace and unity can be established and the world community of the Bahá'ís is the chosen medium through which this plan is to be made known and brought into operation in the world. Having entrusted us with such responsibility, He will surely help us not to fail.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY, Year 102.

<i>Chairman</i> ...	MRS. I. SLADE
<i>Vice-Chairman and</i>	
<i>Asst. Secretary</i>	MRS. M. E. BASIL HALL
<i>Secretary</i> ...	MRS. D. FERRABY
<i>Treasurer</i> ...	MR. J. FERRABY
	MR. H. M. BALYUZI
	MRS. G. COOPER
	MRS. C. LANGDON-DAVIES
	MISS U. NEWMAN
	MISS M. WELLBY

CONVENTION.

Convention this year was held on 28th and 29th April, which coincided with the Nineteen Day Feast of Jamál and the 9th day of Ridván. So the friends who attended Convention had a busy week-end; Saturday and Sunday evenings were devoted to the Feasts, while the days were fully occupied by Convention itself.

The theme which ran through the whole of Convention was, of course, the Six Year Plan and how best to prosecute it. The great need for pioneers was stressed again and again; delegates thought the position so serious that appeals to pioneer should be addressed to particular individuals, and suggested that since pioneers will come chiefly from existing communities, local Assemblies be urged to do everything they can to keep their community conscious of the Six Year Plan. One outcome of the discussion was a recommendation that a questionnaire be drawn up and sent to all the friends, in order to have a record of the ways in which each one may be able to contribute to the success of the Plan.

Delegates this year made several suggestions concerning the organisation of committees, which is a sign that we are progressing administratively. Three years ago the only national committee was a Teaching Committee, then the need for more committees was felt, and several others came into being. In three years the need for these has become so firmly established that the organisation of them has become the concern of the whole community through their delegates at Convention. The problem which was particularly discussed this year was the co-ordination of activities by committees. It was recommended that there should be a strong Publicity Committee to co-ordinate all forms of publicity and a Teaching Committee to co-ordinate all teaching. The Convention particularly urged that all members of committees should devote themselves more closely to their duties than sometimes in the past, and recommended that the N.S.A. should delegate to committees as much as they could of the detailed work.

Another matter of concern to the delegates was the fall in donations to the funds during the past year. It was suggested that an estimate of income and expenditure for the year should be presented to the community. The desirability of an assistant treasurer was pointed out, and the work of Mr. Norton as treasurer of the N.S.A. for the last five years was recognised in a suitable resolution.

The need for prayer was stressed several times, for pioneers in setting out and in working in their chosen location, for the whole community to pray for the success of the Plan

and for the welfare of the world in these troubled times.

Various suggestions concerning New World Order and Bahá'í books were made. In particular, it was recommended that the Guardian be asked whether "Paris Talks" ranks as scripture or as traveller's notes, in view of certain passages in it which might easily be misunderstood by those not acquainted with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. There were also some detailed suggestions regarding teaching and publicity.

On the whole it can be said that this Convention showed that the community is becoming aware of the responsibility it has undertaken with the Six Year Plan. There was a feeling of urgency when the Plan was discussed and most of the topics were discussed in relation to the Plan. The general opinion seemed to be that we must all become so conscious of the needs of the Plan that whatever difficulties may arise, we will overcome them and continue on our chosen highway.

During Convention cables were sent to the Guardian and to the National Spiritual Assemblies of America, Persia and India. One was also sent to the British Delegation to the San Francisco Conference.

The following are the resolutions taken at Convention. Most of them have been accepted by the new N.S.A. for action either now or as occasion arises, and only in one or two cases is it necessary to add any comments.

That the previous auditors be re-elected.

That a questionnaire be sent to all believers, to find out what help they can give to the Six-Year Plan.

In connection with a passage in "Paris Talks" which might give a false impression owing to an apparent mis-translation, the Guardian is to be asked whether this book is counted as scripture or merely as travellers' notes. In the latter case the passage could be slightly re-worded in future editions.

That an estimate of income and expenses of the National Fund for the year be prepared and presented to the community.

That we record our appreciation of the work done by Mr. Norton as national treasurer and pray for his restoration to health.

That Convention earnestly requests that people appointed by the N.S.A. to various committees should devote themselves more closely to their duties than in the past.

That all members of the community be asked to read the Prayer for All Nations for the welfare of the world on May 23rd.

That local assemblies do everything they can to keep their members always conscious of the Six-Year Plan.

That a strong general publicity committee be appointed, to study and execute all aspects of publicity.

That a co-ordinating teaching committee be appointed.

That in fixing boundaries of communities the N.S.A. should take into consideration local circumstances.

That the magazine "New World Order" be continued.

That all believers be recommended to say the first Prayer of the Bab every day for the Six-Year Plan.

That if a summer school proves impossible, we hold a sort of teaching conference, for a long week-end, between now and the winter teaching conference.

It has been found impossible to book anywhere for Summer School, but it has been decided to ask all the friends who can do so to join in the one which London are holding in their centre and in the friends' houses from August 11th to 19th. Details have already been advised.

That both the N.S.A. and local assemblies should appoint an assistant treasurer.

That a person or committee be appointed to answer questions sent in by believers, always giving the source from which the answer is derived, when the question concerns matters of Teaching.

It has been decided that instead of appointing a fresh committee, any questions believers wish answered concerning the Teachings will be dealt with by the Postal Study Course Committee; matters of policy and other questions will be dealt with by the N.S.A.

GIFT FROM THE GUARDIAN.

The beloved Guardian has, in the past month, sent us another gift of £500, specially to help the Six-Year Plan. This generous gift should surely spur us all to equal generosity to the funds—we cannot let the Guardian pay everything for our Six-Year Plan. Though we are truly grateful for his help, we must also do our share in contributing to the expenses, that is a part of the pledge we have taken in adopting the Plan.

Treasurership.

All subscriptions to the National Fund should be sent to the **National Treasurer**, at the London Centre. Mrs. Brown has been appointed Asst. Treasurer, and will deal with general correspondence.

New World Order.

The price of the annual subscription has been reduced from 1/6d. to 1/4d. as the latter price has been found to fully cover cost of postage.

NEWS.

The Postal Study Course is being well supported. Participants have grown from about eighteen when the first instalment was sent out to approximately fifty.

Two successful fireside meetings have been held in Blackpool. Mr. Hofman spoke at one and Mr. Sugar at the other. It is hoped to continue them at regular intervals. Monthly meetings are being held in Liverpool, conducted by Arthur Cole, the resident believer, and Mr. Sugar.

Mr. L. Rosenfield and Miss N. Goodman were married at the Manchester Centre on May 27th.

Mr. and Mrs. Nazar have a daughter.

New Believers.

We welcome with pleasure as members of the community, Miss Vera Rate of Northampton, Miss N. Goodman of Manchester, Mrs. M. G. Johnson, Miss A. Fort (Youth) and Miss J. Spaul (Youth), all of Bournemouth.

The World Community of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Tenth Annual Youth Symposium was celebrated on March 4th by young Bahá'is in various parts of the world. In this country only Torquay was able to hold a meeting, which is described in the annual report.

In Poona they held a very successful meeting, with an attendance of about sixty young people, and we were very interested to receive photographs of the gathering from the Poona Youth Committee.

In the United States, a number of meetings were held in different places, including a big one in the Temple held by all the young Bahá'is in that area, at which there was an attendance of over three hundred.

A new development was the number of meetings held in Latin America. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, Lima, Peru and Santiago, Chile, very successful gatherings were held. The young people of Punta Arenas, at the bottom tip of Chile, one of the most southerly towns in the world, held a meeting and are going to give radio programmes in the near future. In Havana, Cuba, about thirty young people attended a meeting in the auditorium of a radio station and the proceedings were broadcast. Hand-painted posters all over Havana announced the symposium.

The friends in India are struggling hard to consolidate the gains made in fulfilment of their Six Year Plan. Some pioneers had to return to their previous homes and this has reduced some of the newly-formed assemblies once more to group status, but energetic steps are being taken to send other people to take their places and to build up support in each locality.

The Quetta community is making good progress. They have obtained permission to purchase a piece of land for a Bahá'í cemetery. The authorities have agreed also to exempt the Bahá'í centre and the land on which it is built from taxation. A Bahá'í library open to the public has been opened in Quetta.

The American friends were unable to hold a Convention this year on account of travel difficulties. Voting, therefore, took place by post.

NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

Publishing Trust.

Executive: Mr. J. Ferraby (Manager), Mrs. K. V. Brown, Mrs. M. E. Basil Hall, Mrs. Langdon-Davies (Secretary). *Advisory:* Mr. D. Hofman, Mr. A. Sugar.

New World Order.

Miss M. Wellby (Editor), Mrs. M. E. Basil Hall, Mr. H. M. Balyuzi.

Publicity.

Mr. D. Millar, Miss U. Newman (Joint Secretaries), Mr. D. Faux, Mr. J. Ferraby, Mr. D. Hofman.

Teaching.

Executive: Mrs. K. V. Brown (Secretary), Mrs. D. Ferraby, Mrs. I. Slade.

The executive will deal with day to day practical matters and correspondence, being all in London and able to meet constantly. Some advisory members from other parts of the country are to be appointed.

Reviewing Committee.

Miss F. Pinchon (Secretary), Mr. H. M. Balyuzi, Mrs. C. Langdon-Davies.

Archives.

Mr. H. M. Balyuzi, Mr. W. Wilkins.

Committee to study ways of attracting young people.

Mrs. A. Gregory (Secretary), Miss S. Farnsworth, Mr. D. Faux, Mr. H. McKinley, Mrs. M. Matthews, Miss A. Stevens.

ANNUAL REPORT.

Year 101 (1944/45).

This year started on a note of great excitement and exaltation in the Celebration of the Centenary. It was a great week for everyone concerned—so much planning, so much preliminary work, and also a good deal of anxiety, came to fruition that week in the success of the celebrations. A full and detailed account of the Centenary in this country is being written for record purposes, it will be sufficient here to summarise the main events. A big part of the scheme was the holding of a Bahá'í Exhibition at the Alliance Hall, Westminster, for a period

of a week, and the celebrations commenced on Saturday, May 20th, with a crowded scene when the exhibition was opened by Sir Ronald Storrs, who knew Abdu'l-Bahá and is a good friend of the Cause. This set the pace for the week—the exhibition was visited by a number of very interested people and the evening entertainments held there were also well attended and enjoyed. Successful too, was the large public meeting held at Denison Hall on Tuesday evening, May 23rd, at which there were three speakers on the Bahá'í Faith, Mr. Balyuzi, Mr. Hofman and Mr. Tudor Pole. They were followed by several well-known people who spoke in appreciation of the Teachings, namely the Rev. Walter Wynn, Mr. Shaw Desmond, Mr. Hannen Swaffer, Dr. Harold Moody and Sir William Hornell. Finally, Norman Smith, a Bahá'í serving here with the U.S. Army, gave a simple but moving testimony to the Faith. Mrs. Basil Hall was the chairman. For the Bahá'ís, however, the culmination of the whole week was the midnight meeting held during the night of May 22nd/23rd to celebrate the actual time of the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb. The room was crowded with believers, and those who were present will remember always the reverent and moving atmosphere of the devotional meeting and the happiness of the feast held afterwards.

Moved and thrilled by the successful opening of the Centenary celebrations, we gathered for the annual Convention, at which occurred another event of the greatest importance, namely the resolution to adopt a Six-Year Plan for teaching the Faith, to terminate at the Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Báb in 1950. The Guardian was asked by cable to fix the goal at which we should aim and replied suggesting the formation of nineteen local assemblies situated in all the various countries of the British Isles. Truly a great task for the energies of a new century. The Guardian subsequently wrote us, emphasising the importance of the work we were undertaking: "The English believers stand identified with this Plan." We are coming, perhaps only rather slowly, to understand what this means, to realise that everything we do as a community, everything in our individual lives, must be entirely devoted to it, so that it must be the primary aim always before us all. It would perhaps be fair to say that, although concrete achievements this year may be small, we have acquired some realisation of what the task involves and seen, too, some of the practical difficulties that will have to be overcome. Our next and urgent step is to arise, both as a community and as individuals, to carry out the plan, and this depends largely on our being able to realise, to really deeply understand, what the successful conclusion of the Plan means, not only to the Bahá'í community, but to the country at large,

which is yet unconscious of the new Revelation still so slowly and so modestly being brought to its notice. So far we seem not entirely ready to take this next step—though one is preparing to go, no pioneer has yet arisen who has cast all other interests aside, moved to a fresh town and settled down to teach the Faith steadily and build up a community. As we said, one is just preparing to go, but many more are needed and until, at any rate, a good proportion of the needed pioneers have been speeded on their way, we cannot honestly say that the Six-Year Plan has properly started, because experience in other countries where the Bahá'í community has developed and expanded earlier than here has shown that pioneer settlement is an integral and essential part of the work.

Having so discussed the needs of the plan and what lies before us, let us list the steps which have been taken to bring the Plan into being and to lay its foundations. The first step was to form a committee to consider the whole situation and the best way to proceed. They suggested setting a goal of nine pioneers to be settled by Convention of 1946 (hoping by then we should be benefitting by the end of the war and the subsequent changing of jobs, etc.) and a further ten by 1947, after that everyone to go all out to finish forming assemblies in each place settled. They also listed the places where work had been done and it seemed possible to do more, and some other places where it would be desirable to try and establish communities. They are now engaged in gathering together information about the various places, for the help of pioneers as they arise to go to them.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly, convinced that to strengthen the existing communities is a basic part of the Six-Year Plan work, since it is from their ranks that most of the pioneers and other helpers will come, has urged on the local assemblies the need for striving for ever closer unity amongst the members of their communities, so that not only will they be stronger and function better, but they will also acquire more and more the spiritual attraction which will draw other people to the Faith.

Two more committees were set up to help with the Plan. Firstly, a committee to prepare and distribute a Postal Study Course on the Teachings and on matters useful to Bahá'í teachers, in order to help all the believers, whether in communities or alone, to forward the Plan. Also, after the experience of the Centenary celebrations, it was thought that Bahá'í exhibitions had a very useful function in calling attention of the public to the Faith, especially when such exhibitions can be held in an empty shop in a main street of a town where work is already being done or is about to commence. A committee was therefore appointed to re-model the material used for the Centenary

exhibition and make it suitable for general use. This was done and the material has already been in use; it is hoped that many more of these exhibitions will be held as time goes on and opportunity offers.

Meanwhile, pending the settlement of pioneers, the ordinary teaching work has gone on, in some cases in towns where there is one or more believers already living, in others where there are none, though it is very difficult to work in a town where there is not at least one resident Bahá'í.

The most steady and satisfactory teaching work has been done by two groups, Northampton and Blackburn. Northampton is still unable to find a centre, but have kept on with their fortnightly meetings, holding them for part of the year in a café and for a while in private homes, and their meetings are well attended. They have also kept the 19-Day Feasts regularly and have in fact become an organised community, though still a small one. Blackburn built up interest first by advertisements in a local paper and, even before starting meetings, had twenty enquiries. Last November they started to hold regular fortnightly meetings, which have been well attended. The patient work of one believer over a long period of years is thus finally bearing fruit. Various visiting speakers have helped both groups and both have started a lending library to help enquirers. Northampton has two new believers and Blackburn one.

Liverpool has also for some time held regular meetings with an interested attendance, and the one local believer has been helped by a visiting teacher from Manchester, who has gone over to speak at a number of the meetings. For a while a regular series of meetings was held in Nottingham, but results were not very encouraging, though interest in the Faith is there as we know from the large number of answers to advertisements. Visiting speakers went up for some of them, others were taken by two believers, who both live about ten miles away from Nottingham. It is not easy to keep up a sustained interest when nobody lives there, but we hope to have a pioneer there soon. We held a small Centenary exhibition there. Blackpool is just now waking up and some people are showing interest in the Faith, and a book has been accepted by the public library, with a promise that another may be considered later. Other places where meetings have been held include Ilkeston, Coventry, Birmingham and Buxton, where we took a hall during Summer School. Ilkeston also had a small Centenary exhibition, not well attended but very well reported in the local paper, which also noticed the Centenary itself. During the year, work has also been started in Norwich—quite a number of people were contacted whilst a believer in

the Army was stationed there and several meetings were held. There is one new believer, who is now alone there.

Though no new assemblies have been formed during the year, there have been sixteen new believers, four of them not yet of voting age, and one believer came from America to live here. Against this, three of the believers have passed on and one, an American who accepted the Faith here, has returned to the United States. Mr. Dowson of Sydney, N.S.W., is working here for some months. He has been in London and is now in Preston, Lancashire, and is able to help in Blackburn. We have been in contact with several Bahá'ís serving in the U.S. Army here and one is at present a member of the London community. He recently spent a week's leave travelling around from one community or pioneer believer to another, paying short visits—a wonderful way of demonstrating the worldwide unity of the Faith.

The communities have all worked hard during the year. London hoped, of course, to get a lot of new visitors at their meetings after the publicity given by the Centenary celebrations. Unfortunately, about a fortnight afterwards the flying-bombs started, followed later by the rockets, which considerably reduced the attendance at public functions of any sort. They have, however, held their meetings regularly and have had a number of new visitors. They have experimented with different forms of meeting on the various Sundays of the month, in an effort to appeal to different tastes, having sometimes a talk, sometimes a devotional meeting and sometimes a meeting at which questions are answered. They also held two meetings on week-day evenings in order to meet the convenience of enquirers who could not come on Sunday afternoons. Their Nawruz Feast had a record attendance, larger than ever before, the Centre being completely crowded out. They have also held two large public meetings, one a purely Bahá'í one, the other on rather different lines in co-operation with other organisations. The Bahá'í meeting was held at Ealing and was attended by about forty fresh people, the subject being "World Citizenship." It received quite a lot of attention in the local press. The other meeting, held in a hall in the centre of London, was initiated by us but was organised in co-operation with several other organisations interested in the subject, which was "First Steps towards World Unity." Three well-known people, unconnected with any of the organisations, spoke, followed by a Bahá'í who summed up in the spirit of the Teachings, without, however, mentioning the Faith by name. They are intending to hold another such joint meeting. Besides these big meetings, speakers have been sent to various other organisations. Two fireside meetings have been held regularly,

one at South Kensington and the other at Ealing. One public library has accepted a book and one a subscription to New World Order, and one bookseller has held a display of Bahá'í books. London has had one new believer during the year and three believers absent on National Service have also returned to swell their ranks.

Although many of the friends from other communities attended the national Centenary celebrations in London, the communities also held their own celebrations a little later on. Manchester's effort took the form of an exhibition similar to the London one, combined with a series of public meetings. The exhibition was visited by approximately 200 people and the meetings also attracted a number of interested friends. They have also been advertising the Faith in Manchester papers regularly and have had both postal enquirers and visitors. They have held their meetings regularly, for a time having also a short devotional meeting prior to the public talks. They also ran a study group for some months. The Youth Group too, has continued to function, holding regular meetings and sending its bulletins to young Bahá'ís in various parts of the country. Manchester finished the year with a shop exhibition in Salford and they hope to have others in different districts of Manchester in the near future. They have six new believers.

Bradford, too, held a local Centenary celebration, also in the form of an exhibition, but this time in an empty shop in the centre of the town. During a week they obtained 220 names in the visitors' book and a number also did not sign. They finished the week with a public meeting. They have held their public meetings regularly and also had a regular study class. Bradford is badly handicapped still by ill-health and by the number of young members absent on National Service, but one has just returned to Bradford on discharge from the Army and will be able to help the work there.

Torquay's Centenary celebration took the form of an exhibition of Bahá'í books in a shop window and they had a bookstall in the entrance to the shop, which is right underneath their Centre. They also held meetings every evening that week, taken entirely by local speakers, as Torquay was then a prohibited area, which was a great effort for a small community. They advertised in the local press, which also published articles about the celebrations. The young people's social evenings, run by Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. White, reported on last year, have developed a great deal. The young people are now taking an interest in the Faith and are interesting their parents, some of whom attend the Sunday meetings and are reading Bahá'í books. Also some of the mothers are helping with the social evenings. The little group collaborated in the International Youth Day on March 4th,

with other Bahá'í groups all over the world. Not being yet declared Bahá'ís, they did not attempt the rather ambitious programme mapped out by the International Youth Committee, but they held a social meeting and invited their parents and friends and talks on the Faith were given. A Bahá'í talk was given to the local Theosophical Society and attempts have been made to establish contacts in Newton Abbot and Exeter, though not yet with much success.

In spite of the fact that Bournemouth have still not been able to find premises for a centre, they have had a successful year, having increased their members by four new believers, one a youth member, and with three more just declaring themselves now. Having no centre, their work is mostly done at fireside meetings in private homes and at one time they had as many as five fireside meetings going during a week. Miss South also rented a room at the Psychology Club and gave weekly talks, every alternate one being devoted to the Bahá'í Faith.

We have not gone in for as much press publicity this year, either in the form of advertisements or otherwise. So far as advertising was concerned, in several towns it seemed that our advertisements were no longer attracting much attention and that all possible enquirers had already written, and it was therefore considered advisable to give them a rest for a little while, with the idea of starting again later if active work was being done there, especially to support a pioneer. At the moment the only ones actually running are in "The Esperantist" which over several years has brought and continues to bring a small but steady stream of enquirers, and in a Nottingham paper which we are keeping on to pave the way for the pioneer we hope to have there soon.

Last year's Convention recommended that we should continue to employ the publicity agent who helped us for the Centenary. After some negotiation and some delay, this was arranged and he started work. We soon came to the conclusion, however, that for the present, on account of the great events happening coupled with the small available newspaper space, it was not likely that much publicity could be obtained for the Faith this way and, at the suggestion of the publicity officer himself, the agreement was terminated after three months. One thing which we did, however, at his suggestion has proved quite useful. He obtained messages to the Bahá'í community for Nawruz from Dame Sybil Thorndike, Miss Ethel Mannin, Mr. Shaw Desmond, Mr. Clifford Bax, Mr. Reginald Sorensen, M.P., and Mr. Christmas Humphreys, president of the Buddhist Society. These messages were featured in advertisements of the Faith which have been appearing weekly in the personal columns of "The Times," "The Man-

chester Guardian" and "The Yorkshire Post." Quite a number of enquiries have been received. An article on the Faith has appeared in "Cavalcade" and favourable reviews have appeared in the "John o' Groats Journal."

There has been another form of publicity, worked by one of the friends. Mrs. Rideout of Amesbury is a member of the panel of people who regularly report on the B.B.C. religious programmes. She frequently quotes from the Bahá'í Writings in her reports and has also urged that the B.B.C. allow a Bahá'í talk.

With regard to the Publishing Trust, last year it was reported that £300 of the money sent by the Guardian had been allocated to the Trust. A few days before the Centenary the Guardian made a further large gift, mentioning publishing as one of its two purposes, and the share eventually allocated to the Publishing Trust was £730. This generous donation of £1,030 within a year for publishing alone has placed the Publishing Trust in an entirely new position. The problem is no longer to find money for publishing needed books, but rather making the best use of the money we have.

This does not mean that the path of the Publishing Trust has been smooth during the year. So long as lack of money prevented us from publishing all we wanted, wartime publishing difficulties affected us comparatively little. This year they have been the governing factor; and this year they have been more intense for all publishers than at any previous time.

The biggest difficulty has been the shortage of printing labour. Even when we have offered to supply paper ourselves, most printing firms with whom we have not previously dealt have been unable to accept new business. The Dorset Press, who do most of our printing, have been genuinely co-operative; but in spite of this they take a very long time over a job, and the two most important books given to them have been delayed for months because the printing machines developed faults, causing an unevenness of type which has made a great deal of re-setting necessary. Three pamphlets were given to a new printing firm, who found themselves quite unable to procure suitable paper against our quota; had not the Dorset Press agreed to release some paper they were holding in reserve for us, two of these pamphlets could not have been printed. Even "The Centenary of a World Faith," printed last year by one of the best printers in the country, had typographical faults in the last chapter, resulting from the shortcomings of wartime machines and wartime labour.

A result of these difficulties has been that although we have more publications in the hands of printers than ever before, very little has reached the stage of distribution during the

year. "The Hidden Words," and the leaflet "Healing the Sick Body of the World," which were printing at the time the last report was made, are now being distributed. The type of "The Hidden Words" is being stored for future reprints, this being cheaper than having stereotypes made. 1,500 copies of the diary for 1945 were printed, and a reprint made of the article on Lady Blomfield in "Bahá'í World, Vol. VIII," this being at the request of her daughter, Mrs. Basil Hall, debited to her account and distributed free. The first 500 "Centenary of a World Faith" have been sold and the remaining 500 bound. Apart from these items, the only publication which has been completed during the year has been "Bahá'í Teachings on Life after Death."

On the other hand we have now printing a general Prayer Book, a Prayer Book containing prayers and tablets of special interest to Bahá'ís, a modified form of "Bahá'u'lláh and His Message," a new general pamphlet, and a reprint of "Paris Talks."

There are also a number of books and pamphlets in preparation. Of those planned last year, some progress has been made with "Abdu'l-Bahá in Britain," the meditation book, and the simple introductory book. During the year also individuals have been appointed to prepare a full record of the Centenary celebrations in this country, a selection from "Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh," and a card showing how Persian words should be pronounced when the Oxford transliteration is used.

It cannot, however, be said that the preparation of books for publication has been entirely satisfactory. The lapse of time between the planning of a book and the completion of its preparation is so great that we may next year or the year after find ourselves in the position of needing books, being in a position to publish them, and having no books ready for publication. This is partly because there are few members of the community who have both the necessary knowledge of the Faith and the literary ability to write or edit a book; and partly because of the many other calls on the time of those who have the necessary ability. It is a matter which needs careful attention, since there is some hope that publishing will become easier during the next two years, and greater shipping facilities may increase our export turnover, speeding up the sale of existing publications. Unless we plan the preparation of books a year or more in advance, we may find our stock decreasing and no books ready to publish to replenish and increase it.

A new system has been instituted for the stocks held by local spiritual assemblies, which involved the return of about £80 worth of books. Instead of holding large stocks which were paid for only when sold, they now own their own

stock. A credit of £10 is given, and payments are made in monthly instalments of a size determined by each assembly but not varying from month to month. Stock above the value of £10 is paid for in cash. Most of the assemblies are hoping their monthly payments will prove large enough to pay off their £10 credit, as well as paying for replacement orders.

No special effort has been made this year to sell Publishing Trust books through booksellers, but the turnover reached the highest level yet achieved. This has been largely due to the orders received from Bahá'í assemblies abroad, particularly from Australia and Iraq. As catalogues cannot be given away free in this country but may be exported, the policy has been adopted of sending every few months to assemblies abroad who order books from us a duplicated list of books currently available. It is believed that this has induced such assemblies to order books they would otherwise have forgotten.

During the year the following books ceased to be available: "Hidden Words" (paper, cloth and leather), Bahá'í Prayers, "The Coming of the Glory," "God's Heroes," "Bahá'u'lláh and His Message," and Mr. Townshend's pamphlet. Except for "God's Heroes" and Mr. Townshend's pamphlet, reprints or substitutes are either in preparation, in production, or have already been published.

The diary has again been very successful, and the possibility of getting export orders for it is being investigated. The Guardian accepted 20 copies of the 1945 diary for use and distribution. In the letter from his secretary concerning these diaries, it was stated that "the Guardian is very pleased to see the plans you are making and also your present undertaking to get out smaller sized pamphlets."

Thanks to the generosity of the Guardian, this year has again been an active year for the Publishing Trust. Experience has been gained, and it is hoped that next year will see the fruits of this year's work in an increase in the number of titles available from the Publishing Trust. Books in preparation and production are still of small size, but it is hoped that when war restrictions become less, the Publishing Trust will be in a position to embark on some of the larger books which are so much needed in this country and elsewhere.

New World Order has continued to appear this year, though at rather longer intervals on account of printing difficulties. One number was devoted almost entirely to an account of the Centenary celebrations and a report of the speeches given. The number of annual subscriptions has remained about the same—the communities have taken larger supplies but subscriptions amongst individual believers have not increased.

For some time we have had a small collection of books which we lend to postal enquirers. During the year some books used a few years ago by the National Teaching Committee were added to this small store and now with the addition of some more books it has been formed into a National Lending Library, which is at the service both of enquirers and of those Bahá'ís who do not have access to the library of a local community, with the special aim of helping pioneers.

As in previous years, we have been able to hold our various national functions, namely Summer School and the Teaching Conference. Summer School was held at Buxton. Accommodation was limited and was further complicated by staff difficulties, so that we could only take forty people for the Bank Holiday week-end and half that number for the rest of the week. However, in spite of this the school was a great success. With the Six-Year Plan in mind and the fact that nearly all the people attending were Bahá'ís, it was devoted exclusively to subjects which would help prepare them for teaching. The Teaching Conference was as usual held in Manchester in January, and was well attended. Everyone remarked that the discussion was more practical and that there was a more alive and active spirit in the gathering.

On the legal side, we have during the year, continued our efforts to get suitable changes made in our Articles of Association, in order that the Inland Revenue will exempt us from tax. The matter moves very slowly, mainly because the Chief Inspector of Taxes has not yet approved of the amendments we have suggested. The position is at the moment that we have consulted Counsel on the matter and the solicitor has sent a further letter based on Counsel's suggestions. We are also consulting the solicitor about amending the clause which provides for a Convention of 19 delegates, so that when needed through the progress of the Six-Year Plan, a larger number of delegates may be elected.

Towards the end of this year events in the world have moved and we have once more been in touch with some of our fellow believers on the Continent of Europe. David Hofman visited Paris and saw the believers there. We have also corresponded with them and sent two parcels over to them. We have also received a letter from one of the believers in Lyons and have been in touch again with the International Bureau at Geneva.

Amongst smaller items, we should mention the receipt of gifts of books from India and America. Mr. Mani Mehta of Bombay had a special edition printed of the Guardian's book "The Promised Day is Come," many of which he presented to distinguished people connected with India. He very kindly sent a number of copies

for use here. The American N.S.A., knowing our difficulty in importing books, very generously sent us three copies of the Guardian's book "God Passes By" and ten copies of their own Centenary book.

As a gesture of sympathy and support, the N.S.A. has decided to take out six annual subscriptions to the Australian quarterly, "The Herald of the South," intending to retain one copy for the National Library and to share the others amongst the local communities.

The story of the Cause this year started with two important events, the celebration of the first Centenary of the Faith, which was a Bahá'í world event, and an event concerning our British community, the adoption of the Six-Year Plan. The first event has come and gone and is now part of our history, the second, even now after the passing of a year, lies almost entirely in the future. The Guardian has said that the Plan constitutes a landmark in the history of the Faith in the British Isles and that the immediate destinies of the entire community depend upon it. These words need surely to be pondered carefully by all of us. Never before has the Bahá'í community in this country been called upon to face so clearly the implications involved in acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith and the responsibility which that entails to spread the Faith to others. We are now confronted with a very definite and concrete task, to establish the Cause in nineteen towns in the British Isles in the coming five years, for a Five-Year Plan is what it has now become, and the job still remains before us. As we have said, the first step is the establishment of pioneers, at least one in all these nineteen places. That must be done before anything else and everything else must yield place to this task. The Guardian assures us that "when once a few bold, self-sacrificing individuals have arisen to serve, their example will no doubt encourage other timid would-be pioneers to follow in their footsteps" and reminds us that "the history of our Faith is full of records of the remarkable things achieved by really very simple, insignificant individuals, who become veritable beacons and towers of strength through having placed their trust in God and having arisen to proclaim His Message." 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to the English believers, no doubt foreseeing these times we are living in now: "They must not rest day or night but strive to illumine the children of men, and awaken souls. This is not the day of silence. This is not the day of rest." Let us all face our own individual situation honestly and carefully and see if we cannot make a supreme effort to help during the coming year. Never in the history of the world has the Message of God been more needed than it is now. The world is in the deepest trouble, terrible

things are happening such as were not imagined before; we are living through the most tormenting and revolutionary period on record; it is a period of destruction, yet of growth, above all a period of supreme bewilderment for most people. The Bahá'í Faith is the Message of God which will solve all these problems, will give men hope, comfort and tranquillity. And that is precisely what the Six-Year Plan really means—that we who have been blessed above all people with the knowledge and understanding of the tremendous events which are happening in the life of the world, are to give to the people of this country the faith and the understanding that Bahá'u'lláh has already given us. How can we hold back, knowing that the destiny of the country and indeed of the entire world lies for the moment in our hands. Such a task is indeed a formidable prospect; the world's state is such that, without Divine support and blessing, one might well despair. But let us not be discouraged or downhearted, nor uncertain about the final result, for does not 'Abdu'l-Bahá tell us:

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

EXPENDITURE.				INCOME.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Publishing Expenses—				By CONTRIBUTIONS ...			132 19 0
Bahá'í Journal ...			32 11 5	" Bank Interest, less			
Publicity, Advertising, &c.			213 15 5	Commission			8 19 0
Rent, &c., London Office ...			43 1 8	PUBLISHING TRUST—			
Clerical Assistance ...			3 14 0	Contribution Received	2 10 0		
Travelling Expenses—				Less Paid Over ...	2 10 0		
N.S.A. Members ...	24	4	3				
Teachers' Travelling and				" Compensation for Loss			
Rent Rooms ...	29	8	0	of Typewriter ...			18 0 0
			53 12 3				
Summer School Expenses...	4	2	0				159 18 0
Less Contribution ...	3	0	0	" EXCESS EXPENDITURE			232 0 1
			1 2 0				
Postages ...			11 19 8				
Printing and Stationery ...			10 16 5				
Telegrams, Cables, &c. ...			4 14 1				
Audit ...			5 5 0				
Sundries ...			1 14 4				
Gift to Member ...			2 2 0				
Save the Children Fund ...	40	0	0				
Less Contributions ...	39	2	8				
			17 4				
Income Tax ...			5 12 6				
Depreciation—Fixtures ...			1 0 0				
			£391 18 1				£391 18 1