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AN INTERNATIONAL RECORD

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PART FIVE
IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM

RAMONA ALLEN BRAY BROWN
1889–1975

Ramona Allen Brown was one of that special company of American Bahá'ís who had the privilege of welcoming 'Abdu'l-Bahá when He visited the United States. Several of her family were distinguished Bahá'ís. She was a cousin of George Orr Latimer,¹ a prominent believer who was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, and her mother, Frances Orr Allen, was author of an account of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's California sojourn,² valuable for its details of the Master's meeting with the Japanese of Oakland. Ramona's father, Dr. Woodson Hargis Allen, was a pioneer physician in northern California. Ramona was born in Boulder Creek, California on 10 August 1889. Later the family moved to Berkeley.

In 1905 Ramona and her mother, as guests of Georgia Ralston, attended a tea at the Oakland home of Helen S. Goodall. Kanichi Yamamoto, who later became the first Japanese Bahá'í, ushered them into the gathering. Hearing the Bahá'í message for the first time from Mrs. Goodall's daughter, Ella Goodall Cooper, Ramona instantly accepted the Faith that afternoon. She was sixteen years old at the time. She was one of the small circle of young women known as 'the Peaches' who were invited to attend Mrs. Cooper's Bahá'í gatherings; these young ladies affectionately called Ella Cooper 'Mother Peach'. Ramona was blonde and beautiful and although a constant sufferer from asthma she retained her beauty and elegance throughout her life.

Ramona unceasingly shared her accounts of visits with 'Abdu'l-Bahá while He was in the San Francisco Bay area, and has left a written record of those days. She described how the Master would look at her and His eyes would twinkle and He would laugh; no doubt her light-heartedness would have been recognized by Him. He praised her perceptivity, telling her

that this intuitive faculty was like 'the tinkling of bells' and that people could develop this quality in themselves. She always treasured a special volume of *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, took it with her when she travelled, and would open it for guidance. Ramona took the best-known photographs of the Master in Oakland and Berkeley: one with University of California students from India and one of the Master walking alone.³ She also photographed the Master after He gave His historic address on 8 October 1912 at Leland Stanford Junior University near Palo Alto.

In 1916 Ramona married Joseph Grandin Bray⁴ who was to become a much-loved Bahá'í teacher. The couple had two children: J. Allen Bray, well known in the San Francisco Bay area for his support of youth, ecology and the arts; and Barbara Bray West of Rancho Palos Verdes, an ardent teacher of the Faith. At her death, Ramona was the widow of Arthur Merrill Brown, a prominent San Francisco businessman who died in 1950. Ramona had seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren; several members of her family have become members of the Bahá'í Faith. In the spring of 1954 Ramona made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was planning to return in 1957 when the Guardian suddenly died.

Throughout her life Ramona travelled widely in service to the Faith. As a young woman she spent a year (1934) in Honolulu where she held Bahá'í classes with Agnes Alexander and Katherine Baldwin. She visited Turkey, pioneered for one year (1956) with Jean and Tova Deleuran in Palma de Mallorca, and accompanied the Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander to Rome. At the Guardian's direction she visited Bahá'í pioneers throughout the islands of the Mediterranean. Early in 1957 she joined Carl and Lili Olitski Hermann and Harold and Marzieh Gail in Salzburg, Austria and in April of that year became a member of that city's first Spiritual Assembly and, later, its chairman. She also taught in the surrounding villages. In her written account of

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XI, p. 511.

² See 'Abdu'l-Bahá in San Francisco', *Star of the West*, vol. III, no. 12, 16 October 1912, p. 9; vol. III, no. 13, 4 November 1912, p. 11; (vol. 2, George Ronald edition 1978).

³ See *Star of the West*, vol. IV, no. 12, 16 October 1912, p. 202, p. 204; (vol. 2, George Ronald edition 1978).

⁴ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VIII, p. 672.



Ramona Allen Bray Brown

her experiences in Austria she stated: 'In August (1957) I was receiving treatment from a young Austrian woman who became curious to know why I was there (Salzburg) alone, ill and so far from home. I told her about the Faith. She became interested and we had daily chats about the Teachings. . . . In October 1957 she, Editha Wehrle, declared her faith, the first Austrian Bahá'í in Salzburg under the Ten Year Plan.' In June the following year, Ramona records, Fritzi Klap, another Austrian, accepted the Faith. In December 1963 ill health forced Ramona to return to California where she settled in La Jolla, near the border of Mexico. The climate there, it was hoped would foster her return to health. The community, site of the University of California, offered great opportunities for Bahá'í service. Ramona took up residence at La Jolla's Colonial Inn, teaching constantly, visiting many centres in southern California and receiving in ever-increasing numbers the young Bahá'ís and their friends who flocked to meet her, listening to her talks and asking questions for hours at a time.

Ramona's great gift was her power to attract and confirm individuals in the Faith, in whatever country or circumstance she found herself. Her wide-ranging influence can scarcely

be estimated at this time. She never missed an opportunity to teach. Once, from her sick-bed, she sent a copy of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* to a scientist stationed at the North Pole, the son of a woman she had met while a patient in the hospital. Her ease of communication was such that once, although knowing no Greek, she 'conversed' by gestures with women inhabitants she met on the island of Rhodes. Although her life was not without its stretches of difficulty and sorrow, there was a constant air of festivity, hospitality, elegance and grace about her. In spite of almost continual illness she would readily, albeit with great effort, leave her sick-bed to attend a party or Bahá'í gathering. Her light-heartedness, good taste and dignity appealed especially to younger friends. One of her characteristic sayings when selecting a restaurant in an unfamiliar city was '... and let's pay a dollar for the atmosphere!' While a patient in a Salzburg hospital she said to a visitor, 'I wake up in the night and find my heart has stopped; so I shake myself and start it going again!'

On 23 February 1975, after a short illness, Ramona passed into the Abhá Kingdom. Many expressions of tribute and condolence reached her family. In appreciation of her long and distinguished Bahá'í career the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States cabled:

DEEPLY GRIEVED LOSS RAMONA ALLEN BRAY BROWN STALWART MEMBER AMERICAN BAHAI COMMUNITY WHOSE LONG LIFE EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE TO CAUSE BAHAUULLAH WAS MADE DISTINCTIVE BY HER ATTAINMENT TO PRESENCE MASTER ABDULBAHA STOP HER NOBLE EXAMPLE UNSTINTING DEVOTION AND AUTHORSHIP IN HER WANING YEARS OF MANUSCRIPT HER MEMORIES BELOVED MASTER WILL DOUBTLESS SHED LIGHT UPON PATH EVOKE GRATITUDE GENERATIONS TO COME STOP WE PRAY THAT HER SOUL WILL RECEIVE ABUNDANT REWARD IN ABHA KINGDOM.

From the Universal House of Justice came this memorial of her historic life:

INFORMED PASSING 17 MULK STEADFAST SERVANT CAUSE RAMONA BROWN WHOSE DEVOTED HIGHLY MERITORIOUS SERVICES DURING FORMATIVE AND HEROIC AGES FAITH INCLUDING PIONEERING ACTIVITIES EUROPE AND MEDITERRANEAN AREA LOVINGLY REMEMBERED STOP

OFFERING ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY THRESHOLD
 PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM CONVEY
 BARBARA WEST FAMILY LOVING CONDOLENCES.

(Adapted from a memoir by Marzieh Gail
 and Barbara West.)

MARK TOBEY
 1890–1976

Mark Tobey occupies a unique position in the history of art: a painter of genius who also was deeply inspired through most of his productive life by the dynamic of a new religious impulse, the renewal of God's Word through Bahá'u'lláh. As a result, he has produced a body of work which has stirred controversy, been extraordinarily praised and grossly misunderstood, had a strong influence on trends in art which is still not fully grasped, and has helped a substantial number of people to become aware of the meaning and significance of the Bahá'í Faith.

His childhood years were much in the spirit of Tom Sawyer. He was born in Centerville, Wisconsin, on 11 December 1890. When he was four years of age the family moved to Trempealeau, Wisconsin, a village of 600 on the banks of the Mississippi, where Mark spent the next twelve years as a typical mid-western 'barefoot boy'. He studied and enjoyed nature avidly, attended school and the Congregational Church, and aspired in turn to be a minister, a taxidermist, a storekeeper and a trader. There is evidence that he showed aptitude for art early. However, the only formal art training he was to receive was at Saturday classes in watercolours and oils at the Chicago Art Institute and after two years Mark had to drop out of high school and seek work because of the illness of his father.

From 1909 to 1911, after the family moved to Chicago, Mark changed jobs frequently. While working as a blueprint boy in a steel mill he studied mechanical drawing and spent his free time copying magazine covers. Several jobs later he was an errand boy for a fashion studio, when it was discovered he had a talent for drawing and he was engaged to draw the faces for catalogue illustrations, at a substantial boost in salary. He clipped and studied the



Mark Tobey

work of famous illustrators and portrait painters, and eventually discovered Rembrandt and Michelangelo, first from prints, then the originals in the Chicago Art Institute. By 1911 his confidence had grown to the point where he settled in Greenwich Village, New York, determined to make good as a fashion illustrator. Indeed, he obtained a good job in this field with *McCall's Magazine* and continued comparable work both in Chicago and New York for the next six years.

During this period his skill as a charcoal portraitist became recognized. He did portraits of many famous people, including Mary Garden, the opera star (his partroness for a while), Muriel Draper, Anthony Drexel Biddle and Governor Bell of New York, which were exhibited in a modern gallery run by Marie Sterner at M. Knoedler and Co. A year later Mrs. Sterner was to change the course of his life. She invited him to dinner, where he sat next to Juliet Thompson who introduced him to the Bahá'í Faith. He became a Bahá'í in 1918 and made a deep and continuous study of the Teachings. William C. Seitz, whose essay in the catalog for the Museum of Modern Art exhibition is the most profound analysis yet published of the impact of the Bahá'í Faith on Tobey's art, said: 'Without doubt, this (accep-

tance of the Bahá'í Faith) was the crucial spiritual redirection of Tobey's life and of his development as an artist.¹ In 1919 he spent some time in Mexico City, a centre to which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had directed the attention of the Bahá'ís in 1916 in His Divine Plan Tablets. Later he returned to New York. A ferment was taking place in Tobey's approach to his art, particularly a reaction against 'the Renaissance sense of space and order.' He was also storing up experiences that would surface later in many of his important paintings. The day World War I ended he walked the streets of New York with his friend Janet Flanner who in future years was to write the famous Letter from Paris under the name of Genet in *The New Yorker*, and who first wrote in a major article of Mark's dedication to the Bahá'í Faith.² This period was a montage of 'sirens, dynamic lights, brilliant parades and returning heroes. An age of confusion and stepped-up rhythms.'³

In the early 1920s Mark Tobey became known for his caricatures of theatrical people, some of which were published in the *New York Times*, and for his drawings of burlesque and vaudeville personalities. A brief, unhappy marriage in 1922 and growing social demands caused him to want to get away from New York. A friend was returning home to Seattle and offered to share train space and a bag of oranges, so a new home was found. Seattle did not have the intellectual and cultural stimulation of New York, but it did offer spaciousness, great natural beauty, a slower, more relaxed pace, a diffuse light that has been likened to that of Paris, and some devoted, often discerning, friendships.⁴ It also enabled Tobey to find a new activity that was to be a meaningful part of his artistic life for the next three decades: teaching. He was offered a post at the Cornish School and evolved a unique method of teaching, concentrating more on stimulating the imagination of the student, encouraging a love for art and overcoming the barrier of lack of confidence than following structured procedures

and principles. Many of his students from both the Cornish School and his private classes have testified that he was a masterful teacher. Mark claimed that it was a reciprocal process and that his own artistic development evolved in the process.

In 1923 Tobey became close friends with Teng Kuei, a young Chinese artist studying at the University of Washington, and learned from him both the technique and philosophy of Chinese calligraphy. This influence, as Seitz correctly remarks, Tobey applied later as 'a means of opening solid form, giving tangibility to empty space, and of breathing life into static Western realism.'⁵

In 1925 Tobey went to Europe, settling for several months in Paris. Then, in 1926, he accompanied friends to Spain, Greece, Turkey and Lebanon, and later took advantage of the chance to make his first visit to the Bahá'í Shrines and World Centre at Haifa. After visiting the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh he spent an hour with Shoghi Effendi: 'His grace when I first saw him is never to be forgotten, nor did he change when, years later, I had the opportunity to see him for a longer time . . . Of course, in Haifa many things happen and yet all seems to melt in time which is no time. You are there—that's enough. Just to sit down in a chair seems as important as going to town. You are released from yourself.'⁶

In 1930 Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Elmhurst offered Mark a six-month appointment as head of the painting department at Dartington Hall, a progressive school of the arts in Devonshire, about 200 miles from London. Tobey stayed eight years. Here he associated with such intellectual leaders as Aldous Huxley, Rabindranath Tagore, Arthur Waley, Pearl Buck, and dancers Shankar and the Jooss Ballet. He also formed a firm friendship with potter Bernard Leach, which in time led to Leach's acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith. In 1932 further travels in Europe were made possible, and a second pilgrimage to the Bahá'í World Centre. Two years later he accompanied Bernard Leach to the orient, spending time in Shanghai with his friend, Teng Kuei, and then visiting Japan where he entered a Zen monastery for a month to study calligraphy and painting, and to

¹ William C. Seitz, *Mark Tobey*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1962; p. 43.

² Janet Flanner, 'Tobey, mystique errant', *L'Oeil*, 15 June 1955. Reprinted in English in *Selective Eye*, New York, Random House, 1955.

³ Seitz, *ibid.* p. 45.

⁴ Betty Bowen, *The Story of a Collection*, exhibition catalogue, *Tobey's 80: A Retrospective*, Seattle Art Museum, University of Washington Press, 1970.

⁵ Seitz, *ibid.* p. 47.

⁶ Recorded interview of Mark Tobey by Arthur L. Dahl, 21 September 1963.

write poetry and meditate.

The paintings he did in 1935 or 1936, after he had returned to Dartington Hall, represented the birth of his mature style and the discovery of a new language in art. These included *Broadway Norm*, *Broadway* and *Welcome Hero* and in them he made use of the Chinese calligraphic impulse and a vision of the energy of the city—the result was occidental and was, in fact, New York. He was forty-four when he painted them. The next significant move, and the beginning of his life as a mature artist, came in 1938 when he returned to the United States and settled again in Seattle. Here began the massive outpouring of vitally original paintings incorporating the new 'white writing' technique on which his early fame rests.

Fame and financial success came slowly to Mark Tobey, and late in his life. He was fortunate in his dealers. In 1939 he was introduced to Marian Willard (now Marian Willard Johnson) of the Willard Gallery in New York, who bought his significant painting *Broadway*. The Willard Gallery presented its first Tobey exhibition in 1944 and offered them frequently in subsequent years. He was first represented in the United States section of the Venice Biennale in 1948. In 1952 a twenty-minute film, *Mark Tobey*, highly subjective, experimental and sensitive, directed by Robert Gardner and with Tobey reading his poetry on the sound track, replete with Bahá'í concepts of oneness, was shown at the film festivals of Venice and Edinburgh. Tobey's first one-man exhibition was held in Seattle in 1954 at the gallery of Otto Seligman, a close friend and the subject of one of his paintings. His international reputation began in 1955 with his first showing at the Galerie Jeanne Bucher in Paris, and was further extended when he was represented by the Galerie Beyeler in Basel. In recent years the Foster-White Gallery has represented Mark in Seattle. The high regard with which he was held in Europe in the late 1950s was demonstrated by the award to him of the first prize for painting at the Venice Biennale in 1958. He was the first American to win it since Whistler in 1895.

In 1960 Tobey made a change he had been contemplating for a long time, moving with his close friend, Pehr Hallsten, and his secretary, Mark Ritter, from Seattle to Basel where he settled in a charming and spacious 500 year old

house in the old section of this Swiss community, which afforded an atmosphere conducive to his work and refuge from the invasion of privacy which fame brought him.

In 1961 the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, the modern wing of the Paris Louvre, offered a monumental one-man Tobey exhibition containing almost 300 works. Mark was the first living artist who was not French ever to be so honored, and for the occasion the museum made major alterations in the huge rooms to accommodate the small, intimate scope of Tobey's paintings. The opening-day reception was attended by André Malraux, representing the French government, and Ambassador James Gavin represented the United States. That evening the Ambassador gave a brilliant reception in his home in Tobey's honor.

The crowning moment, however, was the exhibition in 1974 at the National Collection of Fine Arts, a branch of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., called 'Tribute to Mark Tobey'. Consisting of seventy works, more than half painted within fifteen years of the exhibit—or after Tobey was sixty-seven years of age—it was an amazing testimony to Mark's creativity and stamina at an advanced age.

During the years of productivity Mark was continually faced with the problem of how to divide his time and energy between his art and direct service to the Bahá'í Faith. While he lived in England at Dartington Hall he served on the British National Spiritual Assembly. In the years at Seattle he served on the Local Spiritual Assembly and once moved briefly to Victoria, British Columbia, in neighbouring Canada, to save the Local Assembly there. While in Switzerland he was chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Basel for sixteen years. At both locations he gave numerous lectures and firesides, and took advantage of special opportunities to talk about the Faith, such as on an ocean voyage (he feared airplanes and took alternative means of transportation wherever possible). During his years in Seattle he frequently attended the Geyserville Bahá'í School, which he loved, and talked both formally and informally, but always eloquently, making art come alive and giving many their first glimpse of the meaning and purpose of abstract art. He published three articles in *World Order*: 'The One Spirit'

(August 1935); 'Art and Community' (April 1939); and 'The Dot and the Circle' (March 1949). He contributed generously to the Funds of the Faith.

Possibly his largest service was the indirect one of being so much in the public eye in his later years and being identified as a Bahá'í. After 1955 almost every article, interview or book about him (some of which are in reference works that will be used for decades) mentioned the Faith and usually outlined those Bahá'í principles which had specific application to his art.

Numerous honors flowed to Mark after he reached his mid-sixties. In 1956 he was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and won the United States National Prize in the Guggenheim International Award. In 1957 he was awarded the American Institute of Architects' Fine Arts Medal. In 1958, in addition to the top prize at the Venice Biennale, he won the first 'Art in America' award. In 1960 he was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, but did not accept the election. In 1961, at the time of the Louvre exhibition, he won first prize at the Carnegie Institute's 'Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture.'

Tobey had a strong, memorable personality and made a legion of devoted friends both within the Bahá'í Faith and in the world at large. He was a brilliant conversationalist and with his acute powers of observation he could find meaning and beauty in the most commonplace objects. An unforgettable memory of the writer is that of standing with Tobey in one of the great redwood forests of Northern California, sensing his response to the cathedral majesty of the great trees with the sun filtering through their massive trunks. He also had an encyclopaedic knowledge of Western art, and was a superb companion in a museum. He loved people from all walks of life and had the capacity of forming deep and long-lasting friendships. His creativity extended to the other arts. He wrote a considerable amount of sensitive and spiritually intuitive poetry, enjoyed playing the piano, and composed several works for it and other instruments.

Mark Tobey's long and productive life was an unending search to find and understand his inner self, and to reconcile the spiritual and the

material. He could appreciate and respond to the physical beauties of the world to an extraordinary degree, yet he was always aware that there was much more than this, and his painting stretched to discover new means and dimensions of expression and vision, offering special insight into man's eternal quest to grasp the nature of reality. Tobey once said: 'Mankind has preoccupied itself too much with the outer, the objective, at the expense of the inner world wherein the true roundness lies.'

Mark Tobey died in his sleep at 1.15 p.m. on 24 April 1976 at his home in Basel. The funeral was held at St. Alban's Church, not far away, with about 150 in attendance. It included two musical works composed by Mark; biographical remarks by Dr. Ott, professor of theology at the University of Basel; an address by Amin S. Khamsi for the Swiss Bahá'í community; comments about Tobey's place in art by Ernest Beyeler; and some personal observations by Virginia Barnett, a close friend from Seattle and wife of Mark's attorney. She said in part: 'He could be both teacher and student. He could both give and receive friendship. He was generous in money and time and encouragement to young and old, while also sharply discriminating in terms of character and values . . . He was touchingly human, vulnerable, tender, proud, irascible, forgiving—and, in my view, a ranking creative genius of this century.'

On 26 April 1976 the Universal House of Justice cabled:

DEEPLY GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING DISTINGUISHED DEDICATED SERVANT BAHAUULLAH MARK TOBEY STOP EVER REMEMBERED HIS CONSTANT SUPPORT BAHAI COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES DEVOTED SERVICES ENGLAND JAPAN SWITZERLAND UNITED STATES UNSTINTING TESTIMONY INSPIRATION FAITH AS HIS FAME INCREASED STOP ARDENT PRAYERS OFFERED SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

ARTHUR L. DAHL

CHOO YEOK BOON
1945-1976

On 26 April 1976 a helicopter of the Royal Malaysian Air Force crashed at the northern border of the Malay Peninsula in the course



Choo Yeok Boon

of an official mission. All eleven passengers in the craft lost their lives including Air Captain Choo Yeok Boon. At the time of his death he was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia, one of the youngest members of the Malaysian Bahá'í community ever to have served on that body. He was universally loved by the friends in Malaysia to whom he was affectionately known as 'Boon' and from the time of his acceptance of the Faith in the early 1960s he served it with the utmost devotion in various capacities.

Yeok Boon was a youth from Alor Star in the State of Kedah. Although he knew about the Bahá'í Faith for some time and encouraged his friends to investigate it, he postponed officially affiliating with the Bahá'í community through loyalty to his mother who had vowed that he would shave his head and serve as a monk for one month at the Buddhist temple. When one of the Bahá'ís assured him that there was no conflict arising from his obligation to his mother and his service to the Bahá'í community he immediately declared his acceptance of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and with unshakeable conviction and ceaseless energy arose in its service. His mother did not press him to discontinue the obligation.

By nature Yeok Boon was irrepressible and joyous, generous and buoyant, yet he possessed a striking simplicity, humility and dignity. He was, in every aspect of his life, an admirable example of what a Bahá'í should be. Although his position with the Air Force would have permitted him to live on a grand scale, he and his wife, Grace, created a home in which all felt welcome. 'I want my home to be a place of refuge, not of retreat,' were the words of this friend who was lost to us in the prime of his life. At the peak of his career he did not forget his humble origin. He would visit Naka, the little village in Kedah where his less fortunate relatives lived, and would bring them to his home in Butterworth for joyful reunions. His material success did not cause him to forget his dearly-loved mother who had toiled and suffered to raise him, nor his only sister who early in life had sacrificed her chances of an education to help her mother produce and sell cakes so that her young brother could go to school.

Although Boon experienced his share of misfortune he did not allow the trials and vicissitudes of life to dampen his radiant spirit. The happiness he exuded increased the joy of any gathering. One always felt better for being in his presence. He had a boundless enthusiasm for the Faith and always had stirring and uplifting stories to share. His service as a pilot took him to various parts of the country and wherever he travelled, whether to city, village or jungle outpost, he always took the time to visit the friends, bringing them news and encouragement.

Boon was the first Sino-Thai of Malaysia to have accepted the Faith of the Ancient Beauty and was one of those beloved early youth of Alor Star whose services made it a thriving centre of teaching activity. The roles he played in establishing at the Technical College the first Bahá'í campus society in Malaysia, as a valued member of the National Spiritual Assembly and as the sole link between that body and the Asli believers in the remote jungles give those who came to love him better than their own kinsmen the proof and evidence of the greatness of his spirit, the degree of his devotion to Bahá'u'lláh and the magnitude of his love for all who crossed his path. He died in the course of duty to his country having served the government with the loyalty and faithfulness which Bahá'u'lláh enjoins upon His followers.

We grieve with his mother and his wife and sorrow for ourselves at Boon's untimely death, our solace being drawn from the assurance of Bahá'u'lláh that the heart which was faithful until the moment of death ascends to God and knows no sadness.

SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
BAHÁ'ÍS OF MALAYSIA

SAICHIRO FUJITA
1886-1976

On 7 May 1976 Saichiro Fujita passed to the Abhá Kingdom in his ninety-first year, in Haifa, after a brief illness and heart attack. The news of his passing spread quickly around the Bahá'í world for Fujita, as he was affectionately called, was known and deeply loved by the friends in every land who had felt the warmth of his love and the radiance of his spirit when they were on pilgrimage in the Holy Land. To each it brought the sense of loss of a precious and loving friend. As one expressed it: 'A small person has left our midst. He has left behind a great legacy.'

Fujita was born in Yanai, Japan on 15 April 1886 and emigrated to the United States at the age of seventeen in search of the best educational advantages. From the time of his arrival in California the events of his life seemed to unfold as though predetermined by the destiny that was in store for him. That he chose Oakland as the place in California in which to settle seems more than merely fortuitous for in that city there existed one of the few groups of Bahá'ís in that part of the country at that time. Mrs. Kathryn Frankland¹ was teaching the Faith to a group of young Japanese students one of whom, Kanichi Yamamoto,² had accepted the Faith in Hawaii in 1902, thus becoming the first Japanese Bahá'í in the world; in 1905 Fujita became the second.

The declaration of these two young men brought unusual joy to the beloved Master Who, in a Tablet addressed to Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham,³ dated 8 October 1907 wrote: 'Announce greetings on my behalf to the two young Japanese and say: "His Imperial

Majesty, Mikado, became the cause of the material progress of Japan. I hope that you may become the cause of her spiritual development. This is the principle of progress."⁴

'Abdu'l-Bahá, before His visit to the United States in 1912, expressed His hope in Tablets addressed to Fujita that after perfecting himself in his profession (practical electricity) Fujita might return to Japan and promulgate the Bahá'í Faith in his native land. The following passages from Tablets beautifully express the love and aspirations which the Master cherished for him:⁴ 'O thou fresh plant in the garden of the Love of God! . . . Consider what bounty God has manifested for thee, whence thou art and from whence are we. Yet, nevertheless, such a candle of love is burning in the hearts that its light is radiating from the East to the West and from the West extending to the East. Rest assured thy name is registered in the Book of God . . . If thou art confirmed as thou oughtest to be, thou wilt certainly establish an eternal kingdom. This kingdom is greater than that of Mikado, for the sovereignty of the Emperor of Japan is for numbered days, but this sovereignty is lasting and will stand unto the Eternity of Eternities . . .' And again: 'Look thou not upon thine own capability, the Invisible Divine Confirmations are great, and the Protection and Providence of the Beauty of Abhá is the helper and the assistant. When a drop draws help from the ocean, it is an ocean itself . . . Therefore do not consider thy capacity and merit, but rely upon the infinite Bounty and trust to His Highness the Almighty . . .'

Fujita was working in Cleveland, Ohio when 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to America. He unfortunately missed seeing the Master Who made a short stop-over in Cleveland on His return to New York from His first visit to Chicago. Shortly thereafter 'Abdu'l-Bahá again visited Chicago and Fujita arranged to be at the railway station in that city to greet his beloved Master upon His arrival there. Lost in the large crowd of Bahá'ís who had gathered at the station, and unable to see over their heads, Fujita climbed up a conveniently-placed lamp post in order to get a glimpse of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As the Master entered the car that was to transport

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, p. 337.

² See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIII, p. 931.

³ See 'In Memoriam', *Star of the West*, vol. 14, no. 12, p. 376.

⁴ The full text of the Tablets, dated 10 November 1906 and 29 May 1907 respectively, appears in *Japan Will Turn Ablaze*, Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Japan (1974).

Him to the home of Corinne True¹ where a reception in His honour was to be held, He saw Fujita in his high perch and called him to come down. He then embraced Fujita and asked him to follow Him to Mrs. True's. Fujita was invited to join the dinner party and after the first course, when he noticed that a number of people were longing to talk with the Master, he offered his place at the table to Mrs. Elizabeth Greenleaf.

The next morning Fujita went with the Master to Kenosha, Wisconsin. It was during this visit that 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited him to accompany Him and His party on their visit to California, which Fujita accepted without hesitation. Throughout these travels it was Fujita's great privilege to serve the Master in many ways which contributed to His physical comfort, health and amusement during those days and nights of arduous and demanding activities. Fujita did not speak often in detail about those experiences, but on one evening at the dinner table during his last visit to Wilmette in 1971, he seemed inspired to recall those wonderful days of serving his beloved Master. Both his manner and tone of voice expressed the depth of their meaning to him and his longing to have been able to serve 'Abdu'l-Bahá for many, many years. His services to his blessed Master were unique indeed and indicated his own spiritual worthiness of such great blessings.

During 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit in America Fujita expressed his great desire to return to Haifa with Him and to devote the remainder of his life to serving Him. The Master accepted this touching offer and promised to send for him when circumstances would permit. Mrs Corinne True invited Fujita to stay in her home while he prepared himself for the kinds of service the Master would require of him, and for the next seven years Fujita lived with the Trues as a welcomed and much loved member of the family. During this time he was carefully guided, through Tablets the Master addressed to him, in the studies and the work he should pursue.

The outbreak of the First World War delayed Fujita's departure but finally, in 1919, came the long-anticipated invitation to proceed to the Holy Land. Government regulations were still restrictive and travel was

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIII, p. 846.



Saichiro Fujita

exceedingly difficult, particularly in the Middle East. Fujita proceeded to Italy where he planned to obtain the special permit that was required to pass through Egypt but was unable to obtain it. This resulted in a long delay at this point in his journey with no reply being received from Cairo to the cables sent almost daily on his behalf. Mrs. True and her daughter, Edna, were about to sail from Trieste to the Holy Land when they heard of Fujita's plight and they immediately changed plans and joined Fujita in Naples. Their reunion with Fujita was unforgettable; his distress was pathetic and his joy in seeing them deeply moving. Unable to solve the problem from Naples, the Trues embarked for Egypt and upon arrival in Cairo immediately applied to the authorities and were assured that the permit would be dispatched at once to Fujita in Naples. Fujita arrived in Haifa with Mr. and Mrs. William H. Randall² and Mr. George Latimer³ whom he had met in Naples. To the delight of the Trues they were still in Haifa and could participate in welcoming Fujita.

With the exception of a three-month visit to

² See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. III, p. 213; vol. XV, p. 463

³ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XI, p. 511.

Japan to see his family in 1936, Fujita remained continuously in Haifa until 1938, serving the beloved Master and later the beloved Guardian. His manifold services included his important assistance in installing and operating much needed electrical appliances, maintaining and driving the Master's automobile, beautifying the gardens and caring for the visiting pilgrims. In addition, he translated from Japanese many of the letters which were by then being sent from Japan and translated the replies to accompany the original messages from the Holy Land. His talents were many and varied. He designed and made gardens with the artistry unique to the Japanese. He was a skilled chef, serving with grace the Master, Shoghi Effendi, visiting dignitaries and countless pilgrims.

In 1938 the Guardian, in his concern about Fujita's safety because of the growing antagonism toward his countrymen, arranged for Fujita to return temporarily to Japan. There he remained for seventeen long years, filled with loneliness and yearning to return to what he felt to be his real home in Haifa. At last, in 1955, Shoghi Effendi was able to arrange for his return to the Holy Land where he continued many of his usual services. From this time, until his death, Fujita remained in Haifa, serving the Guardian and, after the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the Hands of the Cause of God and the Universal House of Justice. Always he was eager to do everything he could for the visiting pilgrims who will ever remember his thoughtfulness and kindness. Among the treasures which they took away with them from the Holy Land were the heart-warming memories of meeting Fujita and of feeling the tender love which filled his great heart. His love of Bahá'u'lláh, the Master, the Guardian and all the friends whom he met was inexpressible in words but was eloquently declared in his gracious and kindly manner and his evident concern and regard for everyone's welfare and happiness.

In the following passages from letters of the beloved Guardian we find expressed his love and esteem for Fujita and his appreciation of his services:

... Fujita is with us; happy, active and extremely helpful. His presence is such a help

and support to me in my work ...'

(Letter to an individual believer, 27 January 1924)

'I wish to assure you personally of my genuine satisfaction in hearing about Mr. French's splendid idea to help towards the welfare and comfort of our dear Fujita. He fully deserves it and I have for him nothing but unqualified admiration. He is truly an exemplary assistant and servant to the Cause ...'

(Letter to an individual believer, 10 April 1926)

No one could resist Fujita's radiant spirit, his gentle and delightful sense of humour. His particular heritage to posterity is his beauty of character and his complete dedication to the Faith he loved so well.

In a Tablet to him dated 15 May 1913, written from Paris on His return journey back to the Holy Land, 'Abdu'l-Bahá counselled Fujita about preparing himself for service in the Holy Land, emphasizing his attaining efficiency in his profession, and then He added: 'When thou shalt learn these things, then I will send for thee. Thou wilt be confirmed to render a great service and this will become the cause of thy everlasting glory.' How true was his beloved Master's vision of the spiritual journey through life of this man of small stature but of such greatness of heart and spirit.

The following cablegram dated 9 May 1976 from the Universal House of Justice announced the passing of this beloved friend from the earthly plane of existence:

DEARLY LOVED TIRELESS STEADFAST SAICHIRO FUJITA PASSED TO ABHA KINGDOM AFTER LONG YEARS SERVICE SACRED THRESHOLD STOP HIS RANK IN VANGUARD FIRST JAPANESE BELIEVERS HIS LABOURS WORLD CENTRE HIS DEDICATION HUMILITY SINCERITY LOVE WILL FOR EVER BE REMEMBERED AND PROVIDE SHINING EXAMPLE TO RISING GENERATIONS JAPANESE BAHÁIS WHO WILL VIEW WITH PRIDE DISTINCTION CONFERRED UPON HIM STOP PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL UNDER LOVING GRACE HIS MASTER AND GUARDIAN BOTH OF WHOM HE SERVED SO WELL ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS JAPAN.

EDNA TRUE

AMELIA BOWMAN
1897-1976

The hearts of the believers throughout Scandinavia were saddened at the news of the passing of Amelia Bowman on 8 May 1976. She was born in Montana, U.S.A. in 1897 and became a Bahá'í in 1933. Twenty-nine years of her life of Bahá'í service were devoted to pioneering in Europe, and twenty-three of those were spent in Norway. She was an ardent teacher and in the first years of her Bahá'í life attracted a number of people to the Faith including most of her family. In a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary on 30 July 1935 we read: 'I wish to express, in particular, his genuine appreciation of your labours with the Teaching Committee of the Eliot (Maine) Assembly, and also to express the hope that through your efforts and those of your distinguished and able collaborator, Mrs. Elizabeth Greenleaf, you may be able to bring the Message to all the main towns in the vicinity of Eliot . . .'. Penned in the Guardian's own hand were the words: 'I am delighted to hear of your work and to note the devotion and zeal with which you are labouring for so great a Cause. I wish to assure you in person of my prayers for your success and spiritual advancement. May the Beloved guide, cheer and sustain you in your high and constant endeavours.' In this period she worked with Florence Morton and Martha Root to extend the Faith in New Hampshire. For five years she acted as hostess at the Ole Bull Cottage at Green Acre Bahá'í School. She entertained women's clubs and other organizations at teas or evening meetings. For a number of years, and extending to 1947, she performed a major service as a member of the United States Bahá'í National Teaching Committee which directed pioneering and teaching activities of the first Seven Year Plan. She then arose as a pioneer herself.

In October 1947 she arrived in Sweden with Nancy Gates; they were the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth pioneers of the second Seven Year Plan to settle in Europe. When Dorothy Baker visited Stockholm in the spring of 1948 she reported finding 'large and flourishing classes' and mentioned that among the newly-found believers was Mr. Eskil Ljungberg. After the formation of the Stockholm Spiritual Assem-



Amelia Bowman

bly in 1948, Amelia proceeded to Göteborg. Soon after the arrival there of two other pioneers she was asked by the European Teaching Committee, in the autumn of 1949, to settle in Oslo, Norway. Amelia was active in various organizations including the Esperantists, the International Friendship League, the United Nations and various clubs, all the while giving full attention to the work of the Bahá'í community on the local level and in the field of extension teaching. In 1952 she moved to Bergen and was instrumental in the establishment, in 1955, of the Local Assembly. In addition to her various teaching activities throughout Scandinavia she served as a news correspondent for the United States *Bahá'í News*.

Her pilgrimage to the Holy Land in March 1953, during which she heard from the lips of Shoghi Effendi an outline of the goals of the Ten Year Crusade and was encouraged by him to speak to the friends of the significance of this world-encircling teaching plan, prepared her even more fully for her role in the teaching field in Europe. She participated in the Convention in Stockholm in 1957 which witnessed the birth of the regional National Assembly of Scandinavia and Finland. Later that year she was requested to serve in France for two years.

Here she was a valued member of the National Teaching Committee of the newly-established French National Assembly. She returned to Norway in 1959 and assisted in establishing the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Stavanger and, later, that of Hetland, and from the time of its formation in 1962, until 1967, she was elected a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway.

With the exception of the year or so she spent in Lofoten to maintain the strength of the Local Assembly, Amelia lived the remainder of her life in Stavanger where the milder climate was beneficial to her health. She had a frail constitution, a heart condition and suffered from a persistent bronchial ailment. All who crossed her path were given the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Amelia's manner of presentation was scholarly, dignified and warmhearted. She was compassionate by nature and serene and regal in her bearing. She had inexhaustible patience and was hospitable toward all without discrimination. Steadfastness and perseverance were the hallmarks of her character.

In 1975 Amelia's strength began to fail, although the fire in her soul still shone in her eyes which radiated love, devotion and the spirit of prayer. She went to her last rest on 8 May 1976, honoured and mourned throughout Scandinavia. The funeral service was attended by many friends, Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í. A beautiful memento comprising a printed booklet with excerpts from the teachings and a picture of the Shrine of the Báb was given to all who were present. Her grave in Stavanger is surrounded by green, peaceful woodland.

An early believer, Winnie Ringstad of Oslo, wrote in a eulogy: 'We are all greatly indebted to Amelia, but still have much to learn from her. Let us bear this in mind when commemorating the thirty-fifth member of the Battalion of Bahá'u'lláh in Europe.'

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States cabled the friends in Norway:

HEARTS SADDENED BY PASSING STEADFAST
AMELIA BOWMAN WHO AROSE WITH DEDICA-
TION TO ANSWER CALL FOR PIONEERS FROM
HER BELOVED GUARDIAN STOP PRAYING AT
HOLIEST HOUSE WORSHIP THAT HER SOUL WILL
RECEIVE RICH HEAVENLY REWARD FOR DEVOTED
SERVICES FAITH.

Great comfort was found in the cablegram of the Universal House of Justice:

GRIEVED PASSING SERENE DEVOTED MAIDSER-
VANT BHAULLAH AMELIA BOWMAN HER SER-
VICES PIONEERING FIELD SCANDINAVIA SINCE
OPENING YEARS SECOND SEVEN YEAR PLAN
UNFORGETTABLE PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROG-
RESS HER RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM
ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHER-
INGS THROUGHOUT NORWAY.

GERD STRAND

DORIS RICHARDSON

1901-1976

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Doris Richardson was born into a family that was both highly individualistic and deeply committed to Canada. Her mother was the first white child born on Manitoulin Island in Georgian Bay; her daughter, Helen Charters, is a Bahá'í who lives on the Island of Grand Manan, New Brunswick, which was opened to the Bahá'í Faith in 1953 through the pioneering efforts of Doris herself, a service for which she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. Doris had an openness and freshness of mind which qualified her to mingle in ease with people of many schools of thought, and a purity of heart which enabled her to recognize immediately the truth of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. She became a Bahá'í in 1939 through the teaching efforts of Howard and Riqvânjyyih (Mabel) Ives and from that time, until her death on 13 May 1976, she dedicated her life to the Blessed Beauty. Her home, in the words of Mrs. Charters, was 'the refuge of seekers of all races, religions and schools of thought—blacks, Indians, Asians, Rosicrucians and clairvoyants. Bahá'í visitors and travelling teachers mixed harmoniously with the boarders and friends and neighbours came and went, warmly and graciously received, and always superbly fed.' She cared for all those who came in contact with the Faith with a sweet and personal love, kept in touch with them and fostered their interest. She spoke with an eloquence and simplicity that was unforgettable. She settled in Scarborough, Ontario and became a member of the first Spiritual Assembly there. Her Saturday firesides became the focal point of the teaching efforts in the region. As a member of the first teaching committee of the Province of



Doris Richardson

Ontario she travelled frequently in the 1940s to the few communities that existed at that time. In 1948 she was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.

She read with the sensitivity of both experience and understanding the appeals of Shoghi Effendi in which he admonished the believers to disperse from the major cities and immediately responded, in 1951, by pioneering to the Maritime region of Canada. She assisted in the formation of the Spiritual Assembly of Moncton, New Brunswick and, in 1953, when the Guardian launched the Ten Year Crusade, she arose to settle in Grand Manan where she remained to see the first Assembly formed.

Throughout her life she was a tireless and active person, not only as a teacher of the Cause which she loved greatly but in other undertakings as well. At one time she was a women's commentator for a radio station and wrote all her own scripts; at another, she travelled all round the Maritimes selling biscuits. On Grand Manan Island, from 1953 until 1974, she managed a summer hotel which was popular for its atmosphere of hospitality and warm courtesy. Later, to augment her income, she became matron of a girls' school.

In the last months of her life Doris faced

death from cancer but she remained, as always, radiant and content. Her physical beauty attested an inner harmony and beauty of spirit that was unforgettable. 'The effect of her spirit remains strong in Grand Manan,' writes Mrs. Charters. 'Her influence upon the islanders, the members of her family and her many friends here will long continue in the memories, in the hearts.'

The words of the Universal House of Justice summarize both the quality of her spirit and the significance of her services to the Canadian Bahá'í community:

ASSURE PRAYERS SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL ABHA
KINGDOM KNIGHT BAHULLAH DORIS RICHARD-
SON HER DEVOTED SERVICES CAUSE ENRICH
ANNALS FAITH CANADA.

AḤMAD ṢAMÍMÍ
1893-1976

Aḥmad Ṣamímí was born in Hamadán, Írán in 1893. His father, Muḥammad-Ḥasan, was an early follower of Bahá'u'lláh who suffered trials and persecution as a result of his acceptance of the Blessed Beauty. Plundered of his possessions again and again, he was finally forced to quit his home town and, with his wife, Khávar Khánum, their three daughters and son, Aḥmad Ṣamímí, aged four, to settle in Tíhrán. Muḥammad-Ḥasan died a year later and his widow, who was a Bahá'í of great courage and determination, resolved to give her children a Bahá'í upbringing and education, no matter what the cost and sacrifice. The attributes of persistence and perseverance, of diligence and integrity, which she instilled into her children characterized Aḥmad Ṣamímí's activities throughout his life and were the cause of his progress in his undertakings.

Aḥmad Ṣamímí was educated at the Bahá'í Tarbiyat School and at the age of sixteen he entered the postal service, operated by the Belgians at that time under a concession, and his honesty and attention to his duties won their commendation. Eventually he was promoted to the post of deputy-chief of the Department of Supplies. He married Khujastih, the granddaughter of Nizámu'l-Mulk, and, in 1919, secured employment in the British



Ahmad Şamímí

Embassy where he rose to be Secretary, a post he held until his retirement in 1947. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire in recognition of his faithful service. He also received an Insignia from the late king of Írán, Riḏá Sháh-i-Pahlaví.

His affability, courtesy and willingness to help won Aḥmad Şamímí the respect and affection of all with whom he came into contact. His patience and single-mindedness enabled him to deal with the voluminous work referred to him by innumerable callers and, no matter how great the stress of his official duties, he never failed to respond with advice and guidance whenever the machinery to carry some potential Bahá'í pioneer to his post was to be set in motion. He was fluent in French, English and Arabic and conversant with German, Russian and Turkish. Active in various Bahá'í spheres, he will be most remembered for his long membership and valuable service on the Committee for Unity of the East and West. He received many Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters from the Guardian. Introductions and connections secured through his occupation were turned to good account in expounding the teachings of the Faith to people of note. His home was a rendezvous for prominent Persians

and foreigners. In 1943, at the request of Shoghi Effendi, he arranged a meeting in his home of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly with Sir Ronald Storrs, Oriental Secretary of the British Agency, who had great respect for 'Abdu'l-Bahá whom he had met in Palestine in 1909.

Aḥmad Şamímí went three times on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, twice during the Guardian's lifetime. In 1938, on his second visit, he received Shoghi Effendi's permission to attend the American Convention and visit various Bahá'í centres in the United States. In 1945 the Guardian advised him to teach in India which he did for a period of three months, visiting the Bahá'ís from coast to coast; and later pioneered there for five years beginning in 1947. He was elected to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly of that country and was its chairman for a period. He pioneered to Indonesia for five years beginning in 1956 and was secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of South-East Asia for a time. On the advice of the Hands of the Cause resident in the Holy Land, Aḥmad Şamímí in 1961 accompanied the Hand of the Cause Ṭarázu'lláh Samandarí during his travels in West and East Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Singapore. He then pioneered to Salzburg, Austria and returned to Tíhrán in 1964. He ascended to the Abhá kingdom in July 1976 at the age of eighty-three.

To the cable from the Persian National Spiritual Assembly announcing his death, the Universal House of Justice replied:

SADDENED PASSING FAITHFUL DEVOTED SERVANT CAUSE AHMAD SAMIMI STOP SUPPLICATE DIVINE THRESHOLD HIS LONG YEARS SERVICE BE RICHLY REWARDED ABHA KINGDOM STOP ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS DEEP SYMPATHY.

(Adapted from a report prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia and translated by Rustom Sabit.)

JOSEPH ENONGENE
1931-1976

Jospeh Enongene was born in Nninong, Cameroon in 1931 and became ardently attracted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1953 through



Joseph Enongene

Mr. Enoch Olinga, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for that country. Joseph was a lover of music. He enjoyed singing and took part in the concerts held in Victoria Botanical Gardens. When he embraced the Faith he organized and trained a choir and began composing songs with Bahá'í themes, many of which are sung by the Bahá'ís of Cameroon to this day. He was a staunch defender of the Covenant and utterly devoted to the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice. After the passing of Shoghi Effendi he accompanied the Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga on his tour to help the Bahá'ís in their understanding of the Covenant. Joseph composed a special song for this tour and taught it to the friends in the communities they visited.

When the call came for pioneers for Equatorial Guinea, Joseph was one of the first to volunteer. In Fernando Po where he settled he suffered persecution and was imprisoned for weeks. Although he was finally forced to leave, his spirit remained undaunted and the natural gaiety of his disposition unclouded. He settled in Tiko in 1971 and helped to build a strong, active community with successful and lively children's classes. His wife, Olga, and his

mother, both accepted the Faith and his children became enthusiastic students of classes for young people. Enongene, his eldest son, in turn became a teacher of children's classes at Tiko and Tombel.

In September 1975 he underwent surgery in Tiko hospital but it was not successful, the disease being far graver than was thought at first. Visitors found him gay and confident. He was then transferred to Yaounde hospital where he taught the Faith to the patients in various wards. When a visitor told him he was 'pioneering' to the hospital and was now doing 'extension teaching', Joseph was delighted. Although he knew he was seriously ill he remained buoyant in spirit.

His last four months were spent in his home village where, from his sick-bed, he continued to teach and encourage the friends; largely through his efforts a new Spiritual Assembly was formed in Ebonemin at Riḍván 1976.

Joseph passed away on 17 July 1976. A memorial meeting was held in Tiko in the presence of the Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga and his wife, Elizabeth. Although the meeting began on a solemn note it gradually became joyous as the friends listened to Mr. Olinga recount the story of Joseph's life and his great dedication to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Later, all joined in singing some of the songs Joseph had composed. That his death should have brought the friends together in love and harmony, with songs and inspiration and even laughter, seemed to be the most fitting tribute to pay this devoted soul.

URSULA SAMANDARÍ

LETICIA FRANCHINO
1916-1976

Leticia Franchino was born on 23 November 1916 in Quillota, Chile; she was the youngest in a family of six children. Leticia studied to be a biology and chemistry teacher. On a study tour with her fellow students to the extreme south of Chile she met the North American Bahá'í pioneer, Artemus Lamb. She did not become a Bahá'í immediately but when she accepted the Faith in 1947 she did so wholeheartedly, expressing her love for Bahá'u'lláh through courageous and indefatigable



Leticia Franchino

service to the Chilean Bahá'í community.

It is not common in Chile to leave the capital for the provinces. Leticia, however, left her job as a biology teacher in Santiago to go to the north of the country, first to the town of Antofagasta and then to La Serena, always actively teaching the Faith. In 1961, when the South American countries elected their first individual National Spiritual Assemblies, Leticia was elected to serve on the first National Assembly of Chile. She served on it, as well, in subsequent periods.

Leticia went north again in 1965, this time to Iquique, where she established the foundations for the future Local Spiritual Assembly. Returning to Santiago two years later was difficult for her as she did not feel well living in this large city. She overcame this frustration by settling in Villa Alemana, a little town in Valparaíso, where she served on the Local Spiritual Assembly and constantly stimulated the community to action.

When the Universal House of Justice launched the Five Year Plan in 1974, Leticia immediately arose to assist achieving the goals assigned to Chile. She was appointed to the Regional Teaching Committee and used her free time to travel extensively. With charac-

teristic perseverance she succeeded in opening several provinces to the Faith, always returning to encourage the new Bahá'ís while simultaneously seeking new places to plant the seeds of the Faith. She was on a teaching trip in Los Andes when she died. At a meeting there two people had accepted the Faith and Leticia was very happy and content. She was leaving the town the next morning and feeling tired she rested on a bench in the plaza while a friend bought her bus ticket; when the friend returned minutes later Leticia was dead of heart failure. It was difficult to accept—she had been so cheerful and full of life, making plans for further teaching.

Leticia exemplified strongly the qualities of detachment and generosity. She settled in outlying communities to serve the Faith and devoted her vacations and weekends to spreading the Bahá'í teachings in remote places. Many times, when the needs of the Bahá'í fund were outlined at Bahá'í gatherings, she was seen asking the treasurer quietly how much was needed, and on one occasion, to help meet a financial emergency described at the National Convention, she contributed the money she had saved toward her pilgrimage. She was frank, open-handed and endowed with a delightful sense of humour. Those who had the privilege of knowing Leticia remember her with love and admiration.

When it was informed of her passing on 21 July 1976, the Universal House of Justice sent the following cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile:

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING LETICIA FRANCHINO
DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT BAHULLAH VALIANT
TEACHER CAUSE MEMBER FIRST NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY CHILE STOP OFFERING ARDENT
PRAYERS DIVINE THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER
RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

SERGIO AND KATE APARICIO

EMMA WAYENECE
1927–1976

Therefore it is the hope of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that . . . ye may carry the fame of the Cause of God to . . . the three great island groups of the Pacific Ocean—Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia, and the islands attached to these groups . . . with

hearts overflowing with the love of God, with tongues commemorating the mention of God, with eyes turned to the Kingdom of God . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá
*Tablets of the Divine Plan*¹

Emma Waynece had the distinction of being the first Melanesian woman of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands to accept the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. From the day of her conversion, Emma served the Cause with an exemplary courage and humility. Her dedicated efforts, together with those of her husband Georges, formed a solid foundation for the Caledonian community in its early, formative years.

The circumstances in which Georges and Emma encountered the Faith are quite extraordinary. The Wayneces were from the island of Maré in the Loyalties (Emma’s village was Wakuarory); and Maré was one of the first islands in the territory to be evangelized around the early 1840s, near the beginning of the Bahá’í era. The Waynece clan had been one of the first to accept the Christian Faith and subsequently assisted to establish it throughout the rest of the territory. Following in the footsteps of their ancestors, Georges and Emma were the prime movers in the construction of their tribe’s first church, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They were never to set foot in it. While they were in the capital, Nouméa, working to pay for furnishings for the newly-built church, they came into contact with Margaret Rowling, the dedicated spiritual mother of the New Caledonian community. Miss Rowling had just begun a study of French and the Wayneces did not know English; nevertheless they investigated independently the few Writings that were available in French at that period. They were quickly convinced of the truth of Bahá’u’lláh’s mission and declared their belief on 8 July 1961. Thus their clan was again honoured, this time as being the first to accept God’s Universal Manifestation, through the Wayneces.

From the moment of her acceptance of the Faith, Emma actively served. She was elected to the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Nouméa, in 1962, and persuasively presented the Cause to her family, relatives, fellow Mareans, and all those with whom she came

¹ Tablet dated 11 April 1916.



Emma Waynece

into contact. The fruits of her labours are impressive. All her brothers and sisters became Bahá’ís, one brother serving for many years on the National Spiritual Assembly of the South West Pacific Ocean. Other close relatives whom she had taught served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Maré, the first all-Melanesian Local Assembly. Emma raised her nine children in the spirit of the Faith with the Bahá’í principles and laws and all are active in its service. It was a special joy for her to have her oldest son elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the South West Pacific Ocean just before her passing. Emma made many teaching trips to goal areas all over the main island, as well as frequent tours of the Loyalty Islands, especially Maré. She made two trips to Bahá’í functions in the New Hebrides and was a member of the New Caledonian delegation which attended the Oceanic Conference in Suva, Fiji in 1971. She and Georges pioneered to Yahoué, a suburb of Nouméa, and helped form the first Local Spiritual Assembly there.

Emma was truly one of those candles which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá so vividly described as weeping its life away, ‘drop by drop in order to give forth its flame of light.’² In spite of frail health

² *An Early Pilgrimage*, May Maxwell, p. 42.

she laboured tirelessly for her family and the Faith. Although visibly worn by the care and struggle to educate her large family, which often included nieces, nephews and other relatives in addition to her own children, she always mustered energy to teach the Faith with enthusiasm, and warmly received a never-ending stream of Bahá'í guests and other visitors. For the reception of guests from overseas she always offered as a gesture of friendship and love a delicious earth-baked local dish, *bouagna*, which demands great effort in preparation. None could fail to be touched by the way she gave of herself. Her heartfelt wish was to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and she was to have done so with Georges in 1977, but on 1 August 1976, in her forty-ninth year, she passed away as a result of a lung disease which had long troubled her and caused great suffering. The Universal House of Justice cabled this tribute.:

SADDENED NEWS PASSING EMMA WAYENECE
FIRST MELANESIAN WOMAN BELIEVER NEW
CALEDONIA LOYALTIES ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS
LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER
SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

JOHN AND SIMONE KENDALL

GULBÁNÚ SAFRANG
1904–1976

*Dispossessed in all save God
The pioneers endure
To gain the wealth another world
Shall lavish on the pure.*

James West

Mrs. Gulbánú Safrang ascended to the Abhá Paradise on 20 September 1976. Her mortal remains were laid to rest alongside those of her husband, Khudádád, in the community of Wai, Maharashtra, India to which they had pioneered.

Gulbánú was born in Yazd, Írán in 1904. She moved to Bombay with her Zoroastrian family and at a young age married Khudádád Safrang, also a Zoroastrian. Through contact with the strong Bahá'í community which existed from the early years in Bombay Khudádád declared



Gulbánú Safrang

his acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith. Gulbánú, too, soon recognized Bahá'u'lláh as the promised Sháh Bahrám of the ancient Zoroastrian religion.

In 1946, under one of the teaching plans of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Mr. and Mrs. Safrang settled in Wai, a small rural community in the interior approximately twelve kilometres from Panchgani, and here they remained as staunch pioneers until the end of their lives. They soon won acceptance by the Hindu, Christian and Muslim residents of Wai by being living examples of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. At first they maintained themselves by managing a restaurant. After her husband became ill, Gulbánú eked out a meagre living by accepting lodgers and by the sale of sweets and bread to the townspeople. Although they had no children of their own they raised a niece, Firúzih Yigánigí, who was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering services in Goa.

After the death of her husband in 1961 Gulbánú, who was affectionately known as 'Gol-bai', was encouraged to move to a more comfortable and less isolated area but she adamantly refused saying that it was her wish to continue her service in her pioneering post

and to be buried alongside her husband when the time came. Through her simplicity of manner and sincerity of heart she attracted many people to the Faith. Her home was a centre of warm fellowship and friendly discussion where gathered the rich and poor, literate and unlearned, Hindu and Muslim and Christian. All were welcomed and found in her a friend. She befriended the local priest and some of the staff of the mission hospital in Wai and was ever ready to help those who came to the hospital by offering them accommodation at no cost and by visiting and praying for the patients. Her life was dedicated to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. In addition to serving in her own community she would support activities in Panchgani and assist the newly-formed New Era School through contributions from her limited income. Through her unstinting efforts the Bahá'í community of Wai began to flourish and the Local Spiritual Assembly was formed. The Assembly was registered in 1975, just one year before her death, a crowning tribute to her dedicated life's work.

A memorial meeting was held in Wai to mark her passing attended by many people of various religious persuasions who offered prayers for the spiritual progress of her soul. The love and unity which was demonstrated by the diverse participants epitomized the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh which Gulbánú had in life so clearly exemplified.

On 25 September 1976 the following cable was received from the Universal House of Justice:

SADDENED PASSING STEADFAST COURAGEOUS
PIONEER GOLBANU SAFRANG STOP HER EXEMPLARY
DEVOTION PERSEVERANCE SERVICES
CAUSE WORTHY HIGH PRAISE ASSURE RELATIVES
FRIENDS ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES.

SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
BAHÁ'ÍS OF PANCHGANI

ANGELA ANNETTE ANDERSON
1926-1976

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING ANGELA ANDERSON
DEDICATED PIONEER AFRICA ASSURE PRAYERS
PROGRESS HER SOUL EXTEND SYMPATHY FAMILY
FRIENDS.

Universal House of Justice



Angela Annette Anderson

Angela Anderson was born into a wealthy family, with servants and 'nannies', and led a sheltered life during childhood. In her late teens she experienced the first glimmering of the possibility that life could be regarded from points of view quite different from those she had acquired in her cultured world of material comfort. When she entered the business world at eighteen she began to meet people from other social backgrounds. She was later to write in her book *The Valley of Search* that 'there was something in me that yearned for *ordinariness*.'

In her twenties she was confined to bed with a grave illness for four years during which she had time to read and think. She examined her life and began her quest for the meaning of existence. Hers was a long and difficult search. After investigating many religious movements, philosophies and value systems she found her spiritual home in the Bahá'í Faith in 1959, in Edinburgh, and in it found complete fulfilment. Although reserved and quiet by nature she at once made every effort to give the message of Bahá'u'lláh to her friends and associates. She pioneered from Edinburgh to Inverness and served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the latter at Ridván

1961. While there she wrote the greater part of her book describing the search that led her to the Bahá'í Faith. The book was, she felt, her 'child', in one sense, and she hoped it would assist others who were in spiritual need.

Later she moved to Bolton and in the late 1960s pioneered to Plymouth, Devon where she worked unceasingly to lay the foundations for the future growth of the Faith in the west of England. Once, overcoming her shyness, she spoke about the Faith from the pulpit of the Unitarian Church.

In her private life she tried to live by the Bahá'í teachings in absolute detail. Although she had private means she always earned her living by office work. She lived very simply, as far as her health would allow. She wanted to be responsible for the education of a Bahá'í child and arranged to pay the tuition fees of a small girl. The child benefited from this early training; she was awarded scholarships and successfully completed a college course.

Another phase of Angela's life began when she arrived in Kenya in 1971 as a pioneer. She threw herself wholeheartedly into the life of the Bahá'í community in this new field of service, serving as secretary of the National Teaching Committee and the National Literature Committee and as assistant to a member of the Auxiliary Board. She undertook many travelling teaching trips and wherever she went was deeply loved by the African believers. She carried out all her duties with a loving spirit and great humility. For many years she had believed that nothing had any significance except that which was done from the motive of love. She gave steadfast and untiring service, inspiring a fellow pioneer to say of her, 'Her life in the service of the Cause is an example worthy of emulation.' She visited Tanzania as a travelling teacher; studied Swahili to help in teaching and correspondence and in the hope of preparing simple Bahá'í pamphlets; and wrote a small book about the Faith for translation into the vernacular languages. In Africa, Angela led a life of extreme simplicity and great personal economy, although she had no need to. She taught secretarial subjects in a business college and, when she pioneered to Luanda in south-western Kenya, she started her own school, overcoming many difficulties to do so. Because many Bahá'ís live in this area, Angela hoped to serve the educational

needs of the youth there.

After a few months, however, her health began to deteriorate. Although she had to stop earning her living, she concealed knowledge of her illness and continued tirelessly serving the Cause for another year, devoting her time to committee work, teaching projects and the work of the Auxiliary Board. Early in 1976 she accepted the fact that she could not go on and was admitted to hospital. A month later she was flown to hospital in England. She was greatly missed by all her friends in Africa who were much in her thoughts. She wrote offering suggestions for the International Teaching Conference to be held in Nairobi in October 1976 and made plans to return as a pioneer to Tanzania. This was not to be. Some months later it was recognized that she was suffering from a brain tumour. By then her life had become a burden and a veiled existence. She was released from her suffering on 1 October, just days before the Nairobi conference.

In Kenya it was said 'Tears are falling from the eyes of those Bahá'ís who have heard this news.' 'She served our beloved Faith diligently and well as a pioneer', wrote the National Assembly of Kenya.

The memorial stone marking Angela Anderson's resting place in the Dorking Municipal Cemetery, Surrey is inscribed with these Words of Bahá'u'lláh:

*O Son of Man! Ascend unto My heaven,
that thou mayest obtain the joy of reunion,
and from the chalice of imperishable glory
quaff the peerless wine.*

BARBARA LEWIS

ADELAIDE SHARP 1896-1976

Born in Texas in 1896, Miss Adelaide Sharp spent her childhood in Mexico, moved in company of her mother to California to pursue her studies, and after graduation from college took up teaching work in the Italian quarter of San Francisco. Her father, Horace M. Sharp, who died during Adelaide's infancy, was a Christian but Adelaide, when still young, received the Message of Bahá'u'lláh from her mother, Clara Sharp—a devoted Bahá'í—and accepted it.

In 1929, when the distinguished Bahá'í, Dr. Susan I. Moody,¹ who was then seventy-seven years of age, undertook to emigrate to Persia a second time at the Guardian's request, she received his permission and hearty approval to take Adelaide along with her to serve at the Tarbiyat School in the capital.

The two pioneers covered the first stretch of their journey by ship to the Holy Land where the glory of pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines for twelve precious days was heightened by the guidance and spiritual strength received from the beloved Guardian, a bounty that would be their mainstay during the long and difficult years ahead. Proceeding thence by the overland route to Tīhrán, Miss Sharp settled in her post as the school's principal on arrival and discharged her duties with exemplary diligence until the school was closed down. Rūḥangíz Fath-'Aẓam² and Ishráqíyyih Dhabīḥ³ collaborated with her in this arduous task and were her unfailing support throughout this period. After some two years' stay in Tīhrán, Miss Sharp asked the Guardian if she might invite her mother over, too. Shoghi Effendi assented readily and graciously cabled instructions to America for Mrs. Sharp's travel to Tīhrán, and so it was that Clara Sharp found herself working in the cradle of the Faith beside her daughter in the field of Bahá'í education.

When the school was closed down, Miss Sharp stayed on in Persia on the Guardian's advice and gradually organized classes for boys as well as girls to study writings in English such as *Bahá'í Administration*, *The Promised Day is Come*, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* and other superb works from the Guardian's inspired pen. Many young Bahá'ís from these classes have since risen to eminence in service to God's Faith within and without Persia's borders.

Supervising and teaching at the Tarbiyat School were not the sole outlets for Miss Sharp's unflagging energy. At one time or another she was active on various committees including the international committee which gathered material for *The Bahá'í World* volumes, the Children's Service Committee, the Reviewing Committee, Unity of the East and the West and the committee charged with the



Adelaide Sharp

translation of Bahá'í Scriptures into English.

On the occasion of her second visit to the Holy Land in 1937, Miss Sharp was again the recipient of the loving kindness of the Guardian. In 1954 when he ruled that women could from then on serve on Bahá'í administrative bodies in Persia, she was the first woman to be elected to the National Spiritual Assembly, serving in this role for fourteen years. Almost to the last she acted as foreign correspondent of the National Assembly and was also assigned the responsibility of issuing credentials to Persian Bahá'ís who were going abroad. She attended the Intercontinental Conference in the United States (it was during this period that her mother passed away), the World Congress held in London during Riḍván of 1963 to celebrate the Most Great Jubilee and participated in the election in the Holy Land of the Universal House of Justice at both the first and second International Conventions.

Miss Sharp never married. Starting at an early age and extending almost to the very end, her talents and energy were dedicated to the service of the Cause and its servants in the land of its birth. This single-minded devotion won her warm tributes both from the beloved Guardian and the Universal House of Justice.

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VI, p. 483.

² See 'In Memoriam', p. 467.

³ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 517.

She was the object of special favour at the hands of Shoghi Effendi. In his missives to her the Guardian addressed her as his 'dear co-worker' and enjoined the Persian National Spiritual Assembly to take the greatest care of her.

Her physical strength and powers deteriorated sadly during the last two or three years of her life when she was confined to bed by various ailments from which death released her on 5 October 1976. When informed of her passing, the Universal House of Justice, in a message to the Persian National Assembly, recognized her long and laborious services in these gracious terms:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEDICATED STEADFAST PROMOTER CAUSE DEARLY LOVED ADELAIDE SHARP WHOSE SELFLESS LABOURS NEARLY FIVE DECADES COMMUNITY CRADLE FAITH IN EDUCATING ITS CHILDREN INSPIRING ENRICHING SPIRITUAL LIFE ITS YOUTH RESEARCHING TRANSLATING WRITINGS CONSOLIDATING ITS ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS AND AS FIRST WOMAN MEMBER ITS NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY WILL ALWAYS BE LOVINGLY REMEMBERED STOP HER DEVOTED SERVICES WON HER PRAISE BELOVED GUARDIAN REINFORCED TIES BINDING AMERICAN BAHAI COMMUNITY TO FRIENDS BAHAUULLAHS NATIVE LAND STOP FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES CONTINUOUS PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM STOP ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HONOUR HER NAME STOP NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES HOLDING MEMORIAL GATHERING MASHRIQUL ADHKAR.

The International Teaching Centre, too, as well as the American National Spiritual Assembly cabled messages expressing their grief at Miss Sharp's passing and their appreciation of the spirit of selfless devotion that had marked her work for the Cause in Bahá'u'lláh's native land for a period of almost half a century. Hundreds of sorrowful mourners from among the Bahá'ís of Tíhrán paid their respects at the last resting-place of their Bahá'í sister; and hundreds of other believers throughout the country attended memorial meetings held in her memory, demonstrating by this act the great love and esteem with which they regarded her. An account of her life was published in the Bahá'í news organ of Persia, while

the magazine *Ahang-i-Badi'* carried articles written by some of her closest friends bearing upon incidents in her unbroken record of service which disclosed intimate glimpses of her sterling worth.

If asked to single out one or two distinctive traits from among the many characteristics that endeared Miss Sharp to her numerous friends, we would point to her unflinching loyalty and deep attachment to our beloved Guardian which provided the strength and solace with which she met the tests and difficulties attendant upon her service. May Bahá'u'lláh's blessings be showered upon her in rich abundance!

(Adapted from a report prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia and translated by Rustom Sabit).

ANGUEL MARÍA SALAZAR

?-1976

Anguel María Salazar, a Quechua Indian of Tunibamba, Canton Cotacachi, in the Province of Imbabura, Ecuador accepted the Bahá'í Faith in 1967 through the teaching efforts of Raúl Pavón and Rufino Gualavisí. Mr. Salazar became a very dedicated and firm follower of Bahá'u'lláh and although illiterate he learned the Bahá'í prayers, teachings and songs by heart. On the first visit of the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih *Khánum* to Ecuador in the spring of 1968, Mr. Salazar had the honour of receiving this distinguished guest and the members of her party in his humble home and subsequently he accompanied her party when she visited Bahá'ís in other Indian communities.

With his family, Mr. Salazar steadfastly attended meetings at the National Teaching Institute to deepen in the knowledge of the Faith. He was a potter by profession and in spite of his frugal circumstances each time he attended the Institute he brought an object he had made as a contribution to the fund. In 1968 he was elected as a delegate to the National Convention and, throughout his Bahá'í life, assisted the work of the Local Spiritual Assembly in his community, constantly opened his home for Bahá'í meetings and offered hospitality to travelling teachers.



Anguel María Salazar

Until his passing on 15 October 1976, Mr. Salazar remained firm of faith, radiant of heart and deep in his love for Bahá'u'lláh, transmitting his conviction with force and eloquence to other indigenous believers.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF ECUADOR

HUGH K. BLUNDELL
1884–1976

DEEPLY GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED
LONGTIME SERVANT FAITH HUGH BLUNDELL
FIRST AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER IN NEW ZEALAND
PRAYING SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS
HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice

Hugh Blundell was born in England on 21 October 1884, the youngest of seven children. The Blundell family immigrated to New Zealand when Hugh was two years old, and he received all his education in New Zealand schools.

His father died in 1923. His mother, Sarah,¹ a non-conformist free thinker and a member of the Higher Thought Temple, had learned of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to London in 1911 and, attracted by what she read of His life and teachings, sent for literature about the Bahá'í Faith. When the Hands of the Cause Clara and Hyde Dunn visited New Zealand in 1923 they were invited to the Blundell home in Remuera, Auckland. This was the first Bahá'í meeting in New Zealand.

Through contact with Mother Dunn, Mrs. Blundell and Hugh's older sister, Ethel, became Bahá'ís. In 1925 Hugh accompanied them in the first party of Australasians to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Although not a Bahá'í, Hugh was deeply impressed by Shoghi Effendi and in July the following year he declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this age. Thus began a lifetime of devoted service to the Bahá'í Cause. He served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Auckland from 1927 onwards, often as treasurer, and for a number of years was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand. He was a member of numerous committees, both national and regional, and travelled widely throughout New Zealand and the Pacific Islands in service to the Faith.

New Zealand's first independent National Assembly was elected in April 1957 and in October a letter came to Hugh from the Hands of the Cause Mother Dunn and Collis Featherstone confirming the cable Hugh had received: ADVISE YOUR APPOINTMENT MEMBER ADDITIONAL AUXILIARY BOARD DEAREST LOVE PRAYERS YOUR GUIDANCE. Hugh was overwhelmed and replied: 'The latter part of your cable is tremendous consolation and a brilliant light in a very dark world. With sincerest appreciation of your faith and trust in my humble ability and with a prayer from my heart that I will be worthy of your confidence . . .' He wrote this the day the beloved Guardian died, and being both a member of the Auxiliary Board and one of the few New Zealand Bahá'ís to have met Shoghi Effendi, he was able to be a tower of strength to the saddened community, and to inspire them to fulfil the goals of the Ten Year Crusade.

He served as a Board member with selfless

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VI, p. 496.

GARRETA H. BUSEY
1893-1976



Hugh K. Blundell

tenacity for eleven years. In his quiet, polite, gentlemanly way 'Uncle Hugh', as he became known, gave of his time, effort and self generously. He travelled regularly throughout the country visiting and encouraging the friends. In 1959 the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land wrote: 'Please convey to our dear brother, Auxiliary Board member Hugh Blundell, our heartfelt appreciation of the wonderful teaching trips he is undertaking in these days when the New Zealand community needs it most.' He extended hospitality to all visiting Bahá'ís and accompanied the Hands of the Cause on many of their visits including the historic visit Enoch Olinga made to the Maori people in 1959.

As age began to take its toll, Hugh found it increasingly difficult to travel and in September 1968 he offered his resignation as Auxiliary Board member. He felt the future of the Faith lay in the hands of the young Bahá'ís and he continued to guide and love these youth until his death on 16 October 1976.

His warm, gentlemanly presence at summer schools and conventions will be a cherished memory to those of the New Zealand community who were fortunate enough to have known Hugh Blundell.

GRIEVED PASSING GARRETA BUSEY SELFSACRIFICING FOLLOWER BHAULLAH STOP HER SERVICES FIELD BAHAI PUBLICATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES LOVINGLY REMEMBERED PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL.

Universal House of Justice

Garreta Helen Busey was born on 1 March 1893 in Urbana, Illinois and lived most of her life in that community. She was talented and versatile, yet unassuming. Before 1918 she travelled through Illinois making advance preparations for rallies and meetings supporting Women's Suffrage and during the First World War served with the International Red Cross in France and Switzerland. She worked for several years on the *New York Herald-Tribune's* Book Review section. Her novel *The Windbreak* was published in 1938. Her father helped establish the Commercial Bank of Champaign and she was on its Board of Directors for thirty-five years, attending meetings until just a month before her death, and was on the faculty of the University of Illinois.

Her Bahá'í activities were manifold. She first attended Bahá'í meetings because she felt sorry for her mother who was always having to go to them alone, but gradually came to consider herself a Bahá'í, and about 1934 she fully identified herself with the Faith. During her sabbatical leaves from the university she served the European Teaching Committee, spending one year in the Netherlands. She was a member of the Urbana Spiritual Assembly for forty years; her contributions to consultation were wise, compassionate and practical. At the request of the National Spiritual Assembly she helped with the development of Spiritual Assemblies in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio. Her writing and editorial skills were placed at the service of the Faith. She served on the editorial staffs of *World Order* magazine, *Bahá'í News* and *The Bahá'í World* and on the National Literature Reviewing Committee. Her beautiful old home was opened to the friends and was a focal point of activities for many years. With the consent of her family it was bequeathed to the Spiritual Assembly of Urbana.

From 1936 until 1974 Garreta was the



Garreta H. Busey

faculty advisor of the University of Illinois Bahá'í Club, one of the first college clubs in the United States. She had special love for youth and offered them understanding and encouragement. One Bahá'í, recollecting the college club meetings, wrote: 'I felt that Garreta saw everything—all our weaknesses, follies, even our unwillingness to accept aspects of the teachings—but she was patient and would wait lovingly for us to grow up. Hundreds of times at those Friday evening firesides I saw her sit quietly as we uttered our vain fancies—even our blasphemies—never arguing, never pushing a point. When we'd all worn ourselves out with hair-splitting, she'd say, "Well, you know, it seems to me . . ." and then she'd quote exactly the passage to answer every dilemma! She was truly a masterful teacher.'

Once when she was in her eighties and, as usual, trying to serve beyond her strength in many areas at once, she laughingly said, 'Bahá'ís are not promised rest from their labours, but a service in both worlds.'

Bahá'u'lláh's words '*The light of a good character surpasses the light of the sun*' were on the printed programme of the memorial service held for Miss Busey who died on 21

October 1976. All those who gathered to celebrate her life felt them to be appropriate.

ELEANOR HUTCHENS

CHARLOTTE M. LINFOOT
1895–1976

Charlotte May Linfoot, a leading figure in the growth and development of the Bahá'í Faith in the United States for almost half a century, died on 30 October 1976 in Wilmette. The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States cabled the Universal House of Justice:

LOYAL DUTIFUL INDEFATIGABLE CHARLOTTE
LINFOOT WINGED HER FLIGHT TO ABHA REALM
TODAY LEAVING BEHIND IN HER BELOVED
AMERICAN COMMUNITY WHICH SHE SERVED SO
ILLUSTRIOUSLY A TRAIL OF GRATEFUL BUT
BROKEN HEARTS.

In reply the House of Justice advised the holding of a befitting memorial service in the Temple and said, in part:

SHARE GRIEF PASSING DEARLY LOVED CHAR-
LOTTE LINFOOT STOP HER TIRELESS SELFLESS
SERVICE WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT TEACH-
INGS AND ADMINISTRATION OF CAUSE SHE
EMBRACED NEARLY FIFTY YEARS AGO INDELIBLY
INSCRIBED ANNALS AMERICAN BAHAI COMMU-
NITY . . .

For twenty-two years, until she suffered a disabling stroke in December 1975, Miss Linfoot served as assistant secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly. The assembly, in its annual report for 1976, paid tribute to her 'constant, heroic service' and lamented the 'staggering blow' dealt the American community through her death.

She was born in North Dakota on 30 May 1895, attended high school in Saskatchewan, Canada and received degrees from Saskatoon Teachers' College and Saskatoon Business College. After graduation she taught elementary school and during summer vacations worked as a reporter and as editor of the women's section of a local newspaper.

In the early 1930s Miss Linfoot moved to California to work for the American Red Cross, soon becoming assistant director of the



Charlotte M. Linfoot

Junior Red Cross for the Pacific area. Her main activity was the developing of international programmes with school systems. During this period she also travelled extensively in Europe to advise Red Cross Societies on that continent.

Miss Linfoot first heard of the Bahá'í Faith in Oakland, California and soon became active in the work of the administrative order. She was appointed to the first National Teaching Committee in 1934, serving as its Western secretary, and throughout the subsequent years was a member of one or more national committees. Those who were privileged to work with her during those years speak with admiration of her undaunted faith, unswerving loyalty, selfless devotion and tireless vigour, and praise the inestimable magnitude of her gifts of mind and spirit which she poured out unstintingly in service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. The Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas wrote to her from the Holy Land congratulating her on her election to the National Assembly in the autumn of 1953 and remarking: 'Your long hours of work in the Teaching Committee, and other Committees, was always an example to me, and I often think, when I am tied up for especially long hours of work, how faithfully, quietly and efficiently you carried on for so long.'

Her appointment as assistant secretary almost immediately after her election to the National Assembly caused her to transfer her residence from Piedmont, California to Wilmette. She served as secretary of the Asia Teaching Committee in the Ten Year Crusade until the American community's goals in the Pacific areas were accomplished, in about 1961; simultaneously she worked on the editorial committees for *Bahá'í News* and *The Bahá'í World*. In 1961 she participated in the election of the International Bahá'í Council and in the first election of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa at Ridván 1963 and attended the Bahá'í World Congress in London immediately thereafter; she also participated in the subsequent elections of the Universal House of Justice in 1968 and 1973. On various occasions she represented the United States National Spiritual Assembly at international conferences.

'She had a quick and telling wit and a never-failing sense of fun,' one friend recalls. 'A few years before I came to Wilmette in 1969 she had fallen on the ice one dark night and sustained an injury to her hip which left her with the occasional need to use a cane for the rest of her life. I remember with affection her curious blend of gallantry, determination and vulnerability as she tapped her way from the office to her home in treacherous and inclement weather. She took great delight in collecting music rolls for an old player piano she had in her home; she also kept pet birds on which she lavished attention. I shall always remember the day we spent in the country buying a barrel of new apples; she brought a sense of adventure and zest and happiness to simple pleasures of this kind. She was always youthfully trim, impeccably groomed and smartly attired, her appearance thus reflecting her alertness of mind, her imposing organizational skills.'

Miss Linfoot's demanding services as assistant secretary to the National Assembly included the guidance of Local Assemblies and individuals in their application of Bahá'í standards to individual lives. Each day her desk was piled high with letters appealing to the National Assembly for guidance in a limitless range of human struggles and needs. The balance of integrity, firmness and deep compassion which she exemplified qualified her to become a finely-tuned instrument through

which the Assembly could effectively respond to the needs of the community. But such work takes its toll of those who give it. Her record of service is an illustration of the degree of 'administrative heroism' which the beloved Guardian told us the advancement of the Cause requires.

Shoghi Effendi's appreciation of Miss Linfoot is found in a letter written on his behalf on 6 September 1957 and serves as a befitting conclusion to this memoir: 'The Guardian has instructed me to inform you of how much he appreciates and values your devoted and sacrificial services to the Cause of God. You have served the Faith diligently, efficiently, and well over a long period of time, in outstanding and historic fields of service: as secretary of the National Teaching Committee during the first Seven Year Plan, the success of which was, in no small measure, due to your ceaseless labours, and since that time, on teaching committees bringing the Faith to numerous parts of the world. Now you are combining teaching and administrative service, in your outstanding services on the National Assembly. The Master will richly reward you for your indefatigable services in the Kingdom.'

On 11 December 1976 a memorial service was held for Charlotte Linfoot in the House of Worship in Wilmette within the shadow of which she had performed many of those feats which cause her memory to be 'indelibly inscribed' in the annals of the American Bahá'í community.

SIYYID MUḤAMMAD 'AZZÁVÍ 1920-1976

The entire Bahá'í world, but the Egyptian community in particular, suffered a grievous loss in the untimely passing of Dr. Siyyid MuḤammad 'Azzáví. His endeavours as an educator bring to mind the words attributed to MuḤammad, the Messenger: 'The ink of the scholar is more precious than the blood of the martyr.'

Dr. 'Azzáví was born in Egypt on 1 April 1920 and received his education there. From 1942 to 1950 he was a teacher of education and psychology at the Men's Teacher Training College in 'Iráq. He returned to Egypt in 1950 and



Siyyid MuḤammad 'Azzáví

obtained his Master of Arts degree from the University of Cairo. Religious prejudice thwarted his efforts to obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophy but he qualified for this with distinction in 1969.

His professional pursuits after his return from 'Iráq included serving as Director of the Office of Translation of the Vice-President of the Republic, acting as assistant to the Director-General for Statistics, assisting the ministry concerned with the management of municipal affairs and serving as Director-General of the Centre of Information for the Presidency. He contributed to the modernization of the curriculum of the thousand-year-old Al-Azhar University and was co-author with MuḤammad Khayrī Harb of *History of Education and Teaching in the Twentieth Century*. He was a gifted translator from English into Arabic of literary and educational works, combining extraordinary speed with great accuracy. His efforts in this area included the translation of documents for UNESCO and association with the Franklin Library project for rendering a thousand standard English works in Arabic. Methods of language teaching interested him greatly. He prepared television programmes designed to combat illiteracy,

experimented in teaching Arabic to African students and to persons of widely-ranging ethnic backgrounds and participated in writing a series of textbooks on teaching Arabic by radio. He was delegated to present modern methods of teaching Persian at the College of Arts at 'Ayn Shams University. The preparation of a children's encyclopedia appealed to him in his dual role of father and educator.

Dr. 'Azzáví encountered the Bahá'í Faith while living in 'Iráq when he approached Miss Bahía (Bahá'íyyih) Faraju'lláh, a fellow teacher of Iranian background, to enquire whether she would teach him Persian. His interest was immediately aroused and the comprehensive Bahá'í library of the Faraju'lláh family was made available to him. He read avidly and in time accepted the Faith. Not long after, when the Faraju'lláh family departed for the Holy Land as pilgrims, Dr. 'Azzáví asked them to convey his love to the Guardian and beg his prayers that he might one day be of service to the Cause. In response, Shoghi Effendi requested Dr. 'Azzáví to translate into Arabic a selection of passages from *God Passes By*, the Guardian's own incomparable history of the Faith. Dr. 'Azzáví set to work with great enthusiasm, postponing completion of his studies for his degree in order to devote full time to this task. He also translated a number of other works including the Persian *Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*, the talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Europe, *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, *The Promised Day is Come* and other letters of the Guardian. Some time later when Dr. 'Azzáví made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land the beloved Guardian referred to him as 'my excellent translator.'

After serving in 'Iráq for eight years, Dr. 'Azzáví returned to Cairo and about a year later married Miss Húriyyah Jalál. Shortly thereafter he accepted a teaching post in the Sudan where he served as chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Khartoum and was helpful in obtaining official registration of the Bahá'í burial ground. He then returned to Egypt where he served on the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Africa, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Cairo and the National Translation and Publication Committee until the dissolution of Bahá'í institutions in Egypt in 1960.

He was a man of commanding presence, with

a keen sense of humour and a gift for storytelling. He showered love and devotion on his five beautiful children—ornaments of a remarkable marriage—and with affection and expertise guided their education, an activity promoted by his own exemplary zeal for learning. Animated by a spirit of self-sacrifice for the Faith he suffered discrimination in terms of position, salary and promotion, and ultimately was incarcerated for his beliefs. His Egyptian roots made it imperative for him to remain in his native land rather than to seek an easier and more luxurious life in countries of greater freedom and prosperity. One midnight, in 1965, there came a knock at the door of his home. The police entered and seized every Bahá'í book they could find, and Dr. 'Azzáví and other Bahá'ís were cast into prison. The authorities interrogated him at odd hours to break his rest and brought Islamic divines to dispute with him, but their arguments were swept away like leaves in the autumn wind.

Eventually he was freed. He started a publishing house which he hoped might develop into an important instrument of service of the new world order. He revised his translation of *God Passes By*, remarking that his understanding of the text had changed profoundly in the course of his experience of twenty-five years as a Bahá'í.

In 1976, Dr. 'Azzáví accepted an invitation to lecture at the Bahá'í Summer School in Írán where the friends derived great benefit from his knowledge of the Qur'án and Bahá'í literature. He visited the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Tíhrán and the House where the Báb declared His mission in Shíráz. This journey, so abounding in confirmations, marked the culmination of a distinguished career of service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Notified of Dr. 'Azzáví's death on 14 November 1976, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING MUHAMMAD AZZAVI HIS DEDICATION CAUSE HIS STEADFASTNESS HIS SCHOLARLY WORK UNFORGETTABLE STOP FERVENTLY PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM ASSURE HIS WIFE CHILDREN FRIENDS DEEP LOVING SYMPATHY.

BAHIA FARAJU'LLÁH GULICK

'ABDU'L-ḤAMÍD EL KHEMÍRÍ
1906–1976

Mr. 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid el Khemírí was born in Tunis during the year 1906, his family being members of the Berber community. He was raised in a strict Muslim community and his childhood was similar to that of others of his generation.

In 1921, when he was only fifteen, 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid and his friend, Muḥammad Vahbí Kasráví, encountered and accepted the Bahá'í Faith. One afternoon, on the main boulevard of Tunis, the two youths noticed a middle-aged gentleman of respectable and distinguished appearance whom they recognized as being a Shaykh from the renowned Azhar University of Cairo and, acting on an impulse, the young men asked to speak to him. The gentleman was Muḥyi'd-Dín Sabrí Kurdí Kanimeshkání who had accepted the Faith during the early years of its establishment in Egypt, and whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá had singled out to open Tunis to the Faith. The young men were very impressed by the wisdom and kindness of Shaykh Muḥyi'd-Dín. They attended regularly the meetings he held with inquirers every evening and soon 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid, with his friend Kasráví, became the first Tunisian Bahá'ís.

In 1928 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was blessed by his meeting with the beloved Guardian. The experience of pilgrimage transformed him. He travelled to Egypt and Syria where he met with the believers and had the joy of reunion with his boyhood friend, Kasráví, who had settled in Syria.

Upon returning to Tunis 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid joined his efforts with those of Mustapha Bouchoucha¹ (Muṣṭafá Būshūshá), a fellow Tunisian Bahá'í, in propagating the Faith among their countrymen. 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid's shop at 175 rue de la Kasbah became a landmark for visiting Bahá'ís. Evening after evening, 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid would visit Mr. Bouchoucha's home for meetings with Bahá'ís and their friends. With the launching of the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade in 1953 and the arrival of pioneers in Tunisia, young Tunisians started to enter the Faith. They found comfort and inspiration through their visits to 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid's little shop in the old town

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, p. 463.



'Abdu'l-Ḥamid el Khemírí

(the Medina) where he counselled and guided them as an older and more experienced brother would.

'Abdu'l-Ḥamid served on the Spiritual Assembly of Tunis from the time of its inception in the 1930s until his home area became an independent civil unit in 1970. In 1956 when the beloved Guardian called for the formation of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of North West Africa 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid el Khemírí was elected to that body and remained a member for four consecutive years. He visited many Bahá'í centres in Morocco in 1956 and, in later years, he attended Bahá'í summer schools in France and Switzerland to bring back to the Tunisian Bahá'ís the spirit and news of the friends in Europe.

The last two years of his life he devoted to visiting the Bahá'ís and receiving them at his home. Increasingly, severe arthritis confined him to his bed and armchair. He sold his shop and contributed the entire proceeds to the Fund. As he felt the end drawing near he distributed among the friends the Bahá'í literature, magazines, reviews and articles he had in his possession. Each time we visited him we

were offered some literature or relics of the Faith. Until the last moment of his earthly existence on 5 December 1976 the greeting 'Alláh-u-Abhá!', which he upheld for over fifty-five years, was on his lips.

'The services of Mr. Khemíri will always be remembered for he was not only among the early believers in Tunisia, but served the Faith for one-half a century in that land with faithfulness, devotion and dedication,' wrote the Universal House of Justice on 9 January 1977 in memory of that dear believer.

R. MUSTAPHA

ELSE JÖRGENSEN
1907-1977

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING ELSE JORGENSEN
DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT BHAULLAH STOP SUP-
PLICATING SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER
SOUL ALL WORLDS GOD.

Universal House of Justice

Else Jörgensen was born in Trondheim, Norway on 28 December 1907. She was working as a hairdresser in Guayaquil, Ecuador in February 1945 when she first heard about the Bahá'í Faith from Virginia Orbison, a resident pioneer. The Spiritual Assembly of Guayaquil was to be formed at Ridván if one additional adult believer could be found. Virginia arranged an appointment for April 17th ostensibly to have Else give her a permanent wave, and Else accepted the Faith before the end of the day. On April 20th the Spiritual Assembly was formed with Else as a member.

By 1948 Else had returned to Norway and at Ridván became a member of the first Spiritual Assembly of Oslo. With a view to pioneering in Spain Else, who was already fluent in Spanish, took secretarial training, and in November 1949 she settled in Madrid where she assisted in consolidating the efforts of the Spiritual Assembly. In April of the next year she moved to Barcelona to assist that struggling young community. With her aid the Spiritual Assembly grew in strength and other Local Assemblies were established in nearby areas in addition to groups being formed and new localities opened. Words cannot describe the meritorious work done by Else for the Cause in Spain at



Else Jörgensen

a time when the utmost wisdom and discretion were necessary and the risk of imprisonment was considerable. She introduced the teachings by giving language lessons and with admirable foresight organized, in collaboration with the Spiritual Assembly of Barcelona, a committee for the protection of the Faith. Significantly, a few years later, she was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for the protection of the Faith in Latin America. Throughout the time she spent in Spain Else had no holidays, no visits to her family and not one moment of rest.

In July 1953 Else returned to Norway and married Roberto Cazcarra. At the Intercontinental Teaching Conference held in Stockholm that month the couple offered themselves as pioneers to Spitzbergen but were not able to meet the requirements governing residence in those islands. Accompanied by Mildred Clark¹ who in August of that year had become the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Lofoten Islands, Else travelled by ship to Spitzbergen to investigate the possibility of settling there but this and all subsequent efforts failed.

At the request of the European Teaching Committee she remained as a pioneer in Oslo until November 1954 when she was asked to

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, p. 303.

assist with the teaching and consolidation work in Portugal where she laboured intensively for the strengthening of the community and the opening of new centres. Her efforts met with success despite her inability to obtain a permanent residence visa and the mischievous activities of a few disaffected Bahá'ís who attempted to undermine all that she did, threatened to denounce her to the authorities, and continually harassed her and menaced her.

With the approval of Shoghi Effendi she left Portugal in October 1956 to join her husband who was under contract to a Swiss firm in Uruguay and within two weeks of arriving in Montevideo, and despite the intended private nature of her visit, Else was elected to the Spiritual Assembly and later was asked to serve on the National Teaching Committee of the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of South America. At Ridván 1957 she and her husband were elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia. At the request of that institution Else undertook a five-month tour of the five countries, visiting each Local Spiritual Assembly, giving public addresses, obtaining radio and press interviews. She returned to Uruguay to find awaiting her a letter announcing her appointment to the Auxiliary Board for the protection of the Faith and a pressing request to meet with the National Assembly for consultation. She had not even unpacked her bags. Thus began a lengthy series of travels throughout which she did not fail to maintain an extensive correspondence frequently averaging eighteen letters a day.

Exhausted and ill, Else returned to Barcelona in June 1962 and the following year settled again in Norway. Although her last years were blighted by an incurable illness she participated to the extent she could in Bahá'í community life until her soul was released from its physical prison, in Trondheim, on 27 January 1977.

'With the deepest sorrow I received the sad news of the passing of our dear Else Jørgensen,' wrote the Hand of the Cause Dr. 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá to the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway. 'She was a wonderful soul, dedicating her life to the service of the Faith of God. I pray from the bottom of my heart for the progress of her brilliant soul in the Abhá Kingdom . . .'

Else was the first pioneer from Norway and her saintly life won the respect of the friends who met her. She was an example of patience and endurance, living frugally, sharing whatever she had with those who were in need. At the time of her passing a devoted friend wrote in tribute to her services, 'Else embodied the high standards of the Norwegian people and in particular the quality of dignity. Present and future Bahá'í friends in your country should be proud of having a Norwegian in the galaxy of heroes and heroines of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.'

The mortal remains of this beloved friend were laid to rest beside those of the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Loyce Lawrence¹ in Trondheim's Tilfredshet cemetery.

GERD STRAND

MARION LORD MAXWELL 1889-1977

Marion Lord Maxwell was the first Jamaican to embrace the Bahá'í Faith in Jamaica. Her acceptance of the Faith, in October 1942, resulted from the teaching efforts of Dr. Malcolm King² who pioneered there in the First Seven Year Plan. Miss Maxwell was elected as a member of the first Spiritual Assembly of Kingston at Ridván 1943 and became its first treasurer. Thereafter, she served the Cause faithfully, remaining steadfast in the Covenant to her last breath.

Born on 26 January 1889 in the capital, Kingston, Marion was the youngest of six children. She used her boundless energy in teaching Sunday school classes and in active service to the Y.W.C.A. and the Shamrock Social Organization. In 1907 she joined the General Post Office staff as a money order clerk and in this capacity served her community for forty-two years, gaining the respect of both her fellow workers and the public. She retired in 1949.

Marion was known as 'Miss Mac' to her close acquaintances and was a mainstay to her family on all occasions, whether happy or sad. In 1929 she became the guardian of her sister's three

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, p. 446.

² See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, p. 316.



Marion Lord Maxwell

children; and to her two nephews and nieces, whose parents were in Costa Rica, she became more than an 'Aunt'.

A Jehovah's Witness before accepting the Bahá'í Faith, Marion never forced her belief on any member of her family nor on her friends, but quietly attended meetings and participated in Bahá'í community life. She was recognized as a dependable and giving person and it was through the example of her life that she was known as a Bahá'í. In her later years, although handicapped by deafness, she was at the centre of every happy gathering, regaling the guests with stories from her storehouse of memory, often clapping her hands in spontaneous joy. In the nursing home where she spent her last three years, Marion was ever mindful of her fellow patients to whom she offered assistance and comfort. She eagerly received her Bahá'í visitors, often exclaiming, 'I am so happy to be a Bahá'í!' Bahá'u'lláh's name was frequently on her lips. She passed away peacefully in her sleep, having lived a full eighty-seven years.

On 27 January 1977, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

SADDENED PASSING MARION MAXWELL CONVEY
FRIENDS RELATIVES ASSURANCES PRAYERS
SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

EDMUND MIESSLER
1902-1977

'He is in my heart.' These were the tearful, half-whispered words of one who knew Edmund Miessler well, when informed of his passing. Others, in tribute to his memory, dedicated a month of sacrificial teaching. Two who had been separated from Bahá'í activity, remembering his influence upon their lives, pledged renewal of service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. And in a flood of telegrams, letters and personal messages the sentiment was expressed: he was so dedicated, so loving and understanding, and so very humble.

Edmund Miessler was born in Chicago on 13 March 1902 and was reared in a very strict, religious-minded family of Lutherans, his father being a pastor and his mother the daughter of Lutheran missionaries. His first wife, Elma, came from a similar background. The couple keenly desired spiritual knowledge and made an intensive study of the Bible. While living in Lima, Ohio the home community of Dorothy Baker,¹ they learned of the Bahá'í Faith from her and after a year's study became confirmed and devoted Bahá'ís. Almost immediately, they were publicly excommunicated from their church as incorrigible sinners. They became active members of the Lima Bahá'í community and with their three children, Bob, Margot and Carol, held fireside meetings. Elma's death in the eleventh year of her marriage left the young father and the three children in difficult circumstances.

Three years later Edmund married Muriel Auble who also became a fervent Bahá'í. The family had moved to their first pioneering post in Columbus Grove, not far from Lima, and there they continued with their local Bahá'í work in addition to serving on the Louhelen (Davison) Bahá'í Summer School Committee and the Regional Teaching Committee of Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky.

Following the death of Carol in 1945 the family realized their long-held dream of pioneering abroad. With Carol as the family's 'guardian angel', as it were, and in close consultation with their intimate friend, Mrs. Dorothy Baker, who was then chairman of the National

¹ Appointed a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi on 24 December 1951. See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XII, p. 670.



Edmund Miessler

Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, it was decided that they should settle in São Paulo, Brazil. When they arrived the following year following some months of preparation and a brief stay in Rio de Janeiro, their hearts were rejoiced by the awaiting telegram from the beloved Guardian in which he stated that he was praying for them at the Holy Shrines that they might realize all their earnest desires in the Path of Bahá'u'lláh.

In São Paulo they began to teach the Faith vigorously, assisted by two young new Bahá'ís who had accepted the Faith through a travelling teacher, and by a third who had accompanied them from Rio de Janeiro. At Riḍvân 1947 the first Local Spiritual Assembly of São Paulo was formed. The community grew in size and in time became one of the strongest and most active in South America.

Edmund served constantly as a member of the institutions of the growing administrative order. He was elected to the first regional National Spiritual Assembly of South America and to those assemblies which succeeded it including, finally, Brazil which formed its own National Spiritual Assembly in 1961. In addition, he was appointed a member of the Auxiliary Board for the protection of the Faith hav-

ing as his responsibility, at first, several countries of South America and, at the time of his passing, a large region comprising several states of Brazil as well as the Falkland Islands.

Edmund loved his work for the Faith and was devoted to his many Bahá'í friends. He tried to visit each community in his territory at least once a year and more accessible areas oftener, and he carried on a voluminous correspondence, advising, inspiring, praising, admonishing—always quoting suitable passages from the Writings. Copies of his letters written during the period of his service on the Auxiliary Board fill five large file drawers. He did not teach from his own viewpoint but rather with words from the Writings which he recorded in a small notebook and carried with him, available at the moment it was needed; and to illustrate the points he wished to emphasize he would recount telling stories.

In 1963, as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, Edmund was a delegate to the first International Bahá'í Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice and he lavished upon this new divinely-ordained institution the great love and loyalty he had felt for the beloved Guardian. A similar devotion was expended upon the institutions of the Hands of the Cause and the Continental Board of Counsellors, under both of which he had worked. Love was the touchstone of Edmund's life. His heart was filled with love for the Cause and for all humanity and he was, in turn, much loved by the many friends he led to the Faith and others who knew him. It is felt that the beautiful thoughts expressed in the cablegram received from the Universal House of Justice when advised of Edmund's passing on 7 February 1977 aptly describe this noble soul:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING BELOVED DEVOTED
SERVANT BHAULLAH EDMUND MIESSLER
WHOSE DISTINGUISHED DEDICATED SERVICES
SOUTH AMERICA SPANNING PERIOD THIRTY
YEARS SET NOBLE EXAMPLE FOLLOWERS BLESS-
ED BEAUTY STOP CONVEY FAMILY OUR LOVING
CONDOLENCES AND ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS
DIVINE THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

MURIEL MIESSLER

ANTÓNIO FRANCISCO EBO
?–1977

António Francisco Ebo, the first Angolan Bahá'í, was born near Malange some sixty years ago and was a member of the KIMBUNDU tribe which inhabit the area around the capital, Luanda, and the territory stretching beyond Malange in the east. Angola was a Portuguese colony so he grew up speaking both his native language and Portuguese. Not much is known of Mr. Ebo's life as a child and young man but it is known that as an adult he moved to Luanda in order to find a better economic climate for his family. He was head of a large 'extended' family which, in African tradition, embraces—in addition to brothers and sisters—cousins, nieces, nephews and other kin.

In January 1956 Mr. Ebo who was a member of the Evangelical Church in Luanda heard Rodolfo Duna, a Bahá'í from Moçambique, speak to the congregation about the Bahá'í principles at the invitation of the minister. Intrigued, Mr. Ebo and his nephew, José Avelino, followed Mr. Duna to the place where he was staying and requested to hear more about this new message. It was there that Mr. Ebo heard for the first time the name of Bahá'u'lláh. Night after night he returned to hear more, each time becoming increasingly convinced that this was indeed a message from God, one that he wished to share with his remarkable uncle, Sampaio, whose spiritual quest had strongly influenced Mr. Ebo's nature. Sampaio, who was considered a mystic and spiritual guide to his friends and family and whose wisdom, love and counsel won him great respect, had refused to affiliate with a formal system of belief, having declared that when truth appeared he would recognize it. To this uncle Mr. Ebo wrote a brief explanation of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. In his reply, Sampaio asked three simple questions about the origin of the Faith, the location of its World Centre and the central teaching of its Founder. Upon being informed that the mission of Bahá'u'lláh is the unification of all mankind Sampaio wrote: 'This is the Faith that I have been waiting for!'

Mr. Ebo, radiantly happy over the acceptance of the Faith by Sampaio, began vigorous teaching activities and enrolled most of his family in the Faith. At Ridván 1956, with the



António Francisco Ebo

assistance of Mr. Duna and his wife, Angelica, the first Spiritual Assembly of Luanda was formed and shortly afterward a pioneer couple arrived from Portugal to help in consolidating the knowledge of the new believers. Mr. Ebo and Mr. Duna joined Sampaio in his teaching efforts in Malange where a great receptivity to the Faith developed. At Ridván 1957, with Mr. Ebo's assistance, the first Spiritual Assembly was formed there. Mr. Ebo was appointed to the teaching committee and yearned to pioneer to the south to establish the Faith in Nova Lisboa. In 1961, before these plans could get under way, Angola was swept up in a maelstrom of political unrest and although the Bahá'ís had followed strictly Bahá'u'lláh's teaching about non-participation in all subversive and political movements, they too fell victims of the suspicion and chaos that engulfed the country. Incited by the clergy who had joined forces in accusing the Bahá'ís of subversive activity the police obtained a decree outlawing the Faith and began seizing and interrogating the Bahá'ís. The pioneers were expelled, leaving the young community on its own. The police came to Sampaio's home in the dead of night, arrested him, threatened his wife never to have any meetings again nor even permit anyone to

stay at her house, and took Sampaio away to an unknown destination. He was never seen again.

In October 1963 Mr. Ebo was arrested, his home searched, and he was imprisoned with three other Bahá'ís from Luanda. When speaking of that period at a later time Mr. Ebo would smile sadly and say, 'We were not treated very well,' but he uttered not a further word of complaint. Eventually Mr. Ebo and the other prisoners were transferred to the prison island of Baía dos Tigres off the coast of southern Angola where they rejoiced at meeting, among their fellow prisoners, six Bahá'ís from Malange. During the six years they remained there they would gather together to pray, to discuss what they could remember of the Bahá'í teachings and to sing and compose new songs in praise of Bahá'u'lláh. While in prison Mr. Ebo grew in faith and dedication. He no longer needed to look to Sampaio for strength but drew on his own spiritual powers. The other Bahá'í prisoners looked to him as their 'father'; he remained optimistic and assured them that one day they would be free and pioneers would come and help them spread the Faith.

Indeed, pioneers had arrived in the interval and were brought into contact with the African believers after Mr. Ebo's release from prison. It was a radiant and tearful reunion. A new period began in the history of the Faith in Angola during which Mr. Ebo emerged as the 'father' of the community. He served on the re-formed Spiritual Assembly of Luanda and was a member of the National Teaching Committee. It was Mr. Ebo who was ever ready to take a teaching trip to nearby villages, who encouraged and stimulated the other believers, who composed a number of songs with Bahá'í themes, who was at the centre of all joyous meetings and spiritual gatherings. He revived the Malange community, giving strength and hope to the believers there, and again laid plans to pioneer to Nova Lisboa.

Another crisis struck the Angolan community with the outbreak of the tragic civil war in 1974. As the situation worsened the pioneers were required to leave and soon the Angolan believers were again left alone. Their love for the pioneers was so great that they offered to adopt them into their families in order that they might remain, and offered them food,

refuge and comfort. The last pioneer left in October 1975 without being able to say good-bye to the Angolan friends because communication, even within Luanda, had become almost impossible.

Mr. Ebo continued to correspond with friends outside Angola, speaking of the teaching efforts, the holding of Nineteen Day Feasts, the efforts to establish a Bahá'í Centre and to seek from the government official recognition of the Faith. In one of his last letters he wrote that he was still firm in his conviction to spread the teachings and that his goal was to enrol five hundred believers so that recognition could be granted to the Bahá'ís.

Mr. Ebo departed from this earthly life on 17 April 1977 following a brief illness. His spirit and strong faith have influenced the other Bahá'ís in their efforts to carry on his work and to live the Bahá'í life. They reported that Mr. Ebo was given a beautiful Bahá'í funeral in accordance with the Writings and that they are hopeful of eventually obtaining official recognition for the community.

Upon hearing of his passing the Universal House of Justice wrote on 7 June 1977, expressing the hope that his life might prove to be an inspiration to the friends in Angola.

From the Abbá Kingdom, Mr. Ebo's radiant spirit will support the supplications of his fellow believers in his native land that the healing message of Bahá'u'lláh may be carried to every city and village of Angola and that the call of 'Yá Bahá'u'l-Abbá' may be heard in all its regions.

MARVEL GRAY

RŪḤ'U'LLĀH TAYMŪRÍ-MUQADAM
Martyr of Fáḡil Ábád
1940-1977

If these companions be not the true strivers after God, who else could be called by this name?

Bahá'u'lláh

Rūḥ'u'llāh Taymūrī-Muqadam was born on 18 August 1940 in the village of Āsyábán, near Bīrjand, in the province of Kḥurásan, Írán, a member of a devoted Bahá'í family who had responded to the call of Bahá'u'lláh in its early stages. The trials and difficulties which beset



Rúh'u'lláh Taymúri-Muqadam

his grandfathers on both sides of the family, and which they bore with admirable steadfastness, foreshadowed the persecutions that befell subsequent generations in their service to the Cause, culminating in the martyrdom of Rúh'u'lláh at the hands of misguided assassins. It is ironic that Rúh'u'lláh's maternal grandfather was the recipient of a Tablet from Bahá'u'lláh in which the Blessed Beauty stated, in effect, that He addressed the populace in the language of the people in order that all might comprehend the purpose of their creation and be admonished by recalling the afflictions which befell the loved ones of God in times past at the hands of those who were prevented by their idle fancies and vain imaginings from recognizing the Promised One.

As a three year old child, Rúh'u'lláh shared, in the path of God, the calamities which befell his family when the Bahá'ís of Ásyábán were persecuted, abused, injured and their belongings plundered. Their very houses were pulled down and their trees uprooted. Following this upheaval, Rúh'u'lláh's father was imprisoned in Bírjand.

In 1953, after completing his studies as a junior, Rúh'u'lláh went to live with his uncle in Mashhad where he continued his education.

Three years later he and his uncle pioneered to Fádíl Ábád in the province of Gurgán. When his uncle left the area in 1962, Rúh'u'lláh remained alone in his pioneering post and faced many difficulties. He served the Cause there for twenty-one years and was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly, frequently acting as treasurer. He was married and had two children. He gained the love and respect of people around him and was known for his honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.

On the evening of Saturday, 14 May 1977, some members of a fanatical element in the area who, aroused by jealousy and enmity, had been plotting against the Bahá'ís, scaled a wall and entered the home of Rúh'u'lláh Taymúri-Muqadam. Paying no heed to the tearful pleas of his mother they struck and injured her. When his sister, Parvín, came forward holding in her upraised hand a copy of the holy Qur'án and bidding them to leave in peace, without respect even for their own sacred book, they struck her on the head with an axe, threw her half dead to the ground and rushed towards Rúh'u'lláh cleaving his head with savage blows of the hatchet. Soon his soul took its flight to the eternal realm. At the age of thirty-seven he became yet another martyr of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in the land of its birth. His sister, although seriously wounded, eventually recovered and later made her pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The family of Rúh'u'lláh Taymúri-Muqadam were honoured by receiving the following cable from the Universal House of Justice sent to them on 16 May 1977:

SADDENED TRAGIC NEWS EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY FAMILY RUHULLAH TAYMURI ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS ARDENT PRAYERS SHRINE BESEECHING PROGRESS SOUL STOP PRAYING BEHALF TAYMURI'S SISTER AWAITING NEWS.

(Translated and adapted from various reports by Gloria Momen)

DOROTHY KEDIBONE SENNE
1931-1977

She stood in the doorway of the small school in Alexandra, Johannesburg—a friendly, spark-

ling person. The three pioneers who were helping to teach handicrafts in the school paused to say goodbye. 'Wait,' Dorothy said, 'I have a question. There's something *different* about you; what is it that you have?' Helen Miller spoke for the other two, Doris Ballard and Bahiyyih Ford. 'We're Bahá'ís,' she said. That was the beginning.

Dorothy was born in Alexandra Township in February 1931, the fifth daughter in a family of six children. She was of the well-known Sebolao family of Thaba'nchu in the Orange Free State, the ancestral home of the Tswana people. She attended Holy Cross Mission School, Moroka High School, and Ohlange College in Natal. She taught in several places and in 1972 became principal of Mokoena Community School. She had decided when she was a child that she wanted to become a teacher.

In 1953, Dorothy and Ephens Nti Senne were married at Kgale in Phokeng, Rustenburg, Transvaal. On the wedding day, Ephens introduced her to a guest as 'one of my best friends.' This was a touching and significant compliment and Dorothy remembered it all her life. Four daughters and a son were born to the Sennes.

Dorothy became interested in the Bahá'í Faith from the time she asked her first question. Early in her study, she spoke of her husband living at Rustenburg, wishing that she could share with him what she was learning. The pioneers delightedly arranged to take Dorothy to Rustenburg. Arriving at Dorothy's home early in the morning, the pioneers were introduced to a fine-looking man, Dorothy's brother-in-law, William Masehla (now a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Southern African zone) who was to chaperon her because she was venturing out alone with strangers.

It was a happy day with singing and laughter on the way. The pioneers met Mr. Senne and other members of his family. At noon the picnic basket was unpacked and typical American picnic fare was spread out—cold ham, potato salad and apple pie. The pioneers did not realize that such food was strange to their guests but the unflinching courtesy of the African people prevailed and the lunch seemed to be eaten with relish. Ever since, the Sennes have said that in South Africa it was not tea, like in



Dorothy Kedibone Senne

the days of the Báb, that captured hearts,¹ but ham and potato salad!

On the journey back to Johannesburg, Mr. Masehla joined Dorothy in asking questions about the Faith. The little car sped along carrying two souls who were to become the earliest pillars of the Faith in Southern Africa.

Dorothy became a Bahá'í in January 1955, the first African woman in South Africa to embrace its truth. She began at once to teach the Faith and many hearts were attracted. She was deeply sincere, clear-thinking and honest in her approach to life and desired to build her life on truth. When she found the answer to her seeking, her enthusiasm knew no bounds. Her gay, outgoing spirit drew people to her; she taught with conviction and love. Dorothy had a superlative capacity to adjust herself to people of all walks of life; she was comfortable and happy with those who could not read and write as well as with the educated. The Faith grew. Bahá'í communities in and around Rustenburg were born. In addition, through her efforts and those of Bula Stewart who had settled in Pretoria as a pioneer, more than forty-five people embraced the Faith.

¹ See E. G. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, (Introduction) p. 38.

As the years passed, Dorothy's favourite study became the Covenant. Her last talk, at the national teaching conference in 1976, dealt with this subject which is at the heart of commitment to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. She passed from this life on 8 June 1977. Her funeral was as she would have wanted it to be, a means of teaching the Faith. Over one thousand people, including many non-Bahá'ís, gathered to pay tribute to one who had been a source of happiness, spiritual rebirth and love. Voices were raised on all sides: 'Our mother has left us.' Her husband, now a member of the Auxiliary Board, movingly paid tribute: 'Up to the time of her death, Dorothy remained loyal, devoted, dedicated, God-loving and God-fearing in rendering service to the divine Cause of God.'

The following cable dated 9 June 1977 was received from the Universal House of Justice:

GRIEVED PASSING DOROTHY SENNE FIRST AFRICAN WOMAN BELIEVER SOUTH AFRICA STOP KINDLY EXTEND OUR WARMEST SYMPATHY HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS STOP PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the Divine Plan Tablets,¹ has written: *It is said that in South Africa, a diamond mine is discovered. Although the mine is most valuable, yet after all it is stone. Perchance, God willing, the mine of humanity may be discovered and the brilliant pearls of the Kingdom be found.*

WILMA THOMAS 1913-1977

Bahá'u'lláh has written: *O Son of the Supreme! I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou grieve?*² Wilma Thomas believed in these words. She was in this life—and how much more so in the realms of light!—a happy and noble being, sincere in her faith, radiant and content, spiritually consecrated, and dedicated to serving others.

She was born on 3 June 1913, and was an only child. Her father died when she was a young girl and she enjoyed a very close rela-

¹ Tablet dated 11 April 1916.

² *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* (Arabic) No. 32.



Wilma Thomas

tionship with her mother who was an outstanding elementary school teacher. Wilma spent her childhood and youth in a small town in Michigan, U.S.A. and later lived in Upslandia and Detroit. She attended Wayne State University, but her studies were interrupted by her first marriage. Her two sons, Tom and Robert Ridley, were born prior to her return to university from which she graduated in sociology. She began her spiritual search early and made a study of different religions. While taking a university course in comparative religions she encountered and embraced the Bahá'í Faith. Later she married Irving Thomas.

Wilma served the Faith as a pioneer in Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, thus furthering the Divine Plan during the Ten Year Crusade from 1955 to 1963, the Nine Year Plan from 1969 to 1972, and the present Five Year Plan, until her passing on 10 June 1977. Before the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia in 1961, Wilma was the secretary of the National Teaching Committee which had the responsibility for winning the goals and preparing that national community for its election. She was a member of that first National Assembly in 1961 and attended the first international convention in

Haifa, Israel in 1963 to elect the Universal House of Justice.

When Wilma came to Venezuela in June 1969 she spent her first months in Cabimas, later transferring to Barquisimeto where she taught English at the University of Lara and came to be loved not only by the Bahá'ís but by the university faculty and students. In 1973 she was appointed a member of the Auxiliary Board for propagation of the Faith in Venezuela and in 1976 was appointed to the protection board, a service for which she was especially well qualified for she was perceptive, spiritually radiant and compassionate. She was exemplary in her firmness in the Covenant, and outstanding in her loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh and His institutions.

Toward the end of her life Wilma suffered from a heart condition and although she was aware that she might not live much longer she declined to return to the United States for surgery because the cardiologist had made it clear that she might not be able to return to Venezuela after the operation. Death found her at her pioneer post, faithful and active to the end. The International Teaching Centre wrote on 12 July 1977: 'It is a blessing that her dedicated work in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh continued to the very end of her earthly life.' Tribute was also paid by the Universal House of Justice in its cable of 13 June:

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED DEDICATED
MAIDSERVANT BAHUULLAH WILMA THOMAS
MEMBER AUXILIARY BOARD PIONEER SOUTH
AMERICAN NINE YEAR PLAN STOP ARDENT
PRAYERS PROGRESS HER SOUL OFFERED AT SAC-
RED THRESHOLD STOP CONVEY LOVING SYM-
PATHY HER FAMILY.

DONALD R. WITZEL
DOROTHY WHALEN

MARIA T. IRIZARRY

1903-1977

On 27 July 1977 the Bahá'í community of Puerto Rico was saddened by the loss of its first and much loved Bahá'í, Doña María T. (Teté) Irizarry. Doña Teté was born María Teresa Martín Quiñones in San Germán, Puerto Rico, on 9 September 1903. At a young age she



María T. Irizarry

married Martín López and moved to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, where she accepted the Bahá'í Faith as a result of the teaching efforts of the German believer, Margaret Lentz,¹ in the opening phase of the first Seven Year Plan (1937-1944) under which the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh were to be carried to 'every state within American Republic and every Republic in American continent.'² Thus Doña Teté became the first person to accept the Faith in the Dominican Republic as well as the first native born Puerto Rican believer.

She returned to Puerto Rico in the early 1940s and was the only Bahá'í on the island for a time. Shortly thereafter some pioneers arrived from the United States. In approximately 1947, Dr. Edris Rice-Wray, an American pioneer, settled in Puerto Rico and lived in the home of Doña Teté. Regular meetings were held in her home during this period and a number of the earliest Puerto Rican believers accepted the message of Bahá'u'lláh as a result of those gatherings.

Being extremely timid by nature, Doña Teté left her home but infrequently. However, she

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, p. 354; 'The Seven Year Plan', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, p. 192.

² Shoghi Effendi, message to United States convention, 1936, *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, p. 187.

served the Faith well not only by teaching it to all those with whom she came in contact but as a member of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of San Juan for many years, by serving on several committees and through opening her home for countless meetings. All who knew her speak of the atmosphere of peace and ease she created. She was the personification of tolerance and patience and literally could not bear the thought of hurting another person. She always spoke in a kindly and positive way. When asked whether she did not get lonely she would respond, 'No, 'Abdu'l-Bahá is always with me.' One would always be treated to a meal in her home since it was her charming custom to prepare a portion for 'Abdu'l-Bahá' which would be shared with unexpected visitors.

Doña Teté was married a second time, to Mr. José C. Irizarry. She is survived by her only child, an adopted daughter, Sara María Irizarry.

Informed of her passing, the Universal House of Justice cabled on 1 August 1977:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED BELIEVER
MARIA IRIZARRY FIRST PUERTO RICAN BAHAI
STOP ASSURE FRIENDS RELATIVES PRAYERS HOLY
SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

AḤMAD YAZDÁNÍ
(MÍRZÁ AḤMAD KHĀN YAZDÁNÍ
KASRAWÍ)
1891-1977

GRIEVED PASSING AHMAD YAZDANI HIS MANY
YEARS SERVICE CAUSE CLOSING PHASE HEROIC
AGE HIS DEVOTED UNREMITTING LABOURS BOTH
TEACHING ADMINISTRATIVE SPHERES BAHAI
ACTIVITIES HIS ERUDITION AND ASSIDUOUS
SCHOLARLY WORK WILL ALWAYS BE REMEM-
BERED BY FRIENDS CRADLE FAITH STOP ASSURE
SYMPATHY BEREAVED FAMILY FERVENT PRAYERS
PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice

Aḥmad Yazdání was born in Tíhrán on 24 April 1891 into a devout Muslim family. His father, Mírzá Ḥasan Khān Mu'ín-Díván, was Auditor-in-Chief during a period of the Qájáryiyih era. His mother's name was



Aḥmad Yazdání

Fāṭimih. Following the customary trend, Aḥmad Yazdání learned to read and write and gained a knowledge of the Qur'án. He studied at the newly-established schools for elementary and secondary education and following that enrolled in an engineering course conducted by French tutors.

Hearing of the Bahá'í Faith from a pedlar in Nishápúr, Aḥmad Yazdání sought further information from the Hand of the Cause Ibn-i-Abhar and from the renowned teacher, Akhavan-i-š-Şafá. After eight months of intense investigation and study of the Bahá'í Holy Writings he accepted the Faith at the age of twenty-two. From then until his death on 5 July 1977, his thoughts and actions were constantly channelled in the path of service to the Faith. He served with distinction on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tíhrán in the early years.

When he was twenty-three years of age, Aḥmad Yazdání married Miftáhu'l-Malakút Miftáḥ, a member of an aristocratic family. His wife was a Muslim but some years later she, too, embraced the Cause. The letters she received from the Guardian attest the zeal with which she served the Faith. Mr. and Mrs. Yazdání had three daughters and two sons.

In 1915 a group of people in Holland, exploring paths to peace, constituted them-

selves into a body known as the Central Organization for a Durable Peace with its Executive Committee based in the Hague. Their constitution was published by the press the world over. Aḥmad Yazdání, in consultation with two other Bahá'ís, prepared in French a paper embodying the Bahá'í principles and sent it to that organization with the suggestion that their search for ways to a permanent peace would be facilitated if they sought guidance on the subject from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The organization responded by submitting through Aḥmad Yazdání a letter to the Master. The letter, however, did not reach 'Abdu'l-Bahá until after World War I was over. In 1919 the Master summoned the Hand of the Cause Ibn-i-Aşdaq and Aḥmad Yazdání to the Holy Land and delegated them to take a Tablet,¹ with its English translation, to the organizers of the peace movement. Taking a boat from Egypt, they arrived in Holland to learn that the original organization had disbanded on termination of the war and a new one had taken its place. They met its president and secretary, presented the Master's Tablet and took their reply back to Him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent them another Tablet which reached them duly.

During his stay in Holland, Aḥmad Yazdání established contact with the Esperantists as he knew their language well and was a member of their branch in Tíhrán. He attended their meetings in Holland and gave stirring talks on the Faith. Having completed his assignment, he returned to the Holy Land whence, after a month and a half, he returned home by way of Turkey.

In Írán Aḥmad Yazdání secured employment in government offices and discharged his duties with exemplary zeal and probity. He could not, however, curb his passion to teach the Faith and thus was openly identified as a Bahá'í. His indiscretion triggered off the hostility of enemies of the Faith who made allegations against him which, though false, still resulted in his being imprisoned. Confined for several months, but irrepressible as ever, he told his fellow-prisoners about the Faith. Eventually his innocence was established and he was set free. Arriving home, he was overjoyed to receive a letter from the Guardian highly commending him and his family on the stead-

fastness of their faith in their recent trials and sufferings.

When he retired from government service in 1949, Aḥmad Yazdání was able to realize his long-cherished desire of devoting all his time and energy to the Faith. He engaged in teaching activities, assumed various responsibilities as an educator of the youth and children, was frequently in demand as a speaker and, in addition to his Bahá'í activities, was active in the promotion and spread of Esperanto. He travelled for the Faith over a wide area of Írán and in 1950, with the permission of Shoghi Effendi, he accepted the invitation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Pakistan to visit those countries where he spent eight months presenting the Faith at colleges and other educational institutions.

When Aḥmad Yazdání returned home, the Guardian asked him to go to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Dubai and cheer the hearts of the pioneers with the latest news of the Faith and with a message of loving greetings and encouragement from Shoghi Effendi and an expression of his admiration of their services. From there, Aḥmad Yazdání was sent on a similar mission to 'Iráq and Híjáz.

The next task entrusted to him by the beloved Guardian took him to Turkey. Apart from visiting the friends, establishing Bahá'í study classes, teaching the Faith and stimulating public interest in it through press articles, he assisted in the formation of three Local Spiritual Assemblies in Turkey before returning to Írán. The Guardian called on him next to go to Afghánistán, where he stayed for some time.

In 1922, Aḥmad Yazdání was invited by the Persian National Spiritual Assembly, to edit the Bahá'í News of Írán. This journal is currently published under the title *Akhhár-i-Amrí*. He served as its editor-in-chief for twelve years and wrote an article regularly in every issue on the aims, objectives and principles of the Cause. He was associated with most Bahá'í publications in Persia and was one of the founders of, and a contributor to, the *Tarániy-i-Umíd*, (Bahá'í Women's Journal). He also contributed articles to *Áhang-i-Badl'* (Bahá'í Youth Magazine) and the Year Book of the Íranian Bahá'í youth.

In addition to his vast literary output the outstanding achievements of Aḥmad Yazdání

¹ See *Tablet to the Central Organization for a Durable Peace, the Hague; The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, pp. 29-37.

include his invaluable work over the years on the National Spiritual Assembly, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tíhrán and the National Teaching Committee; his great contribution to the education and progress of women; his review of Bahá'í publications over a period of no less than half a century and his prodigious labours in collating and classifying extracts from several thousand Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of numberless letters of the Guardian. His faithful service drew many gracious comments from the Universal House of Justice. We conclude with a free translation of an extract from one of the letters written to him on its behalf:

'That precious friend is happy and privileged to dedicate his time fully to the service of God's Cause. He does so in a spirit of noble and self-sacrificial endeavour, immersing himself in the ocean of the Sacred Writings to discover pearls of wisdom. That dear, spiritual brother can rest assured that he is lovingly remembered in our supplications at the Holy Shrines and that our prayers are offered at the Sacred Thresholds for the descent of still greater blessings on his efforts.'

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF ÍRÁN
(Translated by Rustom Sabit)

ELSA MARIA GROSSMANN
1896-1977
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Elsa Maria Grossmann was born into a German family on 19 July 1896 in Rosario, Argentina. She and her brothers spent a happy childhood there and throughout her entire life she loved her Argentine homeland. In 1909 her family moved to Germany, settling first in Hamburg and later in Neckargemünd. Elsa Maria's character was deeply moulded by the warm, receptive and inquiring atmosphere of her parental home, and by the world-oriented mentality of Argentina which knew no prejudice of race or religion. She was also strongly influenced by her maternal grandmother, a pious woman, and by her maternal grandfather who, during the last epidemic of yellow fever in Argentina, voluntarily committed himself to caring for indigent victims and in the course of



Elsa Maria Grossmann

his Samaritan service caught the disease himself and died. It was these influences perhaps which prepared her for her acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith which she first encountered in 1919 or 1920.

Her brother, Hermann,¹ had spontaneously embraced the Faith during a lecture given in Leipzig by an American Bahá'í couple, Harlan and Grace Ober,² who were returning to the United States after being on pilgrimage in the Holy Land where they had visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Hermann returned to Hamburg and was met at the railway station by Elsa to whom he related his deep conviction of the truth of the Bahá'í Faith. From this point onward, love for Bahá'u'lláh and His Message became the centre of her life. She rendered many services to the Faith in Hamburg; on her various travels for the Cause; in the Bahá'í International Bureau in Geneva; and as a Bahá'í delegate to Esperanto Congresses, through which she gained the close friendship of Lydia Zamenhof. During the 1920s an active correspondence linked her to the Guardian of the

¹ Appointed a Hand of the Cause in 1951; see 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, p. 416.

² See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VIII, p. 656; vol. XIII, p. 866.

Faith whom the Grossmanns much admired. On their pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1937, shortly before Himmler's ordinance outlawed the Bahá'í Faith in the Third Reich, Elsa and Hermann and his wife, Anna, had the incomparable privilege of meeting Shoghi Effendi.

In the course of the difficulties caused by the Gestapo in northern Baden, Elsa Maria was imprisoned for nine days in Heidelberg because of her Bahá'í convictions. She was freed through the intervention of her brother who made representations to the Gestapo headquarters in Karlsruhe.

At the Stockholm conference in 1953 she responded to the call of Shoghi Effendi for pioneers to unopened areas in the Ten Year Crusade. Elsa moved to Westerland, one of the Frisian Islands, a service for which she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. She held her lonely, storm-swept pioneering post for eleven years until a serious illness forced her to return to the mainland. She was highly talented: in addition to translating from English into German *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, as well as the compilation of Bahá'í prayers most widely used in Germany (and, in collaboration with her brother, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* and a new translation of *Paris Talks*), she painted and composed verse. She remained interested in scientific progress and world affairs to the end of her life.

With the years her inner harmony and spiritual joy grew; she radiated these attributes in her surroundings and profoundly affected young people. She remained active to the end and was happy to be able to teach the Faith to four people at the nursing home, among them the Catholic priest of the home. On 6 August 1977, near midday, her soul took its flight to another world. The Universal House of Justice paid tribute in these words:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING KNIGHT BAHÁULLAH
 ELSA MARIA GROSSMANN STOP HIGH COMMEN-
 DATION, EXPRESSED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN HER
 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TRANSLATION GLEAN-
 INGS AND ABOVE ALL HER SINGLE HEARTED
 DEVOTION HISTORIC WORK PIONEER FRISIAN
 ISLANDS ENSURE HER HIGH RANK GERMAN
 BAHAI HISTORY AND PROVIDE SHINING EXAMPLE
 SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS STOP KINDLY
 EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY RELATIVES ASSUR-
 ANCE ARDENT PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD
 PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Let Elsa's spirit speak to those who would follow her example in these words from a report she wrote from the Frisian Islands,¹ described by Shoghi Effendi in his 1954 convention message as 'wind-swept' and 'inhospitable':

'It may happen to you that, being—perhaps in autumn—quite alone on the solitary, endless dunes and perceiving nothing but this primary landscape with its infinite sky and sea, you suddenly feel that tremendous, almost annihilating loneliness as it might have been experienced by a first man in a first creation. The story of the opening of the Frisian Islands to the Cause of God is, as yet experienced, not a very crimson-coloured one, when compared with many others from more radiant pioneer places. This was for a long time a heavy load on us here, but only the fact that our beloved Guardian was fully aware of the situation and often transmitted to us his inspiration and loving comfort, lightened its weight.

'We think of the little white lighthouses everywhere on these islands, looking over the sea calmly and firmly, and fully indifferent to the storms and tempests around them, just showing the seeking sailor the right route. This exactly is our way: to be like lighthouses of His Cause for whomsoever seeks His Path. And this finally, if God be willing, may lead to His spiritual victory.'

LUISA MAPA GOMEZ
 1892-1977

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED MAIDSER-
 VANT LUISA MAPA GOMEZ STOP PRAYING
 SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.
Universal House of Justice.

Luisa Mapa (Mrs. Jose Virto Gomez) was born into a prominent family in Talisay, Occidental Negros, Philippines in 1892. She was graduated from the University of the Philippines (College of Education) and, adopting as her motto 'Knowledge does not occupy space' she encouraged every youth she met to obtain an education. Her children were urged to study languages so they might communicate with more people of the world. Her outlook was truly universal and she had a great capacity for

¹ *Bahá'í News* (U.S.A.), August 1958.



Luisa Mapa Gomez

understanding the needs of people. Because of her love of humanity and her sense of fairness, relatives and friends sought her counsel. Hers was a happy home and when her seven children came together beneath its roof the rafters rang with laughter. She was open-handed and hospitable and the home was often filled with guests including foreign students, refugees, armed services personnel and tourists, all of whom were befriended by her and many of whom became lifelong correspondents and friends.

Luisa had an independent and inquiring mind and investigated many schools of religious thought. Through contact with Mrs. Nina Nadler and Mrs. Hazel Mori in 1953 she began to think of herself as a Bahá'í and made her first written declaration of acceptance on a hospital admission card where she described herself as a Bahá'í in the space provided for religious designation. Her daughter was much chagrined by this, thinking that her mother, at age sixty-one, was venturing into unknown waters without sufficient investigation, and considerable curiosity was aroused among the hospital staff who thought that a local religion had been born because 'bahay' in the Tagalog language means 'house'. In 1954 Luisa went abroad for medical treatment and visited a number of Bahá'í

centres in America and Europe; her acceptance of the Faith was confirmed. Although she had lived, as it were, within the spirit of the Bahá'í teachings all her life, her search for a religion with which to identify had now ended.

After she became a Bahá'í her home became the focal point of Bahá'í activities until the purchase of the national Hazíratu'l-Quds. The frequent visits of the Hands of the Cause Agnes Alexander and Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir brought her much pleasure and she enjoyed cooking for Miss Alexander dishes reminiscent of Hawaii. Luisa was an active teacher and a mother to the pioneers from Írán and the United States. One American pioneer wrote in Luisa's guest book, 'To come pioneering to the Philippines is to join the family beneath this roof. You are a *Mamsu* to all of us.'

Mrs. Gomez served on the National Spiritual Assembly from its inception in 1964 until 1975 and was often its treasurer. The first endowment received by the National Assembly, a tract of land in Quezon City, 400 square metres in area, was given by her.

In 1962, when Luisa was near death and was rushed to the hospital for a serious emergency operation, she called her children together and asked them to be always united. One daughter, Neva Gomez Dulay, who provided the information for this memoir and who is now a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines, declared at that time her acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh. She writes: 'I was intellectually convinced of the principles enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh but a spiritual bar born of years of agnosticism clouded my heart. Seeing mother close to death, the veil lifted and I was able to tell her that I would become a Bahá'í. I announced my intention realizing that I might be making her happy for the very last time. Mother answered very weakly, "Good. There is plenty of work to be done."'

Death came on 23 September 1977. People from all strata of society attended the funeral. Although she was known to be a Bahá'í it was only during the readings and prayers that many were able to appreciate the depth and beauty of the Faith; thus even in death she taught.

During his visit to the Philippines at Naw-Rúz 1977 the Hand of the Cause Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir presented Mrs. Gomez with a copy of *Selections from the Writings of the Báb* which gave much joy to her heart. Inscribed within

were the words, 'To dearest *Mamsu*—My greatest love and humble respect.'

In the life of Luisa Gomez was seen exemplification of the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone; let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path . . . Let it be seen that you are filled with universal love.*

KATHLEEN, LADY HORNELL
1890–1977

Kathleen, Lady Hornell, was born in Sussex, England on 1 July 1890, the daughter of Dr. Augustus Hayter Walker and Annie Louisa Walker. In a brief outline of her Bahá'í life and service written in 1966, Lady Hornell states: 'I was fortunate enough to have been allowed great freedom of thought and no prejudices were encouraged. I was never a member of any religious organization until I met the Bahá'í Faith on 16 October 1922 in London. My spiritual mother was Elizabeth Herrick, author of *Unity Triumphant*.¹ I was accepted as a believer at Ridván 1923 and became a voting member of the Faith. There were no formal declarations in those days. Ever since embracing the Cause my faith has grown stronger, enabling me to serve the Cause both administratively and in teaching. I have had the truly glorious experience of two pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the first in 1954 when Shoghi Effendi was my host and the second in 1966.

'From 1936 until 1954 I was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles and served as treasurer and assistant secretary. I was also treasurer of the British Publishing Trust Committee and, for a short time, secretary of the National Teaching Committee and a member of the Summer School Committee.

'As a member of the London community I served on the Local Spiritual Assembly from 1932 until 1945 except for a period of one and a half years when I was in Torquay, Devonshire, during World War II, where I served on the Local Spiritual Assembly. In October 1945 I pioneered to Nottingham, a goal of the British Six Year Plan, remaining there until the passing of Sir William on 22 September 1950.'

¹ London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner and Company, 1923.



Kathleen, Lady Hornell

Early in 1951 Lady Hornell travelled to Edinburgh and Glasgow as a public speaker and in November of that year visited the young and struggling Bahá'ís in Belfast where she also spoke at a public meeting. She relates that her address brought strong opposition from some members of the audience who were of Christian background and notes that ironically it was a Buddhist who arose to defend her. In May 1953 she settled in Belfast as a pioneer and, when that community had grown in strength, she pioneered to Bangor where she remained until a Spiritual Assembly was formed at Ridván 1959, the first homefront goal to be won for the British National Assembly in the Ten Year Crusade. 'All were Bangor citizens except myself,' she wrote, 'and I stayed another year so that the friends might experience the work of a Local Assembly.'

When the Bahá'í community of the United Kingdom was called upon to aid the believers in Europe in achieving the goals of the Ten Year Crusade, Lady Hornell immediately responded. In July 1960 she settled in Venice where she remained until 1965 at which time she pioneered to Cagliari, Sardinia a goal assigned to the Italian believers in the Nine Year Plan. Her last years were spent in London where she passed away on 24 September 1977.

In the cable sent at the time of her passing the Universal House of Justice paid tribute to this distinguished early believer:

PASSING LADY HORNELL ROBS BRITISH COMMUNITY ONE OF FEW REMAINING LINKS EARLY DAYS FAITH. HER UNWAVERING FAITH CONSTANT DEDICATED SERVICES PIONEER TEACHING ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS OVER SO MANY YEARS ASSURE HER HIGH STATION ANNALS CAUSE PROVIDE SHINING EXAMPLE PRESENT FUTURE GENERATIONS. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL MEETING. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER LOVING SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Not long after, at a teaching conference held in Alexandra Palace, North London, the British community commemorated her memory. Present was her daughter, Mrs. Hasan Balyuzi, and approximately 1,800 other Bahá'í friends. Mr. Philip Hainsworth, on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly, recalled her life of indefatigable dedication and service. 'She is an outstanding example for the British Bahá'ís,' he said. 'She recognized the Faith at once, immediately arose to serve it and continued to do so uninterruptedly, to the best of her ability, for more than half a century.'

NATHULAL GUPTA 1890-1977

Mr. Nathulal Gupta was born into a family of orthodox Sanatani Hindus in 1890 at Barai, near Gwalior, India and received his education in Hindi and Sanskrit, as was the custom of the time. Later he grew dissatisfied with the Sanatani policy which he felt discriminated against those of lower caste and became a member of the Arya Samaj. He delved deeply into the ancient Vedic, Puranic (Hindu mythological) and philosophical literature of India and authored two scholarly books in defence of Arya Samaj ideology. A zealous Arya Samajist, Mr. Gupta was intolerant of other religions. Yet, it is a measure of his pure-heartedness that in 1956, when he heard an exposition of the Bahá'í Faith by Mr. M. H. Ilmi at the Gwalior Arya Samaj Hall, he was greatly attracted and began meeting regularly the local Bahá'ís and studying Bahá'í literature in Hindi. He became



Nathulal Gupta

convinced by the irrefutable logic of the Bahá'í teachings and accepted the Faith with great fervour.

Mr. Gupta's open declaration of faith and fearless exposition of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh led to his receiving letters threatening his life. His family, consisting of the widow and children of his adopted son, were antagonistic towards the Faith. In spite of his meagre financial resources he once sold a village home he owned so that he could donate money for the purchase of printing machinery for the Faith. The National Spiritual Assembly of India returned with appreciation his offer of the house in which he lived since the rent from it supported his dependents.

From sources he had known as scholar-devotee of the Arya Samaj, Mr. Gupta developed the conviction that the Persian scholar, whose acquaintance led Rishi (Saint) Dayanand to formulate the principles of Arya Samaj, was actually Jamál Effendi,¹ the teacher sent to India by Bahá'u'lláh, with whom Rishi Dayanand had come in contact in

¹ See 'A Short Historical Sketch of the Bahá'í Movement in India and Burma', by Muṣṭafá Rúmí, *Bahá'í Magazine*, vol. 22, No. 3, June 1931 (and subsequent vols.); *Maṣábiḥ-Hidáyat* by 'Azizu'lláh Sulaymání, vol. VIII, p. 125; and 'In Memoriam', Muṣṭafá Rúmí, *The Bahá'í World*, vol. X, p. 517.

Bombay at the time of Queen Victoria's coronation as Empress, a suggestion which perhaps will be the subject of study by future Bahá'í scholars. His zeal and erudition are reflected in the Hindi-language Bahá'í magazine *Abhá* which he launched in the early 1960s with the approval of the National Spiritual Assembly. He served as editor until failing health forced him to relinquish this activity in 1973. His extensive knowledge and his familiarity with Hindu scripture were reflected in his writing which was a source of confirmation to those of Hindu background.

The memory of this frail old man who, for example, walked three miles so that he might teach the inmates of the local jail, and his strength of spirit and depth of knowledge, are not forgotten by local citizens.

On 9 December 1977 the Universal House of Justice cabled:

GRIEVED PASSING DEDICATED SERVANT BAHÁULLAH NATHULAL GUPTA STOP HIS CONTRIBUTIONS SPREADING MESSAGE GOD PARTICULARLY THROUGH ABHA MAGAZINE UNFORGETTABLE ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

MUZAFFER GÜNEY
1910–1977

Muzaffer Güney was born in the town of Fila which was then situated within the territory of the Ottoman empire and is now part of Yugoslavia. His father was a military officer and the family moved to Istanbul when Muzaffer was four years old. He was raised in a family atmosphere which was pious without being overzealous. When he had reached the age of twelve, Muzaffer was already recognized for the beauty of his voice and the depth of his religious beliefs, as a result of which he was from time to time entrusted with chanting the *adhán*, the Muslim call to prayer, from the minaret of the Fátih mosque, an experience which filled him with bliss and won him admiration. At age thirteen he became spiritually devoted to Mawláná (Rúmí) and for a year attended the ceremonies of worship at the Mawláví Lodge as a whirling dervish. Meanwhile, he continued his education and, following



Muzaffer Güney

his graduation from military school, entered the army as a lieutenant.

In spite of hindrances arising from his profession Muzaffer strove constantly to observe the tenets of Islám. The fact that sometimes the conditions under which he lived prevented him from carrying out his religious duties induced him to reflect upon this discrepancy between the spiritual and the material worlds and he began to search for an answer to this dilemma.

When he was transferred to Sivas, Turkey in 1955 he befriended Maḥmúd 'Aṭṭár and his family, Bahá'ís who had pioneered from Írán. Although his days were filled with the demanding activities of his profession, his evenings were devoted to long conversations with Maḥmúd 'Aṭṭár and reflections upon certain statements in the Qur'án and other religious texts. This led to Muzaffer Güney's acceptance of the divine call of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. His entire family embraced the Cause with him and were welcomed into the Bahá'í community. From that time forward he endeavoured to familiarize with the divine teachings all those with whom he came into contact some of whom accepted the Faith or showed tolerance toward it and some of whom warned and threatened him. The grace of God protected him from harm. In 1960, when he had retired from the

army with the rank of Colonel, he was able to devote himself completely to service to the Faith and was thus able to bring the Faith to the attention of a greater number of people and engage in teaching activities without restraint. The Güney family in February 1964 had the happiness of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and in April of the same year Muzaffer had the honour of being elected to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly of Turkey.

That year also saw his appointment to the Auxiliary Board, his activities thus being expanded to include the whole country. Through the years he travelled to every region of Turkey, never retreating even in the face of severe circumstances. Always he returned home filled with the inner peace that the fulfilment of duty induces. He also travelled abroad several times to carry out Bahá'í missions, visiting India once and Írán twice. His faith was invincible, his love for Bahá'u'lláh wholehearted, and his obedience and devotion exemplary. It was his habit to rise each day before dawn for prayers and although he was quiet by nature and enjoyed meditating in the evening hours he took the greatest pleasure in discussing the Faith with others and considered a day wasted if no inspirational conversation took place. He undertook all activities to the utmost of his capacity and was committed with his whole being to spreading the Bahá'í teachings. Even a month after his passing, acquaintances were still calling at his house to borrow books or telephoning for interviews.

Muzaffer Güney was instrumental in guiding many souls to the Cause of God and being extremely modest was never satisfied with his level of activity and always sought to increase it. May God's mercy and grace be upon him and may his work on this earthly plane be favoured with divine acceptance in the worlds beyond. When informed that he had passed away on 14 December 1977, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT CAUSE
 GOD MUZAFFER GUNAY STOP HIS SERVICES
 UNFORGETTABLE ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL
 GATHERINGS ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS
 ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS
 SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

AYDIN MUZAFFER

SIYYID MAHFÚZU'L-HAQ 'ILMÍ 1894-1978

Siyyid Maḥfúzu'l-Ḥaq 'Ilmí (Mehfoozulhuz Ilmí) was born into a devout and educated Muslim family in 1894 in the village of Sataria, district of Chittagong, Bangladesh. He was an excellent student and with the encouragement of one of his teachers who recognized the youth's capacity he pursued ardently a study of Arabic and resolved to become a teacher. In 1920 he obtained his degree from Punjab University. He taught at *Shamsu'l-'Ulúm* Theological College in Badaun, province of Uttar Pradesh, India for several years and went on to become a lecturer in *Iláhiyyát* Theological College in Kanpur. Here he met the outstanding educator Mawláná 'Abdu'l-Qádir, respected for his saintly character, who had met Bahá'ís in Bombay; he favoured the teaching methods of the Bahá'ís and encouraged his students to follow them.

'Ilmí was a good writer and while still a student had won an award for one of his articles which was published in an Urdu newspaper in Lahore. He later won fame as a poet, his poems in Urdu winning him an appreciative audience throughout the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. His poems were often on themes of love, justice and the fulfilment of spiritual prophecies and he used to give addresses in which he recited passages from his verse. He worked as a freelance journalist for a time.

While living in Qádiyán where he had become a prominent and active member of the *Aḥmadiyya* (or *Qádiyání*) sect, 'Ilmí learned about the Bahá'í Faith and was confirmed in his acceptance of it through *Mírzá Maḥmúd-i-Zarqání* who was then visiting Qádiyán. He immediately arose to proclaim the truth of the Bahá'í Revelation and continued to make an exhaustive study of its scripture, a process facilitated by his command of Persian and Arabic. Very soon he launched a monthly Bahá'í magazine, *Kawkab-i-Hind*, the first issue appearing in May 1924, published in Agra, India. This edition carried a scholarly article written by him in which he set forth the principles of the Bahá'í Cause, explained the station of Bahá'u'lláh and challenged the members of the *Aḥmadiyya* group to investigate with open minds the claim of Bahá'u'lláh. His outpouring of writings, his moving and



Siyyid Mahfūzu'l-Haq 'Ilmī

cogent addresses, his visits to leading figures in many walks of life in both India and Pakistan, to whom he presented Bahá'í literature, attracted many eminent people to investigate and accept the Faith. Those of Muslim background are rarely well accepted by Hindus and it is a measure of 'Ilmī's success as a Bahá'í teacher that he was instrumental in drawing to the Faith numerous Hindus among whom were some prominent pundits of the orthodox Arya Samaj sect. 'Ilmī's wife, Zaynab Bagum, also embraced the Bahá'í Faith and lent him every assistance.

One of the most important services rendered by 'Ilmī was the translation into Urdu of many Bahá'í books thus meeting an urgent need of the Bahá'í community. He is appreciated, as well, for the many pamphlets he wrote, and for his poems, the collection published under the title *Šur-i-Isrāfil* being particularly well known and valued by the Bahá'ís. He was an effective public speaker and frequently addressed prestigious gatherings of educated people who were much affected by the simplicity of his nature and the compelling force of his remarks. In Pakistan he served as a member of the Auxiliary Board. Despite the difficulties of misunderstanding or rejection by friends and relatives and the reduced financial circumstances

which are the inevitable accompaniment of a life dedicated, as was 'Ilmī's, to service to spiritual principles, he was happy and continued to write prolifically.

On 8 February 1978, after more than a half century of uninterrupted service, 'Ilmī passed away and was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery at Lahore. The Universal House of Justice in its cable of 12 February honoured this pillar of the Cause in Pakistan:

GRIEVED PASSING MEHFOOZULHUQ ILMÍ
LIFELONG DEVOTED EXEMPLARY SERVICES
FAITH SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENT UNFORGETTABLE
ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS ARDENT
PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS
SOUL ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL
GATHERING.

(Adapted from a memoir written by Anisur Rehman Dehlavi, Editor, *Bahá'í Magazine*, Karachi.)

MARTHA 'NAKIYA' NOYAKUK TRIGG
1944–1978

Should you display an effort, so that the fragrances of God be diffused amongst the Eskimos, its effect will be very great and far-reaching.

'Abdu'l-Bahá
*Tablets of the Divine Plan*¹

Martha Trigg's Eskimo name, Nakiya, is highly significant. It means 'a point for guidance'. When native hunters or travellers were out in their skin boats, a familiar landmark could mean the difference between life and death. Perhaps because Martha's early life had been difficult and filled with hardship she was often a point of guidance for others to whom she offered assurance, new hope and gentle but sound advice.

She was born in Mary's Igloo, Alaska on 18 January 1944. Most of her childhood years were spent with her grandparents, John and Alice Kakaruk, from whom she learned to value her Eskimo heritage. She studied the dances, songs and legends of her people. Her great-grandfather had been a shaman—a

¹ Tablet dated 5 April 1916.



Martha 'Nakiya' Noyakuk Trigg

medicine man, or holy man—who had seen the good in Christianity and encouraged his people to embrace it.

In her thirteenth year, while living in Nome on the Bering Sea, Martha encountered the Bahá'í Faith through Warren and Kathy Rodgers who had pioneered to the area. Many of her friends were frightened by this new teaching and turned away but Martha developed a deep interest and introduced her grandmother to the Bahá'í teachings. Although warned by the clergy that the Bahá'í Faith was from the devil and that association with the Bahá'ís would result in her being consigned to hell, a bond of love grew up between Martha and her new friends. About three years later, Martha became a live-in baby-sitter in our home in the Anchorage area, learning more about the Cause as she helped with the household tasks. She was whimsically attached to *san*, the Oriental term of endearment, and was known in our home as Martha-san. She called me Papa-san and my wife, Beverly, Mama-san.

In February 1961 Martha became a Bahá'í. She loved the Writings and history of the Faith deeply. 'Mount your steeds, O heroes of God!'—the cry of Mullá Husayn which was taken up by the besieged Bábís at Fort Ṭabarsí—touched her profoundly and became

a watchword which would move her to action throughout her life.

In January 1963 Martha married Jerome Trigg, Jr. The couple and their four children Valerie, Pamela, Jerome III (Koodook) and Sara (Suki) were much loved wherever they went. They lived at various times in the Bahá'í communities of Anchorage, Nome, Soldotna, Haines, Bethel and Kotzebue. In each place, from school authorities and neighbours, would be heard: 'What a nice family; they are always welcome back.' It was one of Martha's greatest joys that members of her family including her beloved grandmother, two sisters, an uncle and the four Trigg children accepted the Faith. When her husband, Jerome, became a Bahá'í during the visit of the Hand of the Cause John Robarts at Riḍván 1967, the Triggs became the first Eskimo Bahá'í couple in the world.

Martha was one of the first to realize that particular efforts must be made to reach the native people and was frequently consulted about means of bringing Bahá'u'lláh's message to her people. She participated in a panel during the national convention of Alaska in 1969. As a result of these deliberations and the ensuing activity a major break-through occurred in teaching among the Eskimos. She and Jerome were in the vanguard of the proclamation programmes launched in the early 1970s. With pride and dignity, Martha would don her beautiful fur traditional dancing parka, hand-made by her grandmother and decorated with unique designs, and perform the ancient Eskimo dances; she would speak of the old ways of her people and explain about the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. In the north, the west, the Aleutian chain, Kodiak Islands and in cities and villages throughout south-east Alaska she danced and told her audiences about the Blessed Beauty.

On 9 February 1978 the house in which Martha was temporarily staying in Nome caught fire. Four people, including Martha, died in the blaze; no other members of her family were present. Her well-worn prayer book which survived the fire was used at her burial service. Her casket was surrounded by the roses she loved so well and which to her symbolized the many blessings of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. Tributes were received from several Hands of the Cause and from other Bahá'í friends. I read during the service the words

Martha had penned inside the front cover of her prayer book: 'O God! Thou Who art adored! I am from Thee and unto Thee I come.'

(Adapted from a memoir by John Kolstoe, *Alaska Bahá'í News*, November 1978)

CHADWICK MOHAPI
1888–1978

MARY MOHAPI
?–1968



Chadwick Mohapi

Chadwick Mohapi and his wife, Mary, were the first to accept the Faith in Lesotho (formerly Basutoland) as a result of the teaching efforts of Fred and Beth Laws¹ who were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh upon their arrival, in October 1953, in that tiny mountainous country in Southern Africa. The teaching trips taken by Mr. and Mrs. Laws on the old roads out of Maseru, the capital, led them past the beautiful tree-shaded home of the Mohapis. A friendship developed between the two couples and the Mohapis became the first Basotho to embrace the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in their home country. Mr. Mohapi has left an account of their first meeting:

'One day in the afternoon of a day in 1954, my wife and I were sitting outside in the sun when we saw a strange car . . . people of European descent came from the car. We then sent our first son, Selai, to find out where they came from: he came to us with them . . . they asked us if they could be permitted to have the use of one wall over which they could put a canvas for the day (for shelter). We asked them who they were, where they had come from . . . we wanted to know their intentions. They told us they had come from a far-off land, that they were looking for people to whom they could teach the Word of God. Clowningly, I said "You can come and live with us in this *rondoval* (round hut) over here!" They said they would be grateful to do that. We asked them, "How are you going to live with black people? Don't you know that we do not love white people? We have never stayed with white people before." They said that did not matter to them,

¹ Elizabeth Laws, see 'In Memoriam', p. 459.

they could live with us. I said to my wife, "Let us try this out and see whether these people are genuine." The Laws returned to Maseru to pick up their luggage and returned in the evening. "We were puzzled because we had been joking and they had, in innocence, taken us seriously. We were now surprised and also frightened," Mr. Mohapi recalled.

'That very evening they invited us to dinner in the *rondoval* with them. We were afraid of going in there with them, but we saw what beautiful faces they had . . . they served us with meals instead of us serving them with meals. The following morning they invited us for breakfast and through the great love they showed they made friends with our young children by the end of the second day. We still asked ourselves what these Europeans wanted living amongst us. The eve of the third day they invited us not for a meal, but for prayers. We were greatly surprised. It appeared to us that we had come by a bone that had very nice marrow in it. Then they stayed and they became our real friends. We gave them new names—the man, *Lerato* (Love), and the lady, *Malerato* (Mother of Love).'

The Mohapis still had many moments in which they wondered about their unusual guests but they enjoyed being with them for

prayers and discussion of Bible prophecies—Mrs. Mohapi had always had a keen interest in Bible subjects. The Laws gradually introduced the Bahá'í teachings to them. Mr. Mohapi recalled, 'Then they told us the Message they had brought and we then understood.' But it was the example of their lives which spoke loudest: 'They fed us like their own children. One day my wife and I fell sick at the same time; they took our children and lived with them and they assisted us and helped us heal. The fears we had entertained gradually disappeared until we really realized . . . they were like our own brother and sister. Now we really accepted their statements.'

Chadwick Mohapi was then sixty-six years old. But he and his wife were to spearhead the first teaching efforts to reach other parts of Lesotho. Other Bahá'ís visited the peaceful shady home of the Mohapis, which they called 'Seqonaka', and it became a centre for meetings which drew in people from surrounding villages. Many were curious to see 'Europeans' (the term used by many Africans for all white people) and Africans living together.

Chadwick Mohapi was born in 1888 into a distinguished family in the Berea area. His family was of the Bakoena clan, the royal clan of Lesotho, descendants of Moshoeshe I, the father of the Basuto nation. As a boy, Chadwick herded cattle for his father who showed him favour; he was the only son to go to school and one of the first young men in Lesotho to study mechanics at Lerotholi Technical Institute in Maseru. Maseru grew from a small village to a busy town and Chadwick was involved in repairing cars, installing water facilities, repairing mills. From 1916 to 1918 he served in the armed forces and travelled to France and Britain. He said to a friend, prophetically, 'We are blazing paths for our children to travel across the seas.' In recent times three of his sons and several grandchildren have gone abroad for study and work.

Mr. Mohapi was deeply impressed by the number of trees he saw in Europe and resolved to plant trees when he returned to his own country which had been stripped of trees years earlier. In 1918 he married; his wife, Mary, was of the Bataung clan, a direct descendant of the famous chieftain, Moletsane. They had six sons and two daughters. The Mohapis set up their home at 'Seqonaka' in 1922 and here Chad-

wick began planting seedlings. He served his country in many ways: as road party foreman for the construction of new roads, as chauffeur to the Resident Commissioner, as driver for the guardian of the young king; and was honoured by being made a gazetted headman of the mountain village of Rapoleboea. He retired to 'Seqonaka' where he later met the Laws and accepted the Faith and became involved immediately in plans 'to go outside and reach other people.'

They went first to Mary's home area, Sephapos, which became Lesotho's second Bahá'í community. Many of Mary's family accepted the Faith including Chief Jacob and Armstrong Sephapos and their wives. 'My wife was really the leader,' said Chadwick, 'she really had the potential.' They carried the Faith to the mountainous area of Qacha's Nek where their son, Alfred, and a nurse at the local hospital became Bahá'ís, and to the royal village of Matsieng where they informed the Paramount Chief about the Bahá'í teachings. They turned their attention to the north and east, teaching in Butha Buthe, Leribe and even the Orange Free State in South Africa; and on another visit to the mountains where their married daughter lived, she and her husband, the chief of the area, became Bahá'ís, as did many others. Meanwhile the work at Seqonaka continued, resulting in the formation of several active communities.

After Mary's passing in 1968 Chadwick reflected: 'We used to sing Bahá'í songs and say prayers with our children . . . now my health is not good and I cannot go on teaching trips, I am now tired . . . I am very grateful that I now see Bahá'ís calling on me. If you plant a little flower, eventually it makes many beautiful big flowers—this gratifies you. I am very grateful to see the success of the Faith in Lesotho. I liken my position to that of Moshoeshe I who accepted the first (Christian) missionaries and brought his people a great deal of knowledge.' Chadwick participated in Bahá'í activities until the time of his passing. During the Five Year Plan, at the dedication of a site for a regional centre at Ha Rampa, he planted two seedling trees, carried in his hands from 'Seqonaka'. In his remarks at the dedication ceremony he employed an analogy very suited to Lesotho which has many diamonds. He likened the discovery of the



Mary Mohapi

Faith to finding a diamond and said, 'At first the stone might look like all the others, but when it has been cut and polished it has the power to make a man wealthy for the rest of his life.' And addressing a Unity Conference at the National Bahá'í Centre he paid tribute to the Laws, cautioning the Bahá'ís: 'Be kind to visitors, friends—you never know who the important ones may be.'

Chadwick Mohapi was honoured by the Bahá'ís of Lesotho in early 1975, marking the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Faith in that country. Nearly one hundred friends gathered at 'Seqonaka' for speeches, feasting, and the presentation to Mr. Mohapi of a photograph of the Shrine of the Báb. He responded by saying, 'Extol me by extolling my Faith.' He gave a beautiful tree-shaded portion of his land to the Bahá'ís, marking the corners with white-painted stones. He hoped that a prayer house, similar to the Laws' old *rondoal* could be built so that the Bahá'ís could come, enjoy the trees, and pray. In 1976 the Hand of the Cause John Roberts and his wife, Audrey,¹ had a joyful visit with Mr. Mohapi reminiscing about the early days of the Cause in Lesotho.

¹ Mr. and Mrs. Roberts and their son, Patrick, are Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for Bechuanaland (now Botswana).

Some months before his passing the Lesotho Bahá'ís erected a bronze plaque on this spot which had been given to the Faith. The inscription, in Sesotho and English, reads in part: 'This site is dedicated as a Bahá'í meeting place in honour of Morena Chadwick Mohapi and Mary Mohapi—First Basotho in Lesotho to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as God's Messenger for today.'

Chadwick Mohapi passed away on 4 April 1978. His funeral was attended by approximately 800 mourners including the Queen of Lesotho, several government ministers and officials, principal chiefs and leaders of the business and professional community. A statement read during the programme made reference to the Bahá'í concept of death and described Mr. Mohapi's position as the first believer in Lesotho: 'Mr. Mohapi will always occupy a special place in the hearts of the Bahá'ís all over the world because he was the first Basotho Bahá'í in Lesotho, having become a Bahá'í in 1954. By this simple act of faith, by this simple declaration in Bahá'u'lláh as the Prophet for today, Mr. Mohapi unknowingly assured his place in the annals of Bahá'í history.'

The cablegram received from the Universal House of Justice was read at the service:

GRIEVED PASSING CHADWICK MOHAPI LONG-TIME STEADFAST DEVOTED BELIEVER LESOTHO ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Also read was the tribute cabled by the Continental Board of Counsellors in Southern Africa:

DEEPLY SADDENED DEPARTURE DEARLY LOVED CHADWICK MOHAPI HIS DISTINGUISHED STATUS FIRST BELIEVER LESOTHO MANY SERVICES CAUSE ASSISTANCE EARLY PIONEERS AND BELIEVERS SURELY ATTRACTS CONFIRMATION BLESSED BEAUTY ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS OUR FERVENT PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL STOP HIS RADIANT SPIRIT WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED.

He was a man ahead of his time. Through his foresight in planting trees at 'Seqonaka', today the friends enjoy their shade. Similarly, through his planting the spiritual seeds of the Bahá'í Faith in Lesotho, the tree of the Cause has grown strong and extends its benefits to the people of that land. He was blessed not only

with an adored wife, many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, a number of whom have recognized the Faith, but was further blessed with spiritual children in Lesotho—those who have become Bahá'ís and those unnumbered who will recognize the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and who will remember with grateful hearts the place of Chadwick and Mary Mohapi in the Bahá'í history of Lesotho.

CAROLE J. ALLEN

ELLSWORTH BLACKWELL
1902–1978

Ellsworth Blackwell was born in Greenville, Mississippi on 1 August 1902 to Philip and Mary Blackwell of that city. He attended the University of Iowa and was a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. In 1937 he married Ruth Browne, a member of the Chicago Bahá'í community, and from that union was born a son, Philip Ellsworth, who died in infancy.

Ellsworth became a Bahá'í in 1934 in Chicago, having studied the Faith at the fireside classes of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Edwards, and from that time forward ardently participated in all phases of the teaching and administrative work of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. He served on the Spiritual Assembly of Chicago and was, for a time, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. His pioneering activity spanned almost a quarter of a century beginning in 1940 under the first Seven Year Plan of Shoghi Effendi when Ellsworth and his wife settled in Haiti, an area where Mr. and Mrs. Louis G. Gregory had spent six months in 1934,¹ and came to an end when he passed away at his post in Kananga, Zaïre during the course of the present Five Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice. The Blackwells spent the years 1940 to 1943 in Haiti; returned there for a second period beginning in 1950, under the second Seven Year Plan; and went there again in 1960, remaining until 1975. The first Spiritual Assembly of Haiti was formed in the capital, Port-au-Prince, in 1942, and in 1961 the first National Spiritual Assembly was

¹ See *The Bahá'í Centenary: 1844–1944*, p. 197.



Ellsworth Blackwell

elected; Ellsworth was the first chairman of these institutions. He later became Haiti's first Auxiliary Board member, serving in that capacity until 1970 when he returned to the administrative service of the Faith in Haiti on the national level.

During their long years in Haiti the Blackwells were strengthened and encouraged by letters from Shoghi Effendi with whom they were in frequent correspondence. In his own hand the Guardian wrote on 15 April 1941, shortly after they arrived as the first pioneers in Haiti: 'The work you have done, the sacrifices you have made, the historic mission you have initiated, are highly praiseworthy, meritorious and unforgettable. I will specially pray for you both that in whatever field you may labour in the days to come, Bahá'u'lláh may reinforce, guide and bless you and aid you to enrich the record of your pioneer services.' On 21 December 1941 Shoghi Effendi wrote: 'I wish to assure you in person of my deepest and abiding appreciation of your devoted and indeed historic services. Perseverance will crown your labours with imperishable glory. Rest assured, and never relax in your efforts which the rising generation will extol and admire. You are often in my thoughts and

prayers. I will always be glad to hear from you, and will pray that your dearest hopes may be speedily and completely realized.'

In October 1975 the Blackwells pioneered to the Malagasy Republic on the island of Madagascar where Ellsworth served on the National Spiritual Assembly in 1976-1977. Finally, in 1977, they were assigned to the Republic of Zaïre in Central Africa. Ellsworth ascended to the Abhá Kingdom on 17 April 1978 after a short illness, the first pioneer to lay down his life in that African nation. A gleaming white monument marks his resting place which overlooks the rolling green countryside near Kananga.

Ellsworth Blackwell was also active in Rotary International in Haiti, Madagascar and Zaïre. His funeral was attended by a representative of the Rotary Club of Kananga who offered a graveside eulogy.

Ellsworth was a Bahá'í speaker and teacher of great renown and his voice was heard in many far corners of the world; he was highly regarded by all who knew him and worked with him in our beloved Faith.

On 20 April 1978 the Universal House of Justice cabled the following tribute:

GRIEVED PASSING VALIANT LONGTIME SERVANT
CAUSE BHAULLAH ELLSWORTH BLACKWELL
STOP OUTSTANDING ENDEAVOURS PIONEERING
TEACHING ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANY
LANDS EVIDENCE HIS DEVOTION DEDICATION
FAITH HE DEARLY LOVED STOP ASSURE WIFE
FAMILY FRIENDS PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROG-
RESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

RUTH BLACKWELL

'INÁYATU'LLÁH FANÁNÁPADHÍR
1919-1978

'Ináyatu'lláh Fanánápadhír (Fananapazir) was born into a devout Bahá'í family in Işfahán, in 1919. His father, Faḍlu'lláh Núrí, was a Bahá'í teacher and calligraphist of distinction; exquisite examples of the transcriptions he made of numerous sacred Writings of the Faith may be found even today in Bahá'í homes in Işfahán and environs.

'Ináyatu'lláh completed his secondary education in his home town and received from his



'Ináyatu'lláh Fanánápadhír

father a grounding in the teachings and principles of the Faith. 'Ináyatu'lláh, too, was a fine penman and was blessed with a keen mind and a prodigious memory. When only fourteen years of age, he studied the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*; the Işfahán Spiritual Assembly assigned him the task of teaching the Bahá'í youth of Najaf-Ábád. As a result of a meeting with the Hand of the Cause Ṭarázu'lláh Samandarí and witnessing the consecration and zeal that characterized his services to the Cause, 'Ináyatu'lláh vowed to dedicate his life to the Faith in a similar manner and by his subsequent services proved right to the very end his fidelity to his pledge.

At the request of the Persian National Spiritual Assembly, 'Ináyatu'lláh settled in Ṭihrán and conducted training institutes until the inception of the forty-five month Plan in October 1946 when the National Spiritual Assembly accepted his request to proceed as a pioneer to 'Iráq. For some two years he resided at Baghdád and Karbilá and Kázimayn conveying the message to the people in those areas until the day when most of the friends were constrained to return home. 'Ináyatu'lláh was among this number and at the instance of the National Spiritual Assembly he went to

Khuzistán to teach the Faith and animate the believers. Later he was assigned similar work in Kirmán where, in the following year, he married 'Ishrat Khánum Ghaybí (Rabbání). Two sons and one daughter, the issue of that union, are all qualified physicians today and worthy servants in God's Vineyard. 'Ináyatu'lláh's teaching efforts in Kirmán bore a goodly harvest. He moved thereafter to Bam, Záhidán, Khásh, Saráván and Írán-Shahr, carrying on the teaching and consolidation work. Then came a short break in his full-time Bahá'í service. Turning his hand to trade for a time and bringing to bear upon it the full force of his intelligence and initiative, he soon achieved substantial success in the material field.

In 1954 while on pilgrimage to the Holy Land the beloved Guardian advised him to devote his full time and thought to Bahá'í work. On his return home, acting on the instructions of the National Spiritual Assembly, he visited a number of centres in Írán to stimulate Bahá'í pioneering activity and, in 1957, with the encouragement of Shoghi Effendí, he arose and, surmounting the many obstacles that beset his path, went as a pioneer to Africa. He was resident in the Gambia, his first post, for four years when illness forced him to leave for Marrakesh. Regaining health, he attended the Jubilee celebrations in London after which he returned to Marrakesh. Under instructions from the Universal House of Justice, he then went to Kenya where he stayed fifteen years. During this period he visited other centres in Africa, teaching non-Bahá'ís and stimulating Bahá'ís to still greater effort. Among the countries he visited were Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zambia, Rhodesia, Malawi, Botswana, Somali and Sudan, and finally, in accordance with directions from the World Centre, he proceeded to visit Mali, Sênégál, the Gambia, Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

On this journey he fell ill and was forced to return to Kenya. Following a period in hospital he returned to Írán to visit relatives and friends. The warmth and affection of the welcome accorded him attested the esteem in which he was held by the Bahá'ís. Full advantage was taken of his presence and full use made of his talents, especially in the fields of teacher-training and of delivering the message to students in the higher grades. His strenuous labours in these various fields won him the

hearty appreciation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia and the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tíhrán alike. He continued in service thus until 19 April 1978 when he suddenly passed away.

Among the published and unpublished works of 'Ináyatu'lláh Fanánápadhír are *Manáhiju'l-Hidáyat*, *Dururu'l-Akhabár* and *Ahsanu'l-Tafásrih*. In addition he wrote pamphlets for senior Bahá'í students and articles for publication in the Bahá'í journal of Persia.

In tribute to his services, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT
FAITH INAYATULLAH FANANAPAZIR WHOSE
SERVICES TEACHING WORK CRADLE FAITH
PIONEERING FIELDS AFRICA WILL ALWAYS BE
LOVINGLY REMEMBERED STOP ASSURE FAMILY
PROFOUND SYMPATHY FERVENT PRAYERS
SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

(Memorial compiled by Dr. Máshá'alláh Mushrif-Zádih at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia. Translated and edited by Rustom Sabit.)

ERNEST GREGORY 1899-1978

It is difficult for me to write about my dear husband and beloved companion in Bahá'í service. There is little I can add to the wonderful tributes paid to his outstanding qualities and devoted service to the Cause he loved so sincerely.

On his passing the Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom:

ANNOUNCE PASSING TO ABHA KINGDOM MORN-
ING OF FIRST DAY OF RIDVAN DISTINGUISHED
SERVANT BAHUULLAH ERNEST GREGORY STOP
HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION GROWTH
BRITISH BAHAI COMMUNITY AS MEMBER MANY
YEARS NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY AND
LATER MEMBER AUXILIARY BOARD ENSURES HIM
HIGH PLACE THAT COMMUNITYS ANNALS STOP
HIS STERLING QUALITIES ENDEARED HIM TO ALL
AT WORLD CENTRE FAITH WHERE HIS LOSS
KEENLY FELT STOP ADVISE BRITISH COMMUNITY
JOIN PRAYERS THANKSGIVING HIS LIFE PROG-
RESS HIS SOUL.



Ernest Gregory

Ernest was the third local resident to accept the Bahá'í Faith in Sheffield, England in 1951. He was at that time a widower with one son. He was very actively associated with, and had achieved a high position in, Freemasonry. With much sacrifice he severed himself from this association and, in this connection, a letter dated 5 August 1955 was received by the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles (as it was then known) from the beloved Guardian through his secretary containing the following message: 'He wishes you to thank Mr. Gregory on his behalf for the spirit of devotion to the Faith which he has shown in connection with this matter . . . The older Bahá'ís, through their example in such matters, form rallying points around which the younger Bahá'ís not so steady yet on their spiritual legs, so to speak, can cluster.'

Ernest served on the British National Spiritual Assembly from 1954 to 1963. During these years he was also chairman of the National Teaching Committee and when he was without family responsibilities he devoted every hour, beyond the requirements of his profession, to these services; it was as though he had become the father of all the small and new Local Spiritual Assemblies up and down

the British Isles. Ernest and I married in 1959 and served together on the National Teaching Committee, until my appointment to the Auxiliary Protection Board in 1960.

In 1963 he accepted appointment to the Auxiliary Board for Propagation, serving on this Board until 1974. His area of Auxiliary Board service covered the north and midlands of England, the western and northern isles of Scotland, Iceland and Faroes. He had a great love for the islands and visited the pioneers and local believers there frequently. As a teacher he was single-minded, indefatigable and dedicated. Bahá'ís young in the Faith have spoken of the inspiration they received from his frankness and directness. During the closing years of his life he had periods of intense suffering but even at these times he maintained always that sense of humour which characterized his life and endeared him to so many friends.

From 1974 until the time of his death on the first day of Riḍván 1978, we both served at the World Centre. When at one time I asked him what had drawn him towards the Faith he replied: 'The administrative order—the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.' Of this, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum said to me, 'Moreover, he understood it.'

Through the bounty of Bahá'u'lláh he rests now on God's Holy Mountain so near to where the arc of the administration—the physical expression of that World Order—is presently taking shape.

JOAN GREGORY

JAVAN GUTOS 1916–1978

Javan Gutos, known as 'Gutosi', was born in Tome Village in South Bugisu District, Uganda. His family were members of the Buta sub-clan. Javan was the third of ten children born to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wamai, and early in his life he evinced praiseworthy characteristics. As a child he assisted in caring for his younger brothers and when he grew older served as his father's goat-herd. He attended Nabumali Intermediary School and then King's College Budo, from 1936 through 1937, but was unable to go on to university. When his schooling was completed he joined



Javan Gutos

the East African Railways and Harbours in Nairobi, retiring in 1947 from his position as station master. For the next ten years he worked as an overseer for the Bugisu Coffee Union in Uganda and later as a salesman for Mr. 'Azíz Yazdí's Nairobi-based company, International Products. In 1962 he began farming in Uganda. He was appointed Parish Chief for the territory under the jurisdiction of the Mbale Municipal Council near his home in Busamaga, and served with distinction until his retirement in 1977.

Mr. Gutos was a devout Christian. His early spiritual training disposed him to accept the Bahá'í Faith when he encountered it in Mbale in 1953 where a Bahá'í community had been established a year previous to this as a result of a spontaneous visit made by Mr. Enoch Olinga and Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání *en route* to their intended destination in the Teso District. He became a member of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Mbale in 1953 when he had been a Bahá'í but three months and served on local and national committees with exemplary devotion. He greatly loved the Faith and until 1974 rendered remarkable services on behalf of the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of Cen-

tral and East Africa,¹ his own home being a focal point of activities of the Cause in Uganda. In 1974 he was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for protection in Central and East Africa and, until the appointment of additional members to the Board, his territory embraced the whole of Eastern, Karamoja, Northern and Nile Provinces in Uganda. In spite of failing health in the last few months of his life, he insisted on accompanying the members of the Board of Counsellors on a major tour of his area during the difficult period when the Faith was under proscription.

He passed away peacefully on 7 May 1978. The Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga was in attendance at his funeral with Mrs. Olinga. Also present were two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors and many other Bahá'ís, members of his family and a number of prominent government officials. Informed of his passing the Universal House of Justice cabled on 11 May:

... HEARTS FILLED SORROW NEWS PASSING
DEVOTED PROMOTER FAITH JAVAN GUTOSI CON-
VEY LÖVING SYMPATHY HIS BEREAVED FAMILY
PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

KOLONARIO OULE

GORDON LAITE
1925-1978

Striving for excellence was characteristic of Gordon Laite in all his endeavours. He excelled in his profession as a painter and illustrator of children's books, achieving national acclaim for published work. His paintings hang in private collections scattered about the globe. Exhibits of his work have served to proclaim the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and his illustrations have graced the pages of Bahá'í publications. Drawing upon his scholarly knowledge of history, art, architecture and costume, he incorporated accurate details, fine draftsmanship and boundless imagination into a unique expression, reaching the highest level in those paintings which explored the realms of spirit and expressed concepts of the new age.

¹ This regional assembly existed from 1956 until 1964 when it was subdivided into three bodies, the National Spiritual Assemblies of Tanzania, of Kenya, and of Uganda and Central Africa.

The same grasp of history and attention to detail helped Gordon develop as a teacher and administrator within the Bahá'í community. He served on several Local Spiritual Assemblies in the United States and in pioneer posts in Latin America; as a delegate to the national conventions of the United States, Honduras and Puerto Rico; and as a member of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Puerto Rico which, until 1972, was under the jurisdiction of the United States National Assembly. His presentations of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in fireside discussions, public talks, classes at Bahá'í schools and conferences were enhanced by direct quotations from the Writings, usually from memory, and often by delightful visual aids created for the occasion.

Gordon also excelled in his passage through the tests and trials of this earthly plane. His hearty laugh, his vigorous stride as he walked about the city or countryside always seeking those souls who hungered for spiritual knowledge, his desire to create beauty whether in arranging flowers, in decorating a room, in painting an impression of spirit or in helping to draw forth the inherent beauty of an insecure or unhappy person, his sympathetic and strong counsel centred in the Sacred Texts—these qualities dominated in even the most difficult and discouraging times. Perhaps more than in any other way, he excelled in the transition from his earthly life, meeting the pain of terminal illness with calm, joyous and truly radiant acquiescence, going eagerly to meet his Lord in the longed-for realms of light.

The journey of Gordon's soul began in New York city where he was born on 11 July 1925. His mother, Blanche Fisher Laite, an illustrator of children's books, took him to live for a time in Paris; French was his first language. As a young man he studied at the Chicago Art Institute in which building the Bahá'í Faith was first mentioned in the West during the Congress of Religions as part of the Columbian Exposition of 1893.¹ A fellow art student, Jeanne Sánchez Marshall, later became his wife.

Gordon visited the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois and the Bahá'í exhibit at



Gordon Laite

the New York World's Fair. He first investigated the Bahá'í teachings when his wife's mother, Jean Marshall Ball, embraced the Faith. Through that introduction, followed by the loving and dedicated teaching efforts of Dr. and Mrs. David Ruhe, the Laites entered the Cause of God on 11 November 1955 in Kansas City, Missouri. A quiet, almost reclusive life at once changed quite dramatically. The Laite home became a centre of Bahá'í activity, a condition which remained constant throughout Gordon's life. As the ocean of divine knowledge was entered, Gordon's work underwent significant changes too. An influx of spirit was experienced, emerging in a totally new expression. He became established as an illustrator, a development which enabled the Laites to move, with their son, Winter, and daughter, Gina, to Gallup, New Mexico, to help offer the healing message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Indian people. They remained in New Mexico for eleven years, finding it an enriching experience and developing cherished friendships among the Navajo, Zuni, Hopi, Taos and other of the south-west tribes. Gordon was given the Zuni name *ChahBah* (Grasshopper) and the Navajo name *Hosteem BahaZhonie* (Happy Man); he often signed his paintings with these honorifics.

¹ See 'The Bahá'í Faith Comes to America', *The Bahá'í Centenary 1844-1944*, p. 78. The Congress met in the Hall of Columbus, a part of the Memorial Art Palace, now the Chicago Art Institute.

They later pioneered to Honduras and Puerto Rico where Gordon, with typical enthusiasm, embraced a new culture and language. The Laites served on a vigorous Local Spiritual Assembly and lived for five years in the Bahá'í Centre in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. Those years brought many bounties including pilgrimage to the Holy Land and attendance at the International Conference held in Mérida, Yucatán in February 1977 where the warm and gracious welcome by the Mayan Indian people provided a spirit-lifting view of the future Bahá'í World Commonwealth enhanced by the special qualities of the indigenous peoples.

Attendance as delegates to the 1978 International Convention in Haifa for the election of the Universal House of Justice had been joyfully anticipated by Gordon and Jeanne but was not possible because Gordon underwent extensive surgery; nevertheless they felt they had been granted a divine bounty in being enabled, during a brief period of recuperation, to pray together and to cast their ballots by mail.

Following Gordon's release to the next world on 26 May 1978 the Universal House of Justice, on 30 May, cabled:

SHARE SORROW AT PASSING GORDON LAITE
DEVOTED ZEALOUS SERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY
WHO HAS TIRELESSLY JOYOUSLY EXPENDED HIS
TALENTS FOR CAUSE STOP ASSURE WIFE FAMILY
PRAYERS OFFERED HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS
SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

JEANNE SÁNCHEZ DE LAITE

MARIAN STEFFES

1900–1978

Marian Steffes was born on 14 June 1900 in Oneida, Wisconsin where she lived with her family on a large farm. Her parents were Oneida Indians, one of the six American Indian tribes belonging to the Iroquois Nation. It was during her early years with her parents that she learned the Iroquois culture which strongly influenced her life. At age thirty-five, while living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with her husband and children, she became interested in the Bahá'í Faith which to her represented a



Marian Steffes

rediscovery and rebirth of the spiritual principles inherent in the true Indian way of life. She was among the first American Indians to accept the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and for over forty years, until her health failed, she devoted herself to teaching the Faith to members of various Indian tribes throughout the United States, using her own funds to cover her travelling expenses. One of her first teachers was the beloved Bahá'í, 'Auntie' Victoria Bedikian,¹ who accompanied her on some of her travels. Together they travelled through the State of Wisconsin introducing the Faith for the first time to the Indian people there. Of particular interest to Marian were the Bahá'í concepts of social justice, respect for human rights, the need for developing spiritual faculties and maintaining sound health of mind and body, and the emphasis on peace among the nations in which she saw hope for harmony among all Indian tribes.

Marian was known and loved by many people for her kindness, gentleness and warm-heartedness, and dedicated herself to passing on good values to her children and grandchildren. She passed on to the Abhá Kingdom on 14 June 1978. On her headstone is inscribed

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIII, p. 884.

'She walks in beauty'—an adage of the Navajo culture as well as a phrase from Byron's poem. On 19 June a cablegram came from the Universal House of Justice:

GRIEVED LOSS STAUNCH OUTSTANDING NATIVE AMERICAN TEACHER CAUSE MARIAN STEFFES STOP KINDLY CONVEY FAMILY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY AND ASSURANCE PRAYERS FOR THE PROGRESS OF HER SOUL IN THE KINGDOMS OF GOD.

ELIZABETH S. LAWS
1888-1977
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Elizabeth S. Laws, 'Beth', was born in St. Louis, Missouri on 20 September 1888. When she was still a small child her family moved to Spokane, Washington. It was from there that most of her childhood memories and stories came. When Beth was just thirteen years old her mother became very ill and died. After a short time the family was broken apart and Beth was sent to live with her grandparents in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grandfather Adams, a graduate of Dartmouth, was a Christian minister and although strict, seemingly to the point of cruelty, he nevertheless cared for her. She was able to complete her formal education and ultimately to earn her teaching certificate. While Beth was teaching in a little one-room school in Indiana she met Walter Ware. They married in 1910 and had four children: John Walter, born in 1912; James Albert, in 1914; Imogene Frances, in 1917; and Lewis Adams, in 1921.

The Ware family moved to Seattle, Washington in 1923. Beth, always a keen Bible student, became very active in the Presbyterian church and her children were given the training that such an association had to offer. Eventually the marriage ended in divorce and Beth remained in Seattle with the children. She became interested in Esperanto and while attending classes taught by Lauren Jackson, a Bahá'í, she found both the Bahá'í Faith and a young man named Frederick Laws. Frederick was younger than she but they became loving friends and shared a devotion which took them through many years and many places throughout the world. They were married in 1939 and



Elizabeth S. Laws

soon thereafter moved to San Diego, California to help rebuild the Spiritual Assembly. Some years later they returned to the Pacific Northwest where Frederick attended Oregon State University.

In response to the call of the Guardian, Beth and Frederick Laws decided to pioneer to Africa. On 23 January 1953 they loaded their belongings in their little car and trailer and headed for New York, sailing aboard *The African Sun* to their pioneering post in Nairobi, Kenya. After a long trip across the Atlantic, down the west coast of Africa, around the Cape of Good Hope and back up the east coast, they arrived only to find that they were not needed in Nairobi as the goal had already been met and the Faith appeared to be flourishing. Shoghi Effendi had called upon Bahá'í communities with more than fifteen believers to send pioneers to virgin areas. As Beth said, 'He dangled a carrot before us.' In his cablegram of 28 May 1953¹ the Guardian called for 'the dispersal, immediate, determined, sustained and universal, throughout the unopened territories of the planet,' describing it as 'the paramount issue challenging the spirit and resources of the privileged prosecutors of the

¹ *Messages to the Bahá'í World*, p. 48.

Ten Year Plan' and announcing his plan 'to inscribe, in chronological order, the names of the spiritual conquerors on an illuminated Roll of Honour, to be deposited at the entrance door of the inner Sanctuary of the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh, as a permanent memorial' and to make 'periodic announcements of the names of the valiant knights upon their arrival at their posts to discharge their historic missions.'

Frederick built a 'little house' on the chassis of their utility trailer and the couple headed south traversing 3,000 miles of difficult roads to reach their new-chosen destination, the little country then called Basutoland (now Lesotho). They arrived on 13 October 1953 just three days before the end of the Holy Year.¹ In his cablegram sent on 14 October 1953 to the Intercontinental Teaching Conference held in New Delhi, the Guardian announced thirteen additions to the Roll of Honour including Frederick and Elizabeth Laws, Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for Basutoland.

The Laws lived in Basutoland for about thirty months, setting up housekeeping in a little round house owned by Mary and Chadwick Mohapi.² Beth loved the people very much and through simple acts of kindness won love in response. In time Beth was given an African name which translated from Basuto meant 'Mother of Love'. Despite difficulties with the language the Cause grew. Reflecting on her experiences Beth wrote some years later: '... the Cause moves forward. Our mighty Lord takes our inadequate words, our puny efforts, and causes them to bring great results. Those who hear go out to tell many others—the chain is endless to eternity.'

It was time to move on. The Laws went south to Johannesburg where they spent about six weeks with William and Marguerite Sears; then, after consultation with the Hands of the Cause Músá Banání and Paul Haney, they proceeded to Gambia and Liberia. In Liberia Frederick worked for an engineering firm building roads in rural areas where he and Beth were able to live and work once again with the African people, always teaching.

In December 1957 Beth and Frederick

¹ The 'Year Nine', marking the centenary of the year 1269 A.H. The centenary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh was observed throughout the Bahá'í world during the year mid-October 1952 and mid-October 1953. See *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XII, p. 25.

² See 'In Memoriam', p. 449.

returned to the northwestern United States. Then in August 1958 Beth returned to Liberia for a short time where she taught in the school at Bombi Hills. However, she found herself incomplete without her partner and returned to America.

After Frederick's retirement they once again decided to return to Africa to help fulfil the goals of the Five Year Plan. On 8 April 1976 they left for a new post in Tanzania. Their stay there was very short, only eight months. They were unable to obtain permanent visas to remain in the country and by this time Beth was beginning to feel a loss of physical stamina. Their parting gesture was to make a generous contribution to the cost of constructing Bahá'í Centres in Tanzania.

In the spring of 1977 Beth and Frederick moved to Wapato, Washington on the Yakima Indian Reservation where their help was needed to maintain the Local Spiritual Assembly. It was here that Beth passed on to the Abhá Kingdom on 24 June 1978. As the end neared, I recall her taking her pencil and pad and writing, 'I'm dying—thank God—Abhá Kingdom.'

On 18 July the Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States:

INFORM FREDERICK LAWS WAPATO WASHINGTON GRIEVED NEWS PASSING KNIGHT BAHÁULLAH DEAR BETH WHOSE PIONEERING TEACHING SERVICES LOVINGLY REMEMBERED ASSURE HIM FERVENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HER SOUL.

LEWIS A. WARE

GHULÁM-'ALÍ IBRÁHÍM JÍ KACHWALA (KURLAWALA)

1896–1978

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Ghulám-'Alí Kachwala (known as Ghulamali Kurlawala) was born in 1896 into a family descended from the ancient Hindu Rajput princes who were known for their exploits on the battlefield and it was perhaps from them that he inherited his indomitable courage, fiery nature and quick temper. He heard of the Bahá'í Cause in 1926 from the well-known Bahá'í teacher, Dr. M. E. Luqmání, and for one full

year resisted it with all his might, arguing that divine revelation ended with Islām. Dr. Luq-mānī being well versed in Islamic scripture was able to adduce quotations to prove his point and as a result Ghulām-'Alī's inner eye was opened and he accepted the Faith. Then began Ghulām-'Alī's transformation as he struggled to curb his temper. Such was his success that one observer remarked, 'He was a lion and he has become a lamb. This is a miracle of the Bahá'í Faith!'

Although he had attended primary school for only two years and could write only a broken and elementary Gujarati, he made efforts to improve his situation after he embraced the Cause. Bahá'í literature in Urdu was available; he learned the language and read and re-read the Bahá'í books. He was a plumber by occupation and also repaired sewing machines and stoves; he could manufacture replacement parts for machines of any description. He was extremely industrious and honest and therefore popular among his customers. But he did not submerge himself in his work. His love for the Faith was so great that if he did not find an opportunity to present the message to one or more persons during the day he could not sleep at night. He lacked urbanity and finesse and taught in a direct manner, coming to the subject without any preface. He would discuss the religions of the past and the prophecies in the holy books referring to the advent of the Promised One and then would speak of the fulfilment of these prophecies through the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. He was no less frank in rejecting the financial inducement offered to him by a Muslim high priest who sought to entice him back to Islām. Divine truth, he said in effect, cannot be bought or sold, and he invited the priest to investigate the claim of Bahá'u'lláh. He was summarily dismissed and considered a 'lost soul'.

Although his family name was Kachwala, meaning a dealer in glass and glassware, Ghulām-'Alī was known in the Bahá'í community as Kurlawala because he resided in Kurla, a suburb of Bombay. He was proud that 'Alī was part of his name, and would often smile and say: 'I am the slave of 'Alī. 'Alī is the first part of the name of the Báb ('Alī Muḥammad) and the last part of the name of Bahá'u'lláh (Ḥusayn 'Alī); therefore I must always be faithful to both my glorious Masters. If I do not



Ghulām-'Alī Kurlawala

serve Them wholeheartedly and with devotion, I will be dismissed.' And serve he did, faithfully, indefatigably and fearlessly. There are at least 20,000 Muslims living in one locality in Kurla and to one and all he gave the message. Some responded with scorn, some called him mad, some abused and ridiculed him. He received at least ten beatings to my knowledge, but he was unaffected and continued to teach the Cause, his talks centring around Bahá'u'lláh and His World Order.

He served as vice-chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Andheri, a suburb of Bombay, from 1937 until Andheri was incorporated into the municipality of Bombay, and then in 1942 he pioneered to Bhopal where his non-stop teaching activities set fire to the dovecots of the mullás. At that time Bhopal was a native state ruled by a Muslim nawab (governor) who was under the influence of the mullás. Offended by Ghulām-'Alī's assertion that the days of efficacy of Islām had come to an end, they rose up with full force against him. He telegraphed the scholarly Siyyid Maḥfūzu'l-Ḥaq 'Ilmi¹ who came to his assistance accompanied by Mrs. Shirin Boman. For one month they met with the Muslim priests without avail although one

¹ See 'In Memoriam', p. 446.

of the Muslim scholars, Maulavi Sondagar, conceded that the language of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh was as inspired as that of the Qur'án. The mullás of that citadel of Islám, having seen the stuff Ghulám-'Alí was made of and being apprehensive of his further teaching efforts, brought pressure to bear on the nawab and secured an order expelling him from Bhopal state where he had stayed but six months. Undeterred, he then spent some months assisting Mrs. Boman at her pioneering post in Ujjain.

In 1949, under the Indian Six Year Plan, he pioneered to Jaipur where he remained for two years. Here he established a Local Assembly and a stable community. His sense of self respect always prevented him from accepting assistance from the friends and institutions; to support himself he drove a rickshaw in Jaipur. While there he visited the head priest and informed him that the Day of Judgment had come and that the Manifestation of God for this age, Bahá'u'lláh, had announced His World Order. The mullá, much incensed, asked him to leave his house at once and never to pass by that road thereafter.

In 1953 Ghulám-'Alí was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh¹ for his service in pioneering to Daman, Portuguese Goa, where he remained for approximately two years. Teaching the Faith was extremely difficult because prohibition was in force in India and many people from nearby Indian areas came to Daman to buy foreign goods and liquor. The local people brewed liquor in their homes and nearly all, young and old, men and women, drank heavily. I once asked him how he could have hoped to find listeners in such a discouraging environment and was told, 'Two things prompted me to make ceaseless efforts in giving the Message, the need of the people to be brought from the path of negativity to the path of God, and my desire to please our beloved Guardian.' His efforts were blessed and found fruition in the formation of a Spiritual Assembly with members of various backgrounds.

During his time in Daman word reached the National Spiritual Assembly of India that Ghulám-'Alí was in ill health and at the request of the assembly Mr. G. A. Amreliwala, then a member of that body, and I, visited Daman and

found him in bed. We summoned a doctor, bathed and nursed him and cleaned his house, and soon he recovered. We also met the Bahá'í community. Not long after this his teaching activities resulted in some elements of the Muslim community lodging a complaint against him. A police inquiry ensued the finding of which was that he was a peace-loving, law-abiding citizen who adhered to and taught an independent religion advocating international peace. Stricter security measures were enforced so that he could teach more effectively.

After he returned to Bombay he pursued his occupation and continued his service to the Cause of God. Although his neighbours and fellow-workers continued to act prejudicially toward him he was undaunted in his teaching efforts.

On one occasion in this period he learned that a Shi'ite mullá was delivering in the Mughúl Masjid in Bombay Muḥarram sermons in which he misrepresented the Bahá'í teachings, so he hastened to attend. More than a thousand people had gathered to hear the sermon during the course of which the mullá heaped abuse on the Bahá'ís and inquired whether anyone would like to know more. Ghulám-'Alí raised his hand and said, in effect, that if the Bahá'ís were as they had been described—unscrupulous liars and adulterers—how could it be that the Bahá'í Faith was growing so rapidly? I have many friends who are Bahá'ís, he continued, and I find them honest, conscientious and of excellent moral character. The priest denounced him as a Bahá'í and the congregation set upon him beating him about the head and leaving him unconscious. His clothing had been torn and his wrist watch and purse stolen. He was taken to a hospital and after a night's treatment was sent home. So great was the impact upon the mullá that he ceased from that point on abusing the Bahá'ís. Ghulám-'Alí remained as fearless and brave as ever in presenting the Faith to all who would listen.

In 1970 he sustained an injury as the result of an explosion and after a long period of time recovered, although from that time forward he had only partial use of one arm. When he returned to work he was not the same man. He had had a strong build and lived an active life, often under hardships, and was accustomed to

¹ *Messages to the Bahá'í World*, Shoghi Effendi, cablegram 20 September 1953, pp. 50-52.

carrying heavy loads in his trade as a plumber. By this time he had spent more than forty years in service to the Cause, travelling from place to place, pioneering from city to city. Now he began to show signs of fatigue. He changed his *modus operandi*, remaining in his shop, so that all who wished to see him had to come there. It is praiseworthy that even at this stage he did not reduce the tempo of teaching. His energy had ebbed, his temper had sobered, but his spiritual enthusiasm and his love for Bahá'u'lláh appeared to increase. Despite the uncertainties of transportation, the lengthy delays and the distances he was required to walk, he regularly attended all Bahá'í gatherings. His eyesight failed three years before his death so he could only sit in his shop and talk of the Blessed Beauty. He was confined to bed for the last month of his life and on 3 July 1978 he left this transitory world.

Although he was neither educated nor wealthy, Ghulám-'Alí was a spiritual king. He was generous of heart and delighted in serving everyone. He loved the Bahá'ís and wholeheartedly associated with them. He spent more than half a century in the service of the Cause and under its banner he was always active, eager to do anything to serve it. When he joined the Faith there were only a few hundred Bahá'ís in India. He lived to see it strike deep roots in our soil and produce a flourishing community now numbering more than half a million. He played his part valiantly and well.

In its letter of 28 September 1978 the Universal House of Justice wrote: 'Mr. Ghulám-'Alí Kurlawala's devoted services to the Faith are surely rewarded by the Blessed Beauty and his name as a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh has become immortal in the history of the Formative Age of the Cause.'

(Adapted from a memoir written by Prof. Dipchand Khianra).

RUTH J. MOFFETT
1880-1978

Ruth Moffett was an indomitable spirit whose valiant efforts on behalf of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh extended over a period in excess of half a century. When this noted Bahá'í lecturer,



Ruth J. Moffett

teacher and writer passed away, the entire Bahá'í world lost one of those shining examples of courage and sacrifice that lights the way for others. On learning of her passing, the Universal House of Justice in a cablegram dated 6 July 1978 addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, lauded her services in these words:

DEEPLY GRIEVED NEWS PASSING DEVOTED
MAIDSERVANT BAHAUULLAH RUTH MOFFETT. HER
INDIVIDUAL TEACHING EFFORTS SPANNING
HALF CENTURY UNFORGETTABLE OFFERING
ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER
SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Born Ruth J. Ellis on 19 January 1880 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, she grew up in a traditional Baptist home. On 8 June 1910 she married Robert Lee Moffett and had two children by him, both of whom died in their childhood years.

In 1912 she began an ardent search for 'Abdu'l-Bahá Whom she saw briefly from a train platform in Chicago. She recalled that moment: 'He looked up at me, smiled and raised His hand.' Finally, having attended one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's lectures, Ruth became an active Bahá'í in 1919 and began her unceasing

and concentrated efforts toward promoting the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

She was a special delegate to the League of Nations in Geneva and was sent by Washington University of St. Louis, Missouri as an accredited observer to the birth of the United Nations in San Francisco. She also attended and reported on nine World Congresses in Europe.

Mrs. Moffett attended Oberlin College and the Universities of Chicago, Wisconsin and Northwestern, in the United States, and Université de Genève, in Switzerland. With her husband, she conducted a Training School and Educational Forum in Chicago for fifteen years; she also taught at George Williams College, Chicago, for seven years.

Ruth was a champion teacher for the Cause of God. Her early teaching efforts, preceding and during the first Seven Year Plan (1937-1944), were instrumental in helping establish the Bahá'í Faith in the United States. She travelled extensively, lecturing in universities, colleges and high schools and speaking on radio and television. Her activities took her through Europe, the Near East, Asia, Egypt and Canada as well as the United States. She maintained, until his death, a frequent correspondence with the Guardian, reporting on her activities, seeking guidance, asking questions the answers to which would aid her in her teaching. The following excerpts are gleaned from letters she received from Shoghi Effendi penned in his own hand:

'... I am deeply gratified to learn of the constant and exemplary services you are rendering to the Cause of God. You are surely a pillar of His Faith in that land, and your magnificent pioneer service will live and adorn the annals of God's immortal Cause. Persevere in your efforts, and rest assured that my prayers will continue to be offered in your behalf at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.' (20 November 1931)

'The magnificent and unforgettable services you have recently rendered the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh will enrich and ennoble the annals of our immortal Faith. They have greatly inspired, cheered, and heartened me in my strenuous labours. Persevere in your noble task and rest assured that my fervent prayers will continue to be offered in your behalf at the sacred Threshold. Yours is a unique and priceless opportunity. I am confident you will

seize and utilize it for the glory and triumph of our sacred Faith.' (15 March 1932)

'I wish to assure you in person of my deep and abiding sense of appreciation of the historic services you are rendering the Cause of God in these days of unprecedented suffering and turmoil. The part you have played, and the share you are still contributing for the promotion of the Faith, future generations will extol and remember with gratitude and pride ...' (11 May 1933)

At the suggestion of the Guardian, Ruth kept a record of her activities and eventually compiled them into a rather extensive collection. More recently, her teaching work took her to the deep South of the United States where she participated in the first efforts to reach the masses. Ruth also served on various national committees and was often seen guiding at the House of Worship in Wilmette.

Ruth's dedication and loving personality attracted others, particularly the youth, with whom she had a special rapport. She often told them, 'I am just a youth myself.' Despite failing health, Ruth remained a potent example to others until she passed away in her ninety-eighth year. Until her last days she continued to teach, holding classes for friends and seekers, serving the Cause which she loved so dearly.

She adopted and used the name 'Rúháníyyih' (or Rawháníyyih) which was given her by the Greatest Holy Leaf. The name connotes spirituality, joy and beauty; and certainly Ruth had a spiritual beauty which enriched the lives of many and progressed the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. The loss of this gallant soldier will be felt most by the community she served so steadfastly, as is acknowledged by the cable sent by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States when it learned of her passing on 5 July 1978:

MOURN LOSS DEARLY LOVED RÚHANIYYIH RUTH MOFFETT CHAMPION TEACHER CAUSE BAHÁU-LLAH ONE MOST OUTSTANDING MEMBERS AMERICAN BAHAI COMMUNITY STOP RANGE AND VARIETY HER SERVICES IN TEACHING FIELD HERE AND ABROAD FOR OVER HALF CENTURY BEYOND RECKONING BOUND TO EXERT DEEP INFLUENCE ON PROGRESS COMMUNITY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME STOP ESPECIALLY RECALL HER INDEFATIGABLE EFFORTS WHICH SWEEPED LIKE FLAME

OF FIRE FROM PLACE TO PLACE IN AS YET DARK
 DAYS OF FAITHS OBSCURITY DURING SECOND
 QUARTER THIS CENTURY STOP HER SPIRIT MUST
 DOUBTLESS BE REJOICING AT STEADY WORLD-
 WIDE EMERGENCE CAUSE FOR WHICH SHE GAVE
 FULL STRENGTH HER UNBOUNDED ENERGIES
 STOP FERVENTLY PRAYING PROGRESS HER SOUL
 THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS.

PAMELA DEROZHINSKY
 1922-1978

Pamela was always a seeker and non-conformist. After she arrived in Fiji in 1967 with her husband, Dmitri, she became interested in the Bahá'í Faith through Mrs. Bobbie Leedham (now McLaren). After many hours of talking with Mrs. Leedham and then with the Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi, Pamela became confirmed in her belief in Bahá'u'lláh, in 1969. Through her example, Dmitri also accepted the Faith.

With acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh came involvement in many Bahá'í activities. Pamela became secretary of the Suva Local Assembly, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Fiji Islands, and served on many committees. Her marked capacity for dealing with people as individuals drew many to study and embrace the Faith. Her love and respect for young people was warmly reciprocated by them; she was friend and adviser to many. When answering the questions of inquirers at fireside meetings, Pamela always referred to the Writings and read answers from the Bahá'í books. She was concerned to foster an increased understanding of Bahá'í administration and to create a balanced community of the kind that results from recognition that teaching and administration, progress and consolidation, go hand in hand.

After her pilgrimage to the Holy Land, she became even more active in proclaiming the Faith to government leaders, civil servants and members of the business community. She demonstrated the Faith in her life through her integrity in business and through her attitude toward her work. She was instrumental in briefing Bahá'í delegations and proclamation teams and on behalf of the National Assembly



Pamela Derozhinsky

conducted the delicate negotiations for purchase of new Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds.

In 1974 Pamela and Dmitri went to live in Bangladesh. As a pioneer on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, she made a considerable impression on the local community through her understanding, humour, love, humility, common sense and example, and her many activities received the constant support and encouragement of her husband. Those in distress often turned to Pamela for comfort and advice.

During a critical period for the Faith in Bangladesh when the National Bahá'í Centre in Dacca was in danger of being expropriated, Pamela accompanied Counsellor Shirin Boman in calling daily for two weeks on leading government figures until they were successful in having the order rescinded.

One of Pamela's joys was keeping up a correspondence with Bahá'ís in different parts of the world. In this way she also deepened her knowledge of the Faith. The booklet she prepared for the use of local teachers of the Faith in Bangladesh has been translated into Bengali and two thousand copies have been distributed to officials and dignitaries.

In 1977 Pamela underwent surgery for

cancer of the oesophagus in London but was able to return to Bangladesh for a short time. Meanwhile, Dmitri's work had taken him to Chittagong where Pamela, although weak and handicapped, again began teaching the Faith. After several months she had to return to London for further treatment. In spite of pain and discomfort and the certain knowledge that she was dying, she was, through her cheerfulness and her faith in Bahá'u'lláh, an inspiration to patients and hospital staff and visitors. Doctors and nurses sat by her bed and discussed the teachings of the Faith, amazed at her serenity, joyousness and sense of peace. Her favourite prayer was the Tablet of Visitation revealed by the Master.

In the early hours of 21 June 1978, with her husband at her side, Pamela ascended to the Abhá Kingdom. She now lies in the Great Northern London Cemetery, New Southgate, close to the resting place of the beloved Guardian. Advised of her passing, the Universal House of Justice on 21 August cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of Bangladesh:

DEEPLY GRIEVED NEWS UNTIMELY PASSING
DEVOTED HANDMAIDEN BAHAUULLAH PAMELA
DEROZHINSKY PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HER
SOUL ABHA KINGDOM KINDLY CONVEY LOVING
SYMPATHY HER HUSBAND.

VERN HUFFMAN
1906-1974

EVELYN HUFFMAN
1911-1978

There are two ways in which devotion to Bahá'u'lláh can be shown; by what one does and by the kind of person one becomes. In both achievement and character Evelyn Huffman and her husband, Vern, excelled; their names are virtually synonymous with the early growth and development of the Bahá'í Faith in Alaska. Their lives were an example of the spirit of service and selfless devotion—it would be impossible to count the number of people who have enjoyed their unstinting hospitality.

In 1940 Evelyn and her two children, Jack and Mary Sue, joined Vern in Alaska where he worked for what is now the Federal Aviation

Administration. Their first post was in Talkeetna—a small, cold, remote mining community on the Susitna River, nestled in the Talkeetna mountains. The main link with the outside world was the slow and meandering Alaska Railroad with its somewhat irregular schedules. The one-room log cabin they lived in had no plumbing and the heat was supplied by a wood-burning stove. Jack had to use a dog-sled to go to school. It was a far cry from the life the Huffmans had known in Kansas, and at first Evelyn hated it. But soon the friendliness and spirit of the frontier captured her heart and she came to love Alaska.

When the Aleutian Islands were invaded during World War II, the authorities insisted that dependants be evacuated. In order to rejoin her husband, Evelyn developed a skill considered necessary for the war effort. By becoming a radio operator she was able to be with Vern in the extreme northwest area of Alaska. After the war they settled in Anchorage where they learned of the Faith through Vern's interest in radio. In February 1945 Evelyn became a Bahá'í, and Vern in December of that year. They were part of the Anchorage community—the only one in Alaska at that time—until they secured a property about ten miles from town and began homesteading. Soon they became part of the nucleus of believers who formed Alaska's second Local Spiritual Assembly. They served that community for more than twenty years, Vern usually as treasurer and Evelyn often as chairman. Twice Evelyn was elected as the delegate from Alaska to the annual convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and in 1957, with the formation of the Alaskan National Assembly, Evelyn found herself in rapid succession secretary of the convention, a member of the newly-formed National Spiritual Assembly and then its secretary, a post she filled for seven of her ten-and-a-half years on that body. As secretary, much of the responsibility of incorporation and other details fell upon her capable shoulders. Vern, in his quiet unassuming way, did much to assist Evelyn in her duties.

One of the goals of the new National Spiritual Assembly was to acquire a Temple site. The Huffmans donated three acres of their homestead property—half the present Temple site. The present Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds of Alaska



Evelyn and Vern Huffman

was built on the Huffman homestead land because of an exchange made possible by gifts of endowment property. The last remaining portion of the homestead, the 1.3 acres where the well-known house was located, was bequeathed to the Faith by Evelyn on her death. In 1963 Evelyn was an Alaskan delegate to the first International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice. Under the Nine Year Plan, in 1965, despite Vern's having had open heart surgery but two years earlier, the Huffmans pioneered to Prince of Wales Island, one of the five virgin goals assigned to Alaska. Vern quickly became 'Mr. Fixit', repairing an endless variety of broken radios and small appliances. The couple were dearly loved by the Tlingit Indians of the island. Vern's deteriorating health made it necessary for them to leave their goal, but they left behind two confirmed Bahá'ís and a secure foundation for further development of the Faith on the island. Vern's death in 1974 ended a decade-long battle with heart problems and general ill health. While his death was a grievous blow and loss for Evelyn, she continued to serve the Cause she loved so well, crowning her distinguished service by working at the

World Centre of the Faith in Haifa from April 1976 to March 1977.

Shortly after returning to Alaska, Evelyn suffered a stroke which slowed her down but did not stop her. A week before her death of a heart attack at the age of sixty-seven in July of 1978, Evelyn had been on a teaching trip among the Eskimos in Kotzebue and was making plans to pioneer to Japan.

All dedicated Bahá'ís dream of serving the Faith to their very last breath. The Huffmans succeeded. Little wonder that the Universal House of Justice would immortalize them with these cables upon learning of their deaths:

On 15 January 1974:

ASSURE PRAYERS SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL ABHA
KINGDOM VERN HUFFMAN VETERAN ALASKAN
PIONEER STALWART SUPPORTER FAITH STOP
EXPRESS CONDOLENCES DEVOTED WIFE FAMILY
ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICES.

And on 27 July 1978:

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT
CAUSE EVELYN HUFFMAN STOP HER YEARS OF
SERVICE AS MEMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL
ASSEMBLY ITS EARLIEST YEARS AND WITH HUSBAND
AS PIONEER PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND
AND DONOR KEY NATIONAL PROPERTIES WILL
BE ALWAYS REMEMBERED AS MERITORIOUS
CONTRIBUTIONS ANNALS FAITH ALASKA STOP
CONVEY CONDOLENCES FAMILY ASSURANCE
PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL
ABHA KINGDOM STOP ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL
SERVICE.

JOHN KOLSTOE

RÚHANGÍZ FATH-‘AZAM
1898–1978

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED HANDMAID
DEDICATED PROMOTER CAUSE RUHANGIZ
FATHEAZAM HER LIFELONG SERVICES IN MANI-
FOLD CAPACITIES BOTH CRADLE FAITH FOREIGN
PIONEERING FIELD ADD LUSTRE TO ACCOMPLISHMENTS
MEMBERS HER DISTINGUISHED FAMILY PRAYING
HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL
CONVEY SYMPATHY RELATIVES FRIENDS.

Universal House of Justice

Miss Rúḥangíz Fath-'Azam (Fathezam) was a prominent maidservant of Bahá'u'lláh in Írán whose life from her earliest youth was dedicated to the service of God and man. Born in the village of Ardístán, Írán in 1898, she was one of the very few women in the entire country to receive a good education, at a time when almost all Persian women were illiterate. As a result of the encouragement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, she and a few other Bahá'í girls were given an opportunity to study English, although very few Persians, men or women, in that period knew the language.

She was born into a family whose members had the bounty of being among the first to recognize the twin Manifestations of God and to declare allegiance to the new Revelation from its inception.

Her maternal grandfather, Mullá 'Alí-Akbar-i-Ardístání,¹ and Quddús and Mullá Šádiq-i-Muqaddas, were the first three believers to be persecuted in Šhíráz where they suffered punishment and indignities. After being severely beaten a hole was bored in the nose of each through which a string was passed by which they were led through the streets. An account of their suffering was published in the *London Times* of 19 November 1845.

Mírzá Fath-'Alí,² her paternal grandfather, was one of the few Bábís who recognized the station of Bahá'u'lláh before His declaration, when he met Him in Baghdád. Bahá'u'lláh honoured him with the surname Fath-i-A'zam (the Most Great Victory) and said of him that 'all the way from Baghdád to Constantinople, he was with Him in spirit, though not corporeally.'³

Shortly after Rúḥangíz's birth her father, Áqá Siyyid Šaháb, had to leave Ardístán to be spared the persecution instigated by Shaykh Muḥammad Taqy-i-Najafí, surnamed by Bahá'u'lláh 'the Son of the Wolf'. Abandoning their land and possessions the family established themselves in Tíhrán where Rúḥangíz obtained her education. When still only in her teens she was employed by the Ministry of Education as a teacher in one of the few school for girls which had recently been established in Persia. When the Tarbíyat School for girls was established by the Bahá'ís Rúḥangíz,

still a young woman, served as a teacher and later became its administrator working in close collaboration with Miss Adelaide Sharp,⁴ the principal. So efficiently did they administer the affairs of the school that its fame spread throughout the country attracting as students large numbers of the daughters of prominent non-Bahá'í families. Through her devoted and capable services 'Rúḥangíz Khánúm', as she was known to Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike, gained the admiration, respect and affection of the hundreds of students who passed through the school, as well as the love and esteem of their families.

When the Iranian government closed Tarbíyat School, Rúḥangíz took employment as an officer in the National Bank of Írán, one of the few women in the country to be appointed to a position of this type at that time.

From her earliest years Rúḥangíz dedicated her life to service to the Cause. Hardly a day went by when she was not engaged in promoting the Faith and building up its institutions. For many years she was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tíhrán, in some years serving as its secretary, which gave full play to her executive skills in co-ordinating the activities of almost 60,000 Bahá'ís. She also served on a number of important national committees including those relating to the education of Bahá'í children, the progress of Bahá'í women and the relations between believers of the East and West.

In the winter of 1965, when she was sixty-seven years of age, she responded to the call of the Universal House of Justice in the Nine Year Plan for pioneers to open new territories. Leaving her home, friends and comfort she settled on the island of Capri in the Bay of Naples where there were no Bahá'ís. She was unaccompanied and knew neither Italian nor the local dialect. Although a popular place for tourists in the summer months, Capri offers a lonely and isolated existence in the winter and few of the residents speak English. On arrival in the winter, she was unable to find accommodation in a private residence. Hotels refuse to accept guests in the off season because their doing so would require paying taxes to the government. Exhausted and weary she went from hotel to hotel but was refused admission. Evening was drawing on when she applied for

¹ *The Báb*, H. M. Balyuzi, pp. 76-78.

² *Bahá'u'lláh, the King of Glory*, H. M. Balyuzi, p. 47.

³ *ibid.* p. 261.

⁴ See 'In Memoriam', p. 418.



Rúḥangíz Fathí-'Azam

accommodation at the last hotel on her list and was again rejected. A passerby noting her distress and the tears of discouragement in her eyes directed her to the outlying village of Anacapri where she found a room in a hotel managed by a kindly man who spoke some English. Alone in her room she offered prayers of gratitude. An early riser, she would waken at dawn and stroll along the seashore and then devote her time to rereading Nabíl's narrative, drawing inspiration from the lives of the early dawn-breakers of the Faith. She purchased a 'teach yourself' book and began to study Italian.

On one of her morning visits to the seashore she was befriended by a woman and her daughter who had watched her daily visits with interest. Although she knew only a few words of Italian by that time a friendship developed between them culminating in an invitation to have Rúḥangíz tutor the daughter in English in exchange for Italian lessons. The girl's father was the head of the postal and telegraph service on the island and the family extended assistance in many ways.

At a later time she received permission to attend a school run by nuns where she took lessons with a class of small children. Her pur-

pose was not only to improve and perfect her command of Italian but also to succeed in winning warm friendships among the nuns, the children and their parents. She had loved children all her life and devoted herself to their training and she soon commanded the love of her classmates. Arriving at class a few minutes late on one occasion she was surprised when the children applauded as she took her seat. When she asked about it one child explained: 'It is customary when a student is late for the teacher to require him to sit in a corner as punishment—we are so glad the teacher didn't make you do that!' Although handicapped by a still elementary knowledge of Italian she enjoyed the respect of the nuns and was gratified some years later to meet one of them, no longer wearing a habit, at a Bahá'í summer school in Italy.

Ostensibly to improve her knowledge of Italian, Rúḥangíz offered free English lessons to the people of the island, thus increasing her circle of friends and contacts through the magnetism of her personality and the genuine love she radiated. From her students there gradually developed a circle of close friends and admirers of the teachings of the Faith. She began teaching openly only after having won the respect, confidence and trust of the population and in 1972, in the seventh year of her stay, the first Local Spiritual Assembly was formed. Its establishment had been hampered by the fact that many who were drawn to the Faith eventually had to leave the island to find employment abroad. The eighth and ninth believers who made formation of the Assembly possible were a young married couple. The man had attended firesides regularly and arriving late at the meeting one evening was lovingly chided by Rúḥangíz. He apologized by explaining that this was the eve of his wedding. Not long after this Rúḥangíz spent an entire night in prayer imploring the Blessed Beauty to lead one more soul to the Faith in order that the Assembly could be elected. Early the next morning a young woman presented herself at Rúḥangíz's door and declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh—it was the bride who had just returned from her honeymoon. Not knowing the girl well, Rúḥangíz inquired why she had been prompted to make her decision. Pointing to a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Rúḥangíz's room the girl explained: 'I dreamed of the Mas-

ter last night—he told me I must do this.'

Selflessness and generosity were among Rúḥangíz's outstanding qualities. Although she lavished hospitality and gifts upon others she lived modestly, ate simple food and dressed in dignified, practical and plain clothes. When her relatives from Europe lovingly scolded her for giving away the presents they would make of clothing and other things she replied, 'If I dress as you would have me do the people would not be comfortable in coming to visit me; they accept me dressed as I am in simple taste.'

She rented the ground floor of a house situated at the apex of two main streets of Anacapri and although the noise level was high she chose it because it was convenient for passersby to drop in. Her door was literally open the whole day and it led directly into the drawing room which she had decorated in the manner of a Bahá'í Centre with appropriate photographs and ample supplies of Bahá'í literature. Although she had a constant stream of guests—travelling teachers and inquirers—she would allow no one to deprive her of the privilege of serving them. During the summer when the water supply of Capri is often interrupted and water must be drawn in buckets from a common well, Rúḥangíz, then past seventy and rather frail, would arise long before her guests and with great difficulty bring buckets of water to the house. She became a familiar figure in Anacapri and after seven years there was literally no one who did not know her, respect her, and who had not heard of the Faith from her. 'I did not begin teaching at once,' she said. 'When I had won the trust of the people I felt that they would listen closely when it came time to speak of the Faith.' So great was her popularity that she was called upon to act as Godmother of some of the children of her Catholic friends on the island. On one of these occasions she explained to the Catholic Priest that she was not a Christian. 'But you believe in Jesus Christ?' he asked. 'All Bahá'ís accept Jesus Christ as one of the Manifestations of God,' she told him. 'That's enough, then,' the Priest said.

In April 1975 after ten years of dedicated service she suffered a stroke. Her disability caused great distress to both the Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís of Anacapri. Immediately her concerned friends telephoned her relatives

abroad. But Rúḥangíz's concern was even greater: there were only eight other Bahá'ís on the island. Would the Local Assembly be lost?

When her family arrived they found that Rúḥangíz was paralyzed and had lost the power of speech, although she remained very alert. She knew, for instance, that the Local Assembly was to be formed the next day. Restricted to communicating by motions of her head and muffled grunts she nonetheless made apparent to the secretary of the Assembly her distress at the prospect of the Assembly being lost. The secretary assured her that a ninth person had just accepted the Faith and the Assembly was secure. Fearing that the secretary had said this merely to comfort her, Rúḥangíz demanded that she recite the names of the nine which, with the slight motion possible to her, she ticked off on her fingers. Still unconvinced and fearing that the friends might be humouring her she then insisted that the new believer be brought into her presence! Meeting him she burst into tears of relief. Such was her determination that the Assembly be safeguarded.

It was the saddest moment of her life when the doctor advised that she might be incapacitated for years. Not wishing to be a burden on the friends of Capri, Rúḥangíz reluctantly consented to leave the island for hospital treatment. Two years after leaving her pioneering post she passed away on 27 September 1978 in Tíhrán. In her room in the hospital there was a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and photographs of the Spiritual Assembly of Capri.

JEANNETTE HILDA BATTRICK 1922–1978

Jeannette was born on 2 March 1922 in Scarborough, Yorkshire, England of hard-working Christian parents who were animated by a pioneering spirit. She had an enquiring mind and from an early age was encouraged by her father to investigate questions that interested her. After the death of her first husband Jeannette, who was still in her early twenties, went to Switzerland with her infant daughter, Ilona,

to learn the hotel business. While there she met a fellow student, Owen Battrick, whom she married in 1948. For a time they operated a hotel in North Wales and in 1951 they moved to Reading, Berkshire where they started two food catering businesses. The businesses prospered and the young couple led a life of material comfort but they grew increasingly more dissatisfied with the conventional round of empty social activities. Their concern about what they felt to be a growing spiritual lethargy and their interest in finding solutions to pressing social questions led them to seek diligently for truth. They investigated various groups and sects and, their search seeming fruitless, grew dispirited and sought refuge in their own home, praying for an answer.

In books taken from the public library they found reference to the Bahá'í Faith and hastened to obtain other Bahá'í books from a local bookshop. They were not then aware that their 'discovery' had coincided with the arrival in Reading of Beryl de Gruchy, a Bahá'í pioneer to the area, who several weeks later advertised the holding of a Bahá'í public meeting in the George Hotel. Jeannette exhorted Owen to attend and find out more. 'You must get there early,' she said, 'as there will be thousands of people in attendance.' In fact, there were only four people present, including Beryl, and all were Bahá'ís. The outcome of the meeting, however, was the acceptance of the Faith by the Battricks.

Those were the early days of the Ten Year Crusade. Jeannette immediately threw herself into the service of Bahá'u'lláh in both the teaching and administrative fields with a devotion that was to characterize her entire Bahá'í life. Her pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1957, and her meeting with Shoghi Effendi, further galvanized her and charged her activities with a vitality that did not dim with the years. Pioneering became part of her everyday life. In April 1957 with her son, Richard, then only six, she went to Edinburgh for six months to help re-establish the Local Assembly. She next pioneered to Luxembourg in 1960 with her three-year old daughter, Sarah, and stayed for approximately ten months before returning to England to devote the remainder of the Ten Year Crusade, as the Guardian had suggested, to teaching in the pivotal centres of Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast, Dublin, London and in the



Jeannette Hilda Battrick

islands of the North Sea—the Shetlands, Orkneys and Faroes. To all of these the Battricks travelled excepting the Faroes to which their daughter, Ilona, pioneered in 1972. In addition, throughout the Crusade, Jeannette served on many committees including, in the final year of the Ten Year Plan, the National Teaching Committee. The Guardian had approved their moving to the South Pacific when circumstances permitted. In 1967, following full family consultation, the Battricks moved to the southern hemisphere fulfilling a long cherished desire to pioneer to the Pacific region. Only three months before their departure in August of that year it was learned that Jeannette had breast cancer; she underwent surgery and subsequent treatment but she did not allow this setback to prevent her pioneering.

Jeannette, with her two youngest children, sailed for New Zealand whilst Owen flew to the Solomon Islands for a six-month period to assist the Blums. From here he gained a foothold in New Caledonia, their pioneering post, and prepared the way for the family to join him. Meanwhile, Jeannette was elected secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand at Rīdván 1968. Her services in that country endeared her to Bahá'ís throughout

the land. She travelled extensively throughout the North Island and was especially conscious of the need to teach the Maori people. Although she was re-elected in 1969 she left New Zealand in May to settle in New Caledonia. Here, and later in the Loyalty Islands, Jeannette attained the pinnacle of her services. Tireless in her devotion, self-sacrificing of her time, health and material means, and patient in her love of the indigenous people, she burned herself out. Often her husband or children would find her asleep over her typewriter and would urge her to go to bed for proper rest. Stirring herself, she would say 'I've only a few more lines to type and then I've finished,' and on she would go.

Jeannette was secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the South West Pacific when it moved its seat to Noumea, New Caledonia in 1971 and served in this capacity until she and her husband left to pioneer to Ouvea, Loyalty Islands. She remained on that National Assembly until she was forced by illness to settle in Auckland, New Zealand in 1975. Those eighteen months spent in Ouvea were probably some of the happiest of her life; she was sustained by the memory of that period during the last three years of her life as the cancer took its toll. In March 1976 Owen was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors and made his base in New Zealand. Jeannette served as his secretary whilst undergoing rigorous chemotherapy. Her indomitable courage during this time became an example to all who knew her. She never allowed the disease to overwhelm her and to the very end she served the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh as best she could, spending long hours praying for the friends in the Cook Islands and elsewhere whom she could no longer visit.

On her passing on 6 October 1978, the Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand:

HEARTS GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING HEROIC
 SELFSACRIFICING MAIDSERVANT BAHAUULLAH
 JEANNETTE BATTRICK HER UNTIRING SERVICES
 CAUSE BRITAIN EUROPE AND PACIFIC AREA
 INSPIRING EXAMPLE RISING GENERATION BAHAI
 PIONEERS PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS
 HER RADIANT SOUL.



Ismail Hiwari Meymoun

ISMAIL HIWARI MEYMOUN
 (ISMÁ'ÍL HUVÁRÍ MAYMÚN 'UMAR)
 1938–1978

Ismá'íl Huvári Maymún 'Umar was born in Nádor, Morocco in 1938 and was educated in Nádor and Teḡuán. He accepted the Bahá'í Faith in 1958 after hearing about it through a devoted pioneer, Mr. Fawzí Zanyu'l-'Ábidin,¹ and in 1960 when the first Spiritual Assembly of Nádor was established he was one of its members. At the time the persecution and imprisonment of Bahá'ís began in Nádor² in 1962, Ismá'íl was living in Casablanca. He served as liaison between the families of the Bahá'í prisoners and the Administrative Committee which had been established for the protection and welfare of the Bahá'í community. He travelled far and wide to render any service he could to the friends and paid visits to Bahá'ís who had been imprisoned in Kenitra and Meknes.

In 1966 Ismá'íl obtained leave of absence from his job and devoted a year to travel teaching in the countries of north-western Africa, bearing all the expenses despite his

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 545.

² See *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIII, p. 288.

modest circumstances. Upon returning to Morocco he participated with great enthusiasm in various Bahá'í activities on the local, regional and national levels. He was elected to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly for several years and was at various times a member of the Spiritual Assemblies of Teṭuán, Nádor, Casablanca and Újdá. In 1969 he arranged a transfer in his employment and was appointed Director of the Post Office in Tarjist thus satisfying his desire to pioneer to a goal area. His marriage in that same year to a devoted Bahá'í was the first between Moroccan believers to be solemnized in full accord with the Bahá'í teachings without an additional ceremony.

Salient among the distinguishing characteristics of this dear friend were his faithfulness, his generosity and his indefatigable efforts to serve others. He cherished the companionship of the Bahá'í friends and braving all dangers would travel long distances to be with them. Within and without the Bahá'í community, all who knew him will long remember this radiant and tender youth whose constant pleasure was to be of service.

Ismá'íl's death occurred on 2 November 1978 in tragic and mysterious circumstances; his burnt body was found inside his automobile along the highway approximately six kilometres from Tarjist. Informed of his death, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

... GRIEVED NEWS PASSING ISMAIL HIWARI
MEYMOUN ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS ARDENT
PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS SOUL
KINGDOM GOD.

OTTO HÄFNER
1908–1978

Otto Häfner was called to the heavenly realm on 3 November 1978 after a brief illness. All who knew him had a sincere affection for him, since his cheerful, sociable and loving nature was the basis for joyous companionship. The Universal House of Justice cabled on 7 November:

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING DEVOTED VETERAN
BELIEVER OTTO HAFNER EXTEND LOVING SYM-
PATHY BEREAVED FAMILY PRAYING PROGRESS
HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.



Otto Häfner

Mr. Häfner's early childhood already bore the imprint of deep spirituality through the firm belief of his parents in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. An event in his childhood which only few were privileged to experience—that of meeting the Master—illuminated his path through life. At the age of three in Paris in 1911 and again at the age of five in Esslingen in 1913¹ he was privileged, together with his parents, to be in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on several occasions. Photographs of that time show 'Abdu'l-Bahá embracing him. In Fellback, where he grew up, the hospitable home of his parents was for a long time the meeting place of the Bahá'í friends for deepening in the new Revelation and for happy fellowship.

After completing his education, Mr. Häfner turned to the study of mathematics and ended his professional career about five years ago after working for many years as director of a large insurance company.

He served the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh with loyal devotion. For over two decades he was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, undertaking the responsible office of treasurer. Often the volume of work con-

¹ See 'In Memoriam', Anna Koestlin, *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, p. 511.

nected with this post taxed his strength, but out of love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá he carried out the duties assigned him. He continued to serve as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Esslingen to the end of his life and threw himself wholeheartedly into the project of rebuilding the Bahá'í home there. We remember with gratitude his services as a member of the National Finance Committee and the valuable assistance he rendered toward the construction of the House of Worship in Langenhain. His last years were spent in a suburb of Esslingen; thus the place where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed and where Mr. Häfner was privileged to be in His presence as a child became his last resting place.

The German Bahá'ís remain bound to Otto Häfner across the borders of this earthly life by ties of deep love and profound gratitude.

DR. EUGEN SCHMIDT

CLARENCE JOHN IVERSON

1909–1979

Mr. Clarence John Iverson, a man with an unswerving desire to serve the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, arose at the International Oceanic Conference held in Palermo, Sicily in August 1968, to volunteer as a pioneer in Bastia, Corsica, an island belonging to France. He received his assignment from the National Spiritual Assembly of France on 19 November 1968, and was informed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States on 21 May 1969 that he would be included in a new United States quota of pioneers for France, thereby fulfilling one of the goals of the Nine Year Plan.

Clarence Iverson was born on 7 February 1909 in Wahoo, Nebraska. He enrolled in the Bahá'í Faith in 1930 and pioneered to El Salvador, Central America, from 1939 to 1946. As a result of his studies he had received a B.A. in Arts and Sciences, and earned his living as a piano teacher while pioneering. He spoke Spanish and French fluently.

Clarence died in the Bastia Hospital on 17 February 1979, following an automobile accident on a highway near his home in Bastia. He is buried in the cemetery of Bastia, close to the

tomb of Mlle. Tabrízí, the first Bahá'í pioneer to Corsica.

During the last years of his life Clarence Iverson's physical condition was extremely feeble. He will be remembered as a person who overcame physical and financial difficulties over a period of ten years in order to remain at his pioneer post. He also will be remembered as one who exemplified the Bahá'í ideals, and as a dear friend to all.

EMMA MARGARET TIJSSSEN-HARTMANN 1888–1979

Margaret Tijssen was born on 15 March 1888 and passed away in Stuttgart at Naw-Rúz 1979 in her ninety-first year. Margaret's father was part of the academic life of Stuttgart where he taught history and the history of art and under his guidance his daughter entered a world rich in cultural opportunities—concerts, theatre, music and painting. She studied art herself and became a drawing teacher at a school for girls. In 1921, together with her husband who was a contemporary and friend of Dr. Adelbert



Emma Margaret Tijssen-Hartmann

Mühlschlegel, she accepted the Bahá'í Faith. Mr. Tijssen passed away in 1955.

In 1937 the family came to the Netherlands and settled in the Hague. One of their two sons, Walter Frank, and his wife Dora, also accepted the Faith. The older Bahá'ís of the community of the Netherlands and especially those from the area of the Hague maintain a memory of Margaret as a radiantly contented being. Although her life was not free of tragedy she had the gift of a happy nature and the capacity to look upon the positive aspects of any situation. Even when confined to a nursing home toward the end of her life she expressed happiness with her lot. In her great simplicity and modesty, and with her deep faith, she felt herself united in sympathy and love with all forms of God's creation, and she expressed this through her devoted service to others. At whatever time she was needed, and in whatever capacity, Margaret would be found at the Bahá'í Centre in the Hague. After visiting the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in 1971 the Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi wrote: 'The special and loving services of this dearly loved "invisible" lady who hides herself in the kitchen are of great importance and are a source of happiness and inspire gratitude in everyone who has the chance to meet her. She is a treasure!'

Margaret expressed her love for flowers in very delicate drawings. One of these has been left to the Bahá'í community and is preserved at the Bahá'í Centre.

GEORGETTE STRAUB-VAN
BLEYSWIJK SOMBEEK
1906–1979

Georgette 'Jetty' Straub was one of the first Bahá'ís of the Netherlands. Her sister, Miss Rita Van Sombeek, had spent the years of World War II in America and in 1946 embraced the Bahá'í Faith. In a letter dated 5 March 1946 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi by his secretary, the Guardian welcomed Miss Van Sombeek 'as a co-worker' and expressed his intention to accede to her request by praying 'that your sister may also accept the Faith'. Jetty was visiting her sister in America at the time. A strong bond of affection had



Georgette VanSombeek

always existed between the girls, and it was natural that Jetty should express an interest in the Cause which her sister had embraced so wholeheartedly. However, Jetty did not immediately become a Bahá'í.

In 1946 the Guardian launched the second Seven Year Plan which had as one of its purposes the secure establishment of the Faith in ten goal countries of Europe including Holland.¹ The sisters returned that year to the Netherlands—Rita's activities already being harnessed to the needs of the Cause—and on 2 February 1947 the Guardian's secretary was instructed to write a letter addressed jointly to Miss Rita Van Sombeek and Mrs. Jetty Straub: 'He was so happy to see that your sister has embraced the Faith and arisen to serve it with you with so much devotion and enthusiasm . . . The work in Holland is very promising, and he feels sure you both, with Mr. van Ogtrop, will soon see tangible results of your devoted labours.' The offer the women had made to immediately begin translating the literature of the Faith from English into Dutch was warmly

¹ See *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 81: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Finland added later.

commended. In his own hand the Guardian wrote: 'The work on which you and your dear sister have embarked is historic, meritorious, and rich in possibilities. Future generations will extol your labours and derive inspiration from the example you have set. I am deeply grateful to you both, admire your spirit, will pray for your success, and am eager to receive the report of your activities. Never lose heart, be assured, happy and grateful.'

In a tribute written at the time of Jetty's passing in 1979 the National Spiritual Assembly acknowledged its debt of gratitude for the earliest translations of Dutch literature including the first prayer book, *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* and *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. 'Jetty gave all her strength to this labour of love and without her this would not have been achieved,' the National Assembly stated. 'The

Bahá'í community of the Netherlands is deeply grateful to Jetty and her sister, Rita, and that handful of friends who in those early days laboured for the Faith in Europe, guided from Geneva by the European Teaching Committee. The name of Jetty Straub—like that of her sister—remains inseparably linked with the history of the Faith in the Netherlands. She passed away in Zeist on 7 April 1979. On 16 April the Universal House of Justice cabled:

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING JETTY STRAUB VAN-SOMBEEK WHOSE DEVOTED SERVICES CAUSE BAHÁULLAH HAVE ENDOWED NETHERLANDS BAHAI COMMUNITY WITH IMPERISHABLE BENEFITS STOP CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY HER SISTER MEMBERS HER FAMILY STOP PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

