

IL SERVITORE

IL GENERALE

&

ARMAGEDDON

La vera storia d'una epica avventura,
nelle orme di una profezia

APPENDICE 1

FOTO DEI PERSONAGGI CITATI NEL LIBRO

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FOTO VARIE DI EPISODI CITATI NEL LIBRO

ABDU'L-BAHA –

ELEMENTI STORICI PER IL TITOLO DI SIR DATOGLI DAGLI INGLESI

22.12.2011 - In Inglese



Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby



Tudor Pole Wellesley



Abdu'l-Baha



Biyuk Djemal Pasha




Lt. General Sir George MacMunn



Brian Gardner

DR. ALLAN L. WARD of Jackson, Tenn., lecturer on the Baha'i Faith, will be the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Benson, 5 Overbrook Circle, today through Tuesday.



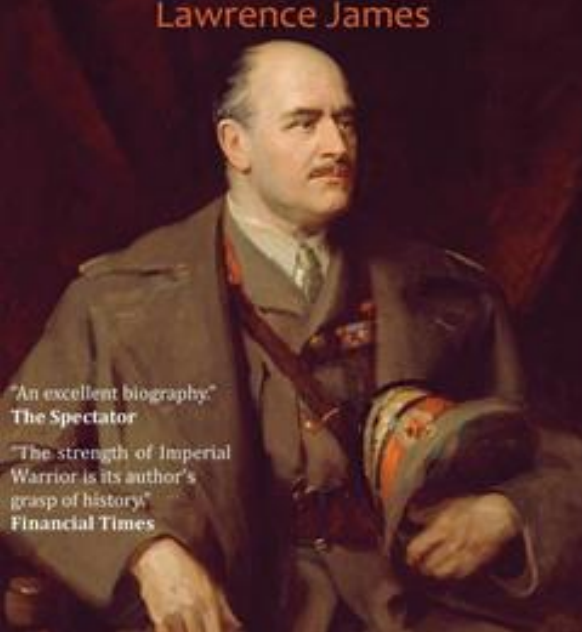
He will meet with local Baha'is and have other public appearances here.

Dr. Ward will teach at Southeastern Baha'i Summer School near Beaufort beginning next week.

WARD

Alan L. Ward

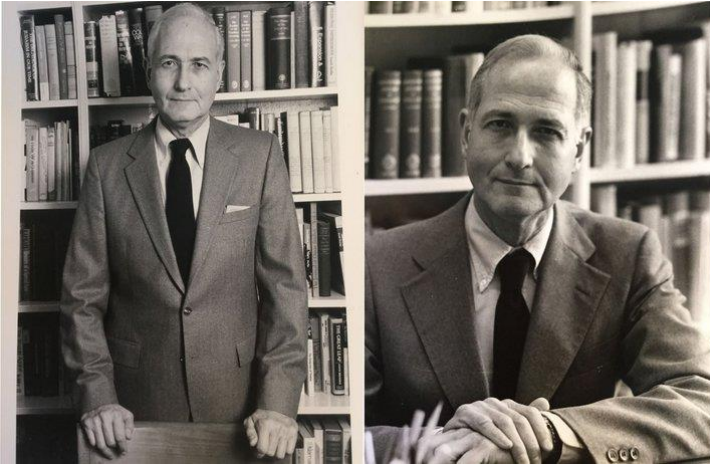
Lawrence James



"An excellent biography."
The Spectator

"The strength of Imperial Warrior is its author's grasp of history."
Financial Times

Lawrence James



Howard M. Sachar



T.E. Lawrence – Lawrence of Arabia



Ion L Idriess



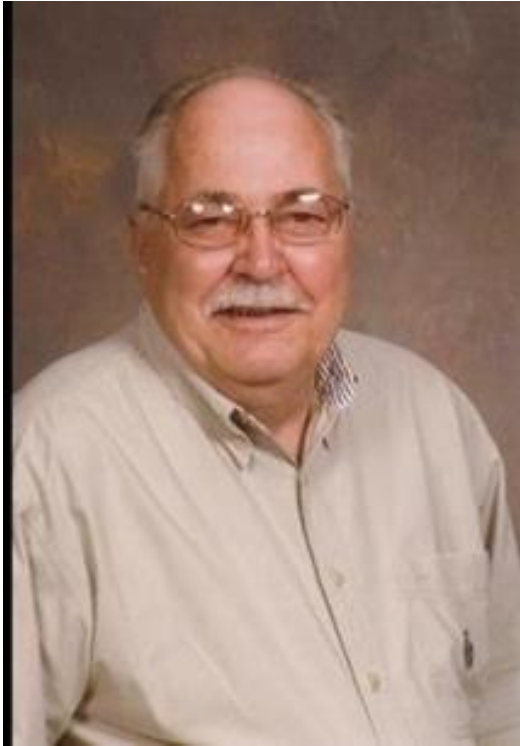
Brigadier Walter Gribbon



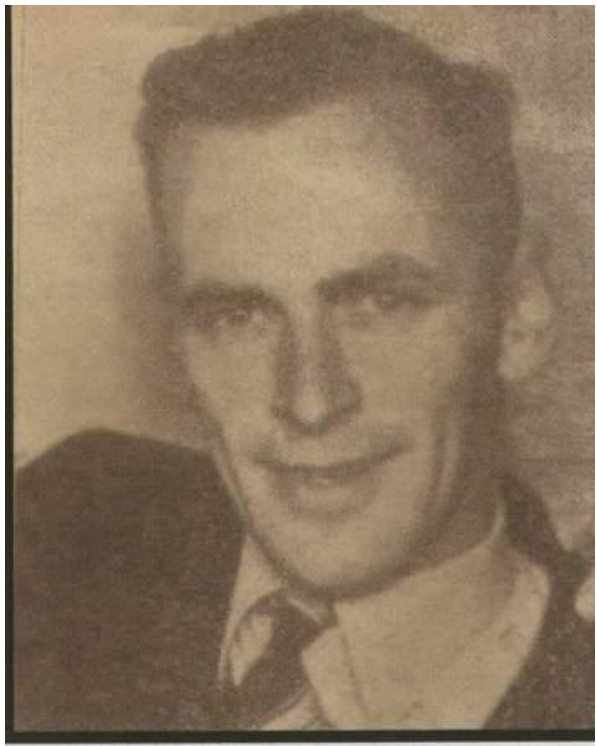
Aaron Aronsohn



Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen



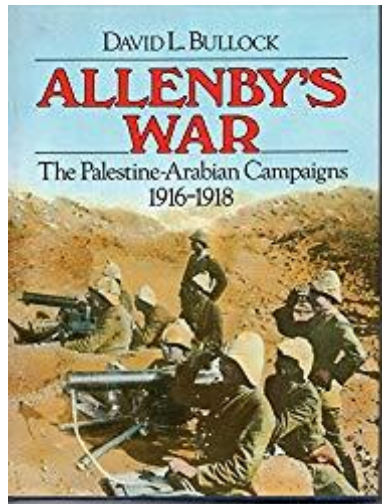
Frank G. Weber



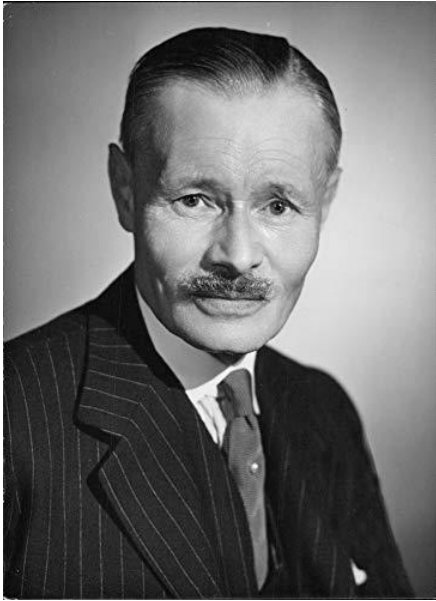
Wilson Robert Henry Bethke



Lawrence Thomas Edward
Lawrence of Arabia



Bullock David L.



Falls Cyril Benthon

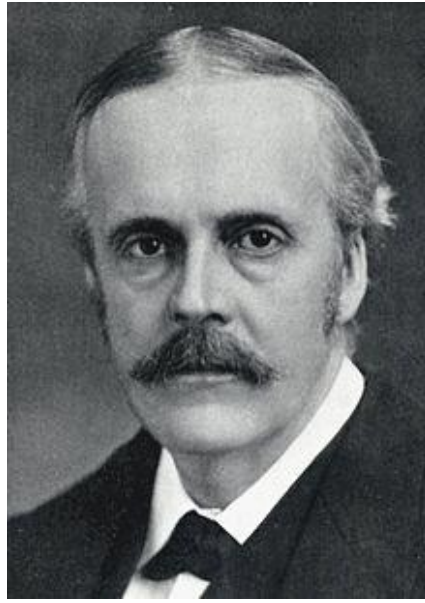
William David Ormsby-Gore, 5th Baron Harlech [KCMG PC DL](#) (20 May 1918 – 26 January 1985), known as David Ormsby-Gore until 1964, was a [British diplomat](#) and [Conservative](#) politician.



Generale tedesco Generale Liman Von Sanders
A capo delle forze armate tedesche durante i combattimenti in Palestina nel 1918

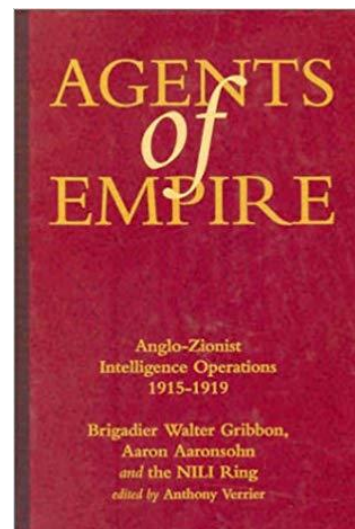
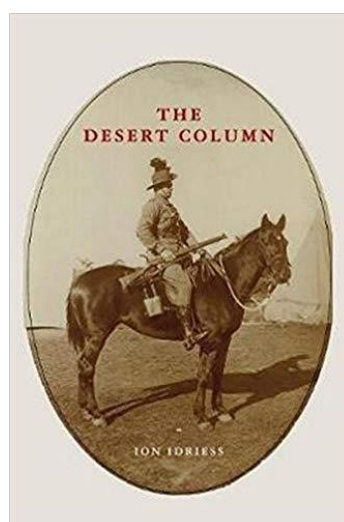
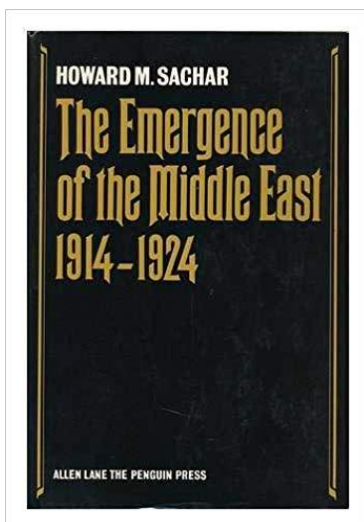
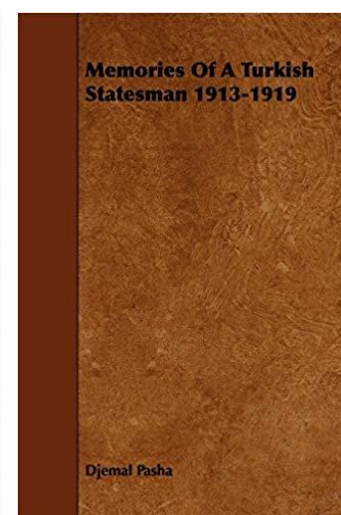
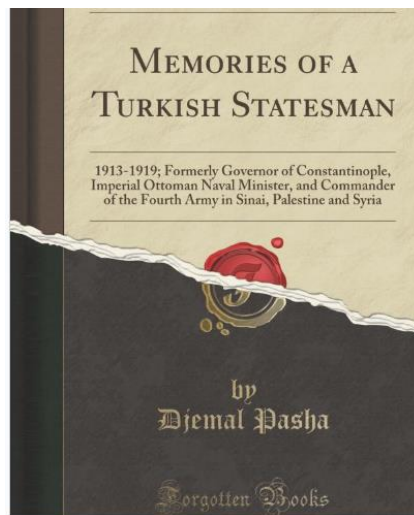
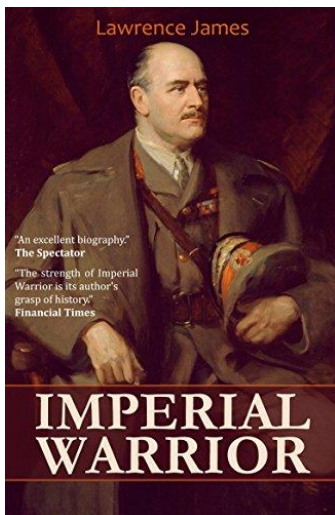
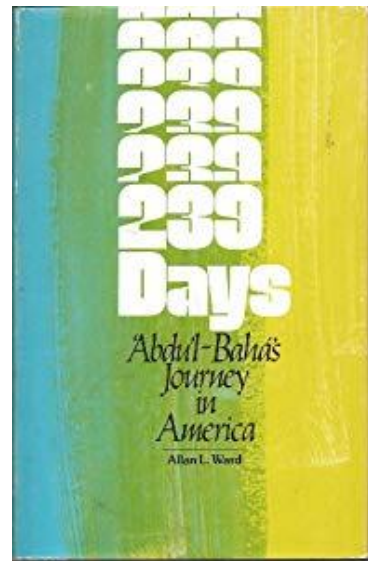
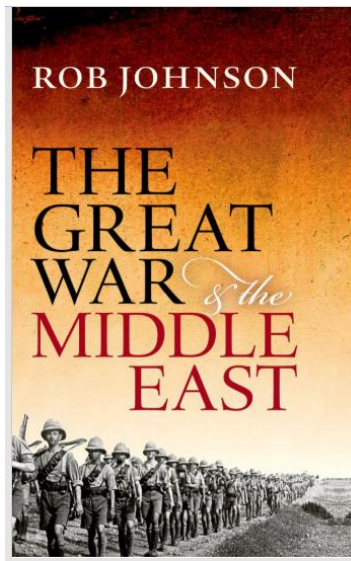
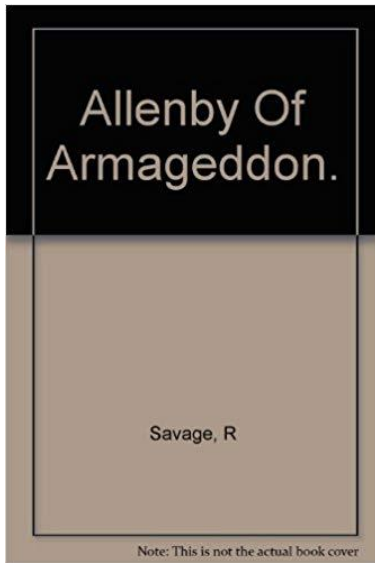


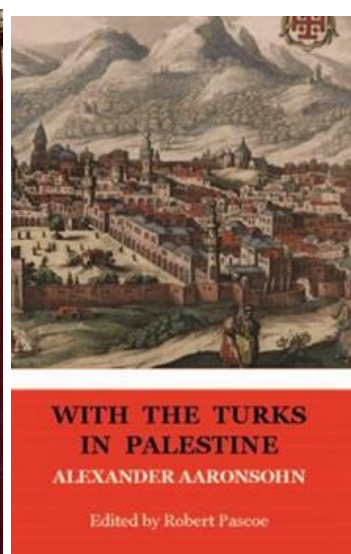
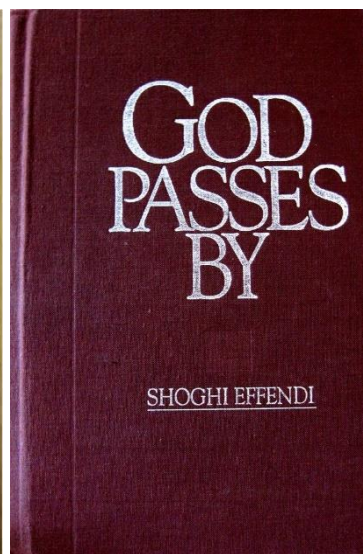
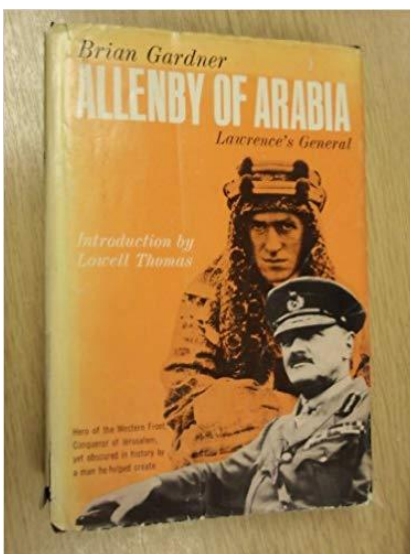
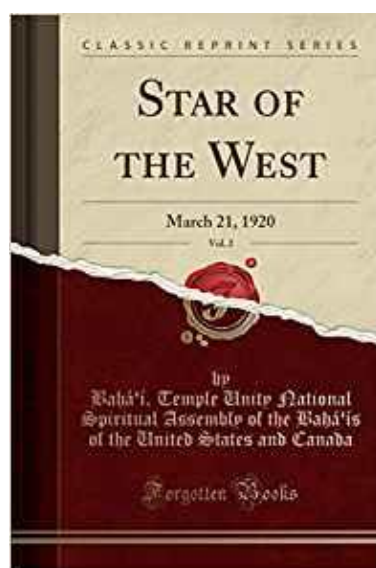
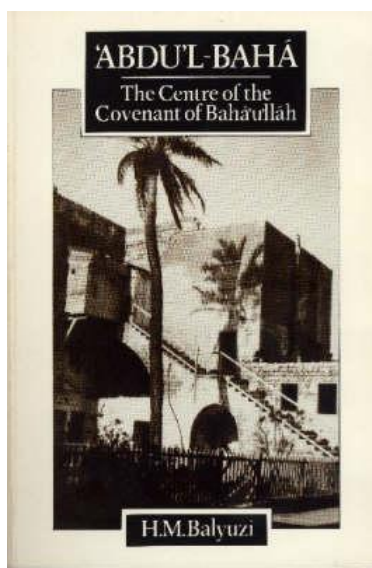
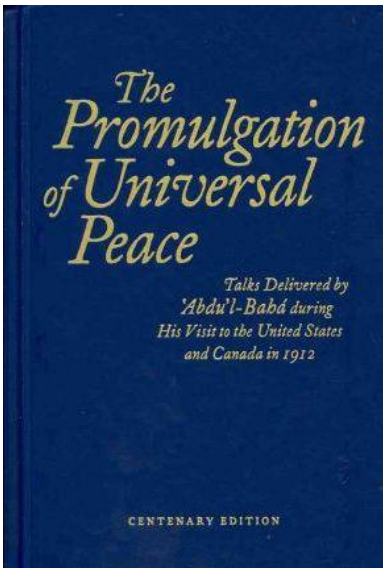
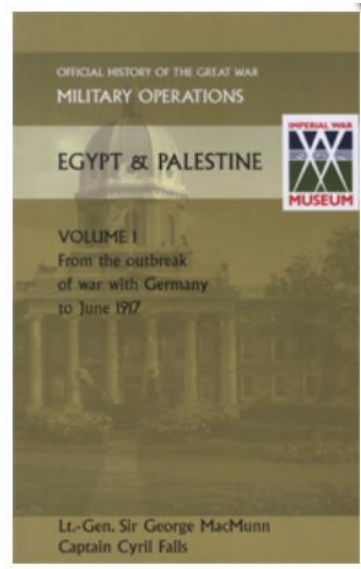
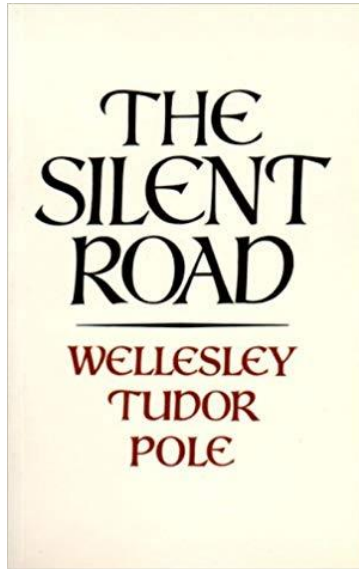
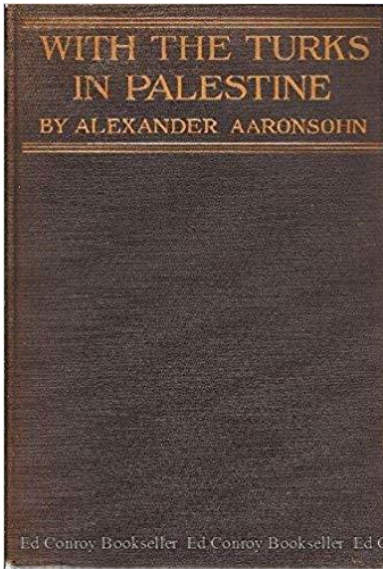
Lady Paget

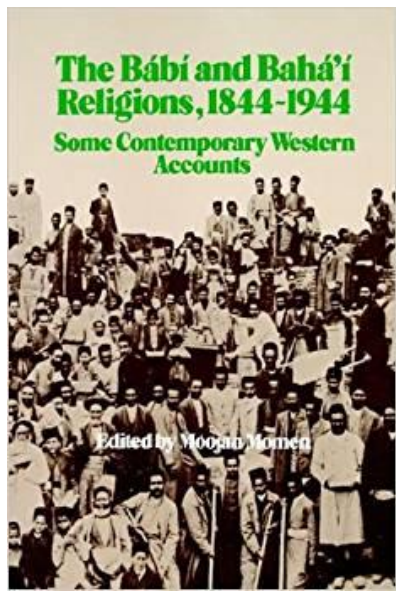
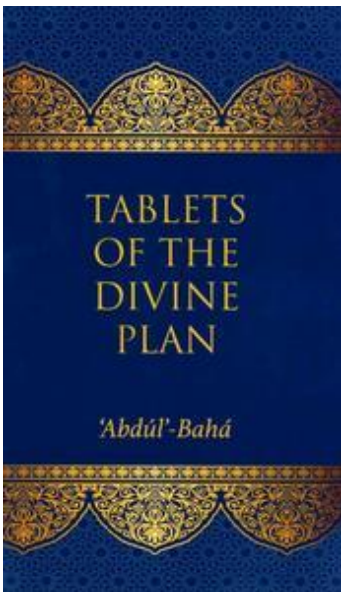
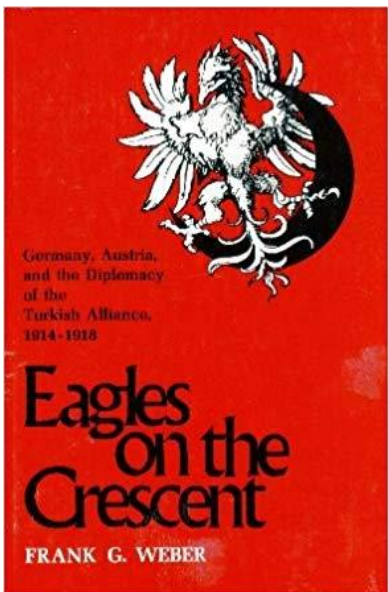
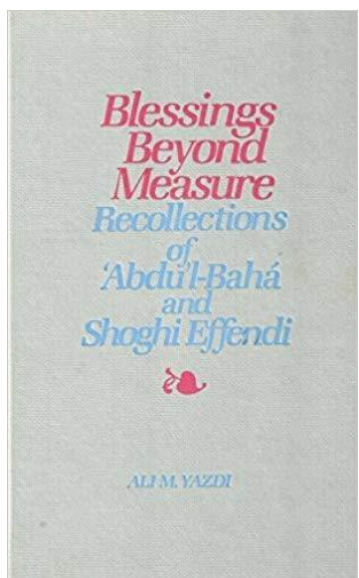
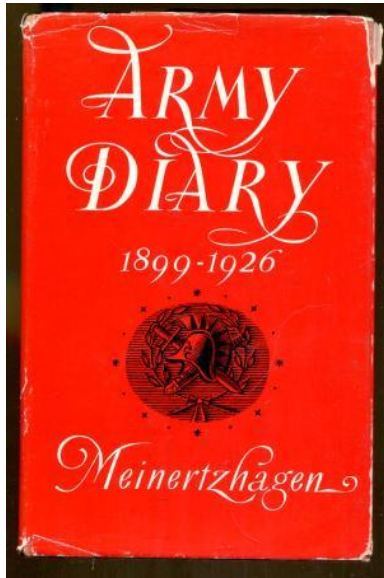
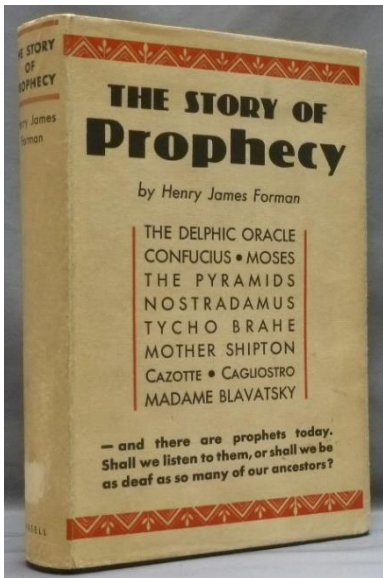
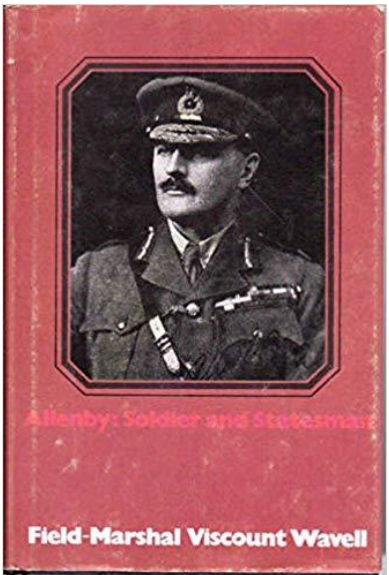
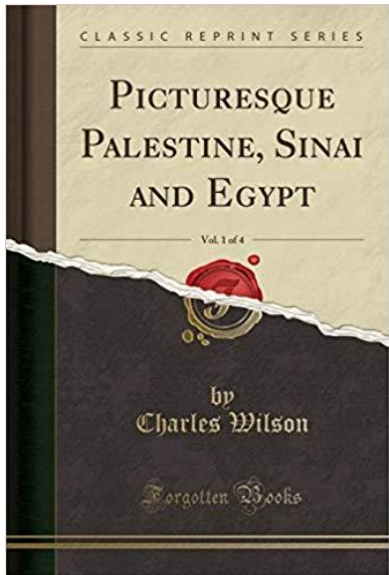
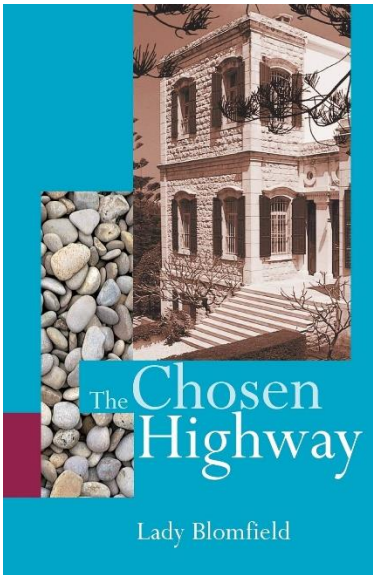


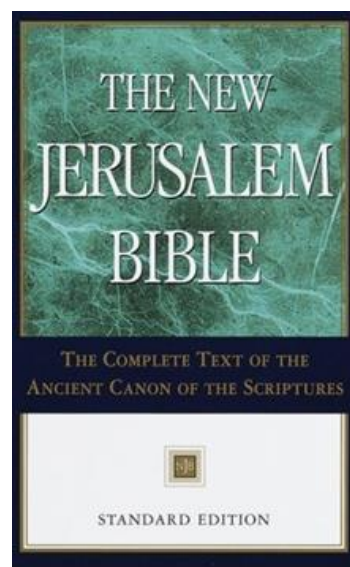
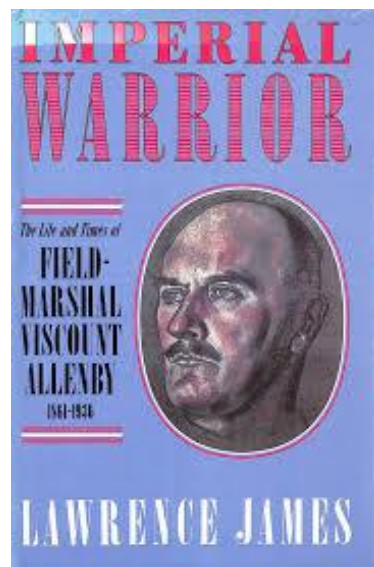
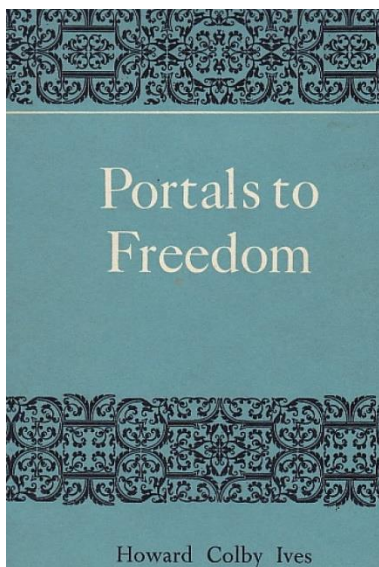
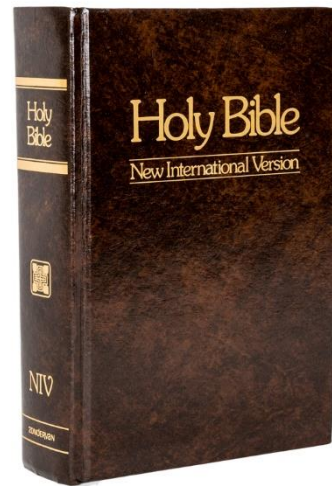
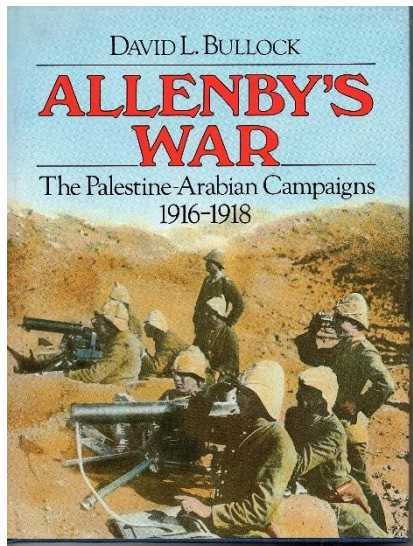
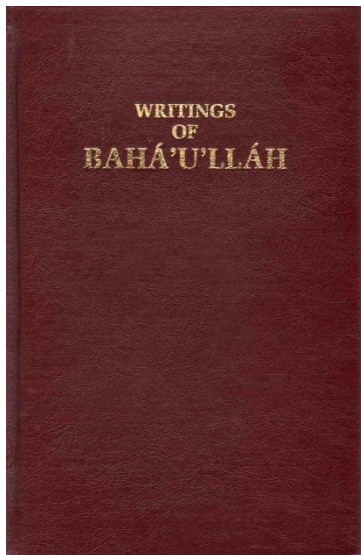
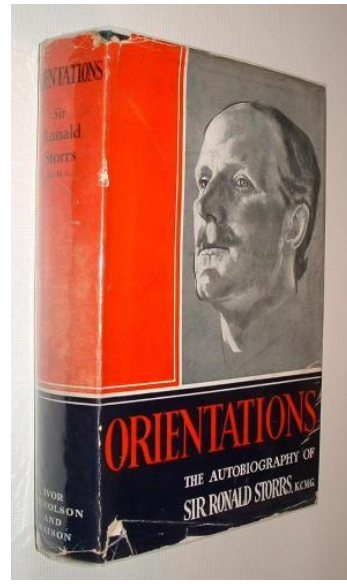
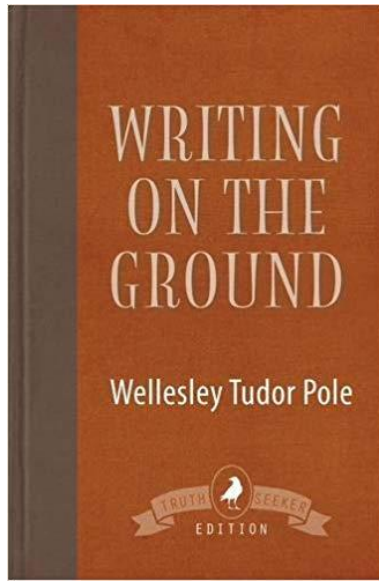
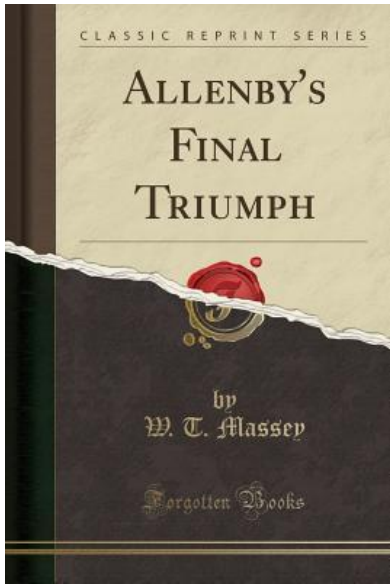
Foreign Minister Lord Balfour (1848 – 1930)

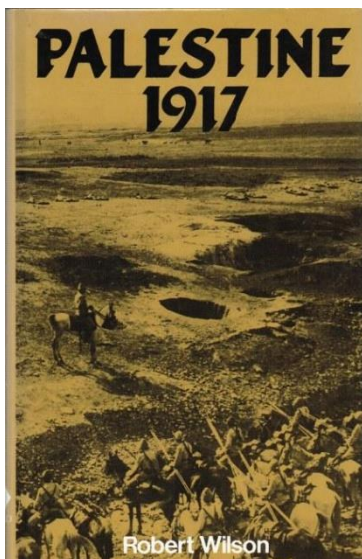
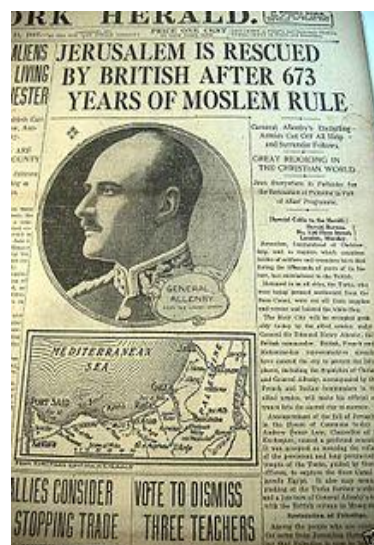
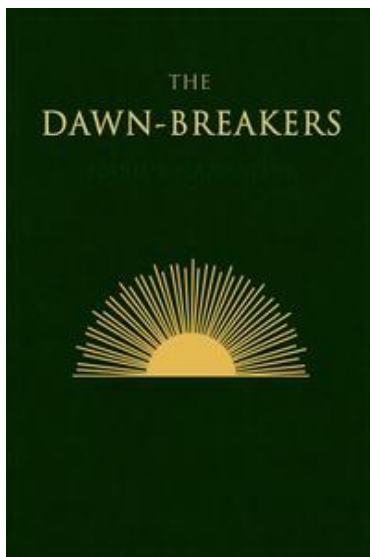
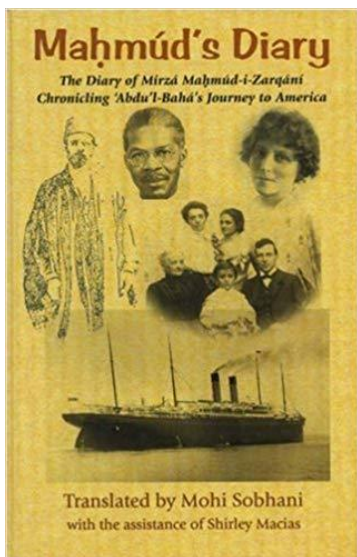
Fotografie delle copertine dei libri richiamati nell'appendice del libro e richiamati in ogni pagina del libro.











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Home | Liddell Hart Military Archives | The Collection | ALLENBY, FM Edmund (Henry Hynman), 1st Viscount Allenby of Megiddo (1861-1936)

[Download this summary catalogue \(PDF\)](#)

ALLENBY, FM Edmund (Henry Hynman), 1st Viscount Allenby of Megiddo (1861-1936)

Identity statement

Reference code(s)
GB0099 KGLMA:Allenby

Title
ALLENBY, FM Edmund (Henry Hynman), 1st Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and of Felixstowe (1861-1936)

Date(s)
Created 1861-1950, 1955

Level of description
collection level

Extent and medium of the unit of description (quantity, bulk, or size)
14 boxes or 0.14 metres cubed

Search

Search within THIS catalogue for:

Search here...

Detailed catalogue

- Introduction
- 1: Correspondence and personal papers, (1890-1936)
- 2: Papers relating to Palestine and Egypt, 1917-1925
- 3-5: Speeches, Press cuttings, Photographs
- 6-7: Papers relating to books on by FM Wavel
- Concordance to 1/2

Please note:
This catalogue may contain links to external data sources as part of the [W3C Semantic Web](#) initiative.

[Context](#)

Context

Name of creator(s)

Allenby, Edmund (Henry Hynman), 1861-1936, 1st Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and of Felixstowe, Field Marshal

Allenby's last message : world police for world peace : being the rectorial address delivered at Edinburgh University on 28th April, 1936.

Autore: [Edmund Allenby](#)
 Pubblicazione: London : The New Commonwealth, 1936.
 Serie: [The New Commonwealth publications. Ser. B](#), no. 9
 Edizione/Formato: Libro a stampa : English : Repr
 Voto: (non ancora votato) [0 con commenti - Diventa il primo.](#)

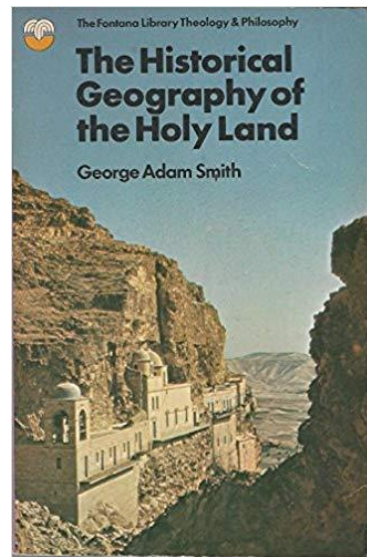
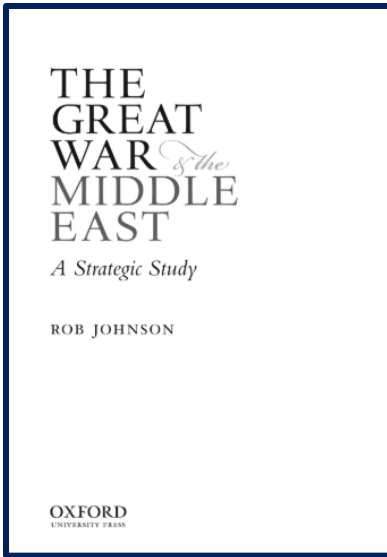
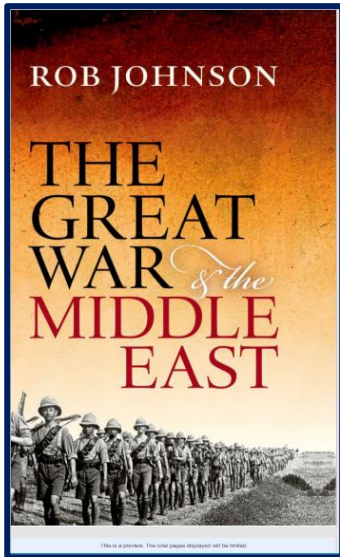


FOTO VARIE DI INTERESSE



Battaglia di Megiddo – Prigionieri Turchi



Battaglia di Megiddo – Cavalleria Indiana di lancieri con le divisioni Britanniche.



Battaglia di Nazareth



Cavalleria Australiana e Neozelandese nella battaglia in Palestina per liberare Haifa – 1918



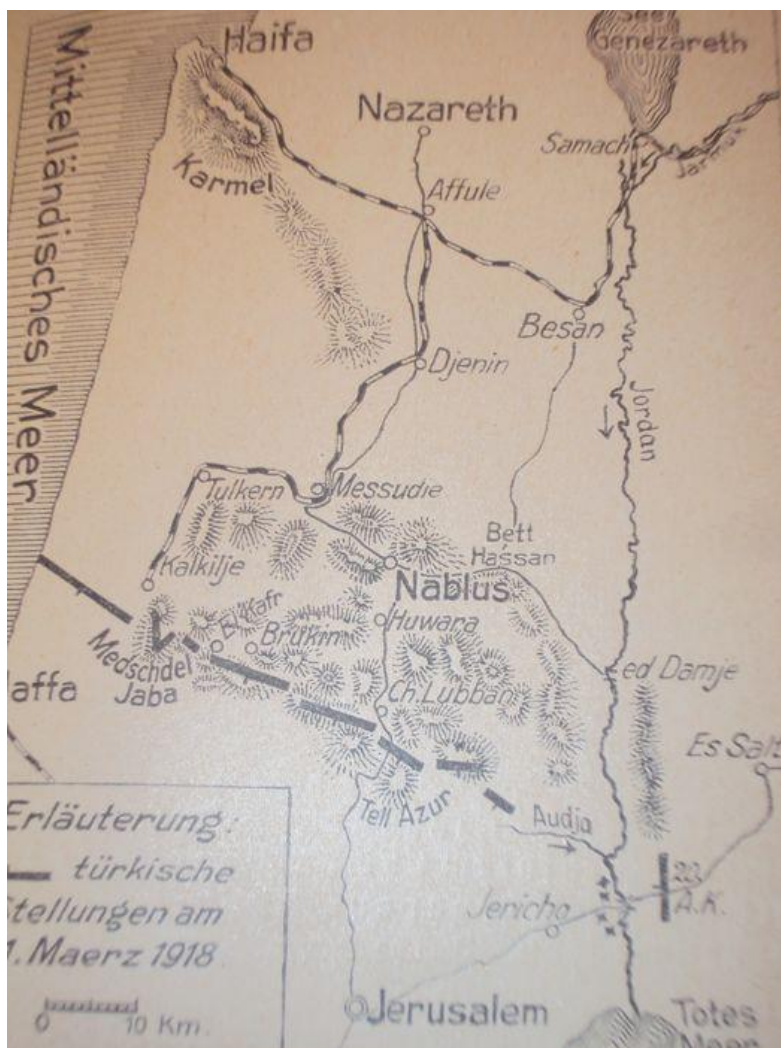
Battaglia di Megiddo – Truppe Inglesi e Gurkas dal Nepal 1918



Battaglia di Megiddo – Cavalleria Leggera Australiana – 1918



Idem



Mappa dei combattimenti
delle truppe Inglesi,
Indiane, Gurka,
Australiane, Neozelandesi
ecc.
per la liberazione di Haifa
Mappa delle forze armate
Turche e Tedesche

UN BREVE RESOCONTO DELLA BATTAGLIA DI HAIFA

Battaglia di Haifa 22-23 settembre 1918 - Una delle più grandi guerre della storia umana. Un gran numero di soldati indiani inviati da Jodhpur Maharaja e Mysore Maharaja sacrificarono le loro vite in Israele (Asia occidentale) durante la prima guerra mondiale. Nel processo, sconfissero le forze combinate di Turchi, Tedeschi e Austriaci e liberarono la città portuale israeliana di Haifa nel settembre del 1918. Israele, allora noto come Filisteo, fu governato per 402 anni dall'impero ottomano turco dal 1516 DC.

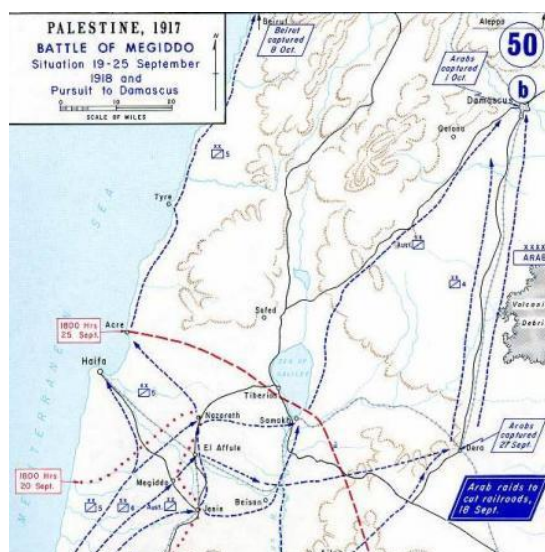
Dopo questa battaglia, soldati indiani insieme a soldati britannici, australiani e neozelandesi hanno combattuto qualche altra battaglia per liberare l'intero Israele. Più di 900 coraggiosi soldati indiani sono morti in diverse battaglie in Israele. Le loro tombe sono conservate e custodite come segno di rispetto dall'attuale governo di Israele. I loro nomi, coraggio e sacrificio sono ricordati ogni anno il 23 settembre e inclusi nei loro libri di testo scolastici. Il maggiore Dalpat Singh Shekhawat di Jodhpur, che guidò l'assalto indiano agli eserciti combinati di turchi, tedeschi e austriaci, è noto come l'eroe di Haifa. Anche se morì nella battaglia, i suoi soldati esibirono un coraggio esemplare e lottarono coraggiosamente per conquistare la fama eterna per Bharat.

Questa battaglia è ricordata come una delle più grandi battaglie della storia umana a causa di alcuni fatti notevoli. I nemici composti da turchi, tedeschi e soldati austriaci erano ben protetti nel loro territorio e armati con le armi più moderne come cannoni, fucili e fucili. D'altra parte, i soldati indiani inviati da Jodhpur e Mysore Maharaja erano cavalieri su cavallo e fanti. Erano equipaggiati solo con spade e lance. Questa è forse l'unica battaglia in cui soldati con lance e spade hanno sconfitto un esercito equipaggiato con armi moderne.

È anche l'ultima incidenza nella storia in cui cavalli e fanti con lance e spade hanno combattuto qualsiasi battaglia importante.

Pertanto, la battaglia di Haifa rimane una delle più grandi guerre della storia umana. È un capitolo d'oro nella storia indiana, che può ispirare ogni bambino e giovane indiano.

Il Nizam di Hyderabad ha anche inviato un'unità di cavalleria per aiutare l'esercito britannico. Il suo ruolo era quello di prendersi cura dei prigionieri di guerra catturati.



ABDU'L-BAHA –

ELEMENTI STORICI PER IL TITOLO DI SIR DATOGLI DAGLI INGLESÌ – 22.12.2011

Dal documento online dal titolo – Bahai British Relations

And Abdul Baha was awarded the title 'SIR' by the Britishers for his valuable services.

Reference :

The handbook of Palestine

EDITED BY : HARRY CHARLES LUKE, B.Lr1r., M.A.

ASSISTANT GOVERNOR OF JERUSALEM AND EDWARD KEITH-ROACH

ASSISTANT CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

The Right Hon. SIR HERBERT SAMUEL, P.C., G.B.E.

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PALESTINE

Issued under the Authority of the Government of Palestine

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1922

Quote

"...Sir 'Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l Baha had travelled extensively in Europe and America to expound his doctrines, and on the 4th December, 1919, was created by King George V. a K.B.E. for valuable services rendered to the British Government in the early days of the Occupation....."



Abbas Effendi (Servant of British Empire)

Sen McGlinn's blog

Reflections on the Bahai teachings

« [Secret Foreign Office documents show ...](#)

Abdu'l-Baha's British knighthood

Posted by [Sen](#) on April 22, 2011

« [Secret Foreign Office documents show ...](#)

[Age of consent](#) »

Abdu'l-Baha's British knighthood

Posted by [Sen](#) on April 22, 2011



Abdu'l-Baha's knighthood has never been a matter of importance to Bahais themselves, who have many much weightier reasons to admire and follow Abdu'l-Baha as the successor to his father, Baha'u'llah, as the authorised interpreter of the Bahai scripture and teachings, as the Centre of the Covenant that unites Bahais across the world, and as the best exemplar of the Bahai life. However the photograph of Abdu'l-Baha, seated at the ceremony to confer on him the honour of Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, is one of the stock images on Iranian and Islamic anti-Bahai sites that seek to present the Bahai Faith as a Western invention, foreign to the Middle East. These anti-Bahai sites have also presented quite scandalous speculations about the reasons for the British award, such as Abdu'l-Baha spying for the British during the period of Ottoman rule, or supplying the British army during the war. So it will be useful to have a blog page that gathers documented evidence of Abdu'l-Baha's activities before and during the British Mandate in Palestine, and the circumstances of his knighthood. What I have is incomplete: feel free to use the comments section to add more. I have selected what appear to me the more illuminating documents published in Moojan Momen's *The Babi and Bahai Religions: Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, beginning on page 332, and supplemented these from other sources. To avoid a metres-long page, in some case I have put references and brief summaries on this page, with links to the full documents and their sources in the comments section.

A little history



Abdu'l-Baha returned to Palestine from his European journeys eight months before the outbreak of World War I. In that war, the Ottoman Empire which ruled Palestine was allied with the **Central Powers**, against the United Kingdom, France and Russia and their 'associate,' the United States.

Abdu'l-Baha remained in Palestine throughout the war. For the first few months, he and the Bahais retired to the Druze village of Abu-Sinan, but as the severe famine remembered as the *Safar Barlik* struck Palestine, due to maladministration, the disruption caused by the war, Ottoman requisitions, and a plague of locusts, Abdu'l-Baha returned to Haifa to organise the distribution of food and supplies. Haifa was central, since it had both a port and a railway, which connected to the **Hijaz-Palestine railway**.



Because of this importance, Haifa was also under threat of naval bombardment by the British Navy in the Mediterranean. As the course of the war turned in favour of the Allies, **Field Marshall Allenby**, leader of the multi-national **Egyptian Expeditionary Force**, based in Egypt, launched a drive north to capture the Ottoman territories of Palestine and Syria. They captured Jerusalem on December 9, 1917, but stopped their advance there for about 10 months, until late summer in 1918, because two thirds of Allenby's infantry and all his tanks were required in France. They were replaced by infantry and cavalry from the British Empire. During this 10-month period, the population of Ottoman-controlled Palestine suffered terribly.

When the allied attack was resumed after this pause, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force broke through the German-Ottoman defenses on September 19, and the cavalry advanced swiftly up the Mediterranean coast to the Carmel Ridge, overlooking Haifa. They seized the passes there on September 20, and Indian cavalry entered Haifa on September 21 [or 23, according to Momen]. Damascus fell on 1 October, and Aleppo on 25 October. On November 2, 1917, the British government issued the **Balfour Declaration**, stating its support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

Palestine remained under British military occupation for the remainder of the war, while Syria and Lebanon became a French sphere of influence. Palestine's first formal administration was under a military governor, **General Money**. In April 1920, the occupation was rechristened a **League of Nations mandate** (only finally confirmed by the League of Nations in 1922), and in July 1920 the military administration was replaced by a High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel.



Meeting the need

In the **Hidden Words**, Baha'u'llah writes: "*The best of men are they that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon their kindred ...*" And in his **Will** he writes, "*It is enjoined upon everyone to manifest love towards the Aghsan [Baha'u'llah's sons], but God hath not granted them any right to the property of others.* His sons therefore were expected to earn their own livings. Zia Bagdadi reports a talk in which Abdu'l-Baha says that he is able to weave a mat, and I have heard from other sources that Abdu'l-Baha learned to be a mat weaver in his youth. That would have been a handicraft that could be done in prison, to earn a little income. As the conditions of detention were eased, Abdu'l-Baha established himself as a significant businessman in the area. By 1911 and 1912, he was able to pay all the expenses for himself and his entourage during their travels to Europe and North America.

Some of Abdu'l-Baha's business activities leading up to, and during, the First World War have been described by Iraj Poostchi, in 'Adasiyyah: A Study in Agriculture and Rural Development' (***Baha'i Studies Review*** 16 (2010), pp. 61–105). Adasiyyah was just one of Abdu'l-Baha's ventures (there were also farms at Samrah, Nuqayb and Nogaile, and perhaps others I have not heard about). Thanks to Poostchi's research, the Adasiyyah estate gives us a picture of Abdu'l-Baha's vigour and persistence in business. Briefly, sometime in 1901, Abdu'l-Baha purchased about 2200 acres of land at Adasiyyah, on the Jordan river, for 400 Turkish lira. Soon after, he gave 1/24th of the land to the family from whom he purchased it, 3/24ths to his brother Mirza Muhammad 'Ali (despite the latter making **false accusations** against him to the Ottoman authorities), and 1/24th to the Mufti of Akka, leaving Abdu'l-Baha with about 1704 acres.



The land at that time was scrubland. A first attempt to grow wheat and barley was unsuccessful, due to lawlessness in the area, and 'Abdu'l-Baha then leased the land for two years to a wealthy Christian merchant, on condition that he would build a house, stables and animal sheds in lieu of one year's rental, and would prepare the ground. He too failed, due to the theft of his produce. In 1907 Abdu'l-Baha arranged for a number of Bahai farmers, mostly those of Zoroastrian background from the village of Mahdiyabad, to come to Palestine, and in the following years increasing numbers moved to Adasiyyah. The influx continued until 1916. Most of the land was farmed by individual families in a sharecropping arrangement. The farmers had security of tenure, and if they wished to give up the land, could ask for a payment from the incoming sharecropper. These provisions gave them an incentive to improve the land and facilities. The share croppers were responsible for seed, water, manure and labour for their plots. They were advised but not required to pay their labourers a portion of their profits. Before the war they paid 1/3rd of their harvest to Abdu'l-Baha, and after the war 1/5th (the norm at that time was a 50/50 division). This would be paid in cash or in grain, which would be shipped to Haifa, some of it for distribution to the poor.

Abdu'l-Baha took a close interest in the farming and in the little community. He advised the farmers to plant a type of eucalyptus that produces quinine in its bark, to drain a marsh, combat malaria, cool the climate and ultimately for construction timber. The Baha'i farmers also built a small stone dam in the **Yarmouk river**, which provided water for both the Bahai and non-Bahai farms in the area through an irrigation ditch that eventually extended over a kilometre. In addition to wheat and barley (usually on the unirrigated land), they grew chickpeas, lentils, broad beans, tomatoes, bananas, citrus fruits, pomegranate, apples, pears and other fruit, vetch and sweet corn, as well as raising cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, and pigeons. Crop rotation was practiced. 'Abdu'l-Baha encouraged the farmers to diversify to fruit production, and suggested that they grow large yellow lemons and sesame seeds, which fetched much higher prices than other farm products. He introduced bananas by bringing a number of shoots (suckers) from India, which also proved lucrative. He also encouraged them to engage in crafts and small rural industries, and to expand their sales to markets further away.

In July 1917, with the First World War raging and rainfall also poor, Abdu'l-Baha arrived in Adasiyyah and told the Bahais that he needed wheat for Haifa and Akka. The Bahai farmers offered Abdu'l-Baha all they had, and Abdu'l-Baha also bought all the wheat available in the area, using 200 camels to ship it to Haifa and 'Akka, carrying 400 sacks on each trip. According to Iraj Poostchi's informants, when the caravan arrived at Haifa, the British had already taken the city. This is plausible: if Abdu'l-Baha intended to feed the population, there would have been little point in sending the food while the Ottoman forces were in control, since they would have requisitioned the supplies for their soldiers. So it was that hundreds of the poor there benefited from the wheat distributed by 'Abdu'l-Baha on this dramatic occasion. However this distribution was not a unique event: as noted above the share farmers would sometimes pay their rents in grain, and Abdu'l-Baha distributed some at least of this in small amounts to individual households, and stored some at the **Khan Al-Umdan** and Khan Al-Shavardeh in Akka. HM



Balyuzi describes how the wheat was given to a lady named Sakinih Sultan, and quotes a letter sent on July 26th 1918, and a list for the distribution of a shipment of wheat:

Ratls [i.e., 2.5 kg bags]

Neighbours' daughters 25

'Abdu'r-Rahman the son of Ahmad Effendi 30

Hanna's wife 15

The fat woman 25

Rafi'ih 25

I know of one Persian family that preserves such a distribution list as a memento of Abdu'l-Baha: it's likely that dozens or even hundreds of these lists existed, for Abdu'l-Baha's philanthropy did not begin or end with the war (nor was it limited to grain: he also handed out coats for the poor at the onset of winter).

Abdu'l-Baha's friends sound the alarm



Major Tudor-Pole, an active British Bahai who had met and talked with Abdu'l-Baha in Cairo and Alexandria in 1910 and again in London in 1911, was serving in the British-led Egyptian Expeditionary Force, and was wounded in the fighting around Jerusalem. He was then transferred to Military Intelligence in Cairo. Information reached him of the serious threat to Abdu'l-Baha's life made by the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, Jamal Pasha, who had expressed his intention of 'crucifying' Abdu'l-Baha. In a letter written some time later (perhaps in the late 1930s), He recalls his efforts to interest the British military authorities:

Meanwhile [about March 1918], the news reaching me concerning 'Abdu'l-Baha's imminent danger became more and more alarming. I tried to arouse interest in the matter among those who were responsible for Intelligence Service activities (including General Clayton, Sir Wyndham Deedes, and Sir Ronald Storrs — the latter having been made Governor of Jerusalem). I also brought the matter before my own chief, General Sir Arthur [Money] (Chief Administrator of Occupied Enemy Territory). None of these personages knew anything about 'Abdu'l-Baha, nor could they be made to realize the urgent need to ensure His safety." (Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, p. 222)

One of those whom Tudor-Pole says was uninterested, **Ronald Storrs**, had met Abdu'l-Baha in Akka in 1909, and was to do so again in Egypt in 1920, when Storrs introduced to Abdu'l-Baha to Lord Kitchener. It appears that Storrs was very much impressed by Abdu'l-Baha, and would not have needed a reminder from Tudor-Pole as to his importance. Perhaps Tudor-Pole's memory is playing him tricks, or perhaps Storrs was one of those contacted by Tudor-Pole, but he saw no need to inform a subordinate that he had already noted the matter.

Tudor-Pole's memory is not reliable as to the date. As early as December 24, 1917, while he was still listed as 'in hospital,' Tudor-Pole bypassed his superiors in the Expeditionary Force, and wrote to **Sir Mark Sykes**, a British MP and diplomatic advisor on Middle East affairs:



... the Bahai leader and his family are in imminent danger ... His position and prestige is not understood among the Authorities here. It is not even realized that he controls a remarkable religious movement, wholly devoid of political and military associations; which can number many millions of adherents throughout the Near and Middle East. ... Is it too much to ask the Authorities at home to request the Authorities here to afford Abdul Baha every protection and consideration? ... A word from Whitehall works wonders. (**more...**)

That letter did not reach Sykes at the Foreign Office until February 6, 1918. In the meantime, Tudor-Pole wrote to **Lady Blomfield**, a Bahai living in London, who went to **Lord Lamington**, a former Governor of Bombay who had himself met Abdu'l-Baha in London in 1912, and who as an active participant in the House of Lords had some influence in government circles. Lamington wrote to **Lord Balfour**, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on January 24, asking that 'action be taken,' and enclosing an outline of the situation. (**More ...**)

Tudor-Pole was not the only person seeking to call the authorities' attention to the need to protect Abdu'l-Baha. In Edinburgh, Mrs Whyte, for whom Abdu'l-Baha wrote his well known '**Seven Candles of Unity**,' received an account of the danger from a Mr. Russel, of whom nothing further is known, and wrote at once to her son, the MP Federick Whyte, who in turn wrote to Sir Mark Sykes on January 25 1918. Whyte asked Sykes to consider "whether you think there is anything in the suggestion contained in Mr. Russel's letter" and pointed out that "Lord Curzon was very deeply impressed with the Bahai Movement in Persia itself and he may be willing to interest himself in the matter now." (**more ...**) Lord Curzon was a very big fish indeed: a former Viceroy of India and Lord Privy Seal, and at the time we are discussing, a member of the War Cabinet.

The letters of Lamington and Whyte arrived in the Foreign Office on January 26, and were handled by Ronald Graham, a diplomat who had himself served in Egypt, who wrote as comment to Whyte's letter: "The Bahais are splendid people, but I do not see how we can help Abdul Baha unless and until we get to Haifa." All they could do, he suggested, was "call the attention of the British Authorities in Egypt to Abdul Baha's presence at Haiffa."



This was precisely what Tudor-Pole had sought. A telegram was sent to Sir **Reginald Wingate**, the British High Commissioner in Egypt who was responsible for the political affairs of the Egyptian Expeditionary Forces. Dated January 30, 1918, it reads:

My attention has been called to the presence at Haiffa of Abdul Baha, head of the Bahais. Please warn the General Officer Commanding that he and his family should be treated with special consideration in the event of our occupying Haiffa. (**more ...**)

Another telegram was sent on February 5, 1918, from Sykes at the Foreign Office to General Clayton, who as Chief Political Officer with the EEF was responsible for administering captured territories, asking him for information about Abdul-Baha, whose "influence in America is appreciable." (**more ...**)

As we have seen, there was little military action in Palestine from January 1918 until late September, and the British authorities in Jerusalem and Cairo apparently took no action for Abdu'l-Baha, and probably could not have taken any. The importance of this flurry of communications is that it shows that Abdu'l-Baha was unknown to the British military authorities in Jerusalem, which also shows that he was not feeding their army or supplying them with information. Haifa was in any case isolated by the

blockade and the front line, and communications were censored. The documents confirm Tudor-Pole's recollection of finding the British authorities in Palestine uninformed about the Bahai Faith, and uninterested in Abdu'l-Baha.

The documents also show us how a number of important people in England, in the circles who recommend people for British knighthoods and other honours, came to know about Abdu'l-Baha and his importance to the world.



It has been suggested that Allenby did take action to protect Abdu'l-Baha, by switching his attack to the coastal plain and ordering his troops to rush to seize Haifa before Jamal Pasha could execute Abdu'l-Baha. I think this is likely to be only a perception of events as seen from Haifa. Before he launched his attack, Allenby went to considerable lengths to make the German and Ottoman forces *think* that he was going to attack on the east of his line, up the Jordan valley towards Damascus. In reality, he was planning to use the coastal plain, which was more suitable for his strong cavalry forces – his tanks having been shipped off to France. Perhaps the Bahais in Haifa also expected the Allies to drive up the Jordan valley. Nor is there any reason to think that the lightning dash of the cavalry up the plain was to rescue Abdu'l-Baha: the objective seems to have been the passes in the Carmel ridge. Allenby's lightning thrust also made good military sense, for the strengths of his force were its cavalry and control of the air. His advantage was greatest in a mobile war.

One detail of Allenby's deception is telling. He had TE Lawrence on the eastern end of his line buying huge quantities of unnecessary fodder, for cavalry and pack animals that were not there, in order to persuade the German commander (Otto Liman von Sanders) that a large attack was being prepared. This indicates that there was no shortage of supplies in the territory controlled by the Allies: they could buy large amounts on the market simply to fool the Germans. So they had no need to get supplies from Abdu'l-Baha, and he had no means to get them through the lines from famine-ravaged north Palestine anyway.

On September 25, with Haifa and Akko occupied by the allies, the Chief Political Officer in Palestine could telegraph London:

Reference to your despatch No. 41 of February 1st to High Commissioner on subject of Abdul Behar the leader of Bahai movement. He is now at Haifa, he is in good health and being cared for.



The aftermath of war

Sir **Ronald Storrs**, the first military Governor of Jerusalem, became the Military Governor of Northern Palestine (and later the Civil Governor of Jerusalem). In a letter to Lady Blomfield he writes:

I met 'Abdu'l-Baha first in 1900, ... When, a few years later, he was released and visited Egypt I had the honour of looking after him and of presenting him to Lord Kitchener, who was deeply impressed by his personality, as who could fail to be?

The war separated us again until Lord Allenby, after his triumphant drive through Syria, sent me to establish the Government at Haifa and throughout that district. I called upon 'Abbas Effendi on the day I arrived and was delighted to find him quite unchanged. When he came to Jerusalem he visited my house and I never failed to visit Him whenever I went to Haifa. His conversation was indeed a remarkable planning, like that of an ancient prophet, far above the perplexities and pettiness of Palestine politics, and elevating all problems into first principles.....(**more ...**)

Another letter to Blomfield gives an indication of British motives for conferring recognition on Abdu'l-Baha:

In 1920 I was appointed as the first High Commissioner ... and took an early opportunity of paying a visit to 'Abdu'l-Baha Effendi at his home in Haifa. I had for some time been interested in the Baha'i Movement, and felt privileged by the opportunity of making the acquaintance of its Head. I had also an official reason as well as a personal one. 'Abdu'l-Baha had been persecuted by the Turks. A British regime had now been substituted in Palestine for the Turkish. Toleration and respect for all religions had long been a principle of British rule wherever it extended; and *the visit of the High Commissioner was intended to be a sign to the population that the adherents of every creed would be able to feel henceforth that they enjoyed the respect and could count upon the good will of the new Government of the land.* (**more ...**)

The knighthood



We have seen that General Sir Arthur Money was one of those whom Tudor-Pole had asked to intervene on Abdu'l-Baha's behalf during the months when the British held Jerusalem, and the Ottoman forces held northern Palestine including Haifa and Akka. General Money became the Chief Administrator of the Southern Occupied Enemy territories, and in this capacity recommended that Abdu'l-Baha should be awarded the order of the British Empire, in July 1919. In the recommendation, Abdu'l-Baha is described as the "Leader and Head of the BAHAI religion which

numbers some millions of adherents in Persia, India, America and England." The 'Statement of service during the War for which this distinction is recommended' has been filled in as follows:

Has given consistently loyal service to the British cause since the occupation. His advice has been most valuable to the Military Governor and officers of the Administration in Haifa, where all his influence has been for good. He was for many years placed in captivity by the Turks in the Citadel at Acre.



This recommendation went to the War Office, who passed it to Lord Curzon, who as we have seen had been impressed by the Bahais he encountered in India when he was Viceroy there, and was now Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

In the correspondence that followed, one staff officer at the Foreign Office suggested that the British Ambassador to Tehran, and the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nusratu'd-Dawlih, should be consulted. Both of these responded that they saw no objection, and the recommendation was duly passed to the Court for royal approval, given on 29 October 1919. The medal was forwarded to Palestine through military channels, and the investiture ceremony took place on April 27, 1920, with Colonel Stanton, the Governor of Haifa, officiating.

One of those to visit Abdu'l-Baha was the architect and town planner, C.R. Ashbee, who was serving as Civic Adviser to the City of Jerusalem in 1920. Among his impressions in *A Palestine Notebook*, are a discussion of the uselessness of "glosses, Talmuds, codes of divinity, and clerical law," of the need for a league of nations, equality of the sexes, and a common language, and of Abdu'l-Baha's knighthood.

Ashbee writes:



When they offered Abbas his title, with whatever bit of ribbon or strip of paper it was accompanied, he said:

'As it comes from the British Government I accept it, as a teacher of God's word it will make no difference to me.'

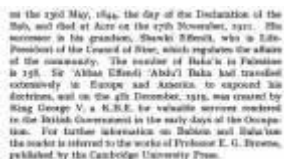
It is pleasant to think that English administrators go to this wise old man for help and counsel. We dined in the evening with Colonel Stanton, the Military Governor of Haifa, Lord Milner, and Herbert Samuel. The two last were rather envious of our afternoon with Abbas, and colonel Stanton told us how he often went to get his advice. 'Of course,' he added in the characteristic manner of the British Administrator, 'I have to listen for half an hour so first to the beauty of the flowers and the wings of the mind; after that we get to business.' ([more ...](#))

Why then was Abdu'l-Baha knighted by the British? First, it should be noted that the knighthood was not unusual: it was raining ribbons at the time, and many honorary knighthoods were awarded to those who

were not British subjects, including quite a few Iranians. Abdu'l-Baha was a very well respected local figure.

Shoghi Effendi, himself a participant in the events, says that the British authorities wished to express "their appreciation of the role which 'Abdu'l-Baha had played in allaying the burden of suffering that had oppressed the inhabitants of the Holy Land during the dark days of that distressing conflict." (*God Passes By*, 306). The other documents I have cited point to Abdu'l-Baha's prestige as a public figure, both locally and world-wide, and to Lady Blomfield's weight in court circles. Abdu'l-Baha's chance encounters with Ronald Storrs, Lord Lamington and Lord Kitchener, and Lord Curzon's positive encounters with the Bahais in India, may all have contributed. In the circles that counted in those days, Abdu'l-Baha was not an unknown quantity. We have also seen that the British authorities in Palestine, such as Reginald Wingate, had given the impression of being rather uninterested in Abdu'l-Baha's fate, and had been put right on that point by men in London who far outranked them. So perhaps they had some motive for showing that they had heard that message.

Storrs, it will be remembered, wrote (some time later) that "the visit of the High Commissioner" to Abdu'l-Baha was a sign that people of all religions would be treated equally under the British mandate. The recommendation document itself mentions Abdu'l-Baha's position as head of the Bahai Faith, and says "His advice has been most valuable to the Military Governor and officers of the Administration in Haifa, where all his influence has been for good." The *Handbook of Palestine* (1922), a work "issued under the authority of the Governate of Palestine," and prepared by H.C. Luke, assistant governor of Jerusalem, and E. Keith-Roach, assistant chief secretary to the Governate of Palestine, states (page 59):



The number of Bahais in Palestine is 158. Sir 'Abbas Effendi Abdu'l-Baha had travelled extensively in Europe and America to expound his doctrines, and on the 4th December, 1919, was created by King George V. a K.B.E. for valuable services rendered to the British Government in the early days of the occupation.

That wording and the date suggest that the *Handbook's* authors had seen the reasons cited when the knighthood was gazetted, but an exhaustive search of the relevant government gazettes has not produced the official announcement, although Adib Masumian was able to help me with a retrospective list of honours awarded to Iranians (click on the greyish images above). However the wording of the official announcement would not necessarily be definitive for the motivations of the British in making the award. The fact that the *Handbook* refers to Shoghi Effendi as Life-President of the Council of Nine suggests that the authors' information is from documents (which they have partly misunderstood), not from personal contact with Abdu'l-Baha or the Bahais in Haifa and Akka.

These various reasons are not contradictory. Abdu'l-Baha's philanthropy no doubt contributed to his standing in Palestine, and that standing would be an additional reason for the new British authorities to

consult him, in line with the usual British policy of ruling through and with local notables and institutions in their colonial territories, and to chose him for an honour intended to demonstrate the new era of religious tolerance.

~~ Sen

Short link: <http://wp.me/pcgF5-1Nd>

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33 Responses to "Abdu'l-Baha's British knighthood"

1.



Sen said

April 22, 2011 at 15:47

1. Tudor Pole to Mark Sykes, MP, December 24, 1917:

On returning to Cairo from the hills round Jerusalem, having received the close attention of a Sniper in a fig tree; I ran across my friend Mohi-el-Dine Sabri. He was anxious to send you his greeting and friendly remembrances and I promised to oblige. The Turkish Line will probably run through Haifa shortly ... the Bahai leader and his family are in imminent danger and at the moment, of course, we are powerless. His position and prestige is not understood among the Authorities here. It is not even realized that he controls a remarkable religious movement, wholly devoid of political and military associations; which can number many millions of adherents throughout the Near and Middle East. Jews, Moslems of Various Sects, Christians, Parsis, Hindoos, Kurds unite under the Bahai banner of Spiritual Fellowship. May not these people contribute much, later, to the harmonising fo Sectarian and Oriental religious feuds? Is it

too much to ask the Authorities at home to request the Authorities here to afford Abdul Baha every protection and consideration? Anxious enquiries reach me from America, England, France, Russia, Persia, India. A word from Whitehall works wonders.

Momen, *The Babi and Bahai Religions, some contemporary Western accounts*, page 333

2.



Sen said

April 22, 2011 at 15:52

2. Lord Lamington (Foreign Office) to Lord Balfour (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), January 24, 1918:

I have been asked to intervene in the interest of Abdul Behar. I enclose a memo. about him and I should be grateful could the action indicated be taken.

The memo:

Abdul Behar sometimes known as Abbas Effendi, leader of the bahai movement, having for its object the true peace of the world is believed to be at his home in Haifa, or else on M. Carmel. In the past he has undergone much persecution at the hands of fanatics and anxiety is felt by his many friends in Gt. Britain and America lest he, his wife and family should not receive adequate protection during the British advance owing to his identity not being known to our authorities. His friends therefore would be grateful if instructions would be cabled to secure on his behalf the good offices of those in command.

Momen, *The Babi and Bahai Religions, some contemporary Western accounts*, page 332

3.



Sen said

April 22, 2011 at 15:56

3. Frederick Whyte MP to Sir Mark Sykes (MP, and chief advisor on the Near East at the Foreign Office), January 25, 1918:

I have just received a letter from my Mother saying that she understands that Abdul Bahai is living in some risk of his life at Haifa. My Mother's correspondent, as you will see from the enclosed letter, seems

to think that we could do something to save him. I presume I need not waste your time in giving an account of Abdul Baha himself, whose personality and work must be well known to you, But as you are aware, he has a good many followers, if one may so call them, in this country; and in general there is a number of people who, like myself, are much interested in his work and will be prepared to do something to make sure that the Military Authorities in Palestine are aware of his presence. I know that at the time Lord Curzon was very deeply impressed with the Bahai Movement in Persia itself and he may be willing to interest himself in the matter now.

In any case I shall be glad to hear from you whether you think there is anything in the suggestion contained in Mr. Russel's letter, which please return to me.

Momen, *The Babi and Bahai Religions, some contemporary Western accounts*, page 334

4.



Sen said

April 22, 2011 at 15:58

4. Foreign office to Sir Reginald Wingate the British High Commissioner in Egypt, January 30, 1918:

My attention has been called to the presence at Haiffa of Abdul Baha, head of the Bahais. Please warn the General Officer Commanding that he and his family should be treated with special consideration in the event of our occupying Haiffa.

Momen, *The Babi and Bahai Religions, some contemporary Western accounts*, page 334

5.



Sen said

April 22, 2011 at 16:00

5. Sir Mark Sykes, Foreign Office, to General Clayton, Chief Political Officer attached to the EEF, February 5, 1918:

Enquiries are being made here as to the present whereabouts of Abdul Baha the leader of the Bahai movement. His usual dwelling is at Acre. Can you give any information, his influence in America is appreciable.

Momen, *The Babi and Bahai Religions, some contemporary Western accounts*, page 335

6.



Sen said

April 22, 2011 at 16:03

6. Ronald Storrs to Lady Blomfield, in Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, page 226

I met 'Abdu'l-Baha first in 1900, on my way out from England and Constantinople through Syria to succeed Harry Boyle as Oriental Secretary to the British Agency in Cairo. (The episode is fully treated in my Orientations published by Ivor Nicholson and Watson.) I drove along the beach in a cab from Haifa to 'Akka and spent a very pleasant hour with the patient but unsubdued prisoner and exile.

When, a few years later, he was released and visited Egypt I had the honour of looking after him and of presenting him to Lord Kitchener, who was deeply impressed by his personality, as who could fail to be?

The war separated us again until Lord Allenby, after his triumphant drive through Syria, sent me to establish the Government at Haifa and throughout that district. I called upon 'Abbas Effendi on the day I arrived and was delighted to find him quite unchanged. When he came to Jerusalem he visited my house and I never failed to visit Him whenever I went to Haifa. His conversation was indeed a remarkable planning, like that of an ancient prophet, far above the perplexities and pettiness of Palestine politics, and elevating all problems into first principles.

He was kind enough to give me one or two beautiful specimens of His own handwriting, together with that of Mishkin-Qalam, all of which, together with His large signed photograph, were unfortunately burned in the Cyprus fire.

I rendered my last sad tribute of affectionate homage when, early in 1921, I accompanied Sir Herbert Samuel to the funeral of 'Abbas Effendi. We walked at the head of a train of all religions up the slope of Mount Carmel, and I have never known a more united expression of regret and respect than was called forth by the utter simplicity of the ceremony.

[The funeral of Abdu'l-Baha in fact occurred in the Autumn of 1921, not the Spring as Storrs recounts it.]

7.



Sen said

April 22, 2011 at 16:07

7. Herbert Samuel to Lady Blomfield, in Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, page 225

In 1920 I was appointed as the first High Commissioner for Palestine under the British Mandate, and took an early opportunity of paying a visit to 'Abdu'l-Baha Effendi at his home in Haifa. I had for some time been interested in the Baha'i Movement, and felt privileged by the opportunity of making the acquaintance of its Head. I had also an official reason as well as a personal one. 'Abdu'l-Baha had been persecuted by the Turks. A British regime had now been substituted in Palestine for the Turkish. Toleration and respect for all religions had long been a principle of British rule wherever it extended; and the visit of the High Commissioner was intended to be a sign to the population that the adherents of every creed would be able to feel henceforth that they enjoyed the respect and could count upon the good will of the new Government of the land.

I was impressed, as was every visitor, by 'Abdu'l-Baha's dignity, grace and charm. Of moderate stature, his strong features and lofty expression lent to his personality an appearance of majesty. In our conversation he readily explained and discussed the principal tenets of Baha'i, answered my inquiries and listened to my comments. I remember vividly that friendly interview of sixteen years ago, in the simple room of the villa, surrounded by gardens, on the sunny hillside of Mount Carmel.

I was glad I had paid my visit so soon, for in 1921 'Abdu'l-Baha died. I was only able to express my respect for his creed and my regard for his person by coming from the capital to attend his funeral. A great throng had gathered together, sorrowing for his death, but rejoicing also for his life.

8.



Sen said

April 22, 2011 at 16:10

8. Another to visit Abdu'l-Baha and record his impressions was the architect and town planner, C.R. Ashbee, who was serving as Civic Adviser to the City of Jerusalem in 1920, and reports in A Palestine Notebook,

On the ramparts, among the old masonry to a background of crumbling golden stone, there was an impressive little figure, white barded, with waving white hair. He wore a white 'emma and an 'abaya of tender brown over his gray Galabia. It was Abbas the Bahai. Later on, thanks to the courtesy of one of our Syrian schoolmasters, we were invited into the house. Word came that he would be very glad to see Mr and Mrs Ashbee, and we spent a wonderful hour with him. He was quite willing to talk and our interpreter was clear and true in his English. Old Abbas curled himself up in the corner of his divan, looked at us with his wonderful illuminating eyes that radiate love, and set forth the cardinal points of Bahaism.

I have rarely come across a man who so completely sums up the saint, or let us say saint and philosopher combined, for the presence and image of the man are of the Middle Ages, their spirit of personal holiness, while what he says has the lucidity of the Greek, is disruptive of all religions and mediaeval systems, is philosophic, modern and synthetic.

'First,' said he, 'we must get rid of all glosses, Talmuds, codes of divinity, and clerical law. Get back to the revealed word of God where we can. Christ had the revealed word, so had Mohammed, so had others before them, but – and here's the point – those revelations were for their own day and environment. You cannot always take the literal interpretation of first-century Syria or eighth-century Arabia and say in its application it is true now.'

He gave the impression of being very modest about his own teaching, adding that the East was in a bad way, needed light, and had to be told these things. That was the reason for Bahauallah and the Bab.

'Then,' said he, 'all the nations must come together, there must be a league of nations for the government of the world.'

He sketched out a sort of council appointed by the presidents, the kings, and the democracies.

'And the existing League?' we asked.

He smiled and shook his head. 'That is only the merest beginning. It is not representative of all. It palliates the disease, the disease of discord. It is no remedy.'

But Bahatism went much further, and here it cuts itself free from the orientalism of Pauline Christianity and from Mohammad. There must be equality of the sexes. 'Humanity,' said old Abbas as he took a pinch of snuff from the little enamelled box, 'is as a creature with two wings – man and woman – you must not cripple either, or you impede flight. Humanity needs both for progress.'

'And the common tongue that is to make it possible for man to speak with man?'

'It will come,' said he.

Janet suggested that the tongue might be English. He accepted the suggestion with a look of warm-hearted love that seemed to imply "We all of us would like to have our own, but God has found a tongue before.'

Who knows but that it may be English yet? Still the last language in which God revealed himself was not Aramaic, nor Greek, nor Hebrew, nor Egyptian, but Arabic. And don't you make any mistake about it! But the languages of God are many.

He tells somewhere in his teaching: Release comes by making of the will a door through which the confirmations of the spirit move.

And those confirmations of the spirit? They are the powers and gifts with which some are born, and which men sometimes call genius, but for which others have to strive with infinite pains. They come to that man or woman who accepts his or her life with 'radiant acquiescence.'

A good phrase, 'radiant acquiescence.' Let's remember it!

As we motored back across the sands, we saw Lord Milner's destroyer lying outside the harbour. 'War,' old Abbas had said, 'is not of God because it does not unify.'

But may it not at times serve as a besom to sweep up ere we begin afresh? That is what it did in south Africa, after which came the peace of Vereeniging and Smuts and Botha became our friends.

The wise men of all time, be it Ptahotep on his tomb, Diogenes from his tub, Plato when he parted from Dion, or Christ with the tribute to Caesar, have always been the passive protest against power. When they offered Abbas his title, with whatever bit of ribbon or strip of paper it was accompanied, he said:

'As it comes from the British Government I accept it, as a teacher of god's word it will make no difference to me.'

It is pleasant to think that English administrators go to this wise old man for help and counsel. We dined in the evening with Colonel Stanton, the Military Governor of Haifa, Lord Milner, and Herbert Samuel.

The two last were rather envious of our afternoon with Abbas, and colonel Stanton told us how he often went to get his advice. 'Of course,' he added in the characteristic manner of the British Administrator, 'I have to listen for half an hour so first to the beauty of the flowers and the wings of the mind; after that we get to business.'

I thought of the destroyer lying outside Akka, and waiting to take Lord Milner back to England. Somehow I rather wished he could have put his journey off another day and come with us if we went again to Akka. He was a little melancholy and pessimistic, but he always takes a big sweep ...

'Yes,' say his friends, but Lord Milner is getting old. Abbas is older, and his sweep is bigger; for his is – shall we say? – a less bounded, because more oriental, faith in the goodness of God and the destiny of man.

Momen, *The Babi and Bahai Religions, some contemporary Western accounts*, pages 341-3

9.



Ralph De Freitas said

April 23, 2011 at 04:27

This is a well needed research project. May God assist all your efforts towards this end, and make all relative resources pertaining to Abdu'l-Baha's Knighthood available to you.

10.



Randy Burns said

April 23, 2011 at 20:16

Good Lord! Allenby "had DH Lawrence on the eastern end of his line buying huge quantities of unnecessary fodder, for cavalry and pack animals that were not there, in order to persuade the German commander..."

I'll bet that DH was doing nothing of the kind, busy writing letters to a certain Lady Chatterly no doubt. And where was TE all this time?

Cheers, Randy

11.



Sen said

April 23, 2011 at 22:48

thanks Randy. I'll fix it.

12.



Steven said

April 24, 2011 at 11:39

You might also consider reviewing http://www.grbooks.com/show_book.php?book_id=183 - it weaves the history into a narrative.

[September 2014: the book has a new URL:

<http://grbooks.com/george-ronald-publisher-books/central-figures-of-the-bahai-faith/books-about-abdul-baha/servant-the-general-and-armageddon-the-1322140539>]

13.



Sen said

April 24, 2011 at 12:42

Thanks, I've ordered that (7 pounds plus postage).

14.



Brent Poirier said

May 5, 2011 at 23:12

On September 25, with Haifa and Akka occupied by the allies, the Chief Political Officer in Palestine could telegraph London:

Reference to your despatch No. 41 of February 1st to High Commissioner on subject of Abdul Behar the leader of Bahai movement. He is now at Haifa, he is in good health and being cared for.

Sen, what is the source for this, is it Momen? Do you know the identity of the Chief Political Officer, or his location in Palestine at the time?

Thanks

Brent

15.



Sen said

May 6, 2011 at 08:07

Yes, I have it from Momen, *The Babi and Bahai Religions 1844-1944*, page 336, and Momen sources it as a communication from Clayton to Sykes No. 68, 25 Sept 1918, file 162590/W/44: FO 371 3396.

Clayton would be General Gilbert Falkingham Clayton. He was Brigadier-General and Chief Political Officer of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, with responsibility for occupied Ottoman territories.

16.



Fred Frazelle said

May 8, 2011 at 20:46

A great read, guys! Just in time for the 90th anniversary.

Have a great afternoon!

17.



Barney said

May 18, 2011 at 18:09

Was Wellesley Tudor Pole really a Bahá'í or was he a sympathiser? He certainly was very close to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but I'm not sure that he would have considered himself a Bahá'í. It is well worth reading *The Two Worlds of Wellesley Tudor Pole* by Gerry Fenge. It's a fascinating book, well researched, well written, and plays an interesting sidelight on 'Abdu'l-Bahá and on the Bahá'í community at that time.

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Two-Worlds-Wellesley-Tudor-Pole/dp/0979170060/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1305738380&sr=1-1

Many thanks for a fascinating post, Sen.

18.



Sen said

May 18, 2011 at 18:56

Yes, Tudor Pole was a Bahai, and functioned for many years as a full member of the Bahai community, and an active teacher of the Faith. He considered himself a Bahai, calls the other Bahais 'the friends' and Abdu'l-Baha 'the Master,' and was accepted as a member of the community by the Bahais, by Abdu'l-Baha and by Shoghi Effendi. This is quite clear from his correspondence with the Bahais, and from Shoghi Effendi's correspondence with him, or referring to him, that was published in *Star of the West*.

For example, there's an undated letter from Tudor Pole to *Star of the West*, published in that journal in volume 2, no 15, (December 12, 1911) in which he says,

Since Abdu'l-Baha arrived in England and especially since he was my guest here, I have had some special opportunities for communion which have proved of immense service to me and to others. ... He is a most remarkable figure in history and his love and wisdom are boundless, yet of course he is simply the servant of his Father who was undoubtedly a great Messenger of God, and Abdu'l-Baha claims no other distinction. There seems a tendency in America and elsewhere to focus too great attention on Abdul-Baha rather than upon the Manifestation Itself. Abdul-Baha, I can see, does not wish for references to himself save as the servant of God, the inspired exponent of his Father's great message. To idolize Abdu'l Baha in exaggerated terms or forms is to delay the spread of the Baha spirit of Unity.

So he accepted Baha'u'llah as a Manifestation of God, and did not elevate Abdu'l-Baha to the return of Christ or other such exaggerations. By our standards today, he was an orthodox Bahai, more so than some of his contemporaries.

In 1921, at least, Tudor-Pole was serving as secretary to the Local Spiritual Assembly of London, which is why the telegram announcing the death of Abdu'l-Baha went to his home.

In March 1922, Tudor Pole was one of those especially trusted Bahais whom Shoghi Effendi invited to Haifa for consultations. The others from the West were Lady Blomfield, Emogene Hoagg, Ethel Rosenberg, Roy Wilhelm, Mountfort Mills, Mason Remey, Laura and Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, and Consul and Alice Schwarz.

19.



Marco Oliveira said

May 19, 2011 at 10:20

Fantastic post!

Thank you.

20.



Paul Desailly said

October 7, 2013 at 00:59

Allah'u'abha dear Sen

Great research and very useful but it's your opening gambit, a widely held stance among the friends, that's in question:

"Abdu'l-Baha's knighthood has never been a matter of importance to Bahais themselves,..."

What is the evidence for this all encompassing statement? I consider His action quite important and useful too among anglophiles in that our enemies who falsely accuse Him of spying do the Cause a service by bringing attention to the Faith which in the final analysis spreads it further..

Many Britons and members of the British Commonwealth who are not yet Baha'is will find the Master's accepting a KBE note worthy. The underpinning for your position seems to come from words purportedly voiced by Abdu'l-Baha, words which when scrutinized can be interpreted in ways other than your assertion.

"As it comes from the British Government I accept it, as a teacher of God's word it will make no difference to me."

What is the source and how has the Guardian interpreted the above; perhaps it suggests that His accepting will make a lot of difference to others?

One may for example alternatively interpret the above as praise for Britain and her policies on religion etc (meaning too that it's accepted with thanks); the honour is not diminished by the Master's statement that it will not deter Him from his more important spiritual tasks.

Moreover, what you and umpteen Baha'i speakers vis-a-vis that KBE are unintentionally implying is that the Master should not have accepted it or that He entered into the ceremony unaware of the ramifications for later generations or that He lacked the skills to politely decline. He accepted the honour! The Guardian, the only official interpreter, as far as i know, never dismissed the honour as unimportant! We Baha'is should simply trust the Master's judgment on the matter!

Baha'i love

Paul

21.



Sen said

October 7, 2013 at 01:56

I certainly did not imply that Abdu'l-Baha should not have accepted the knighthood. If I want to imply something, I will say it unmistakably. The position you attribute to me is a projection.

The origin of the report you asked about is C.R. Ashbee, Civic Adviser to the City of Jerusalem in 1920, who reports these words in *A Palestine Notebook*. The source and full citation are in [comment 8](#). It may well be an accurate reflection of Abdu'l-Baha's attitude to the Knighthood, as he never used the title "Sir."

22.



Paul Desailly said

October 7, 2013 at 23:57

I'm glad to hear you're not implying that the Master should not have accepted the KBE and ergo then you also accept that He knew precisely what He was doing even as to affecting our current Baha'i explaining of His participation in the KBE bestowal. I'm more than glad that you air views asymmetrical to your own; it's a mature and valiant stance not shared with all Baha'i editors, publishers, bloggers etc. Academe's wall-of-silence instinctive stance to gadfly amateurs is not confined to the non Baha'i world in my experience. That you say things unmistakably and choose not to imply reflects a modus operandi free of peer censorship as to what you communicate and how you do it.

Do you accept the possibility that though you are not implying what Abdu'l-Baha should or should not have done about that KBE the rank and file believer reading your essay, and listening to our speakers, is left with a big question mark as to the British authorities, why Abdu'l-Baha accepted it if it would lead to spying charges being directed against Baha'is and what the KBE means to the other Asian recipients and Asians generally?

To assert that the KBE in question is not important because similar honours were "raining like ribbons" on Asians at that chaotic time is unhelpful in the sense that many Britons understandably will detect a snub of their government's attempt to bestow a vote of thanks. Though the snub emanates from Baha'i writers, not from the Master, it nevertheless portrays Baha'is as ungrateful or even in a sense as the arbiters of what He should or should not have accepted.

Baha'i love

Paul

23.



Sen said

October 8, 2013 at 00:19

I did not "assert" that the knighthood was unimportant. Again, you attribute views to me that are projections of your own hostility to academia.

I said that the knighthood was not unusual at that time. It is simply a fact that many honours were awarded to non-British citizens following the war, as is evident from the honours lists I found. While that would generally dilute the honour, in this case I do not think it is the case. It looks to me more like a catch-up following the war, a reflection of the fact that many people had made sacrifices or achieved remarkable things during the stresses of war around the globe, and a recognition that the relationship between Great Britain and the territories and people it governed would have to change.

24.



Paul Desailly said

October 10, 2013 at 08:43

Given Sen's recent comments and the various meanings of the word "assert" and the various possible understandings as to the Master's mindset and Sen's intentions I can accept that Sen never did "assert" that the Knighthood was unimportant. (See Sen's opening sentence of Comment 23) Words are like that some times, especially in lawyers' usage. Amazingly, I feel, Abdu'l-Baha once said: "The greatest undertaking in the world today is to understand and to be understood." Wow, 'the greatest undertaking', no less!

However, the very opening to Sen's essay 22 April 2011 states:

'Abdu'l-Baha's knighthood has never been a matter of importance to Baha'is themselves, who have many much weightier reasons to admire and follow Abdu'l-Baha...'

Given this opening two years ago and given that Sen and I are both Baha'is it's reasonable to ask if Sen accepts that some of his readers might (erroneously?) opine that Sen too prima facie considers the Knighthood unimportant.

I've parenthesized 'erroneously' in the hope that further consultation ensues in a Baha'i spirit

Baha'i love

Paul

25.



Sen said

October 10, 2013 at 09:31

The knighthood is unimportant ... in comparison to Abdu'l-Baha's importance as the **successor to his father**, Baha'u'llah, as the **authorised interpreter** of the Bahai scripture and teachings, as the **Centre of the Covenant** that unites Bahais across the world, and as the best **exemplar of the Bahai life**. If you were to leave out the "weightier reasons," it would be easy to misunderstand.

26.



Paul Desailly said

October 10, 2013 at 10:26

Hi Sam

it's not so much the grading or relativity of the importance I'm asking you about but whether the KBE merits some importance at all as far as Baha'is are concerned

No Baha'is i m o compare the KBE to the importance of the Covenant etc

Can you accept as possible that some of your readers might see at least an ambiguity in your opening and that they ergo consider that it negatively downplays or endeavours to dismiss the KBE's importance? Perhaps (1) I'm entirely misunderstanding your main aims here and (2) no intelligent person could interpret your essay as downplaying that British honour in any way

In times of heated exchange I feel it's best to have a cooling off period and to ask an impartial third party to weigh in.

As I said previously, I see myself as an amateur as far as penmanship (penpersonship) is concerned

Baha'i love

Paul

27.



Paul Desailly said

October 17, 2013 at 04:31

Hi again and again Sen

For misspelling your interesting personal name in a previous post.

please accept the apologies of this senior citizen whose eyesight ain't what it used to be.

Writing about Turkish and British treatment of the Master around the time of WW1 and His KBE the beloved Guardian

notes on pages 306 and 307 of "God Passes By":

"—these contributed, each in its own way, to heighten the prestige which the Faith of Baha'u'llah had been steadily and gradually acquiring through the inspired leadership of 'Abdu'l-Baha."

Baha'i love

Paul

28.



Brent Poirier said

October 17, 2013 at 18:23

Sen, you earlier posted: "In March 1922, Tudor Pole was one of those especially trusted Bahais whom Shoghi Effendi invited to Haifa for consultations. The others from the West were Lady Blomfield, Emogene Hoagg, Ethel Rosenberg, Roy Wilhelm, Mountfort Mills, Mason Remy, Laura and Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, and Consul and Alice Schwarz." I have never seen a complete list – from what sources did you compile it? And do you know who those from the East were?

Thanks

Brent

29.



Sen said

October 21, 2013 at 16:46

The names of the western Bahais have been published before, for example in *The Priceless Pearl*

During March 1922 he gathered in Haifa a group of representative and well-known Bahá'ís: Lady Blomfield had returned with him from England, Emogene Hoagg had been living in Haifa; to these were added Miss Rosenberg from England, Roy Wilhelm, Mountfort Mills and Mason Remy from America, Laura and Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney of France, Consul and Alice Schwarz from Germany, and Major Tudor Pole. Two well-known Bahá'í teachers from Persia, Avarih and Fazel, had likewise been summoned to Haifa, but owing to complications their arrival was long delayed; at a later date the Guardian sent them on long teaching missions to Europe and North America, respectively. Siyyid Mustafa Roumie of

Burma, and Corinne True and her daughter, Katherine, from the United States arrived later on.
(Ruhiyyih Khanum, The Priceless Pearl, p. 55)

30.



Dawn May Adams said

February 12, 2015 at 06:50

I do not believe that Abdu'l-Baha would have approved of anyone arguing over what he did or didn't do. It sounds to me like a lot of ego was involved between the two men who felt they had something to prove.

31.



Sen said

February 12, 2015 at 10:47

Dawn, I do not know which two men you refer to, or which argument, but it is evident that Abdu'l-Baha saw the value of history-writing, and of trying to get it right. What Abdu'l-Baha did during his life is a historical question, and history does not tell itself: someone has to research it, and write it, and there is always the chance of mistakes and room for different readings. Therefore critical debates about history are valuable: they refine and correct our picture of the past.

32.



***Paul Desailly* said**

February 12, 2015 at 12:04

Arguing is OK provided its not acrimonious and I am not trying to harm Sen's reputation.
As to ego, I am trying to get over my ego bigger than mount Everest if you'll pardon the play on words

33.



Mikey said

May 29, 2015 at 06:37

thanks for this! love, Mikey