

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

JULY, 1944

THE CENTENARY

The Centenary week has come and gone, and now we can assess the value of the months of preparation which preceded it. To start with, we had the inestimable assurance of the Guardian's love, encouragement and prayers to support and uphold us. Undoubtedly we could have done more, perhaps much more, to raise still higher the standard of our celebrations. But the supreme fact is this—that Bahá'u'lláh in His great bounty crowned our efforts with marvellous success and confirmation.

The celebrations began in the afternoon of Saturday, May 20th, with the opening of the Centenary Exhibition by Sir Ronald Storrs, K.C.M.G., a good friend of the Cause. This opening ceremony was indeed very well attended, and it was reported in three of the national newspapers, "The Sunday Times" and "The Sunday Dispatch" of May 21st, and "The Manchester Guardian" of May 22nd. The Exhibition, which was held at the Alliance Hall, Westminster, lasted for a week, until the noon of the following Saturday, and was open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. There were many visitors, who took away our literature with them and purchased books.

The most thrilling occasion of the whole week was the meeting at the Centre on the evening of May 22nd. There was a large gathering of the friends, and the meeting, which was timed to coincide with the very hour of the Báb's Declaration, at two hours and eleven minutes after sunset, left a deep impression on all present. It was a memorable event, and a time for the rededication of our lives to the service of the Cause. Afterwards we all joined in a feast, which was made possible by the combined efforts of the community.

On the evening of Tuesday, May 23rd, a pub-

lic meeting was held at Denison House, Victoria. The attendance was large. Mrs. Basil Hall was in the chair. The Bahá'í speakers were Mr. W. Tudor-Pole, Mr. H. M. Balyuzi, Mr. David Hofman and Mr. Norman Smith of the New York community (who is here with the United States Forces). In addition several well-known people paid their tribute to the Cause. They were Mr. Shaw Desmond (author), Sir William Hornell (late Vice-Chancellor of Hong-Kong University), Dr. Harold Moody (President of the League of Coloured Peoples), Mr. Hannen Swaffer (publicist), and the Rev. Walter Wynn (Free Church minister). The meeting began with a musical item arranged by Miss Marjorie Parker.

On the remaining evenings of the week different functions were held at the Alliance Hall. On Wednesday evening (May 24th), Mr. St. Barbe Baker gave a talk on "The Rebirth of Palestine," illustrated with lantern slides. On the following evening Mr. Bernard Leach spoke on "Beauty and Truth." Both of these meetings, as well as the two following, were well attended.

On Friday, May 26th, we had a programme of readings from the Scriptures, interspersed with musical items. This programme, entitled "The Song of Heaven," was presented by Mr. David Hofman. On Saturday evening, the last of the Centenary week, we had a review of Bahá'í history in dramatised form, presented by Mr. H. M. Balyuzi.

We should also record it here that during this week Bernard Leach and Laurie Cookes were married at the London Centre.

This is just a bare account of the Centenary Week, which also included the Annual Convention. But there was much more than just these

functions. There was a spirit of joy and gratitude and devotion, which words cannot describe.

It was indeed a happy week and a profitable week. May the spirit engendered by it carry us forward, with added resolution, to our destined goal.

The communities have arranged to hold their local celebrations in June, and these will be reported in the next "Journal."

The souvenir programmes of the Centenary are still available. Friends who were unable to attend the celebrations may have them for 1/- each from the National Office.

CONVENTION

The Annual Convention opened at 5.30 p.m. on Saturday, May 20th, inspired and happy after the well-attended opening of the Centenary Exhibition. So we started with the consciousness that we had done something and done it successfully, and this gave us all a feeling of energy and constructiveness, which persisted throughout the Convention. Discussion was practical and many good ideas were brought forward. There was a general understanding of the great importance of the coming years and of the hard work and sacrifice that will be needed. The high spot of the Convention was the resolution to inaugurate a Six-Year Plan for teaching, to end at the Centenary of the Báb's Martyrdom in 1950. By general consent a cable was sent to the Guardian asking him to fix the goal, and his reply, which has already been circulated, suggested that we aim at the formation of nineteen spiritual assemblies, spread over England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire. A great task indeed lies ahead of us.

The secretary's annual report pointed out the fact that we had not been able to respond to the Guardian's appeal for pioneers to move into fresh districts and so build up assemblies. It was agreed that, in war-time, to do this is not at all easy, but that nevertheless we still had to undertake it as quickly as possible, and it was suggested that believers be asked to keep this need in mind when they are changing jobs and homes after the war. The appeal is therefore put on record that when such time comes, we should all remember the Guardian's wish. A noble response will certainly go a good way in helping to carry out the Six-Year Plan.

Topics discussed included the need to get Bahá'í books more into circulation, particularly to have them on sale in as many shops as possible, and believers present were urged to make a start at once in their home towns and see what could be done. Suggestions were also made that we reprint some of the books no

longer available, such as Divine Philosophy, Unity Triumphant and The Reality of Man.

The annual report had stated that the quarterly magazine, "New World Order," was not being supported to the greatest possible extent by the community nor used as it might be in teaching work. There was general resolution to remedy this, and a number of suggestions were made which might help to make it more attractive and also to improve its circulation amongst the public.

Teaching was, of course, the most important subject under discussion. There was a great deal of talk about the best way to organise the teaching work, and a number of different suggestions were made, which ended in a resolution to leave the final decision to the N.S.A. New ways of attracting people to the Cause were put forward, i.e., to provide social services, such as reading and writing rooms for the Forces, or clubs and socials for them and for young people; that if we cannot move, we should pioneer in our present districts; that we should give wider publicity to the Bahá'í teachings on World Reconstruction; that we should have teaching in mind in whatever we are doing. The importance of the believers being really well acquainted with all the Bahá'í books was considered an essential factor in teaching.

The actual resolutions taken are listed elsewhere in this "Journal," with the N.S.A.'s decisions regarding them.

More than one delegate put into words what was probably in the consciousness of all of us, that we should not think too much of our small numbers but should bear always in our minds the greatness of our mission and that we are part of a world faith and not just a little body of people in this country alone. Consequently we should face our responsibilities and shake off all apathy. We should do the things that really matter and think more of what we can do and not dwell on the obstacles. The greatest teachers of the Cause, such as Martha Root and Keith Ransom Kehler, have not been strong, vigorous people, but nevertheless by the power of the spirit they have performed marvels. And we can do the same if we will.

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

YEAR 101.

<i>Chairman ...</i>	...	MR. H. M. Balyuzi
<i>Vice-Chairman ...</i>	...	MRS. I. SLADE
<i>Secretary ...</i>	...	MRS. D. FERRABY
<i>Asst. Secretary ...</i>	...	MISS M. WELBY
<i>Treasurer ...</i>	...	MR. A. NORTON
		MISS A. E. BAXTER
		MRS. K. V. BROWN
		MR. J. FERRABY
		MRS. C. LANGDON-DAVIES

DELEGATES TO THE ANNUAL CONVENTION.

Miss E. P. Cranmer,	182 Seabourne Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth.
Miss F. Pinchon,	71 Southbourne Road, Bournemouth.
Mr. A. Norton,	41 Cranbourne Road, Chellow Dene, Bradford.
Mrs. M. Burgess Norton,	41 Cranbourne Road, Chellow Dene, Bradford.
Mrs. Margaret Wilkinson,	1 Moorland Road, Bradford.
Mr. H. M. Balyuzi,	6 Cannon Place, London, N.W.3.
Mrs. K. V. Brown,	6 Cannon Place, London, N.W.3.
Mrs. D. Ferraby,	56 Queens Gardens, London, W.2.
Mr. J. Ferraby,	56 Queens Gardens, London, W.2.
Miss V. Isenthal,	95 The Avenue, London, W.13.
Miss U. Newman,	45 Evelyn Gardens, London, S.W.7.
Miss M. Wellby,	48 Evelyn Gardens, London, S.W.7.
Mr. R. Coulson,	126 Boothroyden Road, Hr. Blackley, Manchester, 9.
Mr. J. Craven,	15 Riddings Road, Timperley, Ches.
Miss Ada Williams,	294 Barton Road, Stretford, Manchester.
Miss Alice Williams,	294 Barton Road, Stretford, Manchester.
Miss J. Young,	34 Palatine Road, Manchester, 20.
Mrs. C. Langdon-Davies,	6 Huxham's Cross, Dartington, Devon.
Mrs. L. Stevens,	Three Hills, Hampton Avenue, Babbacombe, Torquay.

SECRETARIES OF LOCAL ASSEMBLIES.

BOURNEMOUTH:	Miss D. Dewhirst, 167 Tuckton Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth.
BRADFORD:	Mrs. M. Burgess Norton, 41 Cranbourne Road, Chellow Dene, Bradford.
LONDON:	Miss V. Isenthal and Miss U. Newman, Joint Secretaries, Address at London Centre.
MANCHESTER:	Miss Ada Williams, 294 Barton Road, Stretford, Manchester.
TORQUAY:	Mrs. L. Stevens, Three Hills, Hampton Avenue, Babbacombe, Torquay.
NORTHAMPTON GROUP:	Miss J. Howes, 30 Sandiland Road, Headlands, Northampton.

NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

In response to a number of suggestions at Convention, the N.S.A. has considered very carefully the question of a National Teaching Committee. It has in the end been decided that teaching should be dealt with by the Assembly itself. It has, however, appointed a new committee to fulfil the special function of producing ideas and examining methods for the promotion of the Six-Year Plan. This committee will conduct exhaustive research into all possibilities of teaching, opportunities, methods,

publicity, etc., and will submit its findings to the N.S.A. The members are:

MR. H. M. BALYUZI.
MRS. BASIL HALL.
MR. D. HOFMAN.
MRS. M. BURGESS NORTON.
MRS. I. SLADE.
MISS J. YOUNG, *Secretary*.

Other committees are as follows:—

<i>Publicity:</i>	MISS A. E. BAXTER MR. J. FERRABY MR. D. MILLAR
<i>Archives:</i>	MR. H. M. BALYUZI MADAME M. VISTONA MR. W. WILKINS
<i>Publishing Trust:</i>	MRS. BROWN MR. J. FERRABY MRS. C. LANGDON-DAVIES
<i>Reviewing:</i>	MR. H. M. BALYUZI MRS. LANGDON-DAVIES. MISS PINCHON
<i>Contacts Secretary:</i>	MRS. I. SLADE
<i>Assistant:</i>	MR. A. NORTON
<i>New World Order:</i>	MISS M. WELLBY, <i>Editor</i> MR. D. MILLAR, MISS U. NEWMAN, } <i>Consultants</i> MR. B. LEACH,

RESOLUTIONS FROM CONVENTION.

The N.S.A. has met and considered the resolutions voted at the Convention:—

Groups be given representation by delegate at next year's Convention. To be taken into consideration when next allotting delegates.

That we abolish voting lists with names for N.S.A. elections, but that a list of believers be available for reference beforehand for each community. Agreed.

That each local community be asked to appoint someone to be responsible for New World Order in their community, and this person to report regularly to the local assembly. Agreed.

To publish a record of Centenary celebrations, with full records of speeches, etc. The necessary material is being collected.

To publish a book on World Economy from the Bahá'í point of view. To be considered in conjunction with other publishing plans.

To circularise special leaflets to selected lists of professional people throughout the country. Not considered generally advisable.

To bring the Bahá'í teachings of World Reconstruction to the notice of the public by all methods possible. Agreed.

Further suggestions made:—

Suggestions to reprint various books now unobtainable will also be considered in con-

junction with general publishing plans. This also applies to a new edition of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

That sessions at summer school should train believers in teaching methods. The whole of the summer school programme will be in the form of a training course for Bahá'ís.

That the N.S.A. put teaching before other business at its meetings. Agreed.

That the publicity officer be retained for further help. Agreed.

Suggestions.

It was urged at Convention that all Bahá'ís should become thoroughly familiar with all the Bahá'í books and should read and re-read them, so that not only do they know the Teachings well but they know what books to recommend to enquirers and where to find the answers to specific questions. Everyone received some time ago a list of the books which the Publishing Trust has for sale, but there are others which cannot at present be bought. Also friends may not always wish to buy each book they read. They are therefore reminded that they should make every possible use of the lending libraries at the various centres. Pioneers also can make use of these libraries and should apply to the centre nearest them.

It is often said by many of us that all modern thought is following the Bahá'í Teachings. A helpful way of making contacts would be to seek out movements in sympathy with our aims, to attend their meetings and collaborate with them. This is especially recommended to pioneers living alone in a town where they are trying to work up interest in the Faith.

Publishing Trust.

The history of the Cause published for the Centenary, entitled "The Centenary of a World Faith," is still obtainable from the Publishing Trust or the various Centres at a price of 5/-.

The new edition of "The Hidden Words" is now ready, price 1/6.

It was felt at Convention that Bahá'í books ought to be on sale much more widely than they are yet. Believers are urged to approach their local booksellers and try and get them to stock Bahá'í books. If you can book an order, write to the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, who send the books and invoice direct to the booksellers. Booksellers are given a discount of 33½%.

New Believers.

We are pleased to welcome Mrs. Pauline Senior, of Manchester, and Mrs. Etheldreda Nutt, of Northampton, as members of the community.

Our life and work as a Bahá'í community, though it has gone on as usual this year, has been increasingly dominated by one important matter, by the impending celebration of the Centenary of our Faith and by all the duties and preparations involved in this. At the Convention last year we received a cable from the Guardian setting us two tasks—one to make all arrangements to celebrate befittingly the Centenary, and the other to increase and expand our teaching work, with the aim of building as many fresh local assemblies as possible by the end of this year, the last year of the first Bahá'í century. How we have fulfilled the first request cannot be judged yet; we are just at this moment in the course of its fulfilment and must record later our views of its success. We can only say now that we made great plans and we have worked hard, and we pray that our efforts will be accepted and used for the glory of the Cause. As to our other task, to teach and to build assemblies, we can report a little success, but we cannot be content—we have not by any means done all we were asked to do.

This is the first Convention to be held in our new Centre. Last year's Convention discussed the question of larger premises and recommended that something be done. Our first decision was to try and rent another large room in the house where we had already been for seven years, and it seemed that this would succeed. In the end, however, we were informed that we must leave altogether, and for three months we were involved in a search for suitable quarters at a price which we could pay. The full story is more a London than a national matter, since the place serves as a London Centre as well as the National headquarters, and the London community had to bear all the burden of the search and the subsequent removal, on the national behalf as well as their own. The new premises are in most ways superior, particularly in respect to their situation, and we hope to derive great benefit from them.

At the beginning of the year the Guardian gave us two complementary charges in our teaching work: to try and establish as many new assemblies as possible before the end of the century, and, with that end in view, that everyone who could possibly move should go and live in a place where there were already one or two Bahá'ís. To the latter request we regret having to report that there has been no response at all. Without in the least standing in judgment, either individually or collectively, we have in honesty to report that, whilst the

Americans, the Indians, and the Persians, amongst others, have been leaving their homes and venturing abroad as pioneers for the Faith, we have not been able to produce one pioneer to move even to a different part of our own country. There are no doubt many reasons for this, but the fact that we have given absolutely no response to a request from the Guardian is something to think very seriously about, each and every one of us. This part of our task still lies before us. Bahá'u'lláh said that movement from place to place for the sake of God exerts great influence, and it may be that when we once begin to make such great sacrifices, then we shall multiply our assemblies here in this country as they have recently done, for example, in India.

So far as the establishment of assemblies is concerned, we have at any rate re-established two which had lapsed. Torquay was for less than a year reduced to group status, Bournemouth lost its previous assembly many years ago. Thus we finish the year with five assemblies, but we have not built up one assembly in a town where none has been before. Nevertheless we have now a larger number of local assemblies than we have ever had, so let us hope this is the beginning of much faster progress.

So far as seemed possible we have tried to build the foundation on which this hoped-for expansion can grow. A commencement is to make the principles of the Faith known far and wide, chiefly by newspaper advertisement. Details of this are given in the section on publicity. Working in this way we have been able to arouse sufficient interest to hold meetings in Ilkeston, Nottingham (which provides by far the largest number of newspaper answers) and Coventry, and it is hoped later to do the same thing in other towns where advertising is planned. Meetings have also been held in Birmingham, Blackburn and Salisbury, and individual teaching has been done in a number of other places. The biggest progress has been in Northampton, where partly by newspaper publicity and also as a result of the efforts of the first local believer there, and the others as they came along, the number has grown from one to six, and regular meetings are now being held by the group and the 19-Day Feasts observed. They were helped by various visiting teachers, but are at present doing everything for themselves and hope soon to hold a big meeting in a public hall. During the year the first 19-Day Feast in Dorset was held at Puncknoll, when four believers gathered together there.

Along with our other institutions, we have been able to maintain our annual Teaching Conference, which as usual was held in Manchester in January. This opportunity for the exchange

of experience and opinions is always very valuable and helps to inspire the teaching work.

A request was made at last year's Convention that the members of the N.S.A. should try and visit periodically all pioneers, to keep in touch, to get to know their views and difficulties and to help co-ordinate the community. Attempts were made to carry this out, though there were practical difficulties in the way of visiting all pioneers. Some visits were, however made. For instance, the believers in Bristol, Cheltenham and Droitwich met together at Cheltenham to celebrate the Feast of the Declaration of the Báb with a member of the N.S.A. A 19-Day Feast was held with a member of the N.S.A. in Birmingham, and another member visited Blackburn and held a meeting there at the same time. It was difficult, however, to carry the scheme any further, as both the pioneers and the members of the N.S.A. have their daily work to do and are not masters of most of their time; travelling also has become progressively more restricted and difficult. The N.S.A. does, however, try to serve the same purpose so far as possible by correspondence.

The communities on the whole have had a more active and successful year, and all report increases in numbers. Torquay, which regained its assembly status, besides holding three meetings a week at its centre—which is a lot for a community of nine people to maintain — has tried a new experiment. Two of the believers hold a social evening once a week to which young people are invited. Their ages range from 14 to 21, and it is hoped in time to make them interested in the Faith and, through them, their parents, who were invited to the Nawruz Feast. Torquay has also made publicity for the Cause by correspondence in the local paper.

Bournemouth, which has also become an assembly during the year, has no centre in which to hold its meetings yet, but there has been a talk on the Faith every fortnight at the Psychology Club by one member. Another has held a regular fireside meeting, and a second has now been started. When the N.S.A. visited Bournemouth, a hall was hired and a public meeting was held. Three lectures have also been given at the Theosophical Society and a book was presented to their library.

Bradford shows a big improvement. They have been through exceptional difficulties since the war began. They have lost a larger proportion of their community through calling-up than any other, and during the earlier months of this year they were also handicapped by illness of members. But lately the situation has very much improved. Attendance at meetings is much better and they are holding a weekly teacher's study class, which is also well

attended. An address has also been given to the local branch of the International Friendship League. They seem to be over the worst of their troubles now, and will surely begin to reap the spiritual benefit of their efforts to keep things going when conditions were far from easy.

Manchester, too, has been experimenting. One effort has been to invite outside speakers to give talks on subjects in sympathy with the Faith, and also to have a talk on an outside subject, i.e., Czechoslovakia, to which people from that country were invited. Another innovation is the commencement of a Youth Group, the members of which are mostly very young, but they are nevertheless running the group entirely by themselves and making a great success of it. Apart from this the usual public meetings have been held with increased attendance and two people held fireside meetings. Bahá'ís have also addressed meetings of other organisations. They are meeting with an encouraging response to their local advertising.

London's activities are always to some extent bound up with those of the national community, since their centre is also the national headquarters. This year this tendency has been intensified, partly because the national office is located there and partly because London is the biggest community in numbers, if not necessarily in active members. The consequence has been that the members of the London community able to do active work have not only done their local work; but have also done a very large proportion of the national work too. This, particularly in the Centenary year, has meant a large volume of work indeed, and the community as a whole has great cause to be grateful to the London believers. This situation has probably curbed to a certain extent the local activities, and there has been no personnel available for new experiments; but all the same London feels that it has had a fairly successful year, and that a lot of the work it has done will bring results in the future. For over four months life in the London community was dominated by the problem of moving; first of all searching for a place to move to, which took three months and was a very exhausting business; then by the move itself and getting the new Centre straight and attractive afterwards. Nevertheless, they have held regular public meetings each week which, mainly as a result of advertising, have been attended by a good number of fresh people. They also held a big meeting in a public hall, with a Bahá'í speaker and people from other faiths, on the subject of Race Amity, which was very well attended, as was also the tea party afterwards. Their other big function was the Nawruz Feast, which was photographed and featured after-

wards in "Picture Post," though the accompanying article was far from satisfactory.

Two believers have held fireside meetings; more would have done so if they had the time to make enough outside contacts to feed such meetings. Talks have also been given to outside organisations, such as the International Friendship League, the Church of Universal Truth, the Engineers' Study Group, an Adult School and a Rotary Club. Also books have been given to libraries. During the year one of the London believers has compiled an index to the *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, which will be very useful.

The national community has been increased by the addition of 15 new believers during the year, and one believer, Mrs. Helen Harrison, has passed on. There were two Bahá'í marriages.

This year, for the first time since the war began, we were able to hold what might be called a proper summer school. A school was hired at Barford, Warwickshire, which proved to be an ideal place, being surrounded by beautiful gardens and pleasant country. As accommodation was not ideally suitable and space was limited, it was resolved to restrict it mainly to Bahá'ís and to make the school especially a training course which would help the believers in their teaching work. In the end, however, it turned out that more non-Bahá'ís attended than we had ever had before, and in spite of the special character of the school, they enjoyed it as much as the Bahá'ís themselves, and three of the visitors have since declared themselves. From all points of view the school can be considered to have been a great success.

As has already been stated, a section of our activities which is becoming more and more important is publicity. The attempt to make the Faith known widely to the general public had already last year led us to embark on a certain amount of newspaper and magazine advertising, and this was continued during the current year. Publicity also worked hand in hand with teaching, the plan being to advertise the Faith for a time in a local paper in a town where it seemed possible to arouse interest, giving either the London address or that of a local believer, and then when sufficient enquiries had been received, to start holding meetings. It proved in fact that more answers were received from advertisements in the provincial press than from national papers, and we have tended latterly to concentrate on the provinces. Papers advertised in during the year were: "The British Esperantist," "One and All" (organ of the National Adult Schools Union), "Times" Educational Supplement, "Public Opinion," "Time and Tide," "The Teachers' World" and "Adult Education," all these having a national

circulation. Further, the "Ilkeston Advertiser," the "Northampton Independent," the "Northampton Chronicle and Echo," the "Salisbury Times," "Nottingham Evening Post," "Northern Daily Telegraph," "Coventry Evening Telegraph," "Birmingham Weekly Post," the "Blackpool Gazette," and the "Kettering Leader and Guardian." We tried also to advertise in papers in Sheffield, Leicester, Bristol and Cheltenham, but no paper in these towns could give us space. The Centenary Exhibition and meeting have also been advertised in "The New Statesman and Nation," "The Spectator," "The Observer," and in the personal columns of "The Times" and "The Daily Telegraph." We would have had more if space could have been obtained.

Another aspect of publicity, which we had not touched before, has been a result of the Assembly's use of a professional publicity officer for pre-Centenary publicity. As a result of his work paragraphs or letters about the Faith have appeared in such papers as the "Manchester Guardian," the "Manchester Evening News," the "London Evening News," the "Evening Standard," "Picture Post" (which gave an article and pictures about the London Nawruz Feast), the "Empire News," "The Recorder," the "West London Observer," the "West London Chronicle," the "Daily Herald," and the "Middlesex Advertiser." Earlier there was also, unasked, a short article in the "Daily Mirror." This was perhaps not quite on the lines we would have chosen, but it did nevertheless produce enquiries. Miss Susan Butler, who writes a column in the "Yorkshire Observer," has also a number of times made sympathetic mention of the Teachings. Altogether, from all sources, we have had during the year about 170 enquiries, and these have come from 105 different towns since we started advertising in the middle of last year, besides such far-distant places as Mexico, South Africa and New Zealand, and the Forces in Italy, North Africa, the Middle East, and at home.

Another request from Convention to help with publicity, which was carried out, was the sending of copies of Bahá'í prayers to schools. A number of generally suitable prayers were chosen and sent to about fifteen schools in different parts of the country. Only three schools acknowledged them; two were very grateful, but one did not like them.

The Publishing Trust has had a more active year in all respects. The Guardian has on several occasions recently emphasised the importance of the publishing work, and when sending his latest gift of £1,000 he mentioned publishing as one of the purposes for which it was destined. At the time of the formation of the Publishing Trust, moreover, he told us that

this could give a great impetus to the work of the Cause all over the British Empire and, in view of large orders lately received from India and Australia, it is possible to see how the Trust might develop and that it may be destined to fill a wider role in the Bahá'í world than just supplying this country. The Dominions, for instance, which are in the sterling area, are like ourselves unable to get large quantities of dollars with which to buy in America, and if, as may very likely happen, restrictions continue for some years after the war is over, these countries may, as their teaching work expands, turn to us for supplies. If this should happen, the Guardian in his wisdom has seen to it that we have capital to work with.

Consequently, with £800 of the Guardian's money behind it, allocated from his last two gifts, the Trust has been able to consider extending its activities and also to make plans for the future. The paper situation is of course a serious limitation and a number of our productions must at present of necessity be pamphlets or leaflets, but plans are in hand for, amongst other things, a new and larger prayer book and a book about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to this country, which is to include a number of His tablets to believers here. Meanwhile during this year we have published a pamphlet, two leaflets, and a new edition of "The Hidden Words" which is almost ready, and above and beyond these the Centenary book, "The History of a World Faith," which is in some ways a more ambitious type of book than we have ventured on before.

We also bought supplies of several books from outside publishers, and were able to buy a few books from America, the Board of Trade having informed us that we are allowed a quota of £19 a year for imports.

The position of the Publishing Trust has also been consolidated in other ways. The powers of the Committee have been clearly and definitely defined, a proper system of costing has been agreed upon, which gives the Trust sufficient profit eventually to become self-supporting, and sales of one or two slow-selling books have been helped by the orders from abroad. The Trust is therefore getting itself equipped and experienced to deal with bigger business when the need arises, either from this country or from other parts of the world.

During the year we have continued the production of the quarterly "New World Order," and with the Spring, 1944, issue expanded the size, which makes it more attractive. Subscriptions, however, do not increase very rapidly, and odd sales through the communities are not very large, and the Assembly feels that the community is not yet making the fullest possible use of the magazine either for their own information or as a teaching medium. Contri-

butions to the subject matter have also been generally asked for, but few have been submitted. Everything starts from small beginnings, however, and it is in the hands of the community itself whether we can build it up into a really useful instrument for spreading more widely a knowledge of the Faith.

Some months ago it was brought to the attention of the N.S.A. that a man appearing before a Conscientious Objector's Appeal Tribunal in the North of England was calling himself a member of the Bahá'í Faith. The matter was serious, in that he had served in the Army and had been twice imprisoned for refusing to obey orders to fulfil his military duties, and the proceedings had been reported in full in the Yorkshire papers. The man, of course, was not a Bahá'í, but he had been in touch with the London community for a short period before the war. The Assembly got in touch with the Tribunal, who were very sympathetic and helpful, and an opportunity was given for a member of the Assembly to make a statement at the next sitting, showing what our attitude really is. This was duly reported in the "Yorkshire Post," by arrangement with the editor.

During the year it has become apparent, in correspondence with the Income Tax authorities, that certain clauses in our Articles of Association as a private company are likely to produce difficulties where tax is concerned. Our articles authorise us to conduct various kinds of business which the tax people consider profit-making and consequently, though we are never likely to embark on any of them, the authorities will not allow us freedom from tax as a religious body. Our lawyers advise us that the articles can be changed and are now working on the deletion of these clauses, which are not at all necessary for our work as a Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly.

That is our history for the year. We have had successes and we have had failures. We can say, perhaps, that we are still building the foundation of what is to come. We ourselves cannot yet see far beyond this, but our beloved Guardian knows what has to be done in this country, whether by us or by other people depends on our will to devote ourselves to God's Cause; and all the time in his letters and in his cables he has guided us, encouraged us and urged us on. He prays at the Shrines for "magnificent victories" for us, that our "labours may be crowned with glorious success". He cables "fervently pray that all may become radiantly active," and writes, "I will supplicate the Beloved to aid you to surmount all obstacles and to inspire you to undertake the measures that

are most conducive to the proper discharge of your noble task". He tells us that the efforts we exert "must be unprecedented in their range and character" and that the blessings that will be vouchsafed to us if we unitedly persevere and vigorously prosecute our urgent task "will alike be unprecedented". It is with a background of such inspiring help and encouragement that we have worked, accompanied too by practical assistance, by generous gifts amounting to £1,800, beyond what was sent us last year. Perhaps we have not yet risen to the full height of our responsibilities and of our opportunities. Then let us, fortified by both spiritual and material help of such magnitude, firmly resolve not to lose another moment, but with full faith in Bahá'u'lláh's power to help us, strain every nerve and make every effort to carry out the task entrusted to us—to proclaim the Cause of God in this country. Let us therefore open our hearts to God's guidance, and, like the early teachers of the Faith, set out with perfect trust, because "nothing is impossible to you if you have faith." 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words, spoken to the friends in Paris during His visit to Europe, are always true and are still a message of hope and encouragement for us:

"Try with all your hearts to be willing channels for God's Bounty. For I say unto you that He has chosen you to be His messengers of Love throughout the world, to be His bearers of Spiritual gifts to man, to be the means of spreading Unity and Concord on the earth. Thank God with all your hearts that such a privilege has been given unto you. For a life devoted to praise is not too long in which to thank God for such a favour.

"Lift up your hearts above the present and look with eyes of faith into the future! To-day the seed is sown, the grain falls upon the earth, but behold the day will come when it shall rise a glorious tree and the branches thereof shall be laden with fruit. Rejoice and be glad that this day has dawned, try to realise its power, for it is indeed wonderful! God has crowned you with honour and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world!"

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

We regret that owing to lack of space we have to hold over publication of the annual receipt and expenditure account. This will appear in the next issue, together with comments thereon from the treasurer.