

# 'Abdu'l-Baha: Through the War Years

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Editorial

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by Marzieh Gail

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47 A Glimpse of the Master

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throughout, with che foornores ar the end.

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from the diary of

67 The Writings of

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Kazemzadeh

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a review by Kazem

and Firttz Kazemzctdeh

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Inside Back Cover: Authors and

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THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE had always had subjects who sought to destroy it. In return for their unruliness they had received Second World War, when the opening of hostilities brought the prospect that whole towns and cities might be razed to the condign punishment. As far back as the sixteenth century, under Sulfan Selim I, "The Grim" (reigned 1512-1520), the Shi'ahs of Anatolia, who favored Selim's rival, Shah Isma'il I, the Safavid ruler of Iran, were massacred in their thousands. Greeks and Slavs, Macedonians and Albanians had, in the course of years, rebelled, met with harsh suppression and finally obtained their freedom. With the overthrow of despotism, new hopes had arisen, but were soon dashed by the Baha'is of the Young Turks.

Haifa and 'Akka away from

the hysteria of Within a few weeks of Turkey's entry into around them. As the war, the British occupied the port of Ba~rah , deposed the Khedive of Egypt, prosituated to the claimed a protectorate over the country, and Himself stayed set policies in motion which would affect and occasional-

ground. An enemy warship did

railway bridges between

On that occasion a shell

garden of Ric;lvan but did

day, when the sea was calm

ripple on it, and rocks, far

were clearly visible under a

people of 'Akka took them

fled en masse.

It was against such a

'Abdu'l-Baha decided to move

the officials and the people

a temporary home for them He

Druze village of Abu-Sinan,

east of 'Akka. 'Abdu'l-Baha

in 'Akka with one attendant,

profoundly the future of the Ottoman  
 Abu-Sinan. Shaykh  
 realms. Arabs, the largest minority in the  
 put his own house  
 Ottoman Empire, had already shown signs of  
 'Abdu'l-Baha, and that was  
 restiveness and were to pay for it dearly in  
 Quarters were found  
 Damascus at the hands of Jamal Pasha.  
 homes of village-  
 Uprisings among them, particularly the re-  
 lived for three  
 revolt of the Sharif of Mecca, were still far off,  
 people in the  
 but signs were discernible and the Turks  
 room in the house  
 were suspicious. It was also apparent that the  
 had occupied,  
 call for a holy war (Jihad), coming from  
 Istanbul, would go unheeded. Except for a  
 Khudabakhsh (Dr. Mu'-  
 tiny number, the Muslims of the Indian sub-  
 Abu-Sinan, to  
 continent ignored it and, even more, did not  
 members of the  
 hesitate to fight the Turks. Baha'i community soon came  
 for treatment.  
 Spies were everywhere in the Holy Land  
 but paid ac-  
 and authorities were becoming increasingly  
 most of them the  
 repressive. Fear was abroad, a fear which  
 Mu'ayyad performed  
 could sweep over the population like an  
 assisted by Luq  
 epidemic, a fear such as was felt in Great  
 another graduate of  
 Britain and France at the outbreak of the  
 College, ran a school,  
 side by side with the dispensary, for the  
 children of the Baha'is. Life was naturally  
 " This chapter from 'Abdu'l-Baha: The Centre of  
 isolated village in the  
 the Covenant of Bahá'í is reproduced by  
 permission of the author, and by arrangement  
 sole occupant of  
 with the publisher, George Ronald, London,  
 ly spent a night or two in  
 Salih, the Druze chief, had  
 at the disposal of  
 where His family lived.  
 for the other Baha'is in the  
 ers. Baha'u'llah had once  
 months among these friendly  
 foothills of Galilee. The  
 of Shaykh Mazruq, which He  
 was always left untenanted.  
 Dr. I. Fabibu'llah  
 ayyad) ran a dispensary at  
 which people who were not  
 They received equal attention  
 according to their means. For  
 treatment was free. Dr.  
 operations as well and was  
 Getsinger. Bad' Bushn'li,  
 the Syrian Protestant  
 rather primitive in this  
 hills. On Mount Carmel, the  
 the pilgrim house was the

veteran, I:faji

England. © H. M. Balyuzi 1971.

Mirza I:faydar-'Ali.

1. Banan passed away only recently. As far as

the present writer knows he has not left a  
reached

Mirza Fac;llu'llah Khan Banan

full record of that remarkable journey.

Haifa from Shiraz with the

offerings of the

THROUGH THE WAR YEARS

21

Baha'is of that city, on January 19th 1915.

must see 'Abdu'l-Baha

at once. Riding His

His arrival was the last link with the outside

donkey 'Abdu'l-Baha

went to the military

world for a long time. Banin's journey was

cantonment. Jamal

Pasha received Him

fraught with considerable difficulty, for he

courteously, but told

Him that He was a

had to make his way from India to Haifa. 1 To

religious

mischief-maker, which was the rea-

have succeeded was indeed an achievement.

son He had been put

under restraint in the

However, sometime during the war years an

past. It happened

that, in the days of 'Abdu'l-

Arab Baha'i, advanced in years, named I:Iaji

I:Iamid, Jamal Pasha

himself had been

Ramaqin, braving all hazards, managed to

known as a political

mischief-maker. So

reach Tihiran. His perilous journey included

'Abdu'l-Baha, to humor

him, now replied

walking for forty-five days. He delivered to

that mischief-making

was of two kinds:

the Baha'is a Tablet entrusted to him by

political and

religious; and then, pointing at

'Abdu'l-Baha, and returned bearing gold and

the arrogant Pasha, He

said that so far the

letters. A second time he attempted that

political

mischief-maker had not caused any

heroic feat, but he did not reach his destina-

damage, and it was to

be hoped that the

tion, and no trace of him was ever found.

religious

mischief-maker would not do so

either.

EARLY IN 1915, J amal Pasha appeared on

Lady Blomfield has

recorded another en-

the scene, Commander of the 4th Army

counter between

'Abdu'l-Baha and Jamal

Corps, whose mission was to overrun the

Pasha, the story being

related by Mirza Jalal,  
 Suez Canal and drive the British out of  
 'Abdu'l-Baha:  
 Egypt. With him came a reign of terror. The  
 of the year 1916, at  
 whole of Syria (including the Holy Land)  
 one morning, 'Abdu'l-  
 was under his martial control. Throughout  
 His faithful coachman.  
 1915 and into the following year, Jamal  
 have my carriage  
 Pasha was bringing Arab nationalists to trial  
 and Khusraw be ready to  
 in his military courts. Thirty-four of them  
 Nazareth in half an  
 were executed, and many more were de-  
 commanded, and at  
 ported. Mirza Mul)ammad-'Ali and his asso-  
 'Abdu'l-Baha left His  
 ciates, long discredited and cowed into si-  
 accompanied by Khusraw  
 lence, now found fresh opportunities to plot  
 health of 'Abdu'l-  
 against 'Abdu'l-Baha. They went to Jamal  
 satisfactory, as one  
 Pasha with various tales. Majdi'd-Din told  
 signs of weariness on His  
 him that 'Abdu'l-Baha was hostile to the  
 However, the Commander-in-  
 Committee of Union and Progress. The tent  
 and Palestine fronts  
 which Baha'u'llah had used, the violators  
 was Jamal Pasha, and  
 gave to Jamal Pasha. It was a tent under  
 determined to meet him  
 which, 'Abdu'l-Baha is reported to have said,  
 of His great fatigue and  
 "representatives of the Most Great Peace"  
 the Beloved started on  
 should have met. 2 Then in order to create  
 confusion, the violators set rumors afoot that  
 the military government had banished 'Abd-  
 arrived at Nazareth in  
 u'l-Baha to Damascus.  
 o'clock, and took up  
 When Jamal Pasha encamped in the vicin-  
 German Hotel.

a son-in-law of  
 At the beginning  
 about seven o'clock  
 Baha sent me for  
 Tell Isfandiyar to  
 brought, and you  
 accompany me to  
 hour.' We did as He  
 the appointed time  
 home in Haifa,  
 and me. That day the  
 Baha was not very  
 could see by the  
 blessed face.  
 chief of the Syrian  
 was in Nazareth. He  
 'Abdu'l-Baha was  
 there, so in spite  
 physical weakness,  
 His journey.  
 'Abdu'l-Baha ...  
 the evening at seven  
 His residence at the

ity of 'Akka, he told the Governor that he  
Master was invited to

lunch at the home of one of the notables  
2. Dr. I:Iabib Mu'ayyad, Khatirat-i-Habib.

Nazareth. He was one of  
Memoirs of I:Iabib. ( 'fihran: i 961 ) , p. 3 3 3.  
that day Jamal

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Pasha, and nearly two hundred of the war  
war, 'Abdu'l-

leaders, were present at the lunch where  
had not been for

the Master sat down at one o'clock and  
violators, He would have

arose from the table at four.  
leading men

During all those hours 'Abdu'l-Baha  
of the

was speaking in Turkish on philosophical  
counseled them

and scientific subjects, and on heavenly  
prevent disorder.

teachings. So intense was His utterance  
violators prevented

that all stopped eating while they listened  
to His blessed words.

increasing isola-

. . . Jamal Pasha, who had been His  
1915, made

great enemy because of false accusations,  
another occasion,

had not paid the proper respect to 'Abdu'l-  
India, where

Baha when He had first arrived . Now,  
y requested.

however, having heard the Master speak  
said, had an

so learnedly and wisely, he was most  
condition. But

deferential and full of all kinds of polite-  
longer come and

ness. When the time came for the Master  
halted, 'Abdu'l-

to rise, Jamal Pasha most courteously held  
local affairs,

the Beloved's arm to assist Him to leave

The next day the

of the town of

the Fahum family. On

IN THE EARLY MONTHS of the

Baha said one day that, if it

the intrigues of the

gathered together some of the

amongst the Muslims and Christians

Holy Land and would have

to concert their efforts to

But the actions of the

this.

Relative inactivity and

tion, in the opening months of

'Abdu'l-Baha remark, on

that He wished He had gone to

His presence had been fervent!

Not having work to do, He

adverse effect on His physical

although pilgrims could no

correspondence was almost

Baha was kept occupied with

and soon the task of raising

and providing  
 the table, and himself led the way to the food for the Baha'i community  
 and many  
 reception room, and seated the Master others in need faced Him. The  
 mismanage-  
 comfortably. ment and the impositions of  
 the Ottoman  
 Finally, after answering more questions, overlord were gradually leading to  
 a state of  
 and giving wondrous light on many sub- near famine.  
 jects, the Master arose to bid farewell to No matter how relaxed or  
 arduous life  
 His host. Jamal Pasha accompanied Him might be, 'Abdu'l-Baha always  
 found or  
 out of the house, and to the bottom of the recalled a humorous situation.  
 A cat purring  
 steps, and would have gone further with beside His chair would amuse  
 Him: this cat,  
 the Master, but was thanked with great He remarked, is indeed joyous,  
 so carefree, so  
 kindness and urged by 'Abdu'l-Baha to free of fear. A donkey  
 standing in the street  
 return. This was that Jamal Pasha who made Him remember that He saw  
 no don-  
 \Was not accustomed to rise from his seat to keys anywhere in the United  
 States, and  
 pay respect to any one .... 'Abdu'l-Baha reminded Him of a polar bear  
 in the Paris  
 was excessively fatigued, and remained Zoo. People were staring at  
 the bear, He said,  
 that night at the German Hotel at Naza- and the animal was staring  
 back, as if  
 reth ... ;; wanting to say: how did I get  
 entangled with  
 But in time the constant insinuations of these folk? A man passing by  
 the gates of  
 the violators had their effect. Jamal Pasha 'Abdu'l-Baha's house in  
 Haifa, carrying a  
 stated that he would crucify 'Abdu'l-Baha, basket, put it down as soon  
 as he saw Him,  
 when he returned victorious from his cam- saying that he could not  
 find a porter and  
 paigns. When he did come back, ho-wever, he had to carry the basket  
 himself. 'Abdu'l-Baha  
 was in full flight, defeated and humiliated, remarked afterwards that a  
 man should not  
 and could not stop to carry out his threat. feel ashamed of doing

useful work. Someone had written to ask where 'Abdu'l-Baha was. Tell him, 'Abdu'l-Baha replied with a smile:  
 3. Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway* (Wilmette, Ill. : Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1970), in front of a cannon. pp. 202-05. The war fever slowly abated and life in

THROUGH THE WAR YEARS 23

' & H ' P  
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 llH.  
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### A VIEW OF 'ABDUL-BAHA'S HOUSE IN HAIFA DURING HIS LIFE TIME

'Akka and Haifa, although not back to purchases in the bazaar of his native town. normal, became calmer and more sedate as 'Abdu'l-Bahii. sent this cable to a Baha'i of Mailihad: "[May] My life be a the year advanced. 'Abdu'l-Baha felt then sacrifice unto 'Alf-Akbar. I am well. 'Abbas." Edith Sanderson, who had remained behind Iran fared very badly during the war. None of the belligerents respected when other Western Baha'is had gone, and her declared neutrality. Her own people had moved to Abt'l-Sinan, left as early as adopted active partisan attitudes, the January 1915. Well before Italy's entry into the war on the side of the Allies in May key and Germany. German and Turkish, Russian and British agents were 1915, she obtained a passage on an Italian every- where. Russia and Turkey fought boat. On May 5th the sojourn of the Bahii.'is their bat- tles in the north and the northwest of the country, each side receiving the box that contained the portraits of the substantial aid from the Iranians. The British Bab and Baha'u'llah, which was always kept occupied the port of Bushire (Bt'lshih) in in the room of the Greatest Holy Leaf, was August 1915,

brought back to Haifa by Badi' Bushrt'i and and landed a small force at Bandar 'Abbas in Dr. Mu'ayyad. Ten days later the doctor March 1916, under Brigadier-General Sir himself, who had rendered sterling services, Percy Sykes who, driving inland to Kirman, set out for Persia by the Baghdad route. From Yazd, and I-fahan, reached Shiraz in November. The central government was persecuted, news had come of a fresh martyr- less. Bandits and highwaymen, as long as they did not get in the way of the belliger- dom. Shaykh 'Ali-Akbar-i-Qt'ichani, a highly they did not get in the way of the learned and respected Baha'i teacher, who ents, had the freedom of the roads and had served the Faith with distinction in the caravan routes. 'Abdu'l-Baha had foreseen Caucasus and India, was shot while making these lamentable events and had spoken of

#### 24 WORLD ORDER: FALL 197 1

them to His countrymen in Paris. Baha'fs had To this period (and a little beyond ) also belongs a slim volume: their share of tribulation. For them tragedy risaliy-i-Tis'a-'Asha- riyyih- Nineteen was never far off, and it was easy to make Discourses on the lives of them suffer in order to appease others. The the Bab and His two heralds: Shaykh AJ::imad- i-Al).sa'f and Siyyid martyrdom of Mirza Fa;llu'llah, the Ka'im-i-Rashti. These discourses were written by AJ::imad Sohrab, at the instruction of oi - Naraq (near Kashan) , was a case in the Baha'i youth at 'Abdu'l-Baha, for the use of meetings in the pilgrim of seven were slain in their home, in the dead house on Mount Carmel. 'Abdu'l-Baha Him- se lf corrected and of night. emended them. Nineteen With the Baha'is back in Haifa, weekly Discourses, together with a short autobio- gatherings were resumed in the house of graphical monograph by A.qa MuJ::iammad 'Abdu'l-Baha, and it was in that latter half of Mus~afay-i- Baghdadi

(who in his childhood the year 19 15 that the Memorials of the father, Shaykh Mu-Faithful took shape. These short biographies company of Tahirih ) of early Baha'is, so eloquent and pellucid, in 1919, by Shaykh animated and moving, were spoken by an outstanding pupil 'Abdu'l-Baha in these meetings. Each one, a sparkling gem, will remain unmatched. Seventy-nine people are mentioned, and most of them are those who were exiled with Baha'is to which was added 'u'llah to 'Akka. But others are included such as Mirza Mubammad-Taqi, the Vakilu'd-hardships. 'Abdu'l-Baha Dawlih (the builder of the Mashriqu'l-suffering. There were Adhkar of 'Ishqabad) and his brother, Haji the Jordan Valley Mirza Mubammad-'Ali. 'Fahirih, although a luminary of the Babi Dispensation, also featured in that galaxy. These talks of 'Abdu'l-Baha were compiled into a book which was published in Haifa in 1924, with the title : Shrines of Baha'u'llah Tadhkirat 'Abdu'l-Baha - Vafat-the Memorials of the Faithful. Quli, the faithful half-brother of Baha'u'llah, owned land at Nuqayb, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where Mirza Mubammad-Mugafa, was a well-known and much-loved figure in the American Baha'i community for three decades. He died in 1937. IN THE PAST, 'Abdu'l-Baha had stayed at 5. Sakinih Sulc:in was the widow of one of the

went to Persia with his bammad- i-Shibl, in the was published in Cairo Mul).yyi'd-Din-i-Kurdi, of Mirza Abu'l-Fadl. 4 As the war years course, the depredations of Ottoman authorities, devastation caused by ing scarcities and now arose to alleviate properties and lands in and beyond, at Samrah by the shores of the Sea Tiberias), which vate for food. Some of endowments of the and the Bab. Sons of shore of the Sea of Mul:iammad-Quli was buried.

martyrs of Yazd. She had a daughter, named Tiberias from time to time,  
 whenever He needed a respite from the  
 F:~imih, her only child, who died young, humidity of the coast. But in summer time  
 but left a baby, a solace for the stricken the heat in  
 the heat in grandmother. Boch because of her cruel be- Tiberias, and in the lands  
 re- alements and because of the services she intense and onerous. Until  
 that lie below it, is normal conditions,  
 had rendered (which included nursing both the return of 'Abdu'l-Baha had to  
 the return of Mirza Abu'l-Fa~l and Shoghi Effendi, dur- ing his first year at the university in Beirut),  
 'Abdu'l-Baha always showed her a very gen- erous measure of kindness. The tenderness  
 'Akka was given spend days and weeks in and  
 of chat kindness is shown in the many Tab- named Sakinih as. T he wheat He sent to  
 into the care of a lady  
 named Sakinih lets addressed co her. In a Tablet dated  
 Sul~an, in whom He had great confidence. 5 In a Tablet addressed to  
 October 17th 1921, He calls her chat al- though He is overburdened with work, with  
 her, dated Shavval  
 THROUGH THE WAR YEARS 25  
 15th 1336 A.H. (July 26th 1918), 'Abdu'l- provided with choice  
 dishes, and there were Baha says that because it has been very hot,  
 times when He Himself  
 cooked them, His so hot as to affect His breathing, perforce He  
 own food was often a very  
 simple fare. He has had to return to Tiberias. If He obtains  
 took little meat, and  
 hardly any fruit. His relief in Tiberias, He will stay until the  
 preference was for milk,  
 cheese, and herbs wheat is secured; otherwise He will have to  
 such as mint, tarragon, and  
 basil. return to 'Akka and Haifa. He has sent some  
 The ravages of war were  
 mounting. The wheat for the time being, to be distributed  
 British-Indian army was  
 pushing forward in Mesopotamia, and in spite  
 according to the list enclosed. He also states  
 of its grave set- back in April 1916, at  
 that prices have gone up considerably, more  
 Kt'.it-al-'Amarah, it

than threefold, in comparison with the pre- retrieved its position and  
 captured Baghdad in March 1917. A month  
 vious year; the cost of transport is also States declared war on  
 later the United States declared war on  
 doubled and trebled. It is indicated that there tion of the Holy Land was  
 Germany. The isola-  
 was a shortage of camels for transport, Shoghi Effendi said of  
 almost complete. these days:  
 because 'Abdu'l-Baha states that much more Agony filled His soul at  
 'Abdu'l-Baha in human slaughter  
 wheat will be dispatched when camels are these days:  
 available. In another Tablet, in which Agony filled His soul at  
 the spectacle of human slaughter  
 Sakinih Sul~an is told to give two kayls 6 of manity's failure to  
 precipitated through hu- mons He had issued, or  
 wheat to Aqa Jamshid, 'Abdu'l-Baha says manity's failure to  
 respond to the sum- mons He had issued, or  
 that He yearns to visit the Shrine of mons He had issued, or  
 to heed the warnings He had given.  
 Baha'u'llah; He has been so heavily occupied upon sorrow was added to  
 Surely sorrow  
 that He has been prevented from going upon sorrow was added to  
 the burden of  
 there. trials and vicissitudes  
 which He, since His  
 Most of the communications to Sakfnih boyhood, had borne so  
 heroically for the sake, and in the  
 Sul~an, regarding the distribution of wheat, sake, and in the  
 service, of His Father's Cause.  
 consist of a list of names and quantities. The Cause.  
 brevity of the following may be indicative of And yet during these  
 somber days, the  
 how pressing time was: darkness of which was  
 reminiscent of the  
 Ratls 7 tribulations endured during the most dan-  
 Neighbors' daughters 25 gerous period of His  
 incarceration in the  
 'Abdu'r-Ral:iman the son prison-fortress of 'Akka,  
 'Abdu'l-Baha,  
 of Al:imad Effendi 30 whilst in the precincts of His  
 Father's  
 J:lanna's wife 15 Shrine, or when dwelling in  
 the House He  
 The fat woman 25 occupied in 'Akka, or under  
 the shadow of  
 Rafi'ih 25 the Bab's sepulcher on Mt.  
 Carmel, was

moved to confer once again, and for the last time in His life, on the community of Although at 'Abdu'l-Baha's table, both signal mark of before and after the war, His guests were investing them, on the eve of the termination of His earthly little time to write, He has written her that revelation of the letter to ascertain her wishes regarding her grandson, Labib. Whatever she chooses He implications even now, will carry out; her wish is the same as His own, and He will never forget her services. of a century, The present writer knew this lady well during the years that he was a student in the yet in its American University of Beirut.

6. Kay! was a measure for grain. greatly enriched the

7. Ra~! in Syria was equivalent to 5 lbs. administrative

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annals of the first Baha'i century. 8 those who helped to avert that danger speak. First, Lady THE TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN are fourteen in number and were revealed at two was much startled separate times: eight of them in 1916, and telephone message in 1917 ... serious danger.

Take immediate action." It came from an In all, 'Abdu'l-Baha mentioned by name in was not a moment these Tablets some 120 territories and is-available power lands, to which the message of Baha'u'llah save the should be carried. When He did so, there were Baha'is in only 35 countries. Immediate Lamington. His

His American followers a

His special favor by

ministry, through the

Tablets of the Divine Plan,

mission, whose full

after the lapse of a quarter

still remain undisclosed,

foldment thus far, though as

initial stages, has so

spiritual as well as the

Baba was still in danger. Let

Blomfield:

In the spring of 1918, I

and deeply disturbed by a

sage: "'Abdu'l-Baha in

authoritative source. There

ment to be lost. Every

must be brought to bear to

Master.

I went at once to Lord

response came from loving and devoted 'Abdu'l-Baha, his hearts, but before "the proclamation of the ramifications and oneness of humanity" could be raised to all "immediate ac- the world "systematically and enthusiastical- value. ly," the Administrative Order had first to be immediately written to the developed as an instrument of collective the importance teaching-a tremendous labor of sixteen position, His work for years initiated by the Guardian of the Faith spiritual welfare of after 'Abdu'l-Baha's passing-so that by 1937 Through the the first stage in fulfilling the Tablets of the Lamington, and his Divine Plan could be inaugurated in the First with its alarming Seven Year Plan of the American Baha'i the hands of community. Since then, the launching of a number of teaching plans of limited scope in cable was sent to all continents, and the undertaking of two instructions, successive world-encompassing projects in and considera- which the Baha'fs of the whole world have family and His participated, have revealed the potentialities march on Haifa." of the master-plan which the mind of 'Abdu'l- was averted, by the Baha conceived in those years of sorrow and understanding of Lord stress. Bur much still lies in the lap of the Lord Balfour, future, for the Tablets of the Divine Plan are Cabinet here in no less than 'Abdu'l-Baha's charter for the devotion, efficiency, teaching of the Faith of Baha'u'llah through- Tudor-Pole at

sympathetic regard for understanding of the "red tape" necessary for tion" were of priceless A letter was Foreign Office explain ing of 'Abdu'l-Bahi's true peace, and for the many thousands of people. influence of Lord prompt help, the letter, news, was at once put into Lord Balfour. !! That very evening a General Allenby with these "Extend every protection tion to 'Abdu' l-Baha, His friends, when the British So a terrible tragedy promptness and Lamington and the power of his colleagues in the London, and by the and promptitude of Major

out His Dispensation.  
was still in the  
hands of the Turks.

the Turkish end, for Haifa

ON DECEMBER 9th 1917, General Allenby  
aroused by the  
entered Jerusalem. It now seemed certain  
they had  
that the days of the Ottoman rule in the Holy  
and all His

The Turks had been so

enemies of the Master that

threatened to crucify Him,

Land were numbered. But the life of 'Abdu' l-  
When General Allenby took Haifa,  
several days before it was believed possible

family, on Mount Carmel.

8. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette,  
cablegram to

for him to do so, he sent a

Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1970), pp.  
to won-  
304-05.

London which caused everybody

9. Then, the Right Honorable Arthur Balfour,  
the hearts of the  
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.  
deep grati-

der, and especially filled

Baha'fs in all the world with

THROUGH THE WAR YEARS

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tude to the Almighty Protector.  
upshot of these

cial help at this time. The

The cable of General Allenby was as  
and the For-

various activities bore fruit,

follows: "Have to-day taken Palestine.  
General

eign Office sent a despatch to

Notify the world that 'Abdu'l-Baha is  
ensure the  
safe." 10

Allenby instructing him to

family and

safety of 'Abdu'l-Baha and His

Major Tudor-Pole writes:  
British Army

entourage so soon as the

It must have been in the early spring of

captured Haifa.

1918 that I began to feel acute anxiety for  
through my hands

This despatch passed

'Abdu'l-Baha's safety at Haifa, and that of  
Headquarters

in Cairo en route for Army

His family and followers there. I came out  
Intelligence was re-

at Ludd . . . and

of the line in December 1917 during the  
inquiry. In due

quested to make urgent

attack on Jerusalem, and being temporary  
information reached

course this demand for

ily incapacitated for active service, was

the Headquarters of

Intelligence at the transferred to Intelligence, first at Cairo Savoy Hotel, Cairo, and ultimately (when and later at Ludd, Jaffa, and Jerusalem. enquiries elsewhere had proven fruitless) was passed to me for action. As a result, With an advance base at and around General Allenby was provided with full Jaffa, we were beginning to prepare for a particulars in regard to 'Abdu'l-Baha ... and the history of the move towards Haifa and the north at that Movement of which time. For several reasons, including short- He was the Master. age of men and munitions, the British Allenby at once issued orders to the General Commanding Officer in advance was delayed well into the summer of 1918. of the Haifa operations to the effect that immediately the town was entered, Meanwhile, the news reaching me con- a Brit- ish guard was to be posted at a Brit- cerning 'Abdu'l-Baha's imminent danger once around 'Abdu'l-Baha's house, and a became more and more alarming. I tried further guard was to be placed at the to arouse interest in the matter among disposal of His family and followers. Means those who were responsible for Intelli- were found for making it known within the gence Service activities .... I also brought enemy lines that stern retribution the matter before my own chief, General any attempt to cause death or would follow great Persian Master or to any Sir Arthur Money (Chief Administrator of Occupied Enemy Territory) .... household. of His

At this time chance brought me into touch with an officer whose social and political connexions in London were taken, these When Haifa was ultimately strong. Through his courtesy and interest I instructions for posting a guard were duly carried out, and all dangers was enabled to get an urgent message of death or accident were thereby averted. through to the British Foreign Office. Through friends associated with the

Baha'i Cause in England, an independent experience in the avenue of approach to the ruling powers conditions to in London was discovered. Carmel

By these means Lord Balfour, Lord Curzon, and others in the Cabinet were refreshment. advised as to the critical situation at Haifa. majestic yet gentle, Lord Lamington's influence proved of spe- whilst He spoke to me about eternal realities, at a 10. Blomfield, pp. 219-20. material world was

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rocking on its foundations. The divine the Turks would power of the spirit shone through His to be impreg- presence, giving one the feeling that a British soldiers. great prophet from Old Testament days as I was able to had risen up in a war-stricken world, as an follows:- inspirer and spiritual guide for the human of our troops race. into Haifa, the front line was pushed

One or two incidents which happened of 'Akka, shortly afterwards, connected with the cap- position on ture of Haifa, are worthy of record. four miles from

During the British advance from the fortified and south, field batteries were placed in posi- to be filled with tion on high ground immediately to the time. Very early one south-east of Mount Carmel, the intention Service sol-

It was a wonderful midst of the chaos of war visit the Master at His Mount home, which even at that time was haven of peace and I can remember Him, pacing up and down His garden time when the who le facts. He also stated that surrender 'Akki (supposed nable) to two unarmed The resultant facts so far gather them were as Subsequent to the entry forward half-way across the Bay and outposts were placed in the sands of the Bay some 'Akki itself. 'Akki, as a walled town, was believed Turkish troops at this morning two British Army

being to shell Haifa at long range over bearings in the Mount Carmel itself. Some of the Eastern the gates of Baha'fs living on the northern slopes of erroneously that the town Mount Carmel becoming agitated, went to hands. However, the 'Ab::lu'l-Baha's residence and expressed had been secretly fear as to the tragic course of possible earlier, and the events. According to an eye-witness of this British soldiers scene (from whom I obtained the story down and pre- when I reached Haifa), 'Abdu'l-Baha of the town in calmed His excited followers and called credibly stated them to prayer. Then He told them that being un- all would be well, and that no British made post shells would cause death or damage to the lines! 11 population or to Haifa and its environs. As forces com- a matter of historical fact, the range of the rounded the field batteries in question was inaccurate, appeared the shells passing harmlessly over the the notables town and falling into the Bay of 'Akki submission. The first beyond. question that the British commanding officer Another incident of those stirring times put to the Mayor 'of Haifa was: "Is 'Abdu'l- is worthy of record, although I am not Baha in this city? Is He safe?" 'Abdu'l-Baha was sitting calm and able to vouch for its complete accuracy at unperturbed in the forecourt of His house. first hand. Before the fall of Haifa, 'Abdu'l- Baha'fs were there Baha was discussing the British campaign around Him, tense and awaiting

diers, who had lost their night, found themselves at 'Akka, believing was already in British Turkish rearguard troops evacuated only eight hours Mayor of the town, seeing outside the gates, came sented them with the keys token of surrender! It is that the dismayed Tommies, armed, dropped the keys and haste for the British On September 23rd, British ing along the coastal road, promontory of Mount Carmel and before Haifa. The Mayor and went out to offer their

news. Indian  
with a few of His followers in His garden      army outriders arrived  
posthaste at the gates  
one day. He then predicted that, contrary      of the house. The next  
evening, the Gov-  
to the general expectation, the taking of      ernor of Jerusalem came in  
person to pay his  
Haifa and the walled town of 'Akki      respects. Lt. Colonel (later  
Sir) Ronald  
would come about almost without blood-      Storrs was not a stranger. He  
had known  
shed. This prediction was verified by the      'Abdu'l-Baha as far back as  
the days of His  
incarceration within the city walls of 'Akka.  
He came again, the following morning-  
September 25th-before returning to Jeru-  
11. Ibid., pp. 222-25 .      salem.

— 'Abdu'l-Baha: Through the War Years (Used by permission of the curator)