

THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE NINE YEAR PLAN

We have now entered the fourth year of the Nine Year Plan, the year just before the half-way point. The British Community faces many different tasks, and at this early stage in the year the National Assembly wants to draw the threads together so that we can all see exactly where we are and what we need to do. One thing is clear, this is going to be our last opportunity to prepare for Proclamation; by the end of this year we shall be launched on that "unknown sea", which the Universal House of Justice in the Ridván 1967 message said would "add another dimension to our work." Another thing which is clear is that it is going to need courage to be a Bahá'í at this time. The Universal House of Justice anticipated that too, for in the Ridván 1966 Message it was said, "The constant progress of the Cause of God is a source of joy to us all and a stimulus to further action. But not ordinary action. Heroic deeds are now called for such as are performed only by divinely-sustained and detached souls."

Before looking in detail at the needs of our Home Front and at our tasks for the year overseas, the National Assembly offers for you to ponder upon, some words of the Beloved Guardian, taken from letters which he wrote to the British Community during the years from 1946 to 1957. In those letters he covered every field of our activity: expansion and consolidation of the Home Front, the developing mission overseas, the role of the individual believer, and even proclamation to the masses of the people at home. But even more important, Shoghi Effendi showed to us the British Community as he, the Vice-regent of God on earth, saw it. It is this which the National Assembly asks each believer to ponder, with humble heart. We should perhaps recall that in 1946 there were five local assemblies, all in England, and the number of believers barely reached 125, small wonder that many of them were bewildered by the vision the Guardian unfolded to them. Here it is; and it is to this destiny that Shoghi Effendi saw for us that the Universal House of Justice referred in its cable to Convention "ASSURE ALL FRIENDS CONVENTION ARDENT PRAYERS RAPID UNFOLDMENT GLORIOUS DESTINY BRITISH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY."

The first mention of proclamation was made by the Guardian in his letter to us of May 29th, 1946, and showed that, if successful, the Six Year Plan on which the Community had embarked would

"pave the way, and provide the necessary agencies, for the proclamation of the Faith to the masses throughout the British Isles."

This was followed on October 12th 1946 by,

"The consummation of their present task will mark the opening of a new era in the development of their community, and will signalise the inauguration of a great epoch in the history of the Faith in their land — an epoch that must witness the universal recognition of their Cause and the proclamation of its truths, its claims and tenets, to the masses of their countrymen throughout the British Isles. The Plan they are now prosecuting will provide the machinery and establish the basic structure that will enable them to arouse the people, among all sections of the population, and aid them systematically and gradually, to recognise Bahá'u'lláh, and support the nascent institutions of His World Order. There is no time to lose. Theirs is a priceless opportunity, and a great privilege. They must

neither vacillate nor falter. They must determinedly persevere, until their immediate and distant goals have been attained."

And again, on February 26th 1947, proclamation was mentioned,

"The Bahá'ís of the British Isles are now, slowly, laboriously and in strict accordance with the principles of a steadily expanding, divinely appointed Administrative Order, building up the essential and primary institutions (the Local Assemblies) which are destined to act as the chief and most powerful instruments for the proclamation of the Faith to the masses of their countrymen, at a subsequent stage in the development of the Faith in their land. As these institutions expand and are consolidated, the community will find itself equipped not only to carry the Message of the New Day to the multitudes throughout the length and breadth of its homeland, but prepared and fortified to initiate teaching campaigns beyond the shores of its native land, and in distant territories and various parts of the Empire of which that land is the heart and centre."

The same letter continues,

"Theirs is the duty, during these coming years, to lay patiently, assiduously and unitedly the foundation on which the structure of their future international services to their beloved Faith can be firmly and unassailably established. Upon the success of the Plan they are now so diligently and devotedly prosecuting must depend the scope and effectiveness of their two-fold task of proclaiming the verities of their Faith to their fellow-countrymen at home, and of implanting its banner abroad amidst the peoples and races of a far-flung Empire."

Thus the Guardian linked the Home Front — which the Universal House of Justice called our "Home Front reservoir" — with the British Community's mission overseas. This theme was repeated on May 8th 1947, in the following words.

"The Plan itself when consummated will signalise the opening of a new epoch in British Bahá'í history . . . aiming, on the one hand, at the proclamation of the Divine Message to the masses of their respective countrymen, and on the other, at the establishment of the structural basis of a divinely appointed Administrative Order throughout the far-flung dependencies of the British Crown . . . Theirs is an unspeakably thrilling task, an awe-inspiring obligation, a priceless opportunity."

On October 24th 1947 he wrote,

"A staggering responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who have been called upon to assist in the operation of the initial stages of this heroic and colossal enterprise, and to participate in the privilege of directing its course, and nursing its infant strength. Setbacks and reverses are inevitable as this mighty Plan progresses and expands. Critical stages in its unfoldment must be encountered with unswerving resolution and confident hope. Whatever hardships and sacrifices its future prosecution may involve must be borne with courage, pride and thankfulness. To insure its speedy advancement every issue must be subordinated to its vital requirements, and every individual effort co-ordinated with the agencies designed for its execution."

Once more to the theme of proclamation, in the same letter we read,

"Indeed the steps preliminary to the formation of a Bahá'í administrative centre in every country throughout the British Isles, must sooner or later be taken, as an essential prelude to the effective proclamation of the Faith to the masses. That the English Bahá'ís, aided and reinforced gradually by fresh recruits from among their Irish, Welsh and Scottish countrymen, may hasten the advent of such a glorious day in British Bahá'í history is the dearest wish of my heart and the object of my constant supplication at the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh."

On November 5th 1948 the same dual theme of the promise of proclamation at home and tasks overseas was repeated.

"Theirs is the unrivalled opportunity, should they bestir themselves and carry forward to a triumphant conclusion this first corporate effort to which they have consecrated themselves and their nascent institutions, to embark, in the course of subsequent Plans, on enterprises destined to safeguard and consolidate, in all parts of the motherland the achievements so hardly won, to proclaim, unequivocally, systematically and effectively, to the masses throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles the verities enshrined in their Faith . . . and lay the structural basis of its Administrative Order throughout the diversified, the numerous and widely scattered colonies of the British Crown."

On April 9th 1949 came an astounding statement,

"Bahá'u'lláh Himself lauds the conspicuous victories being won in His Name, in the dawning years of the Second Bahá'í Century, at the very heart and centre of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen, whose Sovereign Monarch He Himself had addressed and whose deeds He, with His Own Pen, had commended."

In the same letter new believers were especially drawn into the joint effort,

"The newly-enrolled believers . . . (who) are now summoned to participate in a Plan, whose scope and potency their predecessors could have never visualised and whose initial success must thrill and rejoice their souls in the Abhá Kingdom, have a distinct, a sacred, a peculiar and urgent responsibility to discharge in ensuring the consummation of this mighty enterprise. Through active and constant participation with their veteran co-workers, in filling swiftly the still remaining gaps in the pattern of the Plan, now in its concluding stage, in displaying systematic and sustained activity in the pioneer field now stretching before them; in sacrificing, in as great a measure as possible, their resources, to facilitate the attainment of all its goals, they can best discharge their immense debt of gratitude to the Cause of the Most Great Name, Who has singled them out, at so critical an hour, and from among such a vast multitude of their slumbering countrymen, to serve and glorify His Faith."

That letter ended with the words,

"I entreat them, and plead as well with their older brethren who have set so momentous a Plan in motion, to arise as one soul, to exert one more superhuman effort, to fix steadily their gaze on the pinnacle they are visibly approaching and to disencumber themselves of any burden impeding their arduous climb, in a last and determined attempt to scale and conquer the summit, from which alone they can catch a glimpse of the future glory of their destiny."

In his letter to us of September 6th 1949, Shoghi Effendi made another appeal to the individual, a very special appeal, which showed how close the individual believer is even to the blessed Báb Himself,

"The sacrifices which this fateful hour calls for, are by

their very nature, individual; the loss or inconvenience they entail are at most transitory in their effect, and might well be fully compensated for in the days ahead, whereas the blessings that must irresistably flow out, as the result of the integral success of a nation-wide, historically unprecedented Plan will enrich and ennoble the life of an entire community, exert an abiding influence on its fortunes, and empower it to launch still mightier crusades in the course of subsequent stages in its organic spiritual development. How bountiful, moreover, will be the rewards which He who watches from on high the varying fortunes of the Plan and presides over its destinies, must either in this world or in the next — and it may well be in both — choose to confer upon those who, at the hour of the Plan's greatest need, will fly to its succour, exhibit the rarest evidences of courage and heroism and choose to subordinate their personal interests to the immediate needs and future glory of the community to which they belong . . . The invisible hosts of the Kingdom are ready and eager to rush forth to the assistance of such as will have courage to weigh the issues involved and to take the decision, to face willingly and cheerfully its consequences, will, above all, earn the good-pleasure and commendation of the One Who, well nigh a hundred years ago, so gloriously made the supreme sacrifice of laying down His life that the Cause, for which the present prosecutors of the Plan have so wholly dedicated themselves, might live, prosper and bear, in the fullness of time, its fairest fruit in both the East and the West."

At Ridván 1950 the Six Year Plan, which brought Ireland, Scotland and Wales into the Bahá'í World Community and raised the number of Local Assemblies in the British Isles to twenty-four, was successfully concluded. That was the year of the Centenary, on 9th July, of the Martyrdom of the Báb. The Guardian's cable to the British Convention that Ridván, was the most astounding we have ever received, it included the following words which refer to the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as the Concourse on High.

"HERALD AUTHOR FAITH CENTRE COVENANT CONCOURSE ON HIGH ACCLAIM SUPERB COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT IMMORTALISING OPENING DECADE SECOND BAHÁ'Í CENTURY UNPRECEDENTED HISTORY FAITH BRITISH ISLES UNRIVALLED ANNALS ANY BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY EUROPEAN CONTINENT UNPARALLELED PERCENTAGE MEMBERS COMMUNITY RESPONDING PIONEER CALL THROUGHOUT BAHÁ'Í WORLD SINCE TERMINATION APOSTOLIC AGE BAHÁ'Í DISPENSATION. HISTORIC PLEDGE BRITISH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY NOBLY REDEEMED TRIBUTE MEMORY MARTYR PROPHET FAITH WORTHILY PAID. SPIRITUAL POTENTIALITIES PROSECUTE SUBSEQUENT STAGE UNFOLDING MISSION FULLY ACQUIRED."

In 1951 the British Community's first overseas task, the Africa Project, was launched. On February 25th that year, a letter from Shoghi Effendi contained the following astonishing statement, which links this Community for all time with the Universal House of Justice.

"On the success of this enterprise (the Africa project), unprecedented in its scope, unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing within their range all National Assemblies functioning throughout the Bahá'í World, undertakings constituting in themselves a prelude to the launching of world-wide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same Age, by the Universal House of Justice, that wil

symbolise the unity and co-ordinate and unify the activities of these National Assemblies."

The letter continued,

"Indeed, the birth of this African enterprise, in the opening decade of the second Bahá'í century, coinciding as it does with the formation of the International Bahá'í Council, should be acclaimed as an event of peculiar significance in the evolution of our beloved Faith. Both events will, no doubt, be hailed by posterity as simultaneous and compelling evidences of the irresistible unfoldment of a divinely appointed Administrative Order and of the development, on an international scale, of its subsidiary agencies, heralding the establishment of the Supreme Legislative Body designed to crown the Administrative Edifice now being laboriously erected by the privileged builders of a Divine Order, whose features have been delineated by the Centre of the Covenant in His Will and Testament, whose fundamental laws have been revealed by the Founder of our Faith in His Kítáb-i-Aqdas, and Whose advent has been foreshadowed by the Herald of the Bahá'í Dispensation in the Bayán, His most weighty Book."

But the next paragraph astonished us all,

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

The cable to Convention 1951, sent on April 26th, linked the Community firmly to the less privileged of the peoples in the Dominions, Colonies and Protectorates of the British Crown, with the words,

"PRAYING ENERGETIC COLLABORATION PROSECUTORS 'ABDU'L-BAHA'S DIVINE PLAN (the AMERICAN Bahá'í Community) WITH COMMUNITY BELIEVERS BELONGING NATION WHOSE DESTINY (has) BEEN LINKED (with the) FORTUNES (of the) WORLD'S BACKWARD RACES REINFORCED ASSISTANCE SISTER COMMUNITY CRADLE FAITH, NATIONAL ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES LEADING COMMUNITY AFRICAN CONTINENT, MAY ENSURE SUCCESS CRUSADE CONSTITUTING SPIRITUAL LANDMARK PROCESS AWAKENING AFRICAN PEOPLES MARKING OPENING GLORIOUS CHAPTER EVOLUTION WORLD FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLAH SIGNALISING INITIAL PHASE UNFOLDMENT MISSION COMMUNITY HIS FOLLOWERS BRITISH ISLES MIDST DOMINIONS COLONIES PROTECTORATES BRITISH CROWN."

In a letter of October 16th 1951, Shoghi Effendi unfolded our destiny further,

"Though the operation of the Plan is of short duration yet it constitutes a prelude to a series of successive campaigns which a firmly knit, vigorously functioning, clear visioned, intensely alive national community is destined to initiate, direct and control from its newly consolidated administrative headquarters in the heart of the British Isles, not only throughout the Dependencies of the British Crown within the African Continent, but eventually in the widely scattered Territories of an Empire whose ramifications extend into every continent of the globe."

That letter contained the words,

"Time is running short. The present hour in the

fortunes of mankind is critical . . . The British Bahá'í Community must gird up its loins, redouble its exertions, undertake further sacrifices, demonstrate greater solidarity and rise to still greater heights of consecrated devotion."

It concluded,

"So glorious a vision, now unfolded before the eyes of the British followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, cannot but galvanise them into action, at once swift, resolute and unrelaxing, and fire their souls with a spirit so consuming as to melt every obstacle that may intervene between them and the achievement of their present goal. May they, one and all, prove themselves, in the crucial months immediately ahead, worthy of the blessings vouchsafed to them in the past, and of the high destiny which it lies in their power to achieve in the future."

The letter of June 12th 1952 brought a glimpse of the forthcoming Ten Year Crusade, launched in 1953, and contained these words of grave counsel to us,

"The diversity of functions which the assumption of this task will involve; the privileges and bounties it will, of a certainty, confer on its prosecutors; the degree of dedication, the amount of preparation it will require for its proper discharge; the severe strain it must necessarily impose on all those who will shoulder its burdens; the gravity of the manifold problems it will raise, the severe challenge with which they who will arise to carry it out will be confronted . . . all these must be carefully pondered in preparation for the launching, at its appointed time, of an undertaking that will constitute not only a milestone of the utmost significance in the history of the Faith, in the British Isles, but it will also be hailed by posterity as a landmark of peculiar significance in British history."

The letter continued with a re-emphasis on the importance of the Home Front and our dual mission at home and overseas,

"Whilst the small band of wholly dedicated, patiently labouring, much admired, greatly promising followers and supporters of the Faith, in England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland, contemplates, from their respective homelands, the grandeur of their future task, dwell on its sacred character, and meditate on the wide range of its problems, possibilities, perils and glories, let them devote particular and sustained attention to the imperative needs, the urgent requirements of their no less important and vital mission at home, in their boroughs and counties, amidst their own people, and strain every nerve to reinforce, through a rapid increase in their numbers, through a steady multiplication of their administrative institutions, through a systematic consolidation of the structure of the edifice they are raising within the borders of their native land, their respective communities, which must be regarded as the base for the future operations that will be conducted by the members of these communities, under the guidance of their elected representatives, for the spiritual conquest and the ultimate redemption of the nations, tribes and races owing allegiance to the British Crown."

That letter ended,

"That they may become increasingly conscious of the sublimity of their task; that they may address themselves to it with their characteristic zeal, ability, intelligence and fervour; that they may speedily acquire the spiritual potentialities for the initiation of a still more momentous stage in the unfoldment of their historic Mission; that they may earn increasingly, through their superb feats, the unqualified admiration of their brethren in every continent of the globe and prove themselves worthy of the bounties already received and those which, we may well believe, are held in store for them, is my cherished hope and constant prayer."

So we passed, with the rest of the Bahá'í World, into the great Ten Year Crusade, from 1953 to 1963. In the first letter we received after the launching of the Crusade, a letter dated June 25th 1953, we read the following,

"The entire Community, now firmly entrenched within the Administrative strongholds recently and so laboriously established in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, must rise as one man to the occasion that now presents itself. With hearts brimming with the love of Bahá'u'lláh, with souls entirely dedicated to His Cause, with minds attuned to the laws and precepts underlying His teachings, steeled with an inflexible determination to utilise, to the fullest extent, the administrative agencies which their hands have fashioned since the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and deriving fresh hope and sustenance from the rapid and remarkable victories won in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í activity, both at home and abroad, the members of this high-minded, tenacious and spiritually alive community must gird up their loins, intensify their efforts a hundred fold and, through their combined and sustained efforts, write yet another chapter in British Bahá'í history and eclipse the splendour of the feats already accomplished in the past fifty years by the adherents of His Cause in their native land . . . The development of the institutions of the Faith on the Home Front must be supplemented by, and afford a constant stimulus to, the rise of similar institutions, first in the limited number of territories and islands assigned to the elected representatives of this community, and eventually throughout the colonies and protectorates comprising the British Empire."

This letter also contains the following grave words,

"The prizes to be won by those who must tread this path, in the years immediately ahead, are not to be easily secured. The challenge will be prolonged and severe. The opportunities they now have to scale loftier heights of heroism, and achieve still mightier victories during the interval separating the Great and Most Great Jubilees, will if missed never again recur."

In his letter of June 17th 1954, Shoghi Effendi said the following,

"In both the teaching and administrative spheres of its ever-expanding, swiftly unfolding activities, whether in the heart and capital city of the Empire to which it belongs, or in the chief cities recently opened by its pioneering members in the territories comprising its island home, or in the diversified and far-flung dependencies of the British Crown in the African Continent, this virile forward marching, securely established community has amply demonstrated its capacity to be regarded as one of the chief strongholds of a divinely conceived Faith and one of the principal bastions sustaining the fabric of Bahá'u'lláh's world-encompassing Order."

In that same letter, however, come the following warnings,

"The tasks facing this community in the course of this second and future phases of a world-encircling Crusade are admittedly vast, complex and challenging. The resources at the disposal of its doggedly persevering wholly dedicated members are, alas, circumscribed and inadequate. The Mission, however, to which its Founder is calling it, is unspeakably glorious. Many and divers will, no doubt, be the tests, the setbacks and trials which teachers and administrators alike within the ranks of its members, must necessarily experience. The times, during which the opening phases of its Mission overseas is to yield its fairest fruit, are fraught with great peril. Both at home and in distant outposts of the Empire, the opposition which those responsible for its development and consolidation will encounter from those in authority, whether civil or ecclesiastic, will

progressively hamper their efforts. The competition from its own sister communities, in various regions of the globe and in the course of the systematic prosecution of the same world embracing task, will, in the meantime, grow keener."

The above paragraph was followed by this call,

"Every ounce of energy its members can muster must unhesitatingly be expended to further the supreme end for which so sacred, so formidable and so momentous a Plan has been devised. With every sacrifice that is made, with every forward step that is taken along the toilsome and long road they are destined to tread, with every victory dearly and laboriously won by the champions, the representatives, the vanguard, the spokesmen, as well as the rank and file of this community, a measure of blessing from on high will undoubtedly be vouchsafed in order to reinforce the exertions, cheer the hearts, and stimulate the march of all those enlisted in the service of so glorious a Cause."

From the Guardian's letter of August 5th 1955, we take only three short extracts, the first becomes cogent in its brevity,

"The responsibilities shouldered by the members of this community are manifold, pressing, sacred and inescapable."

The second again re-emphasises the vital importance of the Home Front, although the whole letter continues the dual theme of expansion at home and the mission overseas,

"The process aiming at the rapid increase in the number of the avowed and active supporters of the Faith, must continue unabated in the months immediately ahead. A simultaneous multiplication in the number of isolated centres, groups and Local Assemblies must be ensured in order to reinforce the agencies on which the rising administrative structure of the Faith must ultimately rest . . ."

And the third, which is the concluding paragraph of the letter, repeats the inescapable responsibility of this Community,

"Theirs is an opportunity which they must instantly grasp. Theirs is a responsibility which they cannot escape . . . That they may in every field and at all times, discharge their heavy responsibilities is my constant prayer and dearest hope."

The letter of July 11th 1956 is of utmost significance because of the promise it contains of developments at home and in the nearby islands, as well as again emphasising tasks overseas,

"Parallel with this highly vital and urgently needed exertion in foreign fields, a further intensification of effort is required on the homefront, and particularly throughout the newly opened islands bordering the homeland itself, now standing in such dire need of a flow of pioneers and a concentration of material resources unexampled in British Bahá'í history. There is no reason to doubt that the phenomenal progress achieved within the span of a few years, amidst an alien people, and in such distant and backward territories, will be duplicated, nay surpassed, among peoples of the same race, speaking the same language, of the same background, and living in such close proximity to the Administrative Centre in the British Isles, provided that a determination no less unyielding, and a dedication no less whole-hearted and complete, will be displayed by those who have already won such memorable victories in such far-off and inhospitable regions of the globe. He Who in recent years infallibly guided from His realms above the steps of the little band of pioneers and administrators under such difficult and challenging circumstances, Who galvanised their souls, blessed their handiwork, raised their status, and noised abroad their fame, can

well enable them, if they but arise to the occasion now presenting itself, to conquer with no less rapidity and even greater effectiveness, the citadels of men's hearts, to tear down the barriers which now confront them, and ignite a fire in the hearts of their own countrymen as consuming as the one that has set ablaze, in so conspicuous a fashion, the souls of the African races over the length and breadth of an entire continent."

That letter concludes,

"Every individual believer must, henceforth, encouraged and inspired by all that has already been achieved, contribute to its future and speedy unfoldment. That the entire community may befittingly respond to the call of the present hour and bring to a final consummation the Mission with which it has been entrusted is the deepest yearning of my heart and the object of my unceasing prayers."

The Guardian's last letter to us, of August 30th, 1957, looked to the future, with the words,

"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."

It is in this last letter that Shoghi Effendi described the British Community as,

"... 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 ...".

He went on to link us with the National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies throughout the entire world, and particularly with the Hands of the Cause by then already appointed in the following terms, that the British Community must

"... 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 letter continued,

"The sooner these prime requisites, so essential for a further unfoldment of the mighty potentialities inherent in so spendid 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."

In the concluding passages of that last letter, the Beloved Guardian referred again to our responsibility,

"A sacred 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."

Finally, tracing the course of the Six Year Plan, the Africa Campaign, and the Ten Year Crusade, he said,

"... such a process must, as the centenary celebrations designed to commemorate the Declaration of that same Mission ... 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."

These words of the Beloved Guardian are not just echoes from the past; study of the Messages addressed to us by the Universal House of Justice will show that again and again the House makes reference to Shoghi Effendi's letters to us, as the springboard of present and future activity. One important example of this is the letter from the Universal House of Justice of April 1964, in which we were given our goals in the Nine Year Plan,

"The Bahá'í Community of the British Isles occupies a unique position in the world-wide Community of the Most Great Name alike by virtue of the constant association of its country with the Cause of God and the "historic mission" with which it was invested by the Guardian of the Faith as a result of its own outstanding achievements. The first, and possibly only, Westerner to write a description of the Báb was the English doctor who attended Him shortly prior to His martyrdom. Bahá'u'lláh's remarkable commendation of that form of Government practised by the British people and His distinctive Tablet to Queen Victoria are among His most significant utterances on the future ordering of human society. 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself called this community into being, planting its roots and infusing into it "through the impact of His personality" during the course of two visits when He travelled from its capital city as far north as Edinburgh and as far west as Bristol, "a measure of His own mysterious power"; Shoghi Effendi, "the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees," was called from Balliol College, Oxford, to enter upon his Guardianship of the Cause of God. His resting place, in the homeland of this community which he so dearly loved, confers yet another inestimable honour and bounty upon it. He it was, the Guardian of the Cause of God, who nourished the tender plant sown by the Master, who called forth its "sterling qualities of fidelity, tenacity and intrepidity," gave it tasks to develop its strength and capacities, causing it to put forth the first signs of that mysterious power with which it had been invested, and disclosed to it glimpses of a glorious destiny, "a vista of vast dimensions, of majestic beauty, of infinite promise.""

THE MAIN TASKS OF THE BRITISH COMMUNITY UNTIL RIDVAN 1968.

1. PIONEERING.

The following goals must be filled by pioneers:

Overseas:

Ceylon (1); Belize (2); Dahomey (4); Ghana (2); Swaziland (2); Uganda (2).

Priority at Home:

Cork (2), Limerick (2); Malta; Faroes, at least 1 more in each.

Inner Hebrides (Skye) (2).

Outer Hebrides (Stornoway) (1).

Orkney and Shetland (to be reinforced).

Other Goals at Home:

Opening of new Goal Towns — Hereford, Shrewsbury, (England); Dundee (Scotland); Bangor (Wales).
Reclaiming of lapsed assemblies — Torquay, Northampton, Portsmouth, Epsom (England); Inverness (Scotland), may need some pioneer reinforcement.

2. TEACHING.

Through teaching we must:

- establish assemblies in Goal Towns — at least 5 in England, 1 in Scotland and 1 in Eire; exact details will be given later.
- work to regain the above five lapsed assemblies.
- increase the level of personal teaching in every assembly-community, goal town, group and isolated centre, so as to achieve a rapid increase in numbers.

3. DEEPENING.

Individually, we must remember especially the obligation to pray and read the Writings every day.

Individually and in our communities we must study the Messages of the Universal House of Justice, both the Ridván Messages received year by year, and those sent especially to the British Community.

Assemblies, goal towns and groups must organise study to deepen believers, concentrating especially on the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh for man in this age, the renewing power that He brought, and our privilege and obligation to carry to more and more people the joyful news of this New Day.

4. THE FUNDS.

We must all learn to give freely to the Cause as we would give to our most dearly beloved, without fear of the future. £2,000 is needed for our promised donation to the World Centre;

£2,000 at least will be needed for national Proclamation Plans; pioneers will need some financial support; and more money will be needed for all our work for the Cause at home and overseas.

When we give to the Cause, we give to Bahá'u'lláh. When everyone has given of his measure, all have given equally, so learn to give with love, of your full measure.

The goal is a contribution from every believer to the National Fund every month.

5. PROCLAMATION.

The success of Proclamation will depend on the four things mentioned above, and upon the zeal, enthusiasm, effectiveness and harmony of the Local Spiritual Assemblies. Now is the time to prepare ourselves and our Assemblies for the wonderful tasks which lie ahead.

IMPORTANT DATES IN OUR CALENDAR FROM CONVENTION 1967 TO CONVENTION 1968.

- May 23rd Holy Day, Declaration of the Báb.
May 29th Holy Day, Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh.
May— Preparation for Proclamation by prayer, study and teaching.
September. —
July 1st - 8th Harlech Summer School.
July 9th Holy Day, Martyrdom of the Báb.
August 12th— Dalston Hall Summer School.
26th —
September 27th Feast of Mashíyyat, Devotional Meeting at the Grave of the beloved Guardian; Visit of Hands of the Cause to the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople.
September 30th, National Meeting in London to inaugurate Proclamation.

October 7th— Intercontinental Conference in Frankfurt, Germany.
10th —

October 20th Holy Day. Birth of the Báb.

October—Dec. Regional Teaching Conferences, following the Frankfurt Conference.

October—April Build-up of local teaching, publicity and participation in national and local events as spring-board for intensive Proclamation.

October 24th United Nations Day.

November 12th Holy Day, Birth of Bahá'u'lláh.

December 10th Human Rights Day (start of Human Rights Year, 1968).

in December/ Youth University Week.
January.

January 6th/7th National Teaching Conference.

January 21st World Religion Day.

April 17th/25th International Convention in Haifa, Israel.

April Bahá'í Exhibition in London.

May 25th/27th National Convention.

Holy days on which Work Should be Suspended:

Feast of Ridván (Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh), April 21st to May 2nd: the first, ninth and twelfth days of Ridván, celebrating the first day at about 3.00 p.m. if feasible.

Anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb, May 23rd 1844, at about two hours after sunset.

Anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, May 29th 1892, at 3.00 a.m.

Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb, July 9th 1850, at about noon.

Anniversary of the Birth of the Báb, October 20th 1819.

Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, November 12th 1817.

The Feast of Naw Ruz (New Year), March 21st.

Nineteen Day Feasts:

| Month | Arabic Name | Translation | First Days. |
|-------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1st | Bahá | Splendour | March 21st. |
| 2nd | Jalál | Glory | April 9th |
| 3rd | Jamál | Beauty | April 28th |
| 4th | 'Azamat | Grandeur | May 17th |
| 5th | Nur | Light | June 5th |
| 6th | Rahmat | Mercy | June 24th |
| 7th | Kalimát | Words | July 13th |
| 8th | Kamál | Perfection | August 1st |
| 9th | Asmá | Names | August 20th |
| 10th | 'Izzat | Might | September 8th |
| 11th | Mashíyyat | Will | September 27th |
| 12th | 'Ilm | Knowledge | October 16th |
| 13th | Qudrat | Power | November 4th |
| 14th | Qawl | Speech | November 23rd |
| 15th | Masá'il | Questions | December 12th |
| 16th | Sharaf | Honour | December 31st |
| 17th | Sultán | Sovereignty | January 19th |
| 18th | Mulk | Dominion | February 7th |
| 19th | 'Alá | Loftiness | March 2nd |

Fast: 19 days beginning March 2nd.

Anniversaries to be commemorated but which are not Holy Days:

Day of the Covenant, November 26th.

Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, November 28th 1921, at 1.00 a.m.