

THE HOME FRONT

A NEWS BULLETIN

No. 39.

December, 1963.

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

SHOGHI EFFENDI -
in his letter to the British
Baha'i Community on 26th
February, 1947.

Issued by the National Teaching Committee of the
National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is
of the British Isles.

N. T. C. LETTER.

Dear Friends,

Teaching the Cause of God is essential to our lives, as well as vital for the lives of all peoples, and our Teaching Conference provides annually for the friends an opportunity to refresh their spirits and receive inspiration to prosecute this great task of ours to the best of our ability.

This year, Teaching Conference will be held in an atmosphere of expectancy. We find ourselves at the end of one major task, preparing to 'gird up our loins' for the next - whilst our beloved Universal House of Justice consults on the Nine-Year Plan to be given to the Baha'i World at Ridvan 1964. This plan was envisaged by our beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi as far back as February 1951, when in a letter to the British Baha'i Community, he wrote:-

"On the success of this enterprise, unprecedented in its scope, unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing within their range all National Assemblies functioning throughout the Baha'i World, undertakings constituting in themselves a prelude to the launching of worldwide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same Age, by the Universal House of Justice, that will symbolize the unity and co-ordinate and unify the activities of these National Assemblies."

This is why we ask as many friends as possible to come to Teaching Conference to consult together on ways and means of ensuring that we, the British Community of the Most Great Name, are fully prepared to carry out whatever plans the Universal House of Justice may place before us at Ridvan 1964.

Can we claim to have 450 trained administrators? We should, with 50 Local Spiritual Assemblies. Can we demonstrate an increase in the tempo of teaching? We should, with 100 firesides per week in the British Isles recorded a year ago!

These are the kind of questions to ask ourselves and be prepared to answer at Teaching Conference to show our strength and consolidation on the Home Front and our reserves of man-power, finance and administrative experience for the fulfilment of our destiny overseas, so often referred to by our Guardian in his letters to us.

May our consultation during Teaching Conference enthuse us with such love and devotion as to ensure the success of the future plans.

Yours, in His loving service,

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

We are delighted to announce that Mr. Sandy Ackroyd has been appointed by the N.S.A. as Secretary to the N.T.C., and has taken over his new duties. All N.T.C. Correspondence should now be addressed to:-

20 Dean Park Avenue, Drighlington, Near Bradford.

TEACHING the CHILDREN.

The children of Baha'i parents in and around Brighton have become one of the principle arms of the Brighton L.S.A. in the teaching field - as children they can attend the Feasts with their Baha'i parents; as Youth they can take their share in teaching the Cause.

We asked Mehrazar Kouchekezadeh to tell us how it all began so that we could pass to the friends the inspiration of this example - and these are her words -

"When I first came to Brighton in 1958, Joe and Elsie Lee, who were the centre of activities in this area, asked me to run a class for the Persian children who had been studying in England for some time. I accepted this willingly.

The class started with seven children of different ages. They themselves liked to have the lessons in Persian for improving their Mother tongue. So we started with the book of "Baha'u'llah and the New Era" and "Hidden Words;" the two available Persian books. The class soon grew to eleven, some coming from nearby towns. After two years my husband joined me - his part of this class was to tell the Baha'i news and encourage the children to come.

Two years ago we had 18 students from the age of 6 to 20, so I asked my mother's help, and between the three of us we ran the class successfully.

This year everything was organised properly. There are two classes; my Mother teaches history of the Faith and "Hidden Words" to 6 Youths fortnightly. Each class is followed by discussion. I teach nine children from age 6 to 13 every Saturday for an hour and a half.

We have a series of books written by Hand of the Cause, 'Ali Akbar Furutan, for children's classes. The children study a brief history of the Faith, memorise passages from "Hidden Words," and excerpts from Sacred Writings and prayers.

The programme of each lesson is as follows:-

1. Prayer by one of the pupils.
2. Revision of the previous lesson.
3. Teaching them a new lesson.
4. Telling a story from the history of the Faith.
5. Reminding them how a Baha'i child should be.
6. Singing a Baha'i song.
7. Entertainment.

Not least of their lessons is the obligation to give to the Fund - a habit formed early in life is easily continued.

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"My father was much with Baha'u'llah.

"One night Baha'u'llah, as He walked back and forth in His room, said to my father:

"At stated periods souls are sent to earth by the Mighty God with what we call "the Power of the Great Ether." And they who possess this power can do anything; they have all Power'

"Jesus Christ had this Power.

"The people thought of Him as a poor young man, Whom they had crucified; but He possessed the Power of the Great Ether, therefore He could not remain underground. This ethereal Power arose and quickened the world. And now look to the Master, for this Power is His."

Recorded by Mirza Valiyyu'llah Khan
Varga, son of the martyred poet,
Varga.

Taken from "The Chosen Highway"

by Lady Blomfield.

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TEACHING CONFERENCE.

The Shoe Trade Hall, St. James Street, Leicester.
11th/12th January, 1964.

The full Programme, shown overleaf, has been especially planned bearing in mind the desire of the friends to have time for consultation - in view of the present situation on the home front and the Nine Year Plan to be launched at Ridvan. It is hoped, therefore, that the gathering will be fully representative of all Local Spiritual Assemblies and Groups in the British Isles, and that as many isolated believers as possible will be able to come also - for they are indeed the future Local Spiritual Assemblies - and who knows which towns will be the Goals of the New Plan?

The friends are asked to plan their travel in order that they can be in their seats by 2.30 on Saturday afternoon.

The Session on Sunday afternoon will provide an opportunity for the friends to consult with the Hand(s) of the Cause on any problem or subject which they wish - problems of teaching, functioning of the Local Assembly, etc. If you have such a question to bring forward, please arrange for it to be clearly worded and presented.

Please bring this Programme with you.

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P R O G R A M M E.

"Epoch Blessed Beyond Compare."

Saturday - 11th January.

Chairman - Mr. J. T. Wade.

- 2.30 - 3.00 p.m. Devotional Programme Leicester L.S.A.
- 3.00 - 3.15 p.m. Welcome to the Conference by
Hand of the Cause of God.
- 3.15 - 4.30 p.m. "Reinforcing and broadening the
base for future operations" -
The National Spiritual Assembly.
- Break for tea.
- 5.00 - 6.30 p.m. Consultation by the friends
following points raised in the
N.S.A. Session.
- Break for supper
- 8.00 - 10.00 p.m. Review and guidance on Baha'i
literature. (See details on Page 8).
- 10.00 p.m. Closing Devotional Nottingham L.S.A.

Sunday - 12th January

Chairman - Mrs. J. Gregory.

10.00 - 10.30 a.m. Devotional Programme Cardiff L.S.A.

10.30 - 12.30 p.m. Message from Universal House of Justice.

Factual position on the Home Front and
Island territories - presented by the
National Teaching Committee and European
& Asian Teaching Committee respectively.

Discussion.

12.30 - 2.00 p.m. Break for lunch.

2.00 - 2.30 p.m. Summing up of morning Session

2.30 - 4.30 p.m. Consultation with Hand(s) of the Cause of God.

4.30 p.m. Closing Devotional Northampton L.S.A.

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Book Stall will be in charge of the Leicester L.S.A.

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BOOK SESSION - SATURDAY EVENING 8.00 P.M.

This session is intended to help the friends to understand and become familiar with Baha'i Scripture; we shall review and give guidance on certain books.

Charles Macdonald will open the session, and Malcolm Lee will speak generally of the book service in the local community, bringing to the attention of the friends one or two of the most important books for teaching.

Joe Jameson will sum up - bringing to the friends an enthusiasm for and love of reading and study, both communally and individually.

The beloved Guardian has told us that "as an essential preliminary to the discharge of" our "duties" to "thoroughly familiarise" ourselves "with the various aspects of the history and teachings of the Faith." He says, "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" (Advent of Divine Justice, Page 41.)

We hope that this session will help the friends towards this end.

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A M B A S S A D O R S o f P E A C E .

How honoured would we be if the Queen was to select us to be ambassadors to a foreign country. We would strive night and day to honour the trust placed in us, and to reflect to these people among whom we were placed, the greatness of the British Commonwealth.

God, the King of Kings without comparison, has in His unlimited mercy and love, revealed Himself in His Glory to we few, unspeakably favoured few. We feel that we can never repay Him for the glorious bounties He has showered upon us. But He has told us, 'Yes, we can, and it is so simple; "Love Me that I may love thee." He has revealed to us the way in which we may show our love for Him. A few very, very simple laws to follow. Why do we make it so difficult? Love is through all eternity the key word. All creation is but a sign of God's boundless love. We have but to surrender ourselves and let ourselves drown in the ocean of God's love. But we struggle against it and try and push out on our own, and only succeed in drowning ourselves in the ocean of despair.

The King of Kings, the King of Love, the Creator of all creation has chosen us to be His ambassadors to all humanity. We have but to share with our brothers and sisters on this speck of dust in infinity, this earth, the glory that He in His love and compassion has bestowed upon us. And He has warned us that unless we fulfil this divine privilege, then will the divine grace be cut off and cease to flow to us. We will be cut off from the Source of all love and we will wander through all eternity with the living dead.

Imagine yourself standing on the corner of a busy shopping centre. It is Saturday morning and the people are thronging past you in their thousands. There you stand, unnoticed by the crowds, but with you is the great secret that they are all longing to learn with all their hearts and souls. You alone can tell them, can give their hearts the chance of eternal peace. God, the All-Powerful, has trusted you and placed in your hands the eternal destinies of these people.

We are grateful to Graeme R. Pottier,
for this contribution.

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A R O U N D and A B O U T

News sent in a month ago may seem a little stale, but good news is always worth hearing, and we are very anxious to honour our pledge to bring forward the contributions of the friends which had to be left out of the last "Home Front."

The main activity of the friends up and down the country (and in case they may feel neglected, we would assure the Irish friends that includes them!), has been one of local celebration of the Most Great Jubilee - opportunities of Week-end and Day-Schools have been made for Tree-Planting ceremonies (or maybe it was the other way round), and many communities secured excellent publicity and made valuable contacts with local Authorities in the process. Notably amongst these are Aberdeen (whose local Council had quite a heated session, were invited to a Baha'i public meeting to hear what the Faith was all about, and finally rather grudgingly gave their permission by 22 votes to 16) - and Birmingham whose permission was given with the request that they plant a 25-year old tree in the street!

Other communities who have planted trees for their Celebration are Inverness, Chester, Winchester, Romford, Manchester, Blackpool (the last two having our Man of the Trees, Richard St. Barbe Baker, as their "Chief Tree-Planter"), and Pontpridd. We hear that Portsmouth, Cardiff and Bristol have similar occasions in the near future.

Some Assemblies - who found that tree-planting was not so warmly welcomed, had to find other ways of achieving their aim of celebration, publicity and co-operation with the Local Authorities. Wokingham R.D. and Bangor have presented outdoor seats; Sutton Coldfield presented books to their Public Library at a ceremony during their One-Day School, and Oxford are planning a similar gift.

The news from Wales is most heartening. The friends have written of the great impetus to the teaching work given recently in Swansea, where there is now a group of 5, when Marion Hofman made one of her Board Member visits. The great surprise came when David unexpectedly arrived also - a wonderful meeting resulting, and the friends of South Wales are inspired to achieve great things 'in this corner of the vineyard.' Pontypridd's Tree-Planting ceremony was followed by a most inspiring and happy Week-end School held at Rhoose.

Scotland is also showing its paces. A new experiment which augurs well for the future was an All-Scotland Week-end School held in Perth recently. The friends have also started their own Scottish Newsletter. The noticeable thing about all this is the lead which Edinburgh Assembly is giving as the pivotal centre for Scotland to the other communities in that part of the British Isles.

Dorothy Ferraby recently visited Ireland and spoke afterwards in high praise of the efforts which the friends there are putting into the teaching work, particularly in Dublin where it is most difficult to make progress in a very strong Catholic Country.

Back to England and exciting news from Brighton of their Mass Proclamation programme - 5,000 letters sent to the leading citizens of the town and professional men of all kinds, followed by four weeks of public meetings, three per week. As a result, many new contacts have been made - and several now regularly attending firesides and reading books.

To end on a different but happy note, we would like to send our congratulations and loving greetings for their future happiness to Lilo and Alberto Reyes, married on the 19th October in Manchester. The N.T.C. might well feel a little responsible for bringing these two people together, and perhaps they should consider their policy on travel teachers, as to those who are 'eligible' and those who are not!

We would also like to take this opportunity of wishing God-speed and happiness to two other newly married couples - young husbands who have returned to Persia, the proud possessors of British brides - one from York and another from Caerphilly. May the Blessing of Baha'u'llah ever guide them - Khosrov and Christine (not forgetting the baby) from York and Ehsan and Jenny from Caerphilly.

It will be 1964 before our next "Home Front" is out - Teaching Conference will be over and our eyes and hopes will be on Ridvan and the Nine-Year Plan. In the excitement of all this, please do not forget to send us your news to share with the friends - and dates of any Week-end Schools or other events which you wish to bring to the notice of the friends - to the Editor, Elizabeth Chapman, 36 Park Town, Oxford.

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C A L E N D A R

19-Day Feasts - 12th December - Questions.
31st December - Honour
19th January - Covereignty.
7th February - Dominion.

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Teaching Conference - 11th/12th January, 1964.

World Religion Day - 19th January, 1964.

Northern Area Week-end Schools

Dalston Hall, Carlisle. 15th/16th February,
----- 1964.

Applications for accommodation, etc., should be
made to the Newcastle L.S.A.,

Secretary: Mrs. Mary Jameson, 78 Wingrove Road,
Newcastle-on-Tyne, 4.

Lyme Park Hall, near Manchester. 22nd/24th May,
----- 1964.

Week-end Schools.

December 9th - Bournemouth
December 14th/15th - Leicester
March 1st, 1964 - Birmingham.

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N.T.C. Meetings.

December 7th/8th and 28th/29th.
February 18th/19th and March 12th/13th, 1964.

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THE PRESENT HOUR.

"Arise, O wayfarer in the path of the Love
of God, and aid thou His Cause."

Baha'u'llah.

In its Convention Message, the Universal House of Justice wrote,

"The Cause of God, launched on the sea of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Baha, has achieved, under the superb leadership of its beloved Guardian, a spread throughout the world and a momentum which must now carry it forward on the next stage of its world redeeming mission, the second epoch of the Divine Plan. The Universal House of Justice, in close consultation with the Hands of the Cause, is examining a vast range of Baha'i activity and growth in order to prepare a detailed plan of expansion for the whole Baha'i community, to be launched at Ridvan, 1964.

BUT THERE ARE SOME OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED AT ONCE.

"The consolidation of the goals and new communities of the Baha'i world is an urgent and immediate task facing the fifty-six national spiritual assemblies, and an essential preparation for the launching of the new plans. Pioneers must be maintained at their posts and all the local spiritual assemblies strengthened through a firm establishment of Baha'i community life and an active teaching programme."

Beloved friends, the British community is faced at this moment with a very serious situation, which must be remedied before any future plans can be accepted.

FIFTEEN LOCAL ASSEMBLIES are below numbers.

THIRTY-TWO gaps must be filled before Ridvan.

There is no time to lose - pioneers are needed urgently NOW in the following towns:-

BLACKPOOL needs 4 - a family would be most welcome.

DUBLIN the pivotal centre of Eire, needs one pioneer now and possibly another before Ridvan.

EPSOM needs 3 pioneers, one of whom is already endeavouring to move in.

GLASGOW needs a pioneer family.

INVERNESS needs 4.

SALISBURY needs 2.

YORK needs 3 now and very possibly 2 more by the end of
January.

We earnestly hope that teaching will assure the other Assemblies - will you please remember them in your prayers - they are ABERDEEN, CANTERBURY, CHESTER, NORTHAMPTON, NOTTINGHAM, ROMFORD, SWINTON and WINCHESTER.

Will you search your hearts and prayerfully make your contribution to this supreme effort?

"Whoso is worthy of so high a calling, let him arise and promote it. Whoso is unable, it is his duty to appoint him who will, in his stead, proclaim this Revelation."
Baha'u'llah.

This appeal is particularly directed to those friends who can move into one of these needy places, settle themselves into suitable employment and homes, prepared to plant their roots deep down in the places of their adoption, confident in Baha'u'llah's promise that "the hosts of Divine inspiration shall descend....from the heaven of My Name, the All Knowing, the All-Wise. On him shall also descend the Concourse on high, each bearing aloft a chalice of pure light...."

"Let the light of His Glory, O people, shine upon you and be not of the negligent."

Baha'u'llah.

P.T.O.

P I O N E E R S .

Prospective pioneers are asked to get in touch immediately with the Pioneer Sub-Committee (Mr. John Wade, 14 Northumberland Road, New Barnett) or to the N.T.C. Secretary, Sandy Ackroyd, 20 Dean Park Avenue, Drighlington, near Bradford.

Or by telephone or letter to the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, Mrs. Betty Reed, 27 Rutland Gate, London, S.W.7. (Telephone: Knightsbridge 2566).

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