

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. 160

July, 1964

ON THE THRESHOLD OF ANOTHER EPOCH

(Message from the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land.)

To All National and Regional Assemblies.

Beloved Friends :

A year ago, with infinite joy, the Bahá'ís all over the world were looking forward to the crowning days of our beloved Guardian's Crusade. It had been the expectation of every believer that when the glorious Centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh dawned our beloved Guardian would be watching over us, giving us new inspiration, praising us for the great exploits we had carried out during his Ten Year Plan, and rewarding us for the innumerable victories won in the name of Bahá'u'lláh. Unexpectedly, through the inscrutable decrees of Providence, our beloved Shoghi Effendi was removed from our midst in the middle of his great Crusade.

No one dreamed in those dark days of 1957, that with such distinction, such steadfastness, such utter consecration of heart, the believers in the East and the West would be able to bring his work to such glorious fruition in 1963. We knew that we would be given the strength to cling to the hem of Bahá'u'lláh's robe, to follow in His path and believe in His name, but we did not anticipate that we would be able to consummate the Plan given us by Shoghi Effendi and carry forward the grand design of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to such a victory as the Bahá'ís of the world witnessed during the Riqdán period of last year.

In addition to all the other blessings showered upon the people of Bahá we were graced, through the mercy of God, by being able to bring into being that Supreme Body of the Bahá'í world, the Universal House of Justice, promised in the Holy Texts to be infallibly guided by the Twin Manifestations of God. We all remember, with feelings of the deepest emotion, how last April that august Body was elected by the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world.

Now we stand on the threshold of another epoch in the unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's design for carrying the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to all the peoples of the world and establishing His Order throughout the entire planet ; an epoch during which, in the words of the beloved Guardian, the Universal House of Justice will "launch enterprises embracing the whole Bahá'í world." The hearts of the believers are turned eagerly towards this coming Riqdán period, waiting to hear the details of the great Nine Year Teaching and Consolidation Plan which will be announced at the Annual Conventions by that supreme and infallibly guided body.

As we turn our faces towards the future, let us remember that this new Plan, like all previous Plans, is essentially the Plan of Bahá'u'lláh Himself. He is the victorious King, Who has come to the world to establish His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. It was from His Teachings that the Master gleaned the principles and inspiration for His Tablets of the Divine Plan, which He revealed to the Bahá'ís of North America during some of the darkest days of His life at the end of the first World War. It was these Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that stimulated and inspired our beloved Guardian to give to that privileged Community—the champion builders of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order—two Seven Year Plans, and also other similar Plans to various National Communities. These were followed by the first great global Crusade aimed at the spiritual conquest of the planet by the entire army of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh.

During the course of these Plans the banner of the Faith was planted in the vast majority of the sovereign states, territories, islands and dependencies of the globe. So great were our victories that by Riqdán 1963 the Bahá'ís of the world were able to establish no less than fifty-six independent National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies; and to create so mighty an impetus in the growth of the Administrative Order that thirteen new National Assemblies can come into existence next April as a major reinforcement of the new Plan to be launched at that time. We conquered in the Name of Bahá'u'lláh the whole of Latin America, the countries of Western Europe, the vast reaches of Africa, the remotest regions of the Pacific, new lands in the heart of Asia. When we look back and see what was done from 1937, when the beloved Guardian released his first major Plan, until April 1963, when his World Crusade ended, we are overcome with wonder and astonishment.

There can be no doubt that the believers of the world, through the victories they have won, have gained immensely in spiritual stature, they have gained in confidence, in understanding, in learning to rely on the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh, which are vouchsafed to all those who arise in His Name.

How often both the Master and the Guardian called upon the friends to arise and win new laurels as they vied with each other in the field of service. Victors' crowns are still to be won in the vast field of pioneering; whether it be in the fruitful and promising countries of Africa, in the remote

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CONVENTION 121 (1964)

MAY 2ND/3RD, 1964

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT of the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

ALL ASSEMBLIES MAINTAINED

The last few weeks of the Centenary Year were amongst the most hectic ever experienced. The whole Community joined in the final push to hold the local assemblies. Supported by the love and prayers of the Friends, pioneers arose from the established communities, newer communities, groups of isolated believers, and between March 2nd and April 20th forty-one gaps were filled. This triumphant outcome is clear evidence of the power of the Cause when there is united action and unyielding determination. The National Assembly is particularly proud of the response of the Northern Youth Conference held in Manchester on Sunday, April 19th, to the N.S.A.'s telephoned appeal for a pioneer to help to save the very last assembly; within half-an-hour a twenty-two-year-old pioneer had arisen. We must also mention two local assemblies whose services in providing pioneers have been outstanding, Exeter and Southport, who each contributed three pioneers. The N.S.A. was so determined that no local assembly should be allowed to lapse that permission was given for the National Secretary to take the National Office and pioneer until she could be replaced. But Bahá'u'lláh had better plans, for the very last gap was filled by a declaration, so the National Office remains at the Hazíratu'l-Quds.

CONTINUED NEED FOR PIONEERS FOR TORQUAY AND LEEDS

All this has taught us a great deal. Our crusade goal of 48 local assemblies was won in 1962, but we all knew that many of those assemblies were not firmly based. In the last year of the Crusade there were 115 adult declarations, but at the end of the 10 Year Crusade (April 1963), although we then had 50 local assemblies, seventeen of them were not secure. During the Centenary Year which has just passed there have been 101 adult declarations and 14 Youth have claimed voting rights, making a further increase of 115 adult believers, who numerically could man more than 12 new local assemblies. Yet we had to fight this Riqván to maintain the fifty local assemblies we already had. The N.S.A. and the N.T.C. have studied this problem and two things have become clear: firstly, we are not expanding all our communities sufficiently to cover the normal and inevitable movement which will take place in any population; and secondly, we had not allowed for the possibility of many of the new declarations coming in new places. This in fact is what has happened. But all this is no cause for despondency. On the contrary the movement of the last few weeks and the pioneer moves planned to follow up in the next six weeks, will see the Home Front in a stronger

position than it has ever been before. Already the local assemblies are stronger, and the whole base has been broadened for future operations. There are just two points of weakness which are causing the National Assembly very grave concern, Torquay and Leeds ; both are incorporated assemblies, and it is essential that each be provided with the focal point of a Bahá'í home. Shoghi Effendi wrote many years ago of the part Torquay must play in the opening up of the West of England, and in the North, Leeds is in the heart of one of the most densely populated areas in the country. These two assemblies are vital to our future development, and the National Assembly appeals now, in these last few moments before we turn to the future, for pioneers to settle in them.

YOUTH DECLARATIONS

An encouraging feature of the last month of the Administrative Year was eight Youth declarations, bringing the total Youth declarations for the year to twenty-seven.

MOST RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CENTENARY YEAR

Whilst we pause on the threshold of the new epoch into which we shall pass during the two days of this historic Convention, we should acclaim the most recent achievements of the Centenary Year. The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Manchester has purchased 360 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, thus acquiring the first local Ḥaẓiratu'l-Quds in the British Isles ; the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Eccles has become incorporated ; on his most recent tour of Scotland, the Hand of the Cause of God, Mr. John Ferraby, was received by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and the Provost of Inverness ; trees have been planted in Portsmouth and Ealing, with good local publicity ; a 2,000-word article, illustrated, is included in the May 1964 edition of the London-published magazine "Courier" ; the appeal of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Peterborough against a local planning decision not to allow them to use a room at 114 Lincoln Road specifically as a meeting room, has been upheld by the Minister of Housing and Local Government.

LOYAL GREETINGS TO H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II

On April 21st the National Assembly sent to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, on behalf of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles and those in the Commonwealth, loyal greetings on the occasion of her birthday, and the following telegram has been received from Her Majesty's Private Secretary : THE QUEEN SINCERELY THANKS THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁIS OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND IN THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THEIR KIND MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF HER MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY.

THANKSGIVING FOR NINE-YEAR PLAN

On the week-end of April 17th/19th, just before Riqdán, the National Assembly held its last meeting of this Administrative Year. The main tasks were to do everything humanly possible to make sure that, in the final hours, the banner of victory would again be implanted in the British Isles and the British Community would hold true to the trust Shoghi Effendi had laid upon it ; and then to receive the two momentous Messages from the Universal House of

Justice which would give us all our orders for the next nine years. On April 20th the National Assembly cabled to the Universal House of Justice "ALL ASSEMBLIES ASSURED STOP N.S.A. DONATED ADDITIONAL £500 EACH INTERNATIONAL TEMPLE FUNDS THANKSGIVING NEW PLAN LOVING GREETINGS RIDVAN * BAHÁ'I LONDON" On the same date the National Assembly wrote to the Universal House : "The National Assembly met last week-end and received with much joy details of the Nine Year Plan. The N.S.A. wishes to express its unwavering loyalty, enthusiasm and determination, which we know is felt also by the whole British Community, to see these tasks through. We should be grateful for your prayers on the occasion of the British Convention, to be held over the week-end May 2nd/3rd, when the delegates will be consulting with the N.S.A. on the tasks which lie ahead. With loving greetings for the Riqdán Festival and treasured memories of the Most Great Jubilee held in London last year, In His Service"

The Universal House of Justice has replied : "We are very grateful for your warm and loving letter of April 20th acknowledging receipt of the details of the Nine Year Plan and expressing your unwavering loyalty, enthusiasm and determination to accomplish its goals. You are assured of our prayers that you will be given the confirmation, strength, resources and guidance necessary to achieve total victory. With loving greetings (Signed and Sealed) THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE."

Results of the Election of the National Spiritual Assembly

Convention 121, May 2nd/3rd, 1964.

Charles Macdonald	....	65	votes
John Long	....	63	„
Betty Reed	....	61	„
Adib Taherzadeh	....	57	„
John Wade	....	55	„
Dorothy Ferraby	....	47	„
Richard Backwell	....	46	„
Owen Battrick	....	39	„
Elizabeth Chapman	....	34	„

Other votes received :

Abbas Afnan, 18 ; Joe Jameson, 16 ; Eric Hellicar, 11 ; Valerie Morley, 10 ; Eruch Munsiff, Jeanette Battrick, Hugh McKinley, Gloria Faizi, 9 each ; Malcolm Lee, 7 ; Meherangiz Munsiff, John Morley, Ron Stee, 6 each ; Ted Cardell, Farhang Johanpour, Lizbeth Greaves, Bill Hellaby, 5 each ; Harry Charles, John Shortland, Bahadour Haqjou, David Lewis, 4 each ; J. G. More-Nesbit, 3 ; Joan Giddings, Betty Shepherd, Robert Hallam, Ray Humphrey, Sandy Ackroyd, Alma Gregory, Sheila Cooper, Carl Card, 2 each ; George Bowers, Dorothy Green, Madeline Thompson, Tony McCarthy, E. Johnson, Farhang Afnan, Paul Adams, Bobbie Leedham, Beatrice Newman, Madeline Hellaby, Brian Dilworth, Kathleen Hyett, Louis Ross-Enfield, Barbara Lewis, Kenneth Goode, Philip Harvey, Robert Semple, Bill Crump, Ada Williams, Harold Shepherd, Dorothy Wiggington, Vera Long, 1 each.

Indeterminate: Mr. South, Miss Childs, Faizi Mounsiff, Charles Backwell, 1 each ; Major Childs, 2.

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

Report to Convention May 1964

The Publishing Trust has pleasure in presenting the Audited Accounts for each of the two years to 20th March 1964. It is regretted that the preparation and audit of those to March 1963 has been unduly delayed but the work involved in connection with Congress Bookstall inevitably had priority.

CONGRESS. At this point it may be apposite to refer briefly to Congress, which took place approximately half-way through the period covered by the combined accounts.

The Bahá'ís of the British Isles were indeed privileged to be the hosts to the friends overseas on this great occasion. To the Publishing Trust was given the task of organising the preparation of the actual Bookstall ; arrangements with Contractors and suppliers of equipment ; organising the despatch from abroad of the books, pamphlets, postcards and photographs involved ; then receipt and care in London and ultimate return of those unsold to the senders. Added to which was the responsibility for the financial control during the actual period of the Congress ; the preparation of the financial accounts of the entire venture ; and rendering of financial statements to each of the contributors and payment to them of the monies due.

This all took time—time that would normally have been devoted to Publishing Trust work, but, nevertheless, time very well spent.

A very few statistics may be of some interest and give some idea of the volume of work involved.

1. Just over 50,000 books, in addition to postcards, photographs and pamphlets were received from 18 contributors in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and India.
2. The sale value of those received was £12,000.
3. The sale value of those returned to senders was £6,000.
4. The expense of designing, lining and equipping the bookstall plus warehousing, insurance and transport to and from Albert Hall amounted in all to £500.

The Publishing Trust believes that it has expressed its thanks, in writing, to each of the many helpers from all lands who shouldered so well the Bookstall burden during Congress. Should there be any of the British Community who helped and to whom thanks were not sent (and we hope there are none) the Trust apologises for its lapse and now expresses its thanks and deep appreciation for all the help given so freely, so gladly and so efficiently.

ACCOUNTS. The Delegates have, no doubt, examined the Accounts for the two years to 20/3/64 which have been distributed and will only expect observations upon the broad picture. As the first year, from the accounting viewpoint, has been one of transition, it is proposed, with your approval, to deal with the combined period only.

The form and content of these accounts has varied from those of previous years and, slightly as between themselves—progressing to that used in 1963/64.

The general picture of the prime cost of sales in relation to gross sales has only varied, over the three years 1961/2 to 1963/4, within 5%, i.e. progressively 60.7%, 55.7% and in the last year. 59.5%.

The profit position owes its improvement, in part, to the sales at and arising from Congress plus the fact that during the latest year the oncost percentage included when fixing selling prices has increased to cover post (which is no longer separately charged on home sales) ; the costs to be, but not yet incurred in employing a Trade Counter ; the repayment of existing loans and the provision of development capital.

Increased profits, *as such*, are of no real interest to the Publishing Trust—no dividends have to be paid to hungry shareholders—and the possibility of achieving them has only been arranged so that an ever increasing variety and volume of production at the lowest possible selling price can thereby be obtained.

You will have found, in comparison with the previous periods, that the expenses, in certain cases, vary and that there is a curious item of £49 on the credit side of the Profit and Loss Account for 1962/63. These arose because, as already been mentioned, that year was one of particular transition in which previous reserves for interest and other expenses had to be adjusted to the facts as at 20/3/62, one of which is that at that point interest payments had been brought up to date.

You will have noticed also that the improved profit position in the combined years has enabled the Trust to go some way towards setting aside cash for the repayment of Loans—this cash will quickly be invested outside the business ; to prepare in an increased measure for possible bad debts and for the addition to the working capital shewn.

The lessons to be learned and inwardly digested from the Balance Sheet at 20/3/64 are :—

1. The gross debtors figure is much too high !
Excluding sales at Congress, which were for cash, the figure of £2,042 represents, approximately, eight months credit. And eight months credit means that £1,500 is lying idle, so far as the Trust is concerned, when it might well be earning its corn in useful production. The Debtors figure, with a net sale of £3,300, should not be larger than £500. Considerable progress could be made towards this figure were Assemblies and Groups to pay for goods on receipt of Invoice. One step has already been taken in the case of orders for personal purchases by friends, being accompanied by payment. Our thanks are tendered to those friends who have so helped.
2. The Stock held is, on our latest figures, equivalent to two years sales—excluding those at Congress. This is a problem that is difficult to solve at the moment, because the cost of the same book can vary considerably according to the quantity printed at one operation. Thus, to keep the selling price down the Trust has been compelled, at this stage in its development, to order more than it needed for its reasonable short term requirements. Increasing sales will partly solve the problem and new printing techniques that eliminate the heavy time and layout cost of setting up type will be a great help.

You will also have observed that our own total Capital is entirely invested in Stock while four fifths of our

Loan Capital from Friends and the N.S.A. (who, of course, can also be regarded as friends), is invested in Debtors—not a state of affairs which is likely to contribute towards real progress !

PUBLISHING. The business of the Publishing Trust is NOT, strange as it may seem, the keeping of Accounts nor yet of their production, but it IS in publishing current and new literature at increasingly lower selling prices so long as growing sales volume and value and its resulting production enable this to be done.

In the past great work has been done in the publishing field and we Bahá'ís of today have much to be grateful for, to those Publishing Trust members who were 'in' at the early days of the Trust and who laboured in it until fairly recently. But, since the middle of 1962 until the past few months, the attention of the Trust was largely occupied by Congress preparations and clearing up when it was over.

Now, as can be seen from the 1963/4 figures the Trust is able to continue its proper task in ever increasing measure until, with the goodwill and support of the friends plus a growing community, there is no limit to the heights to which it can and shall attain.

In conclusion, the Trust wishes to express its warm thanks to the friends—everywhere.

RIDVAN CABLE

From the Universal House of Justice, sent 22/4/64.

“Occasion Ridvan festival extend loving greetings Hands delegates friends present historic Conventions launching first enterprise second epoch unfoldment Abdul Bahas Divine Plan hail formation thirteen additional national spiritual assemblies testifying resistless development World Order Bahaullah convey all friends joyful news dedication Mother Temple Europe July fourth stop grateful your loving Ridvan greetings overjoyed homefront victories stop Assure ardent prayers success bountiful favours course Plan now launched * Universal House of Justice.”

ENTHUSIASM & IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AUGUR WELL

(Letter from the Universal House of Justice).

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles

May 7th, 1964.

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Your Ridván cable was most joyfully received by the Universal House of Justice as well as your letter of April 24th and your convention cable. The maintaining of all the Local Spiritual Assemblies, as well as the splendid additional contribution you have made to the International Fund and to the European Temple, are further evidences of the steadiness and determination of the British Bahá'í Community, qualities so admired in it by the beloved Guardian, and which have brought it to the forefront of the ever-growing army of Bahá'u'lláh. The enthusiasm and immediate response of the British friends to the Nine Year Plan augur well for their early success and for the eventual attainment of that glorious destiny envisioned for them by Shoghi Effendi. Please assure the friends of our continuing prayers for them as they strive to attain the goals assigned.

With deepest love,

(Signed and sealed)

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

CABLES AT CONVENTION

Cable from Convention to the Universal House of Justice, sent 4/5/64.

“Sixty seven delegates 250 friends awed rejoiced Divine gift, tremendous Nine Year Plan grateful your inspiring message auspicious news dedication Mother Temple Europe Welcome and wholeheartedly accept precious goals entrusted our community Thoughtful discussion yielding practical proposals swift launching plan eagerly await guidance National Assembly first targets All long share bounties privilege participation already six pioneer offers Joyously greet Universal House Justice with deepest love Beseech your continued prayers worthily discharge our trust * British Convention.”

Cable from Universal House of Justice, sent 5/5/64.

“Hearts warmed spirit devotion dedication expressed your Convention cable assure prayers attain all goals * Universal House of Justice.”

Cable from Convention to Hands of the Cause in Haifa, sent 4/5/64.

“Our hearts turn deep love gratitude precious Hands Cause threshold great new epoch unfolding further stage Beloved Guardians treasured hopes Beg your prayers continued guidance protection * British Convention.”

Cable from Hands of the Cause in Haifa, sent 7/5/64.

“Deeply appreciate heart warming message fervently praying divine assistance enable much loved British community fulfil high destiny envisioned beloved Guardian * Handsfaith.”

DR. GIACHERY FOR THE WEST

Cable from the Hands of the Cause in Haifa, received via the N.S.A. of the United States, sent 2/2/64.

“(On) behalf (of) entire body (of the) Hands (of the Cause) happy (to) announce assignment (of) beloved Hand (of the Cause) Ugo Giachery (to the) Western hemispheres (thus) further reinforcing (the) protection (and) propagation (of the) Faith (in) that vast territory (which has been the) recipient (of) so many bounties (and) promises (of the) future from both Abdul Baha (and) Shoghi Effendi Airmail message (to) all national assemblies * signed Handsfaith.”

DALSTON HALL WEEKEND SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 15TH/16TH, 1964

Of all the locations in which Bahá'í schools have been held, Dalston Hall must surely be one of the most likable. Not only does its appearance of a traditional house of weathered grey stone give it a friendly aspect, but the whole atmosphere of the main hall with its panelled walls and Spanish-style casements overlooking the wide, log-filled hearth seemed to breathe a welcome to the friends who descended on it out of the wintery sunshine. And when, inside, there were Joe and Mary Jameson to greet the new arrivals, the scene was set for a really uplifting and inspiring weekend.

There was a little initial bewilderment when it transpired that not only had the number of bookings doubled in the past week, and were sufficient now to fill the available accommodation, but also many friends had been drawn towards Dalston at the last minute by the auspicious weather conditions. With much room-list switching and mattress shifting all was arranged.

The theme of the school was "The Way Ahead," and the programme was planned to lead up from the origins of the Faith, through its unfoldment and development to the stage which it has now reached, and from which it is our privilege to carry it forward towards the golden age in which its growth must culminate.

The school opened with a devotional, and this was followed by "The Mission of Bahá'u'lláh" by Eric Hellicar, designed to enable us "to obtain a more adequate understanding of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous revelation" as Shoghi Effendi instructs us we should. Eric spoke of the significance of various points in Bahá'u'lláh's life and of His triumph when leaving Baghdád and of the open evidences of His sovereignty while residing at Bahjí, in contrast to the hardships which befell Him throughout the period of His presence on this earth.

After tea Farhang Johapour spoke about the Báb. His station, "The Primal Point" was the title and Farhang told us how many different and astonishing events led up to the termination of Mulla Husayn's search in the Báb's declaration that He was the long-awaited Promised One. He enlarged on the fundamental importance attached to the Báb's mission and then recaptured for us some of the thrill which must have seized the early Bábís when Vahíd recognised the truth of His claim.

A question and answer session followed, the panel comprising Harry Charles, Dorothy Green, Madeline Hellaby, Farhang Johanpour, and John Twynam. This was an excellent opportunity to discuss many haunting problems and a very fruitful one.

The rest of the evening being free, a group gathered round to sing everything from "Clementine" onwards. Mr. Ross, the warden, provided the piano accompaniment in admirable style and supplied both the right notes for those with bad voices and the missing verses for those with bad memories. With the chairs stacked well out of the way, dancing followed, and when it was deemed too late

to impinge on the peace of those upstairs who were trying to sleep, those downstairs who were not yet exhausted played games in the library, roaring with laughter most of the time, until two in the morning.

A pre-breakfast devotional next morning started us off on the right foot on Sunday. The first session was by Ernest Gregory, entitled "The Unfoldment of the Divine Plan." Ernest traced the gradual clarification and crystallisation of some of the bases on which the Divine Plan will be and is being carried out. The charts used were a great aid to the understanding of this essential subject.

Then followed a very informative and illuminating talk by Joan Gregory concerning the World Centre. Joan spoke of the Charter of the World Centre laid down by Bahá'u'lláh in the Tablet of Carmel, its interpretation by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and lastly its implementation by Shoghi Effendi and also the great works performed in a spirit of such loving sacrifice by the Holy Family. After Joan had finished, Marcia Charles shared with us some of her feelings whilst on pilgrimage in the Holy Land, and although she admitted no words could convey them adequately, her vivid description conjured up glorious pictures in all our minds. By the end of this session it seemed almost as if there was a roomful of Haifa in this spot in the middle of Cumberland, so clear was the image painted for us, both of the appearance of the Shrines and the surrounding gardens, and of their significance and the atmosphere surrounding their sacred precincts.

In the afternoon there was a discussion on teaching methods, with Ernest Gregory, Dorothy Green and Bridget Ferraby on the panel. After acquiring so much knowledge, here we found practical means of putting it into effect most advantageously in the situations we meet from day to day.

So we all prepared to depart, and doing so learned that the framework built up so carefully during the weekend by the assiduous efforts both of the committee and speakers, and of all who had participated had been crowned by two new declarations. Such a weekend can be said to be truly successful both in helping to lead two friends towards the Faith, and in kindling afresh in all our hearts the spirit with which to re-invigorate our efforts in our own towns and to this we can add a third achievement—the lasting influence which is more far-reaching, of the unity which we all felt.

BRIDGET FERRABY

ERRATUM.

In the first statement from the Universal House of Justice, read by David Hofman in the Royal Albert Hall, which was printed as an inset for the Congress issue of the Bahá'í Journal, will the friends please note the following correction :

In the second column, fourth line down, for the word "recalls" please substitute "records," so that the sentence reads "The Universal House of Justice, with pride and love, records on this supreme occasion its profound admiration for the heroic work which they have accomplished."



Some of the friends gathered at Lyme Park

LYME PARK

(MAY 22nd to 24th 1964)

The first week-end school of the Nine Year Plan, and a wonderful send-off to the work in this country during the second epoch of the Divine Plan. A record attendance of 140 made it necessary for some of those who slept the night there (40 on Friday night and between 75 and 80 on Saturday) to seek accommodation elsewhere.

After the opening devotional on Friday evening, Hand of the Cause John Ferraby opened the school and sounded the note of urgency which characterised the rest of the week-end. Even the gardens seemed to remind us of this, with the massed magnificence of splendid tulips, surely symbolic of the "souls of Thy heavenly army" who must now go out to win the world for Bahá'u'lláh.

Perhaps it was significant that the first evening of the school should coincide with the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb and this was celebrated most fittingly by all who managed to get to Lyme Park in time. The weather once more conspired to make this much-loved week-end a memorable occasion.

Ruhi Chakibaii was again responsible for a beautiful display. This time it was some of his own exquisite and telling photographs of Bahá'í books intermingled with the books themselves. These displays add an indelible fragrance to the weekend, and are greatly admired by everyone. Thank you, Ruhi, for using your gifts for the service of the Cause in such a delightful manner.

The theme of the school was Divine Guidance and the first talk on Saturday morning by John Wade was on the

Search for Truth. God's guidance is as factual and real as that of Whitehall and if we are to follow it we must be ready to "render instant, exact and complete obedience." John shewed from personal example how aspects of our personalities may be channelled to the use of the Divine Law and how the Faith makes people aware of qualities in themselves which before they did not know they possessed.

The next session was addressed briefly by three speakers, who all dealt with aspects of the search for truth; Arnold Pitt took the Social and Political angle, Eric Hellicar the scientific and Farhang Johanpour the religious angle. This was something different from usual and each speaker gave us plenty to think about.

After lunch Ernest Gregory talked about the Fundamental Verities of the Faith and in his customary way, helped us to understand his points much more clearly by the use of diagrams. Ernest is past master at this kind of thing and it would be wonderful to see his diagrams printed one day, so that we could all benefit by studying them.

After dinner John Long spoke on "Divine Guidance," expounding the scriptural idea of an everlasting Covenant between God and man; mentioning also the Covenant between God and each Divine Messenger as well as other and lesser Covenants.

This year the Children's Session took the form of a party, which was great fun for them and ably organised on the principle that "to prevent chaos you've got to keep 'em at it." By bedtime the children all voted it a "smashing

party" and trooped off merrily armed with balloons, sweets and paper hats, leaving a wake of exhausted adults; to whom be all thanks and honours for courage!

The Social Evening which rounded off the day was organised by the Northern Youth Committee and was of the usual high standard, including singing and conjuring!

On Sunday morning, after the devotional, Dorothy Ferraby spoke on the Unity of the Bahá'í World (the Administrative Order). She brought a fresh sense of the great Bahá'í vision to a subject which as the chairman, Billie Hellaby, said, "often had a dry-as-dust taste." The Administrative Order is the supreme living gift of Bahá'u'lláh to this age and we must all deepen our knowledge of its theory and practical workings, keeping in mind that, small and insignificant as the decisions of our local groups and assemblies may be, they are yet the embryo of the great World Order that future generations will know in its full glory.

This was followed by an N.T.C. session for Bahá'ís only. Many ideas were forthcoming on teaching methods for the new Plan; we were told that of the seventeen counties as yet without Assemblies nine already have Groups and though the N.S.A. had not yet chosen the goal towns, consideration would be given to these as obvious possibilities.

The final talk, after lunch, was given by John Ferraby; he spoke on the forging of the link between the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and the Universal House of Justice, and the culmination—divine guidance for mankind. This most inspiring talk helped us each to see more clearly how we could serve the Faith and to understand better the organic interdependence of every aspect of the Bahá'í life.

The weekend closed with a devotional and we dispersed once more, determined to win all the goals with the least possible delay, longing to share our message and sad only that the non-Bahá'í world is missing such a great bounty!

(We are grateful to Cynthia Macdonald for her help in compiling this report).

FOR MEDITATION

TEACHING—THE GREATEST GIFT OF GOD

Say: Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto everyone the duty of proclaiming His Message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds . . .

By the righteousness of God! Should a man, all alone, arise in the name of Bahá and put on the armour of His love, him will the Almighty cause to be victorious, though the forces of heaven and earth be arrayed against him . . .

And when he determineth to leave his home, for the sake of the Cause of his Lord, let him put his whole trust in God, as the best provision for his journey. . . . If he be kindled with the fire of His love, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him.

—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

. . . Heed not your weaknesses and frailty; fix your gaze upon the invincible power of your Lord, your God, the Almighty Arise in His name, put your trust wholly in Him, and be assured of ultimate victory.

—THE Báb.

ON THE THRESHOLD OF ANOTHER EPOCH—

Continued from page 1

islands that dot the Pacific and cling to the fringes of the great continents of the globe, in the increasingly disturbed and coveted jungle regions of South East Asia, in the heart of the immense Indian sub-continent, in the sweltering tropics and forbidding ranges of Latin America, in the desolate interior of Australia or the fastnesses of Asia, an army of consecrated souls is needed to go forth immediately, upon the announcement of the new Plan, to carry the sacred fire of Bahá'u'lláh's love, the healing light of His Message, to innumerable lands.

No one can ever describe the role of the Bahá'ís in the immediate future better than our beloved Guardian himself. We are now in the tenth part of a process which, he informed us in 1953, began with the dawn of the Adamic Cycle; the tenth part of this mighty process must be the penetration of the light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation "in the course of numerous crusades and of successive epochs in both the Formative and Golden Ages of the Faith, into all the remaining territories of the globe through the erection of the entire machinery of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order in all territories, both East and West, the stage at which the light of God's triumphant Faith shining in all its power and glory will have suffused and enveloped the entire planet."

With joyful and grateful hearts we prepare ourselves to seize upon this new Nine Year Crusade and, perusing its provisions, seek each one to take for himself a portion of its bounties, to find, at home or abroad, a field of service for himself where he can labour for the glorification of Bahá'u'lláh's Name and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND.

February, 1964.

The Bahá'ís have done it again

PROGRESS IN PONTYPRIDD

A few months ago a branch of the United Nations was formed in a Bahá'í home in Pontypridd. Several of the Bahá'ís in the Pontypridd Local Spiritual Assembly became members on that occasion.

In May the town of Pontypridd held a Spring Fayre in aid of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign. The Secretary, Rev. Alan Taylor, a Unitarian minister, invited Calvary Baptist Chapel, Tabernacle Welsh Baptist Chapel and the Bahá'í World Faith to be stall-holders. Other organisations taking part in the Fayre included the Inner Wheel, Pontypridd Chamber of Trade and Commerce, the Soroptomists Club, Pontypridd Save the Children Fund, British Legion, Scouts and Guides, Pontypridd and District United Nations Association.

Thus it is plain that the Bahá'í Faith is gaining official recognition in Pontypridd. This fayre provided excellent publicity for the Faith. It was opened by Lady Brecon, wife of the Minister of State for Welsh Affairs. Mr. A. Pearson, M.P., and Colonel Davies, organiser of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign for Wales, were also present. Lady Brecon was given a copy of "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era." The Bahá'í cake stall made over £30. The Rev. Alan Taylor wrote later saying, "The Bahá'ís have done it again."