

AFRICA NEWS

(Issued by the Africa Committee of the
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles)

No. 7

August-September, 1951

"...THE AFRICAN PEOPLES..."

Our beloved Guardian has written the following letter to the
believers in Dar-es-salaam, dated July 27th, 1951:

"Dear Bahá'í Friends,

"Your letter made our beloved Guardian very happy. His thoughts - and hopes - are constantly focused these days on the wonderful work opening up in Africa, and he rejoiced to see so many of you united there in Tanganyika.

"Truly this Cause moves forward propelled by forces more than we can see or grasp; God has surely raised you up and given you this blessed privilege, this unique privilege, of kindling the Light of His Faith there and writing your name in history.

"How significant that the first group to be formed in the heart of Africa is composed of believers from the East and the West, united, working side by side to bring the Message of the Blessed Beauty to one of the great waiting races of the world, hitherto oppressed and disregarded, but now being offered the waters of life and a wonderful future.

"You may be sure your activities will be supported by his special and fervent prayers, and that he awaits with keen interest news of every new development in your work.

"While being wise and tactful you should, however, never lose sight of the fact that it is to the African peoples, primarily, that your mission is addressed. To bring them into our world-wide brotherhood is your duty and privilege.

"With warm Bahá'í love,

R. Rabbani."

"Dear and valued co-workers,

"I was so pleased to receive your letter and am greatly encouraged by your exemplary and magnificent response. You have indeed set a noble example, and the record of your services will, I trust, enrich the annals of the Faith. Persevere in your labours, and rest assured that the Beloved will watch over you and sustain and guide you in your historic and highly meritorious activities.

"Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi."

EUROPE IS SUMMONED

The European Teaching Conference held at Scheveningen, near the Hague in Holland, August 31st - September 3rd, was amazed and thrilled to find in the Guardian's Conference cablegram a summons to participate in the Africa Project. Here are his words: "Auspiciously inaugurated, mysteriously unfolding, highly promising, widely ramified crusade, embracing well

high score of dependencies African continent presenting privileged prosecutors Divine Plan European field challenge at once severe, soul-stirring, inescapable." Earlier in the message the Guardian had made this significant statement: "Welcome with feeling particular gratification participation newly enrolled Dutch, Danish, Portuguese believers (in) enterprises initiated (by) Indian, Canadian, British Baha'i communities (in) Indonesia, Greenland, African continent, presaging undertakings destined be systematically launched (by) elected representatives newly emerged European communities throughout remaining countries Europe and possibly beyond its confines."

Three members of the British Africa Committee attending the Conference were invited to describe the Africa Project. Consultation was held with five Lisbon Bahá'is who gave details of the four Portuguese believers who have settled in Angola and Mozambique; ideas were exchanged for encouraging these believers in cooperation with the Lisbon Assembly. Through other consultations information about Bahá'is in the Belgian Congo, Zululand, and Libya was gained; important contacts of European Baha'is with persons living in Africa were shared; and interest in African pioneering was expressed. "Africa News" will now be sent to all Spiritual Assemblies in the European Project. Thus a new phase of the Africa Crusade has been unfolded, vast new horizons are appearing, and bonds of fellowship are swiftly linking the twenty-five countries of Africa where Bahá'is live or will soon pioneer.

FIRST NEW Dar-es-salaam has won the first victory with the declaration of
BAHA'I Mr. P.K. Gopalakrishnan Nayar on July 22nd. When advised of this new believer of Indian nationality, our Guardian cabled: "Overjoyed initial victory." We feel sure that heartfelt greetings and welcome go to Mr. Nayar from the Bahá'í world.

AFRICA The Guardian has advised the British National Assembly to hold the
CONFERENCE All African Teaching Conference sometime between January and March, 1953. Members of our Africa Committee have consulted with Miss Edna True, Chairman of the European Teaching Committee, on the organization of the European Conference which the Guardian has said should be our example. Study is now being made and we hope soon to announce the place chosen for this historic gathering.

LIBERIA We are overjoyed to hear that the Guardian has assigned a virgin territory, Liberia, to the American Bahá'í Community, in response to a recommendation from the American National Assembly. The Guardian has urged prompt action and Mr. William Foster has been chosen as Liberia's first pioneer. Our loving thoughts surround him as we await news of his settlement. With Liberia there are now twelve dependencies to be pioneered. The British N.S.A. hopes to contribute at least one pioneer to Liberia, as it plans to do with the other dependencies of the Project.

NEW PIONEERS Three more territories will soon receive their first Bahá'í pioneers. The U.S. Africa Committee has cabled that Mrs. Ethel Stephens will proceed to the Gold Coast as soon as entry permission is granted. She will assist a Nutrition Research Project sponsored by Northwestern University. It is probable that Mrs. Stephens will be the first American pioneer to reach Africa under the Project, and the first of her race to whom our Guardian addressed his stirring appeal. If so, hers will be an inestimable honour in the annals of our Faith. We also hope for early news of the success of Dr. Nasrollah Badri Ala'i of Shiraz, a surgeon dentist who is taking steps to settle in Akkra. Dr. Ala'i is a member of the Afnan

family, and his experience in the Faith and knowledge of English should be of great value in the Gold Coast.

Kenya will have its first reinforcement in October, when Ted Cardell of Brighton, England, will arrive in Nairobi. He is going by air on October 7th, to avail himself of Mrs. Preston's kind offer of help before she returns to England for a visit. He will stop over a night in Rome, Cairo, and Khartoum at our Committee's suggestion, to meet the friends and consult on our behalf. Ted's superb photography will be a loss to the British Community, but should ensure an exciting record of work in Africa.

Northern Rhodesia is the goal of two pioneer families of England and Persia. It is hoped that both will reach their posts this year or early in 1952. Eric Manton and his thirteen-year old son Terry are going out to Rhodesia in the hope of permanently settling there. Eric is a Northampton Bahá'í; it is of interest that Northampton was the first Assembly of the Six Year Plan, while Eric will be the first new believer of that Plan to reach Africa. He is an experienced pioneer, one-time chairman of the Edinburgh Assembly, and we feel confident he will soon find his place. We have been thrilled to hear that Mr. Aziz Yazdi, secretary of the Persian Africa Committee, has decided to settle his family and business in Northern Rhodesia. His wife and three children will accompany him. By this noble action, Mr. Yazdi sets a fine example to his fellow-believers, for he will be the first Persian pioneer to take up a post in the territories especially assigned to Persia by the Guardian. The future in Northern Rhodesia seems "Radiantly bright"!

Other pioneers whose plans are well under way include:

Dr. and Mrs. Mehdi Samandari These two active workers for our Faith, he Persian and she English (formerly Miss Ursula Newman), were advised by our Guardian on the occasion of their recent marriage to arise for service in Africa. They are now investigating professional opportunities for Dr. Samandari in Kenya, Northern Rhodesia, and Liberia.

Miss Shamsi Sedaghat This young Persian believer came to England a few months ago to find a way to pioneer in Africa. Her home is Mashad and she has served as a youth teacher in various parts of Persia. Her firm dedication to the goal of pioneering gives us high hopes for her spiritual success. Plans are now in hand which we hope soon to announce.

The Persian Africa Committee has sent us word that Mr. and Mrs. Kiumarz Izadi have volunteered for Africa, while three Baha'i families are hoping to settle in Uganda. They are Dr. and Mrs. Manuchehr Farhoumand, Dr. and Mrs. Heshmahtollah Farhoumand, and Engineer and Mrs. Mohammad Yazdani, with their children. All have been waiting for entry permits since about last April. We ask the prayers of Baha'i friends everywhere for the success of all those who are striving to reach their African goals.

We know that pioneers in Egypt, India, and America are eager to serve in the Africa Crusade and as details of their projects reach us, we shall joyfully share them in "Africa News".

MRS. HAINSWORTH We are grieved to report the passing of Mrs. Lizzie Hainsworth on September 19th in Bradford, England. She was the first believer to volunteer for the Africa Crusade, during Convention, 1950, and she had received the Guardian's permission to join Philip in Africa. She was twice a pioneer in

the Six Year Plan, and her vivid indomitable spirit will long be remembered and honoured. Our warm sympathy goes to Philip and her family in their heavy loss.

AFRICA FUND We are delighted to report further pledges for the Africa Fund:

British National Assembly - £500

Persian National Assembly - £150

AFRICA NEWS Now that the scope and influence of the Africa Project is swiftly expanding, we feel the time has come to increase our news service. We plan to issue "Africa News" fortnightly, with an English edition appearing on the 15th of each month, and an African edition prepared in Dar-es-salaam appearing on the 1st. Both will be published under our supervision; we shall report the names of the Dar committee as soon as members have accepted. The English edition will carry messages from the Guardian, international news, and policy and guidance from the Africa Committee. The African edition will be devoted to news of Bahá'í activity in Africa, and we hope that pioneers, new believers, Groups and Assemblies throughout Africa will cooperate with our Dar committee in making this a lively and valuable journal. The new plan will begin in November if possible.

NEWS FROM EAST AFRICA Space will not permit an adequate report of the work in East Africa, but we hope that our African edition will soon remedy this. Meantime, here are some high-lights: There are eight Bahá'ís in Tanganyika and five in Uganda. Bahá'í Groups have been organized in Dar and Kampala which are now actively promoting the Faith. Fireside meetings are held in Dar, where there are a number of Nyasalanders and Indians staying. Both Hassan and Isobel Sabri are employed in Dar, while Philip Hainsworth has been appointed as Sanitary Overseer in the Uganda Medical Department, stationed at Masaka about 85 miles from Kampala. Claire Gung recently visited Marguerite Preston in Kenya.

ADVICE TO PIONEERS We ask pioneers and volunteers to take special note of the following:

(1) Many inquiries have been addressed to pioneers and Groups in East Africa from believers who would like to pioneer. In all such cases the inquiry should be sent to the Africa Committee or National Spiritual Assembly of the country in which the inquirer lives. Any pioneer or Group receiving such inquiry should forward it immediately to the British Africa Committee and we will see that it is given speedy attention. We are greatly encouraged by the tremendous interest in the Africa Project which these inquiries betoken.

(2) We would like to remind pioneers in Africa, who are under the jurisdiction of the British National Assembly, that should they find themselves in any kind of difficulty they should at once contact the British Africa Committee. Only in this way can the power of collective action be brought to their aid, and their problems find solution through the channels ordained in our glorious Cause. We hope that pioneers will always be assured of our keen and loving interest in all that concerns them, and of our determination to support them in every way open to us.