

CONVENTION NUMBER

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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

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No. 29

JUNE, 1941

CONVENTION

"Rejoice safety, admire dauntless courage, marvel unquenchable spirit English believers. Sharing joyful news noble perseverance with pilgrims arriving in increasing numbers from Near and Middle East. All praying continued safety, extension activities, sore tried exemplary servants Faith Bahá'u'lláh throughout British Isles. Urge persistent efforts utilize utmost limit priceless spiritual opportunities present hour."

Dear Friends,

Above is the cable which the Guardian sent to the Annual Convention, and it was in an atmosphere of joy and encouragement engendered by such an exhilarating message that the Convention began and continued. Over thirty believers, fourteen of them delegates, were present during all or some of the meetings, and the whole Convention was notable for its vitality and for the increasing unity among the friends. We can surely say this was the best one yet.

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Chairman	MR. A. NORTON
Vice-Chairman	MR. A. SUGAR
Secretary	MISS D. CANSDALE
Asst. Secretary	MISS A. E. BAXTER
Treasurer	MR. A. NORTON
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		MRS. K. V. BROWN
		MR. D. HOFMAN
		MRS. C. LANGDON-DAVIES
		MR. P. WILKINSON

During Convention, the following cable was sent to the Guardian:

"Convention radiant, record attendance, deeply grateful your message, resolves intensify teaching to achieve greatest effort yet made British Isles. Deepest love."

And two days after the end of Convention came the following reply:

"Exhilarated resolution intensify teaching, admiration heightened, praying redoubled fervour."

Surely nothing more can be said—it is deeds, not words, which are needed now.

On Saturday evening the friends all attended a theatrical performance in a small theatre in Great Hucklow. Though we had heard of the good shows which are being given by many village repertory companies nowadays, it was a new experience for most of us to attend one and it was very enjoyable. On Sunday morning, the people owning the guest house very kindly offered us the use of the little Unitarian church up the road, for which we were very grateful, and a beautiful service was held there.

Discussion at all the meetings was eager and lively, and a lot of helpful suggestions were made. Recommendations for submission to the incoming N.S.A. are given below, but ideas were put forward which can be passed on direct to the friends, for use in their individual work. Amongst these the most constantly stressed was the need to attract the young people and the possibility that this could be done best in the beginning by social functions. Many believers felt that we should undertake some sort

of social or relief work, thus putting our ideals to practical account in these very difficult times. It was agreed that as a body, in building for the future, we are doing the work that is ultimately the most important and for which we are best fitted, but the general feeling of the Convention was that all individual believers who are able, should try and do some such work, both for the exhibition which it gives of humanity and good citizenship on the part of the Bahá'ís and for the new contacts which it would bring. A lot of different suggestions were made about methods of teaching, but there was in the end general agreement that there is no fixed way of teaching—that the method must vary with each person teaching and with each different person taught. As someone very truly said, a teacher of the Bahá'í Faith must have the heart of a child and the wisdom of the aged.

Recommendations from the Convention to the N.S.A.

1. That if the N.S.A. feels there is work for a full-time employee and has funds available, such a worker should be employed.
2. That the decision to discontinue publication of New World Order should be reconsidered, as especially in the North it was considered helpful in teaching and propaganda. Also that surplus copies of the Bahá'í Journal could be used for the same purpose.
3. That stocks of the Publishing Trust should be dispersed in as many places as possible to decrease risk, and that all should be covered for insurance, including war risk.
4. That the N.S.A. should consider very thoroughly the risks and advantages of publishing more books, especially Bahá'u'lláh's Writings.
5. That there was a need for more literature, particularly on social problems.
6. That all members of communities should be encouraged and helped to speak at meetings, especially the young people.
7. That the N.S.A. should advise all communities to avoid internal divisions and the discussion of politics and other subjects causing disharmony, and that all disputes should be dealt with only at Assembly meetings.
8. That the period fixed for Summer School should be made to include the Bank Holiday week-end and one other week-end, and could therefore be held the week before or after Bank Holiday.
9. That the various local assemblies should be given a summary of the deliberations of the

N.S.A. after each meeting, in so far as they are of general interest.

The National Assembly met after Convention, but as there were several urgent matters outstanding, the recommendations from Convention had to be left over until the next meeting, which is on May 24th. The Assembly's decisions will be published next time.

DELEGATES TO THE ANNUAL CONVENTION, 1941

In accordance with the Emergency Measures adopted by the National Spiritual Assembly last year, the names of the delegates to the Annual Convention are printed below, since they have the duty of electing new people to fill vacancies in the N.S.A., or even to elect a new N.S.A. if necessary.

Miss Challis,	Rizwan, Broadstone, Dorset.
Mr. A. Norton,	41, Cranbourne Road, Chellow Dene, Bradford.
Miss J. Wilkinson,	20, Southey Place, Bradford.
Mr. P. Wilkinson,	40, Merrion Street, Leeds.
Mr. F. Afnan,	22A, Elvaston Place, London, S.W.7.
Mr. H. M. Balyuzi,	P.O. Box 6, Evesham, Worcs.
Miss A. E. Baxter,	18, New Farm Avenue, Bromley, Kent.
Miss D. Cansdale,	35, Thornton Avenue, London, S.W.2.
Mr. D. Millar,	28, Cedar Court, London, N.10.
Miss M. Wellby,	162, Holland Park Avenue, London, W.11.
Mr. R. Coulson,	"Oakleigh," Boothroydon Road, Higher Blackley, Manchester 9.
Mrs. Coulson,	"Oakleigh," Boothroydon Road, Higher Blackley, Manchester 9.
Mr. J. Craven,	15, Riddings Road, Timperley, Cheshire.
Mr. A. Sugar,	"West Bank," Richmond Road, Bowdon, Cheshire.
Miss N. Winstanley,	2, Cobb Close, Middleton Road, Higher Crumpsall, Manchester 8.
Miss Ada Williams,	294, Barton Road, Stretford, Manchester.
Mrs. C. Langdon-Davies,	6, Huxham's Cross, Dartington, Totnes, Devon.
Mrs. Ward,	Kirkham, St. Albans Road, Babba-combe, Devon.

ANNUAL REPORT

April, 1940—April, 1941

"The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men's fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure."

To the world at large, the end of a year must come as the milestone which, for long weeks, marked the limit of aspiration; the point reached with the universe miraculously still intact. To Bahá'ís it is but a moment for re-

flection in an ever-unfolding drama, whose greatest actions have yet to be fought and whose climax is none other than the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

The record of our activities—to say that some have been curtailed, others stopped, others maintained and others newly begun—presents no true picture of our life and work during the year. For although such activity is a measure of our vitality and affects the development of institutions destined to serve God's will in the future, it cannot record the essential, intangible, mysterious process of deepening in spiritual knowledge and attainment which is the true life of the Bahá'í community. That such spiritual growth has been, and is, taking place, the National Spiritual Assembly is convinced. Individuals and communities alike have been severely tested, not alone by the impact of the war, but equally by a growing realisation, and new understanding, of the demands of Bahá'í life. That standard of moral purity, of right conduct, of obedience to the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh set forth by the Guardian in "The Advent of Divine Justice," stands in sharp contrast to the shoddy and illusive standards of an age lost to self-discipline and moral law. This contrast will be seen by all humanity, and our Faith itself judged, according to our measure of attainment in that new and holy life. The responsibility is indeed great and the purification severe.

The war, inevitably, has affected so small and struggling a community, but not always adversely. Summer School and Teaching Conference have had to be abandoned and communities have suffered from dispersal of members, and from the demands of the war effort on the time and energies of everyone. But difficulties have evoked a greater effort, responsibility and hard work have been shouldered by new people, and a more successful Teaching plan has been evolved. The dispersal of the friends means the taking of the Message to new places and people. Moreover, a realisation of the blessings of freedom has been brought home to us.

Indeed, how grateful the Bahá'í community of the British Isles must be to live where religious freedom still flourishes. How doubly grateful we must be to live where our paramount loyalty of world citizenship may be openly and fully reconciled with the undoubted loyalty we owe to our country. The Law of Bahá'u'lláh, our unfailing protection, has, through the inspired interpretation of the Guardian of our Faith, enabled us to solve what otherwise would have been a grievous problem and a cause of disunity in our ranks. "Through obedience to him who is the Guardian of the Cause of God, the mighty stronghold shall remain impregnable and safe."

A clear definition of the relationship, for Bahá'ís, of these two loyalties—loyalty to mankind and loyalty to that part of it which is our country, had been made by the Guardian prior to the outbreak of war. The National Spiritual Assembly, anticipating the necessity of defining the attitude of the Faith to the war and the war effort, had prepared a statement, and in Bahá'í Journál had firmly requested the friends to be strict in their observance of the two Bahá'í laws which require loyalty to the government and abstention from politics. This statement and the Journál were hardly off the press when enquiries were made by the police, not alone from London but from provincial centres as well. The statement of the N.S.A. was entirely satisfactory, and we were advised, for the duration of the war, to submit a copy of it to police headquarters in every district where teaching work was being undertaken. This action has been welcomed by the local police.

It is obvious that the N.S.A. could not make such representation of the attitude and character of the community unless it was assured of the community's unity and unquestioned loyalty. To a certain extent the N.S.A. has had to assume responsibility—on behalf of the Faith itself—for the action and general behaviour of the believers. It has therefore been bound to provide against unwarranted representation by those who might wish to harm the Faith, or whose ignorance of its fundamental principles might lead them to mis-represent its character. It was for this reason, anticipated by the N.S.A. before the war, that registration of believers was undertaken. When the enquiry, referred to above, was made by the police, they strongly approved our action and received our promise that it would be completed. A number of the friends could not understand the necessity for registration, which they felt conflicted with the liberal spirit of the Faith. The matter was discussed at the last Convention, and later it became necessary for the N.S.A. to make registration a condition of receiving the vote in the community. We are glad to report that nearly all believers are now registered, and new ones, finding no difficulty about it, register on declaration.

A word should be said about this measure with reference to the future. It is not permanent, but must be maintained as long as necessary, resembling in this another measure initiated by the Guardian, which provides for the review and approval of Bahá'í publications. Attacks on the Faith have already been made, and we know will increase. To what measures the resentment of the enemies of the Cause of God may lead them are indicated by the Guardian. "... storms of abuse and ridicule, and campaigns of condemnation and misrepresentation, may be unloosed against them. Their

Faith, they may soon find, has been assaulted, their motives misconstrued, their aims defamed, their aspirations derided, their institutions scorned, their influence belittled, their authority undermined, and their Cause, at times, deserted by a few who will either be incapable of appreciating the nature of their ideals, or unwilling to bear the brunt of the mounting criticisms” Registration of believers makes it impossible to claim membership in the Bahá’í community unless a personal declaration of faith has been made to, and accepted by, a Spiritual Assembly. The protection of such a measure is obvious.

One other consideration should be mentioned, namely, the interest to posterity which a record of the few believers in this period of obscurity of the Faith will undoubtedly have.

The applications which Bahá’í men have made for permission to discharge their national service in a non-combatant capacity have been granted in every case, although in one instance an appeal by the N.S.A. to a higher tribunal was necessary and successful. Many believers are engaged in full-time Air Raid Precaution work, others are serving their country in the construction and maintenance of camps, in instructing motor drivers, in the Women’s Voluntary Service, and in the Land Army.

Other contacts have had to be made with the authorities in order to obtain permission for Iranian members of the N.S.A. to travel. No difficulty has been experienced at all.

This year has seen the solution of a long standing problem. For some time, and increasingly of late, the N.S.A. has felt the lack of even one believer able to give full-time service to the Faith. Through generous support of the National Fund by two friends in particular, this need has been met and the N.S.A. has been able to employ one of the believers, Mr. David Hofman. Such a measure is an important and essential step in the development and growth of the Faith.

Teaching

The Convention last year recommended the adoption of a four-year plan of teaching, which should have as its object the establishment of nineteen local Spiritual Assemblies by the end of the first Bahá’í century. The N.S.A. adopted this recommendation and appointed a National Teaching Committee to carry it out. This committee has worked hard and well, tackling the four-year plan from a wide viewpoint. Thus it has not only arranged for spreading the message, but has maintained contact with scattered believers and conducted a course of teaching for the believers themselves. At the commencement of its work the committee asked for a teaching bulletin, but the N.S.A. arranged instead to give the committee ample space in Bahá’í Journal.

Through this means the committee has reported to, and encouraged the believers, and has conducted a course in the Teachings through a series of Questions and Answers. It has also given instruction in Administration. In these methods we see the crystallisation of the many suggestions put forward and discussed at preceding Teaching Conferences, a striking tribute to the Bahá’í method of consultation.

The Committee realised at the outset of its work that the first period of the plan would have to be spent in disseminating, as far and wide as possible, the simple knowledge of the existence of the Faith and its principles, so that from this wide scattering of the seed, that which fell on good ground could later be nurtured and brought to fruition. The dispersal of the friends, due to the war, has assisted in this first phase of the plan, so that although communities have thereby been weakened in numbers and resources, the teaching work has benefited, and this should be recognised as an unalloyed gain. “Subordinate all activities teaching objective” was the Guardian’s request of three years ago. As we follow his guidance, so may we look for success.

Though none can measure the mysterious progress of the Faith in human hearts, the outward accomplishment in this first year is not impressive, although in some instances it has been very encouraging, notably in Amesbury, where three new believers have formed a group and are studying and interesting others. In Cheltenham a believer of long standing, who has recently returned from America, has maintained a regular weekly meeting in her home with the help of visiting teachers. Both these places can claim to have the nucleus of future communities, and the same can be said of Ilkerton and Nottingham and Newcastle. In this latter place, a believer, who moved there on account of the war, has been able to hold regular meetings and to confirm a new believer in the Faith. Bournemouth has had the status of a Group for some time, and has continued with regular meetings for study, and reports a new believer. These six places show definite promise. But more numerous are the contacts all over the British Isles, which await teachers. There are long isolated and faithful believers in Birmingham, York, Blackburn, who could with help arouse the interest of others and develop regular meetings. During the year excellent contacts have been made in Romsey, Stratford-on-Avon, and Bristol, and there are many places in which a visiting teacher could make a good beginning, either through contact with a believer evacuated from some Bahá’í community, or through the good office of people really interested in the Faith. Such places are widely scattered, from Cornwall to the North of Scotland, and cannot properly be tackled

In Memoriam

FU'AD AFNÁN

Killed in an air raid on London
early on May 11th, 1941

Aged 24

until the community can provide pioneers who will be able to go and live in these towns either for good or until the Faith is established. Mention must also be made of the work of Mr. Townshend and his daughter in Eire. Mr. Townshend's books have aroused interest there and he has spoken to large audiences about the Faith.

The London Community has evolved a new plan of attracting people to the Faith. "Every five or six weeks it holds a large meeting for which invitations are sent to everyone known to be interested. The whole community takes part by bringing friends, and during the meeting refreshments are served, sometimes after the discussion, sometimes before. This has proved successful.

Torquay, very depleted in numbers, moved into a new Centre, and then after the visit of the N.S.A. in March planned a public meeting. One of the municipal halls was engaged and fairly large publicity undertaken. Posters were placed in the town and three thousand handbills distributed from door to door. The attendance at the meeting was seventy-five, and since then many enquirers have come to the Centre. This community also advertises every week in the local press, and has printed a small handbill giving the address of the Centre and the times of meetings.

Bradford and Manchester report the steadfast support of the friends and the holding of Feasts and regular meetings. The N.S.A. spent a week-end in Bradford, when very good meetings were held, and it has now instructed Mr. Hofman to spend the next year in Manchester with the purpose of helping the teaching work there and in the north.

The World Congress of Faiths held a series of lectures and discussions in London on "World Religions," each Faith being given one of the sessions. The Bahá'í session was the last one, and aroused interest and comment. Through this an excellent contact was made with the National Adult School Union.

It was unfortunately necessary to abandon the plans for Summer School. This was a great loss, as we had come to anticipate the vivid and rich experience which it offers, and it was also an important part of our Teaching. Two week-ends were arranged, one in Nottingham and one in Orpington, which were attended by friends from other parts of the country, and these helped, in a small way, to make up for the major loss. The N.S.A. has determined to try to hold Summer School for a week this year.

During the year an attempt was made to evacuate a number of Bahá'í children to America. The American friends, with characteristic generosity, offered hospitality to the

children. It was unfortunate that after the work of the American N.S.A., which resulted in numbers of offers from the American believers, and after the work done on this side, the scheme should have fallen through, due to the difficulties faced by the Government. We wish, however, to record our gratitude to the American believers.

Thanks should also be expressed, on behalf of all the friends, to Mrs. Weeks, who regularly attends to the despatch of the Bahá'í Journal to the isolated believers and communities abroad.

Archives

The National Archives have been enriched by a bequest from the late Lord Lamington of a gold signet ring, presented to him by the Master. The occasion is described in "The Chosen Highway."

Memoirs of some of the older believers have been written down during the year.

Emergency Measures

It is with deep gratitude that we record no casualties among the believers, although the house of one family collapsed on top of them. Bahá'í Centres, too, although in the midst of heavy damage, have been preserved.

The N.S.A. has taken steps to provide for its continuity in the event of casualties among its members. These measures were published in Bahá'í Journal.

"New World Order"

It has been decided to stop publishing this paper after the conclusion of the second volume. The N.S.A. felt that the expense was not warranted in view of its limited usefulness to the Teaching work. When volume two is complete, a number of complete sets will be bound, and back numbers will be available as pamphlets. It is hoped to resume publication later, but in the meantime a single leaflet will be issued with Bahá'í Journal, which the friends may use to send to interested people.

Bahá'í Publishing Trust

The chief work of the Trust this year has been the publication of Lady Blomfield's book "The Chosen Highway." It has been well received by the friends and is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the literature of the Faith. The Guardian has placed a copy in Bahá'u'lláh's mansion at Bahji. The Irish Times reviewed it at some length, and Mr. Grant, that good friend of the Cause, reviewed it in a Scottish newspaper.

The war has exerted its baleful influence on the Publishing Trust, as on all our activities. The rising cost of materials and manufacturing of books presents a serious problem, aggra-

vated by the growing difficulty of importing books from abroad. These factors, with the growing shortage of paper, present a problem which should receive immediate attention, if we are not to find ourselves unable to provide the written Word of God for the increasing numbers who will want it.

Two thousand copies of "The Chosen Highway" were printed, with the intention of sending half that number to the American N.S.A. in payment of our account with them. During the process of printing, stricter regulations came into force, so that it became impossible to export books to America except in exchange for United States currency, to be handed to the Government. Thus the only alternative left for the American friends is to purchase these books for cash, and to hold over our account until we are in a better position to pay it. The N.S.A. in America is considering this.

One other publication is well in hand. Mr. Cobb's book, "Security for a Failing World," will be available in a few days. It is being reproduced photographically. Our thanks are due to the author for his generous co-operation and permission to make whatever alterations we deemed advisable.

Complete sets of Bahá'í publications have been presented to the four leading libraries of the British Isles. The Bodleian, the Cambridge University Library, the National Library of Scotland, and the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, have received the main Bahá'í publications and classified them under the heading "Bahá'í." To these have been added books about the Faith, such as those by E. G. Browne and Dr. Cheyne, already in their possession.

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The N.S.A. has been increasingly aware of the spiritual unity of the whole community, and believes it to be firmly established. What is needed now is increased facility in the art of using the power of unity to serve the Will of Bahá'u'lláh. Such an art is only perfected through the channels of Bahá'í administration and by the methods of Bahá'í procedure. It is a technique difficult to learn, and imposing tests on individuals and communities, for it differs in subtle ways from the methods of the society in which the Cause of God is set. In that large society the emphasis is on achievement, efficiency and ability. These are not overlooked in Bahá'í society, but there is a shifting of emphasis to the spiritual purpose to be served, spiritual welfare and spiritual development.

The communities already established can reinforce the four-year plan, and deepen their own community life, by striving to understand

and practice this new technique in the divine art of living. The responsibility is on individuals in the first place, for no spiritual Assembly can preserve and foster the unity of its community unless all believers take part in the consultation and unless all matters of difficulty, all grievances, and all misunderstandings are frankly stated and discussed. Resting on this firm basis of equity, the vigour of the Bahá'í community can be directed "as one soul in many bodies" to the required end.

That required end is none other than teaching the Cause of God; specifically the prosecution of the four-year plan. It can be seen that no small problem confronts us. Even without the added burden and strain of war it would be formidable. One year has already passed and we have but three left. That year has seen a beginning, but has more especially disclosed to us something of the immense opportunities of the present time. Our resources are meagre, our time scanty, our obligations heavy, and with only ourselves to depend on we could never take advantage of these opportunities. But we are not alone, nor do we depend upon our own strength. "God will assist all those who arise to serve Him. No-one is able to deprive Him of His majesty, His dominion, His sovereignty, for in the heavens and the earth and in all the realms of God, He is the victorious and the conqueror." Careful and wise planning, carried out with determination and unshakeable faith, will attract the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, which alone can turn our weakness into strength, and enable us to transcend our limitations. Unity of purpose, relentless effort on the part of all, continual prayer, are the foundations of victory. An effort, unprecedented in magnitude, and entailing sacrifice and steadfast endeavour is required. The National Teaching Committee will consult personally with the N.S.A. in future, instead of by correspondence as during this last year, and it is hoped, with the full support of every believer, to launch and direct such a mighty effort.

Our report cannot conclude without an expression of gratitude to the Guardian for his encouragement and solicitude for our safety. In his several cables he has enquired after our welfare and assured us of his prayers. May we, the Bahá'ís in England, prove worthy of his praise and confidence, and, to use his own words "firmly united behind their National Assembly . . . arise as one body for the promulgation and wider establishment of the Faith throughout Great Britain."

Faithfully, In His Service,

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

by DAVID HOFMAN, *Secretary.*

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Year ended 25th April, 1941

[illegible]

The accounts were audited by Messrs. Percy Hodgkinson & Co., of Bradford, as Mr. Louis Rosenfield, the auditor appointed by last year's Convention, was called up for military service in March. As there is no other Bahá'í available who is qualified to do this work, the N.S.A. approved the action of the Treasurer in giving the work to an outside auditor.

The Treasurer wishes on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly to send a special word of thanks to the isolated believers, who have so regularly and generously contributed to the National Fund during the past year.

The accounts show a larger balance than last year, but with the Four-Year Plan getting well under weigh and plans for teaching being greatly extended, we can use all we have and still a great deal more. The soundness of a Bahá'í Fund is based on regular contributions on the part of every believer according to his capacity. Each individual must judge for himself what the limit of that capacity is—and the greater the effort and sacrifice involved, the greater the blessing even a small contribution will bring to the community.

SUMMER SCHOOL

We regret we are not yet able to give any details about the arrangements for Summer School. As will be seen earlier in this Journal, the Convention recommended a slight change in the time fixed, and pending the Assembly's decision on this, a suitable place is being sought which can be fairly conveniently reached by believers from different parts of England.

New Believer

We welcome with great joy Mrs. Hill, of West Amesbury House, Amesbury, Wilts. Mrs. Hill is the mother of Bridget Hill, who is already a believer.

NEWS

Miss Molly Brown and Mr. Hasan Balyuzi are being married on June 21st at the Torquay Centre. We pray for their happiness and that the blessing of Bahá'u'lláh may be upon them.

Two members of the London community have been called up for military service. Louis Rosenfield has joined the N.C.C. section of the Pioneer Corps and John Cohen is in the Royal Signal Corps. Letters sent to the London Centre will be forwarded.

Miss Alice Phillips of London is going to be in Great Hucklow for the summer, looking after

a children's camp run in connection with the Convalescent Homes.

Another Bahá'í wedding was performed in Bradford on May 12th, between Margaret Saville and Cyril Jenkersen. We pray that their marriage may be a happy and blessed one.

A letter has been received by one of the English believers from John Eichenauer, a young Bahá'í pioneer in San Salvador, Central America. John and his companion, Clarence Iverson, are doing great work there and have already enrolled three local believers. They are holding a number of meetings and have a good sized study group. Besides all this they find time to run a business and attend classes at a commercial school. The letter was signed by twelve people who attended the Nawruz Feast there, and they all sent loving greetings to the English believers and prayers for their protection.

We have also heard from Mrs. Alizadeh, who used to be a member of the London community, that when a number of Iranian friends met together in Teheran during the Intercalary Days, the Tablet of Ahmad was chanted especially on behalf of the Bahá'ís in England, and we are deeply grateful for this message of love and reassurance.

We welcome also a message from the Bahá'í friends in Sydney, Australia, sending love and good wishes, and a very beautiful card of Ridván greetings from the same community.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

DEAR FRIENDS,

Christ said: "Whenever two or three of you are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of you." Bahá'u'lláh not only repeated this promise of the presence of the guiding spirit whenever people were gathered together for the purpose of worshipping God and of directing their affairs according to His will, as revealed through His Manifestations, but made it the very foundation stone of the World Order which he came to establish.

Individually we can accomplish miraculous things if we obey the laws of God and keep our motives absolutely pure, but it is collectively that we build our world.

All those who attended Convention will, without doubt, have experienced the presence of a power that transcends personalities and binds widely differing individuals together for the accomplishment of a common task.

We have now a positive proof of the effectiveness of consultation—when the desire of those consulting is to promote the interests of

mankind by obeying the word of God as revealed by His Manifestations.

Individuals are channels for the expression of God's will—anything that is obstructive to or useless for this purpose will eventually be discarded, and individuals are constantly being formed into more effective channels, **if this is their desire.**

With Bahá'u'lláh's promise that the world order, for which all mankind is now crying out, will be established, and that we are witnessing the birth of this order, now in our own lifetime; with personal experience of the truth of His words—the calamity which is now overtaking the world, the effectiveness of His administrative order, even on a microscopic scale, but a scale in which, nevertheless, most of the elements which make up any human society are present; with the Guardian's unfailing guidance, encouragement and support, what is there to stand in the way of spreading the news of this really great and true "new world order" all over Great Britain?

We are at the beginning of a new Bahá'í year; let us waste no time in regretting the past—it is only too obvious that we have not, either individually or as a community, exerted ourselves to even one half of our full capacity. Let us resolve that when next spring arrives we can at least look back and say we really have not spared ourselves, that we can do more but this past year has been a great one.

"What can I do?" is the first question. Look round at our resources—not at what we haven't got or feel we can't do, but at what we **have** got and what we **can** do. "The portion of some might lie in the palm of a man's hand, the portion of others might fill a cup, and of others even a gallon measure," is not just a wise and true saying of Bahá'u'lláh's, it is vital and means something: it applies to us and it applies now and for always. We certainly have some friends and acquaintances—what are their interests? Let us present this idea of building a new world in a form which will appeal to them and arouse their interest—nearly everybody is anxious to do something to produce a better state of affairs in the world to-day. Don't let us present this idea in the way we think they should be interested in it—but in the way that may best interest them. Then let us keep our eyes open—let us, for God's sake (literally) be aware of what is taking place around us—of the principles at stake at every new turn of the war, of trends of public opinion, of developments in our social life and organisation—this is required of us as Bahá'ís. Our assemblies are formed to enable us to accomplish our task, to be consulted when we want help and information, **to be used**—and so is the **Teaching Committee**. Use it all you want. Be bold this year. You know the basic principles of the Faith—if you don't, consult your local assembly or write to the Teaching Committee if you don't belong to a community yet. Even if we make mistakes it doesn't matter—we'll all learn something from them—but let's get going. Remember we may see things which need doing, but which we personally cannot do—but there are others who can, for example replying to articles and letters in the press, etc.—bring these things to their notice, either by yourself or through your local assembly or the Teaching Committee. Let us have some failures, they are signs of life and tests of our resolution and strength—but it is certain that our successes will very soon outweigh them.

Remember every day the world is becoming more and more desperate—the frightfulness of the conditions under which the vast majority of human beings are living is increasing—the heartbreak and tragedy of modern warfare is

only just beginning to become universally apparent and felt. Our responsibility is staggering—but the power at our disposal is a million times as great—and it is waiting to be used. Will you use it?

The Teaching Committee is ready to help in every way possible to co-ordinate the work of teaching, to advise and help whenever advice and help is needed. Please make use of it.

CONVENTION

Some thirty of us have just attended the Annual Convention, about half of us as delegates. This is the chief of the three rallying-points for Bahá'ís during the year, viz., Convention (Spring), Summer School and Teaching Conference (Autumn). Of these, Convention is the most important for two or three reasons. Firstly, it is the only annual event devoted by the Faith to Administration purposes. Secondly, its delegates have two specified duties—election of the National Spiritual Assembly and consultation on Bahá'í matters of teaching and management. Thirdly, it is the only occasion on which the views, ideas, grievances of the national community can be aired and discussed.

A Convention consists of a certain number of elected delegates, whose duty it is to represent their community and put forward its views and interests. On their return it is equally their duty to report on matters discussed at Convention to the community. May we all now bear this second obligation in mind, so that the various communities may be well informed on current Bahá'í topics and may in turn share in the invigorating experience of this inspiring meeting.

"O beloved. In this Day the door of heaven was opened by the key of the Name of God, and the ocean of liberality is manifested and rolling before all faces, and the sun of providence is shining and gleaming. Do not exclude yourselves; and do not destroy your most precious time by being influenced by the speech of this or that person. Confirm the back of energy! Do your best in training the people of the world. Do not consider that the Cause of God is the cause of opposition, hatred and wrath. The Tongue of Greatness says that what is intended by that which was revealed from the heaven of the Will in this holy and supreme Manifestation is uniting the people in love and friendship towards all." (*Bahá'í Scriptures*.)

**Subject for Study and Meditation
during the month:**

"The Bahá'í Faith and Sin."