

# I

## FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

EUNICE BRAUN

*The Cause of God, impelled by the mighty forces of life within it, must go on from strength to strength, increasing in size and developing greater and greater powers for the accomplishment of God's purpose on earth.*

The Universal House of Justice.

### THE CLOSE OF THE HEROIC AGE

*The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

EARLY on a November morning in 1921, with darkness on the Mountain of God and on the slopes of Haifa below, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's earthly life ended. The Heroic Age of the Cause of God was drawing to a close, 'that primitive period in which its Founders had lived, in which its life had been generated, in which its greatest heroes had struggled and quaffed the cup of martyrdom'.<sup>1</sup>

Through the provisions of His *Will and Testament*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had forged the vital link which would forever connect the Heroic Age with the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, a transitional stage which Shoghi Effendi said 'must in the fullness of time reach its blossom and yield its fruit in the exploits and triumphs that are to herald the Golden Age of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh'.<sup>2</sup>

The Heroic Age of the Faith had begun on May 23, 1844 in Shíráz, Persia, with the Call of the Báb, the youthful Prophet-Herald of the Bahá'í Faith. During His brief, turbulent Ministry, thousands of His followers were put to death. Two years after the Báb had been martyred in the public square of Tabriz on July 9, 1850, Bahá'u'lláh Himself was arrested and cast into the Siyáh-Chál, a subterranean dungeon in Tíhrán. He was the Promised One of all ages for Whom the Báb had prepared the way and given His life, and for Whom the world had been

waiting for thousands of years. Forty years of exile and imprisonment were in store for Bahá'u'lláh, during which the full import and grandeur of His Mission would gradually unfold.

The first decade of Bahá'u'lláh's exile in 'Iráq was marked by the revelation of the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* (The Book of Certitude) and the *Hidden Words*, 'two outstanding contributions to the world's religious literature'. On the eve of His forced departure for Constantinople, in April 1863, Bahá'u'lláh made an open declaration of His Mission to His close followers in the Garden of Ríqván outside Baghdád. During the five years of His Turkish exile, spent mostly in Adrianople, Bahá'u'lláh revealed powerful Tablets to the rulers and religious leaders in East and West. For Bahá'u'lláh, His family and faithful followers this was a period of increasing tribulation stirred up by an envious half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá, who labored to create doubt and division among the believers, and to plant suspicion in the minds of government officials.

Five years after Bahá'u'lláh's incarceration in the penal colony of 'Akká in 1868, He revealed His Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (the Book of Laws). Shortly after His passing on May 29, 1892, the Book of His Covenant, written entirely in His Own hand, was unsealed and read. It disclosed the appointment of His eldest Son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the Center of His Covenant and Interpreter of His Revelation.

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 98.

This ignited flames of jealousy and rebellion in the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half-brother, Muḥammad-'Alí, a fire that would rage throughout the Master's life and extend into the early years of Shoghi Effendi's ministry. But the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh had the power to protect His faithful followers from all the forces

that would arise in the future to mar the purity of His Faith or to split its ranks. *So firm and mighty is this Covenant, is the Master's asseveration, that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like.*<sup>1</sup>



*A glimpse of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 7 Persian Street, Haifa*

### *Three Divine Charters*

Toward the close of His life, Bahá'u'lláh revealed the *Tablet of Carmel*, the first of three Divine Charters within the framework of which the Cause of God would unfold. This charter was the impetus and authority for the development of the World Centre as the spiritual focus of the world-wide Bahá'í community and the 'heart and nerve center' of the administrative order. Thus would Mount Carmel one day become the seat of the supreme administrative body, the Universal House of Justice.

During the years 1916 and 1917 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed the second of these Divine Charters, the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. This is the charter for the promulgation of the Faith throughout the world, and it conferred the primary responsibility for its discharge upon the North American Bahá'í community.

The third and last of the Divine Charters, the *Will and Testament* of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, written by His own hand, at times under great personal stress and danger, is the charter for the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. It is a document whose provisions were both of immediate application and projecting into the future. Shoghi Effendi

wrote of it: 'We must trust to time, and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice, to obtain a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and implications.'<sup>2</sup> It gave immediate authority for the development of the administrative institutions of the Faith. This document, 'unique in the annals of the world's religious systems', assured the continuing unity and integrity of the Faith through the appointment of Shoghi Effendi, eldest grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as Guardian of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It described the method of electing the Universal House of Justice ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, and the relationship of this supreme institution to the Guardianship and to the secondary Houses of Justice (National Spiritual Assemblies). It called for the appointment and outlined the duties of the Hands of the Cause of God, stressed the supreme authority of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, and warned of the danger and evil of Covenant-breaking. It made teaching the Cause the chief cornerstone of faith.

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 62.

## THE OPENING OF THE FORMATIVE AGE

(First Epoch 1921–1944)

*The Guardianship*

WE stand in the shadow of Shoghi Effendi's thirty-six years of Guardianship, too near to see fully the towering heights of his achievement. Even less, perhaps, can we comprehend the staggering effect that his appointment as Guardian of the Cause of God had upon him, a youth of twenty-four years. He was then preparing himself at Oxford University to serve the Faith through mastery of the English language. This followed two years of being the constant companion and secretary of the Master. The Hand of the Cause, 'Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife and companion to Shoghi Effendi for twenty years, gives us, in her book *The Priceless Pearl*, a moving insight into the effect the appointment had upon his pure and sensitive nature, coupled with the sudden loss of his beloved Grandfather.

Aided by Bahíyyih Khánum, the sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá known as the Greatest Holy Leaf, Shoghi Effendi took immediate steps to rally the Bahá'ís around the world. Within a few weeks he had made contact with the High Commissioner of Palestine, appealed to the Persian believers for steadfastness, written to Bahá'ís

in the Far East, and penned a deeply moving letter to the Bahá'ís of North America, recalling the Master's great trust in the believers there. Soon after this the head of the British Mandatory Government gave official recognition to Shoghi Effendi as head of the Faith.

Brought low by grief and fatigue and by the renewal of vicious attacks from ever-watchful Covenant-breakers, the youthful Shoghi Effendi withdrew from the Holy Land in April 1922, seeking refuge in the mountains of Europe. It was a period of 'communion with himself and his destiny', a time to marshal his strength. Some months later he returned to the Holy Land, 'with renewed hope and vigor', to shoulder the unprecedented burden of the Guardianship. Messages to Assemblies and to individual Bahá'ís began to flow—a fresh stream that would become a mighty river in the years to come. Within his first year he wrote scores of letters to Bahá'ís throughout the world. They were messages of high vision and hope, calling the believers to bend their efforts towards Bahá'u'lláh's 'great purpose for mankind.'

*First Steps of the Administrative Order*

The work of raising the administrative structure, so clearly envisaged by Shoghi Effendi, was only dimly understood by the Bahá'ís at the time. But the great majority of them loved and trusted this 'priceless pearl' bestowed upon them by the Master. Under the loving guidance of their Guardian, the believers around the world began to lay the foundations of the administrative order with the far goal of erecting the Universal House of Justice, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh and delineated in the *Will and Testament* of the Master.

Shoghi Effendi, 'true brother' to every devoted Bahá'í, patiently outlined the way in which local and national Assemblies should be elected, the manner of their functioning, and the spiritual qualities needed by the members to

assure success. He stressed the loving, frank spirit of consultation that must underlie every effort. Before the close of his second year as Guardian, he had sent forth detailed guidelines on building the Mother Temple of the West in Wilmette, Illinois, stressed the importance of the Bahá'í Fund, had given standards for publishing activities, encouraged the holding of summer schools and outlined the pattern of committee work.

Raising and guiding the Assemblies was to receive the greater part of Shoghi Effendi's attention for sixteen years. But he never let the Bahá'ís lose sight of the main goal: 'to bury our cares and teach the Cause, delivering far and wide this Message of Salvation to a sorely-stricken world.' It was the 'most urgent' of all





*Bahíyyih (Bahá'íyyih) Khánum, 'The Greatest Holy Leaf', as she appeared in 1919. A brief account of her life appears on p. 73.*

obligations, the purpose for which the Divine institutions were being raised. With all the practical work to be done, personal character was the essential foundation: 'Nothing but the abundance of our actions, nothing but the purity of our lives and the integrity of our characters, can . . . establish our claim that the Bahá'í spirit is in this day the sole agency that can translate a long-cherished ideal into an enduring achievement.'<sup>1</sup>

Only a scattering of local Assemblies and Bahá'í centers existed in 1921 throughout North America, Europe, the Caucasus, India, Persia, the Near East and Australasia. Bahá'u'lláh Himself had sent forth traveling teachers to carry His Message abroad. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had called upon Eastern and Western believers, 'Heralds of the Covenant', to make teaching journeys. Now, gradually, the first National Spiritual Assemblies were established: the British Isles, Germany and Austria, India and Burma in 1923; Egypt and Sudan in 1924; the United States and Canada in 1925; 'Iráq in 1931; Persia, Australia and New Zealand in 1934. They were like beacon lights around the

world connected to the powerful dynamo that was the Guardianship. Only in America, however, could the building of the administrative order proceed steadily, unhindered by restrictions, persecution and the ravages of war.

The Master had chosen North America and given it primacy in the implementation of His Divine Plan. It was, He said, a nation that had developed powers and capacities that would enable it to be the first to build the Tabernacle of the Great Peace and proclaim the oneness of mankind throughout the world. As a result of His visit to North America in 1912, the light of Divine Revelation that had risen in the East was being poured upon the West, even as the Báb had foretold. America was being raised up by the Hand of God to be 'the cradle and stronghold of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh',<sup>2</sup> the land from which the Call of the Kingdom would be raised in all regions.

An early milestone was the formulation of the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, in 1927. Five years later a similar document for Local Spiritual

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 34.



Assemblies was put into effect for the Spiritual Assembly of New York City. Both became patterns to be adopted by Bahá'í communities around the world. These documents define the character and purpose of the Bahá'í community, the method of elections and the authority and functions of elected Assemblies. They set forth the relationship of these bodies to each other, to the Guardian, and to the Universal House of Justice, and provide a legal basis for incorporation and for the ownership of property. The national charters, Shoghi Effendi stated, would pave the way for the Constitution 'upon which the blest and sanctified edifice of the first International House of Justice' would one day 'securely rest and flourish'.

### *Tribulation and Triumph*

Sixteen years would elapse before the world mission outlined in the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* could be set in motion. During this period the Faith remained mostly in the shadow of world attention, leaving the Bahá'í community free to proceed actively with the building of its administrative order. On the other hand, a number of attacks and persecutions occurred that brought the Faith sharply to the attention of world leaders. The Master had warned that such attacks would come and grow more fierce in the future, initially from fanatical religious leaders who feared loss of their power and position. As the Faith grew, enfolding all races, classes and religions, envious minds would be seized with jealousy and suspicion. Nevertheless, these attacks, borne steadfastly by the friends, would only cause the Faith to advance more swiftly and strongly.

Such an attack soon came in Baghdad. The House of Bahá'u'lláh, declared by Him to be a place of future pilgrimage, was seized by enemies in 1925. When all appeals through the religious courts of the land had failed, the case was brought before the League of Nations. The Permanent Mandates Commission of this body ruled in favor of the Bahá'í claim. 'Iraq, then under British Mandate, was pressed for action—but none came. The League's Commission expressed its concern, year after year. Mountfort Mills, an international lawyer and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, acting on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, had several audiences with

King Feisal of 'Iraq and the King assured him of 'Iraq's compliance with the decision rendered by the League. Then a series of events, including the deaths of the 'Iraqi Prime Minister and of King Feisal himself, as well as the admission of 'Iraq to the League in 1932, brought matters to a standstill. Bahá'u'lláh had foretold both the calamity and eventual liberation of His House: *Grieve not, O House of God, if the veil of thy sanctity be rent asunder . . . In the fullness of time, the Lord shall, by the power of truth, exalt it in the eyes of all men.*<sup>1</sup> Though outwardly a calamity, this event served to bring the Faith to the attention of governments and world leaders as nothing else had done since the birth of the Formative Age, the Guardian declared.

During the same period, the Bahá'ís of Egypt suffered grave injustices through rulings of the Muslim Ecclesiastical Court. They were declared heretics, denied the use of cemeteries and harassed by many other legal difficulties. At this time, the highest Muslim court ruled the Bahá'í Faith to be a new, independent religion, entirely outside the laws of Islám. This verdict was intended to bring humiliation and hardship upon the Bahá'ís of Egypt, which in many ways it did. But it also became, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, 'the first charter of the emancipation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh from the fetters of Islamic orthodoxy'.<sup>2</sup>

Difficulties of a different nature arose for the believers in Turkistán where a Bahá'í community had flourished since the days of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'í schools were already in operation in 1897, and the first House of Worship in the Bahá'í world had been built in 'Ishqábád in 1908. Believers there, as elsewhere in the world, were strictly obedient to their government and did not in any way mingle in political affairs. But the policies of the new regime that had arisen after the first World War brought restrictions in 1928. Ten years later the Bahá'í Temple was confiscated by the civil authorities, the schools were closed, and the Bahá'í community was disbanded.

Persia, cradle of the Faith, whose earth had been stained by the blood of the martyrs and of the blessed Báb Himself, is second only to the Holy Land in ties of love that bind together the hearts of Bahá'ís throughout the world. Its

<sup>1</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 114–115.

<sup>2</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 366.

leaders inflicted untold pain and hardship on the Promised One of God and banished Him from His homeland forever—yet, its future is glorious. Bahá'u'lláh has written: *Let nothing grieve thee, O Land of Tā (Tīhrán), for God hath chosen thee to be the source of the joy of all mankind . . . The day is approaching when thy agitation will have been transmuted into peace and quiet calm.*<sup>1</sup>

The fall of the Qájár dynasty and the coming of a new, more enlightened regime gave hope to the Bahá'ís that the longed-for day of 'peace and quiet calm' was in some degree approaching.

The Master had sent many Persian teachers to America and the Persian Bahá'ís looked for the day when Bahá'ís from the West would come to their aid, as promised. Dr. Susan Moody had earlier spent fifteen years in Tīhrán when in 1928, at seventy-seven years of age, she was asked by Shoghi Effendi to return. Assisted at various times by other believers she had played an important part in the founding of the Tarbiyat schools, had established medical services for women and aided the repressed women of that land to raise their status. She was highly honored by the Persian government. But persecution arose again and was at its height when she died in 1934. Schools that had served Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike were closed throughout Persia. Bahá'í Centers were seized. A ban was placed against Bahá'í literature.

In the summer of 1932, Keith Ransom-Kehler, representing the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, made an historic journey to Persia to appeal in person to the Sháh. This followed many weeks of counsel from the Guardian in the Holy Land. Her first interview with the Minister of the Court gave promise of an immediate removal of the ban on literature. But this did not take place and shortly the Minister himself was removed from office. During the course of fifteen months, Mrs. Ransom-Kehler made repeated appeals to the Sháh. No acknowledgement came; no interview was granted. In addition to pouring out her mind and spirit on this mission, she traveled thousands of miles throughout Persia, meeting the Bahá'ís, teaching administration, encouraging Bahá'í women to take their rightful place in the work of the Faith. Long, heartbreaking months of striving and waiting, as well as

ceaseless efforts to meet with Bahá'ís, exhausted her. She contracted smallpox in Isfáhán and died within a few days, on October 23, 1933. She was buried near the graves of the King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs, heroic brothers sacrificed in the time of Bahá'u'lláh. The soil of Persia now received the remains of the 'first American martyr' and a Hand of the Cause from the West, Shoghi Effendi having elevated her to that rank at her passing. She was one of those whom the Guardian later called 'three heroines' of the Faith in America. The others were Martha Root and May Maxwell.

### *The First to Arise*

Although the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* would not be put into operation with an organized teaching plan until 1937, there were those who arose early to carry the Message around the world. Even before the revelation of the Tablets, great services had been rendered by Lua Getsinger, who went to India at the Master's request and passed away in Egypt in 1916; by Alma Knobloch in Germany; her sister Fanny in South Africa; and by many others, too numerous to name, in other parts of the world.

Among the most notable responses made to the Tablets were the unique services of Martha Root in Latin America, Europe and the Orient; the services of Hyde and Clara Dunn in Australia; and those of Mrs. H. Emogene Hoagg and Marion Jack in Alaska.

Martha Root, who became the 'star-servant' of Bahá'u'lláh, was the first to arise in the very year the Tablets were read in New York City.\* For twenty years she traveled the world as a journalist, spreading the Teachings, circling the globe four times. At all times she was in close touch with Shoghi Effendi and under his guidance. In Japan, she assisted Agnes Alexander, who had already taken the Message there by 1914. Because of the Master's special stress on the future of China, Martha visited that vast country four times. She enlisted in the Cause a Chinese professor, Dr. Y. S. Tsao, who immediately went to work translating Bahá'í literature into Chinese.

The Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania,

<sup>1</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 110-111.

\*The *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, revealed during 1916-17, were not received until after the Armistice that ended the first World War, when communication with the Holy Land was restored.





*Her Majesty Dowager Queen Marie of Romania whose 'acknowledgement of the Divine Message stands as the first fruits of the vision which Bahá'u'lláh had seen long before in His captivity, and had announced in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas' (Shoghi Effendi).*

granddaughter of Queen Victoria, accepted the Faith through Martha and welcomed her visits many times. Deep appreciation of the Teachings was expressed publicly by the Queen, and by many other world leaders through Martha Root's efforts. She brought the Faith to Latin America as early as 1919, once crossing the Andes on a mule. The Bahá'ís of India and Burma welcomed her on three visits and gratefully utilized her services. She interviewed scores of their high dignitaries and spoke to packed university halls, often accompanied by Professor Pritam Singh, himself a tireless worker for the Cause in India. Australia and New Zealand were stirred to new levels of activity through her visits during which she secured unprecedented publicity. At the wish of the Guardian, she arranged the translation and publication of Bahá'í literature, especially Dr. J. E. Esslemont's *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, in many languages.

Martha Root lies buried in Hawaii, halfway between East and West, where she fell, ill and exhausted, in the autumn of 1939. She was the

'archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers,' wrote Shoghi Effendi, 'and the foremost Hand raised by Bahá'u'lláh since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing.' He called her the 'Leading Ambadress of His Faith and Pride of Bahá'í teachers, whether men or women, in both the East and the West'.<sup>1</sup>

Hyde and Clara Dunn, later named Hands of the Cause, arrived in Sydney, Australia from America in 1920, to become its 'spiritual conquerors'. They took the Message to New Zealand in 1922. Three years later the Bahá'í magazine, *Herald of the South*, began publication. An Assembly was raised in Melbourne in 1923 through the efforts of the Dunns. They welcomed the visits of Martha Root, and of Keith Ransom-Kehler on her Far Eastern journey in 1930. On Keith's visit to New Zealand, the Message was taken to several Maori villages. A National Assembly for Australia and New Zealand was formed in 1934, and the first summer school established at Yerrinbool, Australia, in 1938.

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 386.



Marion Jack of Canada, an early pioneer to Alaska, went to Europe in the 1920s. By 1930 she had found her true goal, Bulgaria, and stayed for the remaining twenty-four years of her life. Her desire to remain at this post persuaded the Guardian to let her stay through the danger and hardship of the second World War. At one time she was ably assisted by George Adam Benke, a native of Russia, who had been taught the Faith by Alma Knobloch in Germany and who, laying down his life in his arduous pioneer post, became the first European Bahá'í martyr. Marion Jack was an 'immortal heroine', Shoghi Effendi cabled at the time of her death in 1954, a 'shining example pioneers present future generations East West'.

Another who responded early to the Tablets was Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, the 'mother of the Bahá'ís of Brazil'. She was honored there in February 1971 for fifty years of constant service to the Cause and soon thereafter was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors in South America. Johanna Schubarth returned from America to her native Norway in 1927 to nurse her mother and at the Guardian's request remained until her own death in 1952. He named her the 'mother of the Norwegian Bahá'í community', the 'founder of the Faith in that country'.

These are among the immortal heroes and heroines of the Faith whose hearts responded to the Call of the Master, and who, with the encouragement of the beloved Guardian, served steadfastly to the end of their days. Their self-sacrifice was to become an example and inspiration for all the pioneers who would arise in years to come when the great teaching campaigns were launched by Shoghi Effendi.

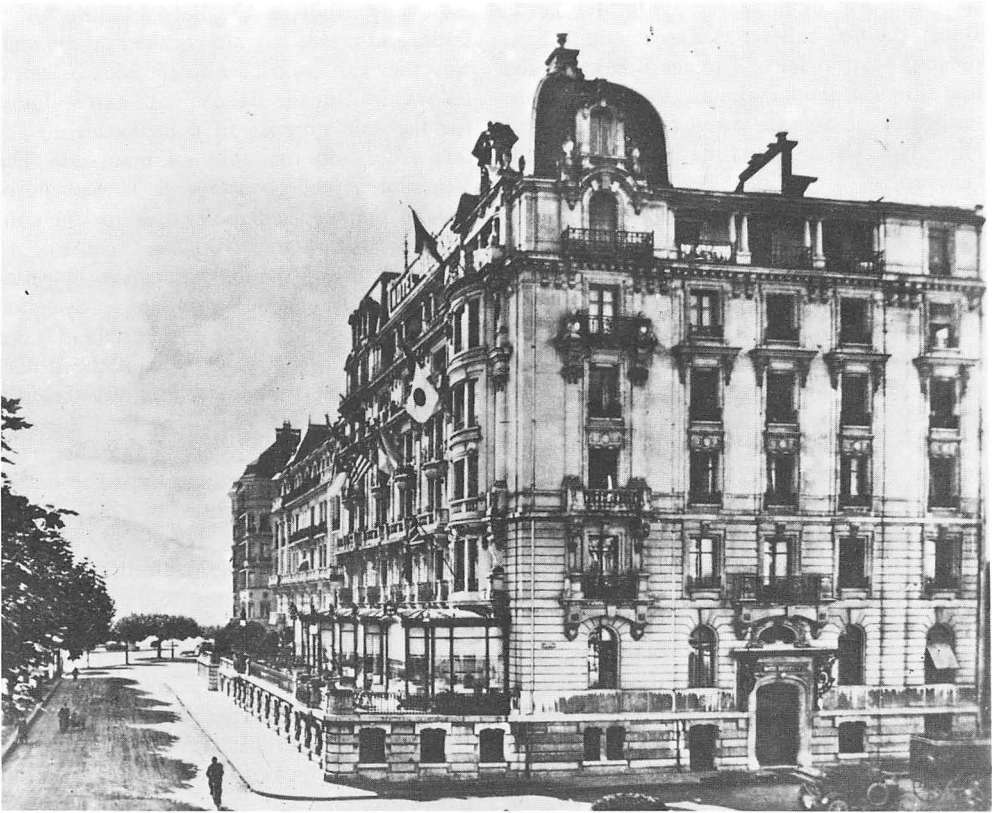
#### *Between Wars in Europe*

The old Europe of the 19th century, whose rulers had been called to account by Bahá'u'lláh, was shattered by the Great War of 1914–1918. Out of the chaos a League of Nations was born. One of its first setbacks was its rejection by the government of the United States whose President, Woodrow Wilson, the Guardian wrote in *God Passes By*, '... imbibing some of the principles so clearly enunciated by Him ('Abdu'l-Bahá) in His discourses, ... incorporated them in a Peace Program which

stands out as the boldest and noblest proposal yet made for the well-being and security of mankind.' The Master had already observed in His *Tablet to the Central Organization for a Durable Peace, The Hague*, dated December 17, 1919, that the League suffered from grave limitations. The principles given by Bahá'u'lláh to ensure peace were sadly lacking in the vision of most of its framers. There was no power to enforce its sanctions. In the end, the shortsightedness of the nations prevailed. Nonetheless, in the years following the first World War, which also marked the rise of the Formative Age of the Faith, the League of Nations, seated in Geneva, was a source of hope and idealism to many peace-loving people.

Geneva became the seat of many world movements and peace organizations. An international Bahá'í Bureau was founded there in 1925 through the efforts of Mme. Jeanne Stannard and under the guidance of the Guardian. The story of the development of the Bureau and the services contributed to it by Mrs. H. Emogene Hoagg, Miss Julia Culver, Mrs. Helen Bishop, Lady Blomfield and others from various countries, is told elsewhere. Its international status was soon recognized by the Federation of International Movements, and later by the League itself. Lectures on peace and other matters of international interest were given there by Bahá'ís and others. Esperanto congresses were convened, organized by Martha Root and Lydia Zamenhof, daughter of the founder of this auxiliary language, whom Martha had attracted to the Faith. Visitors came to the Center from many countries. One of these was George Townshend, at that time Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and Archdeacon of Clonfert, positions he later renounced to devote his entire effort to the service of Bahá'u'lláh. Following a visit to the Bureau in October 1929 he wrote of the spirit there as 'an echo of Haifa'.

*The Bahá'í Messenger* was published by the Bureau in English, French and German, partially supported by donations from Shoghi Effendi. Although the Bureau had no administrative authority in the Faith, it served in various ways to link the work of Bahá'ís in many countries. One of its most useful services was the translation and publication of literature. This advanced greatly through the efforts of Anne Lynch, a Bahá'í of Russian origin, fluent in five



*The Bahá'í International Bureau and offices of the Bahá'í European Teaching Committee were housed for a time in this building, 37, Quai Wilson, Geneva, Switzerland.*

other languages. The Bureau was a special source of encouragement to Bahá'ís during and after World War II, until 1957 when it closed.

The tragedy of World War II had its opening scene in Germany, a land that only a few decades earlier had seen *the banks of the Rhine . . . covered with gore*, as warned by Bahá'u'lláh. After the first World War, the Bahá'ís arose to form a National Assembly of Germany and Austria in 1923. The first summer school of Europe began in Esslingen, Germany, a site once blessed by the Master's footsteps. Among its early teachers were Dr. Adelbert Mühl-schlegel and Dr. Hermann Grossmann, both later to be named Hands of the Cause. Then the dark shadows cast by the new regime that had come to power in the spring of 1933 began to reach across the land. Germany withdrew from the League of Nations. Esslingen school, which had seen such a bright array of international visitors, was forced to close in 1936 by order of

the government. That summer the school had reached a high point—May Maxwell, distinguished disciple of the Master, was present, along with her daughter Mary. Mary Maxwell had been teaching for many months in Germany and the following March would become Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi. In June 1937, the German National Assembly was forced to dissolve and all Bahá'í activities were forbidden.

Before the turn of the century, France had been illumined by the teaching of May Maxwell. She had been deeply attracted to the Cause through Lua Getsinger, one of the first American believers, described by Shoghi Effendi as the 'mother teacher of the West'. Soon after this, in 1898, May journeyed from Paris to 'Akká with Lua, among the first party of Western pilgrims ever to visit the Master. May returned to Paris aflame with the Teachings to attract many who would become brilliant teachers of



the Faith. Among these were Edith McKay (de Bons), the first believer in France; Edith Sanderson; Marion Jack; Thomas Breakwell, the first English Bahá'í; Laura Barney, the interlocutor of *Some Answered Questions*; and Hippolyte Drefus, first native-born French believer.

Hippolyte Dreyfus wrote many books on the Faith and translated Bahá'í writings into French. At one time he presented the Bahá'í teachings at a meeting in Lyons presided over by the celebrated French statesman, M. Edouard Herriot. Until his death in 1928, he assisted Shoghi Effendi in a number of vital international matters. France distinguished itself in the early formative years by holding an annual conference in Paris for all Bahá'í students in Europe.

Most countries of western Europe had some resident believers during this period. Louisa Gregory, wife of Louis Gregory (named first Negro Hand of the Cause at his passing), went to the Balkans in 1928 and helped form the first Bahá'í group in Belgrade. Literature was available in most European languages. By 1937, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* had been published in thirty-five languages.

This book, first published in England in 1923, was to become one of the most potent teaching tools of the Cause. A year after it appeared, the author, Dr. John E. Esslemont, a physician of Scottish descent, went to Haifa to assist the Guardian. He served for a year until his untimely death and lies buried at the foot of Carmel. He was posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause. His book, Shoghi Effendi said, would 'alone inspire generations yet unborn to tread the path of truth', a prediction that has already been abundantly fulfilled.

England was the scene of the Master's first public address in the West, delivered at the City Temple, London, on September 10, 1911. The hour of unity of the sons of men had arrived, He declared. These words were echoed in the autumn of 1924 before a large gathering at the Conference of Some Living Religions Within the British Empire. Horace Holley—later to become a Hand of the Cause—wrote a paper for this noted event at Shoghi Effendi's request. It was read by Mountfort Mills.

A World Congress of Faiths, broader in scope, was held in London in 1936. Sir Herbert Samuel, later Viscount Samuel of Carmel, paid

a glowing tribute to the Bahá'í Faith: 'Other faiths and creeds have to consider . . . in what way they can contribute to the idea of world fellowship. But the Bahá'í Faith exists almost for the sole purpose of contributing to the fellowship and the unity of mankind.' The Venerable Archdeacon George Townshend of Ireland prepared a Bahá'í paper for the conference. His brilliant book, *The Promise of All Ages*, was already in publication, a harbinger of many more to come that would so greatly enrich the literature of the Faith. The year 1936 was a significant year for the Bahá'ís of the British Isles. The first summer school was held in August at Matlock, Bath. The British *Bahá'í Journal*, which was to receive high praise from Shoghi Effendi, began publication. The Bahá'í Publishing Trust was formed in 1937; Shoghi Effendi called the British believers to build and develop it with the same dedication that the American friends had given to the building of the Temple in America.

War clouds were now spreading swiftly over Europe and the world. Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia in 1935, the civil war that erupted in Spain in 1936, and the haste of nations to build up arms were signs of the coming convulsion and chaos.

### *The Far East*

The Far East was not spared. Conflict between Japan and China broke out on Chinese soil in 1937. Martha Root herself narrowly escaped from Shanghai under Japanese bombardment. She went to India to spend fifteen months, 'the most outstanding feature in the year', wrote the Indian National Assembly. 'She opened the whole of India for us!'

India was one of the first countries to receive the Faith. During the Ministry of the Báb one of the eighteen Letters of the Living, an Indian, was sent to India by the Báb Himself. One of its first teachers, Jamál Effendi, was sent by Bahá'u'lláh in 1875. He opened Burma shortly thereafter with Siyyid Muşţafá Rúmí, one of the first believers in India. Siyyid-i-Rúmi remained in Burma the rest of his life, bringing an entire village, Daidanaw, into the Faith. In 1899 he had taken to the Holy Land the marble casket made by the Bahá'ís of Mandalay to hold the precious remains of the Báb. He translated



many passages from the Writings into Burmese and founded numerous Bahá'í centers. Siyyid Muşţafá was appointed a Hand of the Cause posthumously.

The vast area of the Indian subcontinent, encumbered by many languages, presented challenges far greater than those confronting many other communities. By the 1930s *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* was already published in Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Sindhi, Gujrati and Burmese. India was one of the first communities to proclaim the Faith widely to large audiences. Thousands heard of the Teachings in the early formative years through talks at universities, from the platforms of religious and philosophical societies, and through the participation of Bahá'ís in various cultural events. Bahá'í women began early to take part in administrative work. One of the first women of the East to speak on public platforms was a Bahá'í, Mrs. Shirin Fozdar. She acted as the representative for women of both India and Persia at an All-Asian Women's Conference in Lahore in 1931. A Bahá'í summer school was first opened in 1938 in Simla, in the foothills of the Himalaya mountains. One of the earliest Bahá'ís of Hindu background, Narayenrao Vakil, attracted many believers from the Hindu community and served as chairman of the National Assembly for over twenty years. Professor Pritam Singh occupies a unique position in the history of the Bahá'í Faith in India. He was the first member of the Sikh community of India to accept Bahá'u'lláh and devoted his entire life, until his passing in 1959, to the promotion of the Bahá'í Faith.

### *The Passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf*

For many years Bahá'í pilgrims had been privileged to enter the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's 'well-beloved, deeply spiritual sister'. They had shared, in the words of the Guardian, her 'extreme sociability which made her accessible to all; a generosity, a love . . . that reflected so clearly the attributes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's character . . . a quiet and unassuming disposition that served to enhance a thousand-fold the prestige of her exalted rank'. That rank, bestowed by Bahá'u'lláh, was 'a station such as none other woman hath surpassed'.<sup>1</sup>

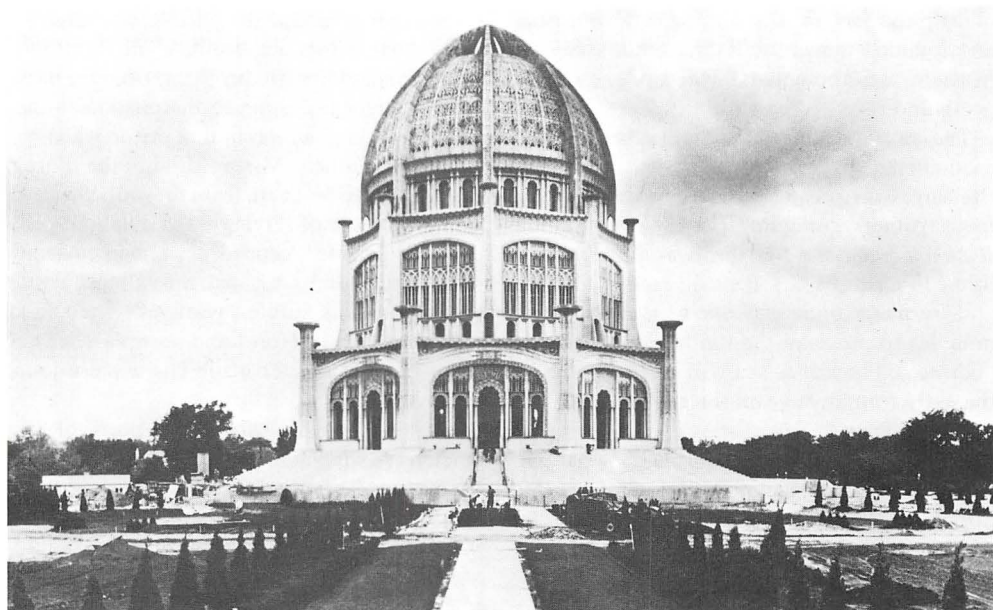
Bahíyyih Khánum shared the trials and ordeals of her Father, her beautiful, noble mother (Navváb), and her two brothers, from the early days of terror in Tíhrán to the prison confinement in 'Akká. She was in that prison when her youngest brother, Mirzá Mihdí, 'the Purest Branch', fell to his death from the roof. She lived for the purpose of serving Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause. When He ascended, she remained firmly with 'Abdu'l-Bahá against the 'almost entire company of His faithless relatives'. The affairs of the Cause in the Holy Land were placed in her care when the Master made His western journeys.

It was she who cabled the news of the Master's passing to the Bahá'í world, and of the appointment of Shoghi Effendi as Guardian. She stood at the side of the young Guardian with a compassionate love and understanding, coupled with iron steadfastness in the Covenant, that made her a source of comfort and tower of strength to Shoghi Effendi in his early years.

Named 'Bahá'íyyih', she was better known as 'Bahíyyih'. The honorific 'The Most Exalted Leaf', sometimes translated as 'The Greatest Holy Leaf', which Bahá'u'lláh conferred upon her blessed mother, Navváb, was bestowed upon Bahíyyih Khánum by her Father after the passing of Navváb.

When Bahíyyih Khánum died in July 1932, Shoghi Effendi built a beautiful marble monument over her resting place on the side of Mount Carmel. He likened its design to the administrative order—the circular steps symbolizing the Local Spiritual Assemblies, its pillars the National Assemblies, crowned by the dome of the Universal House of Justice. She was 'the last survivor of a glorious and heroic age', the Guardian wrote. Her death drew to a close the 'most moving chapter of Bahá'í history'. She had lived to witness the first eleven years of the Formative Age and the steady development of the Administrative Order under the guidance of Shoghi Effendi. Seven years after her passing, Shoghi Effendi was to bring the sacred remains of her mother, Navváb, and of the Purest Branch, to rest beside her. This act, he stated, further reinforced the spiritual potencies of that sacred spot and released forces that would hasten the coming of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 194.



*The first Bahá'í House of Worship in the western hemisphere, situated in the heart of the United States at Wilmette, Illinois. The building was formally dedicated to public worship in 1953 as a highlight of the celebrations marking the centenary of 'the first intimation' Bahá'u'lláh received of His mission. Surrounding the Temple are gardens with fountains and pools, completed in 1955.*

### *The Mother Temple of the West*

In the twilight years of the Greatest Holy Leaf, Shoghi Effendi wrote to the believers in North America urging them to proceed with the building of the Bahá'í Temple, news of its progress being the 'one remaining solace in her swiftly ebbing life'. Her longing and hope for this great Mother Temple of the West went back to the Master's words foretelling its glorious future in teaching the Faith. The ground had been hallowed by His footsteps in 1912, but work had proceeded slowly during the first twenty years. Models of the Temple displayed in New York and Chicago art galleries drew the keen interest and admiration of many architects, including the president of the Architectural League. Many called it a 'new creation', a 'Temple of Peace', the 'Temple of Light'. Articles in journals published as far apart as New York and Tokyo described its features and explained its symbology.

Even as many nationalities and races had been present when the Master dedicated the site in Wilmette, so did contributions come from all

over the world. Corinne True, later named a Hand of the Cause, who had been honored by receiving the Master in her home in Chicago, served as the financial secretary, encouraging Bahá'ís in this vast undertaking which the Master had said was 'the most important of all things'.

For eight years the circular basement, resting on steel caissons sunk 122 feet to bedrock, served as a meeting place, but it was unsightly to passersby. In spite of the great economic depression that gripped the nation and the world, Bahá'ís went forward in 1930 to erect the superstructure. The architect, Louis Bourgeois, a French Canadian Bahá'í, who had felt himself an instrument in the hands of a Divine destiny, died that same year. The casting of the beautiful, lacelike forms for the exterior began in 1932. A model shown at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition in 1933 made thousands of people aware of the Bahá'í Faith. When the first Seven Year Plan was launched in America in 1937, one of its chief goals was the completion of the Temple exterior by May 1944, marking the end of the first century of the Faith.



*America Before the First Seven Year Plan**Early Proclamation and Teaching Efforts*

Prior to the opening of the first Seven Year Plan in 1937, there were no organized teaching plans with specific goals. Nevertheless many Bahá'ís arose to teach throughout North America, Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific Islands. The Faith had been proclaimed at expositions and conferences on peace and world affairs in the United States—echoes of its first mention in that country in 1893 at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. At that time religious leaders from all over the world, assembled at a World Parliament of Religions, heard the name of Bahá'u'lláh read from a paper prepared by a Christian missionary of those days. In this brief presentation Bahá'u'lláh's words were described as 'noble . . . Christlike' and His famed statement to Professor E. G. Browne of Cambridge was quoted: 'That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers.'

Nineteen years later the Master Himself declared in San Francisco: *The age has dawned when human fellowship will become a reality . . . all mankind shall dwell in peace and security beneath the shelter of the . . . one living God.*<sup>1</sup> In 1925 this theme was publicly proclaimed again in San Francisco through a World Unity Conference initiated by the Bahá'ís and participated in by outstanding civic leaders.

The first Bahá'í Race Amity Conference was convened in 1921 in Washington, D.C., at the Master's request, largely through the efforts of Mrs. Agnes Parsons. It became the 'mother' of a whole series of similar events which eventually grew into the annual Race Unity Day observed by hundreds of Bahá'í communities. Shoghi Effendi was quick to praise this effort but also urged Bahá'ís to be 'living witnesses' to race unity, after the example set by the Master in America. Louis Gregory, who had participated in the Conference, was the first Bahá'í to make regular circuits to speak on the Faith at Negro colleges in the South. He and Willard McKay became the first Negro-white teaching team in the South, in 1931—a courageous undertaking at that time. Dorothy Baker, later named a Hand of the Cause, followed some few years after, fearlessly giving the Teachings in more

than ninety southern colleges, for both whites and blacks.

The Souvenir of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at West Englewood, New Jersey, became an annual event in memory of the Feast given there by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1912. The property itself was donated in 1935 by Roy Wilhelm, named a Hand of the Cause at his passing.

The first summer school in the United States began at 'Green Acre' in Eliot, Maine, on America's eastern shore. The Faith had been represented there, along with many other religious and cultural movements, before the Master's visit to it in 1912. This open forum of a liberal nature had been initiated in 1892 by Sarah Farmer, daughter of a well-known American inventor.\* Sarah became attracted to the Faith, visited the Master in 'Akká in 1900, and thereafter 'Green Acre' steadily developed a greater emphasis on the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. It became Bahá'í property in 1929. A Pacific school was opened at Geyserville, California, in 1927, at the ranch home of John and Louisa Bosch, early believers who deeded it to the Bahá'í Trustees in 1935. Davison Bahá'í school, first called Louhelen Ranch, in the heart of America in Michigan, held its first sessions in 1931 through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Lou Eggleston. It later became Bahá'í property.

*Publishing Before the First Seven Year Plan*

When *The Dawn-Breakers* was first published in the United States in 1932, Shoghi Effendi said it should become an 'unchallengeable textbook' in the summer schools, giving the Bahá'ís of the West an understanding of the spirit that moved the believers of the early Heroic Age. Shoghi Effendi himself compiled, edited and translated this monumental work, even directing details of its design. During these sixteen years of preparation before the first plan was launched, literature in the English language was greatly expanded through the publication of many outstanding texts, particularly Shoghi Effendi's translations of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. In addition to various Prayers and Tablets, he translated the following works: *The Kitáb-i-*

\* Among notable figures associated with these programs were John Greenleaf Whittier, noted American poet; Booker T. Washington and, at a later time, Mirzá Abu'l-Faql, well-known Persian scholar and learned apologist of the Bahá'í Faith.

<sup>1</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 364-365.



*Íqán* (The Book of Certitude), *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* (published earlier in England in his own translation), *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* and *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*.

With *Some Answered Questions*, *Paris Talks* and *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*,† all first published in England, various compilations of the Master's talks in the West, and an increasingly diversified list of books and pamphlets written by Bahá'ís, the believers of this time had a greatly enriched treasury of the scriptural, interpretive and expository literature of their Faith in the English language.

A unique publishing endeavor began with the issuance in 1926 of the first volume of *The Bahá'í World*, then called *The Bahá'í Yearbook*. This enterprise was based upon a suggestion from Horace Holley who labored devotedly as secretary of the American National Assembly to develop the Administrative Order under the Guardian's guidance. It received Shoghi Effendi's wholehearted support—he personally selected and arranged the contents of twelve consecutive volumes in his lifetime, all of which were published in the United States under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly. The content of these volumes, consisting of a review of international events and documentary material relating to the progress of the Faith was, beginning with volume II, compiled by an international board of editors, under the supervision of Shoghi Effendi.\* As succeeding editions were published over the years, thousands of copies were presented to public and university libraries throughout the world and to local, national and international leaders.

Many believers of the Master's time had been initially attracted to the Cause by the spirit of the 'return'. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's fatherly love and noble example, movingly recounted in Howard

Colby Ives' book *Portals to Freedom*, motivated them more to carry out His admonitions than any concept of laying the foundation of a divinely ordained social pattern which they, as yet, could but dimly perceive. It was not only the Guardian's great task to lay the foundation of the Administrative Order as a base for launching the Divine Plan, but especially to educate the Bahá'ís in the meaning of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

From 1929 to 1936, Shoghi Effendi released a series of seven major letters later published in one volume as *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*. These letters disclosed the theme of a divine economy enshrined in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. They presented a world nearing the edge of catastrophe, its religious and political institutions unable to stop the drift, and declared the society-building power of the new Revelation. Two forces were at work, Shoghi Effendi explained, the crumbling of an old order and the building of a new one. The work of Bahá'ís in spreading the Faith, with its spirit of unity reflected in its own working pattern, was at the heart of the integrating process. The Lesser Peace, offered by Bahá'u'lláh to a world that had refused His Most Great Peace, would be a political union of the nations, though a spiritually hungry humanity would not find rest until it turned wholeheartedly to Bahá'u'lláh. North America's role in achieving that Most Great Peace was analyzed in one letter and the believers admonished not to relinquish their God-given responsibility and primacy. *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, published in 1934, cast a brilliant light upon the Faith itself, the stations of its Central Figures, its links with past and future Dispensations, and the manner in which the creative energies released through Bahá'u'lláh's laws worked through His Administrative Order. The last message of the series, published in 1936, entitled *The Unfoldment of World Civilization*, gave a broad view of the titanic, spiritual upheaval taking place throughout the world in all areas of human life, as society struggled toward the coming of age of the entire human race. This analysis of the processes released by Bahá'u'lláh, coupled with an illuminating glimpse of its consummation in a future Golden Age, immensely expanded the understanding of the believers at this time, as to their sacred, glorious task.

†The first revised edition of this work by Esslemont was published in 1937 under the direction of Shoghi Effendi. In 1950 the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States purchased the publishing rights to this title from Allen and Unwin, London, the original publisher. Acting under the advice of the Universal House of Justice, another revised edition was published in 1970, adding new developments and statistics.

\**The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIII (1954–1963), was produced at the World Centre under the supervision of the Universal House of Justice which thenceforth assumed responsibility for publication of subsequent volumes.



*The summer residence at Yerrinbool, Australia, of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Bolton of Sydney, where the friends gathered for study of the Bahá'í Faith, was dedicated in 1937 as the first Bahá'í Summer School of that country and in January 1938 the first school was held. Mr. and Mrs. John Hyde Dunn are seen seated in the centre of the second row. Mr. and Mrs. Bolton are seen third from the right, back row, and fourth from the right, second row, respectively.*

### *The Promulgation of the Divine Plan*

'A new hour has struck', wrote Shoghi Effendi to the North American believers in 1935. Amidst the 'deepening gloom' of the world, the time was drawing near for the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to be carried to the 'countless multitudes that hunger for its teachings'. A year later he further exhorted the American believers: 'The promulgation of the Divine Plan... is the key which Providence has placed in the hands of the American believers... leading them to fulfill their unimaginably glorious Destiny.'<sup>1</sup>

### *The First Seven Year Plan (1937-1944)*

So urgent was this hour in history that the Guardian asked delegates to the Annual Convention of the United States and Canada in 1937 to prolong their sessions and deliberate on the tasks assigned to them in the Seven Year Plan. Its chief objectives were: (1) completion of the exterior of the Temple in Wilmette; (2) the formation of a Spiritual Assembly in each state

and province of North America, and in Alaska; (3) the establishment of a center in each republic of Latin America and the Caribbean.

This Seven Year Plan, initiated by the Guardian, marked the first organized response of the American believers to the mandate given to them in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan, and the first systematic teaching plan in the Bahá'í world. As other National Assemblies were formed and gained in strength, they developed active campaigns and were given similar plans, largely aimed at this time toward their own internal expansion. At a later time all the National Assemblies would become the 'generals' of the 'radiant army of Bahá'u'lláh' whose mission would be the spiritual conquest of the planet.

Now a spiritual army began to take shape in America. Goals were mapped out, committees appointed, funds established, recruits moved into position. The first big exodus of pioneers began. 'To try, to persevere, is to ensure ultimate and complete victory', exclaimed the Guardian. An early prize was the formation in 1938 of the first Latin American Spiritual Assembly, that of Mexico City! The Guardian's

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America*, pp. 5, 8.





*May Ellis Maxwell, 'beloved handmaid and distinguished disciple' of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, won 'the priceless honour of a martyr's crown' (Shoghi Effendi).*

heart was exhilarated by the 'unbroken solidarity and unquenchable enthusiasm' that distinguished this new enterprise.

On December 25, 1938 Shoghi Effendi dispatched a long letter that might be termed a permanent guide for every Bahá'í teacher and pioneer. Published as *The Advent of Divine Justice*, it referred again to America's leading role in proclaiming Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings to the world—that country now being the 'chief remaining citadel' of the Faith in a world that had become an 'armed camp'. The resounding call was to arise and teach; its watchword, the conduct and character of each Bahá'í. These soldiers in the spiritual army of Bahá'u'lláh must stand out brightly against the darkness of the materialism and moral laxity of their culture. Complete freedom from every kind of prejudice must be shown in daily life. Both black and white must do their part to 'heal the wounds' of the past. Teaching the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh meant also to deepen in understanding of His Mission. The Guardian named

an early target for the present Plan: planting the banner of the Faith in Panama, that meeting place of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, an area to which the Master had attached great importance in His Tablets.

In the spring of 1939, Shoghi Effendi warned of the imminent eruption of war. It burst upon Europe in August of that year, a few weeks before the passing of Martha Root in Hawaii. Six months later May Maxwell, spiritual mother of the Faith in France and Canada, won her 'martyr's crown' in Argentina, laying down her life at this southern outpost of the Faith. She was the last of America's 'three heroines' whose dust now lay in far off continents and islands. The passing of these two handmaidens at this time assured the triumph of the new Plan, Shoghi Effendi wrote.

A Bahá'í International School, which was created through the generosity of Loulie Mathews of the Inter-America Committee, opened in Colorado in 1940 especially to train pioneer teachers for the Latin American campaign. When midpoint of the Plan arrived, there were three Assemblies and five groups established in



*Martha L. Root, 'archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers... foremost Hand first Bahá'í century... first finest fruit Formative Age Faith...' (Shoghi Effendi).*



Latin America, and literature was being published there. A news bulletin linked these new outposts, and Shoghi Effendi expressed a desire to correspond directly with each pioneer.

The war in Europe spread, threatening the Holy Land. *The Promised Day is Come* came from the Guardian's pen early in 1941, giving the Bahá'ís a better understanding of this destructive chapter in human history. The 'judgment of God' was upon the world, he wrote, preparing it for the Day foretold in the Holy Books of the past. The burden of the nations was the price they were paying for ignoring the summons of the Divine Physician. Secular and religious leaders had withheld the healing Message—now they were powerless to stem the tide. In spite of the present darkness, the Guardian assured his spiritual warriors that they should 'labor serenely, confidently, and unremittingly' to lead humanity out of its misery. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 brought the United States into the war both in Europe and the Pacific. Although this brought hardship and restrictions, the pioneers continued to go forth to Latin America and throughout North America.

The Temple exterior was completed early in 1943, and the first Alaskan Assembly formed that year in Anchorage. Shortwave programs were beamed to South America. Seven Assemblies were still needed in North America—and only a year to go. A mighty effort was raised using every type of proclamation and teaching facility. March of 1944 came and the last three Canadian Assemblies were formed; it was the final seal of victory!

### *The First Centenary of the Faith*

War still raged in both hemispheres as Bahá'ís gathered in meetings around the world to celebrate the centenary of the Declaration of the Báb, in Shiráz, on the eve of May 23, 1844. A century ago He had called to the West to arise and proclaim the New Day. Now East and West joined in thanksgiving and praise to Him and to Bahá'u'lláh. Ninety delegates to the National Convention of Irán gathered in Shiráz to visit the upper room of the Báb's house where He had declared His Mission to Mullá Ḥusayn. In the Holy Land, over 150 Bahá'ís heard the beloved Guardian chant in

the Holy Shrines and later recount the thrilling progress of the Cause.

Some five hundred Egyptian Bahá'ís celebrated the occasion in their new Ḥaziratu'l-Quds—the dome having been completed only two hours earlier! 'Iráqí Bahá'ís scheduled six days of events with many visitors attending. In spite of harassment the believers of these lands had continued their heroic efforts in opening new areas, translating literature into Arabic and encouraging the activity of youth.

Australian Bahá'ís met in their newly acquired headquarters, now appropriately dedicated by 'Mother' Dunn. New Zealand held a banquet meeting in Auckland. Bahá'ís there had recently witnessed the unique universality of the Faith through a talk given in an Anglican pulpit by an American serviceman of orthodox Jewish background.

The Mayor of Bombay opened India's observance. Such an intensive publicity campaign was mounted that it attracted the making of a news film. The Indian community had delighted the Guardian by launching their own Six Year Plan in 1938. At the Guardian's suggestion, its chief goal was sending pioneers to open new areas.

The valiant British Bahá'ís had not only survived the war but had managed to modestly increase their numbers despite severe hardship and the restriction on travel. Their summer school had functioned every year of the war except 1940 when the threat of invasion was heavy. Now many cities arranged beautiful, informative exhibits—one of these attracting much attention in the heart of Westminster. Sir Ronald Storrs, first military Governor of Jerusalem under the British Mandate, who had known and admired the Master for many decades, gave a warm tribute to the Faith at the London observance.

More than 1,600 Bahá'ís of North and South America gathered under the dome of the House of Worship in Wilmette to view the first portrait of the Báb ever shown in the West. It marked the final triumph of the first Seven Year Plan. The Faith now reached from Alaska in the far North to Magellanes at the southern tip of South America. The beautiful exterior of the Mother Temple of the West, floodlit at night, gleamed like a heavenly jewel.

Shoghi Effendi issued a world survey of the Faith for the centenary. The Cause had spread

to seventy-eight countries, fifty-six of them sovereign states. Fifteen Spiritual Assemblies had been formed in Latin America and there was a Bahá'í center in each republic. Literature was available in forty-nine languages. While the centenary celebrations were still in progress, the Guardian cabled a decision to proceed at an early date with the building of the Shrine of the Báb—the outer structure to enclose the one raised by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was designed by the distinguished Canadian architect, William Sutherland Maxwell, the father of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum. He was later named a Hand of the Cause.

At a time when war threats hung heavily over the Holy Land, with the burden of guiding a world community under intense problems of communication, and with Covenant-breaking spreading amongst his own family, Shoghi Effendi had the strength of mind and purpose to write his immortal book *God Passes By*. One hundred years of the world's greatest religious drama are recorded in its pages. This chronicle of the forward march of the Cause of God, meeting crises of all kinds and emerging triumphant from tribulation, opened up a new vision to Bahá'ís, for the future as well as of the past.

## THE SECOND EPOCH OF THE FORMATIVE AGE (1944–1963)

### *The Aftermath of the War*

THE second World War ended officially on May 8, 1945 in Europe and on September 2 of that year in Japan. The foundations of the Cause in Europe and the Orient had been sorely tried but had held firm. The German Bahá'ís had suffered greatly but heroically. They had been brought to trial, placed in concentration camps, their literature and archives destroyed—yet the Bahá'í community in this country, which Shoghi Effendi said was 'destined to play an outstanding role in the spiritual revival' of Europe, rose quickly to its feet. Marta Brauns-Forel of Karlsruhe, daughter of the famed Swiss scientist, Dr. Auguste Forel, to whom the Master had addressed a Tablet, was one of many German believers who performed courageous services. Another was Paul Gollmer of Stuttgart who aided that community to obtain an official permit to organize within a few months of the close of the war. Bahá'ís there and elsewhere in Germany were assisted in these efforts by Allied Bahá'í servicemen. The National Assembly of Germany and Austria was formed again in 1946.

American Bahá'í servicemen searched out the believers in Japan, among them the much-loved Fujita (Mr. Saichiro Fujita) who had come to the Holy Land in 1919 at the Master's invitation and had served there for nearly twenty years. The library of Agnes Alexander, with hundreds of precious copies in Japanese of Dr. Esslemont's book, was found intact in a ruined

part of Tokyo. Four years were to pass before Tokyo would form its Spiritual Assembly.

The Indian sub-continent underwent fundamental changes during and after the war. The days of British rule ended. The land was divided by hatred and prejudice. New political boundaries were formed; religious riots spread like wildfire, but the Bahá'í community forged ahead, undivided by these factions in their midst. They had increased their numbers during their Six Year Plan. Now they planned to triple their Assemblies by 1950 and to translate Dr. Esslemont's book into eighteen additional languages. New teaching zones were mapped out and pioneer families went forth together, one each from Indian and Persian backgrounds, to form nuclei of new Bahá'í communities. The National Assembly of India and Burma summarized the substance of pioneering in these words: 'The individual, the backbone of the whole scheme, will, in . . . pioneering . . . develop the qualities of faith in God, in himself and in his fellowmen, the attributes of renunciation, of courage and audacity, of initiative and enterprise.'

The Burmese Bahá'ís had suffered severely during the war. One who died in the violence that swept the land was Siyyid Muşţafá Rúmí, at the age of ninety-nine. He was named a Hand of the Cause at his passing. An urgent goal for India was to assist the Burmese community to rise again.



### *Formation of the United Nations*

It was significant to Bahá'ís that the United Nations was formed in San Francisco, convening on April 25, 1945. Exactly thirty years earlier to the day, Bahá'ís had taken part in an international peace conference in San Francisco which sent President Woodrow Wilson a message. More significant, the Master had said in California in 1912: *May the first flag of International Peace be upraised in this State.* Bahá'ís seized their chance now and arranged meetings, banquets, exhibits, radio programs and press interviews. They presented a specially prepared brochure, *The Bahá'í Peace Program*, to thousands of delegates and observers, and sent their own observers to the sessions. Their efforts were so well noted that a leading Egyptian newspaper published an account of the Bahá'í activity and printed the contents of the brochure in full. The Hon. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, the leader of the Indian delegation, was inspired to visit the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette and later received a Bahá'í delegation in London. The following January British Bahá'ís sent a letter and brochure to each United Nations delegate at the first meeting of the General Assembly in London.

Encouraged and guided by Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í interest and participation in the work of the United Nations grew. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles was one of the first members of the League of Nations Union in England and this membership was later carried forward into the United Nations Association. The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada was first accredited as a non-governmental organization in 1947, followed by accreditation of the Bahá'í International Community in 1948. Bahá'í observers took part in United Nations non-governmental conferences in many parts of the world. National Assemblies appointed committees to encourage local Bahá'í activity and support for the work of the United Nations. Carefully prepared documents based upon Bahá'í principles were formally submitted to this body, including 'A Bahá'í Declaration of Human Obligations and Rights', and 'A Bahá'í Statement on Rights of Women', both in 1947. In 1955 delegates at the charter revision conference were presented with 'Bahá'í Proposals for Charter Revision'.

In 1947 the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine asked Shoghi Effendi, as Head of a Faith with its world center in Haifa, for a statement on the Bahá'í attitude toward Palestine and its future. The Guardian included with his letter of reply a summary of the history and teachings of the Faith, later published and widely circulated as *The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, A World Religion*. In 1970, under the direction of the Universal House of Justice, the Bahá'í International Community was admitted to consultative status with the Economic and Social Council as a non-governmental organization.

### *The Second Seven Year Plan (1946–1953)\**

#### *'A God-Given Mandate'*

Less than a year had elapsed since the ending of the 'greatest conflict that (had) ever shaken the human race' when Shoghi Effendi issued a call to the North American community to rise to 'scale loftier heights of heroism'. Western Europe was the new spiritual frontier—that 'war-torn, spiritually famished European continent, cradle of world-famed civilizations, twice-blest by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visits, whose rulers Bahá'u'lláh specifically and collectively addressed'.<sup>1</sup> A European Teaching Committee was formed with an auxiliary office in Geneva. Ten goal countries were named: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden—Finland would be added later. The first pioneers sailed within four months, 'wholly dedicated souls, aglow with enthusiasm', but facing many physical hardships and spiritual challenges. Shoghi Effendi encouraged a close collaboration between the British Publishing Trust and the German Publishing Committee to quickly provide the needed literature. By Rídván 1948, there were new Bahá'ís in each goal city. The first European Teaching Conference held in Geneva in May 1948 was hailed by the Guardian as a landmark in the European campaign. Nearly a hundred Bahá'ís came from nineteen countries to share in a new fellowship and to plan further victories. A joyful cable from

\*The second Seven Year Plan, intended to carry a stage further the mission conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the American Bahá'í Community, . . . must, as it operates in three continents, be productive of results outshining any as yet achieved since the Divine Plan itself was set in motion . . . Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America*, p. 88.

Shoghi Effendi urged them to continue to hold aloft 'the torch of divine guidance'. Summer schools opened—the first in Switzerland in 1947. By March of 1952 progress was such as to move Shoghi Effendi to call for the formation of the Italo-Swiss National Spiritual Assembly at Riqvân 1953.

A few weeks after the inauguration of this new Seven-Year Plan, Shoghi Effendi issued a lengthy, cogent message published as *A God-Given Mandate*. It presented a panoramic view of the evolution of the Divine Plan from the birth of the Faith 'in darkest Persia' to that 'ultimate redemption of all mankind'. Again the Guardian stressed the significance of the Master's visits to the West, and especially His call to America to proclaim the *advent of the Kingdom of the Lord of Hosts . . . in all the five continents of the globe*. The present stage of the Divine Plan would end during the hundredth anniversary of the 'Year Nine' that had marked the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission in the Siyáh-Chál. Shoghi Effendi named it 'Holy Year' to be observed in 1952–1953. A further projection in the evolution of the Divine Plan, he wrote, would be marked by the worldwide celebration of the 'Most Great Festival', the 'greatest of all Jubilees', related to the 1,335 days mentioned in the Book of Daniel. This Great Festival was to be observed at Riqvân 1963. *A God-Given Mandate* was not only an appeal and a stirring challenge to the believers—it was also an assurance of victory to all who would arise to assume their God-given role.

Shoghi Effendi named other objectives of this plan: consolidation and expansion of the Faith throughout the Americas; completion of the House of Worship in Wilmette and landscaping of the grounds; the formation of National Spiritual Assemblies in Canada, in Central America and South America.

### *Ten National Plans Circle the World*

The first of the new pillars for the Universal House of Justice was raised in Canada where delegates met in April 1948, in the Maxwell home, hallowed by the Master's presence in 1912.\* Under the Guardian's direction, the National Assembly of Canada initiated a Five

Year Plan resulting in the establishment of thirty Local Assemblies from coast to coast, the opening of a hundred centers including ones in Greenland and Newfoundland, the enrollment of Eskimo and Indian believers and the purchase of a Hazíratu'l-Quds in Toronto. In their second year, the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly secured, through an Act of Parliament, incorporation by Royal Charter which the Guardian termed unique in the history of the Bahá'í world and the strongest incorporation legally.

A sense of commitment intensified among Latin American Bahá'ís as they assumed increasing responsibilities toward the formation of their own National Spiritual Assemblies. Regional committees took shape in 1946, new Assemblies and groups were formed, and the number of believers doubled in a single year. Summer schools arose in Argentina, Chile and Mexico. Teaching conferences were convened in Buenos Aires and in Panama City, each to become the seat of a future National Assembly. In 1947 Shoghi Effendi addressed them in his long message to America, published as *The Challenging Requirements of the Present Hour*, as 'co-workers and associates' in carrying out the Divine Plan. When the two Latin American National Spiritual Assemblies were elected in Central America and South America at Riqvân 1951, he assigned them a threefold responsibility: consolidation of the administrative structure, intensifying the teaching work, and deepening the believers. Under this plan a Bahá'í Cultural Institute was established in the heart of the Indian country in Chichicastenango, Guatemala, and a Bahá'í school was held at 'Karbilá' near Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Lifting their sights above their own horizons, Shoghi Effendi indicated to these two fledgling communities the combined efforts they would soon be called upon to make, with their sister communities in Australasia and the Indian sub-continent, toward the 'spiritual conquest of the multitudinous islands of the South Pacific Ocean'.

Australia and New Zealand far exceeded the original goals of a Six Year Plan on which they had spontaneously embarked in 1947, bringing the total number of Assemblies to seventeen, and groups to forty. This plan, Shoghi Effendi said, would pave the way for that 'mighty Crusade' whereby they would carry the Faith to

\*In 1954 this house was transferred to the National Assembly of Canada as a gift from Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum.



the farflung Pacific territories. He attested 'the vitality of the faith of the believers' in Australia, exemplified by the number of pioneers who went to virgin territories, and by their purchase of a Temple site in Sydney.

India, Pakistan and Burma also spontaneously adopted a Nineteen Month Plan, their third consecutive one since the systematic prosecution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan had begun in 1937. It too was a 'prelude to the mighty and historic Crusade' to be launched in the future. Additional translations were published, and the following countries opened: Thailand; Malaya (with an Assembly in Singapore); Indonesia; Sarawak (with an Assembly in Kuching); Zanzibar; Madagascar; and Nepal. Eight Assemblies were formed on the home front, and the 'New Era School' in Panchgani was moved to larger premises with progress made toward governmental recognition.

In 1944 the Bahá'ís of the British Isles began prosecution of a Six Year Plan under which they trebled the size of their community and established Spiritual Assemblies in nineteen cities. It was, in the Guardian's words, 'one of the most significant undertakings embarked upon by the members of the Bahá'í National Assemblies during the opening years of the second Bahá'í century'. It was but the harbinger of an even more remarkable achievement soon to be won. During this period a wide proclamation of the Faith was effected through the publication of a statement by George Townshend, wherein he explained his reasons for resigning his Orders and church offices. Entitled *The Old Churches and the New World Faith*, it was sent to more than 10,000 religious and other leaders of public opinion.

Still emerging from the war's devastation, the Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria nevertheless doubled their numbers by 1947. With his wisdom and compassion, Shoghi Effendi guided them through this critical period of political and social unrest, and encouraged them to adopt, in 1948, a Five Year Plan. Because all literature had been destroyed, the publication of major Bahá'í books became a prime goal. A new *Háziratu'l-Quds* was constructed in Frankfurt-am-Main; fourteen new communities were raised and Spiritual Assemblies formed in nine of them. Esslingen Bahá'í School opened after a suspension of ten years.

Persia adopted a forty-five month plan in 1946. In addition to expansion of the national community, the goals included sending pioneers to India and 'Iráq, and forming Local Assemblies in Afghanistan, Arabia and in the Persian Gulf. In the course of the plan effective steps were taken to encourage Bahá'í women and to assist them in taking an active part in the affairs of the community. Shoghi Effendi paid tribute to the 'glorious and continuing efforts rendered by the beloved Bahá'í sisters' of a land that had given Táhiriḥ to the world.

Women were elected for the first time to Spiritual Assemblies in Egypt in the course of their Five Year Plan that began in May of 1948. The Faith was expanded in both Egypt and Sudan, centers were opened in Eritrea, Algeria and Libya, and an Assembly was formed in Tunis in April 1953. Negotiations also began for the purchase of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Istanbul, a project brought to conclusion in 1954.

'Iráq, whose Bahá'í community often shared the repression known to its sister communities in Persia and Egypt, is also a hallowed land to Bahá'ís. It had known the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh through the first ten years of His exile, and was the scene of His momentous Declaration in the Garden of Riqván at Baghdád. During the years leading up to the Holy Year, the believers' devotion manifested itself in a plan during which they increased the number of centers, translated and published many additional titles in Arabic and completed the construction of a national headquarters which included a spacious hall seating five hundred.

Midpoint of the second Seven Year Plan brought a financial crisis to the United States Bahá'í community. Costs for completing the Temple in Wilmette had risen greatly, and the expenses of two continental campaigns (Europe and Latin America) were formidable. Shoghi Effendi called for an austerity period wherein certain activities were temporarily suspended, a period later extended to the whole Bahá'í world. But the Divine Plan continued to go forward. When the Centenary of the Báb's martyrdom was observed on July 9, 1950 and the beautiful arcade and parapet of the Shrine were completed, the Guardian felt able to proceed with the completion of this 'Queen of Carmel'. He released a new world survey to 1950. The Faith



*The first Local Spiritual Assembly of Kampala, Uganda; Riqdván 1952. Back row (left to right): Philip Hainsworth (pioneer), Chrispian Kajubi (Ganda tribe), Enoch Olinga (Teso tribe), 'Alí Y. Nakhjavání (pioneer), Frederick Bigabwa (Toro tribe), Peter Musoke (Ganda tribe). Front row (left to right): Mrs. Samihh Banání (pioneer), Músá Banání (pioneer), Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání (pioneer).*

had reached a hundred countries—a gain of twenty-two in six years!

### *The African Campaign*

Three years remained for the Bahá'í world to win the goals. Then Bahá'ís learned that plans aimed at the stars could aim even higher under the farseeing eye of their Guardian. A new campaign was announced—Africa! Britain would spearhead and coordinate this challenging undertaking which called for the combined efforts of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, of Egypt, India, Persia and the United States. The British Bahá'ís had just completed their Six Year Plan. Shoghi Effendi had praised their achievement—especially the number of Bahá'ís who had arisen to take part, a record participation for the Formative Age. With his praise still ringing in their ears at Riqdván 1950, they heard his new summons: a Two Year Plan

(1951–1953) to plant the banner of the Faith amidst the tribes of central and western Africa. The northern and southern fringes of this vast continent had been illuminated in the course of the Ministries of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The new campaign was designed to eventually carry the light of the Faith to all regions. America was asked especially to send its 'much-loved Negro Bahá'ís' to pioneer. Britain, Egypt and Persia sent pioneers. India's part was to consolidate Zanzibar and Madagascar. Five countries thus worked together to take the light of the Faith to the tribes of Africa, the first truly international teaching plan.

One of the first pioneers to arise from Persia was Músá Banání, later named a Hand of the Cause and 'the Spiritual Conqueror of Africa'. An Assembly was formed in Kampala, Uganda in 1952. West Africa was opened. Shoghi Effendi increased the goals to twenty-five states and dependencies. By the next year all goals



were exceeded! Native African believers arose to teach their people, to pioneer, to go outside their own territories—among them a future Hand of the Cause, Enoch Olinga. Shoghi Effendi later bestowed upon him the honorific ‘Abu’l-Futūḥ’ (the Father of Victories).

### *Developments at the World Centre*

As the plans progressed, dramatic changes took place in the Holy Land. The new State of Israel was formed in May 1948, under a plan adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Almost immediately a war broke out, short but intense. During this time Shoghi Effendi, with his small staff of helpers, remained steadfastly in Haifa, conducting the affairs of the Bahá’í world community.

Through Shoghi Effendi’s strenuous efforts over a period of years, the physical properties and endowments in the Holy Land had greatly increased. The Shrine of the Báb would soon lift its golden dome in the heart of Carmel. New terraces and gardens were adorning the slopes of the Holy Mountain, adjoining the serene memorial gardens that shelter the remains of the Holy Family. Protective gardens had been added to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh. Bahjí, Bahá’u’lláh’s last residence, had been beautifully restored by Shoghi Effendi after he had been able, in 1932, to remove Muḥammad ‘Alí and his family from this sacred house they had so pitifully neglected. Mazra‘ih, outside ‘Akká, where the Manifestation of God had dwelt for a time, was leased in 1950 and simply furnished; it was given into Bahá’í custody and restored in 1951.

All this and much more was achieved by the beloved Guardian alone over a period of years in the face of constant opposition and harassment by both old and new Covenant-breakers. They thwarted him in every way they could, slandered his station, wrongly portrayed him to the authorities, and brought legal actions against him. Often his ‘heavy-laden heart’ would turn to the believers for consolation, and they responded with an abundant love and loyalty. Forces arose in the 1950s to demolish one by one the schemes of the Covenant-breakers as though God had totally wearied of their presence in the precincts of His Holy Mountain. Within a few years, after a ‘steady decline’

in their fortunes, these thorns were removed. Places where they had dwelt near the holy sites were quickly replaced with stately gardens designed by Shoghi Effendi.

### *Appointment of the International Bahá’í Council*

January 9, 1951 brought the historic announcement by Shoghi Effendi of the appointment of the International Bahá’í Council, ‘the first embryonic International Institution’, of the Bahá’í world. Counting later appointments, its members and officers were: Amatu’l-Bahá Rúḥiyyih Khánum (liaison between the Guardian and the Council); Mason Remey (president); Amelia Collins (vice-president); Leroy Ioas (secretary-general); Jessie Revell (treasurer); Ugo Giachery (member-at-large); Ethel Revell and Luṭfu’lláh Ḥakím (Western and Eastern secretaries) and Sylvia Ioas (added in 1955). This Council would become an elected body in the future, Shoghi Effendi stated, and its destiny was to evolve into the Universal House of Justice.

The Council assisted the Guardian in building the Shrine of the Báb, extending the land areas near the Holy Places, securing the site of the future House of Worship on Mount Carmel, and in cementing relationships with the Israeli Government. The new State of Israel, itself taking shape during these years, came to recognize the Bahá’í Faith as an independent world religion, with both its spiritual and administrative centers in the Holy Land. A special department for Bahá’í affairs was opened in the Ministry for Religious Affairs.

### *Appointment of the Hands of the Cause of God*

A cable from the Guardian on December 24, 1951 announced the appointment of the first contingent of Hands of the Cause of God. Bahá’u’lláh had named certain believers as ‘Hands of the Cause’, as did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In His *Will and Testament* the Master mentions their duties, *to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men* and *to be ever watchful* in protecting the Faith from evil-wishers. Although Shoghi Effendi had given this high rank to certain believers after they had passed on, no appointments had been previously announced. The Hands of the Cause were to function on all the continents and from the Holy Land. Continental funds were later

established to further their work, and Assemblies and individuals were invited to contribute.

Nineteen Hands of the Cause—some already members of the Bahá'í Council—were appointed in two groups over a two-month period as follows: William Sutherland Maxwell, Mason Remey, Amelia Collins (Holy Land); Valíy'u'lláh Varqá, Tarázu'lláh Samandari, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í, Dhíkru'lláh Khádem (Persia); George Townshend, Hermann Grossmann, Ugo Giachery, Adelbert Mühlischlegel (Europe); Horace Holley, Dorothy Baker, Leroy Ioas, Fred Schopflocher, Corinne True (America); Músá Banání (Africa); and Clara Dunn (Australia).

### *A New Plan Foreshadowed*

As the Holy Year drew near, the teaching plans of the National Assemblies were nearing completion. Shoghi Effendi named four Hands of the Cause who would represent him at the Intercontinental Conferences to be held in 1953: Leroy Ioas (Africa, in February); Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum (who had been appointed a Hand of the Cause after the passing of her father William Sutherland Maxwell in 1952) accompanied by Amelia Collins (America, at Ridván); Ugo Giachery (Europe, in July) and Mason Remey (Asia, in October). All were members of the Bahá'í Council.

For some years exciting glimpses of a new teaching plan that would encircle the globe had been revealed in the Guardian's letters. Pilgrims returned home excited by what they heard at the Guardian's table. Like a drumbeat drawing nearer, news of this plan began to stir the hearts of the believers who were still submerged in winning the current goals. It was envisaged as a third Seven Year Plan to begin in 1956. In the spring of 1952, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States cabled the Guardian expressing a desire not to make use of the promised three-year respite originally mentioned by him, and Shoghi Effendi cabled back his appreciation of this 'noble determination'.

In spite of forewarning, no message from Shoghi Effendi so electrified the Bahá'í world as the one published as *Launching the World-Embracing Spiritual Crusade* with which he opened the Holy Year in October 1952. The Crusade would reach throughout the planet and harness the forces of the entire Bahá'í world.

Through the years, Shoghi Effendi had prepared Bahá'u'lláh's 'Army of Light' for this spiritual conquest of the world. The Hands of the Cause would be the 'Standard Bearers' of this mighty campaign, to be assisted in their work by five Auxiliary Boards, one for each continent, to be appointed by the Hands during Ridván 1954. The 'generals' would be the twelve existing National Assemblies: the British Isles; the United States; Germany and Austria; Egypt and Sudan; 'Iráq; India, Pakistan and Burma; Persia; Australia and New Zealand; Canada; Central America; South America; Italy and Switzerland. Like a brilliant commander, Shoghi Effendi marshaled the forces of the entire Bahá'í world and launched them on this 'soul-stirring . . . world-embracing Crusade'.

The fourfold purposes of the plan were: (1) development of the World Centre; (2) strengthening the national bases from which the twelve plans would proceed—one for each National Assembly; (3) consolidation of all new territories; (4) opening remaining virgin territories. With its details spread out, the scope of this new plan was breathtaking. It included the formation of forty-eight new National Spiritual Assemblies—each to have its own headquarters, constitution, endowment and legal incorporation; the erection of two new Temples, one in Asia (Persia) and one in Europe (Germany); the purchase of eleven Temple sites and the opening of one hundred and thirty-one new countries and territories. Ties with the United Nations were to be strengthened. A beautiful new International Archives building would be built on Mount Carmel, on the 'arc' laid out by the Guardian as the site of future edifices for institutions of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Six publishing trusts would be formed and literature published in ninety-one new languages. Precious historic sites in Persia would be secured. And, God willing, the Most Great Jubilee would be celebrated in the vicinity of Baghdád itself.

### *The Holy Year and the Great Jubilee*

African Bahá'ís from thirty tribes, Orientals and Occidentals from the other continents, gathered together literally within a 'tent of oneness' in Kampala. The Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas welcomed them in the Guardian's name, read his message of praise and gratitude



for past victories and outlined the plan for opening the whole continent of Africa and its islands. Nine other Hands of the Cause were there, touching the hearts of the Africans with stories from the Heroic Age of the Faith, encouraging them to teach and to take hold of the administration of their new Faith. The great victory in Africa was the hearts of the Africans. Centuries of fear and mistrust were wiped away with tears of joy and love—everyone there knew he was a child of God and an heir of the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh.

The All-America Conference in Wilmette at Ridván 1953 was a 'triple celebration—the dedication of the Mother Temple of the West, the launching of a World Spiritual Crusade and the commemoration of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission'.<sup>1</sup> Some 2,300 Bahá'is heard Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum read the Guardian's messages and witnessed the dedication of the Temple whose site the Master had blessed forty-one years before. Some were present who had been with the Master that day—one of them the Hand of the Cause Valíyu'lláh Varqá whose father and brother had been martyred in Persia. Bahá'u'lláh's portrait was formally shown for the first time outside the Holy Land. The model of the Temple to adorn Carmel was displayed. The vast goals for America, spread throughout all continents and islands of the sea, were disclosed. Pioneers arose by the score. A few weeks after this conference, the Guardian announced a Roll of Honor for the 'Knights of Bahá'u'lláh', those pioneers who would open the virgin territories. It was later to be placed, he said, beneath the entrance of the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh.

Fourteen Hands of the Cause, the largest number at any of the conferences, were present at the Stockholm conference convened by the European Teaching Committee of America. The Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery pinpointed the most immediate goals on which to begin: the Temple in Frankfurt, the virgin territories to be opened, the Temple sites in Rome and Stockholm and the translation of urgently needed literature. Before the conference had closed, pioneers had volunteered for all the European territories.

The New Delhi conference held in October closed the Holy Year. Here the Faith achieved a

new prestige as the President of the Indian Republic, His Excellency Dr. Rajendra Prasad, opened the conference and declared it a unique event for the Orient, with its wide display of racial and cultural backgrounds. Special Bahá'í delegations called upon the President, the Vice-President and on Prime Minister Nehru of India. The Hand of the Cause Clara Dunn encouraged the seventy-four pioneers who arose with these words: 'If we have faith we can conquer the whole world!' Following the conference, at Shoghi Effendi's request the Hands of the Cause who had been present carried out teaching journeys throughout Asia, Africa and Australasia.

A highlight of all the conferences was the Guardian's comprehensive world survey of the Faith to 1952, and a detailed charting of the new plan. His colorful map depicted the goals of the twelve National Spiritual Assemblies and helped Bahá'is to quickly relate to this awe-inspiring, world-embracing plan.

#### *The Ten Year World Crusade (1953–1963)*

'When we look back a hundred years ago,' said the Hand of the Cause Dhikru'lláh Khádém at the Stockholm conference, 'Bahá'u'lláh was alone (in the Siyáh-Chál), but now His lovers all around the world, in 2,500 localities in 129 countries, speak of Him in ninety different languages.' Looking ahead ten years, the lovers of Bahá'u'lláh would be calling His name in over 11,000 localities and in more than 300 languages!

The Ten Year Crusade is a story filled with heroism, love, sacrifice and with deep sorrow too—but especially a story of a great victory won by the Bahá'is through steadfast faith in Bahá'u'lláh and in the guidance of Shoghi Effendi. The first phase of the plan, covering a year, saw the opening of a hundred countries and territories from the Arctic Circle to the Indian Ocean. Only eight virgin goals remained to be opened, outside the places where political conditions prevented the entry of pioneers.

At this time the Bahá'is in the cradle of the Faith were steadily building up their Temple Fund and acquiring the sites of historic significance to the Faith. The Siyáh-Chál that had once held the Manifestation of God in chains was acquired in 1954. Then, in 1955, without warning, a shattering blow was struck against the

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 106.

Persian believers. Bahá'ís were killed, their property seized, crops destroyed, the teachings distorted in the press, and the dome of the beautiful, national Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Tíhrán was demolished. This vicious attack, spurred on by fanatical religious leaders, came as a deep shock to many people of the world as well as to Bahá'ís. Under the Guardian's direction, the Bahá'í world rallied immediately to the support of their assailed brothers and sisters. Appeals were directed to the Sháh and to the Iranian Parliament and registered with the United Nations. World leaders raised their voices in protest—Eleanor Roosevelt, Pandit Nehru and Professor Toynbee, to name a few. The Secretary-General of the United Nations sent a representative to the Iranian delegate to confer on the matter and seek redress. The persecution began to diminish, although it would take two years and another appeal to the United Nations to bring it to a halt. For the first time in Persia an attack upon the Bahá'ís had reached the eyes and ears of the whole world and to its highest seat of justice. It was, in effect, a wide proclamation of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. The building of the Temple in Persia, however, had to be postponed. Shortly thereafter Shoghi Effendi announced that, instead, two Temples would rise, one in the heart of Africa at Kampala and one in Australasia at Sydney.

By Ríḍván 1956 the Faith had reached two hundred and forty-seven countries and major territories. The buildup of National and Regional Assemblies began with three additional ones in Africa, making four in all. Latin America expanded from two to four Assemblies in 1957. New National Assemblies were formed in South East Asia, North East Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, Alaska, New Zealand, Pakistan and three in Western Europe. The Guardian's Ríḍván message of 1957 was filled with joy, listing the many victories. He was moved to prepare a new map listing the achievements—many far beyond the original scope of the plan.

His message of June 4, 1957 asked the Hands of the Cause to assume their 'primary obligation to watch over' and protect the Bahá'í community, as well as prosecute the World Crusade, in close collaboration with the National Assemblies. In October he appointed eight more Hands of the Cause, making a total of twenty-seven: Enoch Olinga, William Sears, John Robarts (Africa); Ḥasan Balyuzi, John Fer-

raby (British Isles); Collis Featherstone, Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir (Pacific) and Abu'l-Qásim Faizi (Arabian Peninsula).

Since earlier appointees William Sutherland Maxwell, Siegfried Schopflocher, Dorothy Baker, Valíyu'lláh Varqá and George Townshend had passed away, they were replaced by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, 1952; Jalál Kházeh, 1953; Paul Haney, 1954; 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, 1955; and Agnes Alexander, 1957.

October 1957 brought the good news from the Guardian that five Intercontinental Conferences would be held in 1958, midpoint of the Crusade, to give thanks to Bahá'u'lláh and to consult on remaining goals. This last letter to the Bahá'ís of the world also designated the Hands of the Cause 'Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth', a mandate whose incalculable blessings were so shortly and so tragically to appear. The last half of this plan, he stated, must be marked by the entry of large numbers of believers into the Cause. He concluded this letter with a plea for all Bahá'ís to 'bestir themselves (toward) hastening the establishment of His Kingdom in the hearts of men'.

### *The Passing of Shoghi Effendi*

These were Shoghi Effendi's last words to his followers around the globe. November 4 brought the heartbreaking cable from Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum—the Guardian had passed away suddenly in London. The beloved commander of Bahá'u'lláh's 'Army of Light' that had followed him trustingly into every unknown field had fallen. Stunned, grief stricken, the Bahá'ís gathered in London as this 'priceless pearl' given to them by the Master was laid to rest in British soil. Only those who remembered the Master's passing thirty-six years earlier could compare the sorrow. Yet, after the first shock and grief had lifted, Bahá'ís rose to their feet and went to work, assured by those Chief Stewards, the Hands of the Cause, and moved by the courageous example of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum.

The first of the five conferences opened two months later in Kampala with Rúḥíyyih Khánum as the Guardian's chosen representative, followed by conferences in Sydney, in March, with Mason Remey; Chicago, in May,





(Courtesy of Conrad Rothman)

*Silhouette of the monument rising above the resting place of Shoghi Effendi in the Great Northern London Cemetery, New Southgate.*

with Ugo Giachery; Frankfurt, in July, with Amelia Collins; and Singapore (moved from Djakarta at the last moment), in September, with Leroy Ioas. Each conference received precious gifts, previously arranged by the Guardian himself: the blessed portraits to view, earth from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh for Temple foundation ceremonies in Kampala and Sydney, and the Guardian's mid-Crusade map, so recently come from his hands. Bahá'ís vowed to bring complete victory in the name of the Guardian by April 1963.

### *The Hands of the Cause as Chief Stewards*

The Hands of the Cause gathered in the Holy Land immediately following the passing of Shoghi Effendi. A proclamation issued on November 25 informed the Bahá'í world that Shoghi Effendi had left no heir and had made no appointment of another Guardian. Nine Hands were chosen to remain at the World Centre. The proclamation was signed by twenty-six of the Hands, Mrs. Corinne True, ninety-six years of age, not being present. The major task for Bahá'ís now was to complete the goals of the Crusade. The Hands of the Cause held a conclave each autumn in the Holy Land, from 1958 through 1962, and in the spring of 1963. Bahá'ís were informed of all developments throughout each year. Most of the Hands traveled ceaselessly now, encouraging the believers in their work, giving of themselves in full measure. The blessing Bahá'u'lláh had conferred upon the Hands of the Cause in the *Tablet to the World* took on deeper meaning—those *through whom the light of fortitude hath shone forth and the truth hath been established that the authority to choose rests with God*. . . . The defection of Mason Remey in April 1960, through his claim to be the 'hereditary Guardian', failed to create a division in the Faith. He was expelled from the ranks of the faithful, along with a small handful of misguided followers. He spent his last days in obscurity, unrepentant and abandoned by nearly all his erstwhile followers.

The passing of four Hands of the Cause was to transpire before completion of the World Crusade: Horace Holley (1960) and Amelia Collins (1962) in the Holy Land; Clara Dunn (1960) in Australia; and Corinne True (1961) in the United States.

### *Election of the International Bahá'í Council*

The Hands of the Cause called for the election of the International Bahá'í Council at Riḍván 1961, in accordance with this stage of its development as outlined by Shoghi Effendi. In this first Bahá'í election on a world scale, the National Assemblies of the world cast their ballots by mail and elected the following members: Jessie Revell, 'Alí Nakhjavání, Luṭfulláh Ḥakím, Ethel Revell, Charles Wolcott, Sylvia Ioas, Mildred Mottahedeh, Ian Semple and H. Borrah Kavelin. The newly elected Council continued the work of the former Council, with various added duties. They assisted Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánúm to complete the furnishing and arrangement of the International Archives building in 1961 so that it could be opened for pilgrims. The Bahá'í World Congress (Most Great Jubilee) could not be held in Baghdád and the Hands of the Cause announced London as the site for this great gathering of Bahá'ís. The Council, assisted by a committee in England, assumed the work of preparing for this Most Great Jubilee.

The Crusade forged ahead. The Temples in Kampala and Sydney were dedicated by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánúm in January and in September, 1961.\* More National Spiritual Assemblies were formed: France, 1958; Austria, Burma, Turkey and the South Pacific Islands, 1959; twenty-one republics of Latin America and the Antilles in 1961. Only the eleven Western European Assemblies, and Ceylon, remained to be elected in 1962.

### *The Historic First Election of the Universal House of Justice*

From the beginning of his Guardianship, Shoghi Effendi pointed the sights of the Bahá'ís toward the future establishment of the Universal House of Justice, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in His Most Holy Book, and described by the Master in His *Will and Testament* as the *source of all good and freed from all error*. Each National Assembly that was formed became one more pillar to 'share in sustaining the weight and in broadening the foundation of

\*The Mother Temple of Europe in Frankfurt, Germany, almost completed by the end of the World Crusade, was dedicated by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánúm in July 1964.





*Delegates to the first International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice held in April 1963 gathered at the Bahá'í International Archives building on Mount Carmel for the official convention photograph. Present were 288 delegates representing fifty-one National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies.*

the Universal House of Justice', which, along with its 'manifold auxiliary institutions' was 'destined to arise and function and remain permanently established in (the) close neighborhood of (the) Twin Holy Shrines'.

As Riḍván 1963 approached, the International Bahá'í Council, first appointed by the Guardian, then elected by the National Spiritual Assemblies in 1961, was about to 'effloresce' into the Universal House of Justice. Five hundred and four delegates from fifty-six National Assemblies participated in the election of whom two hundred and eighty-eight delegates from fifty-one National Assemblies assembled in the Holy Land in April when the election of this Supreme Administrative Institution of the Bahá'í world took place.

The members elected to this first Universal House of Justice were: Charles Wolcott, 'Alí Nakhjavání, H. Borrah Kavelin, Ian Semple,

Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím, David Hofman, Hugh Chance, Amoz Gibson and Hushmand Fath-eazam. The Hands of the Cause joyously cabled this news to all National Assemblies. It was the crowning achievement of a magnificent epoch—the first epoch of the Divine Plan, and the second of the Formative Age.

*The Bahá'í World Congress (April 28–May 2, 1963)*

Nearly 7,000 jubilant Bahá'ís gathered in London to observe the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration in the Garden of Riḍván, near Baghdád, and to pay homage to their beloved Guardian at his resting place. The newly elected Universal House of Justice greeted the believers who had laid 'this glorious harvest of victory' in the World Crusade, in the name of the Guardian, 'at the feet of the Blessed



*View of the several thousand Bahá'ís gathered in the Royal Albert Hall, London, for the World Congress commemorating the centenary of 'the formal assumption by Bahá'u'lláh of His Prophetic Office.' 28 April–2 May 1963.*

Beauty'. They paid a loving tribute to the Hands of the Cause who had 'kept the ship on its course'.

It seemed as if the whole human race were represented there, like a flower garden of humanity. The London press bore witness to the blend of races, nationalities, costumes and warm fellowship that so colorfully marked this Most Great Jubilee. Bahá'ís listened to remembrances of Shoghi Effendi tenderly shared by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum and by the other Hands of the Cause who were present. Victories were recounted, the Ridván Feast was celebrated, and songs were sung by the African friends—all to become memories forever written upon the hearts. The most sacred moment for each believer was a visit to the beloved Guardian's grave, now adorned with its marble column, globe and golden eagle. Only the knowledge that several fellow Bahá'ís were held in a Moroccan prison, some condemned to death for

their belief in Bahá'u'lláh, marred the joy of the believers. It would be eight more months before the good news of their release would come.

Now all three of the Divine Charters\* were in effect. The Supreme Administrative Body, the Universal House of Justice, was seated in the Holy Land. The Divine Plan had been carried forward to cover the continents and islands of the seas; and a strong administrative foundation had been laid based upon fifty-six National Spiritual Assemblies, an increase of forty-four in ten years!† Deep assurance filled the hearts of the believers as they left this congress under the protective wings of their Universal House of Justice, ready to follow its lead for the 'onward march of the Cause'.

\*See 'Three Divine Charters', p. 64.

†By late 1957 arrangements had been made for eleven National Assemblies to have branches in the Holy Land, legally entitled to hold property, and recognized by the State of Israel, thus achieving a goal set by Shoghi Effendi for the World Crusade.



## THE THIRD EPOCH OF THE FORMATIVE AGE

*A New, Nine Year Plan*

WHEN the Ten Year Crusade had opened, Shoghi Effendi described ten separate stages of the 'vast majestic process' for the salvation of mankind since the time of Adam, like a Jacob's ladder to heaven. The first part was the whole 6,000 year Prophetic Cycle from Adam to the Báb. This was a preparatory stage, 'the slow and steady growth of this tree of divine revelation', given to mankind through a 'series of progressive dispensations, associated with Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muḥammad and other Prophets'. The next six stages covered the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Faith, two of which were the Mission and Martyrdom of the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh's Mission in Ṭihrán, in Baghdád, in Adrianople and 'Akká, which brought the Faith to thirteen countries in the Asiatic and African continents. The Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá made the seventh stage at which time the light of the Faith reached more than thirty countries including the continents of North America and Europe. The eighth step, covering the first thirty-two years of the Formative Age to 1953, brought the Faith to one hundred and twenty-eight countries, and marked the beginning, in 1937, of the systematic prosecution of the Divine Plan. The Ten Year Crusade alone was the ninth step in this drama of salvation, more than doubling the number of countries and major territories opened to the Faith. The tenth part, Shoghi Effendi stated, would extend far into the future and would include many worldwide plans. It would lead to the Golden Age and to that long-awaited, 'Christ-promised Kingdom of God on Earth', and to a 'world civilization, incomparable in its range, its character and potency, in the history of mankind'.<sup>1</sup>

The tenth part of this 'vast majestic process' began with an announcement from the Universal House of Justice of a new, Nine Year Plan to begin at Riḍván 1964, and to end with the one hundredth anniversary of the revelation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* in 1973. Its twin objectives were (1) a huge expansion of the Cause, and (2) universal participation, with every believer taking part. The goals included opening seventy

virgin territories, raising the number of National Assemblies to one hundred and eight (later increased to one hundred and thirteen), and the number of Local Assemblies to fourteen thousand, building two Temples (Panama and Ṭihrán), acquiring sixty-two Temple sites and fifty-two national Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds. The number of schools, publishing trusts, and translations would all be greatly augmented. World Centre goals involved further strengthening of the relationship with the United Nations, the development of the institution of the Hands of the Cause with a view to the extension of their appointed functions of protection and propagation into the future, and the development of the physical properties at the World Centre.

Universal participation could be achieved and bring 'a source of power and vitality as yet unknown to us', the Supreme Body advised, if every Bahá'í would teach the Cause, try to live up to its laws and standards, contribute to the Fund, and strive to deepen his understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. 'All can pray, fight their own spiritual battles and contribute to the Fund.'<sup>2</sup>

The hundredth year of Bahá'u'lláh's Proclamation from Adrianople to the kings and rulers of the world would be observed through a number of intercontinental and oceanic conferences, the Universal House of Justice announced.

*Worldwide Proclamation*

A vital part of this new plan quickly became evident: teaching among the masses of humanity, the unsophisticated and unlettered souls who make up the majority of the world's peoples. The entry of 'troops' promised by the Master had had a beginning in East Africa even before the Ten Year Plan. It spread in the 1960s to the Congo, to South-East Asia, to a number of Pacific Island groups and to the Bolivian Indians. India enrolled over 30,000 believers from Riḍván to November 1962. By the start of the Nine Year Plan, the flame was spreading to

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahá'í World*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>2</sup> The Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance*, p. 38.

many lands. The Guajiros of Colombia and Venezuela, the Mayans of Yucatán (Mexico), tribes in the jungles of Brazil and other Latin American lands, as well as the *campesinos* (country people), in large numbers showed an eagerness to embrace the Cause. West Africa awakened, following a lead in the Cameroons and Nigeria. In all these areas the believers were greatly inspired by visits of the Hands of the Cause and their Auxiliary Board members who encouraged the Bahá'ís to reach the villages and people removed from large centers of civilization.

Bahá'í youth throughout the world were called upon by the Universal House of Justice to plan their education and their lives toward service to the Faith, to participate fully in community life, and especially to learn the 'wonderful skill of Bahá'í consultation'. 'The achievements of Bahá'í youth,' wrote the House of Justice in 1966, 'are increasingly advancing the work of the Nine Year Plan.'

A 'new dimension' for spreading the Faith was opened by the Supreme Body—worldwide proclamation. As an exile in Turkey, Bahá'u'lláh had fearlessly proclaimed His Faith to the powerful rulers of His day. Now the time had come to proclaim it to 'every stratum of society'. The six Intercontinental Conferences held in October 1967 put this heightened dimension into motion. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, compiled and published by the Universal House of Justice, was presented on its behalf to Heads of State around the world. National and Local Assemblies continued the process on other levels.

The observance of the hundredth anniversary of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to the Kings began in Adrianople at the site of His House where the 'most momentous Tablet' was revealed. Six Hands of the Cause met there on behalf of the Universal House of Justice and then dispersed to the six conferences. To each conference they carried a special message from the Supreme Body for the assembled believers. The Hand of the Cause Amatu'l Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánun laid the foundation stone of the Temple in Panama, with over two hundred Indian Bahá'ís from many tribes lending a special grace and color to the event. Native music with the heartbeat of Africa welcomed the Hand of the Cause 'Alí-Akbar Furútan and other Bahá'ís to Kampala. India did its usual

masterful job of contacting national leaders, aided by the Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi. The Lord Mayor of Sydney opened the Australian conference with a reception honoring the Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery and other Bahá'ís. African, Middle and Far Eastern, North and South American faces all blended with their European brothers and sisters at the Frankfurt conference to greet the Hand of the Cause Paul Haney.

'The time is ripe', the Universal House of Justice declared. 'We are not alone nor helpless . . . the "Army of Light" can achieve such victories as will astonish posterity.'<sup>1</sup>

The Hand of the Cause Ṭarázu'lláh Samandari, ninety-two years of age, shared his memories of Bahá'u'lláh at the Chicago conference, and with amazing power poured forth loving exhortation to the believers. He followed this with a journey throughout North America through many harsh and changing climates. Leading religious journalists across the land were uniquely drawn to him and remarkable publicity resulted. It seemed a special gift of Providence to this heroic standard-bearer of the Cause that he was able to lay down his banner for all time in the Holy Land while Bahá'ís from all over the world assembled to observe the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's journey to 'Akká in August of 1868.

This Holy Land observance was held immediately following the first Oceanic Conference, in Palermo, Sicily, which commemorated Bahá'u'lláh's voyage across the Mediterranean Sea to the Most Great Prison.

Riḍván of 1968 had brought a second international convention to the Holy Land to elect the Universal House of Justice, at which time Dr. David Ruhe was elected to this body. Luṭfulláh Ḥakím had resigned his membership before the election due to reasons of health. Dr. Ḥakím, who had served both the Master and the Guardian for many years in the Holy Land, passed away in August a few weeks prior to the centenary event there.

#### *Appointment of the Continental Boards of Counsellors*

Eleven Continental Boards of Counsellors were appointed in June 1968 by the Universal

<sup>1</sup> The Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance*, p. 120.





*Bahá'ís gathering at the first oceanic conference of the Bahá'í world held in Palermo, Sicily in August 1968 in commemoration of the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's voyage across the Mediterranean Sea from Gallipoli, Turkey to His exile in 'The Most Great Prison' in 'Akká. More than 2,300 Bahá'ís from sixty-seven countries attended the conference.*

House of Justice: three each in Africa, and in Asia; one each in North America, Central America, South America, Australasia and Europe. This historic step was taken to extend into the future the functions of protection and propagation which had been conferred upon the Hands of the Cause, and which would now also be exercised by the Boards of Counsellors. The Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land were named as the liaison between the Boards and the House of Justice. The Auxiliary Board members were to serve the Counsellors, who would appoint them in the future.\* The Hands of the Cause were now released from the administrative duties of their institution to carry out

special missions for the World Centre and to teach throughout all parts of the world. Their continued responsibility to consult with the National Assemblies, as well as with the Counsellors, was stressed.

#### *Midpoint of the Plan*

As the Nine Year Plan reached its midpoint in 1968, a progress report was published by the Universal House of Justice. Eighty-one of the 113 National Assemblies had now been formed. The Faith had reached 314 countries, 135 of these being independent nations. Tribes and minority groups in the Faith had more than doubled since 1963. More than half the Teaching Institutes called for in the plan had been acquired in the mass-teaching areas.

But the teaching field stretched endlessly; an immense harvest lay waiting. April of 1969 brought a call for 733 more pioneers. Youth

\*For elucidation of the collaborative functioning of the Hands of the Cause of God, the Counsellors and Auxiliary Boards, with the National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, see Messages from the Universal House of Justice to the Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies, dated 1 October 1969 and 24 April 1972.



バハイ北太平洋会議・札幌・1971

BAHA'I NORTH PACIFIC OCEANIC CONFERENCE · SAPPORO · 1971

were entering the Cause in larger numbers, especially in America. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum interrupted her African teaching journey to meet with more than 2,000 American youth gathered in the shadow of the Temple in Wilmette in June 1970. The youth were in process of fulfilling a Five Year Plan given to them at their own request by the National Assembly. It called for deployment of 500 from their ranks to fill homefront and foreign goals, doubling the number of Bahá'í College Clubs, increasing the number of High School Clubs, and engaging in extensive travel-teaching programs. Teaching the masses began to develop in the deep south of the United States and believers enrolled in large numbers.

#### *Oceanic and Continental Conferences (1970-1971)*

Mass teaching was a leading subject at the eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences held in 1970-1971. Members of eleven Indian tribes from Surinam to Argentina were among the Bahá'ís who greeted Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum as representative of the Universal House of Justice at the Bolivian conference in August 1970. The Indian Ocean conference in Mauritius, held at the same time,

brought forth a record number of 212 pioneers for Africa under the inspiration of the Hand of the Cause William Sears. Singapore Bahá'ís blanketed their city with half a million pamphlets in three languages preceding the conference, and welcomed a first visit from the Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga, in January 1971. Simultaneously, the conference held in Monrovia, Liberia was highlighted by discussions on mass teaching led by both Rúhíyyih Khánum and the official representative of the House of Justice, the Hand of the Cause Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir, each drawing on their wide experience in this field. A cruise ship, which made teaching stops along the way, carried 600 Bahá'ís from the United States to the Jamaican conference held in May 1971, where the Hand of the Cause Dhikru'lláh Khádem represented the Universal House of Justice. Its counterpart, the Fijian conference, with the Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone as official representative of the House of Justice, was marked by a complete confidence that the Faith 'would sweep through the far-flung scattered islands' of the Pacific. The Hand of the Cause 'Alí-Akbar Furútan represented the Universal House of Justice at the conference in Sapporo, Japan in September 1971. A follow-up conference in Korea, with the Hand of the



Cause Collis Featherstone present, drew 500 believers. John Robarts, Hand of the Cause, read the message from the Universal House of Justice, as its official representative to the Icelandic conference held in Reykjavik, also in September.

During the closing days of the Oceanic conferences news came of the passing of the Hand of the Cause Músá Banání, in Africa. Other revered Hands of the Cause who had passed on during the Nine Year Plan were: Leroy Ioas (1965), Ṭarāzu'lláh Samandari (1968), Hermann Grossmann (1968) and Agnes Alexander (1971).

*The Teaching Journeys of the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum*

No account of the Nine Year Plan, or indeed of the Formative Age of the Faith, would be complete without a review, however brief, of the epic teaching journeys of the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. Even prior to the Nine Year Plan, and after the passing of the beloved Guardian, she had made journeys to all continents, inspiring the Bahá'ís, dedicating Temples, meetings Presidents, Emperors, Prime Ministers and other world leaders, and teaching the Cause to people from every walk of life. She taught thousands of unlettered people who were deeply moved by her manner and spirit. Her journey to Asia in 1964 lasted nine months and extended 55,000 miles by plane, auto, jeep, boat and on foot, through India, Ceylon, Nepal and Sikkim. Hundreds of villages, often difficult to reach, received her visits. Most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean were her hosts during her two conference visits in 1967 and 1970, where again she reached out to the remote areas. On all her journeys, she was respectfully received by many outstanding dignitaries and leaders of public opinion, and was widely interviewed in the press and on radio and television. Large audiences, often in schools and universities, listened attentively to her addresses on the Faith.

But the crowning glory of her travels was the African Safari, planned during nine years and begun in August 1969. Throughout her journey she was accompanied by Violette Nakhjavání, her courageous and devoted companion on many previous journeys. When the tour was completed in January 1973 these intrepid travellers

'had driven 36,000 miles by Landrover, the majority over expanses which could scarcely qualify for description as roads, flown unnumbered miles by air and voyaged vast distances by watercraft, passing through every conceivable climate and terrain'. They had visited more than thirty countries.

In her summary of this great teaching journey, Violette Nakhjavání wrote of Rúhíyyih Khánum: 'I firmly believe that future generations will study her life, her services and her travels in those lands honored by her visits, and pattern their conduct on her example, inspired to follow in her footsteps.'

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum had taken her leave from the resting place of Shoghi Effendi in London. She returned there at the completion of her African safari to lay her services and her victories at his feet. The Universal House of Justice expressed the grateful appreciation and admiration of the entire Bahá'í world in its cable: 'Your travels African continent unique unparalleled in number countries visited heads state interviewed extensive publicity obtained loving encouragement spiritual stimulation imparted standard heroism example self-sacrifice evinced over such long period under such arduous conditions . . .' She returned to the Holy Land in time to open the third International Bahá'í Convention held at Rídván 1973, which also marked the triumphant conclusion of the Nine Year Plan.

*Conclusion of the Nine Year Plan*

'A new horizon, bright with intimations of thrilling developments in the unfolding life of the Cause of God, is now discernible', wrote the Universal House of Justice at Rídván 1971 . . . 'We are confident that the "Army of Light", growing in strength and unity will, by 1973, . . . have scaled the heights of yet another peak in the path leading ultimately to the broad uplands of the Most Great Peace.'

A review of the first half century of the Formative Age would fall short of its purpose if it failed to record the significant accomplishments of the Bahá'í Faith in the last years of the Nine Year Plan. The concluding years of this second global campaign, the first inaugurated by the Universal House of Justice, were filled with such momentous events as to exhilarate the hearts of believers throughout the world. It had



*Members of the Continental Boards of Counsellors gathered in the precincts of the Shrine of the Báb during their visit to Haifa for the International Convention at Ridván 1973 and consultations with the Universal House of Justice and the Hands of the Cause in preparation for the Five Year Plan.*

surpassed its goals for expansion and 'achieved a truly impressive degree of universal participation'. The systematic formation of National Spiritual Assemblies culminated in a final 113, exceeding the goal by five. Ninety of these achieved incorporation and 112 acquired their national headquarters. Bahá'ís were now spread throughout almost 70,000 localities of the world with over 17,000 Local Spiritual Assemblies established. The Faith had penetrated 335 countries, significant territories and islands—a gain of ninety-five in nine years. The number of publishing trusts, national endowments, Temple sites and translations had approximately doubled.

The spirit animating the Bahá'í community was most vividly demonstrated in the response made to the call for pioneers: a total of 1,344 had been called for—3,553 responded, with 2,265 still at their posts as the plan concluded.

The Universal House of Justice named three 'highly portentous developments' resulting from the nine-year campaign: the large number of inter-National Assembly assistance projects carried out which had served 'to strengthen the

bonds of unity between distant parts of the Bahá'í world with different social, cultural and historical backgrounds'; the increase in the financial resources of the Faith; and the advance of youth to the forefront of the teaching work. This spiritual vitality of the youth was abundantly evident at a conference in Fiesch, Switzerland in the summer of 1971. It drew 1,200 youth from five continents who were not only inspired by the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and Dr. Adelbert Mühlischlegel, but succeeded in making a far-reaching proclamation of the Faith.

The fiftieth anniversary of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was observed throughout the Bahá'í world in November 1971, poignancy being lent by the presence of believers who had met the Master. A few weeks later, on December 19, the Universal House of Justice shared news of the erection of an obelisk on Mount Carmel to mark the site of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, a project originally initiated by Shoghi Effendi.

In April 1972, Rúhíyyih Khánum again interrupted her African journey to officiate at the



dedication of the first House of Worship in Latin America in Panama. The Hand of the Cause Dhikru'lláh Khádem and 4,000 other Bahá'ís participated in the dedication ceremonies, public meetings, banquets and a two-day teaching conference. One month later Bahá'ís were apprised of plans at the World Centre for the construction of a majestic edifice on Mount Carmel—a building to serve as the permanent seat of the Universal House of Justice. A special fund was established for the participation of all believers.

November 26, 1972 brought news of great, historic import to the world community of Bahá'ís: the formulation of the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice, hailed, in anticipation, by Shoghi Effendi as the Most Great Law of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. The publication of *A Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* coincided with the centenary of the revelation of this Most Holy Book of Bahá'u'lláh and was described by the Supreme Body as 'another significant step path leading (the) Bahá'í community (to) full maturity (in the) establishment (of the) World Order (of) Bahá'u'lláh.'

There was special joy to Bahá'ís in learning that the Mansion of Mazra'ih, cherished home of Bahá'u'lláh for two years after leaving the prison-city of 'Akká, had been purchased. This Mansion, one of twin historic Houses inhabited by Bahá'u'lláh, had been leased by Shoghi Effendi in 1950 and made a place of pilgrimage. Additional land was now acquired and plans made for beautification of the surrounding area.

A few days following the holding of the third International Convention which resulted in the re-election of the nine members of the Universal House of Justice, this Body released the news of an event which crowned all the victories of the Nine Year Plan. A reigning monarch, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, the Head of State of the independent nation of Western Samoa, had accepted the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh! His letter addressed to those assembled at the convention in the Holy Land expressed his cherished hope 'for the rapid establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the unity of all the peoples of the world'.

### *International Teaching Centre Established in the Holy Land*

A cable of June 5, 1973 from the Universal House of Justice announced the establishment of the International Teaching Centre in the Holy Land, one of the institutions 'ordained by Bahá'u'lláh anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidated by Shoghi Effendi'. This act brought to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land, provided for its extension into the future, linked the institution of the Boards of Counsellors more intimately with that of the Hands of the Cause of God and powerfully reinforced the discharge of the rapidly growing responsibilities of the Universal House of Justice.

Although all the Hands of the Cause of God are included in the membership of the International Teaching Centre, most of them are occupied with service in other parts of the globe. It was therefore decided that there should be a nucleus established in the Holy Land to carry on the vital operations at the World Centre. This nucleus is composed of any Hands present in the Holy Land at any time, together with three Counsellors appointed to the Body—Mr. Hooper Dunbar, Mrs. Florence Mayberry and Mr. 'Aziz Yazdi. The Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land—Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, Paul Haney and Abu'l-Qásim Faizi—are the ones most usually serving on the nucleus, but other Hands have contributed valuably to its deliberations from time to time when visiting Haifa. The immediate responsibilities of the International Teaching Centre are to direct the work of the Continental Boards and act as liaison with the Universal House of Justice; to be informed of the situation of the Cause throughout the world and make reports and recommendations for action; and to determine needs for literature, pioneers, traveling teachers, and work out teaching plans with the approval of the Universal House of Justice.

The International Teaching Centre, destined to evolve into one of those 'world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions' was now seated in the Holy Land!

*God's Holy Purpose for Mankind*

The centennial year of the revelation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, which had yielded so many historical advances for the Cause of God, climaxed over a half century of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Faith—a period fraught with many challenges and crises but laden with ultimate victory.

In the early days of the Formative Age, a youthful Guardian wrote to his 'fellow-laborers in the Divine Vineyard' urging them to pray 'that in these days of world-encircling gloom, . . . when the most precious fruits of civilization are undergoing severe and unparalleled tests, we may all realize, . . . that though a mere handful amidst the seething masses of the world, we are in this day the chosen instruments

of God's grace, that our mission is most urgent and vital to the fate of humanity, and, fortified by these sentiments, arise to achieve God's holy purpose for mankind.'<sup>1</sup>

At Ridván 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote: 'The progress of the Cause of God gathers increasing momentum and we may with confidence look forward to the day when this community, in God's good time, . . . shall have raised on this tormented planet the fair mansions of God's Own Kingdom wherein . . . the hatreds and violence of this time shall be transmuted into an abiding sense of world brotherhood and peace. All this shall be accomplished within the Covenant of the everlasting Father, the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.'

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 52.