

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

27 Rutland Gate, London, S.W.7

Published by the National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles

No. 148

Bahá'í Year 118

October 1961

THE HARVEST IS MOUNTING HIGH

The Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land have shared with our Community their stirring letter to the Bahá'ís gathered in Sydney, "as it deals with the fundamental problem now facing the entire Bahá'í world—Teaching, and especially upon every Homefront."

August 27th, 1961.

To the Hands of the Cause, Members of the National Assemblies, Auxiliary Board Members, and believers attending the Teaching Conference on the historic occasion of the Dedication of the Mother Temple of the Antipodes.

Beloved Friends,

On this unique occasion in the life of the Antipodes, this joyous, soul-stirring occasion, the crowning glory of four decades of devoted labour in that great area of the globe, when the doors of the Mother Temple will open to pour in abundance the light of God's nascent Faith upon the expanse of the Pacific, our thoughts and our hearts turn to the architect of our world-redeeming victories. We turn to him, our most beloved Guardian in humble gratitude, in wonderment, in eager anticipation of yet mightier things to come.

The harvest is mounting high. Goal after goal of the Beloved's Plan is reached all the world over. What faithful Bahá'í heart can fail to be thrilled and to rejoice at this latest evidence of Bahá'u'lláh's all-pervading power and sustaining grace. And the more will the faithful rejoice when the goal attained is the completion and the dedication of the Mother Temple of the Antipodes. But even yet more shall the faithful heart rejoice when the import of the majestic utterance of Bahá'u'lláh is seen in its full glory. He, the Supreme Manifestation of God, wrote that should He be eclipsed on the land, His light would break upon the world from the midmost heart of the ocean.

Our edifice of light was denied to our brethren in the Cradle of our Faith. The Beloved redressed the wrong and decreed the erection of the Mother Temples of Africa and the Antipodes. The voice of our Faith was muted in the land of its birth. Its silent teacher arose clad in splendour in the heart of Africa and in the midst of the Pacific Ocean.

From the World Centre of our Faith, we greet you one and all in utmost joy on this wonderful day. And

our prayers offered at the sacred Thresholds are with you.

To each one of you comes also the deepest love of the Hands of the Faith who wish to express their profound and grateful thanks to every believer who has helped to win the victories which during the past years have fulfilled so many of the cherished hopes of our beloved Guardian.

The holding of the Teaching Conference in conjunction with the dedication of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* affords a timely opportunity for consultation between *Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum* representing the Hands at the World Centre, the Hand of the Cause in Australia, Members of Auxiliary Boards and National Spiritual Assemblies, pioneers, teachers and believers in the Antipodes.

The words which we wish to share with you during this vital teaching session upon which such a bright future depends, are the words of our beloved Guardian. If his blessed instructions become our watchword, every obstacle will be overcome, and every goal will be accomplished.

This challenge of teaching, he told us, "so insistent, and yet so glorious, faces . . . primarily the individual believer, on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community Without his support at once wholehearted and generous every measure adopted and every plan formulated is foredoomed to failure The unseen legions, standing rank upon rank, and eager to pour forth from the Kingdom on high the full measure of their celestial strength on the individual participants of this incomparably glorious Crusade, are powerless unless and until each potential Crusader decides for himself . . . to rush into the arena of service ready to sacrifice his all for the Cause he is called upon to champion."

The beloved Guardian wrote in that same year, emphasizing the vital importance of the Homefronts to the destiny of the entire Crusade. He said, "The Ten-Year Plan, if the friends will study it, comprises not only glamorous goals far afield, but extremely important ones at hand. If these (Homefront goals) are not achieved, the Crusade will have failed."

Upon the success of the Homefront campaigns, he warned us, would depend the mildness or the fierceness of the "contest that must be waged, sooner or later . . . between the rising institutions of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic divinely-appointed Order, and the exponents of obsolescent doctrines and the defenders, both secular and religious, of a corrupt and fast declining society."

The words in his final, loving, fate-laden Message to America, are surely directed to each one of the vital Homefronts: "Once again—and this time more fervently than ever before—I direct my plea to every single member of this strenuously labouring, clear-visioned, stout-hearted, spiritually endowed community, every man and woman, on whose individual efforts, resolution, self-sacrifice and perseverance the immediate destinies of the Faith of God . . . primarily depend, not to allow, through apathy, timidity, or complacency, this one remaining opportunity to be irretrievably lost. I would rather entreat each and every one of them to immortalize this approaching, fateful hour in the evolution of a world Spiritual Crusade, by a fresh consecration to their God-given Mission, coupled with an instantaneous plan of action, at once so dynamic and decisive, as to wipe out . . . with one stroke the deficiencies which have . . . bogged down the operations of the Crusade on the Homefront . . ." This, he assured them, was "the need of the present hour."

'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan appealed to us: "*Let your exertions, henceforth, increase a thousand-fold.*" Then He promised us: "*The wider its range the more striking will be the evidences of Divine Assistance.*" "*Exert yourselves,*" He called to us, "*your mission is unspeakably glorious.*"

"No reader of these words, so vibrant with promises," our beloved Guardian assured us, will be content to "rest upon" his "laurels." It would, he said, "be tantamount to a betrayal of the trust placed" upon the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. "To cut short the chain of victories that must lead it on to that supreme triumph when, *'the whole earth may be stirred and shaken'* by the results of its achievements, would shatter His (the Master's) hopes."

Therefore, beloved friends, we urge each one of you to follow our beloved Guardian's counsel and "act, and act promptly and decisively". From this very moment on, let each individual believer arise, and, with a measure of devotion and sacrifice never before attained, volunteer to pioneer to the goal-cities established by your National Assembly. Those who are unable to go themselves, let them as Bahá'u'lláh Himself suggested deputise with their resources another to go in their place. Those who are unable to pioneer, let them arise and volunteer through the proper administrative body to become travelling teachers for a week-end, a week, a month, six months or whatever time they have available from now until the end of the Crusade. Those who cannot travel and teach, let them open their homes so that every single believer in this richly blessed land may become a teacher. Let no

Bahá'í month pass without the bare minimum of at least one fireside devoted to reaching the multitudes. This was our beloved Guardian's own instruction. Let every single believer, however humble his circumstances, pour out his resources on an unprecedented scale of sacrifice so that the means to properly sustain and courageously expand the work on the Australian Homefront may be provided for, and the efforts of the National Assembly vigorously increased. Let every isolated believer strive to become a group. Let every group concentrate on becoming an Assembly. Let every Assembly consolidate its strength and numbers so that it can become legally incorporated; then let all of the believers over the number of fifteen, in these strong communities, who can possibly do so, disperse and open new centres, thus setting in motion that process so highly prized by our beloved Guardian, by which every isolated believer becomes a group, every group an Assembly, every Assembly a thriving Community, which again in turn disperses until we have generated a momentum which will lead to that mass conversion everywhere, and the land is filled with movement like the tributaries of a mighty river carrying the water of life to every corner of Australia.

Such a plan of action is clearly envisioned by our beloved Guardian in his final Message to the Bahá'í world. The fourth phase of this glorious Crusade, he said, "must be immortalized . . . by an unprecedented increase in the number of avowed supporters of the Faith, in all the continents of the globe, of every race, clime, creed and colour, and from every stratum of present-day society, coupled with a corresponding increase in the number of Bahá'í centres . . ." This final phase of the Crusade, he told us, must "witness . . . an upsurge of enthusiasm and consecration, before which every single as well as collective exploit, associated with any of the three previous phases, will pale."

We have less than two years remaining of the beloved Guardian's Crusade. During every one of the hours remaining, let us keep before us, as our guide, these words of the one who sacrificed his life that we might have such "golden" victories:

"The opportunity that presents itself at this crucial hour is precious beyond expression. The blessings destined to flow from a victory so near at hand are rich beyond example. One final surge of that indomitable spirit . . . is all that is required . . . to release the flow of these blessings."

May Bahá'u'lláh watch over us, sustain us, guide us and make us worthy of so priceless and so great a privilege.

With warmest Bahá'í love,

In the Service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND.

(Signed) A. Furútan, Hasan M. Balyuzi, Jalál Kházeh, John Ferraby, Paul Haney, A. Q. Faizí, William Sears.

A CALL TO PIONEERS

The following message is shared with us by the Hands in Haifa. Its significance to pioneers throughout the British Isles, as well as to all who are enrolled in the Army of Bahá'u'lláh, is emphasized by the fact that only fourteen local Spiritual Assemblies in Britain could be maintained by native Bahá'is. Does this fact not constitute a tangible measure for future achievement?

August 22nd, 1961.

To The Hands of the Cause in Europe and the Regional National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'is of the Iberian Peninsula, Italy and Switzerland, the Benelux Countries, Scandinavia and Finland.

Beloved Friends,

By the unfailing grace of Bahá'u'lláh, this year the necessary foundation was laid in the goal countries of Europe for the erection of independent National Assemblies, and the requisite number of local spiritual assemblies were formed. A dedicated army of pioneers came forth to occupy their posts. The services of these valiant souls are truly unforgettable and historic. The debt that we owe them is great.

The beloved Guardian encouraged the pioneers whenever possible to throw down deep roots into the soil of the country of their adoption. He told them to learn the language of the people amongst whom they laboured to propagate the Cause of God. They were to stay at their posts, persevere at all costs, and not consider their work completed until there were a sufficient number of avowed supporters of the Faith drawn from the peoples of these countries themselves to take up the torch and carry on the task. He, the beloved Guardian, stressed the supreme importance of teaching in the goal countries, and underlined the fact that the end is not the maintenance of assemblies chiefly composed of pioneers, but the emergence of assemblies formed in the main or in totality by native believers.

We feel that it is essential that the pioneers who gave us such a resounding victory last Ridván should at this juncture be lovingly and kindly reminded of the standard set by our beloved Guardian. We ask you to bring these matters to their notice in the way you consider best, and impress upon them that unless there is a great influx of native believers before next Ridván, their task will not be completed with the formation of independent National Assemblies, and that they should stay at their posts even beyond Ridván, 1963.

Assuring you of our ardent prayers on your behalf at the sacred Thresholds, and with warmest loving greetings,

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND.

(signed) Paul Haney, Hasan M. Balyuzi, John Ferraby,
Jalál Kházeh, A. Furútan, William Sears,
A. Q. Faizi.

NATIONAL COMMEMORATION OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S VISIT

*"If you could see with the eye of truth, great waves
of spirituality would be visible to you in this place."*

—'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Those who gathered together in the Kensington Library Theatre on the evening of 8th September, for the national commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the West, must have been deeply conscious of the majestic and loving presence of the sheltering Branch, Who is the Centre of God's Covenant in this Day of Fulfilment.

The auditorium was crowded with some two hundred and fifty Bahá'is and their friends from all over the British Isles. On the platform flowers had been most beautifully arranged, one vase holding blossoms brought that day from the Holy Land which had lain in the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Above hung a portrait in soft, glowing colours from which the Master looked gravely and searchingly. Below, precious archives were displayed, among them many Tablets written in His hand. The seats were soon overflowing and to make room sixty youth filled the stage behind the speakers.

Music stilled the audience and the voices of the readers penetrated all hearts in a befitting programme of readings from Bahá'í prayers and Scripture. Presiding over the meeting was Mr. John Long, Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, who read messages from those regretfully unable to come—Lord Samuel, the Honourable Lilian Montague, Mr. W. Tudor-Pole, and Mr. E. T. Hall, the only British Bahá'í now living who met 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The greetings of Professor Norman Bentwich, who had dined with the Hands, were also conveyed.

Sitting on the platform were the revered Hands of the Cause, Mr. Leroy Ioas and Mr. Hasan Balyuzi; Mrs. Sylvia Ioas, Vice-President of the International Bahá'í Council; Dr. Lotfullah Hakim, likewise a member of the Council, whose great bounty it had been to accompany the Master throughout His travels in Britain; and Mrs. Doris Holley, widow of the distinguished Hand, who had met 'Abdu'l-Bahá. After the presentation of these honoured guests, Dr. Hakim shared memories of the Master's English visit. Mr. Ioas then spoke briefly but compellingly of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Whom he had been privileged to meet in America, and of the significance to humanity of His God-given mission. The main address was a portrayal of the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Mr. Balyuzi, made memorable by countless stories which evoked His very presence. As the recollections came, so the character of this noble, tender, loving Servant of the Glory was revealed afresh. How close it seemed, that golden time when the Mirror of the Revelation of God was still among men. How many the thoughts which this uplifting and vivid account awakened.

Even after the meeting had come to a close and the last prayer was read, the magic vision remained and the friends long lingered, sharing together the spirit of enthusiasm and joy which this great occasion had quickened in them.

SUMMER SCHOOL IN NORTHERN IRELAND

August 26th - September 5th

To describe the wonderful spirit permeating the seventy friends gathered at Mourne Grange, Kilkeel, this year is a very difficult task, but we hope the reader will capture some of the true family atmosphere which was so apparent. We were blessed by brilliant sunshine and blue skies, and by a large youth contingent—thirty-four in all—who contributed their vitality, humour, and enthusiasm to every aspect of Summer School. A youth Entertainments Committee planned many happy evenings and there were mountain climbing parties and trips to the sea.

But the basis on which the School rested was the comprehensive series of lectures and study classes so carefully arranged by the Belfast Spiritual Assembly. Talks on the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Covenant, the Guardian, and the rising World Order were presented each morning with loving care, and brought forth new aspects for full discussion between the friends and the lecturers. The study classes reviewed *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, the Master's Will and Testament, the Tablet of Carmel, and the Tablets of the Divine Plan. An open forum on the World Crusade was held, and Ernest Gregory presented a stimulating visual aid depicting in graph form the growth of the Faith from 1844 to 1963.

The highlight of the School was the arrival on 3rd September of our beloved Hand of the Cause, Mr. Leroy Ioas, and Mrs. Sylvia Ioas, who came to meet the friends of Ireland and join in the celebration

of the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival in the British Isles of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on 4th September, 1911. A programme had been prepared covering many aspects of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's life and Writings, including the reading of His first public talk in the West and His Tablet of Visitation which was recited by the revered Hand. The letter addressed to the British Bahá'í Community from the Hands of the Cause in Haifa was read by Mr. Brian Townshend. As music fittingly closed the commemoration readings no one present wished to break the spirit which pervaded the room—a consciousness of the presence of the beloved Master, our bodies pulsating, our hearts beating with the great spirit of love and unity in our midst. Was there ever a British Bahá'í Summer School so blessed?

Indeed, all of the British believers were deeply aware that they themselves were the "fruits" of that visit of the Master fifty years ago and but for the tireless efforts He had made to spread the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, we should not have been enjoying such bliss and heavenly joy. That wondrous evening was consummated when Mr. Ioas recounted his memories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—stories of His love and kindness and majesty which we shall treasure in our hearts in the years ahead. We had also the bounty of a cable from the Hands in the Holy Land.

We cannot conclude this article without expressing gratitude to the Belfast Assembly for its splendid organisation of the School, and to Mrs. Grace Pritchard and Charles and Yvonne Macdonald, who worked tirelessly to serve our spiritual and physical needs and ensure our happiness in that beautiful "Kingdom of Mourne."

ROSE WADE.

Further accounts of the month-long fiftieth anniversary celebrations will appear in the next Journal.

THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW AND BRILLIANT PHASE

THE GUARDIAN'S FINAL MESSAGE TO THE BRITISH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

The British Bahá'í Community and the nation to which it belongs have been uniquely blessed from the very inception of this Revelation, by historic associations with the Founders of the Faith, the Centre of the Covenant, and the first Guardian.

This priceless heritage was greatly enriched in the last decade of Shoghi Effendi's life when, under his intimate and watchful guidance, the potentialities of the British Bahá'í Community began to flower in the signal victories of the Six-Year Plan and the Africa Project. Not only did these victories quicken the "admiration and esteem" of Bahá'ís the world around for this small but "gallant band"; above all, the good-pleasure of the beloved Guardian was lavishly bestowed on this Community, finding permanent record in the many messages he addressed to the British Bahá'ís.

These messages in their entirety constitute a legacy utterly beyond measure. In them the Guardian gradually disclosed a "noble Mission," reaching far beyond the confines of the British Isles to the furthest "peoples and

racés of a far-flung Empire." The Ten-Year Crusade is a vital stage in that mission, of tremendous significance to this Community. It constitutes a period of essential preparation, a "prelude" to that "blissful era" and the "initial epoch" of that "world-wide mission," during which "each and every one" of us is called to bear a particular share in reinforcing and broadening the "base" for these "future operations."

In the letter which is here reprinted, the last ever to come to the British Bahá'ís in the very handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, all the requirements for "total and complete victory" are fully and clearly set out. If we will but study this precious document, receive into our minds and hearts its divinely-founded guidance, and persevere each day in practical action to "forge ahead" on the "high road" marked out for us by the beloved Guardian, then this Community shall yet "astonish" the Bahá'í world and "bring to a final consummation the Mission with which it has been entrusted"

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

THE GUARDIAN'S LETTER

Haifa, Israel.

August 30th, 1957.

Dear and Valued Co-workers,

The year that has just elapsed, following upon the swift and spectacular success achieved by the firmly grounded, the progressive and alert British Bahá'í Community in the heart of the African Continent—a success attested by the triumphant emergence of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Central and East Africa—has witnessed a progress throughout the length and breadth of the Homefront, as well as in the northern islands in the neighbourhood of the British Isles, which, though not spectacular, nevertheless testifies to the earnestness, the devotion and the exemplary tenacity with which the members of this community are conducting, in all its aspects, the noble Mission entrusted to their care, and are grappling with the manifold problems involved in its prosecution.

This present and crucial year must be signalised in the annals of British Bahá'í history by a substantial measure of internal administrative consolidation and a noticeable expansion in the all-important teaching field, which will enable the members of this community,

now standing on the threshold of a new and brilliant phase in the unfoldment of their Mission in foreign fields, to reinforce and broaden the base of their future operations beyond the confines of their native land.

The splendid work achieved, in such a short space of time, in a field so distant, and amongst a race so alien in its background, outlook and customs, must, if the significance of that Mission is to be properly assessed, be regarded as only a prelude to the series of future campaigns which the privileged members of the British Bahá'í Community, residing and firmly rooted in the heart of a far-flung Commonwealth and Empire, will, if faithful to such a Mission, launch, in the years ahead, in the islands of the North Sea and of the Mediterranean, as well as in the remote territories situated in the Pacific area—campaigns which, in their range and significance, must throw into shade the feats performed in the African Continent.

To be enabled to rise to this occasion, to ensure the energetic, the systematic and uninterrupted conduct of so vast and diversified an enterprise, amidst peoples and races fully as promising, and even more remotely situated, and presenting them with a challenge more severe than any which has faced them in the past, the

small band of the ardent, the high minded, and resolute followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, charged by Destiny and by virtue of the enviable position they occupy, with so glorious a responsibility for the future awakening of the great masses, living under the shadow of, or whose governments are directly associated with, the British Crown, must needs in the years immediately ahead, acquire greater coherence, increase more rapidly in numbers, definitely emerge from obscurity, plumb greater depths of consecration, enrich its store of administrative experience, become definitely self-supporting, and associate itself more closely, through the body of its elected representatives and its future Hands, with the National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies on the European mainland and in all the other continents of the globe, and particularly with the Hands already appointed in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres.

The sooner these prime requisites, so essential for a further unfoldment of the mighty potentialities inherent in so splendid a Mission, are fulfilled, the sooner will the call be raised for the opening of a new chapter in the history of British Bahá'í achievements overseas.

The rapid multiplication of isolated centres, groups and local assemblies, particularly in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and Eire; the incorporation of firmly grounded local spiritual assemblies; a greater measure of publicity; a wider dissemination of Bahá'í literature; a quick and substantial rehabilitation of the vitally important national Fund; a firmer grasp of the essential verities of the Faith; a more profound study of its history and a deeper understanding of the genesis, the significance, the workings, and the present status and achievements of its embryonic World Order and of the Covenant to which it owes its birth and vitality—these remain the rock-bottom requirements which alone can guarantee the opening and hasten the advent, of that blissful era which every British Bahá'í heart so eagerly anticipates, and the glories of which can, at present, be but dimly discerned.

Now, of a certainty, is not the time for the members of this gallant band, so thinly spread over the length and breadth of its island home, and reaching out, so labouriously yet so determinedly to the inhospitable islands fringing its northern and western coasts, to dwell, however tentatively, on the nature of the tantalizing task awaiting them in the not distant future, or to seek to probe into its mysterious, divinely guided operation. Theirs is the duty to plod on, however tedious the nature of the work demanding their immediate attention, however formidable the obstacles involved in its proper execution, however prolonged the effort which its success necessitates, until the signs

of its ultimate consummation, heralding the launching of what is sure to be the most spectacular phase of their Mission, are clearly discerned.

A responsibility, at once colossal and highly challenging, faces not only the body of the elected representatives of this Community, but each and every one of its members. As the world spiritual Crusade, to the successful prosecution of which the British followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have, singly and collectively, so markedly contributed, approaches its mid-point, the evidences of this indispensable quickening of the tempo of Bahá'í activity all over the British Isles and the islands situated in their neighbourhood and far beyond their confines, must become more manifest and rapidly multiply. The admiration and esteem in which a community, relatively small in numbers, strictly limited in resources, yet capable of such solid and enduring achievements, is held by its sister and daughter communities in every continent of the globe, far from declining must be further enhanced. The historic process originated as far back as the year which witnessed the formation of the Six-Year Plan on the occasion of 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 the Centenary of the Báb's Martyrdom in Tabriz, 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 Tíhrán—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, and give the signal for the inauguration, by those who have so spontaneously set this process in motion, more than a decade ago, of a blissful era designed to carry the chief builders of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Order, throughout the unnumbered, the diversified and widely scattered Dependencies of the British Crown, to still greater heights of achievements in the service and for the glory of His Faith.

May they, as they forge ahead along the high road leading to ultimate, total and complete victory, receive as their daily sustenance, a still fuller measure of the abounding grace, promised to the believers of an earlier generation by the Centre of the Covenant, the Author of the Divine Plan, Himself, on the occasion of His twice-repeated visit to their shores, and which has been unfailingly vouchsafed to themselves, in the course of over three decades, since the birth of the Formative Age of the Faith and the rise of its Administrative Order in their homeland.

SHOGHI.

NOTE: The friends are urged to preserve this message and to refer to it often during these final months of the World Crusade.