



BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYÍH KHÁNUM SPEAKS IN LONDON



Over five hundred Bahá'ís, many of whom had travelled long distances to be present, crowded into the auditorium of the Royal Commonwealth Institute in Kensington on the evening of Monday 28 June. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum has been seriously ill and has spent some weeks recuperating in a sanatorium in England. Now she is quite recovered and although still very tired was in her usual sparkling form at the meeting. She began by saying how much more difficult it is to teach young people today, as there seem to be so many more oriental 'isms' than there were ten years ago — it is much more difficult to persuade people that you have something very precious to offer when they feel they already have the answer to their own problems. Another feeling which she expressed about young people was the seeming lack of a sense of adventure — she spoke of her trip to the Amazon last year and of the challenges offered to young people in these far-away countries. Rúhíyyih Khánum expressed the wish that more British would pioneer; she said the British are very good pioneers and the need is still so great — they have qualities of determination and a willingness to undergo hardship that are invaluable. She said that Shoghi Effendi had said that the

British are very slow to move, but once they have started something they were equally slow to leave it. It has taken a very long time for the Bahá'ís in Great Britain to grow, but they are now one of the strongest communities in the whole world.

She suggested that the Bahá'ís should look for new approaches to the minds of other people, and commented that many people were interested in health nowadays — these people could be shown the Bahá'í teachings about health. Other people were interested in mystical subjects and they should be shown the Bahá'í teachings on mysticism and prayer in a way that would make them realise how marvellous are these teachings. We must reach out and find new people who are different in some way and seek to interest their minds in those subjects which will attract them to the Faith. Most important is that we live the Bahá'í life in such a manner that people will see that we have something special from the way in which we live our lives — people would be attracted to unity among the Bahá'ís in their families and communities and NOTHING would keep them away. She spoke of the need to keep the laws and of the unity that this brings, using the marriage law as an illustration.

Then she said that although we must always teach every seeker, we should be more discriminating in whom we look for — we should seek well balanced and upright people, for these are the people who can contribute greatly to the growth of the Faith. We should plan a little more time for them, because it is their abilities which can help to build the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

She stressed the great importance of prayer and said how important it was and gave an instance of a time when a Hand of the Cause had visited a particular area which had been having a great many teaching difficulties. He had not given public meetings, nor television or radio interviews, but had spent his time visiting all the communities in the area and impressing upon them the importance of prayer. The difference in that community was amazing and it could be the same everywhere — we must never underestimate the value of prayer.

She said that it was important that we took some action — if we were confined to the house, we could pray, if we could pioneer or travel teach we could serve in this way, we could save our money and put books in libraries — everybody could do something, and it was important that the community was united in taking action. There were so many things we could DO if we had a little imagination.

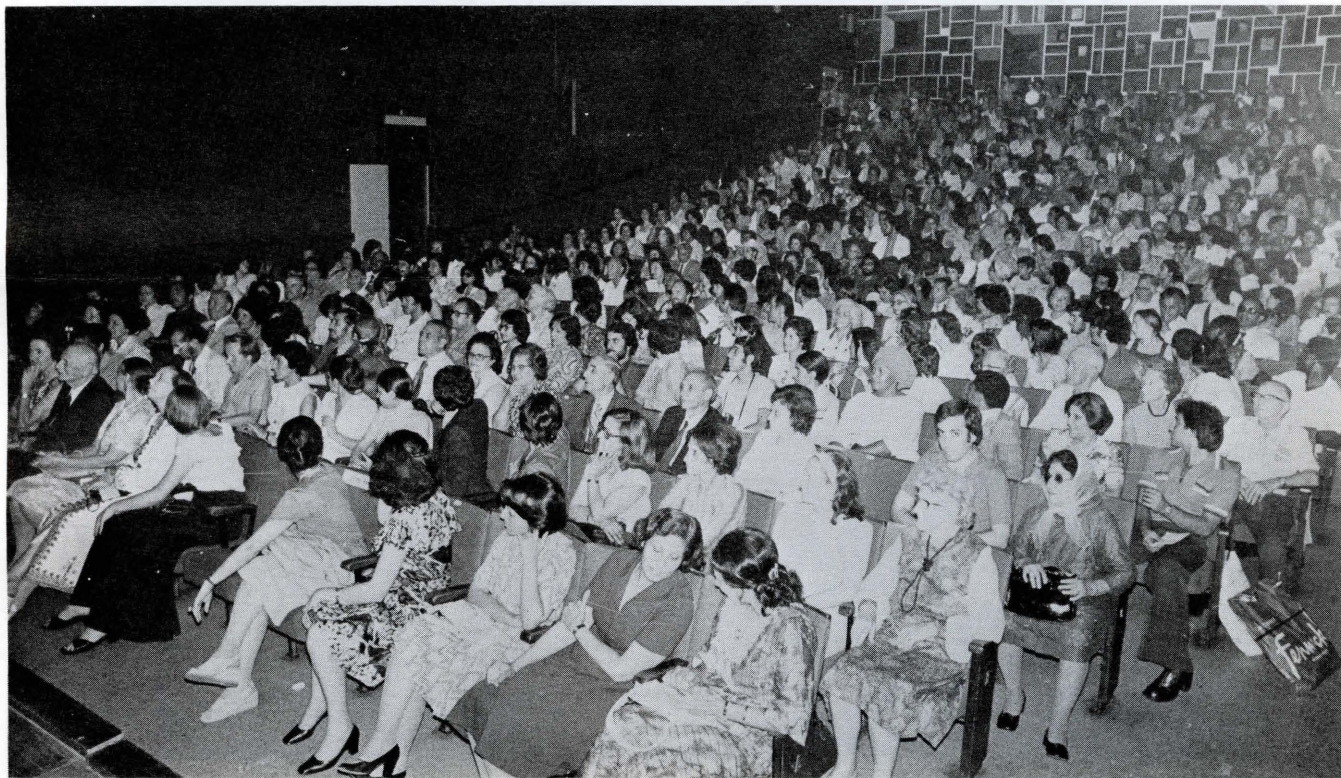
She spoke of the Persian friends — what wonderful pioneers they are — and of the great contribution they had made in this

country and elsewhere. She said that most helped in many ways but some of the older ladies, who perhaps do not speak English very well and may be tied to the house, may feel they would like to do something more, and suggested that they might like to give lessons in Persian cooking to their neighbours. To the delight of the Persian friends she spoke for several moments in Persian before finishing her talk.

After her talk Amatu'l-Bahá answered questions, including one on spiritual healing and she made it quite clear that if a person had some special gift of healing there was no need to discontinue using it to help one's fellow men upon becoming a Bahá'í, but it should be clearly understood that there was no relation between the two — a person had a gift of healing and could also be a Bahá'í, but there was no such person as a 'Bahá'í Healer'.

It was plain from the ovations given to her and the wonderful sense of love which pervaded the hall, that all the Bahá'ís present were deeply grateful to Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum for giving the British Bahá'ís this special privilege at a time when she was recovering from an illness. The Chairman of the meeting, Philip Hainsworth, asked the friends if they would kindly wait until she had left the hall before making their own way home, as she was not well enough to greet everybody, and to this request the vast majority of the friends acceded. After a prayer in English and a chant in Persian, Amatu'l-Bahá, accompanied by her travelling companion, Violette Nakhjavani, left the hall, taking with her a little piece of every heart.

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*Friends attending Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's meeting at the Royal Commonwealth Institute.
Photographs by 'Sue' Benatar*

CYPRUS

The National Assembly was very impressed by the strong wishes expressed at Convention that every attention should be given to Cyprus.

The National Pioneer Committee drafted suggestions for the formation of a Cyprus Teaching Committee, half of the members of which live in the Turkish sector and half in the Greek part of the presently divided Island. They will all meet together when circumstances allow and will establish the closest possible liaison with each other and with the National Pioneer Committee. The Terms of Reference were then drawn up by the National Assembly and the Committee appointed. Contact was made with the Turkish National Assembly for pioneers and the Greek Bahá'ís for travel teachers.

Nicosia and Famagusta were selected for re-formation during this year and Limassol was also chosen as the new goal. Larnaca is to be formed next year, hopefully by 12 November, 1977.

These are the essential four assemblies for the new National Assembly which must be brought into being by the end of the Plan.

A pioneer family is ready to move from Turkey and, at least, two pioneers from the United Kingdom are currently trying to go.

These plans were shared with the Universal House of Justice and a most encouraging letter was received in reply. The National Assembly was commended for its "realistic report and for the constant efforts" we were "initiating to promote the teaching work there".

In view of the tremendous importance of the future pillar of the Universal House of Justice to be raised on this island and in a place which is of such historic importance in the Faith, we pray that in addition to the pioneers who will arise from the United Kingdom and Turkey, a host of travel teachers will surge forward to help achieve tremendous victories.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

PROPOSALS FOR A BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The National Assembly received some concrete proposals for the establishment in the United Kingdom of an International Bahá'í School. A number of similar suggestions have been made in recent years and the problem of the education of children of Persian pioneers in other countries was fully appreciated. The Universal House of Justice was consulted and here is the relevant part of their reply.

"... The House of Justice appreciates the problem of the education of the children of Persian pioneers which Mr [redacted] 's proposal is aimed at solving, but it feels that any such project should be approached with the utmost caution.

The House of Justice has instructed us to say that the establishment of such a school could certainly not be undertaken by the institutions of the Faith at the present time when the resources of the Faith are so stretched by the requirements of the Five Year Plan and, in the education field, there is such a great need for the establishment of primary tutorial schools and literacy

courses in underdeveloped countries where the Bahá'í communities have been growing so quickly among illiterate peoples.

The House of Justice feels, moreover, that it is not timely to establish such a Bahá'í school in a country where there is free State education and also a large selection of private schools. There is also the risk that, once a private school is established, it might in time be taken over by the authorities and thus the Bahá'ís would lose control of the institution.

As it is the moral atmosphere in which the children would be living that seems to be the main concern, it is possible that this could be provided more effectively and economically by the establishment of a home run by competent Bahá'ís where Bahá'í children could live while attending various schools in the neighbourhood. Even this, however, would require much thought and whatever is done would have to be done on an entirely private basis by the individuals concerned. . ."

19 May, 1976 THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

THE ONWARD MARCH OF THE FAITH

We warmly welcome to the community the following new believers, recorded in the National Office from 2 April to 16 June 1976.

ENGLAND — Adults

Tony Alexander — Camden
Patricia Chandler (Mrs) — Worthing
Robert Norman Dodd — Ellesmere Port
Richard Friend — Slough
Richard Kruszelnicki — Haringey (London)
Terry March — Leeds
Lilian Meredith (Mrs) — Knowsley
D. M. Pennington (Mrs) — Plymouth
Annette Smith (Miss) — Birmingham

Norman Burroughs — Bath
Oliver Coburn — Dacorum
Emmanuel Echard — Nottingham
Christina Kitchen (Mrs) — Epsom & Ewell
Michel Lath — Kensington (London)
Jean Mayer (Mrs) — Test Valley
Carole Monfared (Mrs) — Ealing
Donald Pennington — Plymouth

Max Carter — Camden
Ernest J. Davies — S. Hereford
E. Fitzsimmons (Mrs) — Knowsley
Anthony Knowles — Northampton
Vera MacLeod (Mrs) — Bristol
John Mentjox — Birmingham
Ann Alexandra Moss (Mrs) — Knowsley
Lee Stone (Mrs) — Havering (London)

Youth

Hassan Ashena — Hastings
Sandra McDermott (Miss) — Westminster
Shahram Vafy — Plymouth

Melanie Attfield (Miss) — Norwich
Caroline Meyer (Miss) — Test Valley

Bernard Hoskin — Cambridge
Mark Radford — Portsmouth

SCOTLAND — Adults

Ross Allan — Hamilton
Robert Nocher — Glasgow

N. IRELAND — Adults

Mary Kpakra (Mrs) — Carrickfergus
Ernest Riddell — Carrickfergus

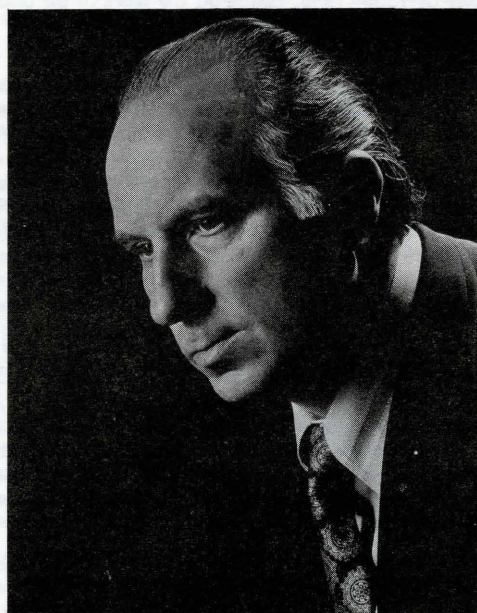
WALES — Adults

Mary Bowley (Mrs) — Cardiff
Joan Clay (Mrs) — Brecknock

OPENING OF BAHÁ'Í TELEVISION STUDIO IN WILMETTE

History was made in May at the American Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette. A television studio has been set up in the foundation rooms of the Temple; on Sunday 23 May the first video tape recording sessions took place and films were made for showing on television. The programme included interviews with well known Bahá'í artists who have been successful in their various fields — world's leading jazz trumpeter, "Dizzie" Gillespie, who was in Chicago for a series of concerts; poet Robert Hayden, who has been appointed Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress for 1976-77 (the American equivalent of Britain's Poet Laureate), the first black poet to achieve this honour, and who was in Chicago for a series of poetry readings; British opera singer, Norman Bailey, who was in America for concerts and to record Wagner's "Flying Dutchman" with Sir Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and who was described during his visit to the States by the New York Times as "fast emerging as the leading Wagner baritone of his generation".

The interviews which took the form of discussions on art and the Bahá'í Faith were led by Glenford Mitchell, Secretary of the American National Assembly and Doug Ruhe, son of David Ruhe, member of the Universal House of Justice.



Norman Bailey

Photo Donald Southern



Nairobi, Kenya — site of the International Conference to be held 14–17 October 1976



Hong Kong — site of the International Conference to be held 27–30 November 1976



BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

On March 8, 1976 the Bahá'í International Community was welcomed into consultative status with UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and invited to designate a representative to attend meetings of the non-governmental organisations' committee on UNICEF.

UNICEF came into being in 1946 when millions of children were in a serious condition of malnutrition and deprivation as a result of the war of 1939–1945, taking up the work of the disbanded United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

The work of the Save the Children Fund established in the United Kingdom during World War I and toward the establishment of which the distinguished English Bahá'í, Lady Blomfield, contributed so greatly, was eulogized in two Tablets by 'Abdu'l-Bahá which appear as appendix 3 to *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, by H. M. Balyuzi. Lady Blomfield's association with Eglantyne Jebb, founder of the Save the Children Fund, is also briefly referred to in Lady Blomfield's "In Memoriam", *The Bahá'í World*, Volume VIII, pp. 651–656.

WORLD CENTRE

On May 7, 1976 Mr Saichiro Fujita, well-known and loved throughout the Bahá'í world, ascended to the Abhá Kingdom following a brief illness.

Saichiro Fujita emigrated from Japan to America in 1903, settling in California where he accepted the Bahá'í Faith through Mrs Kathryn Frankland of Fruitvale, in 1905. At this time Fujita was a school student. His acceptance of the Cause was acknowledged by a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Fujita met 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Chicago during the Master's visit to America in 1912 and was invited to travel with His party and to serve in the Holy Land when circumstances permitted. When World War I ended, Fujita entered the Master's service in the Holy Land, arriving on September 19, 1919, and has served at the World Centre since that time, except for the years between 1938 and 1955 which were spent in Japan.

He was laid to rest on May 9, 1976 in the Bahá'í cemetery at the foot of Mount Carmel.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: On March 28, 1976 the Bahá'ís of the Central African Republic were invited to take part in the commemoration of the anniversary of the death of President Boganda, the first president of the Republic. A delegation of nine Bahá'ís, representative of various racial backgrounds, participated in the event, which is held yearly at the burial site near Bangui. Five religions were represented, each being allowed a brief opportunity to express their sentiments. Addresses, prayers and songs were offered by the various religious representatives. The Bahá'ís were the last group to appear before the microphones and the live television cameras, which were broadcasting the ceremony on the station which serves the entire Bangui area. The radio coverage reached all parts of the Republic and certain areas of the Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Zaire and Sudan.

In attendance on this occasion were President Jean-Bedel Bokassa and a number of ambassadors and delegations from many African, European and Western nations who, it was reported, listened attentively as Bahá'u'lláh's Words were read.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the Bahá'ís were warmly greeted by many of the Africans who seemed moved by the readings. "The respect accorded the Bahá'ís was very evident in the smiles and handshakes and friendly wavings as the Bahá'ís departed for Bangui", the report concluded.

CHILE: The believers in Iquique, a small town in northern Chile, have for more than a year enjoyed excellent relations with the three local radio stations and two newspapers which serve the town. Bahá'í travelling teachers have been interviewed on radio, and articles about the Faith have been printed from time to time.

Last October one member of the Bahá'í group was granted seven or eight minutes of radio time every morning for a period of five days. The Bahá'í presented a talk on references to women in the Sacred Writings. Although the talk was a unified whole, each segment was complete in itself. Inspired by the response to the talk, the Bahá'í asked if the radio station would accept as a regular weekly occurrence a programme of short excerpts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The station readily consented and each week broadcasts the excerpts made available to them.

More recently a similar request was presented to the two local newspapers and the two other radio stations in Iquique, and all were agreeable to the idea. One newspaper suggested a weekly short article on the Faith concluding with an excerpt from the Bahá'í Writings pertinent to the contents of the article.

GUYANA, SURINAM AND FRENCH GUIANA: Contact with Bahá'ís of the Wapishanna tribe, whose enrolment was first reported in January 1976, has been recently renewed and strengthened as a result of a recent teaching trip to the Lethem area of Guyana by Mr Ivan Fraser and Mr Krishna Seegopaul of the Amerindian Teaching Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana. In addition, what are thought to be the first enrolments among the Macusi and Wai Wai tribes have been reported as a result of the visit.

In the same period, during a teaching trip undertaken by Mr Youraj Sarju to the jungle areas in the Northwest District, two women accepted the Faith. The newly enrolled believers agreed to hold Bahá'í classes for children and are studying material on which to base these.

HAITI: Mrs Lee Nys, international travelling teacher, spent the month of February visiting Bahá'í centres in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Haiti. She was joined in Haiti by her daughter, Mrs Francine Levy. In addition to making friendships and presenting the Faith to a number of leading figures in all the areas she visited, Mrs Nys also addressed several public meetings and was frequently interviewed by the press and on radio. A live interview with Mrs Nys and Mrs Levy at one radio station lasted thirty-five minutes. On another occasion, when they were interviewed for thirty-two minutes on a public-opinion programme where the public is invited to telephone their questions, the interviewer expressed delight at having as guests "accomplished speakers" and invited the listeners to be attentive to "a great Message" and phone in their reactions, which several did.

"As the interview progressed," it was reported, "people from the neighbourhood hastened inside the building, flocked behind the glass window of the studio and waved and nodded assent when hearing the Bahá'í answers to the questions that were posed."

HONG KONG: A twelve-day teaching campaign was recently successfully concluded in Hong Kong. The project, spearheaded by the Continental Board of Counsellors in South-eastern Asia, assisted by members of the Auxiliary Board, involved in active participation twenty-two Bahá'í youth from Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong.

An unexpected visit to Macau was arranged for the visitors. The Macau Bahá'ís gave their guests a grand welcome. They were taken to the border of China where they stood on no man's land facing the unopened gate to 700 million people and said prayers under the watchful eyes of puzzled sentries. Later they were taken to a remote Hakka village, consisting of a few scattered huts with about eighty residents. The headman had been visited previously by Bahá'ís and given books. He was most cordial. The group sang for the villagers and their performance was warmly received with smiles and gestures of friendship.

INDIA: Early in January the State Teaching Committee of Karnataka (Bangalore) launched a three-week teaching project designed firmly to establish the Faith in Tumkur District described as "an area steeped in religious tradition where the Bahá'í Message has not yet been carried in any effective way." The area of operation was divided into three zones: Tumkur city and surrounding area; Tiptur town and adjoining villages; and Kunegal and environs. Although less than twenty volunteers were engaged in the project, significant victories were recorded.

In Tumkur an unexpectedly large audience turned out for a public meeting, approximately 400 filling the hall to capacity and listening with great attention to an address by Mrs Gloria Faizi. "It is difficult to describe the great effect her short speech had on an enraptured audience", it was reported. "The people were visibly moved. Everything in the air appeared to be charged with a great spiritual force as she spoke. A few amongst the audience confessed later that never before had they heard a more moving message of love and unity which is so inclusive in its content. One of them became a Bahá'í the next day and is already serving the Cause with devotion."

A press conference was held, attended by representatives of prominent newspapers. The press coverage which the activities of the friends received was most satisfying.

10,000 Hear the Faith Proclaimed

The National Spiritual Assembly was recently invited to send a representative to the Inter-Religious Conference held in Alwaye, Kerala. Mr Dipchand Khianra of the Continental Board of Counsellors in South Central Asia acceded to the request of the National Assembly to represent the Bahá'í community at this event which was held simultaneously with a much-publicised fair.

The Inter-Religious Conference is held annually to perpetuate the memory of Sri Narayan Guru, a man of saintly reputation from Alwaye who lived about 100 years ago and whose life was devoted to securing justice for the down-trodden and encouraging peaceful relations between religious groups. Participating in the Conference were representatives of the Hindu, Christian, Muslim and Bahá'í Faiths, as well as disciples of Sri Narayan Guru.

In his address Mr Khianra spoke of progressive revelation and quoted extensively from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the scriptures of other religions, demonstrating that all religions await a Divine Educator Who will establish world unity.

The learned Chairman of the Conference expressed appreciation of Mr Khianra's address and commented that it had quelled his misgivings and corrected any misunderstandings he might have had about the aims and purposes of the Bahá'í Faith.

It was reported that approximately 10,000 persons attended the Conference.

NORTH WEST PACIFIC OCEAN: Douglas Terrel and Masaaki Ushibata, pioneers from Hawaii and Japan, respectively, recently departed from their home base on Udot to visit the nearby island of Romanum where two villages seemed promising places to teach the Faith. Stiff winds rendered it unfeasible to land at Romanum, but landing was effected at Fason Village in the islands of Tol, the westernmost group of islands in Truk Lagoon. They talked with a number of people about the Faith and prepared to depart but were arrested and detained overnight because of the suspicion that they had illegally entered the district. The detention of the young men attracted considerable interest among the townspeople. No formal charges were laid and the young men were then freed.

At Ridván the National Spiritual Assembly cabled that the two arresting officers, and some townspeople, had embraced the Faith, and a Local Spiritual Assembly had been established at Fason Village. This was one of the seven local spiritual assemblies formed in Truk at Ridván.

RHODESIA: First Bahá'í Children's School Held: The first Bahá'í children's school, jointly sponsored by the Continental Board of Counsellors in Southern Africa and the Rhodesian National Spiritual Assembly, was held in Salisbury from January 10 to 15, 1976 at the home of Mr Lawrence A. Hautz. Auxiliary Board member Helen Wilks served as 'headmistress'.

Those who were to act as teachers spent a profitable day reviewing subject matter and methods of teaching the Faith to children, using material drawn from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Mrs Irma Allen and Mr Carlos Kaupo, professional teachers, led an informative session on the preparation of lesson plans.

Seventy-seven children ranging in age from seven to fifteen and representing fourteen African communities (as well as two visiting children from Australia and one from England) enrolled for the classes which were slanted to the needs of three age groups but each covering the history of the Faith and the lives and teachings of the Central Figures. A carefully balanced programme of constructive recreation was also presented, including training in puppetry and stage design led by Mr Kaupo. On the closing day the children, using puppets and backdrops they had painted, enacted a meeting of a Local Spiritual Assembly and a Nineteen Day Feast.

SAMOA: From the distant reaches of the islands of Savai'i and Upolu, Western Samoa, from the four corners of American Samoa and from other lands, over 100 believers and friends came together in Pago Pago, American Samoa on March 20, 1976 on the joyous occasion of the dedication of the Pago Pago Bahá'í Centre—the first in American Samoa. Its acquisition represents the attainment of one of the goals of the Five Year Plan in Samoa.

Located at Lalopu'a, Pago Pago, the large concrete home was donated by a widowed Samoan believer, Mrs Filifili L. Tu'umalo, who, together with her children, moved to a small Samoan dwelling nearby. Mrs Tu'umalo said that for a long time she had in her heart the desire to offer some sacrifice for Bahá'u'lláh, and when it became evident that it would not be within the means of the local friends to obtain a Centre for many years, she and her children felt that although they had no money to give, they could give their home for Bahá'u'lláh. During the few months preceding the dedication Mrs Tu'umalo and her family and a number of the friends spent many hours painting and redecorating the house and beautifying the surrounding gardens.

A television series about the Faith produced by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands is being shown in Samoa under an agreement between the two National Assemblies.

"We are most happy with the results which the screening of these programmes has had in reaching a very large and important segment of the public in Samoa", the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa reported. "Just last weekend a local Bahá'í teacher reported that in a village which has recently been re-opened to the Faith a couple of youth came to a fireside saying they had just come from viewing the weekly TV series. There was a declaration of faith at that meeting; and it is in a village where there have been no new believers for some time. A very favourable climate in which to teach the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is being developed due to these programmes."

SWAZILAND: A tea marking the end of International Women's Year was held at the Leroy Ioas National Bahá'í Institute, Malagwane Hill, near Mbabane, Swaziland on February 7, 1976 under the auspices of the Bahá'í women of Swaziland. Among the seventy or more guests attending were eight Queens of the royal household of Swaziland; several of the royal Princesses, including Princess Gcinaphi who is a Bahá'í; distinguished ladies from the embassies of various countries; and wives of ministers of the Swaziland Government. Bahá'í ladies of the community acted as hostesses.

After introductions, their royal Highnesses toured the gardens and posed for photographs before the araucaria tree which was planted by Princess Gcinaphi at the time of the dedication of the Institute in 1971. It is now a lovely tree and has attained an impressive height.

The *Times of Swaziland* carried an interesting review of the meeting, with photographs, and an excellent account was broadcast by Radio Swaziland on three occasions during the news. A number of enquiries about the Faith have been received as a result of the publicity obtained.

SWITZERLAND: The passing of the internationally famous American Bahá'í artist Mark Tobey, in Basel on April 24, 1976, was recorded by an impressive obituary notice in *The Times* of London in which reference was made to a statement made by art critic Alan Bowness: "Mark Tobey was without question one of the greatest painters of the mid-20th century". Again quoting Mr Bowness, the article mentioned that Mr Tobey "stood apart from his better-known American contemporaries for many reasons" and listed among them "his deeply-felt Bahá'í faith".

In conclusion *The Times* stated: "Tobey produced masterpieces as profound and richly mysterious as any 20th century painting."

An excellent article also appeared in *Le Monde* of Paris eulogising the work of Mark Tobey and specifically mentioning his adherence to the Bahá'í religion.

Mr Tobey's long and distinguished record of service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh was called to mind in the cable sent by the Universal House of Justice on being informed of his passing: "Deeply grieved announce passing distinguished dedicated servant Bahá'u'lláh Mark Tobey. Ever remembered his constant support Bahá'í community participation activities devoted services England, Japan, Switzerland, United States unstinting testimony inspiration Faith as his fame increased. Ardent prayers offered Sacred Threshold progress his soul Abhá Kingdom."

TAIWAN: The National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan was recently invited, by the sponsoring officials, to participate in a book exhibition held at the National Central Library, Taipei. The theme of the exhibit was "Religions in the Republic of China" and its purpose, it was reported, was "to remind the people of their religious freedom."

The Bahá'í display consisted of a long table simply and attractively arranged with a number of Bahá'í books in Chinese, English and Persian. Also displayed were photographs of the Shrine of the Báb, the International Archives, the House of Worship in Wilmette, and other pictures with Bahá'í subjects. The Bahá'í exhibit was the only one manned. Enquirers were able to have their questions answered by believers.

In a booklet published by the National Central Library introducing the participating religions, the Bahá'í Faith was listed as number nine. The booklet contained a brief and generally accurate description of the basic tenets of the Faith.

During the five days the exhibit was on view an estimated 3,000 people heard of the Faith for the first time and 1,500 pieces of Bahá'í literature were distributed to the enquiring public.

UNITED STATES: Bahá'í Poet Honoured: Mr Robert Hayden of Ann Arbor, Michigan has been appointed consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Mr Hayden is a Bahá'í and the first black poet named to this prestigious position, one that is often described as the nearest American equivalent to Britain's poet laureate. Among his duties will be that of advising the Library of Congress on its literary collection, giving public lectures and readings, and drawing scholars and poets to Washington for recordings and poetry sessions.

Mr Hayden, Professor of English at the University of Michigan and associate editor of *World Order* magazine, was appointed to his new post on February 20, 1976. Mr Hayden is the author of a number of books of poetry. His book *A Ballad of Remembrance* won the grand prize at the first World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal in 1962. He was recently awarded a fellowship of the Academy of American Poets.



Bahá'í children serving some of the royal guests at the tea party in Swaziland.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

NURTURING THE NEW BAHÁ'Í

It has been becoming increasingly apparent recently, and briefly brought to the attention of all attending the National Convention this year by our new Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh, that the most great care should be taken of newly declared believers immediately after they have been accepted into the Faith, and that they should not be allowed to drift by themselves or be left out of the fullest possible participation in Bahá'í life and activities. Becoming a Bahá'í is a new way of life and brings, for all of us, new experiences, tests and challenges. Unless we are properly prepared to meet them, several souls have failed and will continue to fail to cope. They will cease to grow into the Faith, or be able to partake of its live-giving vitality and soon we will find believers inactive or estranged. We must be sure that we have done all we can from the outset to prevent this happening.

Some time ago, especially in the United States, it became the practice to go through "required reading" BEFORE one became a Bahá'í. This has since been discouraged, of course, because we cannot seek to impose barriers on a person becoming a follower of Bahá'u'lláh. Nevertheless, once one has accepted Bahá'u'lláh, it is only natural, even necessary, that one should be fully aware, not only of one's responsibilities, but also the privileges of being a member of the Bahá'í world community. Books to read: "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", "The New Garden", "Pattern of Bahá'í Life" etc.

Not all people can be nurtured in the same way. "Required reading" may be sufficient for some, but the give and take of human contact is also vitally necessary. We would, therefore, like to suggest that each declaration be positively followed up by the accepting body, as close to home as possible, and this could be done in several ways.

Firstly, the Bahá'í sponsoring the registration of a new believer could take it upon him/herself to go through the individual's participation in Bahá'í Life and activities. In fact, all sponsors should make quite sure, at the time of a registration, that this new would-be believer truly loves Bahá'u'lláh and has recognised and accepted Him. (See Guidance Notes to LSA's No. 5, point 1)

Secondly, the local spiritual assembly should ensure a sustained "follow-up", especially if the sponsor is enthusiastic, but not very deep in the Faith either. In which case an older, deeper person should be entrusted with special deepening, or perhaps more than one other member of the community could help. In areas where a number of new believers are accepted at more or less the same time, even a special class could be organised.

Do we need to go over the points that a new believer requires to know? Having met someone recently who, after several months, was still not clear on the importance and point of a Nineteen Day Feast when firesides were regularly held, perhaps it bears repetition that a new believer should be instructed on:

- Attendance at the Nineteen Day Feast, its organisation and special nature.
- The Bahá'í Fund and methods of contribution, and the spiritual principles involved.
- The Fast, and guidance on how it is to be observed.
- Obligatory Prayers, as set apart from other prayers.
- Bahá'í elections, which are a privilege and responsibility given to every adult from the age of twenty-one onwards.
- Anniversaries and observances of Holy Days, with an outline of the Bahá'í calendar.
- Bahá'í burial laws.
- Bahá'í marriage laws.
- Bahá'í laws on drinking and the taking of habit-forming drugs.
- Teaching.

The obligation to teach the Faith lies almost in a category of its own because to do so requires deepening and encouragement. Every Bahá'í community, be it assembly or group should make sure that ample facilities for attending regular teaching meetings, such as firesides, are organised, and that there is every opportunity

to buy or borrow literature; that new believers are encouraged to attend seminars, schools, conferences and Conventions and know all the good news and what is going on, and to meet other Bahá'ís. Lastly, the field of service to the Cause, particularly pioneering, must be opened to all new believers. Thus will they be swept into the very bloodstream of the Faith, and, who, once having tasted the sweetness of the excitement and confirmations abounding in this Cause, would care to drop out of it again?

Other aspects of Bahá'í Life are also very important to the strengthening of the new believer, the most vital of which is, of course, an understanding of the Covenant, the pivot around which must turn the whole of our experience as Bahá'ís and the supreme and infallible source of our guidance and unity. The Covenant is the binding force, the central point from which the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh, His Teachings and Blessings flow out to embrace all mankind. From it the precious Institutions of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh are born. This is the very Rock of our Salvation.

One last word: Our attitudes as Bahá'ís inevitably make a deep impression on the new believer. The warmth of love, fellowship and harmony of a strong and united Bahá'í community will do much to confirm and encourage development in this strange new world. Our sincerity, reverence and faith will teach that this is not something to be taken lightly. The Bahá'í Faith is not just another society they have joined, to be dropped equally lightly next year, or if one marries and can't get consent or moves to another part of the country. Gradually, it is our job to make each new believer aware of the greatness of this Cause, and to integrate them fully into our midst.

Please! Do let's take care of the new believers until they are strong and well able to walk and talk for themselves!

P.S. For further guidance on this matter we refer you to:

The Teaching and Consolidation Manual, especially Confirmation, p 18-20.

Guidance Notes to all LSA's No. 5, point 7.

Study Course on the Bahá'í Faith — available from Iain Palin, address below.

LIST OF TEACHING AIDS

The list of teaching aids, published in the Journal for March 1976, has proved very successful, and a number of communities and individuals have written for items. There is a wide variety of aids available, covering teaching projects, schools' teaching, press publicity and advertising, and many other topics. Any assembly or group that has not yet done so is encouraged to study the list and see whether there are any suitable aids for their local teaching work.

Please note the following amendments:

DELETE:

- Item 8: List of Available Posters.
- Item 14: Call Thyself to Account Each Day.

ADD:

- Item 25: IDEAS FOR A FEW DAYS OF TEACHING IN A GOAL TOWN
Useful where there is not enough manpower or time for an organised project.
- Item 26: COUNSELLORS' LETTER
With suggestions for personal goals.
- Item 27: SUGGESTED WORLD RELIGION DAY PROGRAMME
Originally used by Orkney Assembly. Suitable for use with several Bahá'í speakers.
- Item 28: SPECIMEN NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS
Originally used in South Wales.

All Teaching Aids are available from:

Dr Iain S. Palin,
15 Drumossie Avenue,
INVERNESS, Scotland.

Please enclose a large stamped addressed envelope.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE (continued)

TWO EXHIBITIONS

The March issue of the Journal carried an article on the planning and construction of exhibitions. In response to our appeal, the local Spiritual Assemblies of Inverness and Craigavon supplied practical details on how each of them had set up exhibitions, and some of their useful tips and ideas are included below.

The Craigavon Exhibition

The Craigavon Bahá'ís have an exhibition which is very extensive and which involved a tremendous amount of work and planning. The subject matter was divided into nine sections: Progressive Revelation; Bahá'u'lláh; The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh; Abdu'l-Bahá; The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh; The Administration; The Houses of Worship; The Báb; and a general section including quotes on world unity.

Most of the panels are mounted on metal stands which raise them to eye level. Although the stands make the panels self-supporting, additional support was found to be necessary to prevent toppling when the panels were accidentally pushed.

The material was collected from various sources, including the Sales Committee, and the extensive lettering was done in Letraset, which required painstaking effort. To ensure both professionalism and proper lighting, the exhibition is also equipped with seven photoflood lamps and holders.

The Inverness Exhibition

The Inverness Bahá'ís wanted an exhibition for an agricultural show in their area. The assembly gave the ad hoc committee the following specifications:

1. It should look good, and be as professional as possible.
2. It should be light and easy to transport.
3. It should be freestanding.
4. It should have some relation to the show in content.

The last of these stipulations meant that the exhibition would have to have an agricultural bias, and the ad hoc committee found that the most useful source of visual aids for this was United Nations material.

The theme they chose was "Only One Earth", and each panel represented one aspect of the present-day world, such as Rich and Poor, Family Life, Pollution, War, etc.; and then moved on to the answer, with panels actually on the Faith itself.

As mentioned in the recent Journal article, presentation depends not only on content, but on practical points such as lettering and methods of mounting. In Inverness the problem of lettering was overcome by the use of a stencil set with coloured pens, and all the material was stuck onto the panels with double-sided tape. Brian and Ann Shepherd made the following observations:

"Points to watch":

1. Focal point on panel should be large enough to see at a distance.
2. Most people want to see what it is about at a glance and don't want to spend a lot of time reading.
3. It should have some detail, can't be avoided — keep it simple.
4. Attractive layout.
5. A couple of people manning who are approachable. Possibly a rota system which we thought best.

We spent a lot of time preparing and making the exhibition. Lettering took hours. To do it on the scale we did required one month's preparation and one month to make. All things which had to be sent away for, including Bahá'í books and pamphlets had to be done in good time. The securing of a tent or marquee had to be done a long time before.

General Comments

For communities thinking of preparing their own exhibitions, extra copies of the previous Journal article are available from Iain Palin (address above). The National Teaching Committee would suggest that any community preparing an exhibition divides the work into stages, and adds to it fairly gradually, unless the enthusiasm is there to work at a terrific rate to produce such excellent exhibitions as the two mentioned.

PEN PORTRAITS

ARDS: A large part of the Ards District is a peninsula with miles of uncluttered coastline dotted with small picturesque fishing villages. The remainder of the District is agricultural with traffic-free roads. There are many old abbeys and ancient monuments of historical interest. Many parts of the District are popular holiday-areas.

The main town of Newtownards is an excellent shopping — and residential — area with Primary, Secondary and Grammar Schools; and within easy commuting distance of Belfast.

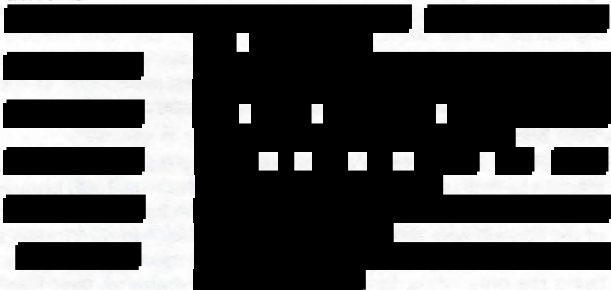
ULLAPOOL: Ullapool, the port of departure for the Ferry to Stornoway and the Western Isles, is itself a goal of the Five Year Plan. This lovely fishing village which, by reason of the Gulf Stream, enjoys a remarkably mild climate, is an excellent "retiring place" for a Bahá'í or Bahá'í couple. A Bahá'í here would not only fulfill an "Opening Goal" of the Plan, but would provide one more link in the chain leading to the Scottish Islands, into which the beloved Guardian said we must "pour all our resources".



Ullapool, Wester Ross

NOTICES

BIRTHS



MARRIAGES

- 29 May 1976: Lena Connell to Hector Connell, in Edinburgh.
- 31 May 1976: John Farrell to Lesley Anne Dibley, in Edinburgh.
- 25 June 1976: Guiti Delkhoush to Roger Knight (not a Bahá'í), in London.

The deadline for material for the October Bahá'í Journal is **30 August**. Please send **TYPEWRITTEN** copy (PLEASE) and black and white glossy photographs to the Editor:

Lois Hainsworth (Mrs)
27 Rutland Gate,
London SW7

AMERICAN 'BAHÁ'Í NEWS'

Please note that the price for one year's subscription (i.e. 12 copies) of the American 'Bahá'í News' has been raised to £4.00. This has been necessary to keep the magazine self-supporting, as postage and material costs have risen sharply during the past year.

THE FUND

Ways of making contributions to the Funds.

1. Directly (by cheque or postal order) to the National Treasurer:—

Mrs Betty Goode,
8 Knowle Road,
Stafford ST17 0DN
Tel: Stafford 62157

2. By Bank Giro directly to the bank which is:—

The National Westminster Bank Ltd.,
186 Brompton Road,
London SW3

Our account number is **18188443**

3. By Post Office Giro. Our number is **43 301 4008**
4. The Capital Projects Fund is in a separate account:—

The National Westminster Bank Ltd.,
186 Brompton Road,
London SW3

Account number **18188648**

POINTS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT

- A All cheques no matter for which Fund should be made payable to "NSA OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS" (please NOT to Betty Goode).
- B They should be 'crossed'.
- C It is unwise to send paper money or any money through the post unless it is registered.
- D Receipts are only sent if the donation is accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.
- E It is still cheaper to make Post Office Giro payments than to buy postal orders.
- F Friends wishing to donate by Deed of Covenant, please write directly about it to the National Treasurer.

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITIES

ABERDEEN: The University Bahá'í Society and the Aberdeen Spiritual Assembly recently participated in a parade sponsored by the University of Aberdeen. They built a float which was 40 ft long and 8 ft wide. The skeleton of the float was bright yellow and was covered with green and white flowers. On the front and the back of the float was a single poster saying only "BAHÁ'Í". Along both sides were banners with the quotation of Bahá'u'lláh saying "So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth". Around this theme of the light of unity was built the rest of the design: a 9 ft diameter globe of the earth which was the striking part of the display, made of transparent polythene and sprayed with the continents and oceans. The globe was illuminated from within by 400 watt power bulbs. This was most impressive especially since the parade was at night, the Bahá'í float led the procession and it was the only one illuminated using a portable generator.

There were ten Bahá'ís on the float, all dressed in different national costumes — Scottish, Indian, North American Indian, Spanish, Japanese and Gypsy.

The float was seen by about 50,000 people and was an excellent proclamation effort.

If any other community is interested in building an inflatable globe of this size we will be happy to give a design outline. The globe can be stored in a single carrier bag.

ANGLESEY: Our Spring—Summer activities have been very busy, starting with an exciting programme on 1 May "Family of the Future" with an exhibition and five consecutive "Firesides".

We have had many visitors, home and abroad, and our regular and spontaneous "Firesides" at our homes have been very encouraging with good participation and rewarding discussions.

Travel teachers John and Elaine Williams from the United States gave a very interesting slide show and talk, and our picnic with them drew a lot of friends and contacts on the beach.

This week we have had another bounty with the visit of travel teachers Morris and Madge Williams from Australia, who have also given continual "Firesides".

DURHAM: At a recent naming ceremony for a new baby seventy guests attended, mainly non-Bahá'ís. Many people commented on the beauty of the service and prayers which had been chosen, and on the wonderful atmosphere. We were fortunate in having adherents of the Jewish, Christian (several different sects) and Islamic Faiths present, and people from Iran, Syria, Hong Kong and Trinidad as well as Britain. A naming party can provide a very good 'excuse' for a gathering where the Faith can be taught by experience.

GLASGOW: On 9/10 June our community was involved in the "Sharing of Faiths" exhibition. Our programme involved songs, chants, music and a few "Hidden Words". We also had the opportunity of being recorded by Radio Clyde, as part of the programme included a panel for discussion in which one of the friends took part. We are also indebted to the neighbouring communities for their support and help.

HAMILTON: We have recently delivered the pamphlet "Bahá'í Faith", together with a personal covering letter, to every householder in the village of Dalsf which is just on the edge of our District and we plan to extend this activity to other areas. We plan to despatch the pamphlet "Pattern for Future Society", together with a personal covering letter, to nearly two hundred and twenty officials and dignitaries in our District.

INVERNESS: The fishing village of Lossiemouth lies in the goal district of Moray and for that reason the Inverness Bahá'ís were especially glad to receive an invitation to send speakers to the Lossiemouth Christian Spiritualist Church on Sunday 23 May. It transpired that the church was, in fact, holding a service on that day and the Bahá'ís were to preach the sermon! Marjorie Giorgi told the congregation of twenty the Bahá'í teachings on unity and related these to the world's needs today, while Dr Iain Palin dealt with the matter of spiritual healing, and showed how, in the Bahá'í Faith, it was not opposed to physical medicine but the two together had contributions to make to the treatment of the sick. An interesting discussion followed the service, and the church's leader later telephoned the assembly to express his appreciation for the visit.

A public meeting held in Moray's capital, Elgin, on the following day, attracted several contacts.

IPSWICH: Firesides are informal meetings and continue to be very successful, helping us to appreciate the value of personal teaching and 'living the life'.

Since Naw Rúz, our first public meeting entitled "Elements for a World Society", was the follow-up of the meeting held in the House of Commons with the World Federalists in February. The meeting was chaired by Earl Cameron, the guest speakers were Ted Wheatley for the Association of World Federalists, and Philip Hainsworth for the Bahá'ís.

Mr Wheatley was a most interesting and amusing speaker, fascinating us with his experience gained in travelling around the world on a motor scooter, single handed. It was his personal experiences of the world's problems of poverty, illiteracy and starvation that convinced him of the need for world government as the only means of solving these problems and insuring peace.

For the Bahá'ís, Philip Hainsworth also emphasised the need for world government, but stressed that this will come about only if mankind is conscious of being world citizens.

The role of the Bahá'ís is to create World Government by spreading the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and thus build the Kingdom of God on earth. Philip concluded by saying that we can work with the World Federalists to promote World unity.

It was a most enjoyable evening, with around fifty people attending, mostly Bahá'ís from all over East Anglia and about eight non-Bahá'ís present. Invitations had been sent to all the dignitaries in the town, including the Mayor, the local Member of Parliament and the Bishop. An article was published in the local free paper as well as two in local Essex papers and in the "What's on" column of the local evening paper. This has led to many enquiries about future events.

On Sunday 9 May, three of our community had been asked to attend the dedication service of a new church of the local branch of Jesus Christ (Apostolic). We had been invited by a member of the Church who had come to the meeting we had for Women's International Year. We found ourselves very much in a minority, being the only white faces amongst an overwhelming, over-filled church of West Indians, who had come from all over the country for the service.

We left after three hours of joyful, spontaneous and happy hymn singing and prayers. An experience none of us would have missed. Our friend was thrilled to see us and rang afterwards to tell us this.

We have been asked with neighbouring Bahá'ís to attend an open meeting of the local Esperanto Group in June and to provide a speaker. They are a thriving group in the town and area, and have got the past and present local Members of Parliament interested in speaking the language, and promoting it.

MANCHESTER: A caretaker for the Manchester Bahá'í Centre is still required. The assembly is looking for a suitable person or couple to look after the building — duties include cleaning, supervision of maintenance, supervision of flats in the building, answering enquiries either by callers or enquiries by telephone etc. Free living accommodation provided. For further information contact the Manchester LSA Secretary, 7 Ellesmere Road South, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 1TE.

READING: Miss Yasmin Mottahedin, a student of eighteen years of age at present a student at Reading University, has recently had a book published by Armada press. It is called "Round The World Quiz Book"; she started to write and illustrate this book when she was only fifteen. On the book is written: "She was born and educated in England, and is a member of the Bahá'í Faith, whose teachings on the unity of mankind prompted her to write this book". She has been interviewed by the BBC, Radio Brighton and Thames Valley Radio.



First Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Three Rivers, with National Assembly representative Philip Hainsworth. Not in the photograph is Mrs J. Farhoumand, who had just given birth to the youngest member of the community. The occasion of Ridván and the formation of the assembly was given full coverage in a local newspaper.

MUHAMMAD AND THE COURSE OF ISLÁM: by H. M. Balyuzi

Review by Hugh McKinley

"I AM THE LAST OF THE PROPHETS"

"...basic human instincts and emotions produce recurring patterns. In that sense history repeats itself. It is obvious, too, that man is always presented with a choice of alternatives. But man's domain of knowledge at any given time, be it scientific or traditional, intellectual or esoteric, mystical or superstitious, profoundly affects his condition and his reactions. . .

"Cruelty is never commended, always condemned. But what one age fails to see as cruel another does. And how many are there today in the Western world who, whenever an eclipse occurs, talk for days and weeks with dread and terror of the attempt made by the dragon to swallow the moon or the sun, and try to put the monster to flight by beating their copper pots and pans? Yet this was how the generality of men once behaved in the East when dark shadows fell over these celestial bodies. The fear of the dragon might be equated with the fear of the bomb." (pps 18/19)

"NO DOUBT IS THERE CONCERNING GOD"

For the present-absorbed technocracies of the developed Occident, the above defining passage may open these tremendous new perspectives that are essential if we are to grasp something — without the tradition-drilled and inculcated prejudices of race and national history — of the grand sweep of Hand of the Cause of God **Hasan Balyuzi's** latest volume of scholarship and interpretation, **MUHAMMAD AND THE COURSE OF ISLÁM**.*

For the first time — also — not alone the Bahá'í world as a whole, but the human race as such, may place its hands upon a totally un-slanted, unprejudiced, un-bigoted, even an austere factual, account of the Messenger of God, His origins, life, Revelation and its subsequent developments. The second part of the book deals not alone with the tragic breaking of Muḥammad's Covenant and the setting-up of the Umayyad Caliphate of political expediency at Damascus, but continues the survey of Islamic history through the years of conquest, the Persian and later the Turkish periods of efflorescence and decline, right down to the years of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kázim.

Finally, by a three-and-a-half page coda of surpassing audacity — that fits the tenor of the whole book as smoothly as a silken glove — the author turns to the defections and contentions of the Christian Apostles and from this sharp correspondence, draws the general and provocative conclusion that is inescapable: a disarming question that would lead all sincere readers to ponder deeply over the implications of the sacred tradition of the Prophet that is our headline above.

"Can it not be truly said that the great living religions of mankind, by the dictate of necessity, came to fashion and develop, as a bulwark, systems and institutions which neither the Founders nor the early converts had envisaged?" (p 425)

It is particularly in dealing with the Prophet's Covenant that Mr Balyuzi exercises a Bahá'í restraint which makes this work of meticulous scholarship a classic of Islamic exegesis. While naturally dismissing — barely referring to, indeed — the countless tales of miracles, prodigies and portents, he exercises the utmost care to adopt a Quranic (if one may be permitted this term) and not a Shi'ah stance. The elective system devised and departed from by the first Caliphs and accepted by the Sunnis is shown as divided individuals working out *ad hoc* solutions from the immediate necessity of their own viewpoint. The Primacy of the Imám 'Alí stands revealed in the account of the position He — the Prince of the Believers — took in confronting the situation of the Faith as it became political; in the a-political non-participation of each one of the Twelve Imáms, His successors. But this is neither lauded nor underlined. No Muslim reader can find legitimate cause for complaint that this is a biased text.

GOLDEN AGE AND PROMISE

Ending the first section with an invincible summary of what the Apostle of God actually taught, of what are the precepts of the Qur'án, the author goes on to reveal the immense scope of Islamic civilisation and culture; its impact upon, and transformation of, decadent Christian Europe; and to list the savants, poets, healers and scientists whose work lies at the foundation of modern Western thought and praxis still. At no time does he iterate the power of the Word of God, of the spirit that generated these marvellous human blossoms:

*"And they will ask thee of the Spirit. Say: The Spirit proceedeth at my Lord's command."*¹

Rather, he allows the simple effects of belief to demonstrate their Source.

For the Bahá'í reader this is a foundational text, filling in, grain by grain, those absolute affirmations he should be familiar with from the *Kitáb-i-Iqán*. He will delight in the judicious use of exemplary quotations from the Holy Book, none least Mr Balyuzi's own exquisite renderings. Just as Mr Taherzadeh's epochal treatment of the social setting in Persia and Bahá'u'lláh's own times and social background ('The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh') draws us within range of the world trodden by Nabíl'i Azam in 'The Dawnbreakers', so this essential possession of every Bahá'í "repeats the gaze" upon the desert civilisation of Arabia and its urban and global development right up to the "time of the end".

With the humility before which all bow, this Hand of the Cause of God claims nothing new in his work: "All that remains is to interpret, and here is another attempt at interpretation" (p 4), but in the style, readability, accuracy, scholarship and universal reference (and a most choice bibliography is appended) of his book, Mr Balyuzi offers a tribute to the Prophet Muḥammad unexcelled by any apologist writing from the bounds of that closing Revelation of the Prophetic Cycle. That the Eternal Truth is to come — is prophesied specifically in the Qur'án — and is **bound** to come, cannot be evaded by the attentive reader; yet at no point might any 'ulterior' Bahá'í motive or 'wiser than thou' condescension be attributed to the author:

"The present writer believes in the God-given mission of Muhammad. . . He could and did re-create the lives of men. . . On the basis of His teachings and by virtue of the enlightenment of His followers, there arose a civilisation and a culture, which, though monotheistic, did not preclude pagan thought; which brought within their pale the philosophy and science of ancient Greece, without giving the heritage of the past a supernatural aura and sanction.

Just as the first to believe in each further Divine Revelation represents the finest fruit upon the Tree of Life reared up by the former Order, so the demonstration of each previous Announcement of God's cyclically-unfolding will for human spiritualisation re-emphasises the unity of these Mouthpieces of God.

Of Them, Bahá'u'lláh has said:

*"These sanctified Mirrors, these Day-springs of ancient glory are one and all the Exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose."*²

And no more fitting conclusion than the following verses from 'the Book' may be adduced. The witness of Mr Balyuzi could only have been written from the point of view of "the learned in el-Bahá"³, and from belief in as well as experience of "attainment unto the divine Presence"⁴ prophesied nearly fourteen centuries ago by the Friend of God. It fulfils the author's obligation to all the passed Divine Revelations.

*"This truly is a warning: And whoso willeth, taketh the way to his Lord;
But will it ye shall not, unless God will it, for God is Knowing, Wise. . .
He causeth whom He will to enter into His mercy."*⁵

* **MUHAMMAD AND THE COURSE OF ISLÁM**: H. M. Balyuzi (illustrated and with maps) **£5.75**
Published by George Ronald, available from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust.

References:

¹ Qur'án, Súrah svii, 87. Rodwell's translation, Everyman Edition page 171.

² Kitáb-i-Iqán — Bahá'u'lláh. British Edition pages 99/100.

³ Bahá'í World Faith — Compilation (U.S. 1943) page 209.

⁴ Kitáb-i-Iqán, page 169.

⁵ Qur'án, Súrah lxxvi, 29/31; page 88.

2 South Street,
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Leics. LE15 6HY
England



THE EARTH IS BUT ONE COUNTRY by John Huddleston

Before becoming a Bahá'í, John Huddleston had "held an agnostic or humanist view of life, and believed that society could be improved only through radical political reform". This book is addressed to the many people "concerned about the condition of society and about the sense of unfulfilment in their personal lives" who "automatically assume that they will not find an answer in religion. Past experience has left a negative impression of superstition and escapism".

Heaven knows this is a widespread attitude in Britain and no doubt throughout the Western world. For Bahá'ís teaching the Faith who have come from a religious background, it is often difficult to find an approach which will, in the Quaker phrase, "speak to the condition" of agnostics, humanists, atheists. So there is a vital need for a Bahá'í book which starts from such an approach; and it must be said at once that the author has done a first-class job.

The first chapter could not be bettered as a clinical description of the world's present social malaise, the futility of "dropping out", the inadequacy of any political solutions or of the old-established religions, their inability to save us from disaster on many fronts. There is a striking Koestler quotation: "Is it too much to ask and hope for a religion whose content is perennial but not archaic, which provides ethical guidance, teaches the lost art of contemplation and restores contact with the supernatural without requiring reason to abdicate?" The theme of this book, that such a religion does exist — the Bahá'í Faith — is developed in the next chapters, entitled "The Time for World Unity", "A New Race of Men", "The Waves of One Sea", "A New Family Life", "A Just System of Government", and — looking into the future — "A World Civilisation". There is then a very clear and succinct account of the history of the Faith from the Heroic Age to the present day.

The structure of the book is admirably suited for teaching the Faith to those who are struggling and searching, particularly because almost every subject treated is underpinned by quotations from Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian. Many of the passages quoted are unfamiliar to "young" Bahá'ís like this reviewer (very young!) and his wife, who will find it a valuable handbook for use at firesides, etc., as well as in deepening our own faith.

Written in a style of telling simplicity and clarity, the book is full of information and insights which will stimulate the open-minded to further study of the Faith. There are so many points which struck me, or which the author has illuminated for me by his own discussion as well as the quotations, that I can only pick out a few of them here: the need for intuition as well as empirical enquiry and logical reasoning; the importance of a person's progress "from his point of departure" (since some have far greater difficulties to contend with than others); Zoroaster's astonishing prophecy of when a new great Prophet would come; the need, if a new civilisation is to be built, for everyone to come to terms with himself, know who he is and what his purpose is in life; the importance of each individual, however insignificant by worldly standards; the whole wise and compassionate treatment of subjects, such as drugs, alcohol and the permissive society, where the Bahá'í Faith diverges from most "progressive" thought; the crime of back-biting — "How much unkindness is implied by that euphemism, 'he did not suffer fools gladly'; the lack of special privilege for those serving on Bahá'í institutions; the respect for minorities and for each individual in Bahá'í administration; and many details of that administration. How refreshing, too, to be reminded of the Guardian's admonition to patience if at times the administration "seems a little self-conscious and rigid in its workings. It is because we are learning something very difficult but very wonderful — how to live together as a community of Bahá'ís according to the glorious teachings."

As a "hopeful agnostic" who has recognised Bahá'u'lláh only after long head- and heart-searching, I have a few minor criticisms. For someone with this background praying is not

"sometimes" but very often "a difficult thing to do at first"; more especially when the prayers revealed are couched in such lofty and poetic language — which to the average person in the West will seem stilted, archaic, repetitive and often obscure. Many must be put off the Faith initially by this difficulty, and a sentence or two would have helped to cut it down to size. I also found the discussion of military service unsatisfactory, because it fails to resolve the apparent contradiction of Bahá'ís in some countries being obliged to serve in combatant units if they must obey the law.

More important, I feel the section on suffering needs to be amplified: there is no mention, for instance, of the so-called "Acts of God". Yet for many good and thinking people the suffering of the innocent is the rock on which faith in an almighty and benevolent God has foundered throughout the ages. The Bahá'í response is quite different, as the author points out, "from the passive acceptance of the 'will of God' so prevalent in the East and from the frustrated bitterness often expressed in the non-religious West". Still, it is the non-religious West John Huddleston is mainly addressing; and humanists might have been helped by a few more paragraphs on the purpose of pain as "a test for growth".

The book ends with a short chapter on "Being a Bahá'í". This, too, I should like to have seen extended, since it describes the author's own experience and would have been even more encouraging for the strugglers and searchers. Becoming a Bahá'í widened and deepened his perspectives, giving him a new serenity of mind and hope for the future. This brief "epilogue" is deeply moving, and the demanding but joyful message can be summed up by quoting one paragraph almost in full:—

"... Life acquires real purpose. The promised new world civilisation is not some highly finished Utopia to be handed down from heaven at some distant date in the future. If it is to be achieved, it must be built up by man himself, following the blueprint given in the Bahá'í Writings. The sooner the foundations are firmly laid down, the sooner that Great Peace will come. This means total commitment by every single Bahá'í. There is no passing the buck to politician or priest. We have to do the work. To be a Bahá'í today is to have the greatest and most glorious challenge of all time."

Oliver Coburn

