

# BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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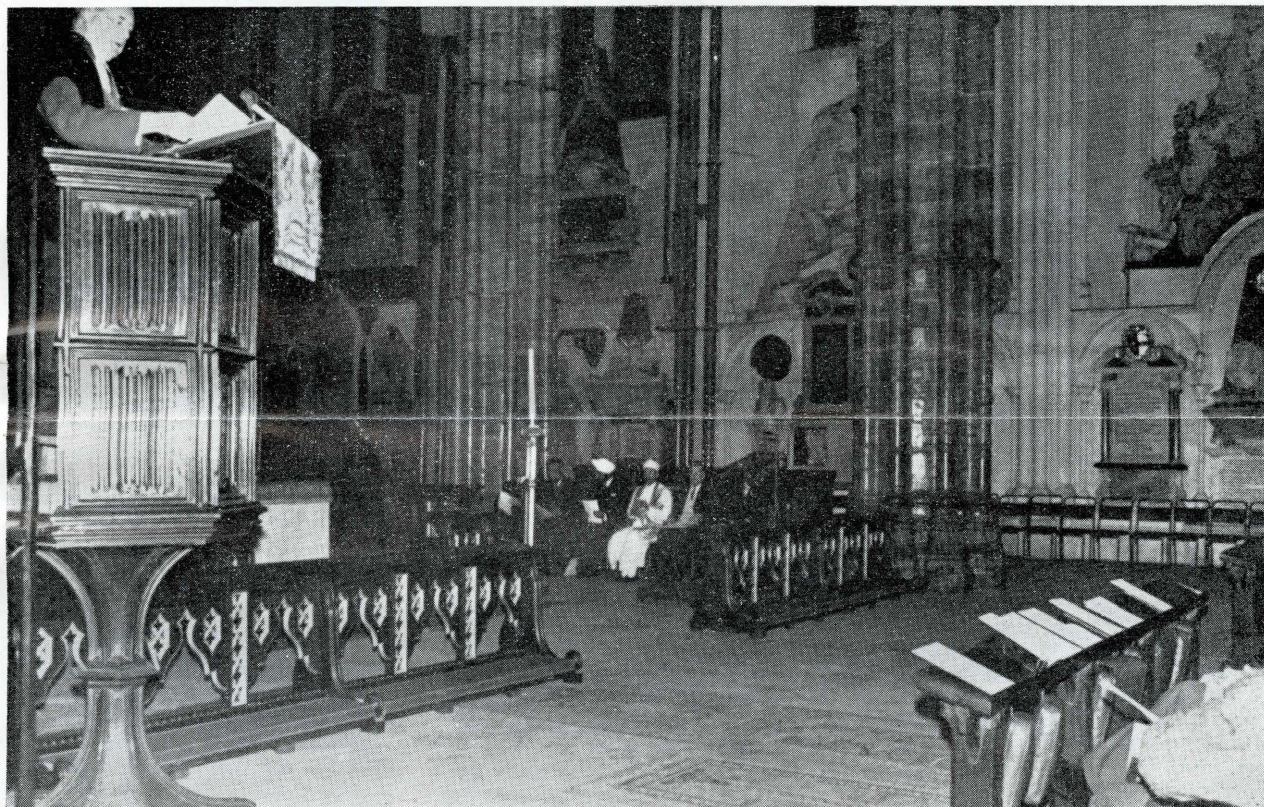
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## IN THE ABBEY



*Text read by Auxiliary Board Member  
Dick Backwell at the Observance.*

The Dean of Westminster announced to the Congregation, "A member of the Bahá'í Community will read from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh" and Dick read,

"How lofty is the station which man, if he but chooseth to fulfil his high destiny, can attain. To what depths of degradation he can sink, depths which the meanest of creatures have never reached. All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilisation. To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

O ye the elected representatives of the people in every land. Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof.

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth. Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth . . . There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God . . . Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your

vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you.

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. We cherish the hope that the light of justice may shine upon the world and sanctify it from tyranny.

It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action. That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race."

*Gleanings from the Writings of  
Bahá'u'lláh—continued overleaf.*



Bahá'u'lláh was publicly mentioned by name for the first time in Westminster Abbey on Saturday, 9th December, 1967 by the Very Reverend Eric S. Abbott, K.C.V.O., M.A., D.D., Dean of Westminster. He was announced from the pulpit as the Author of writings from which a member of the Bahá'í community would read. The occasion was as a part of an "Observance in Silence with music and readings" from the holy books of six different religions. The Observance, which commenced at 7.30 p.m., comprised an hour of meditation on the eve of Human Rights Day at the start of the International Year for Human Rights. The programme for the Observance was beautifully printed for those attending to follow, and contained the full text of all the readings.

The preamble to the programme set out these words: 'During this hour of meditation the Congregation is asked to remain seated, in the greatest possible silence, only standing for the final mutual salutation. As each reading is concluded, we shall enter more deeply into the Silence, praying each as we can, and united in our common humanity, for we are all members one of another in the family of mankind.'

Thus His name was mentioned, and His message, in part, conveyed publicly in the most solemn manner, in that historic house of worship located in the heart of London, adjacent to the Houses of Parliament, which has been the scene of so many great events, of the coronation of kings and queens for many centuries, of royal marriages and of the funerals and resting places both of royalty and of so many British citizens, statesmen and men of letters, science and culture. One hundred years after He wrote His great Tablet to Queen Victoria He was named in the place where she had been crowned queen, to a congregation and by one of the highest church dignitaries in the land.

The religions whose representatives were invited to read from their Holy Books were the Jewish, the Muslim, the Sikh, the Zoroastrian, the Bahá'í, the Christian, in that order. Thus the Bahá'í Faith was clearly distinguished from the Muslim.

In a very real sense also, the recognition of the Faith and its Founder in that place, so hallowed for its traditions and so significant in the life of the British people and in the worship of the established Church of England, has elevated the stature of the Faith and given it a standing of repute and respectability it has not hitherto enjoyed in the British Isles.

The Universal House of Justice, when they heard of the impending occasion, wrote on 29th August, not only of "the highly appropriate reading chosen for the observance in Westminster Abbey" but added, "We were delighted when we learnt of this significant recognition of the Bahá'í Community to be read in a house of worship which has so many historic associations for the British people".

## TEACHING CONFERENCE

Over two hundred British Bahá'ís and friends from other countries will remember with great joy this year's Teaching Conference, for the spirit felt there was truly wonderful—how marvellous it would have been if even more of the friends could have shared this experience.

The conference was blessed by the presence of two Hands of the Cause—our own dear John Ferraby and Abu'l Qásim Faizí and some of the members of the European Auxiliary Board.

Mr. Ferraby opened the conference and set a warm note, which was maintained throughout the weekend, referring to the way in which this annual Teaching Conference had become almost an institution of the Cause in Britain. He then introduced Mr. Faizí, who began by speaking of his experiences in Arabia and Bahrayn and continued with a stimulating talk on the three pillars, of the foundations of our Faith—Bahá'u'lláh's Laws, the spiritual principles and the Administrative Order which must always be firmly accepted by all Bahá'ís. He said that when we read the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh we see clearly that the "Kingdom of God" will be mirrored upon this earth; but that a mirror must be protected by a frame, and the frame for the Kingdom of God is the Universal House of Justice, supported by the national and local institutions of the Bahá'í Faith.

### The urgent needs of the Cause Today

Philip Hainsworth developed his theme by describing the way in which the beloved Guardian had laid the foundations for the work of the British Bahá'ís, quoting from his messages to illustrate how every aspect of the proclamation of the Faith to the masses in the British Isles had been clearly defined. From 1944 to the end of his life, the Guardian had, stage by stage, prepared the British believers for their role in the Bahá'í world. The pattern became clear, the detailed requirements of the Plan known, to bring ten weakened Assemblies up to strength, to re-establish five lapsed Assemblies, to achieve the six goal Assemblies, to pioneer in ten unopened centres and to strengthen four other goal areas.

By this time all were aware of a growing spirit of confirmation and resolve when facing up to the needs of this year. Sixty or more believers were needed, either by pioneering or by confirmation, in the 104 days left before Ridván, for the Home Front and Overseas and realising that even the achievement of these goals would leave a need for 220 more believers in thirty-one Assemblies, to be established during the remaining half of the Plan, the friends were strengthened by the words of the Guardian when describing the British Bahá'ís, "the inherent qualities of tenacity and purpose, of exemplary fidelity, of perspicacity that distinguishes the race to which they belong".

The session closed on the high note of the words written by the Guardian's secretary on his behalf in 1956—"the truly extraordinary and exemplary steadfastness of the British Bahá'ís which had led them, over and over again, at great cost to themselves, to throw themselves into the breach. Although this is a well-known national characteristic, it provides nevertheless a great example to their fellow Bahá'ís all over the world. The Guardian knows of no Community east or west, which so valiantly and so consistently, one might almost say ferociously, has arisen to defend its Home Front . . ."

Hand of the Cause Mr. Faizí again spoke before the evening break and a still higher level of enthusiasm was reached.

### Workshops.

The usefulness of Workshops at Teaching Conference was again demonstrated during the Saturday evening, when about a hundred and twenty of the assembled friends divided into twelve groups to discuss "The task of getting the Faith known", "The task of attracting enquirers", "The task of teaching and confirming enquirers and their declaration", and "The task of reinforcing that confirmation and deepening the new Bahá'ís." Mr. Ferraby, the Board Members and an N.S.A. representative joined the different groups, and stimulating discussion continued for about two hours.

Each Workshop, consisting of three groups, had a co-ordinator who attended all three and, after consultation with the discussion leaders of each group, presented a report to the conference. Some very interesting points were made, which were noted by the Secretaries of the National Teaching Committees and the co-ordinators would send their reports to the National Spiritual Assembly.

While most of the friends were engaged in the Workshop discussions, a smaller group of about thirty National committee representatives met with some members of the N.S.A. in a consultation upon ways and means of streamlining and effecting greater co-ordination in committee and administrative procedures.

### Our Course is Clear

The Sunday morning session began with a stirring résumé by Eric Helicar of the letters of the Universal House of Justice, emphasising the need for universal participation, for intensified fireside teaching and for increased travel teaching . . . "That if we play our part total and unconditional victory will be ours."

Aldie Robarts, speaking on behalf of the Publishing Trust, gave the example of Martha Root, who had been praised so highly by the Guardian for her teaching activities, he called her "the first fruit which the formative age



had as yet produced", and who had used Bahá'í literature so extensively. In English we have a wealth of literature on the Faith and it is thought that greater use could be made of it. Particular attention was drawn to the new issue of the prayer book, to the "Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh" produced by the Universal House of Justice, and to the Study Guides. Mention was also made of the Capital Investment Scheme which is mentioned elsewhere in this issue.

#### Arise With Noble Resolve and in Loving Service

To achieve the tasks of the Nine Year Plan was the theme to which Betty Reed spoke most movingly—that "upon our efforts depends in very large measure the fate of humanity". She shared with us an extract from a letter written by Mr. Khazéh, when he said that "slow steps endanger the progress of the Faith", and stressed again the urgent need for the immediate strengthening of the Home Front. She reminded us of the words of the Universal House of Justice—that we "may not have the time later to consolidate our reservoir of manpower". Details of the requirements for this year's goals were repeated, and Mr. Faizi was invited to the platform to speak about the spirit and the fruits of pioneering.

He also spoke of the meetings which the Hands of the Cause and the Universal House of Justice together hold each week, and of the unmistakable guidance seen by the Hands to be given to the Universal House of Justice—how seemingly insoluble problems, after consultation and prayer, are finally resolved. He impressed upon us the tremendous importance of "firesides"—that we must be patient and carry on holding firesides even though no-one came to them—that we must pray and be patient and that we may be certain of the immense power of Bahá'u'lláh to bring us together to fulfil our goals.

Although Eric Hellicar had spoken movingly about the guidance given by the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice in relation to the Bahá'í Fund, Betty Reed was called upon to bring this vital issue once more to the attention of the conference. It became a great challenge to the assembled friends to attempt to reduce the £2,000 gap which existed between the budget target for January and the actual amount donated.

A call was then made for pioneers and travel teachers. There were some new pioneer offers for overseas and the Home Front, and there was a truly wonderful response to the request for travel teachers, and over forty people answered this call.

#### Summing Up

After the presentation of Workshop reports the Chairman, in summing up, recalled the often repeated words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá "Arise . . . Go forth . . . strive . . . attain!". He thanked all who had helped in the organisation of the Conference and mentioned that

from the York Winter School twelve youth had offered to undertake pioneer projects on completion of their studies. There followed a further exhilarating talk by Mr. Faizi. His closing words concerned the historic voyage made by Bahá'u'lláh when He left Adrianople and sailed to Akká.

This is but a brief summary of those memorable twelve hours of loving fellowship and heart-moving response to arise and serve as never before. Tribute must be paid to the hospitality of the Leicester community, the Publishing Trust's magnificent display of books, which stimulated record sales, the varied selection of items provided by the Sales Committee and those who gave hours of their time to serve at these stalls, the speakers, Workshop Leaders and Co-ordinators; the Assembly Assistance Teaching Committee for its excellent organisation of arrangements, the pioneers in the Islands who selected the devotional readings; the committee members who produced first class visual aids. Above all our thanks go to the dear Hands of the Cause whose presence contributed so largely to the spirit of the conference.

The conference closed with the assurance from Hand of the Cause Mr. Faizi that he would take our greetings and love to the Hands in the Holy Land and to the Universal House of Justice: He said that the thrilling news of this conference would be a wonderful gift to the Universal House of Justice and he promised that he would visit the Shrines with them and pray that the offers made would yield fruit, that the spirit of the conference would permeate the British Bahá'í Community and that each and every goal would be achieved. With this we were content.

#### CABLE TO UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

OVER 200 FRIENDS GATHERED  
LEICESTER SEND WARMEST  
LOVE GREETINGS STOP INSPIRED  
REVIEW MESSAGES BELOVED  
GUARDIAN UNIVERSAL HOUSE  
JUSTICE ADDRESSES HANDS  
CAUSE PRESENT STOP RESOLVED  
REDEDICATE LIVES INTENSIFY  
ACTIVITIES STOP 18 NEW OR  
REAFFIRMED PIONEERS 11  
YOUTH PLEDGED FUTURE  
PIONEER OFFERS STOP SUB-  
STANTIAL TRAVEL TEACHING  
OFFERS £168 CONTRIBUTED  
FUNDS STOP HUMBLY REQUEST  
PRAYERS SACRED SHRINES  
ACHIEVE GOALS

and the reply

DELIGHTED NEWS PRACTICAL  
DEMONSTRATION TEACHING  
CONFERENCE SPIRIT DED-  
ICATION ANIMATING BRITISH  
BELIEVERS STOP ASSURE  
PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES COM-  
PLETION GOALS ASSIGNED PLAY  
NOTEWORTHY ROLE WORLD-  
WIDE PROCLAMATION FAITH  
BAHA'U'LLAH LOVING  
THOUGHTS

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

#### CATHERINE HUXTABLE.

We share with you the account of the passing of dear Catherine Huxtable, by her husband Cliff. These devoted Bahá'ís pioneered with their young son Gavin to the island of St. Helena in the spring of 1966. Though paralysed by muscular dystrophy and confined to a wheelchair, Cathie radiantly braved every obstacle and did not hesitate to serve the Faith, indeed even to pioneer beyond her homeland. When they passed through London en route to their pioneer post, Catherine and Cliff were both able to speak at the Haziratu'l-Quds to a group of students from the Maria Gray Teacher Training College, who had come to learn about the Faith. The love and happiness which Cathie manifested remains vivid in the memories of those who met her. Cliff writes . .

Dear Friends,

Catherine's saintly, heroic and glorious spirit passed to the next world at 2 a.m. October 25th. The end came suddenly after only one day of total discomfort. She had every useful medical aid. Her last words were an earnest, but not anguished prayer, "I want to die".

She lived to nurture a discouraged youth she had met 17 years ago, into a husband and a man, to bear our son Gavin and give him an excellent introduction to life, to see him begin his schooling, to pioneer for the Bahá'í Faith from Toronto to Regina, then to the Gulf Islands, and finally to St. Helena 13,000 miles away in the South Atlantic—always overcoming incredible tests and difficulties in addition to her crippling disease. She touched the hearts, illuminated the spirits, challenged and inspired the courage, of all who were fortunate enough to meet her. She trampled every base desire beneath her feet, and turning to God for sustenance, reached out to suffering humanity with a pure and radiant heart; to offer this new message of love and fulfillment. Her life was a triumph over almost every conceivable personal difficulty.

Catherine is buried high in the centre of the island overlooking the majestic scenery of St. Helena to the South Atlantic beyond. We spoke often of her death. As a newcomer and outsider to this insular community I expected her funeral to be the loneliest journey of my life. Over eighty cards and letters of sympathy poured into the house, ranging from the Bishop to an impoverished leper.

The Governor's wife, the Vicar of Jamestown, our servants, Education Officers, and a police constable, (4 brown, 3 white) read the Bahá'í sacred writings at her graveside. All stood deeply moved and silent, through the chill wind and rain, until the earth had been replaced. Then the people came forward and heaped the entire grave with bouquets and wreaths of fresh flowers.

When all had departed I scattered some earth from the courtyard of Bahá'u'lláh's tomb over Catherine's grave and recited the Tablet of Ahmad.

with love, Cliff Huxtable.



# — National Spiritual Assembly's News Letter —

## 'AMAT'UL BAHÁ VISITS. SURINAM AND GUYANA

We are delighted to share the news that Hand of the Cause 'Amat'ul-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khanum will visit Surinam and Guyana during her South American tour. The Friends there are eagerly awaiting her coming.

Other good news has just been received from the Guianas—the Group in Cayenne now numbers nine, which lays the foundation for the establishment at Ridván of the first Local Assembly of French Guiana. This is a great victory.

## HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD ABU'L QASIM FAIZI

As part of his round-the-world trip, which had begun in Adrianople, taken him to India—where he represented the Universal House of Justice at the New Delhi Intercontinental Conference and included Japan, Mr. Faizi came to the British Isles. As well as staying with his family in Cambridge, he visited the Youth Winter School in York, came to London and consulted with the National Assembly at its January meeting, and as special bounty to the Community attended the whole of our Teaching Conference in Leicester; he then went on to Holland and Belgium. We are particularly grateful to our sister Community in Europe for altering their plans and making it possible for Mr. Faizi to remain here the additional twenty-four hours; we are sure that the Hand took to them also the tremendous spirit he brought to Teaching Conference, and we felt closely linked with them through his visit. Mr. Faizi is one of the Hands who reside in the Holy Land, and from Europe he was returning to Haifa.

## CONFERENCE CALLED BY HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD IN EUROPE

The European Hands have called a Conference of Board Members and N.S.A. members of Europe in Paris over the week-end February 3rd/4th. There will be consultation on Proclamation, Home Front Goals of the 9-Year Plan, and Deepening and Education of the Community. It is a moving experience when representatives of the fifteen Bahá'í Communities of Europe meet together and consult with the institution of the Hands of the Cause at these 'Working Conferences' called from time to time by the European Hands. This one will be particularly important for we have now entered the Proclamation Period, and the fate of Europe is linked now with the efforts of the European Bahá'í Community of which the British Community is part. The National Assembly will be represented by its Secretary, Mrs. Betty Reed.

## HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN ASIA: NEW CONTINENTAL INFORMATION CENTRE NEEDS MATERIALS

The Hands in Asia have sent news of a Continental Information Centre which

they have established in New Delhi, India for the purpose of helping in the teaching and proclamation of the Faith in Asia. One of their first objectives is to collect and make available articles, radio talks, study guides, Teaching Institute courses and other information on mass teaching and proclamation. Anyone interested in writing such material can obtain further details by sending a stamped addressed envelope to the National Assembly, 27 Rutland Gate, London, S.W.7.

## DECLARATIONS

We are delighted to welcome to the Faith Miss Barbara Montgomerie (now Mrs. George), Leicester; Miss Shelagh J. King, Ashford, Kent; Mrs. Dorothy M. Cherry, Inverness; Mr. George Alves and Mrs. Janet Jamset, Edinburgh; Miss Honour M. D. Shaw (Youth) and Mr. Colin J. Black, Wokingham R.D.; Miss Minu Sadeghi (Youth) and Mr. G. Douglas Donleavy, Kensington and Chelsea; Mr. Reginald P. Cuthbert, Barnet; Mrs. Margaret Cash and Mrs. Amy O. Shields, Castle-reagh R.D.; Mrs. Enid Sabet, Rugby; Mrs. Patricia T. Wrout, Southwark; Miss Moira O. Long (Youth), Portsmouth; Mr. Marian Zaprzalski, South Oxhey, Herts; Miss Margaret Cleasby (Youth) and Mr. David Hines, Burnley; Mrs. Frances Morgan, Worsthorne (Burnley R.D.); Mr. Richard B. Ball, Croydon; Miss Danaluchmee Ramalingam, Harringay; Miss Nahid Saedi Richmond; Mr. Richard Bidlake (re-declared), Westminster; Miss Farideh Ashtiani, Cambridge; Miss Kayegasse Pomanah, Hartwood, Lanarks; Mrs. Violet M. M. Reynolds and Mr. Thomas W. Reynolds, Ipswich; Miss Millicent A. Glenn, Plaisance, Mr. Abdool Hai, Campbellville and Mr. John W. Forbes, Kitty Village, all in Guyana; and the following Youth, who have all claimed voting rights—Miss Imelda Harding, Inverness; Miss Elizabeth Hopwood, Stretford; Miss Lindsay Rutherford, Wokingham R.D.; Mr. Roderick Grant, Aberdeen; Miss Leila Assadi and Mr. Robert Collins, both of Enfield; Miss Doreen M. Holdsworth, Newcastle upon Tyne and Mr. Fuad Rizai, Tunbridge Wells.

## FIRST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH TEACHING PROJECT

Moojan Momen left London on Friday evening, January 12th, to fly to Senegal, West Africa, where he will begin an eight-month teaching project that will take him also to Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Ivory Coast. Moojan is the first Bahá'í Youth of the British Community to respond to the appeal made in 1966 by the Universal House of Justice for Youth from Germany, Persia, the United States and the British Isles to make teaching trips of six to twelve months in the large-scale conversion areas. Moojan's offer was sent to the Universal House of Justice who received it warmly, allocated him to West Africa and eventually approved the

details of the trip that were worked out by our Overseas Goals Committee in consultation with the N.S.A. of West Africa. Prayers are being said in the Holy Shrines for his success. The National Assembly is joyous that this first international youth teaching project is under way, and we pray too that it will be richly blessed. Such projects should be financially self-supporting, and some Friends who have no children of their own who would be able to make such a trip, may wish to think seriously of "adopting" a Bahá'í Youth whose dedication, energy and enthusiasm would make him as suitable as Moojan to help in this way. Please write to the National Assembly if you would care to consider it.

## NSA MEETING HELD IN EDINBURGH

The National Assembly's December meeting was held in the Scottish capital, and we were happy to be able to consult with the Edinburgh Assembly and also with the Scottish Teaching Committee, and to meet many of the Edinburgh and nearby friends on the Saturday evening. Arising from the consultation with the S.T.C. the appeal was made for Friends to take part in the first "Residential Teaching Group Project" for the Northern Islands, and we joyously report the response of seven believers, who between them will be able to man two Group Projects to the goal island of Shetland (Lerwick). The S.T.C. is working now on the details. The Universal House of Justice has written warmly of the development of the Edinburgh Community, and mentioned its significance in the development of Europe. The National Assembly asks the whole Community to pray for the successful consolidation and further expansion of the Faith in Edinburgh.

## REMOVAL OF VOTING RIGHTS.

The National Assembly announces that it has been necessary to remove the voting rights of Mr. Graeme Rouhani of Portsmouth.

## OBITUARIES

On 30th November, Denise and Jeremy Fox experienced the tragic death of their small son Jago; less than two years old, little Jago was truly a 'child of the Kingdom', radiantly happy, he brought a special joy to the Swansea and the South Wales Community. He died in the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children in London, as a result of complications following a graft operation on one of his hands. For an unforgettable moment Jago brought the Abbá Kingdom closely to us, for at his funeral there was such a spirit of gladness and purity that all who were present felt the reality of the words, "I have made death a messenger of joy to thee". Verily, of such is the Kingdom of God.

A tribute to Charles Dunning, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh to Orkney, will be



published in a later issue of the "Bahá'í Journal", but the National Assembly announces now Charles' passing in Cardiff on 25th December. He died peacefully, and his valiant soul will have soared joyously to the 'Abha Kingdom, to be greeted once more by the beloved Guardian who welcomed Charles so lovingly in Haifa when he made the pilgrimage in 1957. His name is inscribed on the Scroll of Honour kept at the World Centre, and he will never be forgotten.

To the Friends of Edinburgh we send deepest sympathy at the loss of two of their devoted and active members: Mr. Basil Jamset, who declared in November last, died on 8th January, and Jock Cunningham died on 14th January, both following heart attacks. Although such a new believer, Mr. Jamset's knowledge of the Faith, his deep conviction and enthusiasm impressed everyone who met him; he was already playing a full part in Edinburgh's activities and preparing himself for still more service there. Dear Jock Cunningham was a well-known and much-loved figure throughout the whole of Europe, he stood out at every international and national gathering as a true son of Scotland, and his loyalty and tenacity in service to the Cause were equally outstanding. His photograph is in the Intercontinental Conference issue of the "Bahá'í News", and that is how he will be remembered with affection by so many friends.

On 17th January, Arthur Pitcher passed away in the goal town of Stafford where he and his wife, Jean Pitcher, had moved from their home near Harlech in mid-Wales which they had had built especially for their comfort in the years of retirement. Undaunted, when the call came for pioneers to Stafford, Arthur and Jean had uprooted themselves and joined their daughter and son-in-law in the goal town. Arthur was a quiet, modest person, but one of deep faith and complete loyalty. He faced a long illness with quiet courage and fortitude, and all the time he continued to serve Bahá'u'lláh as an active member of the developing Stafford Group. When the Local Assembly is formed there, as we are confident it will be at Ridván, dear Arthur Pitcher's love and loyalty will be part of its foundation.

#### EUROPEAN YOUTH SUMMER SCHOOL

**Ellecom (Holland) 21-31 August, 1968.**

The school building is in beautiful, wooded surroundings, about 10 km from Arnhem (a city of 180,000 inhabitants). There is excellent accommodation for 350 persons, with separate rooms for meals, lectures and recreation.

A good programme is planned to give you a wonderful time during these ten days in this attractive conference-place, and we hope you all will come and help to make this International Summer school a huge success. The lectures and seminars will be in English, French, German and Dutch.

The price will be £1 6s. 0d. per day.

Further information is awaited.

NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE OF HOLLAND

#### FOR MEDITATION

"O ye Cohorts of God! If you observe that a soul has turned his face completely toward the Cause of God, his intention is centralized upon the penetration of the Word of God, he is serving the Cause day and night with the utmost fidelity, no scent of selfishness is inhaled from his manners and deeds, and no trace of egotism or prejudice is seen in his personality—nay rather is he a wanderer in the wilderness of the love of God, and one intoxicated with the wine of the knowledge of God, occupied wholly with the diffusion of the fragrances of God, and attracted to the signs of the Kingdom of God; know ye of a certainty that he is confirmed with the powers of the Kingdom, assisted by the heaven of Might; and he will shine, gleam and sparkle like unto the morning star with the utmost brilliancy and splendour from the horizon of the everlasting gift. If he is alloyed with the slightest trace of passion, desire, ostentation or self-interest, it is certain that the results of all efforts will prove fruitless, and he will become deprived and hopeless."

"Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol I, p42  
From the Community Development Committee.

#### DR. HAKÍM

October 15, 1967.

To All National Spiritual Assemblies.

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

After a lifetime of devoted and self-sacrificing service to the Cause of God Dr. Lutfu'lláh Hakím has asked the Universal House of Justice to accept his resignation from that Institution because his health and advancing age make it increasingly difficult for him to participate as effectively as he would wish in its work.

The Universal House of Justice has regretfully accepted Dr. Hakím's resignation, but in view of the imminence of the next election, has asked him to continue to serve as a member until that time, and Dr. Hakím has kindly consented to do so.

Having served the Master Himself in the Holy Land, as well as accompanying Him during His historic visits in England and Scotland, and been intimately associated with Shoghi Effendi in his youth, Dr. Hakím was called again to the World Centre by the beloved Guardian in 1951 for important service at the World Centre and was later appointed to the first International Bahá'í Council, of which he was the Eastern Assistant Secretary. He continued to serve on that body and then on the Universal House of Justice with undiminished devotion but with increasing difficulty during the subsequent sixteen years, earning the love and admiration of his co-workers.

Please share this announcement with the friends in your area.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

#### YORK WINTER SCHOOL.

To the Youth gathered at the York Winter School:—

National Spiritual Assembly about to commence exceptionally prolonged session wishes to convey to Youth School its loving greetings and assures all participants prayers for outstanding successes. Although immensely proud achievements of the youth during past few years, Assembly believes the great potential of the British youth has not yet been exploited to the full and urges you pay particular attention to the practical and effective way in which the youth can help achieve remaining goals of the Plan during the next five crucial years. Not only should you seek to co-operate fully with the various committees entrusted with the achievement of these goals, but you should not hesitate to initiate your own projects with all the zeal, enthusiasm and imagination which is a prerogative of youth. The youth of Britain are crying out for dynamic leadership and your N.S.A. is confident that the capacity to give this leadership is available at the York school. We eagerly await proof that this confidence is justified.

With deepest love to you all,

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

To The National Spiritual Assembly.  
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We felt very moved and greatly honoured to receive your stirring message. We have been instilled with an enthusiasm which has captured our hearts and made us intensely aware of our role at this crucial and vital stage of the Nine Year Plan. Our response was immediate.

It was decided that the great spirit of love that your message evoked should be channelled into practical and effective ways of serving the Faith as soon as possible. In sessions held for consultation on your message, we were greatly guided in our response by the presence of Hands of the Cause Mr. Ferraby and Mr. Faizi.

Offers to pioneer and correspond with pioneers, suggestions for youth projects during vacations and the realisation of the need for a greater force of cohesion among the Bahá'í Youth of this country were the results of our consultations.

The organisation, the attendance, and, above all, the spirit of this school reflects the growing maturity of the Bahá'í Youth of the British Isles. This, we believe, to be a sign of our determination to justify your confidence in us and we hope that we may prove one day to be among the first of that "new race of men".

Assuring you of our prayers, our sincere devotion, and our deepest love.

THE YOUTH GATHERED AT YORK WINTER SCHOOL,

31st December, 1967.

*Draw Nigh unto Bahá'u'lláh.*

*Beautify your tongues, O peoples, with truthfulness, and adorn your souls with the ornament of honesty. Beware, O people, that ye deal not treacherously with anyone.*

— Bahá'u'lláh —



# THE JOURNEY OF TRUTHSEEKING

Of all the basic principles of Bahá'u'lláh for the safeguarding of the world order and unity of mankind, this principle of Independent Investigation of Truth is one of the few which is directed solely to the individual while the others are basically collective and primarily involve a social change. For example individuals are not responsible to adopt the international language or to formulate a universal system of education, but they do have to investigate the truth and to conduct the investigation independently of others. It is equally significant for us to realize that this principle is a two-edged sword; one edge separates falsehood from the truth, the other protects the individual believer against his own ego when confronted with divine tests.

This principle does not only apply to man's spiritual life, but it is important to know that it is equally applicable to whatever he desires to do. He goes through this process of investigation in all his major and minor actions. It is indeed inevitable and one of the most fundamental prerogatives of every individual.

The question is whether the attitude of Bahá'í parents toward their children should be to bring them up as Bahá'ís or to leave them to themselves, on the very wrong assumption and slender hope that the children would find the Faith by themselves.

The latter is a misinterpretation of the Divine Utterances and one of the greatest factors that contributes to the decrease in numbers, the spiritual destruction of Bahá'í families, and the lack of progress in the work of the Faith in many lands.

It is indeed unfortunate that some newly enrolled believers, due to their lack of knowledge about our all-comprehensive Faith, and in their desire to tread the path of least resistance and to silence the voice of their conscience, misconstrue this very fundamental principle of man's eternal life. Thus the gift of God entrusted to us to be used as a torch which casts its rays through the obscure paths of life is changed into a fire which consumes every fibre of our spiritual entity and allows nothing to survive, except the skeleton of our physical creation, destined to be transformed into dust.

I found to my utter grief that some Bahá'í families, though themselves active members of different Bahá'í communities, due to their grave misunderstanding of this fundamental principle, have not uttered even a word to their children about our eternal legacy—the glorious Faith. Unmindful of the consequences of this ignorance in the hearts and minds of their dear ones, they act as if they belong to a secret society. There is not a single token of the Faith in their well furnished houses. I even found some of them ashamed to mention their religious

affiliations. Thus the Faith remains unknown to their children who, I am sure, will disperse from their homes never gazing at the immense horizon floodlit with the rising Sun of Truth.

When asked, the parents have invariably answered, "We want them to find it by themselves and investigate it independently".

Such answers brought so much sorrow to my heart that I could not find adequate words and expressions to pour out my feelings.

"To find it by themselves"! What a false dictum! How will they find it? Through whom and from where, if not in their own homes, from their own parents' loving and vigilant directions? If we do not pity our children and throw them to the devouring waves of this turbulent ocean, called "society", how do we expect others to pity them, hold their hands, save them and set them on the shores of safety and security?

If this is what we mean by "Independent Investigation" why do we then exert our utmost to arrange schools for them, register their names well ahead of time, even many years in advance for attendance at some universities? Why do we keep urging them to attend all the classes at every period, encourage them to do better work and take pride in their daily advancement in what is called arts and sciences? Why do we not leave them free to find their own way to educational institutions and abandon them to their own choice, never asking whether they spent their days in school, or in bars and gambling houses?

For material education we surely urge our children to go into special training, require discipline, and we are vigilant to see that they will never lose any opportunity. But alas! In this, the most vital matter which is like unto sunshine in all the aspects of the lives of our dear ones, and which insures their eternal happiness, we remain heedless, nonchalant and carefree.

Should our intention be limited to raising ourselves from the distress of unbelief, doubt and scepticism to the condition of recognition, faith and certitude in the truth of the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh, when we do reach this ultimate goal and recognize Him as the Divine Educator, then our journey ends. It means that thereafter every act of Bahá'u'lláh and every Utterance revealed by Him will have to be accepted as the manifestation of truth; and the spirit of investigation will help the traveller who has embarked on this journey to discard the impurities of falsehood from the gems of truth and advance on this path until every member of his physical temple and even every hair will find tongues to proclaim the light of the faith ignited in his heart and soul.

But the journey is not ended. Having reached the station of faith the traveller is at the shore of an endless and fathomless ocean of divine utterances. He has to plunge into it, not to examine the truth of every word, verse, principle or precept, nay on the contrary, with a heart full of certitude and an attitude of utter humility and supplication the believer will meditate and pray and then seek to discover pearls of wisdom and will behold abiding beauty and innumerable mysteries enshrined in every word.

## The Object of All Knowledge

Before turning to the main subject of this letter, let us refer to the following two extracts from the immortal Narrative of Nabil to refresh our memory of the glorious deeds of the heroes and saints of our beloved Cause. These illustrate the two aspects of the problem at hand and will, I feel sure, shed much light on our research.

"As soon as the call from Shíráz reached his ears, Hujjat deputed one of his disciples, Mullá Iskandar, in whom he reposed the fullest confidence, to inquire into the whole matter and to report to him the result of his investigations. Utterly indifferent to the praise and censure of his countrymen, whose integrity he suspected and whose judgment he disdained, he sent his delegate to Shíráz with explicit instructions to conduct a minute and independent enquiry. Mullá Iskandar attained the presence of the Báb and felt immediately the regenerating power of His influence. He tarried 40 days in Shíráz, during which time he imbibed the principles of the Faith and acquired, according to his capacity, a knowledge of the measure of its glory.

"With the approval of the Báb, he returned to Zanján. He arrived at a time when all the leading 'ulamás of the city had assembled in the presence of Hujjat. As soon as he appeared, Hujjat enquired whether he believed in, or rejected the new Revelation.

"Mullá Iskandar submitted the writings of the Báb which he had brought with him, and asserted that whatever should be the verdict of his master, the same would he deem it his obligation to follow. "What!" angrily exclaimed Hujjat, "But for the presence of this distinguished company, I would have chastised you severely. How dare you consider matters of belief to be dependent upon the approbation or rejection of others?" Receiving from the hand of his messenger the copy of the Qayyumu'l-Asmá', he, as soon as he had perused a page of that book, fell prostrate upon the ground and exclaimed: 'I bear witness that these words which I have read proceed from the same Source as that of the Qur'an. Whoso has recognized the truth of that sacred Book must needs testify to the Divine origin



of these words and must needs submit to the precepts inculcated by their Author. I take you, members of this assembly, as my witnesses. I pledge such allegiance to the Author of this Revelation that should He ever pronounce the night to be the day, and declare the sun to be a shadow, I would unreservedly submit to his judgement, and would regard His verdict as the voice of Truth. Whoso denies Him, him will I regard as the repudiator of God Himself'. With these words he terminated the proceedings of that gathering". (*Nabil's Narrative* pp 178-9).

"It was in those days that his special envoy, Mashhadí Ahmad, whom he had confidentially despatched to Shiráz with a petition and gifts from him to the Báb, arrived at Zanján and delivered into his hands, while he was addressing his disciples, a sealed letter from his Beloved. In the Tablet he received, the Báb conferred upon him one of His own titles, that of Hujjat, and urged him to proclaim from the pulpit, without the least reservation, the fundamental teachings of his faith. No sooner was he informed of the wishes of his Master than he declared his resolve to devote himself to the immediate enforcement of whatever injunction that Tablet contained. He immediately dismissed his disciples, bade them close their books, and declared his intention of discontinuing his courses of study. 'Of what profit' he said, 'are study and research to those who have already found the Truth, and why strive after learning when He who is the Object of all knowledge is made manifest?' (*Nabil's Narrative*, pp 532-3).

Every human temple, regardless of race, colour, country or clime, is considered by Bahá'u'lláh as a mine in which God has, through His inscrutable wisdom and boundless love, deposited gems which are to be discovered, polished and cultured through the process of proper, divine, all-embracing education. These gems are the latent powers and talents with which every individual is endowed. When these powers and talents are discovered and correctly trained, the world of humanity will become the mirror of Heaven in which all divine perfections are gloriously reflected.

#### Divine Education—The Root of Knowledge

The vast subject of Bahá'í education has many ramifications stretching over all aspects of man's life and our Bahá'í literature is replete with elucidations which reveal to our eyes the most obscure corners of the human soul. How lamentable that mankind stubbornly abandons these abundant divine bounties and chooses the path of disgrace and perdition!

It is still more lamentable if those who believe in the Supreme Manifestation of God, deprive themselves of following His loving advice. Until such time as we will have authorised classifications and translations of all the holy texts. I shall limit myself in this letter to the references on parents' obligations towards their children.

We must first know that there is a vast difference between education, in the sense of character training, and instruction. The beloved Master has emphasized that education must always have priority over mere accumulation of knowledge. To know many facts, to memorize numerous formulae and to repeat parrot-like theories of science is not honour for man. True honour lies in man's education and moral conduct which enable him to be the mirror of divine perfections and shine like unto a guiding star, ready to die rather than to apply his knowledge for the destruction of humanity.

It is towards this ultimate goal that we are encouraged to advance. Divine education is considered by Bahá'u'lláh to rank as "The most exalted" amongst His commandments and is a "great protection" for the Cause of God. Educational Institutions must first instill divine laws and precepts in the hearts and minds of children. Thus the children grow to worship God and to love one another as His sons and daughters. Immediately after giving us this commandment Bahá'u'lláh warns us against excess of any system which, individually or collectively, inculcates prejudice and intolerance in the innocent hearts of our children.

#### Parental Responsibility

As we clearly understand from the Texts, there is no coercion in the Faith. Under no circumstances are the parents to force their children to be Bahá'ís, but according to the explicit Texts, they are responsible for the spiritual birth and growth of their children.

Let us take a lesson from nature. When a mother conceives, nature creates a certain condition in her physical temple which forms the home of the growing foetus. In that proper atmosphere the physical growth of the child starts. The parents, though intensely eager to behold the face of their little ones, never force its birth. On the contrary, they patiently await the approach of the hour appointed by Providence and keep every other thing in perfect harmony with the natural process. When that blessed moment comes through the operation of natural forces, the child is born into this immense world.

Now let us apply the same rule to the second home of the child into which it is introduced through its physical birth.

By divine education at home we mean the creation of an atmosphere in which the child can breathe the spiritual powers of this Age, and in due time, like unto a rose, may blossom out, unfold, and proclaim his existence in the garden of God under the care and protection of the Divine Gardener. This cannot be achieved by force or by any form of compulsion, just as the child's birth cannot be realized by outside forces. We never try to pull the flower out of its stem in winter. The flowers will adorn the stems in due time, according to the rules and regulations especially conferred upon the plants by the Creator.

Let us illustrate this by giving an example. The children who grow up in houses where the music of Mozart or Beethoven is often played, surely grow to enjoy that kind of music. This is achieved because the atmosphere of the house was filled with such melodies. The child has breathed them in. As a matter of fact this united aim becomes a focus which brings parents very close to each other.

Should the parents read the Writings each morning and evening as commanded by the Ancient Beauty; hold firesides in their homes where they show love, respect and reverence to the people regardless of race, class and creed; recite the obligatory prayers; fast; attend the Nineteen Day Feasts; celebrate the nine Holy days; and in all of these commemorations have the children comprehend the importance and significance of each act, then there remains nothing for the parents to fear. They will proudly watch the growing flowers in their own homes. Thus the spirit of the Cause will fill every layer in the atmosphere of the house. The warmth and light of this divine love emanated from such a home will definitely help the little ones to grow into fruitful trees in the Garden of God, and in due course they will proclaim not only by their words but also by the sanctity of their deeds that they are gathered under the banner of the Greatest Name; committed to be soldiers in the army of life, winning victories in the forefront of the battle lines of teaching, consolidation and pioneering fields of service.

Our writings further indicate that expectant mothers are advised to recite the Words of God to foster the spiritual growth of the conceived children. After the birth of the child, the mother is exhorted to say prayers as she puts her dear ones to bed. The influence of these words on the infants' hearts has been described as the influence of the light and the heat of sunshine on the growing flowers. As the children grow the parents are called on to teach them the Words of God. At the age of five they are to be gathered together to receive divine education. We clearly observe that education is emphasized and is given the first rank in the order of importance. It is explicitly recommended to first teach the children courtesy and reverence after which comes the acquisitions of knowledge.

#### Need for Early Spiritual Training

Knowledge must go hand in hand with divine education, otherwise man's learning will be governed by greed and lust. These qualities will change science into a disgrace and bring about the eventual destruction of all man's achievements. 'Abdul-Bahá, in His love for children, begs the friends to do their utmost to give proper Bahá'í education to their dear ones so they may understand the importance of the practice of its precepts in their lives. He promises that the children trained in the divine gardens of love and in homes imbued with the Bahá'í spirit will learn in one



month what others will learn in twelve. He urges the parents to be diligent in directing the frail steps of their little ones to the path of eternal glory. All of this should be done with tender affection loving care and kindness. He warns us against beating the children and making them the victims of tongue lashings and rebukes. Experience shows that such treatment is detrimental to the proper growth of the child's mental, spiritual and even his physical powers; it dams the opening and the onflow of his latent powers. In addition, he grows to hate his home and all that pertains to it.

We must always remember this fundamental principle of the Master affirming that education of the child who is more than fifteen is extremely difficult and in some cases, impossible. Can we straighten a branch when it has become hard and stiff? Such children, we are warned by the Master, will be left in the abyss of misery, the victims of iniquity, arrogance, pride and ignorance and very often of mental deficiencies. They will be despised and humiliated, sick and invalid and forever ashamed of themselves. They will barely pass the tests of life.

What will they think of their parents who had the torch of guidance and did not try to show it to their loved ones?

Parents who thus reduce their offspring to such depths of misery through their negligence will surely be responsible to God. We are emphatically warned by the Ancient Beauty that He will charge the parents with this negligence and will consider this as a great sin—a sin which will never be forgiven.

The injunction of Bahá'u'lláh to parents about the divine education of their children is so emphatic that, as pointed out by Him, those who ignore such a responsibility are in the sight of God, deprived of their rights of parenthood.

I appeal to the hearts of the parents who desire nothing but the welfare of their children, the apples of their eyes or as the Arabs say "The fragments of their hearts which walk on earth", I supplicate them to ponder upon the conditions prevailing in the world and find out for themselves whether children need protection or whether they should be left to themselves and to the cruel influences of life

That the world is too much with us and that society is overcome by many social diseases, no sound mind can ever deny. Pollutions have penetrated into all the pores of man's existence and the swamps of moral corruption have flooded the farthest and driest deserts and the most remote corners of every barren waste. Carnal desires and animal passions are unleashed and all aim to be gratified. Gratification of this beast of lust is to be fulfilled by all means—at the risk of breaking every sacred standard in man's life. To accede to the desires of self has become a universal verdict.

Plunged in this overtly immoral world, where the raging beast of lust is the domineering monarch, caught in the throes of its devilish machinations, unable to separate the diabolical from the divine, and almost insensible to benevolent love, pity and reverence; our children, our poor children, find themselves engulfed by their own urges within and hypnotized by their dazzling and alluring lights. Don't they need lamps at their feet, an inherent and powerful force to enable them to live as true men, to walk with celestial pride and to lead a clean, a holy and pure life as a prelude to the eternal one?

#### Protection of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings

Whatever the explanation the world may give and however it justifies its present plight, it is crystal clear to the adherents of our Faith, that the road projected by Bahá'u'lláh through this world enveloped in darkness, is illumined and safeguarded by the protective measures of His Teachings.

The unpardonable forgetfulness and negligence of parents in their attitude towards their children is the result of wrong deductions and will ultimately bring the children to the abyss of disgrace and shame, and in the life to come will hold them subject to God's justice.

If we live in a house without a lamp the consequences of unseen troubles and even disasters will no doubt await us. If we do not ignite the fire of faith in the hearts of our little ones the decline of their mental physical and spiritual lives will immediately set in. Where there is light, everything is properly placed and clearly seen; and the residents of the house can use everything with proper perspective. The same thing is true of the light of faith when ignited in the hearts and souls of children. Then all their God-given gifts, talents and capacities will function harmoniously and efficiently.

As the immense horizon of life stretches in front of our children's eyes, we see them torn between two forces. The one pulls them down to the point where all their pleasures turn into agony and the other, symbolized by a voice within them, which seeks to lift them to summits of splendours where even death is changed into glory and eternity. Look at them with their expecting, innocent and bewildered eyes, undecided amidst the controversial and devouring forces of life. Do we sit comfortably in our seats as Roman spectators and watch human lives thrown into the mouths of beasts? Or, as honest parents, do we help them, guide them and assist them to raise their eyes and behold the rising sun of Glory?

#### Backbiting Quenches the Spirit

From my experience I know of one calamity which pitilessly brings gradual death to the growing spirit of our children. This disaster is very often an undesired guest, but alas, sometimes is invited, given the best seat—our hearts—and is offered the sweetest moments of

our precious lives. It is like the freezing breeze of mid-winter which passes through almond groves, kills the blossoms and leaves the poor farmers who were comfortably settled in their warm rooms, poverty-stricken and sorrowful.

This hideous intruder is backbiting. No matter how much we endeavour to bring up our children in the spirit of the Faith, to teach them its laws, principles and precepts, if there is the slightest whisper of back biting in our homes let us be sure that our dear little ones are gone forever and irretrievably lost.

The perilous effects are so imperceptible that one's own ego is not warned and the parents are not alerted to the symptoms of the spreading spiritual ailment. One of the old teachers of the Cause used to say that we try to pull a very heavy load to the top storey of the house, and when the load is up, an ignorant man applies the sharp edge of his knife to the rope carrying the load. The downfall is sure. All the efforts of the many labourers who pulled the load are lost forever and in one instant. The same thing is true of the poisonous atmosphere created by this hideous guest in our own abode.

We think the children are playing with their toys and are not paying attention to what we are saying. It may be true that they do not consciously respond to the conversation of their elders, but their eyes see and their ears hear and register things within.

The children's hearts and souls are like clean mirrors or containers of pure, crystal and translucent water. Every word uttered by us against other friends, like a drop of ink, sinks deep into the transparent hearts. At the beginning, the colour may not seem to have changed but we know that it is absorbed with all its poisonous effects. Should the drops of poison be repeated, the child's whole existence becomes victim to a spiritual disease, the first symptoms of which are his reluctance to attend Bahá'í classes, and his grudges, even sometimes his hatred towards other Bahá'ís.

What do we expect our children to do when we as elders sit in our homes and talk against our fellow Bahá'ís, members of committees and Local Spiritual Assemblies, and perhaps the Secretary or a member of the National Assembly? The children look up to these Divine Institutions and we raze them to the dust in their growing minds and loving hearts. Then when they are of age, they do not feel any sense of security and safety in the friends' homes, nor do they trust Bahá'í committees, Local Spiritual Assemblies or the National Spiritual Assembly. That is why when we ask them to attend classes or summer schools, their reaction is obviously antagonistic. It is exactly as if we paralyse the child and then ask him to run or starve him and then demand the performance of athletic feats.

*Reproduced from the Canadian Bahá'í News, July, 1967.*



# "BAHA'ISM"

by J. R. RICHARDS, Bishop of St. Davids.

Reply by JOHN FERRABY, Hand of the Cause.

This pamphlet about the Bahá'í Faith is written by the Anglican Bishop of St. Davids, Wales, once a missionary in Persia, and is published by the S.P.C.K., London (The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge). It is an expression of the kind of prejudice to be expected from a Christian missionary in a Muslim country where conversion to Christianity is rare and conversion to the Bahá'í Faith more frequent. Much that it contains is accurate, but it is infiltrated with tendentious comments designed to belittle the Faith and with errors it is difficult to believe are not deliberate. These comments and errors vary from the trivial to the fundamentally important. Some of them are discussed below.

(1) P.6. Among the Bábís were "*men who coveted power and were prepared to use force to gain it*". Such statements are frequent in the writings of the enemies of the Faith. The Bahá'í account of the episodes to which they and the pamphlet refer is to be found in "God Passes By" by Shoghi Effendi and "The Dawnbreakers" by Nabil. The inimical writings contain many such accusations as that mentioned by Bishop Richards, that the Bábís "*flayed alive and then roasted a renegade Bábí*", but they do not agree in their accusations. These are out of character with all that is known of individual Bábís both before and after they accepted the Báb.

(2) P.10. The author of the pamphlet alleges that the Báb foretold that He whom God shall make manifest will appear "*some time between 1511 and 2001 years after his own coming*". Bahá'u'lláh explained that the deliberately concealed prophecies, based as the pamphlet states upon the numerical values of Arabic letters, referred to nine and to nineteen years after the Declaration of the Báb. Nine years refers to the Birth of the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh in the Síyáh-Chál, and nineteen years to the Declaration of the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh. The calculation used in the pamphlet is an unusual one.

(3) P.13. The comments in the pamphlet upon the Kitáb-i-Aqdas demonstrate that the author is among those who have read the Holy Writings without understanding them. The prejudice of the translation to which he refers is conclusively proved by the sources quoted in its introduction, which consist in twelve books by non-Bahá'ís, about half of them well-known enemies of the Faith, three books of Bahá'í Holy Writings long since disused because the translations are inadequate, and no books whatsoever by Bahá'ís other than Holy Writings. The prejudice of the comments on the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in the pamphlet are evident in mis-statements that could only be deliberate about what is

obligatory in prayer, about menstruating women being ceremonially unclean, in the suggestion that Bahá'u'lláh gave a certain distribution of wealth after death precedence over the testator's own wishes, in a personal reinterpretation of Bahá'u'lláh's oblique insistence on monogamy, in the allegation that a Bahá'í woman may not divorce her husband. The provisions of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that the author does not quote are more evidently weighty and universal than those he does. His comments illustrate by their inadequacy, however, Shoghi Effendi's statement that some of the laws of the Aqdas "have been formulated in anticipation of a state of society destined to emerge from the chaotic conditions that prevail today".

(4) PP16-17. The author of the pamphlet unearths certain errors a few of the Bahá'ís of the past made and presents them as though they were authentic Bahá'í teachings. For example Dr. Khairu'llah, whom he quotes, taught the Bahá'í Faith in America at the turn of the century, but was expelled as a Covenant-breaker. The American Bahá'ís remained loyal to Bahá'u'lláh and His appointed Interpreter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and rejected the teaching of Khairu'llah. Any Bahá'í in London who told a visitor, as the author of the pamphlet alleges, that the Bahá'í Faith was not a religion, was flouting the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh and His appointed Interpreters.

It is not clear what the author of the pamphlet means when he alleges the Bahá'í Faith "*became a chameleon among religions*". If he objects to those aspects of the Faith being first stressed that meet least resistance among those being taught, that objection is a strange one; but if he alleges that teachings are authorised that are not truly in the Faith, the allegation is false.

(5) P.18. The author of the pamphlet claims that the Bahá'í Faith as presented by George Townshend and others "*is uprooted from its Moslem soil and set in that of the Christian Faith*". Perhaps the Jews might claim that Christianity has been uprooted from its Israelite soil. Just as Christianity is not Israelite because Jesus was greater than the Jews, the Bahá'í Faith is not Muslim because Bahá'u'lláh was greater than the Muslims. The soil from which the tree of the Bahá'í Faith springs is the soil of the heart of Bahá'u'lláh, which is neither of the East nor of the West, neither Christian nor Muslim nor Israelite, but of God.

(6) P.20. The author of the pamphlet objects in many places to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the Bahá'í Writings. It is implied that his own interpretation and that of his friends is in some way superior to that of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. But

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "I am the Interpreter of the Word of God; such is my Interpretation". It is not permitted for the Bishop of St. Davids and his like to substitute their own interpretation for that of the appointed Interpreter.

(7) The author ends his pamphlet by asking "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" The answer of Bahá'u'lláh is clear. He is the Son of Man, as He Himself claimed, ("Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", P.85). Shoghi Effendi confirms, if confirmation is needed, that the Bahá'í Faith asserts the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus. Bahá'ís perhaps have a better understanding and appreciation of this Sonship and this Divinity than most Christians.

## OCEANIC CONFERENCE— PALERMO SICILY

12th November, 1967

To: All National Spiritual Assemblies.  
Dear Bahá'í Friends,  
"OCCASION HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY BIRTH BLESSED BEAUTY WE CONTEMPLATE WITH HEARTS OVERFLOWING GRATITUDE INESTIMABLE BOUNTIES CONFERRED BY GOD THROUGH HIS SUPREME MANIFESTATION ENSURING FULFILMENT GLORIOUS LONG PROMISED KINGDOM NOW EVOLVING WOMB TRAVAILING AGE DESTINED CONFER PEACE UNDEAMT FELICITY MANKIND STOP ANNOUNCE CONVOCATION TWENTYTHIRD TO TWENTY-FIFTH AUGUST 1968 FIRST OCEANIC CONFERENCE BAHÁ'Í WORLD PALERMO SICILY HEART SEA TRAVERSED GODS MANIFESTATION CENTURY AGO PROCEEDING INCARCERATION MOST GREAT PRISON STOP TWOFOLD PURPOSE CONFERENCE CONSIDER MOMENTOUS FULFILMENT AGEOLD PROPHECIES TRIUMPH GODS MESSENGER OVER EVERY GRIEVOUS CALAMITY AND CONSULT PLANS PROPAGATION CAUSE ISLANDS BORDERING MEDITERRANEAN SEA STOP PARTICIPANTS INVITED HOLY LAND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CONFERENCE ATTEND COMMEMORATION ARRIVAL LORD HOSTS THESE SACRED SHORES RECONSECRATE THEMSELVES THRESHOLD HIS SHRINE PROSECUTION GLORIOUS TASKS AHEAD".

Details concerning booking for the Conference will be circulated shortly and the friends should reply to these as soon as possible if they wish to attend the Conference. Only those who attend the Palermo Conference may come to the Holy Land. They should arrange to be in Haifa not later than noon on 30th August, as the Commemoration will be held on the 31st. Friends may stay six days at the World Centre, following which they may, if they wish, remain for thirteen more days in Israel, outside the area of Haifa and 'Akká.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.



## THE GUARDIAN SAID

that Bahá'ís must "as an essential preliminary to the discharge of their duties, thoroughly familiarize themselves with the various aspects of the history and teachings of their Faith. In their efforts to achieve this purpose they must study for themselves conscientiously and painstakingly, the literature of their Faith, delve into its teachings, assimilate its laws and principles, ponder its admonitions, tenets and purposes, commit to memory certain of its exhortations and prayers, master the essentials of its administration, and keep abreast of its current affairs and latest developments. They must strive to obtain, from sources that are authoritative and unbiased, a sound knowledge of the history and tenets of Islam—the source and background of their Faith—and approach reverently and with a mind purged from preconceived ideas the study of the Qur'an which, apart from the sacred scriptures of the Bábí and Bahá'í Revelations, constitutes the only Book which can be regarded as an absolutely authenticated Repository of the Word of God." ADJ p41.

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust will be glad to send you an up-to-date catalogue of all books available absolutely free of charge. Just send a stamped, addressed foolscap envelope to the secretary at 114 Lincoln Road, Peterborough.

## WELSH NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD

Volunteers are required to man the Bahá'í Exhibition at the above, to be held at Barry during the first week in August.

You don't need to speak Welsh to render this invaluable service. Please make your offer NOW to:

The Secretary, W.T.C.,  
Mrs. D. Dewar,  
33 de la Beche Road,  
Sketty,  
Swansea.

Also required—Bahá'í Youth (handymen) to assist in the erection of the exhibition from July 29th onwards; offers please to:

Carl Card,  
13 Mynachdy Road,  
Cardiff, CF4 3DW.

Who would like to speak of our beloved Faith to hundreds of enquirers in one short week?

This is YOUR opportunity in the first year of proclamation.

## LOST

A valuable fur coat was lost on National Observance Day at the Royal Commonwealth Society Hall. This coat was handed to a Bahá'í after being found in the supper room.

Perhaps this friend is still looking after it, if so please contact Mrs. Anne Jeffrey,

92 Feeches Road,  
Prittlewell,  
Southend-on-Sea.

# NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITIES

## CAMDEN

Camden's first public meeting was held in the Old Town Hall in Hampstead.

Eruch Munsiff chaired the meeting at which Wendy Ayoub spoke on, "Bahá'u'lláh's message for the World's problems".

Included in the audience of 40, were 7 non-Bahá'ís.

The Camden friends were grateful for the support given the friends from many London Boroughs on what was a wintry evening.

## NEWCASTLE

A weekend school held in Newcastle 16th-17th December, was attended by twenty-five people including two non-Bahá'í friends and friends from Billingham, Burnley, Durham and York. The sessions were varied. Regina Mazandarani gave a long and fascinating talk on Primitive Religion. Her husband, Faramarz, spoke on the Houses of Worship, illustrating his talk with photographs. Everyone listened attentively to Bahiyyih Nakhjavani's vivid recollections of Rúhiyyih Khánum's teaching tour of Indian Ocean islands, and to Eric Hellicar's talk on the Bahá'í Role in the progressive world which promoted a lengthy and worthwhile discussion bringing this lively school to a close.

Newcastle World Religion Day Celebration was attended by seventy three people. After a devotional of readings from the scriptures of seven Dispensations, adherents of four faiths, Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Bahá'í, gave excellent talks on 'My Faith and the World Today', promoting a lively open forum. A high degree of agreement between the speakers made evident a common spirit of faith, and the warm atmosphere continued throughout the buffet tea and social get-together, during which many people asked questions about the Bahá'í Faith.

## RUTLAND

The Bahá'ís of Oakham held a highly successful one-day school on Sunday, October 15th at the home of the pioneers Vera and John Long. This the first ever held in the County of Rutland, was organised by the sponsoring Assembly, Leicester, and was supported by 27 visitors from the Bahá'í communities of Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham and Sutton Coldfield.

In the morning Ernest Gregory gave a talk on the Covenant which was particularly helpful to the many newer Bahá'ís present and then Joan Gregory gave one on the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá bringing to all a better realisation of its tremendous significance. Both talks were followed by discussion.

The sandwich lunches which the friends had brought with them were augmented by hot soup and coffee

supplied by the Leicester and Oakham friends and the 'break' was enlivened by comments on the Frankfurt Inter-Continental Conference from which several had just returned. In addition, John and Vera recounted some of the highlights of their recent travel-teaching tour which involved a 5,300 miles car drive to Arctic Lapland in the course of which they visited Bahá'í communities in Holland, Denmark, throughout the whole length of Norway, the Lofoten Islands, Finland and Sweden.

Some of the friends took advantage of the sunshine to have a quick look at the Buttermarket and the ancient stocks in which wrongdoers were formerly imprisoned. They found Oakham, a county town yet having less than 5,000 inhabitants, quite charming, its smallness helping them to appreciate that Rutland really is the smallest county in England, for the entire county has only a population of some 18,000.

For the afternoon session John Long gave a talk which many found most moving on the 36 years of the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi.

Following discussion and tea, group photographs were taken to record this first Bahá'í function in Rutland.

## WOKINGHAM R.D.

World Religion Day was celebrated during the first of a series of one-day schools at the newly opened Twyford and Ruskin Community Centre. The school commenced with a devotional comprising of readings from the scriptures of various religions. After Riaz Khadem had spoken on the life of Bahá'u'lláh, the friends divided into groups to hold a "workshop".

Hand of the Cause, John Ferraby then spoke of the importance of following the laws and principles of Bahá'u'lláh and said that the greatness we can see now is incomparable to the future significance of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

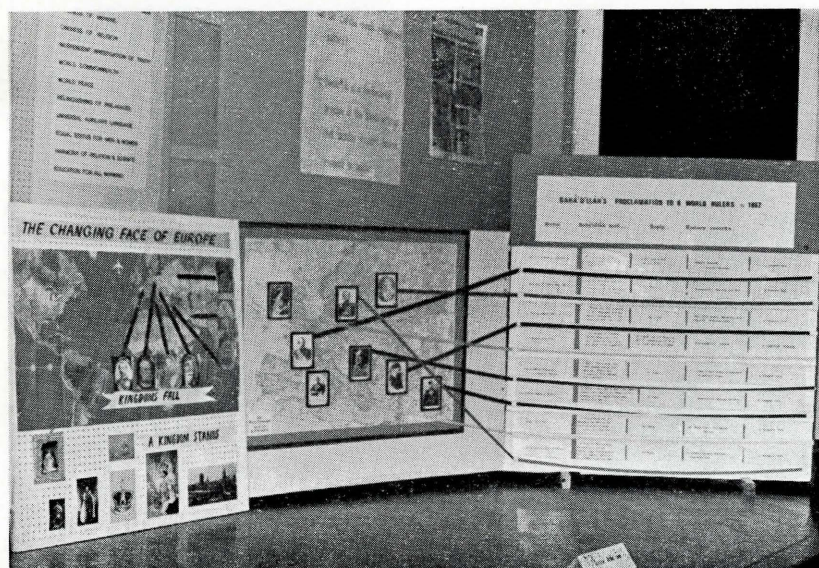
Auxiliary Board member David Lewis then spoke on "Proclaiming our Faith", pointing out some of the difficulties in the task ahead, as well as the joy and benefits it will bring. Betty Reed was the speaker at the Public Meeting which followed and spoke to the title "This earth one country", about 40 people including several non-Bahá'ís listened to Betty's powerful message.

The Wokingham Community wish to thank those who came, and extend a warm invitation to them and other friends to attend their future one day schools, the next being held on 3rd March.

## A WEEKEND SCHOOL.

Will be held at Cragnor House, Chyangweal, Carbis Bay, St. Ives, Cornwall, on 22nd-24th March, 1968. For further details please send S.A.E. to Mrs. T. Scott at the above address.





Part of the Display

## Watford Exhibition

For a week from 13th to 18th November Watford put on an exhibition at the Town's Central Library, as part of Watford Bahá'í Community's proclamation activity and also to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's birth.

The exhibition hall is an excellent one about 40 feet by 25 feet with poster boards and glass show cases. Adequate material was prepared to fill the hall, and this consisted of posters depicting the principles of the Faith pictorially, posters with questions and answers from Bill Sears booklet "Convincing Answers", pictures of Shrines, holy places, Temples and gatherings of Bahá'ís at inter-continental conferences. A large selection of appropriate pages of Bahá'í News, illustrating the World-wide character of the Bahá'í Faith, and a good selection of Bahá'í books and literature. In addition to these, two large and very attractive items prepared by Ted Cardell for the National Observance Day exhibition were on show, one was a large map of the world with tiny lights indicating the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world, the other an illuminated board accompanied with a map illustrating the fate of the Kings and rulers of the world, who were recipients of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh. All these were arranged attractively around the walls, and in the show cases.

The exhibition officially opened on Tuesday, 14th November and members of the Watford Bahá'í Community and two isolated believers in Bovingdon helped by being present in the hall throughout the time it was on, i.e. from 9.30 a.m. to 8.0 p.m.

Over 200 people visited the exhibition and carefully took note of the exhibits and all took leaflets. Many of the

visitors commented very favourably. A good stock of leaflets were put at two points for free distribution and it was noticed that the pile placed at the unobtrusive corner of the hall disappeared at a faster rate.

In all, the exhibition was a great success, weeks of preparation had gone into it supported by expensive press advertisements and last but not least a week of prayers organised by the Watford Community in which all the Bahá'ís met at a different home every night to pray for the success of our venture. The results of these prayers have been immediate. One person declared on November 12th on the anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, and a whole church group have asked for a Bahá'í speaker for December 13th.

This method of teaching, i.e. organising an activity supported by intensive prayer and supplication is most successful and is thoroughly recommended.

### SUMMER SCHOOL—FRANCE

31st August—7th September, 1968.  
GRENOBLE—ISERE PROVINCE.

Details of charges, which are reasonable, are awaited.

### A.A.T.C. REPORT—Continued

secretary to send details of their meetings to you, and then you can write a personal letter to your friend telling him of the meeting. Many of us must have friends in these places, friends who live too far away for us to meet very often, friends to whom we should love to send news of regular meetings. Here is a way in which we can serve our friends by bringing to them news of the Faith we love so well, and serve the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh by pouring our prayers and our efforts into the maintenance of Spiritual Assemblies.

## A.A.T.C. REPORT

At this moment in time there are twelve Local Assemblies in England which are below strength. Four are Assemblies which lapsed at Ridván either last year or the year before—York (where there are 7 believers), Northampton (8), Epsom (8) and Portsmouth (6). Torquay, which also lapsed, will be saved this Ridván when its civic limits will be amalgamated with those of Paignton and the Bahá'ís in that area will be able to form the Torbay LSA at Ridván. In the remaining eight communities which are below strength, the figures are as follows: Bristol (8), Canterbury (8), Chester (7), Ealing (7), Nottingham (8), Peterborough (8), Swindon (8) and Winchester (7).

When we survey the goals which have to be achieved this year, the maintenance of these Assemblies where altogether eighteen Bahá'ís are needed, either by new declarations or movement, may seem to be only a very small part of the overall effort. But we should never forget that communities where Local Assemblies are established constitute the main source of manpower for pioneering efforts in other areas. Nor should we forget for a moment the immense importance of the Local Assembly as instituted by Bahá'u'lláh. Those who are privileged to serve upon a Local Assembly are not simply a group of nine people consulting together; they are under the guidance of Bahá'u'lláh, a divine institution which is a channel for the power of the Covenant. Where a Local Assembly is functioning properly, meeting and consulting upon the teachings of the Faith, so will the Blessings of Bahá'u'lláh flow to that community.

There are three ways in which every member of the community can help in the goal of maintaining lapsed Assemblies and those below strength. The first is through prayer and we would beg your prayers that at Ridván all these communities will be able to elect their Local Assembly.

The second is through inter-community visiting—this was established between a few communities some time ago, and wherever it has been practised with enthusiasm there have always been excellent results. We would ask anyone who can do so to attend the firesides in those communities which are below strength—everyone is always happy to see a new face, and the value of this form of teaching is inestimable. At the same time it is always a happy practice for those Assemblies which are close together to attend each others meetings.

The third way is a new idea—if any Bahá'í can think of a friend to whom the Faith has been mentioned, who lives in one of the areas mentioned above could their address please be sent to the secretary of the Assembly concerned. It will then be possible for the L.S.A. secretary to send to these people details of Bahá'í meetings. An extension of this idea would be to ask the L.S.A.



# ISLANDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

From May until August 'Amat'ul-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánúm travelled in the Islands of the Indian Ocean meeting with the Bahá'í friends.

An account of the travels by Bahiyyeh Nakhjavani who accompanied 'Amat'ul Bahá.

"the field is indeed so immense"

Rúhiyyih Khánúm once said that the Bahá'í world was like a spiders' web and that although we may be on its furthest edge yet we must always remember that we are connected to the centre by a single thread. She said this to a small group of nameless people sitting in the murky corners of a wooden shack that was the Bahá'í Centre of Entre Deux, a village scattered between volcanic boulders and jungle creepers on the island of Réunion. We seemed to be on another planet; the stars at night were alien and the Creole people were a strange mixture that did not really seem to belong anywhere, or have any definite origin. The Bahá'ís felt alone and stranded, far from the reality of such things as an Administrative Order—The Bahá'í Publishing Trust or Summer Schools in Harlech. It was a revelation to suddenly experience the "Bahá'í World" that had become such a comfortable cliché in Teaching Conferences and public talks. It was a world. It stretched out over strange seas and islands, on twisting dust tracks, that led to a dim low-ceilinged room at the other end of a rice paddy, where a group of about twenty-five people that had never heard of the Faith before were gathered in flickering candlelight to listen to Khánúm. It led out through the waving sugar cane for miles and miles until we reached the house of one of the labourers on the plantation and sat there all afternoon while children sang songs in front of an overwhelming bunch of roses on the table before Khánúm. It stretched over the barren black beaches of volcanic sand all around Réunion, where even the dogs looked as though they had rather not been born, and dust hovered thickly in empty, half hearted market places. These islands were far flung outposts that were themselves vast spaces of unexplored land. Rúhiyyih Khánúm travelled from north to south and still there seemed no end to an island as small as Mauritius which is barely thirty miles across. Once when we were returning at night through the moonlight sugar plantation, Khánúm remarked that the cane seemed to be alive as we raced past it. The leaves stretched out over the road—beckoning. It seemed to be marching on and on and it did not stop until it reached the sea. Khánúm said that this is how the Bahá'ís should be: they should imitate this army of sugar cane and march out over every square acre of land, and they should never stop while there was still land to grow on.

"the period so critical" . . . "the time so short"

We were in the plane crossing from Nairobi to Mauritius, when the war in Israel was announced over the loud-speaker. It was only the first of many

news bulletins of the world's trouble spots that we followed on the course of the trip. Trouble even erupted out of the ocean where it was least expected. There was a General Election in full swing in Mauritius and the political parties were basing their differences on their religions, which added to the confusion and prejudice of the population. It seemed to be the final irony of that island's fate to harbour such insular hell in such paradisaical surroundings. Hindus and Christians, Chinese and French—mosques and pagodas, all stood under the same waving palms and beneath the same breath-taking rain-bows—all, that is, in their separateness, in case they might breathe on one another. The only thing they shared was their delicious food and their sunny natures. It was a perfect cake mixture, with all the ingredients ready on the table—but no cook to do the mixing.

Wherever we went, Khánúm carried a sense of urgency to the friends—she always knew how to make the impact of this urgency most strongly felt and she was always triumphantly successful. Sometimes she would shock one's complacency by her almost brutal directness; the air would be charged with a tingling, electric sensation. She would ask questions that no one could answer. She would answer them with vital perception and understanding as though she had been living with these people all her life and knew of their most intimate thoughts. She would place her finger on the nerve centre of a jumble of problems that had been troubling the Assembly for months and in a matter of days would have found a solution and be urging the friends to carry out her plan before she left. One was always keenly aware of the unrelenting tread of time with Rúhiyyih Khánúm for she not only drained every minute of its value herself but was unceasing in her command to the friends to do likewise. Time suddenly became an infinitely precious and elusive thing. She often repeated the words "there is so little time"—to her audiences—and spoke untiringly on this theme even when we were alone. She called upon the friends to secure the Cause now for in five years it might be too late. The Bahá'í Faith needed teachers to go in the villages and speak to the peasants, she said. Now was not the time to sit and hoard degrees so that in the end there would be nothing to do but lecture senior graduates in a university in the middle of a city. She said that the situation in the world could be drawn as a picture of two mountains and a deep valley between them. On one mountain peak stood the followers of Bahá'u'lláh—by virtue of their having recognised and accepted the Manifestation for this day. On the other stood an ever-diminishing group of simple and spiritual hearted

people—the pagans of this world—"the underdeveloped", "uncivilised" masses of the Indian and African jungles—and this mountain was rapidly avalanching down in a cloud of dust to the valley between where the western civilisation was moving about in a misery of darkness. The Bahá'ís, she said, should "transplant" as it were, the people on the second mountain top to the first—for now it was easy. As soon as they fell in the valley, it would be difficult.

The waves beat on the white shore and throw up the most exquisite shells. If we do not pick the sea-treasures now the tide will sweep in and cover them up. Khánúm often said that words were useless: you could not sit down and tell people to do things. So she went beach-combing herself and showed them.

"the cause so great" . . . . "the privilege so priceless"

Rúhiyyih Khánúm always gave beautiful talks but there were times when she seemed quite simply to be inspired. On one occasion, at a public meeting in a tiny village called Rose Belle in Mauritius, we arrived to find that the only resident Bahá'í was ill and therefore unable to come; that the local priests of all the various religions had been warning their respective flocks about the danger of this Bahá'í visitor so that only a handful had ventured to come out of curiosity more than anything else—and that a vast cinema hall had been rented to celebrate the great occasion, with barely enough people in it to fill up the back row. They sat in the shadows by the door marked "exit" while a cracked record player churned out an antiquated Tamal love song. Rúhiyyih Khánúm had travelled 2,000 miles to speak about the Bahá'í Faith in this dark place, and as she spoke the audience left the back seats and gathered nearer to listen. The cinema hall suddenly had a purpose in being so vast and dark; the faces of the people opened out like flowers and the suspicion left their eyes. She spoke of the prophets—Moses, Abraham, Christ and Buddha—they were sitting on gold thrones in a great room together. Would they be quarrelling with one another? Those shining kings? Could we imagine them in anything but harmony? So why should we who are their followers, be quarrelling with one another?

Words always sounded new when she used them. She once said "There is a wide highway leading from this Cause to all the peoples of the world".

It was in Madagascar and we had been discussing, with a certain amount of enjoyment, the Malagashy custom, based on the pagan concept of ancestor worship, of disinterring the dead in order to re-wrap them in new shrouds. Khánúm turned round and said with great force—I do not quote exactly—"we should not laugh at these customs: it is through them that we can reach out to the people and tell them about the



Faith. The highway of this Cause is wide and all-encompassing; why must we always be narrowing it and defining its borders? She continued to say that the Malagashy custom in fact was the sign of a deep respect for the dead. She said that when the friends spoke about the Faith they should stress the fact that the Bahá'ís also have this same respect because the body at one time held the soul of man and is therefore a precious thing. She said we should always search for something that would attract people to the Cause rather than alienate them. For the Cause is great enough to receive all.

She made the friends in those small islands feel the hugeness of the Faith by always talking of the big issues. In the home of a Bahá'í in a tiny village outside Tananarive it seemed as if the Bahá'í Faith in its entirety lived and breathed within the four mud walls. The family was troubled because the neighbours were gossiping about their not going to church—so Rúhiyyih Khánúm spoke to them about the way the Bahá'ís have overcome the caste system in India—of the news that comes to the World Centre from all over the globe, of the recognition of governments, of the Faith—of her own personal experiences as a young child in Montreal when she and her family were the only Bahá'ís in that city and quite alone after 'Abdu'l-Bahá had left. Whenever she spoke one was made intensely aware of the global aspect of the Faith—of the fact that this was a religion that was to promote the oneness of man, whatever patch of the planet it was that he occupied.

"the workers so few . . . that no follower of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh worthy to bear His name, can afford a moment's hesitation".

There were four bus loads to meet Rúhiyyih Khánúm off the plane at Mauritius, and everywhere she went there were smiling gold-brown faces to greet her. The island seemed to be overrun with Bahá'ís and there was a predominance of youth. But in the youth meeting no-one said a word. They sat like beautiful butterflies with their gorgeous saris and shining eyes—ready to laugh but hesitant to participate in any kind of action. One of the greatest proofs of the triumph of Rúhiyyih Khánúm's visit, I think was when, at the last meeting, a group of young people came forward and improvised a hilariously funny play about teaching the Faith. They performed it on the spot and were as delighted with it themselves as the audience was.

The islands of Mauritius and Réunion were very different from one another and yet almost the same in some respects. Mauritius lay in a pool of sun, brimful of smiling Bahá'ís and frothy coconut juice. Réunion was a volcanic island—dark and savage—with a profusion of wild pigs and deep rocky gorges. The Bahá'ís were very few and scattered at opposite sides of the grim, brooding shadow of the volcano. They did not all even know each other. There were four in the northern town of St. Denis who were nothing but names on a

piece of paper, which was strange considering the number of Bahá'ís on the whole island. But when Rúhiyyih Khánúm went to St. Denis she took their names and was determined to find them.

It was a hot, sultry weekend and St. Denis was barred and shuttered like a school in vacation time. The town was planned like a grid with streets crossing at right-angles and they stretched out in front of us, utterly empty. We began to walk, with the four addresses, counting the house numbers, back and forth along those interminable yellow streets. One of the names had gone or died five years before. Another two were away for the weekend and the last had gone fishing. We stepped through gutters and sat in deserted dance-halls waiting, we crossed cracked courtyards to the stench-filled back yards of miserable 'pensions' where men sat playing cards in the gloom of smoky kitchens; always following Khánúm as she inquired after the Bahá'í, she said she was a friend who had come to see him, asked for her greetings to be given to him and left her card among the sordid clutter and jumble with such humility.

There was less Bahá'í activity in Réunion than in either of the other two islands—but in some ways the few days we spent there overwhelmed us more than all the weeks we spent with the Bahá'ís of either Mauritius or Madagascar. The four hours we followed Khánúm through the empty streets of St. Denis, in her indefatigable determination to find the Bahá'ís, were worth more than all the joyous meetings among the friends of the Indian Ocean. It was like coming face to face with something that was infinitely great and awe inspiring, in its complete humanity and dogged perseverance. Rúhiyyih Khánúm would get up in the morning with flowers in her hair and by the end of the day her face was exhausted and the flowers were faded but all the time there was a strange fire that burned in her, carried others forward in the force of its heat, kindled the coldest hearth with its flame and always made her glow like a beautiful light when everything seemed most black and cold. The surf on the coral reefs of Mauritius must have a new sound to the Bahá'ís who hear it—it must be perpetually haunting them in her voice telling them to move—to go out and teach the Faith—"For there is so little time . . . so little time . . . ."

## N.T.T.C. REPORT

COUNTY	GOAL TOWN	NUMBER OF BELIEVERS.															
Buckinghamshire	Aylesbury	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
*Somerset	Bath	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
*Bedfordshire	Bedford	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Cumberland	Carlisle	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Essex	Chelmsford	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Derbyshire	Derby	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Durham County	Durham	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Herefordshire	Hereford	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
*Suffolk	Ipswich	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Westmorland	Kendal	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Worcestershire	Kidderminster	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lincolnshire	Lincoln	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Rutland	Oakham	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
*Dorset	Poole	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
*Staffordshire	Stafford	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Cornwall	St. Austell	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Shropshire	Shrewsbury	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Caernarvon	Bangor	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Islands (Assembly Status)—																	
Isle of Wight		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Jersey C.I.		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Islands—																	
Isle of Man . . . . .	to be opened and brought to group status.																
Guernsey . . . . .	to be opened . . . (Achieved).																
*To reach Assembly status by Rídván 1968.																	

### NEWS OF THE GOAL TOWNS

**Carlisle.** Exchange visits to take place between the Carlisle friends and friends from the Assisting Assembly of Burnley.

**Chelmsford.** The pioneer has left Chelmsford to pioneer overseas, and this town is now without Bahá'ís.

**Ipswich.** We joyfully announce two more declarations.

**Kendal.** Successful weekend gathering of Bahá'ís and enquirers 11/12th November. The Kendal friends now feel they are able to identify themselves with the Faith in advertising locally.

**Stafford.** 13 non-Bahá'ís attended the first public meeting, several people reading seriously; informal weekly meetings with discussions and slides.

**Poole.** Public meeting for Human Rights held on Sunday, 10th December, with a good attendance.

**Thanks.** The Committee warmly thank all those friends who answered our appeal for travellers and visitors for goal towns.

Assemblies answering the call . . . . . Croydon, Norwich and Peterborough.

MORE PLEASE!



# AN OPEN LETTER

TO THE BAHÁ'IS IN THE BRITISH ISLES  
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Some weeks ago the National Spiritual Assembly asked me to write an article for the "Journal" about a very serious problem which is facing them and the whole British Bahá'í Community. Having met many of you since I returned from Uganda I feel I can talk to you better by letter, so I am writing to you in this way as I cannot write to you all individually.

My thoughts keep going back to some of the words of the Guardian written to us on the completion of the Six Year Plan, calling us the "valorous dearly-loved Bahá'í Community British Isles", assuring us that, "Herald, Author Faith, Center Covenant, Concourse on High, acclaim superb collective achievement immortalising opening decade second Bahá'í century" and that the "historic pledge" was "nobly redeemed and the 'tribute memory Martyr Prophet Faith' was 'worthily paid'". Yes, indeed, the British Bahá'í community had "arrived". They had earned a place in the Bahá'í world community and as the years went by their stature grew. At the October Conference in Frankfurt the most moving moment was for me when, as the roll was called, almost one sixth of the entire gathering stood up to answer for the British Isles. The number of Bahá'ís from Britain at that Conference was more than twice the number of Bahá'ís in Britain at the opening of the Six Year Plan. Are you surprised then that my heart was full and my eyes wet?

When those Bahá'ís stood up in Frankfurt, I felt proud to be a Bahá'í from Britain and during the course of the Conference I realised just how privileged we are in comparison with the European communities and how much we can contribute to the teaching effort on the Continent.

After my return that pride was rudely shaken, and as I write this letter to you I wonder whether I dare be as bluntly outspoken as my feelings urge.

We in Britain are regarded by the Bahá'ís of many lands as living in an affluent society and as one fifth of the community was able to afford to go to Frankfurt for a short conference, there appears to be justification for this view. Yet a few weeks ago we had to advise the Universal House of Justice that if we are to send pioneers to our own home goals in the islands off Scotland, we will have to call on outside funds. Yes, the Bahá'ís of Britain, the country with one of the highest standards of living in the world, have to take funds contributed by devoted believers from other lands whose annual income is but a fraction of ours, to achieve the goals within our own territory.

This is the problem facing the whole British Bahá'í community but the greatest burden is on the shoulders of those you elected to make these unhappy decisions.

What alternative is left to your N.S.A.?

Estimates for the achievements of the goals were collected from all the committees concerned and then added to all that was estimated necessary for the day to day running of the essential services of the Faith in this country. The total thus reached was then cut, pruned and reduced to a size which the friends could meet with a little more effort than they made last year. This final Budget was shared with Committees and appeals were made; it is reproduced again in this "Journal". In September it was explained that believers may wish to pledge an amount, place a Bankers' standing instruction or make a Covenant so the N.S.A. can get more funds by tax refunds. The response was negligible—3 Bankers' Orders; 4 Covenants and 8 pledges (One pledge from an Old Age Pensioner of 6/- per month who said "I can just manage this if I live carefully.")

As I write this letter, Teaching Conference will soon be here and we are to be told that the target to date is £8,250 and we are £1,950 behind that target. Since the Regional Conferences the gap has widened. The believers were thrilled to think that they could contribute to the world-wide spread of the Faith by sending £2,000 to the World Centre: the sad story is that this money has not yet been received from the friends.

I think the question really is, "Has our Faith, too, been devalued?" For many years we have been self-supporting yet today, as we advance into the Proclamation period, we have to call on outside help.

"For God's sake, care" has raised over £1 million for the Salvation Army; can we not care a little more? Can not more of us join the few who "give until it hurts"?

Perhaps all was spent at Frankfurt. Perhaps there is a saving-up for Palermo and Israel.

Perhaps the newer believers have not had it made clear to them that giving to the Fund is obligatory.

Perhaps the full achievement of "unity giving" is beyond our grasp; yet we need it for the extra flood of bounties for Proclamation for which we all yearn.

Perhaps the following words of the Guardian will ring a bell.

"Contributions . . . constitute . . . a practical and effective way whereby every believer can test the measure and character of his faith".

"No individual is functioning as a full member of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh who does not support the Fund."

"To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by the fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the Source of all wealth and all good, that is the secret of right living".

With loving greetings to you all,  
Philip Hainsworth.

## PORTSMOUTH CONFERENCE

Two coachloads of Bahá'ís from London considerably swelled the attendance of the Portsmouth Regional Conference, held on Sunday, November 19th, 1967. Over 120 Bahá'ís were present, including 15-year old Moira Gagg from Portsmouth who had declared as a Bahá'í Youth that very morning.

After the devotional the chairman Betty Reed read the message from the Universal House of Justice, which had been sent to all the Intercontinental Conferences, and then Auxiliary Board Member David Lewis spoke of some of the highlights which were experienced in Frankfurt. Slides of Frankfurt and the conference were then shown to bring us even closer to the wonderful spirit and enthusiasm that had been generated there.

This was followed by discussion on ways in which we could best serve the Faith during the Proclamation period. Pat Keeley, speaking on behalf of the Proclamation and Publicity Committee about our responsibility to teach, mentioned the exhibition which will tour the country before it goes on display in London. It is ideal for agricultural or other regional shows, and if communities are interested in either borrowing the material or in constructing one of their own, the Committee is willing to assist them.

During the lunch break we discussed, at the suggestion of our chairman, activities being undertaken by our own local communities so that practical ideas of action could be shared, and friends could be invited to support nearby communities. The youth also discussed the possibility of forming regular teaching-discussion groups in the south.

The afternoon programme consisted of short talks and consultations with representatives of the A.A.T.C., the N.T.T.C., the Pioneer Committee and the Overseas Goals Committee.

Gloria Momen on behalf of the A.A.T.C. emphasized the importance of full attendance at L.S.A. meetings so that the spirit of consultation can be developed and improved. Support was requested for the lapsed Assemblies; pioneering and visiting are needed to help raise them to Assembly status. Closer co-operation between Local Assemblies and the A.A.T.C. was urged. Assemblies were requested to send their ideas to the A.A.T.C. Gloria also suggested that members of communities tried to learn to speak themselves rather than rely all the time on outside speakers.

On behalf of the N.T.T.C. Paul Adams pointed out that abroad the British have a wonderful reputation for pioneering, and there's no reason to stop now. Students could study equally well in goal towns rather than come to London, especially for such subjects as English. Friends should support the activities of goal areas even if they cannot pioneer there.

Patrick Green, for the Pioneer Committee, and Betty Reed, for the Over-



seas Goals Committee, gave reports of the current situation and of goals which still need to be filled. Persistent efforts are needed to live in these goal places and obtain work, especially for pioneer posts abroad.

How are we going to sail on the Unknown Sea of Proclamation? Consultation brought forth several suggestions including the following: Make people in our own local areas "Bahá'í conscious". We can achieve this by advertising, by participating in local shows, and by supporting the efforts of such organisations as the United Nations Association and the Human Rights activities. Photographs of the Shrine of the Báb have been found to be good focal points in exhibitions because a number of people are already familiar with the Shrine from their travels, and so it becomes an easy talking point. Participation in Human Rights Year activities can benefit the Bahá'ís, both by getting the name associated with acceptable organisations and meeting local dignitaries, and by giving Bahá'ís experience in the organisation and administration of publicity activities. As the Human Rights Charter has been drafted by the United Nations Organisation, it is advisable for communities to liaise closely with their local U.N.A. groups and encourage them to initiate a programme in support of the Human Rights Year. In teaching the Faith at the present moment, we should aim just to tell people who wish to be informed of the Faith, but do not expect the Faith to be accepted immediately. As conditions become more difficult, people will feel the need for a spiritual explanation.

We were urged now is the time to put aside our personal wishes and desires and to place ourselves in the hands of our Local and National Assemblies for service. Once a believer starts to teach he must rely on God, not on his personal knowledge. We must be careful to answer the problems of the seeker rather than give him an unasked lecture on religion.

The Conference closed with reading extracts from the message from the Hands of the Cause to the 1958 Inter-continental Conference in Frankfurt, which encouraged the Bahá'ís to acquire two great attributes—vision and faith, and we came away once more kindled with the spirit of the Frankfurt Conference.

#### NAW RUZ CELEBRATION, 125

A Naw Ruz celebration has been arranged for

Wednesday, 20th March, 1968,

at 8 p.m.

to be held in the first floor meeting room of the National Haziratu'l-Quds.

#### Programme :

1. Devotional programme.
2. An item by the children.
3. ADDRESS TO THE FRIENDS BY HAND OF THE CAUSE JOHN FERRABY.
4. Special refreshments.

Non-Bahá'ís is welcome.

This will be a festive evening in keeping with the occasion and each child will receive a small gift.

#### National Budgets for Baha'i Year 124

March 21st 1967 to March 20th 1968.

#### Expenditure Budget

	£
National Spiritual Assembly, including Travelling, Salaries and Insurance, Cables and Telephones, Postage, Stationery, Bank Charges, Audit and Legal Fees ... ..	4,700
Assembly Assistance Teaching Committee ... ..	900
New Territories Teaching Committee ... ..	650
Irish Teaching Committee ... ..	400
Scottish Teaching Committee ... ..	700
Welsh Teaching Committee ... ..	300
National Youth Committee ... ..	250
Pioneer Committee ... ..	2,500
Proclamation/Publicity Committee ... ..	1,500
Child Education Committee ... ..	200
Overseas Goals Committee ... ..	4,000
Public Relations Officers ... ..	250
Consultative Committee ... ..	50
Community Development Committee ... ..	50
Blind Services Committee ... ..	50
National Haziratu'l-Quds Committee ... ..	125
Other Committees ... ..	50
"Bahá'í Journal", Annual Report ... ..	700
Convention and Teaching Conference ... ..	230
Incorporation costs ... ..	100
Extraordinary ... ..	200
National Haziratu'l-Quds ... ..	2,040
Dublin Haziratu'l-Quds ... ..	300
Donations (International Fund £2,000; European Continental Fund £100; African Continental Fund £50; South American Continental Fund £50; European Temple Fund £60; Panama Temple Fund £60) ... ..	2,320
	<hr/> £22,565

#### Income Budget

	£
Donations ... ..	11,000
Tax Recovery (Covenants) ... ..	5,000
Interest and Dividends ... ..	1,300
Transfer Bequests ... ..	4,500
Cash Credit Balance ... ..	700
Sundry ... ..	65
	<hr/> £22,565



Friends at Teaching Conference



# NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE UNIVERSITY WEEK

Brache Centre, 4th - 11th April, 1968

A fruitful and exciting programme has been planned for you by the National Youth Committee, to be presented at the University Week during the Easter vacation. The aim of the school is to help the student to increase his knowledge and understanding of the Faith and become better equipped to "impart this knowledge to his contemporaries". The programme is to consist basically of lectures and research. In the evening seminars, the contents of the lectures and the research topics will be discussed. The student is required to report to the whole school on his supervised research. Don't miss this unique opportunity. Write to:—

Elizabeth Asbury,  
36 Redan Street,  
London, W. 14.

Any youthful Bahá'í may apply; but only 25 applications will be accepted.

**Cost.** The charge for full board which includes Bed, Breakfast, Lunch High Tea and Beverage is 5 gns. per person.

## DEADLINE:—

Material for the next issue of the Journal to be in by 18th March 1968. to—

Mr. J. Coates, Editor,  
45 Overfield Road,  
Fawdon,  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3AJ

# BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

## Investment Scheme

The greatly expanded range of literature now in the Trusts' catalogue which has been so warmly commended by the Hands in Haifa and which was so apparent to the friends at Teaching Conference necessitates more **finance**.

The expansion of the Trust called for by the Universal House of Justice in the Nine Year Plan is already under way (15% increase in sales in the last Bahá'í year, sales at Teaching Conference almost doubled this year) but this too necessitates the provision of more **finance**.

Plans at present in hand require a further £5,000 capital—£2,000 this year, £2,000 next and £1,000 the year after to enable the Trust to become the mighty teaching instrument it is destined to be and which the Guardian foresaw when he said that our Publishing Trust was to the British Bahá'ís what the Wilmette Temple was to the Americans.

Will **you** help to provide this extra capital?

**LOANS** can be made in any multiple of £25 for **fixed periods** of 5, 10, or 20 years bearing **INTEREST** at the rate of:

4½ % p.a. on a 5 year loan  
4¾ % p.a. on a 10 year loan and  
5 % p.a. on a 20 year loan.

Of course, you *can* get higher rates of interest elsewhere but by this investment **YOU ARE SERVING THE FAITH**.

(Interest free loans would certainly be welcomed.!)

**SEND** your loans now to the Publishing Trust, 2 South Street, Oakham, Rutland.

You will receive an acknowledgment immediately and this will be followed by an official printed agreement from the National Spiritual Assembly.

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT No. 1 1st July 1967 to 31st December 1967 (inclusive)

INCOME				EXPENDITURE			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Donations—				N.S.A.—			
L.S.A.'s and Groups .....	1259	4	3 (68)	Travel .....	398	3	3
Individuals .....	3822	15	9 (73)	Office .....	1244	3	0
				Telephone and Cables .....	156	5	7
	5082	0	0	Post and Stamps .....	145	16	5
Less Payments against Covenants.....	808	2	7	Convention .....	66	10	0
	4273	17	5	Journal .....	180	5	5
Interest and Dividends .....	365	12	3	Extraordinary.....	192	0	6
Refunds to us—				Auditors .....	101	15	6
Incorporation Expenses .....	3	0	0	A.A.T.C. ....	413	13	8
Income Tax (Div.).....	412	17	8	N.T.T.C. ....	165	7	2
Rent Endowment Land .....	7	10	0	Other Home Committees .....	293	4	6
Sundry .....	15	3	3	Overseas Committee .....	533	13	0
	£5,078	0	7	Pioneer Committee .....	462	17	6
Donations—				Other Committees .....	326	14	6
Budget .....	8500	0	0	Youth Committee .....	30	0	0
To date .....	6360	0	0	Sundry.....	55	6	5
				Proclamation Committee .....	120	0	0
Gap .....	2140	0	0	Excess income over expenditure .....	192	4	2
	£5,078	0	7		£5,078	0	7

**Communities contributing:** Aberdeen, Bangor, Barnet, Bath, Bedford, Belfast, Blackpool, Bournemouth, Bradford, Brighton, Brighton Children, Brent, Burnley, Cambridge, Camden, Canterbury, Cardiff, Castlereagh R.D., Cheadle and Gatley, Chester, Croydon, Dublin, Dunlaoghaire, Durham, Ealing, Eccles, Edinburgh, Exeter, Georgetown (Guyana), Hammersmith, Harringay, Havering, Glasgow, Inverness, Ipswich, Hove, Jersey, Kensington and Chelsea, Larne R.D., Leeds, Leicester, Lytham St. Anne's, Manchester, Motherwell, Malta, Nelson, Newcastle, N. Berwick, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford, Peterborough, Poole, Portsmouth, Pontypridd, Reading, Richmond, Sheffield, Southport, Stafford, Stretford, Swansea, Salisbury, Sutton Coldfield, Wandsworth, Watford, Wembley, Winchester.