

“The Threshold of a New and Glorious Epoch” — The Africa Plan 1950–1953

Shoghi Effendi

Original English



“The Threshold of a New and Glorious Epoch” — The Africa Plan 1950–1953

Convention 1950

Heart flooded joy striking evidence bountiful grace Bahá'u'lláh enabling valorous dearly loved Bahá'í community British Isles triumphantly conclude first historic plan half century British Bahá'í history. Herald author faith centre covenant concourse on high acclaim superb collective achievement immortalising opening decade second Bahá'í century unprecedented history faith British Isles unrivalled annals any Bahá'í community European continent unparalleled percentage members community responding pioneer call throughout Bahá'í world since termination apostolic age Bahá'í dispensation. Historic pledge British Bahá'í community nobly redeemed. Tribute memory martyr prophet faith worthily paid. Spiritual potentialities prosecute subsequent stage unfolding mission fully acquired. Triumphant community now standing threshold catching first glimpse still dimly outlined future enterprises overseas. Hour propitious galvanised firmly knit body believers brace itself embark after one year respite yet another historic undertaking marking formal inauguration two year plan constituting prelude initiation systematic campaign designed carry torch faith territories dark continent whose northern Southern fringes were successively illuminated course ministries Bahá'u'lláh 'Abdu'l-bahá. Hour struck undertake preliminary steps implant banner faith amidst african tribes mentioned tablet centre covenant signalling association victorious British Bahá'í community with sister communities United States Egypt designed lay structural basis Bahá'í administrative order scale comparable foundation already established north south american european australian continents. Projected plan itself prelude double task to be undertaken course future plans destined simultaneously broaden base operations home front and prosecute systematic campaign dependencies British Isles. First objective two year plan consolidation nineteen assemblies painstakingly established England Scotland Wales North Ireland Eire. Second objective formation nuclei three dependencies British crown either East West Africa. Third objective translation publication dissemination Bahá'í literature through publishing trust three African languages addition three already undertaken course first plan. Successful prosecution contemplated plan will pave way large scale operations calculated lay foundation promised Kingdom earth through establishment administrative order infinitely more glorious empire built rulers British Isles throughout that continent and will enable British Bahá'í community share honour sister community across atlantic prosecuting successfully two successive plans registering double victory laying twice repeated sacrifice altar faith anticipation approaching celebrations commemorating centenary birth Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic mission. Contributing one



ORIGINAL

thousand pounds first contribution furtherance noble purpose.

Shoghi

Letter of 1 May 1950

Grieve passing dear distinguished promoter faith¹ her services unforgettable praying progress soul Abhá Kingdom.

Shoghi

Letter of 3 May 1950

Delighted success sessions praying mighty victories.

Shoghi

Letter of 9 June 1950

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

At the instruction of our beloved Guardian I am forwarding you the enclosed material for possible use in connection with the centenary of the Báb's martyrdom.

In America they are going to get out a pamphlet with this and other material, more complete, which the Guardian has asked them to forward you copies of as soon as printed.

He regrets the delay in answering your Assembly's letters. My father has been desperately ill for over 8 weeks and the worry involved and doctors, nurses etc. has been so distressing to us all that it has been temporarily impossible to attend to his mail. However, now he is improving, the Guardian hopes to shortly be able to get his letters answered....

Letter of 15 June 1950

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your many communications dated August 20, 26; September 30; October 6, 7, 10, 26; November 7, 9, 14, 23, 25; December 8, 18, 22, 23 (two of this date), 24, all of 1949, and January 4, 20, 30; February 2, 22; March 1, 6, 18, 29 (two of this date); April 7, 18, 19 (two of this date), 24, 27; and May 2, 4, 8, 16 (three of this date) of 1950, have been received as well as their enclosures and other material, and our beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He regrets very much the long delay in not only answering your Assembly's letters but those of other N.S.A.s' as well. The past winter, owing to the fact that large excavations had to be carried

¹ Mary Basil-Hall, "Parvine".

out behind the Shrine in order to permit construction to continue, was a particularly busy gruelling one for him. On top of this, at the beginning of April, Mr. Maxwell became dangerously ill and the constant worry and preoccupation of us all with doctors, nurses, etc., forced the Guardian to put aside his letters entirely for the time being. Thanks to the mercy of God Mr. Maxwell is now recovering slowly; but the past months were very difficult ones for everyone.

To now take up the various matters referred to in your letters.

The Guardian does not feel that a quorum of delegates is necessary in any sense for the convention. Under unusual circumstances National bodies can be elected by mailed votes of all the delegates; the primary function of the delegates is to elect the N.S.A. Suggestions from the Convention floor can be made by a majority of those present.

The Guardian is very pleased to see that Peter Esslemont is growing closer to the Faith. A friendly contact with him should always be maintained.

Regarding his cable concerning Hussein: he has been very surprised to note that the terms "low-born Christian girl" and "disgraceful alliance" should arouse any question: it seems to him that the friends should realise it is not befitting for the Guardian's own brother, the grandchild of the Master, an Afnán and Aghsán mentioned in the Will and Testament of the Master, and of whom so much was expected because of his relation to the Family of the Prophet, to marry an unknown girl, according to goodness knows what rite, who is not a believer at all. Surely, every Bahá'í must realise that the terms low-born and Christian are definitions of a situation and in no way imply any condemnation of a person's birth or the religion they belong to as such. We have no snobbery and no religious prejudice in our Faith. But the members of the Master's family have contracted marriages which cannot be considered in any other light than disgraceful, in view of what 'Abdu'l-Bahá wished for them.

Recently the Court of First Instance, in Kárkúk, 'Iráq, has accepted to register a Bahá'í marriage certificate. This is the first time in the East (except for the British Mandate authorities and the Israeli Government), that a Bahá'í marriage has been recognised as being legal. The Guardian feels that this can form a very important precedent for the other Oriental countries, and he suggests you inform the Egyptian N.S.A. of his view and urge them to press for due recognition in Egypt, using this precedent as a lever.

There is nothing in our teachings about Freud and his method. Psychiatric treatment in general is no doubt an important contribution to medicine, but we must believe it is still a growing rather than a perfected science. As Bahá'u'lláh has urged us to avail ourselves of the help of good physicians Bahá'ís are certainly not only free to turn to psychiatry for assistance but should, when available, do so. This does not mean psychiatrists are always wise or always right, it means we are free to avail ourselves of the best medicine has to offer us.

The Guardian thanks you and the friends for your eagerness to contribute to the cost of the Shrine through the special edition of "Prescription for Living"; also he thanks the friends at Convention for the copy they sent him.

I need not tell you how immensely relieved, proud and gratified the beloved Guardian was when he knew the British community had achieved their Plan so successfully. During the last year he was often anxious as he shared with your Assembly and the National Teaching Committee the news of how acute the position was, and how great the obstacles still remaining to be overcome.

From the beginning, however, he felt confident that this dedicated and courageous community could and would drive through to victory, and his joy was very great when it did. He firmly believes this will exert a great influence on the future of the Bahá'í community there, and indirectly on the history of that country in the days to come. It is not possible, at close range, to understand the implications of what we do; but when we see things in historical perspective, we realise that what seemed small at the time was really a turning point in destiny.

The Guardian was delighted to receive the Welsh pamphlet, also the map you sent him. He is planning to have the map published in the next edition of "Bahá'í World", and he placed the pamphlet in the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh.

He approves of the Investment Scheme of the Publishing Trust, and he trusts that the members of the community will respond and thus enable your Assembly to expand its publishing activities. He leaves the question of approaching Bahá'ís overseas, should the Trust be in need of further capital, to your Assembly's discretion.

The Guardian does not approve of your placing a condition upon recognition of local assemblies (mentioned in your letter of January 20); and he wishes in this connection to emphasise the fact that every possible care should be taken not to add to existing rules and regulations in the form of statements or otherwise. He has already advised the American and other National Assemblies to beware of adding more rules and regulations.

The death of Mrs. Hall, such a faithful and devoted servant of the Faith, is a great loss to the British community. The Guardian appreciated receiving a copy of her Will, which mirrors her solicitude for the interests of the Cause in England. He trusts that a Bahá'í Ceremony could take place at the graveside, which certainly would have been her own wish.

Regarding ..., if the financial response of the friends to the needs of the Faith there is not sufficient for your Assembly to continue to defray his expenses as a teacher and pioneer, then it seems inevitable that he will have to make some other plans. His services have been of real value, and his intimate knowledge of the teachings and steadfastness in the Covenant have enabled him to contribute much to the understanding of the friends.

The Guardian approves your resolution to keep Mr. Ferraby as paid secretary of the Assembly. He deeply appreciates Mr. Ferraby's devoted services.

The Guardian wishes to assure you, one and all, of his prayers for the success of the new work your Assembly will be undertaking, and for the consolidation of all the recent goals achieved.

P.S. Also just received are a receipt for the Guardian's contribution, dated May 15th and your letter, with enclosure, of May 28th and May 24th. A photo of the Shrine will be mailed you very soon.

P.P.S. The Guardian will certainly pray for the progress and happiness of the soul of Mr. Manton. No doubt the selfless services his son has rendered the Cause of God, in an hour of great need, will be accepted and enable him to influence the state of his father through his own prayers.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

On the occasion of the victorious consummation of the first historic Plan undertaken by the British Bahá'í community, I feel moved to reaffirm my feelings of exultation, joy and gratitude for the superb triumph that marks such a great turning point in British Bahá'í history. No single event, in the course of its half-a-century existence, with the exception of the twice repeated visit of the Centre of the Covenant to the British Isles, has proved as significant and momentous as this unique collective achievement, which may, in a sense, be regarded as the first and long-awaited fruit of that intimate and personal contact, established both in private and in public, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá with its members as well as with various representatives of the country to which it belongs.

So magnificent an achievement has, no doubt, endowed the entire community, now representative of the peoples of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, with tremendous potentialities, empowering it to launch on the first stage of its historic overseas mission destined to bring that community into closer and more concrete association with its sister communities in North America and Egypt, for the purpose of promoting the Faith in the vast virgin territories where its banner is still unraised and which constitute an integral part of the territories of the British Crown beyond the confines of that community's homeland.

To the races and tribes inhabiting these territories throughout the vast African Continent 'Abdu'l-Bahá when His life was in imminent danger, specifically referred in a Tablet, addressed by Him to the cousin of the Báb and chief builder of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world, in which He predicts, in moving terms, the awakening of the peoples of that dark continent and the ultimate triumph of His Father's Faith among its backward peoples as well as among the great masses inhabiting China and India.

To the accomplishment of the initial stages of this colossal task, envisaged by our beloved Master, the Bahá'í community of the British Isles, now greatly reinforced, resting on a far broader foundation, galvanised into action, qualified through its initial signal victory in its homeland — the base of its future operations overseas, is now summoned to direct its attention and its energies.

While, in the current and two succeeding years which separate us from the celebration of the centenary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic mission, close and sustained attention should be directed by the elected representatives, as well as by the rank and file, of that community towards the safeguarding of the prizes won throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles, and the consolidation of the newly born institutions, the preliminary steps, constituting the prelude to this prodigious systemic labour and soul-thrilling enterprise, destined to extend its ramifications, in the years that lie ahead, to the fringe and within the very heart of a vast continent, must be carefully and prayerfully taken.

Though the members of this community are still restricted in number, though its resources are as yet meagre, though its recent victories are as yet unconsolidated, though it has hardly recuperated from its recent labours, undertaken during a period of great national exhaustion and severe austerity, the mere act of launching upon so glorious, so fateful an enterprise, will, of necessity, create at this propitious hour the receptivity which will enable a swiftly marching, stout-hearted, virile community, now standing on the threshold of its mission beyond the seas, to attract a fresh measure of celestial potency adequate to its growing needs and its ever expanding responsibilities. The miracle its members have performed over so vast a territory, in so short a time, and under such adverse circumstances, cannot but augur well for the initial success of an enterprise infinitely more meritorious, of far greater promise, and endowed with vastly superior spiritual potentialities.

How great the honour with which the Bahá'í pioneers of the present generation of the subjects of the British Crown will be invested in the eyes of posterity within their island home and abroad! How great the debt of gratitude of those who will labour after them and garner the fruit of their present day assiduous exertions to those whose privilege is to blaze the trail and break the soil in the virgin territories destined, as prophesied by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to acclaim the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and establish the institutions of His embryonic World Order!

This community, laden with the trophies of so recent and splendid a victory, and summoned to brace itself for another exertion, so fate-laden in its consequences, stands too near the structure which its hands are now rearing to visualise the dimensions of its task, appraise its value, and appreciate its future glory. Alive to its inherent capacity, conscious of its high responsibility, aware of the sacredness of its mission, emboldened by its recent exploits, trusting fully in that reinforcing Power that guided and sustained it unflinchingly in the past, this community can do no better than to gird up afresh its loins, turn its back upon the clamour of the age, its fears, confusion and strife, step resolutely forward on its chosen path, unshakably confident that with every step it takes, should it remain undeflected in its purpose and undimmed in its vision, a fresh outpouring of Divine grace will reinforce and guide its march on the highroad of its destiny.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 28 June 1950

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letters dated June 6th and two of June 13th have just reached the Guardian, with their enclosures, and he wishes you to please regard this as a sort of postscript to the detailed letter to your Assembly which was mailed a short time ago. He thanks you for the copies of correspondence with the Official Solicitor, and trusts this matter is now satisfactorily settled.

He approves of the advice your Assembly has given.... However, he does not approve of ... going to Canada or South America. He has been forced, owing to the very unfortunate influence of certain so-called Bahá'ís from Persia, to lay down a general rule that no Persians for the present proceed to North or South America. As many sincere souls have, through obedience to his

instructions, given up trips to those territories, he feels he cannot permit any exceptions to be made, not even for so important a purpose as pioneering. This would be a manifest injustice to those who have obeyed him with an exemplary spirit. He feels sure ... will understand and accept this. There are a great many places where they can serve the Faith in the East, in Europe, or in Africa.

Whatever form of co-operation will get the best results your Assembly is free to decide upon in regard to the Egyptian and American N.S.A.s' extension teaching in Africa. He feels, however, that simultaneous activity is more practicable at present.

There are no specific tribes listed in the Master's Tablets; the pioneering should be directed at present towards the most feasible possibilities.

The Guardian feels that Kenya, as it already has a Bahá'í, should be excluded from your Plan. Uganda and Tanganyika would be much more suitable in conjunction with any other territory, but not Nigeria, which already has some Bahá'ís. However, it must not necessarily be these two.

Entirely aside from any additional literature it might be possible to get out in Hausa and Swahili he feels your objective must be to print at least a pamphlet in three languages other than those Philip Hainsworth has tackled. It must be borne in mind that printing in new languages kills two birds with one stone — not only does it enable the Faith to reach new elements, but it also enriches our literature and is excellent as a means of calling the attention of the public to the universality of our Cause and the extent of our world-wide activities!

He will be delighted to receive the reports regarding the progress of the British Bahá'ís' first overseas mission.

P.S. Regarding expenditures: the Guardian feels that the greatest effort should be made to curtail everything that is not essential; this is the primary responsibility of the N.S.A. The Guardian will be very pleased to receive copies of the reports of the Africa and Consolidation Committees and was pleased to read the first two reports.

Letter of 24 July 1950

Gold coast eligible delighted grateful publicity occasion centenary.

Shoghi

Letter of 12 August 1950 (Summer School)

Delighted success welcome noble resolve assurance loyalty believers urge concentration perseverance complete dedication newly assigned epoch making tasks marking opening new chapter world wide expansion faith supplicating bountiful blessing privileged participants glorious enterprise urging American Persian communities arise lend assistance its prosecution deepest love.

Shoghi

Letter of 6 September 1950

Warn believers avoid Perdu owing his contact Sohrab.

Shoghi

Letter of 11 September 1950

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

Under separate cover the Guardian is mailing two enlargements of the Shrine. He would like these to be shown as widely as possible to the friends and then hung in the London Bahá'í Centre.

He has sent to America the negative of one of these enlargements with instructions that the friends can order copies for themselves. This applies to the British friends too, and if copies are desired you can enquire from the American N.S.A. what they cost etc.

He feels sure all the believers will be happy to see how beautiful the finished arcade is...

P.S. Please cable when you receive these two photos.

Letter of 15 September 1950

Approve sending pioneers Africa immediately also seek assistance Persia America.

Shoghi

Letter of 2 November 1950

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Some time ago I wrote you on behalf of the Guardian giving you the following information, but as I have heard a letter to Mr. Holley posted at the same time has not been received, I fear yours too may have been lost.

The beloved Guardian has sent each of the National Assemblies under separate cover, a couple of enlarged photos of the finished arcade of the Báb's Shrine. These are a little gift from him. He would like as many of the believers as possible to see them, and for them to then be hung wherever they would then be seen most, in some countries this would be the National Hazira.

He has sent two negatives to the American N.S.A., and instructed prints be made available for sale to the friends desiring copies. You can no doubt order some if desired.

Please cable the Guardian acknowledging receipt of these photos as soon as they reach you....

Letter of 14 November 1950

Kindly arrange departure Lutfu'lláh Hakím Haifa for necessary service.

Shoghi

Letter of 14 November 1950

Grieve passing distinguished indefatigable promoter faith² Ardently supplicating progress soul Abhá Kingdom her notable meritorious services unforgettable.

Shoghi

Letter of 22 November 1950

Urge utmost economy appeal entire community endeavour reduce deficit fund contributing five hundred pounds.

Shoghi

Letter of 22 December 1950

Assure Claire Gung fervent loving prayers surrounding her meritorious historic journey supplicating blessings forthcoming conference deepest loving appreciation.

Shoghi

Letter of 10 January 1951 (Teaching Conference)

Assure attendants supplicating almighty blessings deliberations may conference lend tremendous impetus process consolidation homeland initiation pioneer activities African continent.

Shoghi

Letter of 16 January 1951

(Copy of a cable from the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States dated 16 January 1951, sent also to the British National Spiritual Assembly.)

2. Florence "Mother" George.

Assistance Africa project through financial contribution participation pioneers white coloured close consultation co-operation British assembly necessary independent campaign not intended fervently praying participation British American Persian Egyptian national assemblies unique epochmaking enterprise African continent may prove prelude convocation first African teaching conference leading eventually initiation undertakings involving collaboration all national assemblies Bahá'í world thereby paving way ultimate organic union these assemblies through formation international house justice destined launch enterprises embracing whole Bahá'í world acclaim simultaneous inauguration crusade linking administrative machinery four national assemblies East West within four continents and birth first international council world centre faith twin compelling evidences resistless unfoldment embryonic divinely appointed world order Bahá'u'lláh.

Shoghi

Letter of 17 January 1951

Inform Músá Banání highly approve pioneering Africa with Nakhjavání fervently praying for his success and entire family.

Letter of 25 January 1951³

Appreciate sentiments beloved friends.

Shoghi

Letter of 25 February 1951

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letters of June 19th, June 22nd, July 18th, July 21st, July 26th, August 17th, August 29th, August 30th, September 6th, September 8th, September 27th (2 letters), October 3rd (2 letters), October 5th, October 17th, October 26th, October 30th (2 letters), October 31st, November 13th, November 24th (2 letters), December 10th, December 22nd, 1950, and January 2nd, January 25th and February 2nd, 20th, 1951, together with enclosures as well as photographs, have been received, and our beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf. (A postscript dated March 18th adds: "Your letters (two) dated March 8th have also been received with enclosures.")

He regrets that, due to pressure of work, he is not able to write more frequently, but feels that the cable communications between himself and your assembly attend to the essential work in between letters...

3. Reply to cable sent on the occasion of the appointment of the International Bahá'í Council.

Regarding your question about the communication with the King, as mentioned in Minutes 292 and 344, he feels that both contemplated approaches should be dropped for the present. By undertaking such action we call attention to ourselves in a very conspicuous manner, and investigation of who the senders are of such petitions would only expose the weakness of our numbers and detract from the prestige which the Cause is slowly beginning to acquire in the eyes of the world.

He thanks you very much for the map, showing the British Bahá'í community at the end of the Six Year Plan. He has placed it on a wall of the Mansion of Bahjí, where visitors and believers can enjoy it. It certainly marks the scene of one of the most historic victories of the Faith.

In regard to the question of the African campaign, the Guardian is immensely pleased with the way your assembly and the special committee you have appointed, have seized this project and are vigorously prosecuting it. He admires the evidences of careful planning and staunch determination which all the data regarding this important campaign, which you have forwarded to him, bear witness to.

He was very happy to receive the Chinyanza pamphlets which you sent to him, and also likes very much the "Africa News" which the committee is getting out and which is so alive with plans and news.

He is also delighted to see that the Persian National Assembly is vigorously co-operating with your Assembly and facilitating settlement of some devoted Persian pioneer there who no doubt will be of great help to the work....

He feels that, although it is preferable that the three pioneers to each virgin country should be in one town or at least as near each other as possible, it should not be considered the essential point at this juncture.

The most important thing of all is to get the pioneers out there and established if possible in some self-supporting work. Once this has been done, the work within the country itself can be gradually organised and plans made to consolidate it in a more practical manner.

He used the word "tribes" loosely to mean the peoples of Africa and not necessarily individuals still living under tribal system.

The Guardian does not feel that it is necessary to specify any particular prayer to be said for the Africa work. The main thing is that the Bahá'ís should pray for its success.

He approves of your getting out the edition of the "New Era" which you now have in the press; but feels very strongly that any future editions should strictly conform to the 1937 American edition, in order to preserve uniformity in this very important Bahá'í publication.

Regarding your question about military service, the Guardian sees no reason why the Bahá'í in question should not bring a test case, and press the matter. It is now, since he has become a follower of Bahá'u'lláh, against his conscience to kill his fellow-men; and he should have the right to explain his position and ask to be exempted from combatant service. During the hearing of such cases the Bahá'ís should make it absolutely clear that we do not fear being placed in

danger, and are not asking to be given a safe berth in hours of national crisis — quite the contrary — any dangerous service the Bahá'ís can render their fellow-men during the agonies of war, they should be anxious to accept.

The work that the British Bahá'ís are accomplishing is very dear to his heart; and he wishes your Assembly to constantly encourage the friends (as of course they are doing) to go on with all phases of their Bahá'í work and maintain the tempo they achieved during the past few years. They have distinguished themselves so much that now their fellow Bahá'ís in other lands expect them to lead the way in new fields, and to continue being the pace setters for at least the British Empire, if not other countries as well! Success brings burdens; and the British Bahá'ís who were so miraculously successful at the last moment of their Six Year Plan, now find themselves in the sometimes difficult position of being a cynosure for all eyes.

He assures you, one and all, of his loving prayers for the work you are so faithfully carrying out on behalf of the believers in the British Isles...

P. S. — I wish to call your attention to certain things in “Principles of Bahá'í Administration” which has just reached the Guardian; although the material is good, he feels that the complete lack of quotation marks is very misleading. His own words, the words of his various secretaries, even the Words of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, are all lumped together as one text. This is not only not reverent in the case of Bahá'u'lláh's Words, but misleading. Although the secretaries of the Guardian convey his thoughts and instructions and these messages are authoritative, their words are in no sense the same as his, their style certainly not the same, and their authority less, for they use their own terms and not his exact words in conveying his messages. He feels that in any future edition this fault should be remedied, any quotations from Bahá'u'lláh or the Master plainly attributed to them, and the words of the Guardian clearly differentiated from those of his secretaries.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The magnificent spirit of devotion and the initiative and resourcefulness demonstrated in recent months by a triumphant community, in its eagerness to launch, ahead of the appointed time, the enterprise destined to carry the fame of its members and establish its outposts as far afield as the African Continent, merit the highest praise. By their organising ability, by their zeal in enlisting the collaboration of their sister communities in the African, the American and Asiatic continents for the effective prosecution of this epoch-making enterprise; by the tenacity, sagacity and fidelity which they have displayed in the course of its opening phase; by their utter consecration and their complete reliance on the One Who watches over their destiny, they have set an example worthy of emulation by the members of Bahá'í communities in both the East and the West.

The despatch of the first pioneer to Tanganyika, signalling the inauguration of the African campaign, following so closely upon the successful termination of the Six Year Plan, will be recognised by posterity as the initial move in an undertaking designed to supplement and enrich the record of signal collective services rendered by the members of this community

within the confines and throughout the length and breadth of its homeland. On it, however great the support it will receive from its sister communities in the days to come, will devolve the chief responsibility of guiding the destinies, of supplying the motive power, and of contributing to the resources of a crusade which, for the first time in Bahá'í history, involves the collaboration, and affects the fortunes, of no less than four National Assemblies, in both Hemispheres and within four continents of the globe.

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

Indeed the birth of this African enterprise, in the opening decade of the second Bahá'í century, coinciding as it does with the formation of the International Bahá'í Council, should be acclaimed as an event of peculiar significance in the evolution of our beloved Faith. Both events will, no doubt, be hailed by posterity as simultaneous and compelling evidences of the irresistible unfoldment of a divinely appointed Administrative Order and of the development, on an international scale, of its subsidiary agencies, heralding the establishment of the Supreme Legislative Body designed to crown the Administrative Edifice now being laboriously erected by the privileged builders of a Divine Order, whose features have been delineated by the Centre of the Covenant in His Will and Testament, whose fundamental laws have been revealed by the Founder of our Faith in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and Whose advent has been foreshadowed by the Herald of the Bahá'í Dispensation in the Bayán, His most weighty Book.

To be singled out as the chief agency in the prosecution of a task of such dimensions, such significance, and the harbinger of events so glorious, is indeed at once an inestimable blessing and a staggering responsibility with which the British Bahá'í community, emerging triumphantly and in rapid succession from the ordeal of a world war and the struggles involved in the prosecution of an historic Plan, has been honoured at so critical and challenging an hour in the fortunes of mankind.

To labour assiduously for the despatch, in the coming year marking the official opening of the Two Year Plan, of pioneers to the chosen Territories of the African Continent; to ensure that its three sister National Assemblies will steadily reinforce its work through financial assistance as well as through the increase in the number of pioneers; to expedite the translation, publication and dissemination of Bahá'í literature in the three selected languages throughout these Territories; to enlarge the scope of the contacts established with representatives of the African peoples and with institutions designed to foster their interests; to cultivate cordial relations with, and secure the goodwill and support of, the civil authorities in the goal countries where the pioneers will reside; to maintain steady correspondence with, fan the zeal, seek the counsel and secure the assistance of the budding and scattered communities in the North, the South and the Heart of that vast, that promising and slowly awakening continent; to prepare for the eventual convocation, under its own auspices and following the example set, and the procedure adopted, by its sister American Assembly on the European Continent, of the First African

Teaching Conference, representative of both the white and black races, constituting an epoch-making landmark in the evolution of the Faith among the African races and possibly synchronising with the centenary celebrations of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission, and adding another victor's crown to the laurels already won by the British followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in their own homeland — these stand out as the paramount and inescapable duties confronting the British National Spiritual Assembly as it stands on the threshold of a new and glorious epoch in British Bahá'í history.

Though the prospect of this new venture is indeed enthralling, though it demands careful planning, the allocation of substantial sums for its prosecution, and the exertion of strenuous efforts for its systematic development, the prizes so laboriously won at home must under no circumstances be jeopardised. The twofold obligation of preserving the status of the newly-fledged Assemblies in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland and of propagating the Faith among the people dwelling in the British Isles through active teaching and the wide circulation of Bahá'í literature must be faithfully discharged. The necessary foundation for the proclamation of the Faith, at a later stage in the development of the British Bahá'í community, amidst the British people and in the very heart of the British Empire must be carefully laid. Whatever measures will facilitate the future recognition of the Faith by the civil authorities in the localities where its followers reside, and eventually by the central government in Westminster, must, within the means at their disposal, and however tentatively, be adopted.

Then and only then will this community, carrying out faithfully the twofold duty incumbent upon it, both at home and abroad, be vouchsafed by Bahá'u'lláh the full measure of His grace which will enable it to traverse, speedily and successfully, the present stage in its evolution, and acquire still greater potentialities for the revelation of a still brighter aspect of its mission designed to illuminate with the light of Divine Guidance and in the course of the Formative and Golden Ages of the Faith all the Dependencies of the British Crown, and erect the administrative structure within these Territories, of an Order, incomparably mightier and more enduring than any which that Crown has ever established.

Shoghi

Letter of 23 April 1951

Deepest appreciation greetings loving remembrance shrines delighted success.

Shoghi

Letter of 25 April 1951 (Convention)

Rejoice thankful proud sterling qualities fidelity tenacity intrepidity British followers faith Bahá'u'lláh conspicuously demonstrated course interval successful conclusion six year formal inauguration two year plan. Heartily congratulate delegates assembled occasion historic numerically enlarged epoch making convention. One year respite regarded breathing spell designed enable toiling triumphant valorous high minded community recruit forces witnessed

unexpected display vigorous activity resulting first victories african field preservation laboriously established assemblies length breadth British Isles. Two year plan now officially launched demands continuous unstinted systematic support national elected representatives all local assemblies rank file entire community. Auspicious rays God's dawning revelation which first struck corner vast dark spiritually decadent continent course Bahá'u'lláh's ministry which warmed illuminated its Northern Southern fringes concluding years heroic age faith must now penetrate its heart brighten its jungle fastnesses envelop it with splendour their radiance course present succeeding epochs formative age Bahá'í dispensation. Confident British Bahá'í community will arise befittingly meet challenge now confronting it achieve threefold purpose plan. Praying energetic collaboration prosecutors 'Abdu'l-bahá's divine plan with community believers belonging nation whose destiny been linked fortunes world's backward races reinforced assistance sister community cradle faith national elected representatives leading community African continent may ensure success crusade constituting spiritual landmark process awakening African peoples marking opening glorious chapter evolution world faith Bahá'u'lláh signalling initial phase unfoldment mission community his followers British Isles midst dominions colonies protectorates British crown. May projected centenary birth prophetic mission Bahá'u'lláh befittingly celebrated convocation first all african teaching conference representative black white races embracing seventeen African territories now included pale faith. Arranging transmission one thousand pounds contribution furtherance glorious objective.

Shoghi

Letter of 2 May 1951

Deeply appreciate greetings high resolve attendants convention delighted success sessions praying signal victories.

Shoghi

Letter of 4 May 1951

Owing recent instructions Persian Egyptian assemblies to despatch pioneers five additional African territories advise undertake translation small pamphlets into acoli adanwe ewe fanta mende yoruba.

Shoghi

Letter of 5 May 1951

Add Somali to languages already cabled.

Shoghi

Letter of 22 June 1951

Newly launched highly momentous African campaign chief auxiliary manifold agencies operating furtherance 'Abdu'l-bahá's plan American European continents irresistibly unfolding gathering momentum through added participation Indian Bahá'í community assignment specific supplementary functions Persian Egyptian national assemblies contemplated translation Bahá'í literature additional African languages multiplication territories Northern Eastern Western fringes vast awakening continent. Brief span two years destined witness first fruits historic continent-wide crusade will ere long terminate. Valorous British Bahá'í community central pivot machinery now set motion chief agency prosecution mighty divinely propelled enterprise must aware urgency task act speedily resolutely despatch without delay volunteers, settle pioneers disseminate literature initiate teaching activities establish fruitful contacts ensure steady enrolment fresh recruits amongst tribes races farflung virgin territories. Transmitting additional contribution thousand pounds ensure vigorous prosecution colossal sacred task enabling well tried followers faith Bahá'u'lláh British Isles write worthily first page history memorable undertaking constituting opening phase their glorious spiritual mission overseas.

Shoghi

Letter of 22 June 1951⁴

Assure departed pioneers fervent loving prayers surrounding them.

Shoghi

Letter of 4 July 1951

Work newly assigned Egypt India Persia supplementary any assistance extended them your assembly deeply appreciated. Two funds established world centre settlement Banání Nakhjavání left discretion your assembly.

Shoghi

Letter of 15 July 1951

Approve ibo or dagbane instead of fanta.

Shoghi

4. Músá and Samiyyih Banání, 'Alí and Violette Nakhjavání, and Philip Hainsworth.

Letter of 20 July 1951

Assure Sabris⁵ loving fervent prayers accompanying them. Grieve passing preston assure wife loving prayers approve reinforce Kenya.

Shoghi

Letter of 21 August 1951⁶

Overjoyed initial victory love.

Shoghi

Letter of 26 August 1951

Centenary celebrations Riḍván. Teaching conference may be held any time between January and March 1953 substitute another language for Somali.

Shoghi

Letter of 2 September 1951

Assure attendants school abiding appreciation Noble resolve fervent prayers.

Shoghi

Letter of 19 September 1951⁷

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

5. Hassan and Isobel Sabri

Hassan, a young Egyptian Bahá'í studying in England in 1945 met Isobel Locke, an American pioneer to England, and they both served with distinction in the Six Year Plan, Hassan on the National Youth and National Teaching Committees and the Nottingham, Birmingham, Belfast, Liverpool, Cardiff and Bristol Spiritual Assemblies, and Isobel on the Assemblies in Edinburgh, Blackpool, Sheffield and Bristol, as well as on the National Teaching Committee. They married in 1951 and pioneered to Tanganyika and Uganda, where Hassan was on the first National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa. Isobel became a Counsellor and Hassan Secretary of the Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa. They subsequently pioneered to Kenya where they still serve (1979).

6. On receiving news of the first Declaration of the Africa project, in Tanganyika (Tanzania).

7. To the Treasurer for this special fund — Arthur Norton (see block b.59).

Your letter of August 27th has been received, and the beloved Guardian is sending you herein his receipt for the contribution of the British Bahá'ís to the Shrine. He noted with interest and appreciation that the Bank raised no objections to the transfer of this sum for such a purpose, and feels this indicates the slowly growing recognition of the Faith's nature and importance. Your own ever devoted services to the Cause are greatly appreciated by him, you may be sure....

[From the Guardian:]

I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of the sum of three hundred pounds from the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, to be expended for the construction of the Shrine of the Báb on Mt. Carmel.

Shoghi

Letter of 16 October 1951

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letters dated March 26th (two); April 4th (three), 11th, 17th, 8th, 7th and 24th; May 1st, 4th, 12th and 24th; June 1st, 4th, 19th (two), 12th, 23rd and 27th; July 4th, 6th, 21st (two), 25th and 31st; August 8th, 9th and 15th; September 15th, 18th and 19th; have all been received, as well as their enclosures, and the photographs sent and material under separate cover, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

It will no doubt make you happy to hear that the Guardian has really had a little rest this summer, much needed after the tremendous strain of last year's worries and burdens. He can now turn to his important N.S.A. letters somewhat refreshed.

To take up certain matters raised in your letters:

There are two Funds, that of the Shrine of the Báb and the International Fund; but at present it is more important for the friends to concentrate on completing the work in progress on the Shrine, which, thanks to the response of the believers from all over the world, is going forward uninterruptedly, in spite of the very difficult situation in the Holy Land which makes all kinds of building work frightfully complicated.

The Guardian would very much like to receive five copies of every publication brought out in England for the Bahá'í libraries in Haifa and at Bahjí and in Acre. He thanks you for the diaries you sent....

For your information the Guardian does not want any believers to migrate at present to this country. It will not meet with his approval under any circumstances. The local problems, with a small group of Covenant-Breakers more or less active in stirring up trouble; the efforts, at present successful, which he is making to establish the most cordial relations with the Government; the upbuilding of the international institutions of the Faith; the consolidation of the International Bahá'í Council — all require that no complications arise and no further strain be added to the burden of work at the World Centre of the Faith.

Now we come to the part of your activities nearest to his heart at present — Africa Campaign. By all means any translation at present into Somali should be given up, as the advice of experts prove it both unnecessary and very expensive.

The Guardian feels that, in view of the fact that funds for sending out pioneers are limited, and that a good number of pioneers are available, it is better to choose those most qualified and not, for the time being at least, accept every offer, however devoted the spirit behind it.

He fully appreciates the fact that Somaliland is going to be somewhat difficult. In view of its peculiar status your Assembly should bear in mind the possibility of sending there a British subject, if this should prove feasible, and pending a time when the Persians can go there and make arrangements for someone to represent them.

The Guardian considers that your Assembly is the consultative body for all African territories, and that the other National Assemblies should keep in close touch with you. This does not mean, however, that the initiative for the places allotted to them by the Guardian does not lie in their own hands. Likewise, the planning of the African Conference should be handled by you, in close co-operation with the other N.S.A.s. He does not feel it is feasible for the other N.S.A.s to pool their finances for the African work and put it in your Fund.

The unfortunate crisis in Persia may hold up, for a time, their services in Africa, and he hopes you will do all you can to offset this most unfortunate setback to their work. The Persian believers, have, for over a hundred years, borne the brunt of persecution and are still doing so, being the unhappy victims of their country and their race. They merit the ardent sympathy of their fellow Bahá'ís the world over.

The Guardian is very anxious to know how the work is going in the British Isles: he feels that the Africa Campaign has been launched in a way far exceeding his hopes, is being visibly blessed from on high, and, with the same amount of perseverance shown so far, is assured of great and speedy victories. But the goals, so hard won and at such cost of sacrifice at home, must not be lost. He urges all the friends to not allow the dazzling prospect overseas to take their attention away from the steady work of consolidation still required at home! The work abroad rests on the foundation laid so well and so painfully at home; if one suffers, so will the other.

The British Bahá'ís have distinguished themselves in recent years to a degree which has given them great prominence in the entire Bahá'í World and inspired others to follow their example. They cannot and must not lose this hard-won prominence, but, on the contrary, must demonstrate that it was not a spurt of speed but the evidence of deep and hardy roots bearing their first fruits, after years of quiet growth.

He remembers all the members of your Assembly in his prayers, and prays that the community of believers you serve so devotedly may go on rising to ever greater heights and shoulder all their tasks with increasing vigour, faith and devotion...

P.S. Regarding the forthcoming Centenary celebrations: the Guardian feels both national and local celebrations should be held very much as were those of the 1944 Centenary, but on a larger scale, with more publicity, if possible.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The auspicious launching of the first teaching Crusade undertaken by the British Bahá'í community beyond the borders of its homeland, marks yet another stage in the evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in the British Isles, and signals the opening of an epoch of the utmost significance in the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation. Though the operation of the Plan is of short duration, yet it constitutes a prelude to a series of successive campaigns which a firmly knit, vigorously functioning, clear visioned, intensely alive national community is destined to initiate, direct and control from its newly consolidated administrative headquarters in the heart of the British Isles, not only throughout the Dependencies of the British Crown within the African Continent, but eventually in the widely scattered Territories of an Empire whose ramifications extend into every continent of the globe.

A little over half-a-century ago, this community, now invested with a mandate of the utmost significance both at home and overseas, was called into being in the course of the opening years of the third and last epoch of the Heroic Age of the Faith. A decade later, the Appointed Centre of a Covenant, through the creative and potent energies of which so important a member of a steadily rising world community was conceived and nurtured, chose to infuse into that infant community through the impact of His personality in the course of a twice repeated visit to the heart and centre of that Empire, a measure of His own mysterious power, which, as He Himself prophesied, was destined to unfold its potentialities in the course of a later age. On the morrow of His passing, the earliest evidences of the unfailing promise He had made revealed themselves through the first stirrings of an Administrative Order — the Child of the Covenant, the Shield of that community and the divinely appointed Agency for the execution of the mandate with which that community was to be invested in the second epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation. A little over two decades later, that community, armed and equipped with the mighty, divinely conceived agencies of a laboriously erected, unassailably established Administrative Order, embarked upon a six-year enterprise that culminated in the erection of the institutions of that Order in the very heart and capital cities of its island home — the essential prerequisite for the inauguration of yet another stage in its unfoldment. On the morrow of the triumphant termination of the first collective enterprise launched by that community in British Bahá'í history, its jubilant members braced themselves, during a one-year interval, for the initial onslaught, which they were preparing to launch, unitedly and determinedly, far beyond the shores of their homeland amid alien, widely diversified, politically restless, economically backward, spiritually famished tribes and peoples, and in the course of one of the most critical periods in human history. On the morrow of the centenary of the martyrdom of the Prophet Herald of its Faith, this same community had already formulated its plans, initiated its programme of publications in various African languages, despatched its first pioneer to the heart of that continent, forged the necessary links with its allied sister communities participating in various enterprises in that same continent, and established its first essential contact with divers government agencies capable of giving their advice and assistance in the prosecution of its historic and arduous task.

This community, so young in experience, so richly endowed by the love and care of a departed all-powerful Master, so firmly entrenched in the stronghold of its Administrative Order, already

so rich in prizes won in the course of the first collective enterprise undertaken in its history, so promising in the vigour, the zeal and devotion which it is now displaying, is faced, at the present hour, with a grave, a sacred and inescapable responsibility — a responsibility that will increase as the brief eighteen-month interval separating it from the termination of its Two Year Plan speeds to a close.

Upon the discharge of this weighty responsibility now resting upon it must depend the inauguration of yet another Plan, of longer duration, of greater scope, of a still more challenging character, and of greater consequence in the effect it must have on that community's destiny.

Time is running short. The present hour in the fortunes of mankind is critical. The centenary of the birth of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is fast approaching. The British Bahá'í community must gird up its loins, redouble its exertions, undertake further sacrifices, demonstrate greater solidarity and rise to still greater heights of consecrated devotion.

The flow of pioneers to the African Continent must be noticeably accelerated. The provision of Bahá'í literature in all the selected African languages must be speeded up. The ties binding the community with its cooperating sister communities must be steadily reinforced. The prizes already garnered as a result of the operation of the Six-Year Plan in England, Wales, Scotland, Eire and Northern Ireland, must, at all costs, be safeguarded. The preparations for the forthcoming first African Teaching Conference must be carefully planned and meticulously carried out. Above all, the zeal kindled in the breasts of administrators, pioneers, teachers and supporters, jointly contributing to the success of this meritorious enterprise, must burn ever more brightly and be reflected in still more remarkable exploits.

Then, and only then, will this community be enabled to contribute its share of tribute to the memory of the Founder of its Faith, on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of His Prophetic Mission, in as befitting a manner as the share it already contributed, through the consummation of its first historic Plan, to the world-wide celebrations which commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the founding of its Faith. Then, and only then, will it be qualified to embark upon yet another Crusade, whose scope will transcend the limits of the vast African Continent, and the culmination of which might well coincide with the Most Great Jubilee that will commemorate the centenary of the formal assumption by Bahá'u'lláh of His prophetic office, a jubilee envisaged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets, and prophesied more than two thousand years ago, by Daniel in His Book.

So glorious a vision, now unfolded before the eyes of the British followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, cannot but galvanise them into action, at once swift, resolute and unrelaxing, and fire their souls with a spirit so consuming as to melt every obstacle that may intervene between them and the achievement of their present goal.

May they, one and all, prove themselves, in the crucial months immediately ahead, worthy of the blessings vouchsafed to them in the past, and of the high destiny which it lies in their power to achieve in the future.

Shoghi

Letter of 28 October 1951⁸

Assure Stephens loving fervent prayers accompanying her.

Shoghi

Letter of 11 November 1951

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

As I just recently sent you a long letter on behalf of the beloved Guardian to which he appended at some length, he wishes you to consider this reply to your letters of October 17th (three in number) as a postscript to the other.

As regards the questions you raised:

The ideal thing would be to have at least one Bahá'í from every territory in Africa attend the African Conference. This is the goal to be worked for, and attained if possible, as it will greatly stimulate the work and especially the inexperienced and isolated believers.

The solar calendar should, by all means, be adhered to in Africa.

He feels that your Assembly is responsible for the time being for the work in territories not under the charge of other N.S.A.s (Tunis, Sudan and Ethiopia are under Egyptian care).

You are not directly responsible for any work done in territories which have been allotted to other N.S.A.s. But you should correspond with them, and give them any help and advice you can, both the N.S.A.s and their African Committees. In the case of Eric Manton,⁹ though he will be under Persia's jurisdiction you can keep him informed of your work, so as to cheer him up.

Only the five participating National Assemblies are responsible directly for financing the African work. No invitations should be extended to other bodies or individuals to contribute. Naturally if any one wants to, they no doubt will, but it would be, he feels, very inappropriate to broadcast any appeal. The Africa work is not an international undertaking but an interassembly one, confined to five national Bodies.

He is very pleased over the way the work is progressing, and sends you all his loving greetings....

P.S. He thanks you for the Quarterly Report enclosed. He reads with great interest everything related to the African work.

8. When Ethel Stephens flew to the Gold Coast.

9. He was Chairman of the first National Spiritual Assembly of South Central Africa in 1964 and of the National Assembly of Zambia for nine years from its formation in 1967. He has remained at his post and became a Zambian citizen in 1973.

Letter of 23 November 1951¹⁰

Conference should be held Uganda.

Shoghi

Letter of 6 December 1951

Africa Committee

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

Your letters of November 5th and 22nd (enclosures were also received) have been received, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He was pleased to hear that Sir Ronald Storrs keeps up a friendly interest in the Faith.

Regarding ... it is obvious that people like this, who have had in some cases a smattering of Bahá'í teaching are not fully aware of the implications of the Faith. However, this does not mean that we should not help them and hold on to them, in the hope of being able, as time and circumstances permit, to deepen them and produce from them really fine believers. This has happened on many occasions in the past, and the Guardian hopes that, through correspondence with him, your committee — and perhaps the Groups in Africa — will be able to accomplish this.

In response to his requests for money, you should point out to him that as we finance entirely our own activities as our gift to mankind, we have to harbour our resources and concentrate on the most important expenditures. You will know what these are; and they certainly don't include a headquarters in Nigeria. You might also encourage him to make an effort to attend the Africa Conference.

The Guardian also hopes that you will give ... every encouragement. She is a fine soul, and no doubt, if she had time devoted to her, would soon develop into an assured and active believer. You should encourage her also to make every effort to be present at the Africa Conference, and in the meantime to correspond with believers abroad, and do her best to teach the Cause there in spite of her handicaps.

The Guardian feels that the next step in Bahá'í literature might well be the publication of a more comprehensive work in Luganda and Swahili. However, he would like the Africa Committee to undertake pamphlets in other languages as well; let him know what languages the committee proposes.

He attaches, as you know, the greatest importance to the work of your committee and is tremendously impressed by the progress being made in Africa, and by the capacity, tenacity

¹⁰. Regarding the first Intercontinental Conference.

and enthusiasm the British Africa Committee is showing in handling its share of this extremely important campaign. His prayers are frequently offered on your behalf.

[From the Guardian:]

May the Almighty whose Cause you serve with such devotion, ability and faithfulness, reward you abundantly for your labours, guide you and sustain you and assist you to enrich continually the record of your meritorious service.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 19 December 1951¹¹

Delighted assure them fervent prayers hearty welcome Bahá'í fold.

Shoghi

Letter of 30 December 1951

Approve plan celebration centenary.

Shoghi

Letter of 8 January 1952 (Teaching Conference)

Assure attendants teaching conference deepest loving appreciation assurance loyalty. Appeal fervently arise determinedly stimulate pioneer activity safeguard hard-won prizes consolidate home front reinforce agencies administrative base on which success african campaign inauguration future plans embracing british territories other continents ultimately depend supplicating abundant blessing.

Shoghi

Letter of 16 January 1952¹²

Delighted approve talks hands loving appreciation.

¹¹. On 18 December 1951 the National Assembly reported to the beloved Guardian the acceptance of two African believers in Kampala.

¹². Reply to National Assembly's enquiry whether Hands of the Cause could be invited to give talks at the Africa Conference.

Shoghi

Letter of 13 February 1952

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Our beloved Guardian has instructed me to write you the following:

He wishes the British National Assembly to please do all they can to watch over the two young sons of our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. ..., in view of the fact that the youngest boy is little more than a child, he needs particularly to have his spiritual welfare safeguarded through as much contact as possible with believers.

The wonderful services this devoted and self-sacrificing father and mother are rendering the Faith have forced them to be separated from their children, and hence the Guardian requests your Assembly to please take special care of the boys.

We are all very happy to have ... here, and they have brought most heartening reports of the progress of the work in Africa with them....

Letter of 20 February 1952¹³

Grieve tragic loss praying fervently behalf departed.

Shoghi

Letter of 29 February 1952

...advise build up Kenya. Urge formation assemblies Kampala Dar-es-salaam. Approve special sessions for national assembly representatives outside conference.

Shoghi

Letter of 4 March 1952

Africa Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Dear Bahá'í Friends:

Your letter of the 18th of February, with enclosures, has reached the beloved Guardian; and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He is very pleased over the progress being made, particularly in Uganda; and the recent pilgrimage of the dear Banánís, he feels sure, will add a great impetus to the work there.

¹³. Death of Marguerite Preston and eldest child killed in air crash returning to Kenya.

Regarding the matters of policy you raised in your letter, he sees no objection to the Persian Bahá'ís, — as long as there are so many of them, and it is unwise to concentrate too many applicants on one country at one time as you point out, — going to countries under the jurisdiction of other National Spiritual Assemblies, such as Egypt and India.

He considers that it is of the greatest importance that pioneers should have upright characters, as well as some considerable knowledge of the Teachings. We cannot expect that every pioneer will be a person of importance; but we must hope that each one will be a person of worth, in his own character. This should be pointed out to the Indian friends.

India should likewise make an effort to send pioneers primarily to the territories embraced in its own part of the Plan; but if they can make available to your committee for British territory, some qualified Indian Bahá'ís, who for some reason cannot go to one of the Indian National Assembly's assignments, then there is no objection.

The Guardian thinks that it is wise not to influence ... by sending him material which he does not at present wish to receive. He is, judging from his letter, a sincere but immature believer....

P.S. Your National Assembly is not responsible for Eritrea but you may encourage any believers there.

[From the Guardian:]

May the Almighty bless your high endeavours, guide and sustain you continually, and aid you to win great victories in the service of His Faith.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 8 March 1952¹⁴

Approve Shomais departure Africa. Abbás return Persia appreciate deeply self-sacrifice.

Shoghi

Letter of 12 March 1952

Owing rapid progress African campaign advise concentration consolidation home front appeal united renewed vigorous effort praying fervently success.

Shoghi

¹⁴. Regarding Dr. and Mrs. Abbás Afnán (see block b.61).

Letter of 18 March 1952

Goal fulfilled any part Somaliland.

Shoghi

Letter of 16 April 1952¹⁵

Overjoyed praying success Blackpool love.

Shoghi

Letter of 22 April 1952¹⁶

Delighted appreciate services pioneers.

Shoghi

Letter of 29 April 1952

Deeply touched pledge British Bahá'í community congratulate valiant members marvellous progress African campaign consolidation home front owing attainment objectives advise concentrate Nairobi aiming establishment assembly leading promising centre British territories heart East African continent fervently praying still greater victories loving gratitude.

Shoghi

Letter of 4 May 1952

National Bahá'í Youth Committee

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Your letter of April 9, 1952, has been received, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

¹⁵. The National Assembly cabled the Guardian on 14 April 1952: "*Kampala Dar-es-salaam now nine assemblies assured. Believe maintenance assured all assemblies except Blackpool where two gaps remain. Beg special prayers.*"

¹⁶. On news of maintenance of all Assemblies.

He was most happy to see that so many of the Bahá'í youth and their friends had gathered together for the Youth Conference; and trusts that, from this consultation, a greater activity amongst the Bahá'í youth of the British Isles will result.

All over the Bahá'í world, we see that not an inconsiderable proportion of the most active and devoted pioneers are young people. This is only right and proper, because they are freer, usually, to migrate to distant lands, embark on new projects, and withstand the trials and hardships, than older people, who have built up family ties and professional ties.

He will pray for all of you, for your success and the deepening of your capacities in the service of Bahá'u'lláh.

[From the Guardian:]

May the Almighty bless and sustain you in your meritorious activities and aid you to achieve great victories in the service of His Faith,

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 3 June 1952

I gratefully acknowledge receipt of the sum of £200 Sterling from my dear Bahá'í co-workers, British Bahá'í community to be expended for the promotion of the international interests of the Bahá'í Faith.

Shoghi

Letter of 3 June 1952

I gratefully acknowledge receipt of the sum of £300 Sterling from my dear Bahá'í co-workers, British Bahá'í community to be expended for the construction of the Shrine of the Báb.

Shoghi

Letter of 4 June 1952

Africa Committee

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

Your letter of May 16th has been received, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He has read with great interest the reports which your committee sends him regularly, because as you know the work in Africa is to him one of the most important activities going on in the Bahá'í world, and very close to his heart.

He was very sorry to hear from the recent cable sent him that there is a question about the Kampala Conference, and whether arrangements can be made for it to be held there. Undoubtedly there is an increasingly negative attitude toward our work growing up amongst the officials, probably due to the lack of racial discrimination they are coming to realise is one of our fundamental teachings, a teaching carried into action, and not merely a pious hope.... He wishes you to keep him informed about this and the progress being made.

Your suggested souvenir booklet sounds interesting, and he urges you to consider the wisdom of including a photograph of Mr. Gregory, First Negro Hand of the Cause, in addition to the others.

As regards the latest progress photo of the Shrine Mr. Ted Cardell¹⁷ took a great many pictures here, which the Guardian told him he could share with the Bahá'ís anywhere in the world; and it seems as if, exclusive of the work on the drum, which will begin showing distinctly in about two months' time, the best possible photograph you can obtain of the Shrine at present would be one of Ted's. You should therefore apply to him for one.

The Guardian is very anxious that, during the coming months, the Africa Committee and the Bahá'ís should concentrate their efforts on establishing an Assembly in Kenya, and hopes that you will be able to direct pioneers to Nairobi as soon as possible.

The Guardian considers that it is premature at this time to answer your question about consultation at the Africa Conference, between people from territories which will come under the jurisdiction of the East and Central Africa National Spiritual Assembly. He is so overworked and tired at the moment that he has not been able to go into the entire question of the Inter-Continental Conferences, the countries which will come under the jurisdiction of various future national bodies, etc. He hopes that he will be able, during the coming months, to do this, and if he feels it wise, will advise you by cable concerning a consultation such as you suggest, at the Conference.

He assures all the members of your committee of his deep appreciation of the work they are doing, and of his loving prayers for their success....

P.S. Your personal letter of May 17th was received, and he assures you not only of how deeply he admires the spirit you and your husband have, and the work you accomplish, but of his loving prayers that you may be given strength to carry out this work.

Mr. ... evidently is very immature and has no real concept of the Faith; this does not mean, however, that we should abandon him as a contact or let him become the prey of the New History Society. We should keep in friendly touch until someone can see him.

[From the Guardian:]

May the Almighty Whose Cause you and your co-workers are serving with such an exemplary spirit of devotion, fidelity and perseverance, reward you for your meritorious labours, remove all obstacles from your path and enable you to win great victories in the days to come,

¹⁷. He was elected to the National Assembly in 1973 and is still a member (1979).

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 12 June 1952

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

The beloved Guardian has received your letters of October 3, October 27 (4), November 5, 9, 22 (2), 24 and 29, December 6, 19 (4) and 21, 1951, and January 1, 2, 7, 11, 16, 17, 20 and 29 (3), February 1, 16, 20 (3), 27 (2) and February 29, March 5 and 14, April 3, 15 and 24, May 5, 13, 19 (2), 27 and 31, and June 6th, 10th and June 12, 1952, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf. He also has received the various enclosures which you sent with these letters....

The book you sent from the friends in Bahrein was received, and pleased the beloved Guardian very much, as the lines are written in the handwriting of Bahá'u'lláh at the beginning of the book. (This answers your question in your letter of June 6th.)

It brought great joy to his heart to see that you were able to maintain all assemblies in spite of the heavy odds against you. It demonstrates to him once more the tenacity and devotion of the British Bahá'ís, which is rapidly becoming one of the great assets of the Faith in its process of international expansion....

The wonderful spirit shown by Dr. Afnán and his wife is certainly an example to all pioneers. He hopes that Mrs. Afnán will settle herself successfully in Africa, and soon be able to have her husband join her.

He was very happy to hear that the Teaching Conference has been so successful. Undoubtedly the dedication of the friends to their tasks at that time facilitated the achievement of their goals in April....

The Guardian would like to assure your Assembly of his loving prayers for dear Mr. Sam Scott, who pioneered at such a ripe age, and who is surely receiving his reward in the Abhá Kingdom.¹⁸

He considers it advisable that all believers living in Africa, even those who did so before the beginning of the Plan, should have some form of credentials....

Your suggestion of inaugurating the Holy Year next Ridván and continuing on until October, 1953, with celebrations, meets with his approval.

As regards the Africa campaign: this enterprise, so enthusiastically carried on, has been throughout this past year the greatest source of joy to the heart of the beloved Guardian. The visits of the dear Banánís and Ted Cardell, the news they brought and the general progress of the work, have made Africa seem right next door to Haifa! The formation of the Dar-es-Salaam and Kampala Assemblies was also a great satisfaction to him.

18.

1.

He urges you to now concentrate on an Assembly for Nairobi by next April. This should not be too difficult of achievement in view of the devoted efforts of Mr. Cardell and the pioneers eager to go there.

As regards your question about Somaliland: any one of the three Somalilands may be chosen as a goal territory.

In this connection, he feels that Persian pioneers should be accepted for any and all territories; they are arising in large numbers to offer their services, and it is a great pity that these dedicated and eager friends are so restricted as regards settlement. Your Assembly should do all in its power to facilitate placing them.

The Guardian feels that although the Conference planned for Kampala is primarily a Conference and in no sense a Convention (having no delegates), there is no objection to the representatives of various N.S.A.s who may attend meeting in separate sessions for more special and concentrated consultation. Any Hands of the Cause attending could also be included in this private discussion.

He feels that now more than ever the British friends have every reason to feel proud of their accomplishments and happy over the very evident bestowals from the Throne on High. They have found, after half a century of development, scope for their abilities, and a field large enough to distinguish themselves in, and they are certainly taking advantage of it, much to the delight of the Guardian and their fellow-Bahá'ís.

You may be sure that he remembers you all in his prayers, and also the body of the faithful believers you serve to such good purpose.

He would like you to please thank, on his behalf, the friends who so devotedly contribute to the construction of the Holy Shrine....

P.S. As regards Bahá'í divorce as mentioned in your letters of June 12th: Bahá'ís (whether one party or both are believers) should follow the Bahá'í law of divorce, i.e. one year of waiting, and not neglect this divinely given law. Whether they were Bahá'ís when they married or not has nothing to do with it.

In connection with the budget, mentioned in your letter of June 10th, he feels, in the future, you should not set a budget which the resources of the community are unable to meet; however, owing to the crucial Africa work and the forthcoming Conference, he realises you had at this time no other choice. He is going to arrange for one thousand pounds to be sent to your Assembly in order to meet the needs of the Conference and the literature in African languages still to be published. The remaining translations should be pressed forward in order to be ready for the Conference next year.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The Two Year Plan on which the British Bahá'í community has embarked bids fair, as it approaches its conclusion, to eclipse, however short its duration, the exploits of that community throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles, in the course of the prosecution of the first collective enterprise undertaken in British Bahá'í history. This second historic undertaking marks the inauguration of the Mission entrusted to this community for the purpose of diffusing the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and of implanting its banner through successive stages, and in collaboration with its sister communities, not only in the territories of the British Crown in the African Continent, but throughout the dependencies of a widely scattered Empire in the remaining continents of the globe. It may well be regarded as a befitting prelude to the official participation of this community in the Ten Year, world-encircling Crusade, designed to signalise the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission, involving the systematic co-operation of no less than twelve National Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world, and destined to culminate in the Most Great Jubilee that will, God willing, witness the introduction of the Faith into all the Sovereign States, the Chief Dependencies and Islands of the entire planet.

In the conduct of this world-encompassing task, so vast in scope, so thrilling in its possibilities, so formidable in its potentialities, the British Bahá'í community will be called upon to play a preponderating rôle, in conjunction with the American Bahá'í community, acting as the Chief Custodians of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Master Plan, and seconded by its sister communities in the British Dominions in both hemispheres, in awakening the peoples, races and nations comprising the British Commonwealth and Empire to the redemptive Message of Bahá'u'lláh, and in establishing, on an unassailable foundation, the structural basis of His World Order.

The diversity of functions which the assumption of this task will involve; the privileges and bounties it will, of a certainty, confer on its prosecutors; the degree of dedication, the amount of preparation it will require for its proper discharge; the severe strain it must necessarily impose on all those who will shoulder its burdens; the gravity of the manifold problems it will raise; the severe challenge with which they who will arise to carry it out will be confronted — as witnessed by the delicate and complicated situation that has already arisen in the initial stage of this historic Mission in the heart of Africa, in connection with the holding of the projected inter-continental conference — all these must be carefully pondered in preparation for the launching, at its appointed time, of an undertaking that will constitute, not only a milestone of the utmost significance in the history of the Faith in the British Isles, but will also be hailed by posterity as a landmark of peculiar significance in British history.

Whilst the small band of wholly dedicated, patiently labouring, much admired, greatly promising followers and supporters of the Faith, in England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland, contemplate, from their respective homelands, the grandeur of their future task, dwell on its sacred character, and meditate on the wide range of its problems, possibilities, perils and glories, let them devote particular and sustained attention to the imperative needs, the urgent requirements of their no less important and vital mission at home, in their boroughs and counties, amidst their own people, and strain every nerve to reinforce, through a rapid increase in their numbers, through a steady multiplication of their administrative institutions, through a systematic consolidation of the structure of the edifice they are raising within the borders of their native land, their respective communities, which must be regarded as the base for the

future operations that will be conducted by the members of these communities, under the guidance of their elected representatives, for the spiritual conquest and the ultimate redemption of the nations, tribes and races owing allegiance to the British Crown.

With every forward step taken by this stalwart community in the path of service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, with every signal victory achieved for the promulgation of His Faith, a new revelation of the glorious Mission which this community is privileged to undertake is unfolded before the eyes of its members and a wider vista of the future range of its operations, both at home and overseas, opens before it. With every complication that arises in the course of its unfolding Mission, with even every seeming reverse it meets with, as its destiny unfolds, a clearer understanding of the character of its stewardship to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is vouchsafed to its members, a greater measure of His sustaining grace is poured forth from on high, a more compelling evidence of His all-conquering power is evinced, and a more majestic assertion of His mysterious purpose is demonstrated.

The potent seeds a loving and vigilant Master sowed with His Own hands, in the course of a twice repeated visit to the homeland of this community, are now, after having lain dormant for almost a quarter of a century, at long last, sprouting throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles, and are even revealing the potency of their regenerative power, through the instrumentality of those valiant pioneers, who, faithful to His Call and dedicated to His service, are leaving the shores of those islands to settle in the territories of a far-away and backward continent. Amidst their arduous labours, in their contact with the heterogeneous tribes and races dwelling in that continent, in their dealings with the civil authorities of divers countries and states within whose jurisdiction they will labour, in their struggle with an inhospitable climate, in the hazards to which they will be inevitably exposed, in the adventures they may experience, in the reverses they may temporarily suffer, in the opposition they will meet with, in the tests and trials they will undergo, His unfailing guidance will be vouchsafed to them in direct proportion to the degree of their consecration to their task, and the perseverance, the courage and fidelity they will display as they discharge their duties.

The remarkable success that has attended their high endeavours since the initiation of their first collective enterprise within the confines of their native land, the still more notable evidence of God's sustaining grace that has accompanied the opening of the first stage of their Mission overseas, are sufficient proof of the tremendous potency of the forces at work for the purpose of ensuring the unrestricted expansion of their future activities within and beyond the frontiers of their island home, and the ultimate consummation of their magnificent enterprise.

In the months immediately ahead, the strongholds of the Faith erected, in the form of local assemblies, and already established in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, must be maintained at all costs in their present strength; the groups and isolated centres already brought into being must, under no circumstances, be allowed to decrease in number or be lost to the Faith; the translation and publication of pamphlets in the languages already selected must be vigorously pushed forward and completed; the centre in the capital of Kenya must be assiduously expanded; the preparations for the projected inter-continental Conference must be carefully carried out; the effective participation of the representatives of the British Bahá'í community in the Stockholm inter-continental Conference must be ensured; and all the preparatory steps, required for the effectual collaboration of the members of this community in

the global crusade, destined to be launched on the morrow of the world-wide celebrations of the approaching Holy Year, should, to whatever extent possible, be undertaken.

There is no time to lose. The issues at stake call for immediate action, demand unrelaxing vigilance, undivided attention, and a consecration unexampled in the annals of the Faith in the British Isles. Though the number of those summoned to shoulder so immense a task be dishearteningly small, though the resources at their disposal be meagre, though the cares and preoccupations of the peoples amidst whom they live are such as to often blind them to the Faith and its healing message, yet the position they occupy and the responsibilities devolving upon them in the heart and centre of a world-wide empire, the manifold tokens of esteem and loving-kindness showered upon them during the infancy of this community by the Centre of God's Covenant; the inherent qualities of tenacity of purpose, of exemplary fidelity, of perspicacity that distinguishes the race to which they belong, must inspire hope and confidence in their future, and fully entitles them to play a leading role in the future proclamation of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the multitudes that live beneath the shadow of the British Crown.

That they may become increasingly conscious of the sublimity of their task; that they may address themselves to it with their characteristic zeal, ability, intelligence and fervour; that they may speedily acquire the spiritual potentialities for the initiation of a still more momentous stage in the unfoldment of their historic Mission; that they may earn increasingly, through their superb feats, the unqualified admiration of their brethren in every continent of the globe and prove themselves worthy of the bounties already received and those which, we may well believe, are held in store for them, is my cherished hope and constant prayer.

Shoghi

Letter of 15 June 1952¹⁹

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The beloved Guardian has instructed me to write you in his behalf, to request that information relating to the British Isles and their activities, contained in the booklet "The Bahá'í Faith" 'Information Statistical and Comparative' be brought up to date as of May 1 1952, and sent to him here by the first possible air mail post.

One of the features of the Holy Year will be the re-issuance of this important book; inasmuch as the Holy Year is fast approaching the Guardian wishes the information as quickly as possible.

Briefly, the information which your N.S.A. is to provide, brought up to date of May 1, 1952, is as follows:

¹⁹. On 9 January 1951 the Guardian announced the formation of the first International Bahá'í Council, hailing it as "the greatest event shedding lustre upon second epoch of Formative Age..." and on 8 March 1952 he enlarged it and named its eight members. Hand of the Cause Leroy Loas was appointed Secretary General and as such wrote frequently to the British National Spiritual Assembly. He wrote more frequently, however, conveying messages from the Guardian, requesting information, sharing news, etc., signing his letters "Assistant Secretary". This was the first letter of this kind. His letters are now included wherever he indicates that he is writing on behalf of the Guardian

Incorporated local spiritual assemblies in the British Isles.

Bahá'í Centres in the British Isles, showing, if possible, the division between local spiritual assemblies, Groups and Isolated Believers.

Any information not immediately available should be handled by telegraph, but such information as is available should not be delayed for any one or two delinquents. You can appreciate that if the booklet is to be published early in the Holy Year, the information should reach the Guardian at a very early date.

The Guardian sends his loving greetings to the National Assembly and its devoted members....

Letter of 29 August 1952²⁰

Deeply touched profoundly appreciate Noble sentiments praying fulfilment high Destiny
deepest love.

Shoghi

Letter of 15 October 1952²¹

Profoundly appreciate message ardently praying British community may arise befittingly
discharge great tasks ahead.

Shoghi

Letter of 20 November 1952²²

Delighted loving appreciation.

Shoghi

Letter of 28 December 1952

Maintenance groups isolated centres advisable though not essential part plan.

Shoghi

20. Reply to Summer School.

21. Reply to greetings of N.S.A. at beginning of Holy Year.

22. On completion of nine African Pamphlets, a goal of the Two Year Plan.

To Entire Bahá'í World, 5 January 1953

Rejoice share Bahá'í communities East West thrilling reports feats achieved heroic band Bahá'í pioneers labouring divers widely-scattered African territories particularly Uganda heart continent reminiscent alike episodes related book acts rapid dramatic propagation faith instrumentality dawn-breakers heroic age Bahá'í dispensation marvellous accomplishments signalling rise establishment administrative order faith Latin America eclipsed exploits immortalising recently launched crusade European continent surpassed goal seven-month plan initiated Kampala assembly aiming doubling twelve enrolled believers out-stripped number Africans converted course last fifteen months residing Kampala outlying districts protestant catholic pagan backgrounds lettered unlettered both sexes representative no less sixteen tribes passed two hundred mark.

Effulgent rays god's triumphant cause radiating focal centre fast awakening continent penetrating accelerating rate isolated regions unfrequented white men enveloping their radiance souls hitherto indifferent persistent humanitarian activities Christian missions civilising influence civil authorities no less nine localities qualified attain coming Riḍván assembly status within single territory long-slumbering continent.

Zanzibar Madagascar french Morocco South Rhodesia Italian Somaliland already or soon be opened faith.

Desire pay special tribute strenuous efforts exerted 'Alí Naḳhjavání setting example dedication freedom prejudice fellow pioneers labouring inhospitable surroundings confronted manifold formidable obstacles.

Planning entrust special representative delegated attend approaching kampala conference portrait holy Báb replica one deposited beneath dome Maṣhriqu'l-Adhkár Wilmette to be exhibited assembled attendants historic occasion confident unveiling may draw newly recruited vanguard ever-swelling host Bahá'u'lláh as well as all participating visitors itinerant teachers settlers closer spirit martyr-prophet faith bestow everlasting benediction all gathered memorable sessions epoch-making inter-continental conference dedicated prosecution latest most glorious crusade launched course eleven decades Bahá'í history.

Shoghi

Letter of 8 January 1953 (Teaching Conference)

Moved place record expression abiding appreciation notable contribution British Bahá'í pioneers magnificent success historic enterprise launched African continent course two year plan formulated British Bahá'í community. Goals first epoch-making stage glorious overseas mission followers Bahá'u'lláh British Isles nobly achieved. Appeal attendants conference focus

attention fleeting months ahead consolidation homefront constituting no less vital phase second collective enterprise British Bahá'í history. Urge participants resolve upon return respective communities exert utmost fan flame pioneering spirit utilise every available means ensure all aspects triumphant consummation plan. Total success internal external phases present undertaking will constitute befitting contribution steadfastly labouring highly esteemed tenaciously loyal British Bahá'í community world wide celebrations holy year pave way effective participation its members impending ten year crusade marking opening third collective enterprise inaugurated since inception faith British Isles signalling second memorable stage their unfolding mission foreign fields destined embrace territories British crown both African European continents. Praying fervently attainment objectives ultimate achievement distant goals.

Shoghi

Letter of 15 January 1953 (Teaching Conference)

Deeply touched message appreciate rededication praying glorious success.

Shoghi

Letter of 28 January 1953

Advise modify list languages. Kindly airmail immediately explanation American national assembly for modification their manuscript.

Shoghi

Letter of 1 February 1953

Advise assembly's representatives attending Kampala conference ensure no one photographs Báb's portrait during display. Sending colour film shrines arrange provide projector sixteen millimetres.

Shoghi

Letter of 13 March 1953

Assure you loving fervent prayers.

Shoghi

Letter of 25 March 1953

Your assembly henceforth consultative body only for British territories in Africa.

Shoghi

Letter of 3 April 1953

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

Enclosed please find the Guardian's Convention Message.

As there are a great many African languages enumerated, and the spelling is very involved, the Guardian has decided to Air Mail you this message, rather than have it cabled, which was his original intention.

Please cable immediately you receive this letter, acknowledging it, so that the Guardian will know his Convention Message is in your hands. Otherwise he will of course have to cable it from here.

He is eagerly awaiting the report of the African Conference, which he has not received to date....

P.S. Your letter regarding a rug supposedly owned by Bahá'u'lláh coming up for sale, has just been received, and the Guardian feels that he cannot possibly authenticate this rug as having belonged at any time to Bahá'u'lláh. It may of course be quite true that it did. He leaves it to the discretion of your Assembly to decide whether you wish to purchase it or not.

Letter of 8 April 1953

Appeal entire community exert supreme effort eleventh hour seal success plan assure loving fervent prayers.

Shoghi

Letter of 18 April 1953

Heartfelt congratulations deepest love.

Shoghi

