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FIRST WORLD ELECTION

The following announcement was received at Ridván from the Hands of the Cause in Haifa. 'Deepest gratitude Bahá'u'lláh's unfailing blessings enabling Bahá'í world eighth year Crusade elect International Bahá'í Council succeeding first historic body appointed by Guardian. Joyfully announce membership: Jessie Revell, 'Alí Nakhjavani, Lotfullah Hakim, Ethel Revell, Charles Wolcott, Sylvia Ioas, Mildred Mottahedeh, Ian Semple, Borrah Kavelin. Invite believers join us ardent prayers historic step may release spiritual impetus assist attainment goals sacred plan so dear heart beloved Guardian. (signed) Handsfaith.

THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL

With jubilant words the beloved Guardian announced the appointment of the International Council, in a cable on January 9th, 1951.

'Hail with thankful, joyous heart at long last the constitution of International Council which history will acclaim as the greatest event shedding lustre upon second epoch of Formative Age of Bahá'í Dispensation potentially unsurpassed by any enterprise undertaken since inception of Administrative Order of Faith on morrow of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, ranking second only to glorious immortal events associated with Ministries of the Three Central Figures of Faith in course of First Age of most glorious Dispensation of the five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle.'

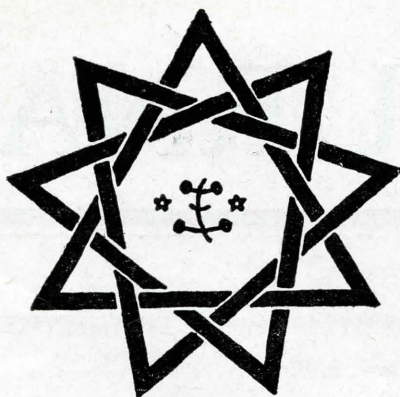
This Ridván, the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land have been able to announce that the significant step of transforming the International Council into a 'duly elected body' has been taken.

With reference to the duties of the International Council the beloved Guardian said: This 'nascent Institution (is) invested with three-fold function: *first*, to forge link with authorities of newly emerged State' of Israel; *second*, to assist me to discharge responsibilities involved in erection of mighty superstructure of the Báb's Holy Shrine; *third*, to conduct negotiations related to matters of personal status with civil authorities. To these will be added further functions in course of evolution of this first embryonic

International Institution, marking its development into officially recognised Bahá'í Court, its transformation into duly elected body, its efflorescence into Universal House of Justice, and its final fruition through erection of manifold auxiliary institutions constituting the World Administrative Centre destined to arise and function and remain permanently established in close neighbourhood of Twin Holy Shrines.'

This body of nine members, elected at Ridván by the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world, will, as the Hands announced in their messages of November 4th, 1959 and November 2nd, 1960, continue to perform the first and third functions assigned to the International Council by the beloved Guardian. They will 'assist the Hands of the Cause in the care of the properties at the World Centre, and in the establishment of the Universal House of Justice', will 'be given certain administrative duties to discharge in facilitating the work at the World Centre in relation to National Assemblies abroad', and will assist 'in any other functions which the Hands may assign from time to time'.

As we rejoice at this historic event, let us in gratitude to God renew our efforts for the teaching of His Faith, so that the Bahá'í world will reach Ridván 1963 with all goals of the Crusade won, fully prepared for the next supremely sacred step, the election of the Universal House of Justice itself.



RIDVÁN MESSAGE

CONVENTION 118

FROM THE HANDS OF THE FAITH IN HAIFA

Dearly beloved Friends:

'Every nation in the Western Hemisphere is illumined by the ways and woven into the fabric of Bahá'u'lláh's triumphant Administrative Order.' Such, in the beloved Guardian's own words, is the nature of the unique victory the entire Bahá'í world is celebrating during this blessed Ridván period, when twenty-one new and independent National Spiritual Assemblies are being elected throughout the length and breadth of Latin America. An enterprise officially inaugurated twenty-four years ago, through the launching of the first Seven-Year Plan, has been gloriously consummated. The 'onward marching legions of the Army of Bahá'u'lláh' pause in wonder and survey with grateful hearts their majestic conquests. 'That pioneer movement for which' Shoghi Effendi stated 'the entire machinery' of the Administrative Order had 'been primarily designed and erected' has yielded a mighty harvest. No less than twenty-four independent National Spiritual Assemblies now comprise the links in the mighty chain of Bahá'í solidarity stretching from the Arctic Circle to the Straits of Magallanes. Humbly, and with infinite gratitude, the followers of the Blessed Beauty lay before His throne this blazing crown in the name and in the memory of their Guardian, for it is essentially his victory, the witness of his faithful and superhuman efforts to implement that Divine Plan for the spiritual conquest of the entire planet which 'Abdu'l-Bahá entrusted to his care, to him who was the Sign of God on Earth.

An occasion for such rejoicing cannot be allowed to pass without reviewing the antecedents of this overwhelming victory in the Western Hemisphere, which comprises half the globe, which embraces the entire New World, and which the Guardian said was 'the first region in the Western World to be warmed and illumined by the ways of God's infant Faith'. He stated that in a sense the original impetus of the world teaching plan of the Master was given when the Báb, in the opening years of the first Bahá'í century, directed the "peoples of the west", to issue forth "from their cities and aid His Cause". Many times he pointed out that ever since 'the momentous and stirring summons' was 'issued by the Author of the Revelation in His Most Holy Book addressed to the rulers of all the Republics of the Western Hemisphere' the uninterrupted blessings of God had been poured upon the American continent. Bahá'u'lláh Himself testified that 'in the East the light of His Revelation hath broken; in the West have appeared

the signs of His dominion', whilst 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1917, in one of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, made the extraordinary pronouncement that 'the continent of America is in the eyes of the one True God the land wherein the splendours of His Light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled'. 'The American continent', He affirmed, 'gives signs and evidences of very great advancement. Its future is even more promising . . . it will lead all nations spiritually'.

Within the northern confines of a continent upon which had already been conferred such a remarkable station, the American Bahá'í Community was singled out for unique honours; it was 'a community', Shoghi Effendi wrote, 'invested with spiritual primacy by the Author of the immortal Tablets constituting the Charter of the Master Plan of the appointed Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant'. In majestic and ringing words the Guardian himself gave the rank and titles of this favoured community, whose mission is so unbelievably great, whose responsibilities are so staggering. Its members were, he said, 'the spiritual descendants of the Dawn-Breakers of the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Faith, the chief repository of the immortal Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan, the foremost executors of the Mandate issued by the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, the champion builders of a divinely conceived Administrative Order, the standard-bearers of a future divinely inspired world civilisation'.

A community, called by 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh' and specifically instructed by Him in the Tablets of the Divine Plan to carry the Message of His Father to all the Republics of Latin America and the islands fringing them in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, was launched officially in 1937 on its mission of spiritual conquest when the Guardian set in motion the first Seven-Year Plan. The precursor of this historic event was a letter from him written in May, 1936, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada in which he said a 'systematic, carefully conceived . . . plan should be devised' whose 'supreme objective should be the permanent establishment of at least one centre in every State of the American Republic and in every Republic of the American Continent'. The significance of this first Plan was increasingly revealed to the Bahá'í world. When two years had elapsed Shoghi Effendi wrote, 'the five remaining years should essentially be consecrated to the imperative, the spiritual needs of the remaining Republics of both Central and South America for whose entry into the fellowship of

Bahá'u'lláh the Plan was primarily formulated'. As the 'carrying of the sacred Fire to all the Republics of the Western Hemisphere' went forward, the tone of jubilation in the Guardian's Messages mounted: 'from Alaska to Chile', he wrote in 1942, 'the Americas are astir with the leavening influences of the rising Order of the new-born Revelation'. He said the 'first fruits of the Divine Plan' had been garnered there in abundance and that the first Seven-Year Plan, commenced on the eve of the greatest war the human race had ever experienced, had, 'despite six years of chaos and tribulation, been crowned with a success far exceeding the most sanguine hopes of its ardent promoters. Within so short a period, during such troublous years, such exploits were achieved as will forever illuminate the pages of Bahá'í history'. On the eve of the holding of the first All-America Convention in 1944, celebrating the Centenary of the 'first, most shining century of the Bahá'í Era', in that 'great turning point in the history of our Faith' when 'a spiritual front extending the entire length of the Western Hemisphere' had been established, when 'the crowning act of an entire century' had been accomplished, when the administrative structure of the Faith was already 'raising its triumphant head in the Central and South American Republics', when his heart was 'filled with joy, love, pride and gratitude', when 'the greatest collective enterprise ever launched in the course of the history of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh' had been successfully concluded, Shoghi Effendi wrote: 'A victory of undying fame has marked the culmination of the fifty-year long labours of the American Bahá'í Community in the service of Bahá'u'lláh and has shed imperishable lustre on the immortal records of His Faith during the first hundred years of its existence'. In words such as these he sang the praises of the Community of the Most Great Name in the North American Continent and indicated to the Bahá'í world the nature of the victories won during the first Seven-Year Plan, not the least of which were the brilliant achievements in the Southern part of the Western Hemisphere.

Two years later the American Bahá'í Community was called upon to launch the second Seven-Year Plan—a plan which the Guardian said surpassed every enterprise undertaken during the first Bahá'í century. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan was steadily gathering momentum. Whereas at the end of the first Seven-Year Plan fourteen of the Latin American Republics had established local Assemblies, the remainder possessing groups only, whilst the total number of localities had risen to a little over fifty, by June, 1947 there were thirty-seven Spiritual Assemblies and believers were to be found in over a hundred localities. To this extraordinary progress the beloved Guardian at that time paid a unique tribute: 'No community', he wrote, 'since the inception of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not even the Community of the Most Great Name in the North American Continent, can boast of an evolution as rapid, a consolidation as sound, a multiplication of centres as swift, as those that have marked the birth and rise of the Community of His followers in Latin America' whose motherlands had 'been chosen as the scene of the earliest victories won by the prosecutors of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan'. He called upon them to 'bestir themselves for the collective, the historic and gigantic tasks that await them'. He said the constitution of

their National Spiritual Assemblies for the northern and southern zones was 'one of the most vital objectives of the second Seven-Year Plan'. He said these two National Assemblies were the 'precursors of the institutions which must participate in the election, and contribute to the support, of the Universal House of Justice' and that they must lead, 'gradually and uninterruptedly . . . to the constitution in each of the Republics of Central and South America, of a properly elected, fully representative National Assembly, constituting thereby the last stage in the administrative evolution' of the Faith in Latin America.

Slowly the magnitude of Latin America's destiny unfolded. Upon the occasion of the formation in 1951 of the two first Regional Assemblies in that part of the world, he wrote them that 'these Communities may be said to have been invested with rights and duties which no community in any continent of the Eastern Hemisphere can claim to possess'. He pointed out that these 'newly fledged, spiritually alert Communities of Central and South America . . . are expected by their brethren in both the East and the West, to worthily play their part as associates of the chief executors of the Plan bequeathed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá'. With the launching of the World Crusade in 1953 new honours and responsibilities fell to the lot of these Communities and the National Bodies that represented them; in addition to the truly staggering Plans made for them in their homelands, no less than nineteen new and previously opened territories were apportioned them as their share in this new globe-encircling phase of the Divine Plan—territories so far afield that some of them were situated in the very heart of the Pacific Ocean. Yet after the lapse of eight years nearly every major task at home and abroad set for them by their beloved Guardian has been fully and nobly achieved and the few remaining tasks required to perfect their labours are now well within their reach.

Such, briefly, is the history leading up to the formation of these twenty-one supreme administrative bodies. The mysterious impetus imparted by the Báb in the Qayyumu'l-Asmá, the singular, significant and dynamic statements of Bahá'u'lláh, the innumerable references of the beloved Master culminating in His Plan for the spiritual conquest of the entire globe, the detailed, brilliant and inspiring strategy worked out by Shoghi Effendi during his thirty-six years' Guardianship, the 'daring exploits' of so many valiant Bahá'í pioneers, teachers and administrators—all have contributed to bring the Bahá'í world to this magnificent consummation, this unique event.

Though this is the end of a long journey, it is only the beginning of a glorious future for these new National Bodies, and the Communities they represent. They must remember that they share with the North American Bahá'í Community, as its appointed 'associates', a special responsibility in the prosecution of every phase in the successive unfoldment of the Plans which form stages in the evolution of what the Guardian called the 'Grand Design delineated in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's immortal Tablets'; the members of these new communities share in what Shoghi Effendi characterised as 'the phenomenal destiny which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the New World are to fulfil'. They are, now, he wrote, 'launched on their Crusade for the spiritual conquest of the whole planet'.

Before passing on to survey the victories won in other fields during the past year, we should recognise that aside from the fact that twenty nations and one dependency are electing their supreme Bahá'í Administrative Bodies, an additional event of far-reaching significance is taking place: 'The Islands of the West Indies', 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, 'have great importance . . . especially the two black Republics of Haiti and San Domingo'. It is these Republics which are now rearing up two of those autonomous pillars so soon to bear the weight of the Universal House of Justice. Who can doubt that these two new national communities, seconded by their sister community in Jamaica, and representative of that race which Bahá'u'lláh Himself likened to the 'pupil of the eye' through which He claimed 'the light of the spirit shineth forth', will greatly enrich the supra-national world-wide Fellowship of His Faith and herald the day when innumerable other black nations of the continent of Africa elect their own independent National Assemblies?

The remarkable record of victories achieved since last Ridván in the prosecution of the World Crusade of our beloved Guardian—the completion of which he indicated would mark the end of the first epoch in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—bears eloquent testimony to the devotion and sacrifice with which the friends in every part of the globe have striven to fulfil his cherished hopes and high expectations. As the eighth year of the Ten-Year Plan draws to a close, the believers everywhere may gain fresh inspiration and encouragement from the imposing list of achievements recorded during the past year.

The light of the Faith, now radiating from two hundred and fifty-seven countries, islands and dependencies, now covers the face of the globe, bringing to fulfilment the many prophecies foreshadowing the world-wide spread of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh ere the close of the first century following the declaration of His Mission, referred to by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as 'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'.

In his last Ridván Message the beloved Guardian called upon the friends in all continents to exert strenuous efforts to assure the 'early attainment of the goal of five thousand Bahá'í centres in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres'. By Ridván two years later, less than eighteen months after his passing, this goal was not only attained but exceeded, when the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside reached a total of over five thousand two hundred. This Ridván, as a result of the continuing dispersion of pioneers and the winning of fresh recruits to the ranks of the Faith, the total has risen to the truly impressive level of nearly six thousand five hundred, a gain of no less than four thousand centres since the inception of the World Crusade in 1953.

This rapid process of multiplication of centres has brought the number of localities in Germany and Austria to a hundred and fifty; in the British Isles to a hundred and fifty-three; in Australasia to nearly a hundred and sixty; in Canada to a hundred and seventy-one; in the goal countries of Europe to nearly a hundred and seventy-five; in the fast-awakening Indian sub-continent to nearly two hundred and thirty; in Latin America to nearly three hundred and sixty; in Persia to more than one thousand and eighty; in the rapidly developing African continent to

over fifteen hundred; and in the United States of America to nearly one thousand six hundred.

Particularly noteworthy is the rate of increase which has occurred in the four widely dispersed areas of the Indian sub-continent, Latin America, the Pacific area, and the continent of Africa. Since the announcement made by the Guardian in his Ridván Message of 1957, the number of centres in the Indian sub-continent has almost doubled. In Latin America, the gain has been even more striking, from approximately a hundred and thirty to almost three hundred and sixty, a truly remarkable achievement in so short a space of time, and one contributing significantly to the fulfilment of the goal of a National Assembly in every republic of Central and South America. Throughout the Pacific region there has been an increase of more than three hundred centres in a four-year period, testifying to those spiritual potentialities mentioned in Shoghi Effendi's frequent references to the establishment and spread of the Faith in the countries of the Asiatic mainland and the islands of the Pacific. The total of more than fifteen hundred centres in Africa reflects the addition of nearly one thousand localities since 1957 when he so proudly announced in his last Ridván Message that the total had reached a level of more than five hundred and fifty.

After the formation during the current Ridván period of twenty-one National Spiritual Assemblies in Latin America, a total of forty-eight National and Regional Assemblies will be functioning throughout the Bahá'í world as the supreme, divinely-ordained administrative institutions of their respective countries and areas.

The total number of local spiritual assemblies, the foundation upon which the entire Bahá'í administrative structure rests, is now nearly one thousand eight hundred and fifty, an increase of three hundred and eighty-five over the number reported in last year's Convention Message, and a further substantial increase will occur this year, as the fruit of the stupendous efforts exerted in all the continents of the Ten-Year Plan. Two hundred and sixty-five of these local bodies are now incorporated, an objective to which the beloved Guardian attached great importance. Nearly twenty new registrations were secured during the past year, chiefly in the Western Hemisphere, in regions as widespread as Alaska, Canada, the United States, Brazil, Peru, and Chile. The incorporation of the four Brazilian Assemblies of Curitiba, Sao Caetano, Campinas and Niteroi in one year, bringing the total in that country to eight, as well as the registration of the local assembly of Chiclayo, Peru, represent particularly significant victories, as both Brazil and Peru now have the unique distinction of being the first sovereign countries in the Bahá'í world to attain the goal of incorporation of every one of the local spiritual assemblies within their borders. Another notable achievement of the past year was the incorporation of the local spiritual assembly of Victoria, British Cameroons, the first in this region of West Africa, and one which undoubtedly will open the way for legal recognition of the Faith in other countries and dependencies of that important area.

The goal of translating the literature of the Faith into the indigenous languages of the territories included in the Ten-Year Plan has, in most cases, been accomplished, and the supplemental achievements in this important field have exceeded all expectations.

Since the inauguration of the Crusade translations have been completed in no less than one hundred and eighty-four different languages, eighty-one of which represent original or revised objectives, and the remaining one hundred and three supplementary achievements. All of the goals for translation have been fulfilled in the languages specified for Europe and the Americas, and nearly all of those for Africa; only ten in Asia remain to be completed. Including those already in existence before the opening of the Crusade, Bahá'í literature has now been translated into two hundred and seventy-three different languages, one hundred and twenty-five of these since the passing of the beloved Guardian.

The Ten-Year Plan called for the acquisition of eleven sites for future Bahá'í Houses of Worship. Most of these were purchased in the early years of the Crusade, the last one having been added in 1958. Acquisition of Temple sites was also an objective of many of the supplementary plans given to various National and Regional Assemblies. Including the original eleven, no less than forty such sites have now been acquired, among these plots in all but two of the twenty republics of Latin America, foreshadowing the day when peoples in all the continents and major areas of the world can assemble for worship under the dome of future Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs.

Recognition of the independent character of the Faith by civil authorities, an objective constantly urged upon the friends by the beloved Guardian, has been further advanced during the past year through the action of school officials in twelve additional cities of the United States giving recognition to the Bahá'í Holy Days. Over ninety jurisdictions throughout the world now grant the Faith this form of recognition. During the past year the Bahá'í marriage certificate has been legalised in Louisiana in the United States, bringing to twenty-nine the number of States and Federal districts in that country which recognise the right of Bahá'í Assemblies to conduct legal marriage ceremonies.

The extraordinary increase in the number of Bahá'í summer schools, winter schools, week-end schools, teaching conferences and congresses throughout the Bahá'í world, in both the East and West, precludes detailed enumeration at this time, but bears witness to the greatly increased community activity of the believers and the range of that phase of their teaching efforts, aimed at deepening the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in their knowledge and understanding of His Faith. Also of significance has been the increase of endowments, a number of which have been contributed by devoted, newly-enrolled African believers who have, out of their meagre holdings, insisted on donating land for local Házíratu'l-Quds and schools.

In reviewing the extraordinary progress which has been made in achieving so many objectives of the Ten-Year Plan, sufficient tribute could never be paid to the services rendered by the followers of the Faith in Bahá'u'lláh's native land. This oldest community in the Bahá'í world, from whose ranks its early saints, heroes and martyrs were drawn, has poured forth its substance, and an army of pioneers, in a steadily mounting stream for the support of every undertaking embarked upon in every continent of the globe.

The eighth year of the world-embracing Crusade now drawing to a close has witnessed an unprecedented movement of pioneers from both Persia and America into the goal cities of Europe, paralleling and indeed surpassing that which occurred in Latin America in the months preceding the great victory won in that region last Ridván. This stupendous effort, the first of its kind to join the two foremost communities of the Bahá'í world in an international undertaking of such transcendent importance has, through the operation of the Joint Deputisation Fund and the settlement of pioneers, assured the formation of the requisite number of local assemblies specified by the beloved Guardian as objectives of the Homefront campaigns in the goal countries of the European Continent, aimed at quadrupling the number of local assemblies existing at the beginning of the Crusade—the highest objective set by him for any Homefront in the Bahá'í World Community.

This glorious victory represents a significant milestone in that 'fate-laden' process set in motion by the beloved Guardian in 1946 when he made 'the initiation of systematic teaching activity in the war-torn, spiritually famished European continent' a primary objective of the second Seven-Year Plan launched in that year, and which constituted the second stage in the unfoldment of the world mission given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the American believers. In calling for a vanguard of pioneers to inaugurate the 'spiritual conquest of the old world', he looked forward to the time when, 'in the years to come' a host of Bahá'u'lláh's standard-bearers would 'spiritually raise up the sorely ravaged continent of Europe'. This confident hope of our beloved Guardian will become a reality this Ridván when, as the fruit of the labours of this host of pioneers, the foundations for eleven future pillars of the Universal House of Justice will be laid, paving the way for the establishment of these divinely-ordained institutions in the Ridván period of 1962.

The evolution of the World Centre of the Faith so often alluded to by the beloved Guardian in his references to the rise and development of the institutions functioning in the Holy Land, will enter another stage this Ridván when the International Bahá'í Council, the forerunner of the Universal House of Justice, will be transformed into a duly elected body. This highly significant event, the first international election in Bahá'í history, has placed upon the members of the National and Regional Assemblies formed last Ridván the obligation of participating in the election of a body to whose membership believers in every part of the world are eligible.

The process of erecting a Bahá'í House of Worship in each of the five continents of the globe, a task of far-reaching spiritual significance and one to which the beloved Guardian attached immense importance, may be said to have entered its final stage with the opening in Kampala, Uganda, of the completed Mother Temple of Africa last January, the contemplated dedication of the Mother Temple of the Antipodes in Sydney, Australia, next September, and the laying of the corner-stone of the Mother Temple of Europe in Frankfurt, Germany, last November. No one could have foreseen, when the vast panorama of the World Crusade was spread before our eyes in 1953, that in the eighth year of its prosecution Africa would snatch the palm of victory in yet another field.

The beautiful and dignified African Temple, en-

throned like a queen on Kikaya Hill, overlooking the City of Kampala and the rolling green countryside, seems to emanate a warm and personal welcome to all who behold it, and is already demonstrating the truth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words that these Temples are great silent teachers of the Faith. On the day of its dedication the words of Bahá'u'lláh, recited in Persian, Arabic, many African languages and English, flowed over the assembled believers from East Africa, Abyssinia, Eritrea, Rhodesia, Ruanda Urundi, South Africa, the Sudan, Arabia, Persia, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the United States and other places, in mighty waves of benediction, lifting all hearts in praise of Him, and filling the souls of the friends with awe at the contemplation of the bounties of God poured forth in this Day of Days in such supreme abundance. On the day following this profound experience of Bahá'í fellowship, the Temple was formally opened to the public for worship; the crowds representative of not only the African peoples, but of European, Indian, Sikh, and other elements in the population, filled the Temple to its open doors and overflowed onto its surrounding terrace, an attentive, colourful and reverent throng united, for perhaps the first time, in a service of worship dedicated to the oneness of mankind, to the establishment of world peace, and the creation of a society founded on the brotherhood of all men and the fatherhood of their common Creator.

The blessings which this Mashriqu'l-Adhikár is now releasing in the heart of what once was termed the 'dark continent' but which now may be truly said to have become the 'bright continent' are indeed incalculable; already similar blessings are beginning to flow out from the first Bahá'í House of Worship to be erected in the Southern Hemisphere, where thousands of people in anticipation of its forthcoming dedication, are visiting the Sydney Temple, receiving literature, asking questions and broadcasting news of the progress of Bahá'í activities throughout Australia.

There remains the construction, in the centre of that continent which is the cradle of Western civilisation, amongst peoples highly gifted but sorely disillusioned, often hopeless and cynical through direct experience of two cataclysmic wars, of the third great House of Worship which Shoghi Effendi called upon us to erect during this period of unparalleled expansion in all fields of Bahá'í activity. We have witnessed how far-reaching has been the effect of the completion in the heart of America of that most holy Temple dedicated by the Centre of the Covenant Himself; we now see before our eyes the new and powerful teaching influence which the African and Australian Temples are releasing. We cannot for a moment contemplate depriving the European continent and its spiritually famished multitudes of a similar blessing. A supreme effort is required, however, if we are to accomplish this purpose. The fanatical and calculated opposition of certain ecclesiastical elements in Germany has delayed, until the eighth year of the World Crusade, purchase of a site for and permission to build a Bahá'í House of Worship there. At long last the work has commenced, and there are bright prospects for the speedy erection of this building, whose design was approved by the beloved Guardian himself and for the support of which he urged the entire Bahá'í world to rally its forces. Unfortunately the steady rise in prices in Europe, and particularly in Germany,

since the passing of the Guardian, will now entail a tremendous increase in cost. This, as well as the maintenance abroad of that precious corps of pioneers in Latin America and Europe, whose steadfast and devoted services are the buttress of the newly elected local assemblies upon which the future pillars of the Universal House of Justice must rest, as well as the support of the various activities which are the mainstay of the mass conversion beginning at long last to take place will, if we are to meet our obligations and achieve our goals, require on the part of every single believer, whatever his or her personal circumstances, whether in the East or the West, a tremendous and unprecedented degree of self-sacrifice in the support of the various funds, the bedrock upon which all Bahá'í activity inevitably rests. Face to face with the gravity of our present obligations, we must never for a moment lose heart. We have never failed. Our record is unblemished. Miraculously, at the last hour, battles greater and more critical in the fortunes of our Faith have been won.

That the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, the 'priceless gem of Divine Revelation enshrining', as the Guardian wrote, 'the Spirit of God and incarnating His Purpose for mankind in this Age', 'feeds itself upon . . . hidden springs of celestial strength' and 'propagates itself by ways mysterious and utterly at variance with the standards accepted by the generality of mankind' is, in every field of Bahá'í activity, being constantly demonstrated, but perhaps in no field as clearly as that of the teaching work. The vast process of mass conversion, in fulfilment of Shoghi Effendi's expressed wish that during this fourth phase of the Ten-Year Plan 'an unprecedented increase in the number of the avowed supporters of the Faith, in all the continents of the globe, of every race, clime, creed and colour' should take place, is beginning to yield its first fruits.

Little wonder that these fruits are, for the most part, being garnered in lands and amongst peoples who have retained, he said, their 'primitive simplicity and remained uncontaminated by the evils of a gross, a rampant materialism undermining the fabric of human society alike in the East and the West, eating into the vitals of the conflicting peoples inhabiting the American, the European and the Asiatic continents, and alas threatening to engulf in one common catastrophic convulsion the generality of mankind'.

In a little over a decade the ranks of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the African continent—now representing no less than two hundred and eighty-six tribes, have swelled to twenty thousand, ten thousand alone having been added since the passing of the beloved Guardian in 1957. 'The pure-hearted and spiritually receptive Negro race' which, he testified, was 'so deeply loved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for whose conversion to His Father's Faith He so deeply yearned', is now beginning to take its rightful place in the Bahá'í world; already seven National and Regional bodies are representative of areas where the majority of the electorate belong to this distinguished race. The possibilities for an unprecedented enrollment of new believers in these areas are practically limitless, particularly in the African continent, and may be said to be solely dependent on a wider dispersal of Bahá'í pioneers and teachers and the provision of the necessary financial assistance in support of plans that are already formulated and only held in abeyance through lack of sufficient man-power and means.

Concomitant with the remarkable advances made in Africa, the Pacific region, upon which the Guardian lavished so much praise and encouragement during the last years of his life, and of whose newly-won victories he was so immensely proud, is witnessing a comparable expansion amongst the many peoples scattered throughout its islands and peninsulas who are as yet unspoiled by the blighting winds of Western materialism. In the Island of Mentawai alone there are now over five thousand Bahá'ís, whilst in the entire South-East Asian area the number of the adherents of the Faith has swelled to well over eight thousand. Throughout the islands of the Pacific Ocean the far-flung Bahá'í communities are rapidly expanding and steadily increasing numbers of their varied races are being enrolled under the banner of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. In the Indian sub-continent, one of the earliest regions to receive His Message during His own lifetime, a wave of conversion is spreading amongst some of its more primitive people in the Maydhya-Pradesh area, over five hundred of whom have embraced the Cause during the last few months.

In conjunction with the extraordinary progress which has taken place in the spread and consolidation of the Faith throughout the Western Hemisphere during the last few years, a less conspicuous but equally important advance can be seen in a field to which both the Master and the Guardian attached the highest significance. Almost half a century ago 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructed the believers in the United States and Canada to 'attach great importance to the indigenous population of America', promising that the Indians, like the original inhabitants of Arabia who accepted and supported Muhammad would, when educated and guided, 'become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world'. The nineteenth objective of that portion of the World Crusade entrusted in 1953 to the American Bahá'í Community by its Guardian was the 'conversion to the Faith of members of the leading Indian tribes'. At a steadily accelerating pace this immensely significant process of conversion has gone on until at the present time we are witnesses of an event of extraordinary historic importance, the election in Bolivia of a National Bahá'í Assembly representative of a Community the vast majority of whom belong to the Aymara race. No less than thirteen hundred of these Indians, in over one hundred localities have, with enthusiasm and conviction, embraced the Faith and are responsible for the formation during this present Ridván of over twenty local assemblies, thus directly fulfilling the expressed wish of the Guardian that the Indians be elected to the Councils of the Faith and lend their support to its administrative activities.

The establishment of Indian assemblies in Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico—areas which were the scene of such mighty pre-Colombian civilisations as those of the Incas, the Mayas, and the Aztecs; the formation of no less than four assemblies representative of Canadian Indians in the Yukon, Alberta and Saskatchewan; the fact that there are now over forty Indian and Eskimo tribes represented in the Bahá'í Community throughout the Western Hemisphere—more than double the number in 1957—all testify that the devoted followers of Bahá'u'lláh in both the East and the West are mindful of the tremendously significant words of their beloved Guardian at the inception of the World Crusade, and are devoting special attention to the teaching work in these infinitely fertile fields.

At the moment when such great victories have been won, when such significant events are taking place, when the Ten-Year Plan, the detailed, unique and precious Plan of Shoghi Effendi, embodying his fondest hopes, and setting forth so clearly those tasks the accomplishment of which in their entirety must constitute the rock foundation of the work to come for generations, is drawing to a close—at such a moment we should pause and weigh once again the implications of those words he addressed to the first Intercontinental Teaching Conference, held in Africa at the opening of the World Crusade: 'I welcome', he said, 'with open arms the unexpectedly large number of the representatives of the pure-hearted and spiritually receptive Negro race . . . I acclaim the preponderance of the members of this same race at so significant a Conference . . . auguring well for a corresponding multiplication in the number of the representatives of the yellow, the red and brown races of mankind dwelling respectively in the Far East, the Far West and in the Islands of the South Pacific Ocean, a multiplication designed ultimately to bring to a proper equipoise the diverse ethnic elements comprised within the highly diversified world-embracing Bahá'í Fellowship'.

There can be no doubt that one of the deepest sources of satisfaction to the heart of our beloved Guardian during the closing years of his life was the remarkable progress being made in carrying the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to the members of these races. Their enrolment as Bahá'ís, however, was far from being his ultimate goal. He desired their 'active participation in the administrative affairs of the Bahá'í Communities'. This desire of his is now being rapidly fulfilled all over the world.

Significant as these other plans and considerations may be, there was a dream of the future in Shoghi Effendi's mind, a vision of things to come. This Crusade, he pointed out at its very inception, has been launched 'for the systematic propagation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh over the surface of the entire planet. . . . 'It must, as it approaches its climax, carry the torch of the Faith to regions so remote, so inhospitable that neither the light of Christianity or Islam has, after the revolution of centuries, as yet penetrated.' Already in Africa, in the Pacific, and in the Americas, the first attacks on these remote outposts of paganism have been made and members of tribes as yet unconverted to any of the great living religions of the world have accepted, with steadfast and illumined hearts, the regenerating truths enshrined in the Revelation of God for this Day. But beyond all this there were still heights and depths of service not yet attained, shining prizes within our reach, which Shoghi Effendi longed for us to seize, to which his eyes travelled with yearning and hope as he gazed upon the vision of our future. To all his 'dearly loved . . . onward marching legions of the army of Bahá'u'lláh'—whether they laboured beyond the Arctic Circle, in the Torrid Zones of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, on the borders or in the heart of the jungles of Burma, Malaya, India or the Amazon, on the fringes of the African and Arabian deserts, in the lonely islands dotting the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans or the North Sea, whether they scaled the mountains of Tibet, penetrated the interior of China, Mongolia and Japan, sat with the leper, consorted with the outcast, traversed

the steppes of Russia or the wastes of Siberia—'I direct', he wrote, 'my impassioned appeal to obey, as befits His warriors, the summons of the Lord of Hosts, and prepare for that Day of Days when His victorious battalions will, to the accompaniment of hosannas from the invisible angels in the Abhá Kingdom, celebrate the hour of final victory'.

The brilliant plans, the daring campaigns, initiated by the Guardian during the thirty-six years of his ministry to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have borne fruit, during the eighth year of his World Crusade, in a manner and to a degree the staunchest believer would never have dreamed possible during that dark and fateful period associated with his passing. Great, however, as our present victories are, we must never for a moment lose sight of the fact that the crown of so much labour and sacrifice will elude our grasp if the remaining objectives of the Plan are not achieved and the prizes already won are not safeguarded during the two years that lie ahead of us.

The consolidation of the various Homefronts, a task of such fundamental importance that 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself repeatedly stressed it as early as 1916 in His Tablets of the Divine Plan, must receive the special attention of all National bodies, whether presently or previously formed, throughout the entire Bahá'í world, for the Homefronts, and primarily the formation of the number of local spiritual assemblies specified by the Guardian himself for each one of them, are the bedrock upon which rest those pillars which must, at the end of the Crusade, sustain the weight of the Universal House of Justice itself. 'The Crusade must', he wrote, 'as it approaches its conclusion, pave the way for the laying, on an unassailable foundation, of the structural basis of an Administrative Order whose fabric must, in the course of successive Crusades, be laboriously erected throughout the entire globe'.

The process of carrying the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to all the peoples of the world must be accelerated, for He Himself ordained teaching as one of the primary duties of every single one of His followers. When broken in strength and advanced in years 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in those Tablets which constitute the Charter of teaching activities for centuries to come, recalled in most touching terms His own labours to spread the Faith of His Father and warned the believers against the vanity of all other preoccupations. 'Ye have observed', He wrote, 'that while 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in the utmost bodily weakness, while he was indisposed and had not the power to move . . . he travelled through many countries'. 'What result', He asked, 'is forthcoming from material rest, tranquillity, luxury and attachment to this physical world? It is evident that the man who pursues these things will in the end become afflicted with regret and loss'.

Shoghi Effendi pointed out to us, at the very inception of the Crusade, that the prosecution of all the other vital tasks he had enumerated as objectives of his world-embracing Plan, 'would fail to achieve their supreme purpose if not supplemented by the equally vital task . . . of winning to the Faith fresh recruits to the slowly yet steadily advancing army of the Lord of Hosts, whose reinforcing strength is so essential to the safeguarding of the victories which the band of heroic Bahá'í conquerors are winning in the course of their several campaigns in all countries of the globe'.

No words could better direct the attention of the

friends to the significance of the immediate three-fold task that confronts the entire Bahá'í world—the consolidation of the Homefronts, the process of mass conversion and the rearing of the Mother Temple of Europe—than these written by our beloved Guardian himself long ago, on another occasion, but in words so pregnant with meaning for this hour in which we find ourselves that they seem to have been written yesterday:

'Ours is the duty to fix our gaze with undeviating attention on the duties and responsibilities confronting us at this present hour, to concentrate our resources, both material and spiritual, on the tasks that lie immediately ahead, to insure that no time is wasted, that no opportunity is missed, that no obligation is evaded, that no task is procrastinated. The task summoning us to a challenge, unprecedented in its gravity and force, is too vast and sacred, the time too short, the hour too perilous, the workers too few, the call too insistent, the resources too inadequate, for us to allow these precious and fleeting hours to slip from our grasp, and to suffer the prizes within our reach to be endangered or forfeited. So much depends upon us, so pregnant with possibilities is the present stage in the evolution of the Plan, that great and small, individuals, groups and Assemblies, white and coloured, young and old, neophytes and veterans, settlers, pioneers, itinerant teachers and administrators, as isolated believers, as organisers of groups, and as contributors to the formation of local or national Assemblies, as builders of the Temple . . . all, without exception and in every sphere of activity, however modest, restricted, or inconspicuous, must participate and labour, assiduously and continually, until every ounce of our energy is spent, until, tired but blissful, our promised harvest is brought in, and our pledge to our Beloved fully redeemed.'

April 1961.

(Signed)

RUHIYIH

AMELIA COLLINS

LEROY IOAS

JALÁL KHÁZEH

PAUL HANEY

JOHN FERRABY

A. Q. FAIZI

NAW-RÚZ CABLE FROM HANDS OF THE FAITH

'With humble hearts turn Bahá'u'lláh in thanksgiving bountiful blessings bestowed His faithful followers throughout world during past year enabling them win unprecedented victories all fronts. Mother Temple Africa befittingly dedicated, Mother Temple Australia nearing completion, construction work Mother Temple Europe rapidly progressing. Mass conversion so ardently called for by beloved Guardian continuing African continent, expanding South America, Indonesia, Malaya now beginning India. In sending loving Naw-Rúz greetings urge friends join in fervent prayers Bahá'u'lláh supplicate further outpourings His bounties assuring in coming year even greater victories, raising higher banner His glorious Faith in every land as beacon and sole hope peace unity distracted world.'

(Signed) 'HANDSFAITH'

MESSAGE FROM HASAN M. BALLYUZI REVERED HAND OF THE CAUSE

TO CONVENTION 118

Beloved Friends,

This year I shall be at two of the twenty-one historic Conventions of Latin America and the Antilles, and cannot be with you at your Convention, which is indeed also historic. Please pray for me, and I shall be remembering you. Just before leaving for Quito I was given some very good news—wonderful and soul-uplifting. I was told there was every reason to hope that all the existing Assemblies would be maintained, and in addition to those Assemblies scheduled to be formed this year, Canterbury would also attain Assembly status. Some weeks ago the situation seemed bleak. But this is what the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, His heroic army, can perform. All over the world, it is the same story. The same resounding victories are being won in the name of our most beloved Guardian. The Message of the revered Hands of the Faith in the Holy Land gives you a stupendous record of achievement. Take heart and know for certain that Bahá'u'lláh will come to your aid, that He will never, never fail you, and resolve to get all the remaining Assemblies this year. Resolve that never, never, never again shall Assemblies be maintained by last minute moves of self-sacrificing pioneers. Resolve to lay at the very start a firm unshakeable foundation in every goal town, and by incessant, constant, never-wavering, never-faltering effort to swell the army of teachers who shall bring aid all the year round to the pioneers in the goal towns. Resolve to make mass conversion a fact in these Isles. Remember and take to heart these weighty words contained in a letter from the beloved Guardian to this Community, dated August 1955:

'Undoubtedly the most important task facing the British Community at the present time, is to increase its membership. It has performed miracles during the past ten years, through shifting around devoted volunteers from one centre to another, in order to maintain or to create Spiritual Assemblies; but, efficacious as this has been in the past, it is certainly not a permanent solution to the problem. The only solution is to bring in more Bahá'ís. This requires patient, prayerful, ceaseless efforts on the part of, not only the Bahá'í teachers and pioneers but every single member of the Community. The British people are traditionally slow to move. Fortunately, once they do move, it's almost impossible to stop them; but to overcome the inertia requires great effort. In bringing new people into the Faith, the friends always come up against this problem. He urges all the Bahá'ís, however, not to become discouraged, but to persevere and redouble their efforts, knowing that they can and must succeed in the end.'

We need pioneers right now who will go out determined to settle for good in the goal towns of their choosing, to throw down firm roots in these towns, to become the bedrocks of the future communities. Families can render this invaluable service best, but this does not preclude any other devoted soul. We also need pioneers with no attachments, who can move from place to place, staying at each locality for a prolonged period, teaching all the while, broadening the basis of the community.

(Continued at foot of next column)

JOYFUL NEWS OF RIDVÁN GOALS

6 NEW ASSEMBLIES

2 Assemblies regained

The Pivotal Centre of Belfast and the Leeds Assembly achieved incorporation.

On April 21st we received the following cable from the revered Hands of the Faith in Haifa:

'Delighted victories praying fulfilment all beloved Guardian's plans British Community. Hands Faith.'

This was in reply to our cable, sent after the N.S.A. meeting on April 16th, which read:

'Ridván goals six Assemblies achieved two extra assured including Canterbury striving maintain Hove incorporate seven Assemblies seek prayers.'

The National Assembly is now deeply moved to be able to announce the heart-warming tidings that all the Assemblies have been maintained, new ones have been formed in the goal towns of Chester, Pontypridd, Watford, Wokingham Rural District, and Epsom, and an additional important victory has been won—the formation of the first local Spiritual Assembly of Canterbury! Beloved friends, this is a supreme moment in the history of the Faith, a moment of thanksgiving and rejoicing; we are sure that our beloved Guardian is also rejoicing with us all as he keenly desired that a local Spiritual Assembly be established in the city which is the seat of the Primate of the Church of England.

THERE ARE NOW THIRTY-SIX LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

ELECTION OF NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Betty Reed	47
John Long	45
Adib Taherzadeh	43
Marion Hofman	43
John Wade	38
David Hofman	34
Owen Battrick	31
Ian Semple	31
Ernest Gregory	31

Let this Convention be made truly historic, let it shine as a beacon not only through the next two most precious years, but throughout many years to come, by making this high resolve to lay that very firm and abiding foundation now, right now; to step out into this highroad of pioneering; to forge ahead unflinchingly and establish the remaining Assemblies of the Crusade by Ridván 1962; to put every Bahá'í Community in these Isles on a firm well-assured foundation; to make mass conversion take shape before our eyes. These things are possible to us, if we let Bahá'u'lláh use us as His servants. Our beloved Guardian expected much from this Community.

With deepest love to you one and all,

(Signed) HASAN M. BALLYUZI

THE MOTHER TEMPLE OF AFRICA



BRITAIN'S DELEGATES TO THE DEDICATION OF THE MOTHER TEMPLE OF AFRICA

From right to left: David Hofman, England, representing the National Spiritual Assembly; James Robertson, Scotland; Mrs. Lizbeth Greeves, Ireland; and Miss Beatrice Newman, Wales. On the left is Ursula Samandari, English Knight of Bahá'u'lláh in Somaliland.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AFRICA PROJECT

IN THE WORDS OF THE BELOVED GUARDIAN

'Indeed the birth of this African enterprise, in the opening decade of the second Bahá'í century, coinciding as it does with the formation of the International Bahá'í Council, should be acclaimed as an event of peculiar significance in the evolution of our beloved Faith. Both events will, no doubt, be hailed by posterity as simultaneous and compelling evidences of the irresistible unfoldment of a divinely-appointed Administrative Order and of the development, on an international scale, of its subsidiary agencies, heralding the establishment of the Supreme Legislative body designed to crown the Administrative Edifice now being laboriously erected by the privileged builders of a Divine order. . . .

'OUR STAGGERING RESPONSIBILITY'

'To be singled out as the chief agency in the prosecution of a task of such dimensions, such significance, and the harbinger of events so glorious, is indeed at once an inestimable blessing and a staggering responsibility with which the British Bahá'í Community, emerging triumphantly in rapid succession from the ordeal of a world war and the struggles involved in the prosecution of a historic Plan, has been honoured at so critical and challenging an hour in the fortunes of mankind.'

—To the British National Spiritual Assembly

February 25th, 1951.

KAMPALA TEMPLE

CABLE FROM HANDS OF THE FAITH

A wonderful message from the Hands in the Holy Land announced yet another objective attained in the World Crusade:

'Joyously share (with) Bahá'í world (the) news (of) completion (and) dedication (of the) Mother Temple (of) Africa marking significant milestone (in the) development (of the) institutions (of our) Faith (in) that richly blessed continent stop Memorable dedication ceremony (was) attended (by) 'Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm and nearly five hundred believers representing nineteen countries stop Presence (of) more than (one) thousand visitors (at) inaugural service (of) public worship (and) wide publicity (in) press (and) radio attest (to the) growing recognition (of the) importance (of the) African Bahá'í community stop Urge (the) friends everywhere (to) join (in) prayers (of) thanksgiving (for the) attainment (of) this cherished goal (of the) beloved Guardian's plan.'

January 24th, 1961.

'HANDSFAITH'

THE DEDICATION OF THE MOTHER TEMPLE OF AFRICA

When it became apparent to our beloved Guardian that it was not possible to build a Temple in Iran during the Ten-Year Crusade, he immediately reached 'the historic decision . . . to raise the Mother Temple of Africa in the city of Kampala' as a 'supreme consolation' to the Persian Bahá'ís and in recognition of 'the marvellous expansion of the Faith' in Africa.

Built in three years under the supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Central and East Africa, the Temple was formally opened and dedicated, by 'Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm, during the week-end of January 13th-16th, 1961, before several hundred Bahá'ís, representing nineteen countries, and the representatives of the Kabaka of Buganda and the British Government, the Mayor of Kampala, the press and religious leaders of Uganda, and many local people.

This was a proud day for the British Bahá'ís, for it was our own daughter community, founded and nurtured under our guidance and sustained in its infant days by the British Africa Committee, which now stood in the limelight of the world Bahá'í stage. 'Qualified' and 'empowered' by our victory in the Six-Year Plan, we were launched by the beloved Guardian into the Africa Campaign, the first international administrative undertaking in Bahá'í history, uniting five National Spiritual Assemblies under the 'chief responsibility' of the British National Assembly. It was eminently fitting that we should be represented on this historic occasion by a believer each from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, for it was the Six-Year Plan which spread the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh from England to the other countries of the United Kingdom. Equally befitting this great achievement of our vigorous daughter was the gift which we were able to make: the original letter from our beloved Guardian, setting the seal of history and his divine assessment on the Six-Year Plan, and inaugurating the Africa Campaign, designed to open the Dark Continent to the holy illumination of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Kampala Temple is the seal of victory on that campaign; it is the symbol of the new cycle of human power, the promise of God to Africa that 'all are His servants' and all 'are gathered at Thy table of bounty'; 'all mankind is sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle'. It is the assurance of peace, brotherhood and the Kingdom of God to this new, illumined continent.

The Temple itself owes nothing to decoration or other embellishments. Its beauty is of form and proportion and fitness to its setting. It enshrines the holy dust from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, sent by the beloved Guardian, and placed beneath the floor by the great door which faces the Qiblih. The other eight doors are thrown open by day to the breezes of Africa. On its hill right in the centre of the landscape, the Mother Temple of Africa is a jewel on the heart of this great continent, and is aptly called 'the Queen of Africa.'

DAVID HOFMAN

OUR EUROPEAN HOUSE OF WORSHIP URGENT APPEAL FROM HANDS

'Announce joyous news (that) cornerstone (of the) Mother Temple (of) Europe (was) laid (in) impressive ceremony attended (by) nearly one thousand Bahá'ís (and) guests (and the) sacred dust (from the) Shrine (of) Bahá'u'lláh placed (in the) foundation by beloved Hand (of the Cause) Amelia Collins stop Excavations, foundations (and) walls (are) being rapidly completed (and) plans laid (for) early construction (of the) superstructure but (the) actual beginning (of) this work (is) dependent (on the) availability (of) sufficient funds stop Heavy increase (in) building costs during (the) unavoidable seven-year delay (in) overcoming serious obstacles now requires (a) steady, uninterrupted flow (of) contributions stop Completion (of) this historic structure during (the) Crusade now necessitates fulfilment (of the) beloved Guardian's stirring call for (a) great outpouring (of) treasure by believers throughout (the) world stop Request all National Assemblies immediately inaugurate (a) special fund (for the) construction (of the) Mother Temple (of) Europe (and to) urge all (the) friends (to) support this fund liberally (and) continuously stop Attainment (of) this vital goal (of the) Ten-Year Plan will release untold spiritual power and prestige (for the) Faith, demonstrate (the) vitality (of an) ever victorious world Bahá'í community (and) attract (the) divine confirmations (and) blessings promised by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to all those who sacrifice for (the) House of the Lord.'

January 12th, 1961.

'HANDSFAITH'

OUR EUROPEAN HOUSE OF WORSHIP

FROM TALK GIVEN BY MRS. AMELIA COLLINS

When the cornerstone was laid many memorable words were spoken about this 'silent teacher' now to be raised in our midst.

' . . . Our beloved Guardian in his infinite wisdom chose the very heart of Europe as the site of this Temple. It will be the fifth Mashriqu'l-Adhkár to be erected by the Bahá'ís of the world, and from it will stream forth special grace and blessings upon this continent, the cradle of Western civilisation, so war-torn, so in need at this time of the spiritualising forces latent in the teachings of the Manifestation of God for this day.

' . . . Both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi repeatedly pointed out that these Bahá'í institutions are the great silent teachers of the Faith; they not only enhance its prestige in the eyes of the people of the world, but from them stream spiritual power and blessings upon believer and non-believer alike. This Mother Temple of Europe is not only unique, but is distinguished by the fact that the beloved Guardian himself specified that it should receive the infinitely precious gift of some of the sacred dust from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. . . . May his ardent hopes be fulfilled, and this House of Worship, so dear to his heart, be speedily completed, a testimonial of the love of not only the European believers for their Guardian, but the Bahá'ís of the entire world.'

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO
CONVENTION 118

First of all, we should like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the revered Hands of the Cause Mr. Shuá'u'lláh 'Alá'í and Mr. 'Alí Akbar Furútan, whose visits in March and April were such a source of inspiration and stimulation to us all. Mr. 'Alá'í, who was here for the longer period, visited the North of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire, and Mr. Furútan visited Wales, the South and the Midlands, as well as holding a special meeting in London for Iránian friends from all over the country. In every place the Hands visited, there were wonderful gatherings of Bahá'ís and close contacts, and before each of them left the National Assembly had the privilege of consulting with them.

In one respect, however, as their visits came to an end, we became a little sad. Immediately before Convention we had three Hands of the Cause in this country, Mr. 'Alá'í, Mr. Furútan and Mr. Balyúzi, but all of them were struggling to get to South America for Conventions at which the new National Assemblies were to be formed, and it looked as though we should be left without the blessing of a Hand of the Cause at our own Convention. But then came the good news from Dr. Mühlischlegel that he would be with us, and we are especially glad to welcome him to this truly historic gathering. For this is a great moment in the history of the Faith in the British Isles.

When the Annual Report of the National Spiritual Assembly was written, on March 16th, we were intensely worried; although it was probable that five new local Assemblies would be formed and two which had lapsed in previous years would be re-established, nine other Assemblies were below numbers and in grave danger of lapsing this Ridván. The number of declarations during the year had been very low, only forty including seven youth. The picture was particularly grim.

Since then the scene has completely changed, and this morning the National Assembly is deeply moved to be able to report that the goals for this Ridván have not only been achieved, they have been exceeded.

On April 21st not five but six new local Spiritual Assemblies were formed, in Chester, Pontypridd, Watford, Wokingham Rural District, Epsom and Canterbury. Two of these merit special mention, Pontypridd and Canterbury.

Pontypridd is the first all-native Assembly to be formed in the British Isles, it is composed entirely of Welsh believers and they had to have an election as they have a community of ten Bahá'ís. They established another record too, for all this work has been done without at any stage sending in a pioneer. Beatrice Newman was the first Bahá'í in Pontypridd and it has not been necessary to send a pioneer there.

The sixth Assembly to be formed is an important victory for the whole community; indeed, this Ridván would have been a supreme moment in the history of the Faith for the one factor alone, that a local Spiritual Assembly has been established in Canterbury, the seat of the Primate of the Church of England. The Canterbury press seemed to recognise something of the importance of this step, for the *Kent Gazette* devoted almost seven inches of space to publicising the news.

The two Assemblies which were re-established were

Torquay and Glasgow; counting youth there are fifteen Bahá'ís in Torquay and ten in Glasgow.

All the remaining twenty-eight Assemblies were maintained, including both Hove and Brighton, which gives us a total of thirty-six local Spiritual Assemblies now existing in the British Isles and Eire. We have just twelve more to achieve in order to reach our Crusade goal of forty-eight local Assemblies.

Concerning declarations: at the March meeting of the N.S.A. one new believer was accepted; at the April meeting there were twelve and since then there have been a further three declarations in places where already there had been new believers—Cambridge, Burnley and Northampton. This brings the total to fifty-five.

Coming to incorporations, we were delighted to receive news on the evening of April 20th of the incorporation of Belfast. This had been particularly difficult as the laws in Northern Ireland relating to incorporation were different from English laws, and the Belfast Assembly are to be congratulated on their good work. The incorporation of Leeds is complete, and Bournemouth, Cardiff, Cheadle, Norwich and Portsmouth, although not yet completed are well in hand. This will bring the total number of incorporations to eleven, leaving eight more to be done to reach the Crusade goal of nineteen.

So we now stand at the cross-roads. For the first time in three years we have achieved our goals at Ridván. Let us make no mistake, there is a lot of consolidation to be done, but the account is now square—we have thirty-six Assemblies and there are twelve more to be won to finish the job. We are moving rapidly towards the end of the Ten-Year Crusade. Is this not the period of which the beloved Guardian wrote in his last letter to the British Bahá'í community, on August 30th, 1957? In that letter he said:

'The historic process originated as far back as the year which witnessed the centenary of the Declaration of the Báb in Shíráz, which gathered momentum as a result of the inauguration of the Two-Year Plan which followed, which received a tremendous impetus, in consequence of the launching of the Ten-Year Crusade commemorating the centenary celebrations of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission in Tihrán—such a process must, as the centenary celebrations designed to commemorate the Declaration of that same Mission in Baghdád approaches, be so markedly accelerated and yield such a harvest as will astonish the entire Bahá'í world. . . .'

May we all gathered at this Convention, unitedly with enthusiasm and determination, ensure that the British Bahá'í community will justify the Beloved Guardian's confidence and the harvest he foresaw will be reaped.

IMPORTANT DATES

Meeting of the Hands and the National Spiritual Assemblies in Frankfurt on June 25th.

Harlech Summer School, July 9th-22nd.

Irish Summer School, August 26th—September 5th.

MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

June 16th-18th; July 28th-30th; August 18th-20th; September 15th-17th; October 13th-15th; November 17th-19th; December 15th-17th; January 19th-21st; February 16th-18th; March 16th-18th; April 13th-15th.