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Message from **THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE** *to the Bahá'ís of East and West*

Dearly beloved Friends,

The Community of the Most Great Name, East and West, North and South, can look back over the remarkable achievements of the past twelve months with profound thankfulness and from them draw fresh courage and determination to arise unitedly for one last supreme effort which will enable us to crown with victory the mighty Global Plan to be consummated in Ridván, 1963, by the celebration of the Most Great Jubilee of our Faith—the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh. The hearts and thoughts of all His followers now turn to the last eighteen months of our dearly beloved Guardian's World Crusade. What treasures will we proudly lay at his feet on that occasion. What rejoicing will be ours when we can say to him: see, we were faithful to our trust, as much as lay within our power, this did we perform according to the sacred Plan you gave us!

After the passage of the most fruitful and stirring decade the Formative Age of our Faith has as yet witnessed, the International Bahá'í Council has passed into the final stage of its evolution and efflorescence into the Universal House of Justice through its election by all the members of the National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world; the Council is now regularly meeting in the Holy Land and discharging those duties laid down for it by Shoghi Effendi himself. The vast process of mass conversion, specified by him as one of the major objectives of the second half of the World Crusade, is beginning to take place on a large scale in Asia, South America, and the Pacific Area, and is rapidly increasing in momentum in Africa. Last Ridván, on the number of local assemblies specified by him as Crusade goals, no less than twenty-one independent National Spiritual Assemblies were successfully founded, an historic act which will be followed next Ridván by the establishment on an equally firm foundation of eleven European National Bodies and the first National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ceylon. The Mother Temples of both Africa and the Antipodes have been formally opened for public worship and are already redounding to the fame of the Cause of God throughout the entire world. The Mashriqu'l-Adhikár of Europe is slowly rising in

the heart of that continent so sorely in need of the regenerating grace of Bahá'u'lláh. The divine assistance, so repeatedly promised to us in the teachings, has been vouchsafed to us in a truly miraculous manner, plain for all to see, since the Bahá'í World was shaken by the loss of its beloved Guardian.

It is therefore with hopeful hearts that the Hands of the Cause can point out to their fellow-believers those remaining milestones we must race to pass ere our great and unique opportunity for service in the Guardian's own Crusade is lost to us forever. In the course of our lengthy consultations during this fifth gathering of the Hands of the Cause held in Bahji, in the shadow of the Shrine of the supreme Manifestation of God Himself, it has been abundantly clear what our major duties still are, where we must, one and all, concentrate our efforts and resources, which are the battle fronts we must deploy our forces upon, if victory is to be won—that victory must and shall be ours no loyal Bahá'í heart can doubt for a single instant.

Though multifarious tasks still remain to be accomplished in various fields of Bahá'í activity, three supremely important duties face us during the last eighteen months of the World Crusade, duties which, should we fail in any one of them, may well have repercussions on the evolution of not only the present National Bahá'í Communities, but indeed the spiritual and material welfare of mankind itself for generations to come.

The first of these is to bring the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to the waiting masses at this critical time, this unique juncture in human history, when the hearts of so many of the less privileged peoples of the world are ready to receive His Message, and to be enrolled under His banner "in troops" as foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The second is to win the remaining Homefront goals in five of those original twelve stalwart, long-established, much-loved National Communities which, at the inception of the Ten-Year Plan, received the unique and priceless honour of having the spiritual conquest of no less than an entire planet entrusted to their care. Wherever the army of Bahá'u'lláh was free

to march, in their totality, and with the greatest distinction, these global goals have been won. It is inconceivable that the Homefront goals, given to them at the same time and forming an integral part of the World Crusade, should not also be triumphantly achieved. The third is undoubtedly the pivotal one at this point of the Crusade and comprises the heavy, pressing, inescapable duty of every single believer to assist in providing an uninterrupted and greatly amplified flow of that "life blood" of material resources without which construction of the Mother Temple of Europe and other vast undertakings now gaining momentum all over the world, in old and new Bahá'í communities alike, will either cease to go forward, come to a standstill or, in important areas of mass conversion, stand in danger of losing the precious ground won through so much heroic effort and sacrifice. There can be no doubt that the discharge of these three paramount duties at this time can alone provide a suitably strong and unshakable foundation for the future activities of that glorious and august institution, so soon to be elected, Bahá'u'lláh's long anticipated Universal House of Justice.

Last year the Hands of the Faith called upon the believers to observe a year of austerity in order to concentrate the resources of the followers of this infant but infinitely strong and dynamic Faith upon attaining the remaining objectives of the Ten-Year Plan. It has become apparent that a far greater effort must be made during the next eighteen months, and that the austerity and self-sacrifice we voluntarily imposed upon ourselves must continue and be intensified until every goal is won, every prize protected, every achievement maintained. In the words of the beloved Guardian, "a pouring out of substance, not only by those of limited means, but by the richest and wealthiest, in a degree involving the truest sacrifice," is needed.

The financial requirements of the Cause at this critical hour call, not only for the offering of a greater proportion of the income of every loyal believer, but also for the sacrifice of capital in such a manner that no Bahá'í will have cause for regret that he or she failed to respond to the Guardian's plea "unhesitatingly, to place, each according to his circumstances, his share on the altar of Bahá'í sacrifice, lest, on a sudden, unforeseen calamities rob them of a considerable portion of the earthly things they have amassed."

The attention of the friends should be called at this time to the words of Shoghi Effendi concerning the purpose and significance of the International Fund, direct contributions to which he indicated were a spiritual obligation of every local and National Assembly and every believer. Participation of individuals through "contributions directly transmitted to the Holy Land" was, he said, "imperative and beyond the scope of the jurisdiction of National and local Assemblies." Bearing in mind the increasing scale of the world-wide activities which must be sustained from the International Fund, we ask the friends to ponder these words and each, in his own way, respond to this plea. Undoubtedly one penny, freely and lovingly laid

on the altar of sacrifice now, for the successful conclusion of this divinely-conceived Plan, will be equal to thousands in the future.

The paramount task of the present hour is to teach the Cause of God. "In these days," wrote the incomparable Master in His Will and Testament, "the most important of all things is the guidance of the nations and the peoples of the world. Teaching the Cause is of utmost importance for it is the head corner-stone of the foundation itself." "O, that I could travel," He wrote, "even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and raising the call of Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it."

The wings of time are beating at our door as one of the most momentous epochs in the entire range of Bahá'í history swiftly moves to its close. The impelling call of our beloved Guardian, resounding in the very last message of his life, is but partially answered. "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" is the goal inscribed by his unerring pen.

The effort now required of us is imperative and inescapable, and must indeed be prodigious. Nothing less than complete, total dedication will suffice. In this mighty, life-offering task every Bahá'í, no matter who he is or where he dwells, has a share and a worthy part to play. Now is the moment for all the administrative agencies of our Faith to order their work in such fashion as to put teaching at the forefront of all their activities, and to exclude any plan which is not relevant to the purposes of our Crusade.

If the world situation has so far prevented us from planting the Banner of Bahá'u'lláh in certain virgin territories, there can be no possible excuse for failure on such vital Homefronts as those of the United States, Canada, Australia, Britain and Germany. These five tried and tested National Communities, each to a greater or lesser degree, are still faced by the urgent necessity of increasing the number of their assemblies to that total set for them by Shoghi Effendi himself. Let every single believer, in those countries where at present the status of these internal goals is a cause of grave concern to the entire Bahá'í World, recall the words of the Guardian in one of his last letters to the American Bahá'ís dated 21st September, 1957, words applicable not only to them but to all other Bahá'ís whose Homefronts constitute a threat to the total success of the Crusade: "The fourth phase of the Ten-Year Plan" . . . he wrote, "must witness . . . on every Homefront, and particularly within the confines of the American homeland, this same spiritual reinvigoration, administrative expansion and material replenishment constituting the triple facets of a task that can brook no further delay . . ." He urged the friends to rescue "while there is yet time, their Homefront from the precarious position in which it finds itself . . . not to allow, through

apathy, timidity or complacency, this one remaining opportunity to be irretrievably lost." He said, "I would entreat each and every one of them" through fresh consecration and "dynamic and decisive" action "to wipe out . . . with one stroke the deficiencies which have, to no small extent, bogged down the operations of the Crusade on the Homefront." In that same message he warned that the Plan was suffering from these vital deficiencies "which, if not speedily and fundamentally remedied, will not only mutilate the Plan itself, but jeopardize the prizes won so laboriously since its inauguration."

There can be no doubt that if each individual believer in these national communities, where the goals are not yet won, will place his whole trust in God, if he will deeply search his heart and question whether he may not be the one privileged, indeed needed, to make the sacrifice of moving to one of those centres where a local Assembly must be established, if he will call to mind the admonition of Bahá'u'lláh to depute one in his stead if he is not himself able to go forth and teach, if he will rise to higher levels of sacrifice in this hour of great need on the Homefronts, the victory will be assured.

Not alone in the arena of teaching, but also in the pioneering field, the opportunities and high rewards that now beckon every Bahá'í are indeed priceless. They who have gone forth in His Name to the goal towns on the Homefronts, or to distant lands where the Banner of Bahá'u'lláh had to be implanted or to be kept waving, have given such victories to the Cause of God which down the corridors of time will reverberate to His glory, and which succeeding generations shall remember with pride and gratitude. They are now painstakingly and diligently buttressing the pillars on which shall soon be laid the splendid dome of God's Universal House of Justice.

No consideration of needs in the teaching field at the present time can leave out that majestic theme of mass conversion which the Guardian introduced into his Global Crusade upon the eve of his departure from this world, and which he stated must immortalize the second half of this Plan, which itself is but a stage in the unfoldment of that Divine Plan which he characterized as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "Mandate," His "world-encircling Plan," "the Master Plan of the appointed Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant."

The pre-eminent task of teaching the Faith to the multitudes is "a task", the Guardian wrote, "so dear to the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, at once so sacred, so fundamental, and so urgent, primarily involving and challenging every single individual"; it is, he said, "the bedrock on which the solidity and stability of the multiplying institutions of a rising Order must rest."

In the last months of Shoghi Effendi's precious life he encouraged the National Assemblies, and all those engaged in the teaching work, to make a far greater effort to bring about this portentous process of converting the masses. He urged them to simplify their methods of teaching and enrolling new believers, to

remove obstacles from the path of those hungering for the Word of God. He said the fundamental thing was to plant in the heart of the seeker the knowledge that the Promised One had come, that Bahá'u'lláh was God's Divine Messenger for this day, and to encourage him to accept His station and embrace His Faith. "The essential thing," he wrote, "is that the candidate for enrolment should believe in his heart in the truth of Bahá'u'lláh. Whether he is literate or illiterate, informed of all the Teachings or not, is beside the point entirely. When the spark of faith exists, the essential ingredient is there, and gradually everything else can be added unto it . . ." He pointed out that "those responsible for accepting new enrolments must just be sure of one thing—that the heart of the applicant has been touched with the spirit of the Faith. Everything else can be built on this foundation gradually."

He promised us that once this spirit of mass conversion is released in the world, its momentum will increase mysteriously in every part of the planet. "As the Cause spreads all over the world," he assured us, "the rate of acceleration increases too, and new centres in Africa, in some mysterious way, have spiritual repercussions which aid in forming new centres elsewhere." May not Africa have ignited Indonesia which fired Bolivia which in turn set ablaze India? That the beloved Guardian's words have already found fulfilment is evident in the astounding flood of teaching victories achieved this year, particularly in India, where more than eight thousand have entered the tabernacle of Bahá'u'lláh in the past eight months.

If every National Assembly, every local Assembly and every individual believer will arise at this hour, and seize with both hands this God-given opportunity, we can hasten that joyous day foretold in the words of our beloved Guardian when he launched this glorious Global Crusade, a day when "the light of God's triumphant Faith, shining in all its power and glory, will have suffused and enveloped the entire planet."

"The purpose of the new National Assemblies in Africa, and the purpose of any administrative body," he wrote to one of these African Assemblies on 8th August, 1957, "is to carry the Message to the people and enlist the sincere under the Banner of this Faith. Your Assembly must never lose sight of this for a moment, and must go on courageously expanding the membership of the communities under your jurisdiction, and gradually educating the friends in both the teachings and the administration. Nothing could be more tragic than if the establishment of these great administrative bodies should stifle or bog down the teaching work. The early believers both in the East and the West, we must remember, knew practically nothing compared to what the average Bahá'í knows about his Faith nowadays, yet they were the ones who shed their blood, the ones who arose and said, 'I believe', requiring no proof, and often never having read a single word of the Teachings."

Shoghi Effendi made it unmistakably clear that his words did not apply to Africa alone, for in another

of his letters we find it clearly stated that, "What has been achieved in Africa sets an example to be followed by Bahá'ís everywhere The Guardian sees no reason why such victories should not be achieved in all parts of the world." As early as 1938, in a letter to the American National Assembly, in which he stressed the "high privilege of local Assemblies" in facilitating the admission of new believers, he wrote: "To them I wish particularly to appeal . . . to desist from insisting too rigidly on the minor observances and beliefs, which might prove a stumbling block in the way of any sincere applicant, whose eager desire is to enlist under the Banner of Bahá'u'lláh." He was still making this same appeal towards the end of his life: ". . . the friends should be very careful not to place hindrances in the way of those who wish to accept the Faith. If we make the requirements too rigorous, we will cool off the initial enthusiasm, rebuff the hearts, and cease to expand rapidly."

Keenly aware of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words that: "The Hands of the Cause of God must spend all their time in teaching. Ere long will the assistance of the Heavenly Kingdom be manifest beyond all expectations and the words 'you will see people enter the Religion of God troop upon troop' be realized," we have decided that all the Hands, including those resident in the Holy Land, will devote as much of their time as possible to accelerating the process of mass conversion on the one hand, and on the other, in fulfilment of the Guardian's instructions, to meeting frequently with various National Assemblies in order to deliberate with them on ways and means of winning the goals of the Crusade.

The tasks facing the institution of the Hands and the members of its Teaching and Protection Boards grow in weight as the Ten-Year Plan advances. Once again we appeal to the members of these Boards to be more mindful of the duties given them by their beloved Guardian and to devote their hearts, their energies and their time to the work he outlined for them. To the degree to which each Hand and each Board member concentrates on his own specific task will the work of our glorious Faith speedily attain those victories which alone can bring the World Crusade to a triumphal end.

On the occasion of the election of the eleven new European National Spiritual Assemblies next Ridván six of the Hands of the Faith will be present as follows: Italy and Switzerland, Ugo Giachery; Belgium and Luxembourg, Dr. 'Alí Muhammad Varghá; Holland and Denmark, Hasan Balyuzi; Sweden and Finland, Adelbert Mühlischlegel; Spain and Portugal, Paul Haney; Norway, John Ferraby, who will also attend the British Bahá'í Convention. The election of the new National Spiritual Assembly of Ceylon will be attended by Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í.

In addition to these activities, and after careful consideration of the over-all needs of the teaching work at this time in various continents, it has been decided that in view of the delicate state of health of Músá

Banání which prevents him from moving about, John Robarts will remain a Hand of the Cause in Africa. William Sears will devote as much time as possible to the work in the Western Hemisphere, to which he will proceed in the near future. Rahmat'u'lláh Muhájir, in view of the presence of both John Robarts and Enoch Olinga in Africa, will devote his time to the Asian and Pacific teaching fields, proceeding shortly on a lengthy tour which will take him as far as the islands of the South Pacific, later returning to the South East Asian field which is now being swept by a mighty wave of enthusiasm for the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and where the indigenous peoples are entering the Faith in great numbers.

Abu'l Qasim Faizí will leave next Spring to spend several months in the most promising mass conversion areas of Latin America, whilst Jalál Kházeh plans shortly a prolonged and extensive trip to the new centres in India where the people are truly entering the Faith in troops. 'Alí Akbar Furútan and Leroy Ioas will both spend time assisting the European Homefronts, the former in the near future, the latter during the summer months. All the Continental Hands have pledged themselves to travel as extensively as possible to promote the teaching and consolidation work in their areas.

With the erection in 1962 of twelve more future pillars of that supreme legislative Body of the Bahá'í World, a firm foundation will have been laid for the election of "that Universal House of Justice which," Shoghi Effendi stated, "as its title implies, is to be the exponent and guardian of that Divine Justice which can alone insure the security of, and establish the reign of law and order in, a strangely disordered world."

We are now able to envisage the steps that must still be taken before that "Ark" referred to in Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic Tablet of Carmel shall come into being, an ark whose dwellers, the Guardian told us, "are the men of the Supreme House of Justice which, in conformity with the exact provisions of the Will and Testament of the Centre of the mighty Covenant, is the Body which should legislate on laws not explicitly revealed in the text. In this Dispensation these laws are destined to flow from this holy Mountain, even as in the Mosaic Dispensation the law of God was promulgated from Zion."

The Chief Stewards of the Faith are therefore calling a convention in the Holy Land for the election of the Universal House of Justice on the first, second and third days of Ridván, 1963. The members of all National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies elected by the Bahá'ís in Ridván, 1962, will, in conformity with the teachings, constitute the electoral body empowered to vote for this crowning unit of the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, upon whose deliberations the unique bounty of receiving divine inspiration has been bestowed, and whose decisions are infallibly guided by both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

After long and conscientious consideration of the needs of the present hour and the writings of our

dearly-loved Guardian, the following decision has been reached: All male voting members throughout the Bahá'í World are eligible for election to the Universal House of Justice. The Hands of the Cause do not limit the freedom of the electors. However, as they have been given the explicit duties of guarding over the security and insuring the propagation of the Faith, they ask the electors to leave them free at this time to discharge their duties. When that supreme and infallible Body has been elected it will decide on all matters concerning its own membership.

At a later date, and in ample time for each qualified elector of the Universal House of Justice to cast his or her vote, a detailed election call, as well as ballots for those unable to attend the international convention in the Holy Land will be issued from the World Centre.

Owing to conditions affecting the Cause which still prevail in the Middle East, it has become evident that it is not possible to hold the World Congress in Baghdád in 1963, on the occasion of the world-wide celebrations of the "Most Great Jubilee," the Centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in the Garden of Ridván. Prolonged investigations have shown us that to make plans at this time for it to take place there is out of the question. We have therefore decided that this first World Congress, the last of the great gatherings of the Bahá'ís to be summoned by Shoghi Effendi, which constitutes the joyous consummation of ten years of unprecedented work and achievement, shall be held in London, the city which enshrines his infinitely precious remains, on the 28th, 29th and 30th of April and the 1st and 2nd of May, 1963, a period which includes the 9th and 12th days of Ridván. In taking this decision we have been comforted by the knowledge that he himself, in view of the situation in this part of the world, expressed towards the end of his life serious doubts as to whether it would be possible to hold the Congress in Baghdád. It must be a consolation to every believer who plans to be present on this unique occasion to know that he will be able to visit the grave of Shoghi Effendi and offer his prayers there as the last, majestic, glorious, globe-conquering Plan of his Guardian draws to its close.

Because of the dates set for the election of the Universal House of Justice and the World Congress—both events of unique historic importance in this century, and which must perforce take place during the Ridván period—it has been decided to hold the elections of all National Spiritual Assemblies for the Bahá'í year 120 on the week-end beginning 23rd May, 1963. In making this decision we have been guided by the fact that the beloved Guardian himself permitted, in special rare circumstances, the annual conventions to be held outside the Ridván period.

The challenge confronting the standard-bearers of Bahá'u'lláh in every continent of the globe, in every

field of Bahá'í activity, in these swiftly passing hours is unprecedented; the opportunities lying within their reach are of such magnitude that only future generations can comprehend their glory and their significance in the majestic unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's World-Redeeming Order.

Not many years have passed since the beloved Guardian addressed to the Bahá'í World the following pregnant words, full of hope, full of longing, full of love and full of warning. We do well to recall them now when we face our last possible chance to consummate his Plan and to consolidate the foundations of the Universal House of Justice: "I appeal, as I close this review of the superb feats already accomplished, in the course of so many campaigns, by the heroic band of the warriors of Bahá'u'lláh, battling in His Name and by His aid for the purification, the unification and the spiritualization of a morally and spiritually bankrupt society, now hovering on the brink of self-destruction, for a renewed dedication, at this critical hour in the fortunes of mankind, on the part of the entire company of my spiritual brethren in every continent of the globe, to the high ideals of the Cause they have espoused, as well as to the immediate accomplishment of the goals of the Crusade on which they have embarked, be they in active service or not, of either sex, young as well as old, rich or poor, whether veteran or newly enrolled."

He who was the Sign of God on Earth has assured us that "the invisible hosts of the Abhá Kingdom are arrayed and ready to rush forth and insure the triumph of every stout-hearted and persevering herald of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh," and that "God's own Plan has been set in motion. It is gathering momentum with every passing day. The powers of heaven and earth mysteriously assist in its execution. Such an opportunity is irreplaceable. Let the doubter arise and himself verify the truth of such assertions. To try, to persevere, is to insure ultimate and complete victory."

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

Rúhíyyih	A. Furútan
Amelia Collins	Zikr-u'lláh Khádem
Leroy Ioas	William Sears
Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í	John Robarts
Tarazu'lláh Samandari	John Ferraby
Ugo Giachery	Jalál Kházeh
Adelbert Mühlischlegel	Enoch Olinga
Hasan Balyuzi	Agnes B. Alexander
Paul E. Haney	H. Collis Featherstone
A. Q. Faizí	'Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir
Hermann Grossmann	

Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh
Bahjí, 'Akká, Israel
5th November, 1961

CABLES FROM HAIFA TO THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

"Share joyous news Dedication Mother Temple Antipodes presence 'Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm representatives twenty countries Bahá'í World Community. Historic occasion marks attainment second stage beloved Guardian's three-fold enterprise designed establish first Sacred Houses Worship African Continent, Australasia, Europe. Call upon friends everywhere join prayers praise thanksgiving Bahá'u'lláh highly significant victory."

(Signed) Handsfaith.

19th September, 1961.

"Mindful Beloved Guardian's emphasis (on) pre-eminent sacred task (of) teaching Faith multitudes and recent evidence (of) mounting worldwide flood enrollments, urge Believers (on) occasion Fortieth Anniversary Ascension Master (to) join us ardent prayers (for) acceleration process mass conversion (and) resolve dedicate individual efforts (to) assure resounding victories remaining months Holy Crusade."

(Signed) Handsfaith.

8th November, 1961.

TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES

4th September, 1961.

Dearly-loved Friends,

It is with the greatest joy and with a deep sense of gratitude that we send you the greetings of the World Centre on this happy and historic occasion.

Fifty years to this day, the beloved Master arrived at your shores. On Britain He conferred the unique honour of choosing its capital city to be the scene of His first public appearance before a Western audience. The significance of that event cannot be over-estimated. Fifteen months later 'Abdu'l-Bahá once again blessed your country with His Presence.

In the course of your Six-Year Plan which set your Community on the road to its high destiny, and whilst you stood at the threshold of the Ten-Year Crusade, our beloved Guardian called to your mind the bounties which 'Abdu'l-Bahá showered on you. These were His words to you in His letter of 25th June, 1953:

"He, Who, in His infinite love and mercy called into being this Community . . . Who tenderly and vigilantly nursed it and guided its footsteps in the early years of its infancy, Who twice conferred upon it the inestimable blessings of personal contact with its members, Who sustained, from His station on high, its development in the course of no less than two decades, within the framework of a rising Adminis-

trative Order, Who enabled it to expand and consolidate itself within its island home, Who launched it, subsequently, on its mission overseas, will, if its members prove themselves worthy of His Trust, continue to shower His manifold blessings upon them, at this hour of their greatest need, and will enable them to traverse, speedily and successfully the second and momentous stage in the progressive unfoldment of that same Mission."

From those to whom much is given, much is expected.

While we greet you with the utmost joy and send you our felicitations on this blissful anniversary, we beseech that loving and beloved Master to evermore guide your steps and buttress your efforts, and pray at the sacred Thresholds that this great occasion may give you added vigour and fresh impetus to fulfil all the expectations of our beloved Guardian, and to accomplish such feats which in His words shall astonish the whole Bahá'í world.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND.

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

NEWS LETTER

ISSUED FROM THE WORLD CENTRE
BY THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL

Dear Friends,

This year has witnessed a historic occurrence, the dedication of two Bahá'í Temples within nine months of one another. This fact alone demonstrates the astonishing acceleration in the growth of the Faith in recent years. The dedication of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Sydney on the weekend of 15th/17th September was attended by the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, who was accompanied by Miss Jessie Revell, the Treasurer of the International Council, and Mr. Collis Featherstone. The raising of this building not only completes another goal of the Crusade but also marks the completion of the second stage of that "ambitious three-fold enterprise, designed to compensate for the disabilities suffered by the sorely-tried Community of the followers of His (Bahá'u'lláh's) Faith in the land of His birth". Four hundred Bahá'ís from twenty countries were present at the dedication, and 1,800 people attended the two public services. There was extensive publicity for the occasion, adding to that which the Temple had already attracted during the course of building, and there is no doubt of the potency that this silent teacher will evince in the immediate future. In other countries, too, this event has attracted attention; in Pakistan the occasion was used to hold a reception to mark the dedication, which was attended by ten members of the diplomatic corps and one hundred officials and other guests.

This year is also memorable as being the fiftieth anniversary of the Master's first visit to the western world. He sailed from Egypt on 11th August, 1911, on the S.S. "Corsica" bound for Marseilles, and after a brief stay in Thonon-les-Bains, proceeded to London where He arrived on 4th September. There He made His first address to a western audience in the City Temple, was received by the Lord Mayor in the Mansion House, and spoke at evening service in the Church of St. John the Divine, Westminster. "Whilst He sojourned in England," our beloved Guardian writes, "the house placed at His disposal in Cadogan Gardens became a veritable mecca to all sorts and conditions of men, thronging to visit the Prisoner of 'Akká Who had chosen their great city as the first scene of His labours in the West."

On 4th September this year the Bahá'ís of the British Isles began a series of gatherings to commemorate this event of supreme importance in the history of their islands. The Hands of the Cause, Mr. Leroy Ioas and Mr. Hasan Balyuzi, spoke at a public meeting in London on 8th September, which was also attended by Mrs. Sylvia Ioas, Vice-President of the International Bahá'í Council, and Dr. Lotfullah Hakim, one of the members of the Council, who was in England during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit. Gradually as these next two

years pass, so the wave of celebrations will sweep across the western world in the wake of the Master's epoch-making journeys.

The seeds then sown by the Master's hand in the soil of Europe are now springing up, and in the heart of that continent the third stage of the "three-fold enterprise," of which the Kampala and Sydney Temples are the first two stages, is advancing steadily on the outskirts of Frankfurt. On 8th August the erection of the bottom sections of the dome ribs was begun, and by the 20th seven sections were erected and eleven lay ready for erection, the remaining nine still being in preparation. Each of these bottom sections is six metres high and weighs seven tons; the middle sections will be twelve metres high and will weigh about fourteen tons.

In the same city a continental conference called by the Hands of the Cause for Europe was held on 23rd/25th June. This was the latest of a regular series that have been held twice to thrice a year and have proved of immense value to the work on that continent and to the drawing together of its Bahá'ís. This conference had particular cause for joy, being held so shortly after the winning of all the local Assembly goals in Europe. The first day was a meeting of the Hands only, on the second they consulted with their Auxiliary Board members, and on the third day these were joined by members of the eight European National Spiritual Assemblies. To all who have attended these conferences, the experience of a number of Bahá'í institutions consulting together in this way for the service of the Cause and their mutual help, is unforgettably moving.

In the far north of Europe a valiant pioneer has gone to live among the Lapps in northern Sweden, and the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh in Spitzbergen and his companion are once again preparing for their long dark winter vigil in that desolate outpost. A letter from there last April reported: "No less than two people have sought accommodation with us"—in their small hut—"in order to get away from the town. During the winter we had two visits of dog teams; the first arrived at 3 a.m. and left at 10 a.m., sleeping the hours in between, while the second did almost the same, and that is the entire record of our contact with other human beings for the winter '60-'61!"

On the other side of the North Pole, in the Yukon, Northern Canada, the work among the Indians is still developing. A letter from two pioneers, who had recently been on pilgrimage, reports: "Since our return we are overjoyed to report twelve new declarations (including eleven Indian) as well as evidence of interest from many others. Six Bahá'ís (including four Indians) from the Yukon attended the Alaska Bahá'í Summer School and had the wonderful privilege of meeting and hearing the Hand of the Cause, Zikru'lláh

Khádem. His visit in the Yukon on 11th and 12th July was a most outstanding event in the lives of all the Yukon Bahá'ís." During Mr. Khádem's visit one new believer declared, and ten more people indicated they wanted to be Bahá'ís. On 2nd/4th September the Fourth Annual Yukon Conference was held.

In Bolivia 650 new believers have joined the Faith in the past two months, and the teaching work among the Indians is spreading to neighbouring countries. In Carabuela, Ecuador, we have four new Indian believers; this is the third Indian village to be conquered for the Faith since the Convention, and already they have surpassed the total number who accepted the Faith in Ecuador during the whole of the past year.

From Central and East Africa comes the thrilling news of the conversion of some hundred pygmies to the Faith. Kenya now has approximately 4,000 believers, having raised the number of its L.S.A.s this year by 23 to a total of 134. The Honolulu community in the Pacific Ocean has doubled its numbers in a single year. Cuba not only held a triumphant National Convention and elected a dedicated National Spiritual Assembly, but has now organised its first historic summer school.

The rapid spread of the Faith in India continues, and a recent letter reports: "These new believers are the same as those souls about whom we read in the History of the Cause. Though they are three or four months old in the Cause they are quite deep in understanding and firm and steadfast in faith. Though they know very little reading and writing, their hearts are fountainheads of reasoning and proofs. It seems that they have studied teaching for long years In the mornings we had regular classes and at nights general meetings where we answered questions, debated, sang songs and chanted prayers. During this short lapse of time they have composed more than twenty poems. I believe they are so sweet that we do not have their equal in the whole of the Bahá'í world There is a boy of ten years old. He has already memorized many prayers and during the whole fifteen days' classes never ceased to listen or to write. These people are religious and spiritual in their essence and they themselves said that like unto gold they must glitter in the fire of tests which surely would appear on their paths It was 11.30 and before the closing prayer was chanted one of them got up and in the most poetic way, addressed us a farewell speech I can repeat some of the words he said: 'Dear teacher, your departure from our midst creates a pain in our hearts but it is a pleasant pain, because thus we understand that you came by yourselves and you gave us freely of the treasures you had so that we in our turn give it to our children and the generations to come.'"

In Australia the first Aboriginal Bahá'í, Mr. Fred Murray, made his declaration following a study and social weekend held at Murray Bridge on 10th/11th June.

In the last News Letter we mentioned antagonism towards the Faith from ministers of religion in Australia; now comes the significant and joyful news of the declaration of Mr. Ronald J. Parsons of Calgary, Canada, who was a minister of the United Church of Canada. Also we hear of a meeting in one eastern country where a local Muslim religious leader "praised the teachings of the Cause and recommended all the people to have a free and complete investigation of the Bahá'í Faith. Should they desire, they may accept it as their own religion"

Here in the Holy Land it was found possible during July to resume the work of furnishing and equipping the new Archives Building. Led and inspired by the indefatigable energy of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, a band of the believers resident here began the task of moving cabinets, lining them with beautiful cloths, stencilling them with exquisite Japanese designs, and all the other multitude of little details that are required to ensure that a befitting setting is prepared for the infinitely precious objects which are preserved here. During the progress of the work the revered Hand, Mr. Hasan Balyuzi, came from England to assist Rúhíyyih Khánum with the preliminary arrangement of the Archives themselves. All about us as we worked were objects recalling with ineffable poignancy the lives and sufferings of the Central Figures of our Faith and those holy souls who served Them with such devotion: a portion of the blood-stained shirt of the Báb; locks of the flowing black hair of Bahá'u'lláh, lovingly preserved by the Greatest Holy Leaf; the sword of Mullá Husayn; and such uniquely precious documents as the original Tablets to the Letters of the Living, and Tablets in Bahá'u'lláh's own hand addressed to the Most Great Branch.

As the work progressed and the various cabinets, pictures and ornaments were assembled and arranged in the breathtakingly beautiful Archives Building, we were struck again and again by the manner in which each article preserved or bought by the beloved Guardian for this room seemed to fit into its own special place, as if he could have had the whole finished effect in mind when he was gathering them. It is with humble gratitude to him that we can see at last the fulfilment of that vision which he had from the outset of the Crusade, and for the first time, this winter, and always thereafter, the pilgrims will thus be able to view the sacred Archives in the glorious setting which Shoghi Effendi had designed and destined for them.

INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL.

World Centre of the Faith.

30th September, 1961.