



AFRICA NEWS

Issued by The Africa Committee of the National
Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of
the British Isles.

*"The earth is but one country, and
mankind its citizens."—Bahá'u'lláh.*

No. 13.

July 1953.

ENGLISH EDITION

Special Issue - The Ten Year Crusade

We feel it may be helpful to give the messages received from our beloved Guardian, which relate specially to the Ten Year Crusade in Africa, so that the friends may have them easily available for reference and for consecutive reading.

The Guardian's Message to the Africa Conference, February 1953

To the Hands of the Cause, the Members of the National Spiritual Assemblies, the pioneers, the resident believers and visitors attending the African Intercontinental Teaching Conference in Kampala, Uganda. Well-beloved friends:

I hail with a joyous heart the convocation in the heart of the African continent of the first of the four Intercontinental Teaching Conferences constituting the highlights of the world wide celebrations of the Holy Year which commemorates the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Mission of the Founder of our Faith. I welcome with open arms the unexpectedly large number of the representatives of the pure-hearted and the spiritually receptive Negro race, so dearly loved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for whose conversion to His Father's Faith He so deeply yearned and whose interests He so ardently championed in the course of His memorable visit to the North American continent. I am reminded on this historic occasion, of the significant words uttered by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, Who as attested by the Center of the Covenant, in His Writings, "compared the coloured people to the black pupil of the eye", through which "the light of the spirit shineth forth". I feel particularly gratified by the substantial participation in this epoch-making Conference of the members of a race dwelling in a continent which for the most part has retained its primitive simplicity and remained uncontaminated by the evils of a gross, a rampant and cancerous materialism undermining the fabric of human society alike in the East and in the West, eating into the vitals of the conflicting peoples and races inhabiting the American, the European and the Asiatic continents, and alas threatening to engulf in one common catastrophic convulsion the generality of mankind. I acclaim the preponderance of the members of this same race at so significant a Conference, a phenomenon unprecedented in the annals of Bahá'í Conferences held during over a century, and auguring well for a corresponding multiplication in the number of the representatives of the yellow, the red and brown races of mankind dwelling respectively in the Far East, in the Far West and in the islands of the South Pacific Ocean, a multiplication designed ultimately to bring to a proper equipoise the divers ethnic elements comprised within the highly diversified world-embracing Bahá'í Fellowship.

I feel moved, on this auspicious occasion, to pay a warm tribute to the elected representatives, as well as the members, of the British, the Persian, the American, the Egyptian and the Indian Bahá'í Communities which have participated, in pursuance of their respective Plans, in the opening stage of a colossal teaching campaign, constituting a vital phase of the impending decade-long world Crusade, and aiming at the spiritual conquest of the entire African continent. I desire in particular to express to all those gathered at this Conference my feelings of abiding appreciation of the magnificent role played and of the remarkable prizes won, by the small band of Persian, British and American pioneers, in the course of the initial stage of this divinely propelled and mysteriously unfolding collective enterprise, which has overshadowed both the Latin American and European teaching campaigns launched in recent years, which is destined to exert an incalculable influence on the fortunes of the Faith throughout the world, and which may well have far-reaching repercussions among the two chief races dwelling in the North American continent.

To the American Bahá'í Community, the chief executor of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan; to the British Bahá'í Community, destined to play in future decades a pre-dominating role in opening to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh not only the British Territories throughout the African continent, but the divers Dependencies of the British Crown scattered on the surface of the globe; to the Persian Bahá'í Community, at once the most venerable and most consistently persecuted among its sister communities in both the East and the West; to the Egyptian Bahá'í Community that may well boast of having erected in that continent the first pillar of the Universal House of Justice; to the Indian Bahá'í Community, fated to contribute, to a marked degree, to the spiritual quickening of the Indians constituting a notable element of the population of Africa - to these Communities I feel I must acknowledge my deep sense of thankfulness for the strenuous efforts exerted by their pioneers to raise aloft the standard of the Faith in the territories allocated to them in Liberia, Uganda, Tanganyika, the Gold Coast, Kenya, Somaliland, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia, Libya, Algeria, Zanzibar and Madagascar. To others who, though not following the fixed pattern of the Plan initiated for the present African campaign, have arisen to introduce the Faith in the Territories of Sierra Leone, Angola, Mozambique and Southern Rhodesia, I feel, moreover, a debt of gratitude is due for their share in extending the range of Bahá'í Pioneer activity in that continent.

The hour is indeed propitious, as the climax of the world wide rejoicings signalizing the Holy Year approaches, for the National Spiritual Assemblies of these same Communities to gird up their loins, in collaboration with the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iraq, in a supreme effort to launch, on the morrow of this fateful Conference, that phase of the ten year Crusade which, God willing, will culminate in the introduction of our glorious Faith in all the remaining territories of that vast continent as well as the chief neighbouring islands lying in the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans. The decade on whose threshold they now stand must, circumstances permitting, witness: First, the erection of three additional pillars within the confines of that continent and its neighbouring islands, designed to support, together with no less than forty-five other National Spiritual Assemblies to be established in other parts of the world, the final unit in the erection of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, namely: The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Central and East Africa, to be formed under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, with its seat in Kampala; the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa, to be formed under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America, with its seat

in Johannesburg; the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of North West Africa, to be formed under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and Sudan, with its seat in Tunis. Second, the initial purchase of land for the future construction of three Mashriqu'l-Adhkars, one in Cairo, one in Kampala and one in Johannesburg, situated respectively in the north, the heart and the south of the African continent. Third, the opening of the following thirty-three virgin territories and islands: Cape Verde Is., Canary Is., French Somaliland, French Togoland, Mauritius, Northern Territories Protectorate, Portuguese Guinea, Reunion I., Spanish Guinea, St. Helena, and St. Thomas I., assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America; Ashanti Protectorate, Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Italian Somaliland, Southern Rhodesia and Swaziland, assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia; French Equatorial Africa, French West Africa, Morocco (Int. Zone), Rio de Oro, Spanish Morocco and Spanish Sahara, assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and Sudan; Comoro Is., French Cameroons, Gambia, Ruanda-Urundi and Socotra I., assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India, Pakistan and Burma; the British Cameroons, British Togoland, Madeira and South West Africa, assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles; and Seychelles Is., assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iraq. Fourth, the translation and publication of Bahá'í literature in the following thirty-one African languages to be undertaken by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles: Accra, Afrikaans, Aladian, Ashanti, Banu, Bemba, Bua, Chuana, Gio, Gu, Jieng, Jolof, Kuamyama, Krongo, Kroo, Luimbi, Malagasy, Nubian, Pedi, Popo, Ronga, Sena, Shilha, Shona, Sobo, Suto, Wongo, Xosa, Yalunka, Yao and Zulu. Fifth, the consolidation of the twenty-four following territories already opened to the Faith in the African continent: Angola, Belgian Congo, Gold Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zululand, allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles; Abyssinia, Algeria, Eritrea, Libya, French Morocco, Somaliland Sudan and Tunisia, allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and Sudan; Madagascar, Mozambique and Zanzibar, allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India, Pakistan and Burma; Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia; Liberia and South Africa, allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America. Sixth, the establishment, circumstances permitting, of a National Bahá'í Court in the capital city of Egypt, the recognized centre of both the Islamic and Arab worlds, officially empowered to apply, in matters of personal status, the Laws and Ordinances revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother-Book of the Bahá'í Revelation. Seventh, the incorporation of the three above-mentioned Regional National Spiritual Assemblies. Eighth, the establishment by these same National Spiritual Assemblies of National Bahá'í Endowments. Ninth, the establishment of a National Haziratu'l-Quds in Johannesburg and one in Tunis and the conversion into a similar institution of the local Haziratu'l-Quds of Kampala. Tenth, the formation of a National Bahá'í Publishing Trust in Cairo. Eleventh, the formation of an Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and Sudan, authorized to hold, on behalf of its parent institution, property dedicated to the Holy Shrines at the World Centre of the Faith in the State of Israel. Twelfth, the appointment, during Ridván 1954, by the Hand of the Cause in Africa, of an auxiliary Board of nine members who will, in conjunction with the six National Spiritual Assemblies participating in the African Campaign, assist, through periodic and systematic visits to Bahá'í Centres, in the efficient and prompt execution of the Plans formulated for the prosecution of the teaching campaign in the African continent.

May the six aforementioned National Spiritual Assemblies, aided by the Hand of the Cause appointed in that continent, and the auxiliary Board to be chosen by him, and supported by the national committees and sub-committees to be formed in due course, and reinforced by the constant and energetic efforts of an ever-swelling number of pioneers, whether settlers or itinerant teachers, and assisted by the whole-hearted collaboration of the indigenous believers in all localities, be spiritually welded into a unit at once dynamic and coherent, and be suffused with the creative, the directing and propelling forces proceeding from the Source of the Revelation Himself, and be made, as the projected campaign unfolds, the vehicle of His grace from on High, and prove themselves worthy and effective instruments for the execution and ultimate consummation of one of the most thrilling and far-reaching enterprises undertaken in the Formative Age of the Faith and constituting one of the noblest phases of the most glorious Crusade ever launched in the course of Bahá'í history for the systematic propagation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh over the surface of the entire planet.

Shoghi

From his message to the British Convention

Ardently praying decade long crusade, culminating hundredth anniversary declaration Faith Bahá'u'lláh, may witness (in) both administrative (and) teaching fields home front, as well as beyond confines British Isles, fruition potent seeds hands Center Covenant so lovingly, patiently sowed course twice repeated visit heart British Empire. May it likewise carry triumphant conclusion initial epoch unfoldment world-wide mission entrusted British Bahá'í Community amidst peoples, races dwelling Dependencies British Crown, scattered throughout five continents globe.

Cable to the British N.S.A. dated 13th May 1953

Urge full fledged Bahá'í Assemblies British territories Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya, now regarded most powerful pillars swiftly emerging, steadily consolidating, highly promising African Bahá'í Community, set glorious example through prompt measures initiation extension work, through despatch surplus members local communities including Africans (to) neighbouring territories French Somaliland, Ruanda-Urundi, Madagascar, French Belgian Congo, Comoro Islands, even Algeria, Morocco, accelerating thereby process formation local assemblies, establishment National Assembly Central/East Africa, adding fresh laurels crown already won pioneering field African Continent.

A Message to the whole Bahá'í World. May 28th 1953

Occasion sixty-first Anniversary Ascension Bahá'u'lláh, morrow opening initial phase momentous World Crusade, call upon His followers all continents allow no slackening, nay, insure acceleration marvellous momentum generated historic celebrations climaxing festivities Holy Year. Dispersal, immediate, determined sustained, universal, throughout unopened territories planet (is the) paramount issue challenging spirit, resources privileged prosecutors Ten-Year Plan course current year.

All National Assemblies urged give it priority assignments (in their) national

budgets. Chief executors 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Plan, virtue primacy conferred His Tablets, accorded prerogative stimulate vital process dispersal through dispatch, in addition their allotted tasks, pioneers virgin territories allocated sister communities East, West.

Once again appeal members all communities arise, enlist, ere present opportunity irretrievably lost, army Bahá'u'lláh's crusaders. Hour ripe disencumber themselves worldly vanities, mount steed steadfastness, unfurl banner renunciation, don armour utter consecration God's Cause, gird themselves girdle chaste holy life, unsheathe sword Bahá'u'lláh's utterance, buckle on shield His love, carry as sole provision implicit trust His promise, flee homelands, scatter far wide (to) capture unsundered territories entire planet.

Would to God Bahá'í warriors, six score (and) ten, (the) number required fill gaps still unconquered territories globe, promptly arise, enroll themselves achieve goals ere conclusion opening year decade-long, greatest collective enterprise since memorable episodes associated Dawn-Breakers Heroic Age.

Planning inscribe, chronological order, names spiritual conquerors (on an) illuminated Roll Honour, to be deposited (at the) entrance door inner Sanctuary Tomb Bahá'u'lláh, (as a) permanent memorial contribution champions His Faith (at the) victorious conclusion opening campaign Global Crusade, destined attain consummation Most Great Jubilee commemorating Centenary Declaration His Mission, Anticipate making periodic announcements names valiant knights upon arrival posts (to) discharge historic missions.

Share message National Assemblies Bahá'í World.

Cable to the British N.S.A., dated 1st June 1953

Urge immediate steps publication pamphlets African languages. Approve approach National Assemblies financial assistance. Myself contributing Thousand Pounds meritorious purpose.

Similar letters were sent on June 5th on behalf of the Guardian by his assistant secretary to the Local Assemblies of Dar-es-Salaam, Kampala and Nairobi. We quote the one sent to Nairobi:

Dear Baha'i Friends,

The Beloved Guardian has been most encouraged by reports he has received from all parts of the World, since the launching of the Ten Year Crusade.

His glorious cablegram to the Baha'i World (copy attached), urging the immediate settlement of the 131 virgin areas, is the final stimulus to the Friends, who will undoubtedly arise, and spread the Glory of the Lord over the face of the Globe.

The Faith has developed so rapidly and successfully in Nairobi, that the Guardian has hoped some of the Friends may wish to carry the Faith of new areas,

and pioneer in one of the 131 virgin areas. Such souls as arise, will be quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit and will be the object of assistance of the Hosts of the Supreme Concourse.

The Guardian feels that territories near Kenya could easily be settled by the Friends in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika. Those mentioned specifically by the Guardian are Belgian Congo, Ruanda-Urundi, the Somalilands, Ashanti Protectorate, and even South West Africa.

The Beloved Guardian has spoken often, very lovingly, and appreciatively of your dear friends, laboring so diligently in that far-off land, and yet the land which is now awakening to the Message of the Lord of Hosts. He knows how hard you have worked to establish the Faith so firmly in Nairobi, but as good and true servants of the Blessed Perfection, he knows likewise, you will never be satisfied so long as there are virgin areas unsettled, either a part of the Ten Year Plan, or even in your own country.

This is the time which the Master said would surely come, of "scattering", and the Guardian feels the Friends of Nairobi, who are now gathered in such numbers, will again scatter, so the divine fragrances may reach all parts.

The Guardian will appreciate your following closely the advices of the British National Assembly, so far as moving into new areas is concerned, particularly those under the assignment of the British N.S.A.; or territories not under their assignment, but which are members of the British Commonwealth.

He will also appreciate your sending monthly a report to the Secretary General of the International Bahá'í Council, here in Haifa, of the progress being made in arranging settlement of the areas mentioned by the Guardian, or other territories where the Friends may go.

Who of the Friends will be the first to settle in one of these virgin areas, and thus become known as a "Knight of Bahá'u'lláh", and have his name inscribed on an illuminated "Roll of Honor", and have it placed within the door of the Inner Sanctuary of the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh?

These are the blessings now offered by our Beloved Guardian. They will never come again, in such torrents.

The Guardian is praying ardently for each of you; for your success; and that divine confirmations will ever reach you.

Faithfully yours,

Leroy Ioas,

Assistant Secretary.

Kampala Conference

February 12th to 18th 1953

(by one of the visitors from Overseas)

When Bahá'u'lláh pitched His tent on Mount Carmel, the Tablet of Carmel issued from His holy lips and the plan for the spiritual conquest of the planet was laid down. The Kampala Conference was part of that dream made flesh. The Guardian announced the four Intercontinental Conferences a year ago and none of us could envision the reality. At the time of the announcement there were few pioneers in Africa and fewer African Bahá'ís. The tempo of the teaching work on this continent increased every passing day and the evidences of the triumphant victory were made manifest to every eye in Kampala. The Guardian compared the entrance of the Africans into the Faith with the Book of Acts. Those who were privileged to be there were moved to tears of joy by the reality.

In the days preceding the Conference many planes brought Bahá'ís from all corners of the world. Most of the African Bahá'ís were brought to Kampala as guests of Shoghi Effendi. By the time the Conference commenced there were present Bahá'ís from nineteen countries and thirty races and tribes. This was a unique event in the history of Africa and opened the door to a new day for a continent that had slumbered for centuries.

For the first time in Bahá'í history there were gathered together ten of the Hands of the Cause of God, including Leroy Ioas, who represented the Guardian. His joyous welcome by both African and visiting Bahá'ís was in itself a living demonstration of the principle of the oneness of mankind.

The visitors were profoundly moved to hear the African Bahá'ís, so newly enrolled in Bahá'u'lláh's cohorts, speak of their entrance into the Faith, their desire to learn and teach, their deep love of the Faith and their understanding of the basic principles. Though only a few of the friends present had known each other before the Conference, the flow of the Holy Spirit welded them together in unity and harmony. There was no consciousness whatever of differences of race. The Conference progressed smoothly under the able chairmanship of Hasan Balyuzi, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles. The African Bahá'ís, who till not so long ago had progressed culturally only as far as the tribal unit, made the great leap and functioned as members of the New World Order.

The Conference itself was preceded by a Unity Feast, which was opened by the reading of the Tablet of Visitation, after which Mr. Mousa Banani welcomed the friends. Mr. Tarazollah Samandari told of his memories of seeing His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh.

At the opening session of the Conference, Mr. Leroy Ioas gave the greetings of the Guardian, who had sent his love to each one present and his regret that he could not be there in person. Then Mr. Ioas read the momentous message from the Guardian presenting the Ten Year Plan for Africa. All were dazed by the magnitude of the Plan and sought strength in their hearts and souls to achieve its triumphant conclusion.

During the next session greetings from Ruhiiyyih Khanum were given and she told of her deep desire to be present. At this and ensuing sessions greetings were presented by the Hands of the Cause of God. Mr. Leroy Ioas greeted the friends on behalf of the Bahá'í International Council.

In this and succeeding sessions the Africans spoke frequently. One woman said, "Can I, a woman, go and pioneer?" A man spoke of his desire to study the Koran so that he could go and teach the Moslems. Another said, "Don't let us make everything complicated. Just give us transport and we'll do the work of winning new Bahá'ís". They spoke of their need for deepening and for preparation in pioneering. Some illustrated their points with Bahá'í quotations. They asked for more education and more Bahá'í teaching and for Bahá'í centres to develop themselves and their community life.

During subsequent sessions various phases of the teaching work were considered. Mr. Leslie Matola, a Bahá'í from Dar-es-Salaam, who had translated "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" into Swahili, announced that he was ready to start a translation into Yao. Pioneers spoke of their experiences and what methods had proved successful, as well as what problems they had met and what they had done about them.

In the session just preceding the showing of the Portrait of the Blessed Báb, Mr. Valiollah Vargha told the story of the painting of the Portrait, a most moving narrative, which he has now recorded at the Guardian's request. Then Mr. Ioas presented the Guardian's gift to the Kampala Hazira, two magnificently illuminated pages containing sections of the Báb's Commentaries on the Surih of Joseph, in which are revealed the prophecy of the development of the Faith, His martyrdom, the coming of Bahá'u'lláh and references to the teaching work in Africa. The writings are entirely done in gold ink.

At the next session the Portrait of the Holy Báb was shown in a beautifully prepared setting of silks and flowers. The sacredness of this occasion can never be described; it must be experienced. Each Bahá'í saw through the eyes of his own devotion and service. Those who had spent a lifetime in service remembered the sufferings and the humiliations endured by the Bahá'ís and tasted the cup of joy at the great progress of the Faith. The newly declared African Bahá'ís opened their pure hearts to be inundated by the flow of the spirit released on this occasion. To all it was a fresh outpouring of strength to pursue our sacred duty.

In the evening of the same day a meeting was held at Makerere College. Mr. John Ferraby was the chairman and Mr. Horace Holley and Mr. Hasan Balyuzi were the speakers. Their talks were followed by a lively question and answer period. This meeting was one of two public meetings in connection with the Conference. The other, which followed next day, was given on the grounds of the Bahá'í Haziratu'l-Quds. Miss Elsie Austin was the chairman and Mrs. Dorothy Baker and Mr. Matthew Bullock were the speakers.

All the following sessions of the Conference were concerned with the goals listed in the Guardian's message and how to achieve them. The only interruption in this study was a trip to the African countryside, a day of happy fellowship.

Much to everyone's regret, the last day of the Conference arrived. Mr. Ioas spoke movingly of the opportunity offered to the Bahá'ís to be counted among the immortals. He said that the pioneers were the "associates of the Holy Spirit"

and that the Guardian said the pioneers were never alone under any circumstances; that the Hosts of the Supreme Concourse were suspended between heaven and earth waiting for those they could support. The Guardian had told him that nothing in recent years had given him so much joy and happiness as the spread of the Faith to the African people, who were still uncontaminated by either the East or the West and who were therefore the proper instruments to establish the true Bahá'í way of life. He spoke of the Guardian's hope that African pioneers would arise to teach - first in their own continent and then in other parts of the world. Mr. Ioas said that the Ten Year Crusade would bring about the fulfilment of the Bible prophecy that the earth would be flooded with the Glory of the Lord.

The African and visiting Bahá'ís sent many messages of love and gratitude to the Guardian and pledged themselves to the achievement of the goals in the Ten Year Crusade.

The closing session was marked by many expressions of gratitude for the Conference and of determination to consecrate themselves to the success of the Ten Year Crusade. The history-making Conference came to an end with the reading of the Tablet of Carmel in English, a prayer in Persian for the Persian Bahá'ís, now experiencing great difficulties, and a prayer for unity given in the Ateso language. A new day had dawned for Africa.

Pioneer News

Major and Zara Dunne of the U.S. reached Accra, Gold Coast, in May, and are trying to settle there. They report they have found a home, but so far Major has not obtained a job.

Ezzat Zahrai and Enayat Soheili, who both went to Portuguese East Africa, to try and settle, have been compelled to leave that territory. Ezzat Zahrai is now in Southern Rhodesia trying to get permission to stay, and Enayat Soheili is at present in Dar-es-Salaam trying to find a way into another virgin territory.

Rex and Mary Collison and Dunduzu Chisiga, all members of the Kampala Spiritual Assembly, have left on their way to settle in Ruanda-Urundi, thus opening another virgin territory.

Other News

The following formed their first Local Spiritual Assembly on April 21st 1953: Nairobi, Kenya; Benghazi, Libya; and the following in Uganda: Acissa, Akarukei, Atoot, Jinja, Kadoki, Kobuku, Kococwa, Mbale, Ocakai, Opot, Osopotoit, Tilling.