

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES
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BAHÁ'Í YEAR 101

SEPTEMBER, 1944

THE SIX-YEAR PLAN

At the end of May in response to our request sent from Convention the Guardian set for our Six-Year Plan the following goal:

"Advise formation nineteen spiritual assemblies spread over England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire."

That means that in the coming six years our little body of Bahá'ís, now concentrated in England, our small community with its five local assemblies, either well established or very new and weak in numbers, with its other members in ones and twos here and there—this little group is to spread itself out and establish itself in all parts of the British Isles. We are not, we know, to perform this formidable task alone. Bahá'u'lláh promises that His hosts of angels will help us, the Guardian prays for, as he says in his cable, "signal victory," and according to a later cable "ever increasing flow Divine outpourings." But we, ourselves, are the instruments by which the task has to be done, and it means first and foremost a call for pioneers, for believers to move and live either in places in England where there are prospects of forming an assembly or in these other areas of the British Isles, Wales, Scotland, Ireland. That is really the only way it can be done. That is the way they have extended and established the Faith in North America, in South America and in India. Here, too, there have already been appeals for pioneers, but there was no response. This time we must give a different answer, there can be no refusal any longer. The growth of the Faith in the British Isles depends on what we do in these coming six years. This is both our great responsibility and our glorious destiny, as a community and as individuals.

There will, too, be much work for those who remain where they are, and for the communi-

ties as such, to do. We must all take our part and help in every way we can. Above all, we have the supreme duty to pray for the Cause and for each other, that our efforts may be accepted and the work be blessed. Without prayer it is certain that nothing we do will avail.

A new committee has been set up for the purpose of thinking out and investigating ways in which the Six-Year Plan can be helped forward. They will advise and help the pioneers, they will produce ideas which can be carried out both by individuals and by communities. They have already met and started their work, though it is as yet in the preliminary stages, but they hope to make suggestions soon. So that they can keep in touch with the believers, they are to have the use of one page in the Journal every time it appears and this feature will commence with the next issue. Their reports and their recommendations will deserve our closest attention and our most earnest efforts to put them into effect.

Meanwhile since the Plan was formed, the first pioneer has set to work. Jessica Young of Manchester moved to Bristol at the beginning of September, to help strengthen the group there. This is a beginning and will, we hope, lead to the establishment of an assembly there soon.

To be a pioneer for the Faith, even more to be one of the first pioneers, is a great distinction. To serve the Cause with our whole heart, with all our capacity whether in pioneering or some other form of work, to devote all our lives to it is the little we can do in return for the priceless privilege bestowed as yet on so few, of being allowed to know the Manifestation of God for this age, of being enabled to

glimpse the glorious future God has decreed for mankind when the whole world shall come to know Him. The growth of the Faith in the British Isles depends on what we do in these coming six years. This is both our great responsibility and our glorious destiny, as a community and as individuals.

It must be quite obvious to all of us that great demands will be made on the Bahá'í Funds in fulfilling the Six-Year Plan. Publicity, travelling, helping pioneers establish themselves, all will be expensive. The Guardian has sent us most generous gifts to help with the teaching work, but we cannot carry out the Plan with the Guardian's money alone. It is our plan and our responsibility, and the Guardian's gifts should serve as an incentive to us to contribute equally. Believing that the friends will be anxious to help and to make a start as quickly as possible, the National Spiritual Assembly has opened a Six-Year Plan Fund and appeals to all the Bahá'ís in the country to make every possible sacrifice to support it. The ultimate success of the Six-Year Plan depends on what we give to it both in service and in money. Contributions either from individuals or local assemblies should be sent to the National Treasurer, Mr. A. Norton, 41, Cranbourne Road, Chellow Dene, Bradford.

The Guardian has cabled recently enquiring about the safety of the London believers during the flying-bomb attacks. We were happy to be able to reply that all the friends are so far safe.

Centenary Celebrations in the Provinces.

Torquay's celebrations came first in order of time, being held from June 11th to 18th. They took the form of meetings each day in their Centre and a bookstall at the entrance fronting on the street and a book display in the shop window beside it.

Torquay Centre is in a busy shopping street and the bookstall therefore did a good trade, the sales being mainly in small literature.

The Centre was decorated with photographs similar to those used for the London exhibition, and they prepared a comprehensive programme of talks. The subjects were:

"The Dawn of a New Age," the Báb—Miss Miss Budgell, Bahá'u'lláh—Mrs. Stevens, 'Abdu'l-Bahá—Mrs. Matthews.

"Progressive Revelation," Mrs. White.

"The Growth of a World Faith," Mrs. Langdon-Davies.

"The Bahá'í Temple," Mrs. Ward.

"The Oneness of Mankind," Mrs. Langdon-Davies.

"Bahá'í Light on World Affairs," Mrs. White.
"The Changing World," Mrs. Matthews.
"Abdu'l-Bahá: some stories of His Life," Mrs. Stevens.

As Torquay was at the time in a banned area, it was not possible for any guest speakers to be sent and as will be seen most of the local speakers did two talks in the week, which was a noble effort. Attendance at the meetings was not so good as they had hoped, but some were sufficiently interested to come to almost every meeting, and some who could not attend evening meetings came in the day time to look at the photographs.

One of the local newspapers printed a notice in the evening edition on the first Saturday and also on one of the talks given. There were also large advertisements in both local papers and notices each day under the heading "What's On To-day."

Manchester held a Centenary Week from June 17th to 24th, and the celebrations took the form of an exhibition and a number of public meetings.

They began to prepare the ground by advertising the Faith in the "Manchester Guardian" and the "Manchester Evening News" two months previously, and they received from this a number of postal enquiries about the Faith.

The exhibition, which was held in the Centre, was in the main similar to that held in London and it was visited by approximately 200 people. Literature was displayed and a great deal was sold.

The week commenced with a devotional meeting on the Friday evening, before the exhibition opened. They held meetings on Saturday and Sunday evenings of the first week-end, the Monday and Wednesday and again on the Saturday and Sunday of the second week-end. Guest speakers were Miss Marguerite Wellby, Miss Ursula Newman, Mr. Arthur Norton and Mr. St. Barbe Baker, and Mr. Ingleby, a local friend of the Faith. Miss Ada Williams of the Manchester community also spoke and Mr. Louis Rosenfield acted as Chairman.

The celebrations obtained a great deal of publicity for the Faith in Manchester and in due course, no doubt, the believers there will see the benefits of their hard work.

Bradford is holding a Centenary Week from September 4th to 10th. They are having a display in a shop in one of the main streets of Bradford, which they have taken for the purpose, and they are holding public meetings. A report will be given in the next issue of the Journal.

The World Community of Bahá'u'lláh.

Centenary News.

All the members of the Persian National Spiritual Assembly and of the local assemblies in that country went to Shiráz and attended the Centenary commemoration meeting in the House of the Báb. The Guardian sent a silk carpet to the House as a Centenary gift.

We hear from Tihrán that they held very many Centenary meetings there. Since conditions do not allow them to gather together in very large numbers, they held meetings in a lot of places at a time. There were about 60 meetings a night for nine nights, each being attended by anything between 120 and 300 people. At first the Press took no notice of the Centenary, until the "Tihrán Daily News" published a telegram about the celebrations in London. This created a big sensation and then the other papers began to take notice. They tended mainly to criticise but it proved to be a very good advertisement for the Faith in Persia.

The believers in America of course made elaborate plans for the celebration of the Centenary, at the Temple at Wilmette. Meetings were held each day from 19th May, culminating in a banquet "in Celebration of the Coming of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh to the Western World—Chicago 1894" held on 25th May. It must indeed have been a wonderful time of rejoicing for between two and three thousand believers gathered there. The Centenary of the Founding of the Faith, the fiftieth anniversary of the coming of the Cause to the West and the successful completion of their Seven-Year Plan by which believers had been established in every province and state of Canada and the U.S. and in every country of Central and South America. It was an All-America Convention and celebration too, communities participating from all the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, San Domingo, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela. No such gathering has ever been held before, but this is just the beginning of many. There, too, as everywhere in the Bahá'í world the Declaration of the Báb was commemorated at a solemn meeting two hours and eleven minutes after sunset on 22nd May, in the Temple, where was on exhibition at the same time the picture of the Báb specially sent by the Guardian.

In India, Australia and New Zealand, too, celebrations were planned and no doubt we shall receive reports about them soon.

Other News from Abroad.

We hear from Tihrán that when the issue of "Picture Post" containing the article and picture of the London Nawruz Feast arrived there and became known, the price of the paper rose from the ordinary one of 3 riyals to 300 riyals owing to the enormous demand for it.

SUMMER SCHOOL, 1944.

We must mark the fact that this was our first Summer School of the New Century. And it was undoubtedly a big success. For that we ought to be truly grateful, because above everything else the school inaugurated the whole working of our Six-Year Plan. The Convention wanted some sort of a Teacher's Training Course, and we had it at the Summer School. There were only six days, and they were fully utilised. Admittedly the programme was a heavy one, and a great deal of concentration was required. We shall see the effects of the work done during the coming months.

The School proved once again to us this supreme fact that willing service in the path of Bahá'u'lláh brings with it untold blessings and bounties. It was felt all round that during those six days of study and harmonious fellowship, a great power was at work amongst us.

The following telegram was sent to the Guardian from Summer School:

"British Summer School sends devoted greetings. Beg your prayers for blessings inauguration Six Year Teaching Plan."

to which a reply has since been received:

"Appreciate greetings. Praying blessings Summer School and Teaching Plan. Love."

The Summer School was held at Holm Leigh School in Buxton, Derbyshire, from August 4th to the 11th. The accommodation was limited and no more than forty-one could come for the week-end and twenty-two could stay on for the rest of the time. The proprietress was very kind and considerate and did all that she could to make us comfortable. To her we owe a debt of gratitude.

On the evening of 9th August, we held a public meeting in Buxton. Posters announcing the meeting were displayed in the town, and the "Buxton Advertiser" of that week carried three paragraphs about the meeting and the Cause, in the column devoted to town events. Although the attendance was not large, it was satisfactory for a first attempt at holding a public meeting in Buxton.

Our first Summer School of the Second Bahá'í Century was indeed a joyous and fruitful occasion.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the Year ended 21st April, 1944

EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
PUBLISHING EXPENSES.						
Bahá'í Journal ...				38	0	7
Publicity, Advertising, etc.				161	9	0
Rent, London Office ...				37	10	0
Hire of Rooms ...				1	1	0
Clerical Assistance ...				5	13	9
TRAVELLING EXPENSES.						
N.S.A. Members ...	62	19	2			
Teachers, etc. ...	40	9	5			
				103	8	7
Postages ...				12	6	3
Printing and Stationery ...				5	12	9
Telegrams, Cables, etc. ...				11	14	7
Repairs ...				3	0	0
Audit ...				5	5	0
Subscriptions ...				1	0	0
Sundries ...				5	17	0
Donation to Member for loss sustained ...				10	0	0
Legal Expenses for a Member ...				5	5	0
Income Tax ...				4	10	0
Depreciation—Fixtures ...				16	6	
				£412	10	0
SURPLUS FOR YEAR ...				273	15	2
				£686	5	2

INCOME.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By CONTRIBUTIONS ...				184	7	7
GUARDIAN'S DONATIONS				500	0	0
Bank Interest less Commission ...				1	17	7
PUBLISHING TRUST.						
Special Appeals.						
Balance in hand 21st April, 1943 ...	1	10	0			
Add Appeals Received	10	0	0			
	11	10	0			
Less Paid to Publishing Trust ...	11	10	0			

£686 5 2

NEWS.

We are pleased to welcome as a member of the community Mrs. Margaret Palmer of Bournemouth. F/O R. H. Backwell, R.A.F., who first learnt of the Cause in this country and has lately been stationed in Ceylon, has been in touch with the Indian community and his declaration as a Bahá'í has been accepted by the Indian N.S.A.

Mrs. Helen Toye, who evacuated to America four years ago and became a Bahá'í over there, has returned to this country.

Mr. T. R. Dowson of the Sydney N.S.W. community is in England on business and will be here some months.

Small Centenary exhibitions will also be held at the end of September in Nottingham and Ilkeston in connection with meetings to be held there.

Meetings have been held in the last few months in Coventry, Nottingham, Ilkeston, and Salisbury.

The next meetings of the N.S.A. will be on 16th and 17th September and 28th and 29th October in London.

It will be seen from the above accounts that our expenditure was more than double the amount of contributions received and that although we do finish the year with a surplus of £273 15s. 2d., the position would have been quite different had we not received from the Guardian. Such items as Publicity and Advertising £161 9s. 0d., and Travelling Expenses £103 8s. 7d., would have been quite impossible without the gifts from the Guardian, yet they are normal expenses which must be incurred by a community devoting itself to making a faith known and teaching it in different parts of the country. We have to face this fact that if we want to teach the Cause, if we want to maintain our institutions and extend them, as a community we must support the expenses involved. Bahá'í funds, both local and national, need good, steady incomes made up of regular contributions. A Bahá'í fund is the life-blood of a community.