The Bahá'í Community in Edinburgh, 1946–1950

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Given the overwhelming predominance of Christianity in the contemporary religious life, and crucial place in the political and cultural history, of Scotland, it is natural that studies of Scottish religious developments should have concentrated almost exclusively on traditional Christianity. Christianity however has not been the only religious element in Scottish religious history, and is certainly far from being so as we approach the 21st century. Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Sikhs, no less than Theosophists, New Age and (Neo)Pagans, to name but a few non-Christian movements and traditions to be found in Edinburgh today, have established themselves on Scottish shores and developed in a Scottish context, some for a few decades, others, like the Jews, for much longer. Further, in the last twenty years or so the interfaith movement in Scotland has grown and continues to do so in different directions, both regionally and locally, testifying to an awareness of Scottish religious pluralism within these same religious groups. Yet no research appears to have been carried out to map the rise of this development, much less assess its significance or identify its underlying dynamics.[1] In this perspective, the gathering and analysis of information on the various groups and communities that make up the diversity of religious expression in contemporary Scotland stands out as a necessary task, an essential preliminary in anticipation of more general studies that may seek to trace the growth of Scottish religious pluralism and assess its importance and significance both in its own right and in relation to other areas of inquiry. This essay, therefore, focusing on one non-Christian strand of religious diversity in Scotland (the Baha'i Faith), is undertaken in the hope that it may help illuminate the broader picture.

In its Scottish context, studies of the Baha'i Faith are confined, as far as we have been able to discover, to an anthropological dissertation on the Baha'i community in Aberdeen and a published account of the visit to Edinburgh in 1913 of one of the three central figures of the Baha'i Faith, 'Abdu'l-Baha (1844-1921), son of Baha'u'llah (1817-1892), prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith. Other than this, as far as secondary literature is concerned, all that exists is a very few scattered fragments in mostly unpublished sources. It is by reason of this almost complete absence of research that this essay is constrained to laying foundations for further work, even in the limited area under study, and that it focuses in one locality only, Edinburgh, where the Baha'i Faith was first established in Scottish territory and where the local archival resources have been made available to the writer. It is hoped however that the case of Edinburgh serves to illuminate general aspects of the establishment of the Baha'i Faith in Scotland and also to highlight issues relating to the broader question of Scottish religious diversity.

Historical Context[2]

It was in the period of 'Abdu'l-Baha's ministry that the Baha'i Faith first entered Scotland through the instrumentality of Jane Elizabeth Whyte, wife of Dr. Alexander Whyte, Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland (from 1898) and principal of New College (1909-

1916).[3] Mrs. Whyte was a friend of the first person to become a Baha'i in England (in 1898), Mrs. Mary Thornburgh-Cropper from London. At the latter's invitation, and with Professor E. G. Brown's encouragement, Mrs. Whyte took the opportunity of a winter trip to Egypt to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha in Akka in 1906, and was deeply moved by the experience. In this trip, as attested in her own account, she gained a basic knowledge of the Baha'i teachings and history and became convinced about the divine nature of the Baha'i Faith as preached and lived by 'Abdu'l-Baha. She was, she states, impressed by the progressiveness of the Baha'i outlook which broadened the concern with Christian unity associated with her husband's labours to encompass the recognition of divine truth "in all faiths and the brotherhood of all nations."[4] On her return to Edinburgh she shared the Baha'i teachings with friends and family, albeit with the circumspection due to hers and especially her husband's ties to the church. Her activities included distributing Baha'i literature and promoting a sympathetic understanding of the Baha'i teachings at the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910, as well as holding meetings to spread the Baha'i teachings at her home in the Manse, 7 Charlotte Square.[5]

The second channel by which knowledge of the Baha'i Faith filtered through to Scotland at this early period was the Scottish branch of the Theosophical Society, which as early as 1911 carried a lengthy article on the Baha'i Faith in its official journal *Theosophy in Scotland.* This was partly in response to exchanges with Major Tudor Pole, a staunch supporter of the Baha'is and a prominent figure in the introduction to Britain of alternative spiritualities and philosophies in the early decades of this century. Later that year, during 'Abdu'l-Baha's first trip to London, the Scottish Theosophists sent a delegation to meet him headed by their Secretary, Mr. Graham Pole, who met with 'Abdu'l-Baha on four separate occasions. Upon their return they wrote about their meeting in the above-mentioned journal, receiving from 'Abdu'l-Baha afterwards a letter which was also published there. Mr. Graham Pole was profoundly impressed in the course of those four interviews, and was instrumental in conveying a positive image of 'Abdu'l-Baha to his friends and colleagues in Edinburgh prior to the latter's visit to Scotland.

Upon returning to Britain in 1913 from a tour of the United States, 'Abdu'l-Baha was invited by Mrs. Whyte to visit Edinburgh. Already 'Abdu'l-Baha's return to British shores had been announced in an article in the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* of 13 December 1912, greeting the event and explaining that "the keynote of his faith is peace". The article proved to be but the prelude of a flurry of media coverage detailing 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to Edinburgh. Among the newspapers carrying features were included the *Evening Dispatch*, the *Edinburgh Evening News* and *The Scotsman*, all of which continued the discussion of 'Abdu'l-Baha's trip in the letters column for weeks after his departure. It was Mrs. Whyte who was responsible for organizing 'Abdu'l-Baha's public and informal programmes in Edinburgh. Through her efforts, the Outlook Tower Society, the Edinburgh Esperanto Society, and the Scottish Theosophical Society hosted one public address each on subsequent days, from January 7, 1913, the day after 'Abdu'l-Baha's arrival, to January 9, the day before 'Abdu'l-Baha's departure.[6]

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Baha Western conceptions of the Baha'i faith were somewhat ambiguous, ranging from perceptions of it as a movement of progressive thought working within existing groups and institutions, to visions of it as an independent religion fulfilling the promises of all scriptures, and consequently Baha'i identity was a rather broad concept encompassing various degrees of commitment. It is therefore difficult to say that there was a Baha'i community as such in Edinburgh after 'Abdu'l-Baha's departure. The records so far

available of Baha'i activity up to 1946 (when an Egyptian Baha'i arrived in Edinburgh to study medicine and to help found a Baha'i community in Scotland) are very few and far between, but whatever the situation after 1913, it is clear is that by the 1940's Baha'i activity had all but fizzled out and there were no Baha'is in Scotland to speak of. What we can say is that the Baha'i Faith had a high profile following 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit, being the topic of hot debate in newspaper columns, with, among others, clergymen attacking and clergymen defending the Baha'i message. Baha'i meetings were held regularly at the Esperantists as well as at the Outlook Tower and private homes; *Theosophy in Scotland* under the editorship of Graham Pole continued to publish Baha'i features and the theosophists continued to promote the Baha'i teachings; and a number of individuals such as Mrs. Whyte and to a lesser extent E. H. Pagan evinced clear commitment to the Baha'i Faith and kept in contact with Baha'is in England and in the United States.[7] The processes which led to the cessation of Baha'i activity are unclear, but what is clear is that, whilst we can trace the presence of the Baha'i Faith in Scotland to the turn of the century, we can only properly speak of the emergence of a Baha'i community as such in the late 1940's and early 1950's.

The passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha saw the inception of a new phase in the development of the Baha'i Faith under the leadership of 'Abdu'l-Baha's grandson and appointed successor, Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957), Guardian of the Baha'i Faith.[8] With Shoghi Effendi the widely scattered Baha'i community went through a process of institutionalisation already under way in 'Abdu'l-Baha's later years, which signaled the emergence of the Baha'i Faith as a self-consciously distinct and highly organised religion. The administrative system founded by Baha'u'llah and elaborated by 'Abdu'l-Baha was applied and developed world-wide, and the broad plan for the international expansion of the Faith outlined by 'Abdu'l-Baha was progressively and systematically executed. This, coupled with Shoghi Effendi's prolific work of translation, exposition, historiography, and institutional and personal guidance, resulted in a highly integrated network of widely scattered Baha'i communities unified at the local, national and international levels by a common vision of community action and development, a shared sense of Baha'i history, a body of sacred scripture, and a single administrative system based on consultative and spiritual principles which ensured high levels of communication at the local, regional and international levels. Thirty six years after taking over the responsibilities of his office, in 1957, Shoghi Effendi died, having set in motion processes which culminated in 1963 in the first election of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme administrative body of the Baha'i community and present head of the Baha'i Faith. It is against the backdrop of this global transformation of the Baha'i Faith in Shoghi Effendi's lifetime into a highly cohesive, interconnected world community, that the emergence of a local Baha'i community in Edinburgh c.1948 must be understood, placed in the context of English Baha'i history.[9]

Before the 1940's, the Baha'i community of the UK was almost exclusively confined to England, where steady growth during 'Abdu'l-Baha's lifetime had been followed by a decline in vitality and numbers following his death, but had witnessed a revival of activity and expansion in the mid-1930's which would definitely establish the Baha'i Faith in the British Isles in the ensuing years. In Ireland Baha'i presence may be traced to c.1918, but a community only emerges c.1948. In Wales Baha'i presence dates to 1942, but a Baha'i community, again, only begins to emerge c.1948.[10] That the emergence of the Baha'i community in Scotland, Wales and Ireland coincides so neatly is, of course, no chance occurrence, but rather an expression of the systematic approach to community development and expansion which became such a prominent feature of the Baha'i Faith during Shoghi

Effendi's ministry and after, made possible by the dynamics and structures of the Baha'i administrative system.[11]

It is thus in the context of the maturation of the Baha'i community of England and in particular of its institutional development, that the emergence, not only of the Scottish, but also of the Irish and Welsh Baha'i communities must be understood. This evolution of the institutional life of the Baha'i community in the U.K. has been traced to 1914, when the Baha'is of England first organized themselves into a committee. From this early begining a Baha'i Spiritual Assembly for England had been formed by 1922, and one year later the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles had come into being.[12] By 1928, the National Spiritual Assembly had been elected in what came to be the standard administrative procedure for the worldwide Baha'i community, first applied in the United States c.1925 and still largely in vigour today[13]. On the strength of these institutional developments and of the renewed vitality and activity of the 1930's and onwards, the British Baha'is embarked on their first national plan for the expansion and consolidation of the Baha'i Faith in Britain, building on the success of a similar plan (1937-1944) which the Baha'is of North America had just concluded. Thus, in May 1944, the British Baha'is cabled Shoghi Effendi their intention to undertake a six year plan and asked him to set the goals; to which Shoghi Effendi cabled back: "WELCOME SPONTANEOUS DECISION ADVISE FORMATION NINETEEN [local] SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES SPREAD OVER ENGLAND WALES SCOTLAND NORTHERN IRELAND AND EIRE PRAYING SIGNAL VICTORY."[14] This brief response channeled the energies of the Baha'is of England to establish Baha'i communities in the various countries of the British Isles, and thus generated the impulse that would give rise in the next 6 years to the nucleus of the Baha'i community in Scotland - an event which may be neatly marked by the formation, in Edinburgh, of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Scotland, in April 21, 1948.[15]

Before moving on, a word on the nature of the Six Year Plan and the motivations of the Baha'is for pursuing it will give us sufficient background to understand the mindset of the first Baha'is to move to Edinburgh to establish a Baha'i community.[16] Margit Warburg has already pointed out the importance of migration in the growth and development of the Baha'i community of Europe generally,[17] and migration may be said to have constituted the backbone of the Six Year Plan. To understand the reasons for this we have to look beyond Scotland and even beyond England. The international dimension, as Warburg has pointed out, is crucial for understanding the process of expansion of the Baha'i community, and never more so than in this period.[18] The most important element in this regard are the directives of Shoghi Effendi to the Baha'i community in general, and the British Baha'i community in particular, as shall become clear.

We find that in a letter dated 27 March, 1945, Shoghi Effendi directs the British National Assembly to "encourage the believers to disperse, to settle, to persevere, and to appeal more directly and effectively to the masses who are waiting for this Divine Message".[19] This policy of propagation through systematic dispersion had already proved effective in the Seven Year Plan of the American Baha'is, and was inspired before that by precedents in the policy and writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha and Baha'u'llah.[20] The degree of emphasis placed by Shoghi Effendi on systematic, focused pioneering, conveyed in letters such as the following, dated 22 March, 1946 and in his own handwriting, had a profound impact on the pattern of activity of the Baha'i community of England:

"The goal towns which have been selected should be regarded as the chief objectives requiring the immediate and concentrated attention of its zealous promoters. Every consideration should be subordinated to the paramount need of establishing, at any cost and by every means possible, vigorously functioning assemblies at these centres"[21]

The British response was forthcoming: 60 percent of the Baha'i community of Great Britain, the highest percentage in any community in the Baha'i world this century, pioneered during the Six Year Plan. An idea of the rhythm this implied may be gathered from the figures for April 1949 to Apri1950: 46 pioneers mobilised to carry out 49 projects; 88 travelling teachers used; and 40 adults and 3 youth accepting the Baha'i Faith.[22] By the late 1940's pioneering was fast becoming part of British Baha'i culture, closely linked to what Peter Smith called the "polar motif"[23] (characteristic of the Baha'i community from its origins), that stressed loyalty and obedience to the founder of the Faith and his successors, and, by extension, to the Baha'i institutions. Thus, Hugh McKinley, a Baha'i from England who pioneered from Torquay to Cardiff in 1947 to form the first Spiritual Assembly in Wales, explained that at that time pioneering was regarded as a natural, almost automatic part of committed Baha'i service - "you just did it"[24]. Pioneering was an expression of obedience, and regarded as an act of service of immense significance and historic import: a contribution to the building of the Kingdom of God on earth and to the immediate assuaging and ultimate eradication of the world's material, social and spiritual ills. This understanding, motivating the endeavours of believers and impelling them to leave their homes and travel to promote their faith, is characteristically expressed in a letter addressed to the British Baha'is by their elected representatives:

"We speak of the coming of the Most Great Peace which will be the Kingdom of God established upon earth, but how impossible it is to visualise what it will be like! ...It is not a mere system of world government which will be established, not a mere set of principles put into practice, but a Divinely inspired Order canalising the spiritual bounties which God is pouring forth upon mankind, a world-wide community of love such as humanity has never known.. It is the unimaginably great privilege of the few who have so far been drawn to the light of Baha'u'llah to act as channels for the spread of His Word and tools by which He may build this most great, this new World Order."[25]

We have alluded to the fact that the growth of the Baha'i Faith in Scotland is but one small element both of the rise in Scottish religious diversity in the 19th and 20th centuries, and of the accompanying increase in Scottish religious pluralism.[26] Religious diversity (expressed more often than not in religious controversy) may be said to have been a feature of Scotland since the early days of the arrival of Christianity, through the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the 19th and 20th centuries. For a long time, this diversity remained almost exclusively within a Christian paradigm, although the presence of Judaism and of some strands of deism or theism (and one might add atheism) associated with the Enlightenment may be identified as early non-Christian elements. However, until the 19th century institutionalised religious diversity in general may be said to have been highly minoritary, (with the exception of transitional periods such as the Reformation), and non-Christian diversity positively marginal in Scotland. Thus we find that around 1780, according to Callum Brown's estimate, "the Church of Scotland could claim the religious superintendence of perhaps 85 per cent of Scots people, with about 12 per cent adhering to dissenting Presbyterian churches and a further 3 per cent to non-Presbyterian groups."[27]

From the 19th century onwards this situation changes dramatically. In 1851 only 32 percent of church goers belonged to the Church of Scotland, 59 percent to Presbyterian dissent and 9 per cent to non-Presbyterian dissent.[28] By 1980 the percentage of Scots affiliated to any church was 48 percent.[29] Simultaneously, during the 19th century we begin to see the rise in Scotland of religious movements such as the Swedenborgians (1800),[30] the Mormons (from the 1840's),[31] the Spiritualists (1860's)[32], and Christian Scientists (1890's).[33] Catholics began to emigrate in large numbers from Ireland into Scotland in the same period, and the 1880's saw the beginning of an influx of large numbers of Jews into Scotland, reaching by 1914 possibly 15,000.[34]

The decline in church membership in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the growth of religious diversity and of religious pluralism in that same period resulted in a large constituency of people without church affiliation and in a less exclusive understanding of religion among such as retained religious affiliation. This no doubt contributed to the growth of non-mainstream religious groups with conversionist emphases, and is reflected in the wide-spread concern in the churches over the long-term decline of traditional religion. The Scottish Baha'i community thus emerges at an important juncture, a transitional period when the religious climate is already denominational, and yet the so-called "market" approach to religion (which may be properly dated to 1970's Sxotland) had not emerged, alternative religious identities still being very limited in number and non-Christian options still virtually non-existent. The current of new religious movements was rising, but non-Christian movements and religions for the most part had not yet taken root in Scottish land.

In this light, we might conclude that the early post-war climate was propitious for the establishment of the Baha'i community in Scotland: people were increasingly satisfied with formal separation from the mainstream churches, and were increasingly open to the truth of religious perspectives other than their own; a sense of malaise was felt in many quarters in the churches, while at the same time the post-war climate of reconstructionism made people receptive to innovation; the growth of new religious movements since the 19th century had made people increasingly used to alternative religious visions, yet there was not as yet the degree of choice and hence competition of two decades later. Further, the Baha'i emphasis on religious pluralism and social recontruction may be said to have been especially in tune with the times.

THE RISE OF THE BAHA'I COMMUNITY IN EDINBURGH 1946-1950

Against this background we may proceed to chronicle the rise of the Baha'i community in Scotland. Our principal source in this endeavour has been the minutes of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Edinburgh from its formation in 1948 until 1950. Additionally, we have drawn on materials in Baha'i periodicals of the time, interviews with contemporaries, some relevant Baha'i publications, and miscellaneous materials from the small archives of the Baha'i community of Edinburgh. As such there are large gaps that we have not been able to cover. Minutes, almost by definition, are skeletal and impersonal.[35] They imply a bias towards institutional concerns over broader ones which may have been equally or more important and significant. They also carry the danger of conveying too integrated a picture, summarising as they do the thoughts and opinions of many individuals. The work of adequately tracing the background of the first Baha'is of the Edinburgh Baha'i community is perhaps the most important gap, and we will only give very fragmentary and limited information on the subject here. A number of papers including correspondence and a history of the Baha'i Faith in Edinburgh by some of these early Edinburgh Baha'is are

believed to be in existence but have not thus far been located by the author. Yet sufficient materials exist, it seems clear, to adequately sketch the period, formulate fruitful questions and draw some interesting conclusions. New questions and conclusions will be added and a lot more detail introduced as a result of later finds.

Before proceeding with our task, a word of explanation concerning the choice of time-span studied seems in order. As was mentioned earlier, we trace the emergence or rise of the Baha'i community in Scotland to the establishment of the first local Baha'i administrative body in Edinburgh in 1948, although the presence of the Baha'i Faith in Edinburgh dates to the turn of the century. We make a further distinction between the rise, and the establishment of the Baha'i community - the former referring to the stage at which the community's central concern is survival, and the latter to the point at which survival is to all intents and purposes assured and the focus lies on broader issues. We may trace the rise of the Edinburgh Baha'i community to 1948, but its establishment, in the sense described above, does not crystallise until approximately a decade later. In this study we are concerned with the processes which led to the rise of the Baha'i community in Edinburgh, rather than with processes that led to its establishment, and consequently we have decided to stop our review in 1950, which coincides with the end of the 6 Year Plan of the British Baha'is (1944-1950) which led to the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Scotland. However, it may be borne in mind that the dynamics we identify for this period may be very generally said to apply until the 1960's.

Preliminary Efforts (1946-1948)

We will begin our account by referring to a succinct chronicle of the events leading to the formation of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Edinburgh that appeared in the national British Baha'i periodical, *Baha'i Journal*, in November 1948.[36] The report begins by telling of the arrival of a Dr. Said from Egypt[37] in 1946 to study in Edinburgh and fulfill the goals of the Six Year Plan. He invite dtravel teachers to speak in Edinburgh, and before long was joined by Jean Court from Canada; together they formed a group[38] and cabled Shoghi Effendi to that effect, Shoghi Effendi in return praising them and assuring them of his prayers. A stream of travel teachers and pioneers in the course of the next few years resulted gradually in the conversion of five Scots, Mr. And Mrs. Wood,[39] Dr. Johnston,[40] Mrs. Hughina Faulkiner,[41] and Mr. William Robertson.[42] By 1948 Dr. Said had left for Egypt and Isobel Locke,[43] Isobel Slade,[44] and Eric Manton[45] had pioneered to Edinburgh to make the nine people required for the establishment of a Local Spiritual Assembly. The article explains:

"Suffice it to say that every possible opportunity was utilized for the promulgation of the Faith, including Baha'u'llah's Birthday, International Youth Day, and Naw Ruz;[46] and all Feasts and Anniversaries[47] were celebrated by the Group and a regular study-class each week for the contacts was a Group project as well."[48]

One of the most obvious facts that stands out from the report is the critical importance played by migration in the emergence of the Edinburgh Baha'i community. Indeed, migration may be identified as the single most important factor affecting the growth and development of the Edinburgh community until the late 1950's at least. The amount of people visiting or moving to Edinburgh for the purpose of forming a Local Spiritual Assembly in the first year and a half of Baha'i expansion there is quite remarkable. 22 individuals are mentioned as having come (some repeatedly) for varying lengths of time to promote the Baha'i Faith in

only eighteen months. Of these, 15 hailed from England; 5 from the US (one of them via Germany); 1 from Canada (via Luxembourg); and 1 from Egypt.[49]

Besides the importance of migration, the rationale and motivation of which we have already endeavoured to explain in an earlier section, the other element that jumps to mind from the report quoted above is the number of people with high positions of responsibility at the national level who were involved in the efforts to establish a Local Spiritual Assembly in Edinburgh in this period: at least 6 individuals (or 40 percent of the English contingent of pioneers and travel-teachers to Edinburgh) were members of the National Assembly and/or at least one of its major committees. A closer look reveals that most of these individuals were visiting teachers rather than settlers, reinforcing rather than sustaining the teaching work in Edinburgh - although two settled there for some time (Isobel Locke and Richard Backwell).[50] The numbers are suggestive of the importance attached to the teaching work in Edinburgh - in large measure in consequence, as before, of Shoghi Effendi's imput. "Cardiff, Dublin and Edinburgh" wrote Shoghi Effendi through his secretary, "...are the three most important assemblies formed under the Plan, and must be built into strong and flourishing communities, free from any danger of relapse."[51] The involvement of so many national Baha'i officers is also a sign of the importance of the national dimension in shaping local developments at this time, the implications of which will be discussed later.

Of the five Scots that "declared" in this period, Mr. And Mrs. Wood, and also Hughina Faulkiner, left the Baha'i Faith by Spring 1949, a little over a year after they had become Baha'is, while Dr. Johnston and Mr. Robertson remained until the end of their days, becoming pillars of the community and providing continuity in the midst of constant change. The task of adequately reconstructing Dr. Johnston and Mr. Robertson's motivations for embracing the Baha'i Faith from the primary sources at hand, is, due to the paucity of information, impracticable. Sociological considerations, however, may allow us to formulate plausible hypotheses, which we will discuss later in the essay. We will only note at this point that Dr. Johnson's meeting with 'Abdu'l-Baha during the latter's visit to Edinburgh would no doubt have been a prominent factor in his conversion.

The motivations of the three remaining Scottish converts of 1947-1948, are more amenable to speculation on the basis of internal evidence. To assess these motivations from the fragmentary information at our disposal we will, however, partly have to work backwards. We find that the withdrawal from the Baha'i Faith of the Woods is partly due to Mrs. Wood's unwillingness to relinquish membership in the Spiritualist church.[52] This was the period when the Baha'i community around the world was (and had been since the 1920's) undergoing a process of institutionalisation and differentiation (impelled by Shoghi Effendi), which called on Baha'is to distinguish themselves from other religious traditions and movements in order to appreciate the distinctiveness of the Baha'i Faith and galvanise support for its institutions. Baha'is were permitted and indeed urged to associate with all groups and religions, but were required to refuse formal membership in their official bodies and institutions.[53] Additionally, and perhaps most significantly, the Woods seem to have become disenchanted with the administrative side of the Faith, asking to resign from the Local Spiritual Assembly in June 1948, only four months after their declaration in January of that year and a full nine months before their resignation from the Faith.[54] We may thus postulate that what attracted the Woods to the Baha'i Faith in the first place was its spiritual and humanitarian teachings, including its teachings on life after death, which present similarities to Spiritualist beliefs on the subject, and that their conception of the Faith had difficulty reconciling these with the potentially less romantic work of administering the

affairs of the local community. It is likely that the pressures of administering the community also played a part in the withdrawal of Mrs. Faulkiner, as she missed three consecutive meetings of the Local Assembly after having attended merely twice before, attending again Local Spiritual Assembly meetings only subsequent to a meeting in August 1948 (together with the rest of the Local Assembly) with Hasan Balyuzi of the National Spiritual Assembly. Thereafter she attended three more meetings (until December 1948), before finally withdrawing from the community sometime between January and March 1949.[55]

To understand the pressures that led to the disenchantment of these three early Scottish converts one must bear in mind the fact that the Baha'i Faith has no clergy or priesthood. No Baha'i can expect to be permanently supported by the Baha'i Funds, although temporary financial assistance may be extended to Baha'is engaged in service to the Faith. As such, the work of the Local Spiritual Assembly takes on the character of a voluntary organisation, relying on the wholehearted commitment and support of believers for its survival and smooth running. With only nine members in the community, the same people finance, plan, organize and execute all local activities, while responding to priorities and pressures from the national level, supporting themselves and carrying on with family and daily life at the same time. Add to this constant change of membership in the local community and the stresses this poses to administrative work; post-war privation; the demands of a critical phase in the national plan;[56] and only some four months' affiliation to the Baha'i Faith behind; and the degree of challenge faced by these early converts begins to become apparent. We surmise then that becoming a Baha'i during the Six Year Plan, at least in a goal town, demanded unusually high levels of motivation, commitment, resilience, and a strong willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the Baha'i cause. This probably required a great deal of clarity about one's reasons to be a Baha'i and a broad vision of the Baha'i Faith that could sacralise the small details and daily struggles demanded by the situation, structures and dynamics of the British Baha'i community at this time. It is not surprising that so many messages from Shoghi Effendi and from the national institutions of the British Baha'is, some of which have been quoted earlier, focus on imparting such a vision of the historic import and sacred nature of the work of the Six Year Plan. Such considerations not only help explain the withdrawal of three of the five initial Scottish converts to the Baha'i Faith in the Six Year Plan, but also give us an intimation of the character and level of commitment of the two that remained in the Faith.

Emergence of a Budding Baha'i Community in Edinburgh (1948-1950)

In seeking to locate the dynamics of community life in the Edinburgh Baha'i community 1948-1950 we might begin by mentioning that there was a high level of social interaction among Baha'is. They met once a month on average for Local Spiritual Assembly meetings, once every nineteen days for Feasts, and several times a year for holy days. Additionally, the administrative structure of the Local Spiritual Assembly included a variety of committees, such as a literature committee, a teaching committee, a feast committee, a youth committee, etc.[57]; plus ad-hoc working groups to deal with temporary issues such as writing reports, preparing a special meeting, etc. These committees, formed of two to four persons on average, would meet in between LSA meetings to carry out their work. Regular public meetings and firesides, plus social encounters, meant that, in all, the nine Baha'is of Edinburgh interacted very often indeed.[58] Additionally, the Edinburgh Baha'is were in touch with other Baha'i communities around the country, exchanging correspondence, receiving visitors, and themselves visiting other areas. Local Baha'i activity focused on community development,[59] numerical expansion, and the dissemination of Baha'i literature.[60]

Community Development

An early concern as regards community development was the search for a regular meeting place. From the very first meeting attention was given to the possibility of acquiring a room at the Centre of United Scotland as a Baha'i Centre, but the bid was unsuccessful.[61] The search for "a permanent centre or a place where we could meet regularly"[62] continued, with a "room hunt committee" appointed which checked 7 venues before settling for a rented room in the Scottish Liberal Party Rooms from January 1949, a full nine months after the search began.[63] In election time doubts were expressed as to the advisability of meeting in the Liberal Party Rooms, give the Baha'i principle of non-involvement in partisan politics ("If the election fever grew too great we would have to go elsewhere"),[64] but in the end they continued meeting there for some time. The idea of a permanent centre was temporarily abandoned, hardly resurfacing at all in the next few years.

Another fact related to the early efforts at community development was the very early existence of local Baha'i archives, possibly dating to 1947 and certainly in place by December 1948.[65] In the course of the next two years materials pertaining to the visit of 'Abdu'l-Baha were collected, notably by Dr. Lotfullah Hakim, a pioneer from Persia who arrived in Edinburgh in 1948 and who had as a young man accompanied 'Abdu'l-Baha to Edinburgh in 1913.[66] Dr. Hakim and Isobel Locke are also said to have written in this period an account of the history of the Baha'i Faith in Edinburgh, possibly in the national Baha'i archives in London or the international archives in Haifa.[67] 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to Edinburgh must indeed have heightened a sense of sacred history among the Edinburgh Baha'is, already a strong characteristic of the Baha'i community at large.

A third aspect of community life was the holding of 19 Day Feasts and the commemoration of holy days, to which great importance was attached. The Local Spiritual Assembly, writing about the Feast Committee in charge of organizing Feasts and Anniversaries, states in one of its minutes, "The inner spiritual well-being of the community...lies, in great part, in their care."[68] The consultative part of the Feasts, after its devotional and before its social section, was devoted, after the essential business had been dealt with, to study of the Baha'i teachings regarding the Local Spiritual Assembly, teaching activity, and the like.[69] At these and other meetings the Baha'i scriptures were read as were the letters of the national institutions and neighbouring communities and the communications of Shoghi Effendi, especially his letter to the Edinburgh Local Assembly dated 22 September, 1948.[70] This letter was reviewed again and again in the course of the year when planning teaching activities and after elections of the Local Spiritual Assembly.[71]

Diffusion of Baha'i Literature

As to dissemination of Baha'i literature, the drive for this - as for so many other things - originates, as we have seen, with Shoghi Effendi, who held it up to be one of the two "chief objectives" of the Six Year Plan. Even before the Local Assembly was established a literature committee had therefore been set up by the Baha'i group, and Dr. Said from Egypt had before leaving gifted Baha'i books for a Baha'i lending library. The lending library was presumably for the use of Baha'is and their friends or regular contacts.[72] Baha'i literature available for distribution was classified into books for sale, books for lending (mostly books Baha'is had finished reading), and free literature (supplied by the national Baha'i Publishing Trust).[73] The free literature would be distributed "only to those people definitely interested to

receive it".[74] Books for sale would be purchased from the Baha'i Publishing Trust and then presumably sold at meetings and through personal contact. A list of titles was prepared to "circulate to all the Friends", referring probably to close non-Baha'i contacts.[75] In October 1948 the stock for sale was valued at £13.10.11 (a representative figure) and sales and purchases in this period were small but regular.[76]

In June 1948, the literature committee was asked by the Local Assembly to take up the matter of placing books in the Edinburgh public libraries.[77] It was decided to put one bound volume of David Hofman's *Renewal of Civilization* in the various public libraries of Edinburgh each month for 5 months.[78] They sought to place books in local libraries; as well as in the Friend's Meeting House, the Theosophical Society (wished to buy books); the Unitarian Church and the Psychic College (happy to receive gifted books); and the International House Library.[79] Additionally, historical connections of Scots with the Baha'i Faith were used to fascilitate access to libraries, so that a copy of 'Abdu'l-Baha's letter to Andrew Carnegie might, they thought, open doors in Carnegie libraries;[80] a copy of John Esslemont's immensely influential text-book on the Baha'i Faith was sent to the editor of the *Glasgow Herald* because of the "author's family connection";[81] and a copy of a new compilation of Baha'i sacred writings made by George Townshend was forwarded to Mr. Millar of the John O'Groat Journal, who had previously reviewed favourably a number of Baha'i books.[82] Finally, individuals acted on their own initiative, so that before Mrs. Faulkiner left the Baha'i Faith, she had placed a copy of Shoghi Effendi's history of the Baha'i religion in Leith library.[83]

Expansion

With this we come to the most dominant concern of the Baha'is together with the cycle of Local Spiritual Assembly meetings, 19 Day Feasts and holy days: teaching or propagation. Indeed, given the temporary nature of most pioneer settlements in this period, local numerical expansion was essential to long-term survival, and efforts were therefore understandably focused on teaching the faith. Beyond this rationale, the emphasis in the Baha'i writings - including those of Shoghi Effendi - on teaching is very strong. We have already mentioned something of the Baha'i self-understanding of the nature and significance of teaching efforts; we will focus here on the specific activities and processes associated with these efforts.

Teaching was said to involve three phases of activity: publicity, maintenance of interest, and focus on receptive contacts.[84] Peter Smith's 'polar motif' is everywhere in evidence as the community turns again and again to the communications of Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly or its institutions for guidance in the execution of its work, seeking "to carry out the Guardian's hopes and instructions to us."[85] "It was felt that the Guardian's words, in particular, should form the basis for all the teaching work in Edinburgh."[86] The approach was highly systematic. A local teaching committee was appointed to draft a plan and coordinate activities on behalf of the Assembly. This committee would make "a special study of needs and opportunities in the teaching field in Scotland and particularly Edinburgh", and formulate on that basis a "teaching policy" for the coming year, presenting "a full report of its findings and policy to the Local Spiritual Assembly" for ratification, which would then be executed by all members of the community.[87] Areas explored in the report included Scottish organizations and opportunities (investigated by the two committed Scots), international organizations, youth organizations, and publicity and advertising, which demonstrates that networking was a central part of the teaching strategy.[88]

Importance was attached to cultural sensitivity (encouraged by Shoghi Effendi), as is seen from the appointment of two Scots to investigate Scottish opportunities and organizations, from the request for Dr. Johnston's "special cooperation" with the Local Teaching Committee "in view of his knowledge of Scotland and its peoples",[89] and as seen in their concern to reach the local people[90] and use Scottish materials like the *John O'Groat* journal and other documents kept in their local archives .[91]

The pattern of activity consisted of monthly public meetings to stimulate interest at which visiting travel-teachers would speak, and which would be widely advertised by means of cards with the twelve principles formulated by 'Abdu'l-Baha for summarising the Baha'i teachings to Western audiences;[92] by advertisements in the major newspapers, and by word of mouth. Also, to attract attention Baha'is would sometimes speak at the meetings of other organizations and support their events or invite them to speak to the Baha'is, as well as joining clubs and societies to increase range of contacts.[93] To maintain the interest thus aroused, weekly "public firesides" would be held, often advertised in the newspaper, at a public venue, at which a local Baha'i would discuss the Baha'i teachings and slight refreshments would be served ("twelve principles" cards would also be handed out on these occasions). According to Dr. Iraj Ayman[94], a number of people were regular attendees close to the Baha'i Faith but without formal membership. He also noted that many contacts in this period were theosophists, with whom Dr. Hakim had re-established contact (from the time of his visit with 'Abdu'l-Baha). Attendance varied, with up to 12 youth attending a successful fireside,[95] and as little as 5 people attending over the course of 4 such meetings.[96] The cost of public firesides between December and January averaged an approximately £4 per meeting, 70 percent of which went towards publicity in the Scotsman, the Evening News and five other weeklies, the remaining amount being covered by room hire, card printing and postage.[97] With less publicity, the meetings cost as little as 24 shillings. In all however, this sort of expenditure was more than substantial for a community of very limited financial resources. To consolidate the contacts which had shown special receptivity, study classes lasting as long as 10 lessons and based on materials provided by the National Teaching Committee, were regularly held.[98] Individuals also engaged in "personal contact work", that is, efforts focused on "those whom we might privately help to know more of the Cause through greater association, recognising that lots of people are not of the meeting kind."[99] A list of interested contacts was kept and regularly updated, and frequently the Baha'is would get together to discuss possible approaches to these various contacts.

As for the range of contacts, we get an idea from the fact that 95 invitations were sent for one of the monthly public meetings with visiting speakers, while only 23 were sent for a small Feast designed for the core of their friends and associates.[100] This averages to about 19 interested acquaintances and 3 close contacts per local Baha'i. As to the social composition of this population, we can only hazard a guess, but the groups mentioned in the minutes (by no means the only ones contacted) give a sense of the likelihood of diversity rather than homogeneity: the Order of the Cross, the International House, the Society of Friends, the Theosophical Society, the Psychic College, the Unitarian Church, the Spiritualist Church; the Crusade for World Government, United Nations Association, Federal Union, and an Edinburgh women's association.[101] What we see take place is an early focus on groups with a religious content, expanded in 1950, after a specially unsuccessful month, to include "societies without religious emphasis".[102] The result of this activity from April 1948 until April 1950 was two declarations, both by young women, one of whom withdrew from the Faith shortly afterwards after attending two Local Spiritual Assembly meetings, and the

second of whom remained an active member of the community participating in its manifold activities.

The first one to declare, Miss Smith, came into the Baha'i Faith, it seems certain, after the youth fireside mentioned earlier to which 12 youth came, in the autumn of 1948. We have a record of the manner in which she was welcomed into the community. She presented herself at a meeting of the Local Spiritual Assembly on 6 October of that year; after being welcomed, a quotation from Shoghi Effendi was read to her stating the qualifications of a new believer.[103] They then asked Miss Smith if she understood fully all that is contained therein, to which Miss Smith replied in the affirmative. After this, the Assembly retired for consultation and heard a full report of her "contact and knowledge of the Faith", subsequently deciding to accept Miss Smith's declaration. They then asked Miss Smith whether she had read and understood 'Abdu'l-Baha's Will and Testament,[104] to which she said yes. She was thereupon presented with the gift of a book of sacred Baha'i scriptures, and given a declaration card to sign. The meeting closed with a "delicious feast" and a "piano recital" by Dr. Johnston[105] She attended one more meeting of the Local Assembly and is not mentioned again in the minutes after that, suggesting again that the pressures of administrative life were too much for her. In contrast with Miss Smith, the second Scottish convert, Miss Jean McLean did not formally meet the Local Spiritual Assembly. Her declaration followed her attendance to a 19 Day Feast on 4 November 1949, and was handled by the Assembly without her being present at their meeting. The Assembly "agreed to welcome her as a youth member of the community" - which makes her under 21 years old.[106] Dr. Hakim (Secretary) was to write a letter of special welcome and Jean Court and Mrs. Mills[107] would form a committee "to help deepen her in the faith." A declaration card[108] would be given her to sign after Dr. Hakim's return from a travel-teaching project some four weeks later. The impression is that the Local Spiritual Assembly, perhaps learning from the previous experience, adopted a softer, more gradual, yet more thorough (a committee to help her deepen her faith) approach. Additionally, as a youth, she was spared the contemporary pressures of Assembly membership.[109]

National Links

We have already stressed the importance of the international dimension in the form of the determining impact of Shoghi Efendi's communications and guidance. Informing all three major areas of activity described above, was, additionally, the constant input of the National Spiritual Assembly and its committees, struggling to bring the Six Year Plan nationally to a successful conclusion. In almost every meeting of the Local Assembly correspondence from the national level was read, encouraging, urging to higher endeavour, materially supporting local efforts, advising and responding to questions and dilemmas. Not content with this, three members of the National Spiritual Assembly and one official representative visited the Edinburgh Baha'is, acting as visiting speakers and consulting with the community on its local dilemmas as well as on the national situation and needs of the Six Year Plan - one National Assembly member, Richard Backwell, even moving to Edinburgh for a number of months.[110] Hasan Balyuzi, Chairman of the National Assembly and future Hand of the Cause, explained in a discussion with the Edinburgh Baha'is that the purpose of such meetings was to establish a closer relationship between local communities and the National Spiritual Assembly. The National Assembly, he explained, wants assistance with its problems, and offers Local Assemblies assistance with theirs. "We are all elected to serve the Cause... The stronger the love that binds us the more effective will be our consultation."[111]

On the whole, the interaction with the national level was more than beneficial to Edinburgh, providing teaching materials, financial assistance in times of need, a steady flow of devoted and able travel-teachers, guidance, inspiration and advise. But conflicting needs did sometimes create challenges and pose serious disruptions to the life of the local community. The final year of the Six Year Plan was a time of crisis for the British Baha'is: "The last year", writes Richard Backwell, "commenced with the [national] community facing what seemed to be an impossible task 57 believers required in 10 towns".[112] The community was already thinly scattered, and this put enormous pressures on the Baha'is at the time. The way the National Assembly chose to deal with the situation was to call on its most able teachers to carry out short-term projects in goal areas designed to expand sufficiently, through conversion and pioneering, to establish all projected Local Spiritual Assemblies. As a result the communities in which these teachers were residing were constantly being shuffled about, their most able hands (often officers on the Local Assembly) having to leave at a few weeks' notice for varying lengths of time. Thus the Baha'is of Edinburgh were frequently disrupted by the constant move of their Secretary or Chairman (who would also fulfill several other functions), and having to intermittently transfer responsibilities and adapt to new faces coming to support the work in Edinburgh. Between April 1948 and April 1950 seven people migrated from and seven new people migrated into the community in Edinburgh at the instance of the National Teaching Committee. In addition, several members spent long or frequent periods away from Edinburgh on projects assigned to them by the same body. However, although often expressing disappointment and even a hint of dissatisfaction, no serious friction between the Baha'is of Edinburgh and their national institutions appears to have obtained, partly due to the close degree of personal interaction between the two levels, and partly due to the polar motif which stressed trust and obedience to the institutions of the Faith.

Community Dynamics

It would be well to ask whether, after all, referring to the Baha'is of Edinburgh in this period as a community, or even, as we do, as a budding community, might not actually be a misnomer or an anachronism; and if it is not a misnomer then to identify the factors and dynamics which shape and preserve this community.[113] At first sight, indeed, it may seem misplaced to refer to a grouping of nine people, most of whom are not permanently settled in the locality, as a community. Indeed, all the community studies of which we are aware, even of very small communities, deal with considerably larger numbers.[114] Moreover, geographical considerations in these studies tend to play a more significant role than in the case of the Edinburgh Baha'i community in this period. It would indeed instinctively seem more appropriate to consider it a group, rather than a community. Yet a closer examination reveals that the Baha'is of Edinburgh may indeed be considered a small emergent community after 1948. The concept of community is one of the most ambiguous in the social sciences, and several authors have complained about this fact.[115] Poplin accepts George Hillery's definition which states that a "community consists of persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more common ties."[116] Scherer's important analysis additionally underscores the destabilising influence which the modern potential for mobility, -social, psychological and geographical - has had on traditional geographical communities. It has made place a far less determinant factor of community.[117] Similarly, size is shown by Scherer to be an unreliable criterion for defining community, as compared with social relationships.[118] Indeed, for Scherer, first and foremost, "community represents a particular set of social relationships."[119]

In this light, three characteristics distinguish the community from the group: First, the community, unlike the group, has responsibilities outside the unit; it "must tackle the question of relationships between groups: it must be the moderator between differing parties in case of conflict and, more importantly, the social guarantor of rights and protection for groups."[120] Secondly, unlike the group, the community has a 'structured commonality'. "This is the quality which enables a community to become almost more than the sum of its members."[121] Lastly, communities tend to have more permanence than groups, and, more significantly, "inherently" imply, unlike groups, "the *intention* of longevity".[122] These distinctions are, according to Scherer, fluid, and communities may break down into groups, while, "in an age of temporary associations divorced from geography, groups may endeavour to become communities and to provide similar functions for members."[123] This is exactly what the Baha'is were trying to do in Edinburgh from 1947.

The Edinburgh Baha'i group of 1947-1948 may be said, according to these definitions, to have been part of the larger Baha'i community in a way that Baha'is in Edinburgh at the time of 'Abdu'l-Baha were not. This is primarily shown by their responsibilities to the national community in response to whose plans and institutions they had emigrated to Edinburgh. But they were not a community in their own right; although they had a degree of structured communality, they lacked an inherent intention of longevity *qua* group. Although they hoped to see a community established on a permanent basis, they did not envisage themselves as a group spending a long time together in Edinburgh. Indeed, by May 1950 all the pioneers that had arrived between 1945 and April 1948 had moved on, only the two Scottish converts Dr. Johnston and Mr. Robertson, remaining from that period. Above all, until the formation of the Local Spiritual Assembly, the Baha'is of Edinburgh did not consider themselves a community but, as we have seen in Isobel Locke's report, a temporary group. With the first Local Spiritual Assembly the Baha'is begin to use the term community to refer to themselves, and the three characteristics highlighted by Scherer become indeed determinant; Hillery's definition becomes fully applicable to the Edinburgh Baha'is. At the same time, in the period under study the Baha'i community of Edinburgh was still partly dependent on national support. It is this partial yet not fully adequate degree of self-sufficiency that leads us to refer to the Edinburgh Baha'i community in this period as a budding community trying to become an established geographical community. More precisely, the Edinburgh Baha'i community in this period may be termed a synthetic community, defined by Scherer as "an attempt to build and develop a community consciously and deliberately."[124] In this respect it is of particular interest for comparative analysis, since it is one of the earliest a non-Christian religious movements to attempt such a feat in Scotland. It is also one of the few to have succeeded.[125]

The Baha'i Faith itself is found to be the primary agent and basis of Baha'i community, over and above factors of size and place. It is found to provide for Baha'is, against the pressures of numerical insignificance, national, social and economic heterogeneity, and exceptionally high levels of migration, what Scherer considers the "essentials" required in any community: "a 'core of commonness' or commonality that includes a collective perspective, agreed upon definitions, and some agreement about values... [and] a context for personal integration... Members ..are committed to the community to the extent of identifying directly or indirectly with the whole, and by having shared rather than functional bonds with others."[126] In this context "the whole" is the British and even the worldwide Baha'i community, Edinburgh Baha'i community being still at this stage in a precarious formative phase of development, manifesting the characteristics of community but not yet in a sustainable fashion. Among Baha'i teachings, the polar motif is

undoubtedly the single most important integrative agent, allowing Baha'is to connect even the most mundane act of service to the Faith to a sense of sacredness and importance linked to the motifs of millenarianism and social reconstruction also identified by Peter Smith in his important work.[127]

As to its pattern of community activity, it may be said to be divided into activity prescribed by the Baha'i system to all local Baha'i communities, and activity originating from local initiative with significant implications for the development of a Baha'i identity. Commitment to the fundamental and scripturally prescribed institutions pertaining to local Baha'i community life (the Local Spiritual Assembly, 19 Day Feasts and Holy Days) socialised Baha'is into a Baha'i identity which was national and international even as it was local, and linked Baha'i administrative and communal activity to the individual act of recognition of Baha'u'llah's claims. To administer the local affairs of the community was to translate Baha'u'llah's prophetic vision into historical reality and thus share in the execution of the Plan of God and the fulfillment of His Covenant. Religiosity and administration were thus bound in an indisoluble embrace, which alone explains why Baha'is were willing to endure the unquestionable stress and sacrifices of administering the Faith on a voluntary basis; and how the individual search for God was inextricably linked to a collective quest for communality.

If the systemic requirements of Baha'i administration, in the shape of routinised community activity binding on all Baha'is, provided the universality of Baha'i community identity, then the initiated aspects of the local community activity acted as platforms for the formulation of local community identities. The local plans, the committee structure of the Local Assembly, regular meetings other than the Assembly meetings, Feasts and Holy Days, were often the product of local initiative and decision making (on occasion, however, they could be a response to National level demands) and generally served to make a local Baha'i community distinctive. Some of these activities (such as the regular public meetings, or the meetings of the Local Teaching Committee, the Feast and Holy Days Committee, and the Literature Committee), moreover would become semi-permanent features of the local community, themselves acquiring the character of routinised activity.[128]

A number of observations may be further made regarding the group dynamics of the Edinburgh Baha'i community in the period in question. We note a social orientation half-way between an extreme communal orientation, with high levels of interaction and interrelationship, and the associative orientation, where the large number of relationships available to an individual tends not to overlap with the relationships of other individual members of the association. Moreover, this middle ground allowed for a complementarity of approaches and a harmonisation of inward looking and outward bound concerns. Local group dynamics tended to be more horizontal than hierarchical. Conflicting groups could not avoid contact as easily as in the broader urban milieu, and the pressure was for conflicts somehow to be resolved and open disputes avoided. When this could not be done informally, the issue was referred to the authority of the Local Spiritual Assembly whose process of decision making was a mix of decision by unanimity and decision by vote.[129]

From the foregoing may be surmised the overriding importance of systemic influences in determining the form and orientation of the Edinburgh Baha'i community in this period. An important reason for the centrality of systemic influences would undoubtedly be the numerical smallness of the community. In a larger community the proportion of routinised activity directly imposed by the Baha'i system on the community would probably

be comparatively insignificant. In the Edinburgh context the very attempt to have the Baha'i system up and running at a basic level called for the major part of the members' energies. A by-product of this is that the capacity to develop communal as opposed to administrative aspects suffered, the limited energies that were not devoted to administration being focused on attracting new converts to establish the community on a sound numerical base. This attempt in turn saw itself hampered by the high rates of migration which militated against the stability required for sustained development. As the rates of migration settle towards the end of our period, community development and expansion becomes more grounded and sustainable.

The Scottish factor in this period had limited influence on the form and dynamics of the Baha'i community. Its chief areas of influence was affecting the populations targeted by Baha'is (native Scots typically with religious associations outside the mainstream churches, such as Theosophy in the case of Dr. Johnston or spiritualism in the case of the Woods, plus the various secular or alternative organizations contacted mentioned above); and their style of teaching, that sought to draw links between the Baha'i Faith and Scotland. As far as the general pattern of community life was concerned however, the specifically Scottish milieu appears to have had little influence as compared with systemic, numerical, and urban factors.

CONCLUSION

The success of the project to establish a Baha'i community in the late 1940's, in this light, may perhaps be seen as one marker of a transition from a predominantly exclusivistic religious culture in Scotland, to a predominantly denominational and increasingly pluralistic one. The Baha'i teachers that came tapped into populations that had already moved away from church-based religiosity and begun to investigate alternatives. The groups we find the Baha'is targeting are either non-mainstream religious groups such as the theosophists, spiritualists, Unitarians, etc., or secular organizations such as the United Nations Association and promoters of world-government or the equality of men and women. This suggests that in the early post-war period new/alternative religious organizations with a non-sectarian ethos were likely to seek support from each other, and that support might also be sought from organizations perceived to be secular - which may link the rise of alternative religiosities to secularisation, even though causal relationships in this respect are not easily made.

The national and international dimension are shown to be crucial in determining the rise and development of the Baha'i community, providing the most important impulse to Baha'i activity in the period. This is linked to the sacralisation of the Baha'i system by the central Baha'i theological concept of the covenant, which endows the routinised authority of the Baha'i Faith with a charismatic dimension, and focuses Baha'is on obeying and drawing inspiration from the writings of their faith and the guidance of its institutions. It is this guidance and inspiration that motivated the Baha'is of England and beyond to leave their home to settle in Edinburgh in the hope of contributing to the establishment of universal peace and harmony as promised in the sacred scriptures of the world. Migration is found to be the determining factor of Baha'i community in this period. On the whole, national and international imputs were beneficial, but at times they could be highly disruptive. We see the small settlement of Baha'is evolve in its first four years from an individual to a group to a synthetic, budding community, and in this respect the Baha'i Faith itself is found to be the generating factor of Baha'i community, above elements of place, size, or national and socio-economic make-up. Internal influences stemming from the Baha'i administrative system and from the numerical size of the community were more important in shaping the form and

pattern of Baha'i community life than were environmental factors to do with a Scottish milieu, although being in an urban context was an important factor as well. Overall, the most important influence was the Baha'i administrative system's stimuli and demands.

The approach to community development and expansion was very systematic, and relied strongly on national support. Initial numerical expansion was moderately successful, but consolidation proved a challenge, as 7 Scots converted in 4 years, but only 3 remained Baha'is at the end of that period. The attraction of the Baha'i Faith for the early Scottish converts probably consisted in its spiritual and social teachings, which embraced pluralism, gave meaning to the social disruptions of the time, and conveyed hope and an opportunity to engage in building a new world order based on justice and love. Additionally, the high degree of communality and commitment was probably especially congenial to any who shared the sense of malaise of the Scottish clergy over a perceived decline in zeal and unity in the traditional churches. The more challenging aspects would have been the intense pressures and demands of administrative and community life and the problem of maintaining boundaries in order to preserve a distinctive identity - the other side of the 'pluralistic, committed and united' coin. Being a Baha'i at this time could thus be immensely exciting - building the Kingdom of God on Earth in the here and now and providing immediate hope and bearings to a world distracted since the War and earlier - but could also prove extremely difficult, demanding sacrifice, time, and high degrees of commitment.

APPENDIX 1: BASIC BAHA'I ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE c.1946-1950

GUARDIAN OF THE BAHA'I FAITH
(Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957). Appointed by 'Abdu'l-Baha as his successor. Authorized interpreter and Head of the Baha'i Faith. Highest living source of authority in the Baha'i community.)

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

(Highest national Baha'i authority. Its nine members are chosen in each year by secret ballot at a national convention held for that purpose. The delegates who elect these nine members from the entire adult membership of the national Baha'i community, are themselves elected anually by secret ballot by the Baha'is in the various localities. The vote is strictly secret and a private act of conscience, and there is no campaigning or nominations in Baha'i electoral system. The National Assembly also forms national committees to deal with its manifold tasks.)

LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

(Also known as Local Assemblies or LSA's. They are formed whenever there are nine or more Baha'is in a locality. They often carry aspects of their work through local committees. Decisions are taken by an effective system of consultation, as with all Baha'i bodies. They constitute the bedrock of the Baha'i Administrative Order, and the local Baha'is owe them obedience and loyalty.)

GROUPS

(Any local grouping of Baha'is less than nine people in number. The aim of a Baha'i Group is wherever possible to grow to become a Local Assembly)

ISOLATED BELIEVERS
(Only one Baha'i in the area. Often such Baha'is will travel to nearby Baha'i communities for mutual support and encouragement. Also known as a nucleus.)

APPENDIX 2: BAHA'I FAITH IN SCOTLAND AS OF SEPTEMBER 1997

Population

Total Population: c. 570+
Male (1995 figures): 258 (46%)
Female (1995): 296 (54%)
Adults (21+): 406 (71%)
Youth (13-21): c.90 (16%)
Children (0-12): c.80+ (14%)
Estimated Percentage of UK Baha'i population: 10%

Conversion Rates 1986-1996

Date	Enrolments
1987-1988	16
1986-1987	22
1988-1989	14
1989-1990	26
1990-1991	20
1991-1992	29
1992-1993	19
1993-1994	16
1994-1995	23
1995-1996	16

Total = 201
Scottish average yearly conversions in the decade 1986-1996= 20.1/year
Irish average yearly conversions in the decade 1986-1996= 6.4
Welsh average yearly conversions in the decade 1986-1996= 14.5
English average yearly conversions in the decade 1986-1996= 117.8

Net Growth in the years 1995-1997: 16

Spread

- *Districts*: 45 out of 51

- *Assemblies*: 20

- *Communities with 26-37 adults*: 3 - Edinburgh - (37); Aberdeen (26); Glasgow - (24)
- *Percentage of total adult population:* 21%

- *Communities with 9-18 adults*: 17 - Orkney (18); Shetland (18); Skye and Lochalsh (17); South Lanarkshire (15); Dundee (14); Stewartry (13); Lewis and Harris (12); Uist (12); Western Borders (12); Annadale and Eskdale (11); East Renfrewshire (11); Buchan (10); Inverness (10); Nithsdale (10); Ross and Cromarty (10); Donside (9); Perth and Kinross (9).
- *Percentage of total adult population*: 52%

- *Communities with 1-8 adults*: 25 - Argyll and Bute (8); Banff and Strathbogie (8); East Fife (8); North Lanarkshire (8); East Dunbartonshire (6); Eastern Borders (6); West Lothian (6); Stirling (6); Moray (5); Mull (5); Clackmanan (4); East Lothian (4); West Fife (4); Angus (3); East Ayrshire (3); Falkirk (3); Midlothian (3); North Ayrshire(3); Renfrewshire (3); Sutherland (3); Central Fife (2); Deeside (2); Lochaber (2); West Dumbartonshire (2); Nairn and Glenmor (1).
- *Percentage of total population*: 27%

- *Percentage of adult population living in the Scottish islands*: 20%

- *Percentage of adult population living in main 'city districts' (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness,Dundee, Stirling, Perth): c.30%*

Pattern of Activity

Systematic Teaching Initiatives: 19 communities (sometimes in association)

Local Four Year Plan Goals: 12 communities

Established Children's classes: 14 communities (estimated 50 or so children attending overall 60-70%)

Regional Youth Activities: 3-5/year

Baha'i Societies in University: 3

Social and Economic Development: Esslemont Centre For Learning; Agenda 21 in 10 areas; Soup Kitchen (Glasgow); Voluntary Work (Orkney)

Artistic Activity: Scottish-Gaelic Baha'i Choir; Children's singing; Dramatic Sketches at Feasts; Art Exhibitions; Celidh; Classical Music; 'Baha'i Folk' music.

External Affairs: Women's issues; Moral Development; Human Rights; Interfaith, Racial Equality, CHOGM; Multiculturalism, Scottish Civic Forum, twin annivers.
Community Development: Summer Schools, Conferences, Institutes, Training; Scottish Newsletter; Baha'i Studies.

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Notes

[1] Brown lists no more than 8 entries related in any way to non-Christian religious groups in his bibliography, for instance (Brown p.46-52). There clearly may be omissions (such as Dr. Malory Nye's work on Hinduism in Edinburgh), but a more extensive bibliography is unlikely to yield that many more references to non-Christian developments in Scotland.

[2] Probably the best general academic introduction to the history of the Baha'i Faith is Smith (1987). Other general overviews containing important analyses include Peter Berger and V. E. Johnson's Ph.D. dissertations on the Baha'i Faith. The latter is especially useful for the 1921-1963 period (see bibliography). Of special significance is Shoghi Effendi's confessional history of the Baha'i Faith (1844-1944), which defined Baha'i perceptions of their history in our period and continues to do so today.

[3] We have drawn all details on the Baha'i Faith in Edinburgh in the time of 'Abdu'l-Baha from Khursheed, unless otherwise acknowledged.

[4] Mrs. Whyte's account of her trip to Akka, quoted in Khursheed, p.48

[5] It was at this house that 'Abdu'l-Baha stayed during his trip to Edinburgh. The manse is today open to the public as 'the Georgian House', and its top section continues to serve as residence to the Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland. It is sacred space for Baha'is today, and a photograph of it hangs in their National Baha'i Centre in London.

[6] 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit invites further study as it may provide a good index of the dynamics of progressive thought in Edwardian Edinburgh. 'Abdu'l-Baha's unexpected popularity with a number of prominent clergymen, with the media, with Esperantists, Theosophists, suffragettes and anti-suffragettes alike, with people like Patrick Geddes who even designed in collaboration with Sir Frank Mears a Baha'i temple, is suggestive of a pattern of informal networks bringing together disparate groups in a common "progressive" sphere. The appeal of 'Abdu'l-Baha to so many seemingly disparate groups and individuals makes the Baha'i message, preached with such success, potentially useful in identifying a locus of ideas circulating at the time in polite society in Edwardian Edinburgh, helping us assess that elusive factor which John Durkan called the "climate of thought". The response to 'Abdu'l-Baha was similarly eclectic and positive in England, France, the United States and Canada, indicating, for instance, that the Scottish "climate of thought" was significantly informed by international cultural trends.

[7] Cf. Hollinger, p.71

[8] The most important work to date devoted to Shoghi Effendi is his widow's, Ruhiyyih Rabbani, more of a commemorative assessment of Shoghi Effendi's life and work than a biography, but still very useful in identifying the main concerns and motifs of the international Baha'i community under his leadership. Read together with Bramson's historical study of this period in the United States and Johnson's work, a valuable and well-rounded general picture is obtained, except for insufficient information on the Oriental Baha'i communities.

[9] Our discussion of English Baha'i history is based on Smith and Momen (1993); Smith, Phillip; Shoghi Effendi, (*1981*); and n.a., *Centenary...*(1944).

[10] Momen and Smith (1993); Shoghi Effendi, (*1981*), p.469.

[11] See Appendix 1: Baha'i administrative System.

[12] It is interesting to note that even while the Baha'i community was confined to England to all intents and purposes, Baha'is there, to the extent highlighted by the new title of their national body ("National Assembly of the Baha'is of the British Isles"), were beginning in 1923 to understand their national community in a British and not only an English perspective. This may possibly (although if so probably very marginally) have been influenced by the presence in England of Baha'is of Scottish background, including very prominent early Baha'is such as John Esslemont, born in Aberdeen and a close friend of Shoghi Effendi. More significantly this new development was definitely affected by the presence in Ireland of one increasingly prominent Baha'i, George Townshend, who was for some time Archdeacon of Clonfert and Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral and who in 1918 while still a minister had initiated correspondence with 'Abdu'l-Baha leading to his conversion not long after. His close interaction with Shoghi Effendi via extensive correspondence, his high position in the Church, and his literary work, earned him an eminent place in British and international Baha'i history. Two other related factors that would probably have been propitious to the development among the Baha'is of

England of a sense of British identity are an increasing commitment to expansion, which would have envisaged from the outset extending the Faith to all parts of Britain; and the Baha'i principle of fostering and respecting cultural diversity. But this does little to explain the unusual timing of the shift reflected in the change of title of the Baha'i national council. The very early emergence of a tentatively British consciousness (somewhat anachronistically given the overwhelmingly English demographics of the Baha'i community in the U.K. at this period), may well be explained in some measure by the events surrounding the 1920 Home Rule Bill for Ireland and the 1921 Irish treaty, setting up the Irish Free State on the one hand and on the other separating it from the six counties in Ulster, thereafter known as Northern Ireland. These events made all England sensitive to the tensions and national heterogeneity implied in the word 'British', and the tentative if nonetheless noticeable signs of this awareness in the Baha'i community may be seen as at least partly reflecting this broader context. Such a possibility is made all the more plausible by the fact that the idea for designating the 1923 national council as "National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the British Isles", is reported to have been a suggestion made by (Irish) George Townshend to Shoghi Effendi, which the latter readily accepted (Hoffman, 1983) and enforced. That the change of name was George Townshend's suggestion, and Shoghi Effendi's decision, rather than a development arising naturally in England, makes evident that the new title of 1923 reflects not so much a sense of Britishness and cultural sensitivity among the English Baha'is as in George Townshend and Shoghi Effendi. The new title, however, could not but impel a British perspective among the English believers, so that the dawn (and only the dawn)of this perspective may still be dated to 1923, but not earlier.

[13] Momen and Smith, section 3; Smith, Peter, p.121. For an outline of the Baha'i administrative system see Appendix 1: Baha'i Administrative System.

[14] Shoghi Effendi, *Unfolding...*, p.169. This spontaneous reply further demonstrates Shoghi Effendi's clear awareness of the national and political diversity of the British Isles (he had spent almost a year and a half (1920-21) in Balliol until the death of 'Abdu'l-Baha forced him to interrupt his studies and, to his surprise and perplexity, take on the leadership of the Faith). It is also one example of his goal to make the Baha'i community as diverse and representative as possible both globally and nationally.

[15] We have chosen, for the sake of fidelity, to refer to Baha'i administrative bodies by their own name. If in doubt, see Appendix 1.

[16] The following definitions will prove useful to understand the coming discussion: the general term used by Baha'is for spreading their religion is 'teaching'. A 'travel-teacher' is a Baha'i who travels for short periods to an area for the purpose of teaching. A 'pioneer' is someone who migrates and settles for an extended length of time (even a lifetime) in another area for the same purpose. In this period, pioneering tended to be more flexible, many pioneers moving to a place with intent to stay long-term, but often leaving not long after to pioneer to a different area at the instance of the National Teaching Committee, in order to fulfill the goals of the Six Year Plan. The term 'pioneering' came into currency, it seems, during the American Seven Year Plan (1937-1944).

[17] Warburg, *passim*. Her study covers the growth of the Baha'i Faith in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Netherlands, England and Wales, France, Italy and Spain. For a larger study of the growth pattern of the Baha'i Faith worldwide see Hampson, *passim.*

[18] In the 1940's the interdependence and level of communication between the Baha'i local, national and international levels was unprecedented, and well above that which ensued when the initial period of large international expansion (1953-63) brought in its wake increasing decentralisation.

[19] Shoghi Effendi (*1981)*, p.174. We might remark that this approach contrasts with that of the elder religions, which focused instead on high concentrations of believers as a means to expansion and community development. This underscores the fact that the Baha'i Faith emerges in a context of comparatively high possibilities of communication and transport making possible its emphasis on systematic migration. The same may be said to apply to some other new religions and movements born in the last century and a half.

[20] An analysis of the teaching methods used in the American Seven Year Plan (1937-1944) may be found in Dahl, *passim.*, For the major (book-length) communication by Shoghi Effendi dealing with this plan, crucially and permanently influencing the Baha'i approach to expansion (and much else besides), see Shoghi Effendi (1937), which includes relevant quotes from 'Abdu'l-Baha and Baha'u'llah's writings on the subject of travel-teaching and pioneering. The single most important text of 'Abdu'l-Baha connected to this, constituting the generating impulse of all Baha'i collective teaching plans, are the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* addressed in c. 1914-1918 to the American Baha'is. All Baha'i plans for the expansion of their Faith are said to be stages in the implementation of the vision outlined in this fundamental work.

[21] Shoghi Effendi (*1981*), p.182.

[22] Cf. account of the Six Year Plan written by Richard Backwell c.1951,Edinburgh Baha'i archives).

[23] Cf. Smith, Peter (1983), pp. 38-39, 138-139

[24] personal communication.

[25] Published in the *Baha'i Journal* no. 69, November, 1948. These sentiments may be traced especially to two major letters of Shoghi Effendi to the American Baha'is dated November 28, 1931,and March 11, 1936, respectively, in circulation in the U.K. in the 1940's under the titles: *The Goal of a New World Order* and *The Unfoldment of World Civilization* (cf. *Baha'i World 1946-1950,* p.597); they are most accessibly found in Shoghi Effendi (*1991*), pp. 29-48 and 161-206.

[26] A society might be diverse without being pluralistic, since pluralism implies both availability and freedom of choice. Whilst religious diversity has been a characteristic of Scottish society for a very long time, pluralism as such is a rather more recent development, allowing in principle the flexibility to openly choose and express alternative religious identities.

[27] Brown (1993), p.7

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] *Ibid.* It is not clear whether this figure includes non-Christian religions or new religious movements.

[30] Highet (1960) p.47

[31] Brown (1993) p.25

[32] Highet (1950) p.59

[33] Highet (1960) p.42

[34] Brown, p.24

[35] As it is, these minutes are more useful than average, often containing summaries of the discussion leading to decisions and one or two illuminating episodes.

[36] *Baha'i Journal* commissioned this article from the Edinburgh Baha'is, and it was written by Isobel Locke, one of the founding members of the Edinburgh Assembly (see minutes, Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Edinburgh, 8 August, 1948).

[37] We have not yet found any other information on Dr. Said.

[38] The Baha'i community, since the time of Shoghi Effendi, formally distinguishes between "nucleus/isolated believers" or areas with only one Baha'i; "Groups", or localities with less than nine believers (nine being the number required to form a Local Spiritual Assembly); and areas with a Local Spiritual Assembly (see appendix 1).

[39] We have so far found no information on the background of the Wood's, except that Mrs. Wood at least was connected with the Spiritualist church prior to her encounters with the Baha'i Faith.

[40] We have found little immediately available information on Dr. Johnston. He was a surgeon and a pianist and had published work on the history of Edinburgh (Iraj Ayman, personal communication). He met 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1913 at the Scottish Theosophical Society Headquarters in Edinburgh, where 'Abdu'l-Baha had placed his hands on his head and given him his blessing (Khursheed, p.202)

[41] We have found no further information so far of Hughina Faulkiner.

[42] We have not yet found additional information on the background of James Robertson.

[43] Isobel Locke was a member of the National Teaching Committee during the 6 Year Plan, and in the same period was member, at different times, of the Edinburgh, Blackpool, Sheffield and Bristol Local Spiritual Assemblies (ibid. p. 487 (under Isobel Sabri)).

[44] Isobel Slade became a Baha'i c.1920. She was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly from 1927 to 1946, and went to Edinburgh in a "last ditch" effort to form the Assembly there (ibid., p.470)

[45] Eric Manton became a Baha'i in Northampton in 1946 where he was a member of its first Local Spiritual Assembly before moving to Edinburgh to form the Assembly there. We have not so far found information on Jean Court, other than that she was Canadian.

[46] Naw Ruz is the Baha'i new year festival, celebrated on the 21st of March.

[47] The Baha'i calendar comprises nineteen solar months of nineteen days each plus 4 intercalary days (5 on leap years) and includes eight anniversaries beside the New Year's day (Naw Ruz) and the celebratory intercalary days. At the beginning of each Baha'i month (every 19 days) the Baha'is hold a Feast consisting of a devotional, an administrative, and a social section.

[48] *Baha'i Journal*, November 1948, p10

[49] We have shown that for British Baha'is the directive to pioneer stems from Shoghi Effendi. The international pioneers were also responding to Shoghi Effendi's instructions: teaching in Europe was a part of the second American Seven Year Plan (1946-1953) assigned to them by Shoghi Effendi (see *Baha'i World 1946-50*, p.38). It is very likely that the Egyptian Baha'i would have come to Edinburgh to study medicine at Shoghi Effendi's suggestion, as did Lotfullah Hakim a few years later.

[50] Richard Backwell became a Baha'i in Ceylon in 1944 where he was an officer in the Royal Air Force. He returned to Britain in 1946. From April 1947 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly, where he remained until 1955 when he left for British Guyana to spread the Baha'i teachings (ibid. p.483).

[51] Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi of 5 November 1948, *Unfolding*..., p.219

[52] cf. Edinburgh LSA minutes, 23 March 1949.

[53] In sociological language this is known as 'boundary maintenance' about which Charles Loomis writes: "this is the process whereby the identity of the social system is preserved and the characteristic interaction pattern maintained... without boundary maintenance social groups would be indistiguishable among a mass of individuals and interaction would be haphazard" (quoted in Poplin, pp.162-163). Thus, in a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the British National Spiritual Assembly dated 5 August 1955 we read: "As regards the question of Baha'is belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc., the friends must realise that now that the Faith is over one hundred years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before." (Shoghi Effendi (*1981*), p.350)

[54] Edinburgh LSA minutes, 14 June 1948.

[55] Cf. Edinburgh LSA minutes 1948-1949, esp. 23 March 1949.

[56] Cf. account of the Six Year Plan written by Richard Backwell c.1951,Edinburgh Baha'i archives.

[57] cf. op. cit. 13 May, 1948

[58] An example of the sort of informal meetings that took place was described by Hugh Mackinley to the author, telling of his visit to the Edinburgh Community c.1950. Jean Mclean (cf. ibid., 7 November, 1949), a youthful new Scottish Baha'i took him to Calton Hill, where they read prayers and sacred writings and enjoyed the view.

[59] "Now Edinburgh has become the mother Assembly of Scotland, and must, by its example, set the pace, and assist in the development of all future Scottish Baha'i Assemblies." Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 22 September, 1948, quoted in Shoghi Effendi (*1981*) , p.400.

[60] "The multiplication of Baha'i centres and the dissemination of Baha'i literature should be regarded as the chief objectives of the prosecutors of the [Six Year] Plan." Shoghi Effendi, letter dated 12, August 1944, ibid. p.171.

[61] Minutes, Edinburgh Local Spiritual Assembly, 21 April, 1948

[62] Ibid., 13 May, 1948

[63] Ibid. 9 December, 1948

[64] Ibid. 28 September, 1949

[65] Ibid.

[66] During his time in Edinburgh Dr. Hakim was a pillar of the community, re-establishing contact with people he had met in 1913, acting as a contact-point for people interested on the Baha'i Faith, and serving as secretary to the LSA until his departure in 1950. Dr. Hakim would become in 1963 a founding member of the Universal House of Justice. For more information on him see Khursheed, pp. 203-204.

[67] Dr. Iraj Ayman, personal communication.

[68] Minutes, Edinburgh Local Spiritual Assembly, 18th May, 1949.

[69] Ibid., 11 July, 1948.

[70] Shoghi Effendi (*1981*) p.400. This letter extols the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Edinburgh, conveys admiration for the "characteristics of the Scots; their deep religious feelings, their frank, open and friendly nature, their tenacity and abilities", expresses hopes for further growth in Edinburgh and calls on the Assembly to assist the development of other Scottish Baha'i Assemblies, assuring them of Shoghi Effendi's prayers for their success, unity and divine guidance in administering the affairs of the Faith.

[71] We would like to possess more information on the informal side of community life, but in the absence of materials we must await further research to comment.

[72] Cf. Minutes, Edinburgh Local Spiritual Assembly, 13th May, 1949.; ibid. 8 August, 1948

[73] Ibid., 18 may, 1949; Dec. 9 1948

[74] Ibid., 9 December, 1948.

[75] Ibid. 26 October, 1948.

[76] Ibid., 26 October, 1948.

[77] Ibid., 13 June, 1948; 11 July 1948.

[78] Ibid., 8 August, 1948. This book, written by a frequent travel teacher to Edinburgh and Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly gives us an idea of the sort of message preached by the Baha'is at the time. Looking at history from a Baha'i perspective, the book offers a general introduction to the Baha'i teachings.

[79] Op. cit., 26 October, 1948; 9 December 1948; 4 March, 1949.

[80] Ibid. 1 October, 1949

[81] Ibid. As mentioned before, John Esslemont was born in Aberdeen. His book, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era*, written in the 1920's, is the most widely translated and distributed introduction to the Baha'i Faith in the world, and is in print in a multitude of languages to this day.

[82] Ibid., 7 November, 1949. The journal in question was published in Wick and was connected to the Caithness Association.. Between 1927 and 1946 Renwick J. G. Millar published approximately 100 favourable reviews and articles about the Baha'i Faith. (See Khursheed, p.208)

[83] Op. cit., 4 March, 1949.

[84] Ibid., 31 May 1949. This echoes Shoghi Effendi's own instructions, contained in his major letter concerning the first American Seven Year Plan, to "capture the attention, maintain the interest, and deepen the faith, of those whom he seeks to bring into the fold of his Faith." (Shoghi Effendi (1937), p.51)

[85] Op. cit. 4 May, 1949. Cf. ibid., 13 May 1948; 26 October 1948.

[86] Ibid. 26 October, 1948.

[87] Ibid. 11 July 1948.

[88] Ibid. 8 August, 1948

[89] Ibid., 11 Julay, 1948

[90] Cf. Ibid., 4 March 1949

[91] Cf. ibid.

[92] These twelve principles, illustrating the message preached by Baha'is at this time are: (1) the oneness of mankind; (2) independent investigation of truth; (3)the foundation of all religions is one; (4) religion must be the cause of unity (5) religion must be in accord with science and reason; (6) equality between men and women; (7)

Prejudice of all kinds must be forgotten; (8) universal peace; (9) universal education; (10) spiritual solution of the economic problem; (11) universal language; (12) an international tribunal.

[93] In this we again find an echo of Shoghi Effendi's 1937 message to the American Baha'is (cf. Shoghi Effendi (1937), pp.51-52).

[94] Personal communication

[95] Minutes, Edinburgh Local Spiritual Assembly, 8 August, 1948.

[96] Ibid., 10 January, 1950

[97] Ibid. 28 September, 1949

[98] Ibid. 13, January, 1949

[99] Ibid. 28 September, 1949

[100] Ibid., 22 June, 1948; 18 March, 1950

[101] Ibid. 14 June, 1948; 26 October, 1948, December 9, 1948; 4 March 1949; 1 Oct. 1949; 10 January 1950;

[102] Ibid., 10 January, 1950

[103] The qualifications mentioned in that letter include "Full recognition of the station of the Bab as Forerunner of Baha'u'llah as Author and of 'Abdu'l-Baha as Exemplar of the Baha'i religion; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to whatsoever has been revealed by their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of 'Abdu'l-Baha's sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of Baha'i Administration throughout the world." ("By-laws of the National Spiritual Assembly", *Baha'i World 1946-1950,* p. 215)

[104] One of the most important documents in the whole range of Baha'i writings, outlining the Baha'i Administrative Order, which is still in process of implementation today, and designating Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice as his twin successors.

[105] Minutes, Edinburgh Local Spiritual Assembly,6 October, 1948.

[106] The minimum age for membership on the Local Spiritual Assembly is 21.

[107] Born in 1882 in Germany, by 1930 Olga Mills was a Baha'i, and from then until 1947 she was a prominent Baha'i in Germany. She arrived in England in early 1948 for the purpose of pioneering, after intense hardship during the war. In 1949 she moved to Edinburgh. Later she became the first Baha'i to establish a community in Malta (Hainsworth (1981), p. 480).

[108] The procedure in the U.K. 1940's was for new believers to write a declaration of faith which would be sent to the National Spiritual Assembly (via the Local Spiritual Assembly where there was one) for ratification and registration in the records.

[109] Minutes, Edinburgh Local Spiritual Assembly,7 November, 1948. In Scotland, the practice of having the Local Spiritual Assembly make sure that the enrolant understood the contents of 'Abdu'l-Baha's Will and Testament was continued until c.1969 after which enrolement procedures 'softened'. This development coincided with a wave of enrolements, of youth specially, that continued into the 1970's. We are indebted to Harry and Rita Docherty for this information.

[110] See esp. ibid., 8 August 1948; 8 February, 1949; 7 June 1949.

[111] Ibid, 8 August 1948. Thus administration, in a Baha'i context, is understood as an expression of love.

[112] Backwell (c.1950), p.2. To understand the challenge this posed one has to bear in mind that at the start of the Six Year Plan there were approximately 120 Baha'is in Britain, 5 Assemblies, and 1 Group. The goals of the Plan called for almost a doubling of believers (116 more), and the formation of 14 more Local Assemblies (of 9 Baha'is each) in widely scattered territories. The task of raising the new believers and pioneers required to fulfill the goal witthout jeopardising previous gains was a challenging one indeed.

[113] We use the term 'budding community' to refer to a social grouping in which major distinctive features of community are present but in a precarious manner, efforts centering on the mere mantainance of these features rather than, as in a well established community, on their development.

[114] Scherer, however, envisages the posibility of a community of six people only.

[115] Scherer, for instance describes it as "an untidy, confusing, and difficult term" (p.1). Poplin gives a useful survey of current academic uses of the term (pp. 3-9)

[116] Qtd. in Popli, p.9

[117] Cf. Scherer, ch. 2, esp. pp.13-15

[118] Ibid., ch. 3, passim.

[119] Ibid., p.37

[120] Ibid., p.34

[121] Ibid. pp.34-35

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid. p.33

[124] Scherer, pp.120-121

[125] There are today approximately 50 Baha'is in Edinburgh and approximately 400 in Scotland (550-600 including children and youth under 21). Since the first Baha'i pioneer to Scotland arrived in Edinburgh from Egypt in 1946 for the purpose of founding a Baha'i community on Scottish soil, 19 Local Spiritual Assemblies have been established in diverse places and there are Baha'is living in 45 localities from the Borders to Shetland (Local Spiritual Assembly of Edinburgh records; Baha'i Council for Scotland, personal communication).

[126] Scherer, p.122f.

[127] Smith, pp.140-144, 146-154

[128] Routinised action, according to Poplin, "includes any event or activity that is a normal, recurrent part of community life." *ibid.*

[129] The Baha'i decision making process works by a consultative system which stresses unanimity as a strategic goal, but which allows for voting when unanimity is not forthcoming. Thus Baha'i consultation is biased in favour of unanimity. On the other hand, most administrative officers at the local level are elected by vote. The likelihood is that most decisions would be settled unanimously, but a significant number of decisions would be arrived at by voting.

[130] This bibliography only lists the works we consulted of most immediate relevance to this essay. A few anciliary materials, from primary sources such as a letter by Isobel Locke, to secondary sources dealing with religion in Scotland, or with the nature of community, have been left out. Dates without brackets refer to the year of publication looked. Dates in brackets refer to date of original edition.